Psychological predictors and mediators of subjective well-being in a sample of romanian teachers

Article *in* REVISTA DE CERCETARE SI INTERVENTIE SOCIALA · September 2014

CITATIONS
9

READS
281

1 author:

Elena Stanculescu
University of Bucharest
30 PUBLICATIONS **317** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

Selected by coverage in Social Sciences Citation Index, ISI databases

---

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS AND MEDIATORS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN A SAMPLE OF ROMANIAN TEACHERS

Elena STANCULESCU

Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2014, vol. 46, pp. 37-52

The online version of this article can be found at:

www.rcis.ro, *www.doaj.org* and *www.scopus.com*

Published by:

Expert Projects Publishing House

On behalf of:

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University,

Department of Sociology and Social Work

and

Holt Romania Foundation

REVISTA DE CERCETARE SI INTERVENTIE SOCIALA

is indexed by ISI Thomson Reuters - Social Sciences Citation Index

(Sociology and Social Work Domains)

Working together
www.rcis.ro

Psychological Predictors and Mediators of Subjective Well-being in a Sample of Romanian Teachers

Elena STANCULESCU[1]

Abstract

The study examined psychological predictors and mediators of teacher subjective well-being. Participants included 174 teachers from urban middle and high-schools. The first objective was to explore the psychological correlates of the teacher SWB: self-esteem, general self-efficacy (core self-evaluation), teacher self-efficacy, optimism (cognitive trait related to the psychological well-being), and perceived social support (psychosocial trait related to the psychological well-being. The second objective was to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy in the association between optimism and subjective well-being. The third objective was to explore the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy in the relation between perceived social support and teacher subjective well-being. Correlation, linear regression and mediation model analyses through the Sobel test were computed. Results confirmed the research assumptions. The findings of this study enhance the understanding of personal factors associated with teacher subjective well-being. The constructs linked to subjective well-being (predictors and mediators) could be target of school psychologists' interventions, in order to have more engaged and performing teachers in schools. The findings were discussed in the context of designing the interventions for enhancement of the subjective well-being among teachers.

Keywords: subjective well-being (SWB), general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, perceived social support, optimism.

Introduction

In the last decades, a consistent number of specialists have focused on positive aspects of health and psychological well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihaly,

[1] University of Bucharest, Teacher Training Department, Bucharest, ROMANIA. E-mail: elistapsy@yahoo.com

2000). Positive psychology explores the factors which contribute to the maintenance of the optimal psychological functioning. In educational settings, the positive schooling supposes not only supportive climate and cognitive engagement, but affective engagement and satisfied students and teachers. There is a consensus in the literature (Schonfeld & Ruan, 1991) that teaching is a challenging activity that sometimes could be conducive to distress, dissatisfaction, and burnout (Chenkseven-Onder & Sari, 2009). Cultivating teacher SWB it is necessary not just because doing so makes them feel good and satisfied, but also because doing this will transform them to be more engaged, with better results in their activities. Subjective well-being (SWB) represents a private experience concerning the self-perception quality of individual's life (Ross *et al.*, 2013). Although the study of SWB is one of the earliest topics in positive psychology, there are not so much researches on teacher SWB.

Theoretical background of the study of subjective well-being (SWB)

In the literature, SWB has been defined as having two dimensions – emotional and cognitive – which reflects how the individual assesses his/her own life or the extent to which he/she considers it a fulfilled existence (Diener & Seligman, 2004). SWB is a broad concept that includes: positive emotion experience, low level of negative mood and high life satisfaction (Diener *et al.*, 2005: 63). Affective dimension was conceptualized in the literature as the balance between positive and negative emotions and as the subjective happiness (Snyder and Lopez, 2005). The cognitive dimension of the SWB was defined through the psychological construct of the life satisfaction (Pavot, 2008). Albuquerque *et al.*, (2012) showed that the great majority of work on SWB has been developed using self-report questionnaires because researchers consider that no one better than the individual himself can judge his happiness level. Much-used multi-item scales of affective dimension of SWB are *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule* (PANAS, Watson *et al.*, 1988) – that captures the balance between positive and negative emotions, and *Subjective Happiness Scale* (SHS, Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) – that was designed to measure happiness.

Researches' findings pointed out that trying to reduce the negative emotions (anxious and depressive states) does not automatically increase the positive affect (Diener *et al.*, 2005). It was concluded that the absence of negative emotions does not necessarily mean high levels of SWB. In this context it is appeared a new topic: possibility that value judgments by which assesses life satisfaction and the relationship between positive and negative emotions differ from individual to individual. These differences depend not only on their experiences, but also on psychological aspects such as: tendency to focus more on positive events (optimism) or rather on the negative (pessimism).

One of the conditions that stimulate optimal psychological functioning is self-esteem. In the conventional approach of the self-esteem, it has been described as the evaluative dimension of the self-concept (what a person feels about what he/she knows about himself/herself). The contemporary points of view focus on the more complex and nuanced approach than the conventional traditional one. Self-esteem was defined as a socially constructed emotion (Smith-Lovin, 1995), reflexive emotion that has developed over time in social processes of interactions. For instance, Hewitt (2005) considered that "anchoring self-esteem within the realm of emotions gives a more precise theoretical formulation than its definition as the evaluative dimension of self-regard and better captures the reality of the experience from the individual's standpoint" (p. 139). High levels of self-esteem contribute to the self-confidence, self-efficacy, performance, and finally to life satisfaction and happiness – SWB. R. Cummins and H. Nistico (2002) are agreed that self-esteem is very important to individuals' life satisfaction.

Self-efficacy is a set of beliefs about the ability to coordinate skills to accomplish goals in particular domains or circumstances. Bandura (1997) highlighted that self-efficacy represents people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. Efficacy expectancies are important in analysis the relevant contingencies in a given goal attainment situation, in order to evaluate the individual's capabilities to perform. Time and experience are the conditions of the growing self-efficacy. It is accepted in the literature that there is a strong relation between self-efficacy and psychological adjustment. Low levels of self-efficacy are associated with depression, anxiety, and avoidant behavior (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 2005; Maddux & DuCharme, 1997; Williams, 1995). Those people who don't feel confident in their abilities could be disrupted by the difficulties, underperforming, allowing the emergence of the helplessness phenomenon. In another study that examined the affective component of subjective well-being (using happiness measurement) it has been obtained that job satisfaction (a psychological correlates of teacher self-efficacy) is a determinant of happiness (Frey & Stutzer, 2002).

Teacher SWB and related constructs

In the last decade, it has been emphasized in educational field a call for positive psychology to foster positive learning settings (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Seligman *et al.*, (2005) pointed out the benefit of positive psychology perspective, especially in designing and promoting programs of intervention to foster students' and teachers' optimal functioning, and to help them to detect and develop their psychological strengths to combat the stressors impact.

The study of teacher SWB in the literature has been focused especially on the relation with personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness,

openness to experience, and conscientiousness). Burns and Machin (2010) investigated SWB on different cohorts of teachers (Australian and Norwegian) and found moderate correlations between this construct, personality, and psychological well-being. They have demonstrated that psychological well-being appears to be a significant factor in determining SWB in teachers.

It should be noticed that the authors of this study conceptualized SWB in terms of positive and negative affect. In fact, they studied only the affective component of SWB (in order to capture the level of SWB in teachers, authors used only one measure – PANAS, Watson *et al.*, 1988 – an instrument that was designed to measure positive and negative affects). Wei (2013) found a significant relationship among teacher SWB and social intelligence, practical intelligence, teaching efficacy, and teaching experience. Study of predictors and mediators of teacher SWB are less detailed. Chenkseven-Onder and Sari (2009) studied the quality of life and burnout as predictors of teacher SWB. Albuquerque *et al.* (2012) showed that neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness are predictors of the teacher SWB. Sharma (2011) investigated the psycho-social factors of SWB in a sample of retired teachers. It was found that purpose in life, social support, and religiosity are the predictors of teacher SWB. Because "efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (Bandura, 1993: 118), it seems to be very important to explore the contribution of general and teacher self-efficacy to subjective well-being.

The Present Study

This study investigated the psychological correlates and mediators of the teacher SWB. There were three key objectives of the study. The first objective was to explore the psychological correlates of the teacher SWB: self-esteem, general self-efficacy (core self-evaluation), teacher self-efficacy, optimism (cognitive trait related to the psychological well-being), and perceived social support (psychosocial trait related to the psychological well-being). In addition to the mere associations among variables, it will be explored whether there are some mediation effects in order to gain more insight into possible mechanism of the development of teacher SWB. Thus, the second objective was to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy in the association between optimism and teacher SWB. The third objective was to explore the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy in the relation between perceived social support and teacher SWB.

H_1 – There is a positive relationship among teacher SWB and self-esteem, general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, optimism, and perceived social support;

H_2 – General self-efficacy is the mediator of the relationship between optimism and teacher SWB;

H_3 – Teacher self-efficacy has a mediating role in the relationship between perceived social support and teacher SWB.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 174 (41 man and 133 women) teachers from urban settings, employed full time. The sample selection was recruited via enrollment in a course in university teacher education, at the Teacher Training Department, University of Bucharest. Of the 205 invited persons, 85 per cent were willing to fill out the questionnaires on life satisfaction, happiness, optimism, self-esteem, general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and perceived social support. Their age ranged from 24 to 59 years with an average of 42.41 years (*SD*=10.14). Their teaching experience ranged from 2 to 35 years. The sample included middle (n=83) and high-school teachers (n=91).

Measures

The instruments used in this research were adapted in Romanian by Baban (2002), Baban *et al.*, (1996). Evidence emerged that the psychometric properties are good, and validation information is accumulating in the Romanian literature (Muntele-Hendres, 2009; Negovan, 2010; Stanculescu, 2008).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985*)* is a widely used and well-validated measure of life satisfaction. Satisfaction with life is the cognitive component of the subjective well-being (Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996). Five items assess satisfaction with life (e.g. *In most way my life is close to my ideal*, *I am satisfied with my life*) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree)*. This psychological construct reveals the person's own judgment of his/her quality of life. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher levels of life satisfaction. The coefficient Cronbach α of the five-item sores was .81.

Subjective Happiness Scale (*SHS*, Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) measures the affective dymension of the SWB. The scale contains four items. Two items ask respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers (e.g. *Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself: 1-less happy – 7-more happy*"), whereas the other two items offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals, and asking respondents the extent to which each sentence describes them (e.g. *Some people are generally very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?*). Responses were assessed on the basis of a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 7 – *strongly agree*). The coefficient Cronbach α of the four-item sores was .79. Calculation of *teacher SWB* was realized summing the life satisfaction score (cognitive dimension of the subjective well-being) and the happiness score (affective dimension of the subjective well-being). It has been emphasized in the literature (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Pavot, 2008) that a comprehensive assessment of the SWB supposes separate measures of the cognitive and affective component. The coefficient Cronbach α was .82.

The Life Orientation Test (LOT-Revised – Scheier and Carver, 1985) assesses individual differences in generalized optimism *vs.* pessimism. Optimism is a personality characteristic having implications for the manner by which people regulate their actions. This test contains ten items, (e.g. *In uncertain times, I usually expect the best*, *I rarely count on good things happening to me*), responses being assessed on the basis of a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 - *I disagree a lot* to 5 – *I agree a lot*). Four items are filters. The coefficient Cronbach α of the scale was .74.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (*RSES*, 1965*)* is a 10-item Likert-type scale and answers have to be rated on a four-point scale – from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Five of the scale items have positively worded statements and five have negatively worded ones (e.g. *I am able to do things as well as most other people*; *I feel I do not have much to be proud* of). The scale measures state self-esteem by asking the respondents to reflect on their current feelings about him/her. The coefficient Cronbach α of the ten-item sores was .76.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) is a psychometric scale that is designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life. In contrast to other scales that were designed to assess optimism, this one explicitly refers to personal agency. The scale contains ten items (e.g. *It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals*, *When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions*) responses being assessed on the basis of a four-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 – *not at all true* to 4 – *exactly true*). It has been pointed out that perceived self-efficacy represents a prospective and operative construct. The coefficient Cronbach α of the ten-item scores was .91.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner, 1999) investigates four domains that seem to be of vital importance for successful teaching: 1 – job accomplishment; 2 – skills development; 3 – social interaction with students, parents and colleagues; 4 – coping with job stress. This scale has ten items (e.g. *When I try really hard; I am able to reach even the most difficult students*; *I am confident in my ability to be responsive to my students' needs even if I am having a bad day*; *Even if I am disrupted while teaching; I am confident that I can maintain my composure and continue to teach well*) and answers have to be rated on a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 – *not all true* to 4 – *exactly true*). The coefficient Cronbach α of the ten-item sores was .84.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Scale (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) includes twelve items relating to perceived social support, such as: *I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows, There is a special person who is around when I am in need, My friends really try to help me*. The items are divided into factor groups relating to the source of the social support, namely family, friends, and significant others. Three separate scores can be calculated for the sources of the support. Participants are instructed to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement using a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 – very strongly disagree to 7 – very strongly agree). The coefficient Cronbach α of the twelve-item sores was .88.

Procedures

The participants were invited to respond to a survey packet anonymously. The nature of the study was discussed in general terms; participants were encouraged to look over the questionnaires before participating. The survey packet consisted of an informed consent form, a demographic information sheet; life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, optimism, and perceived social support scales. All participants were informed that the data would be kept confidential and would be used for research purposes only. They completed the packet on their own time and they had to return the packet at the next course.

Data Analyses

Analyses were computed using SPSS 16 and SOBEL test. Bivariate correlations tested the associations between teacher SWB: self-esteem, general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, optimism, and perceived social support. Linear regression analyses were performed to model the relationship between independent and dependent variables compressed in the three mediation models. Two SOBEL tests verified whether the core general self-efficacy and teacher self-efficacy are mediators of the teacher subjective well-being.

Results

Descriptive statistics

As shown in the Table 1, mean scores for the life satisfaction and happiness were slightly smaller but close to the midpoint of the scale. In the case of core self-evaluations (self-esteem and general self-efficacy), mean scores registered were above the midpoint. Mean score for perceived social support was medium, and for optimism was slightly higher but close to the midlevel. In the case of teacher self-efficacy, it was obtained a higher mean score than midlevel. The shape of distributions approximated normality, and scores were variable, as demonstrated by their standard deviations.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach α)*

	Mean (*M*)	Standard deviation (*SD*)	*Cronbach α*
Life satisfaction	15.39	3.14	*.81*
Happiness	13.10	2.51	*.79*
Teacher SWB	28.48	5.15	*.82*
Self-esteem	26.44	4.32	*.76*
General self-efficacy	27.35	6.36	*.91*
Teacher self-efficacy	32.98	4.05	*.84*
Perceived social support	48.79	6.81	*.88*
Optimism	*18.82*	*4.45*	*.74*

Psychological correlates of teacher SWB

In order to test the first hypothesis, it was performed a bivariate correlate analysis. Pearson correlations coefficients among teacher SWB and other variables were calculated and are presented in the Table 2. As predicted, teacher SWB positivelly correlated with: perceived social support ($r = .55$; $p<.01$), optimism ($r = .47$; $p < .01$), core self-evaluations: self-esteem ($r = .42$; $p < .01$), self-efficacy ($r = .46$; $p < .01$); teacher self-efficacy ($r = .32$; $p < .01$). Starting with the model of interpretation of test value *r* proposed by Hopkins (2000), it can be asserted that there was a high correlation between teacher SWB and perceived social support, and moderate correlations among the same concept and other variables. Effect size was tested using Cohen determination coefficient. According to Kotrlik and Williams (2003), the results confirmed the high correlation between teacher SWB and perceived social support (*Cohen's d* = .30), and moderate correlations between teacher SWB and: optimism, self-esteem, general self-efficacy, and teacher self-efficacy (*Cohen's d* ranged from .10 to .22). Results obtained reflect that there is a concomitant variation of the values of the variables.

Table 2. *Correlation matrix of research variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teacher SWB	–					
Self-esteem	.42**	–				
General self-efficacy	.46**	.33**	–			
Teacher self-efficacy	.32**	.38**	.52**	–		
Perceived social support	.55**	.32**	.35**	.33**	–	
Optimism	*.47***	*.36***	*.43***	*.30***	*.48***	–

Note. ** p < *.01*

General self-efficacy (core self-evaluation) as mediator of teacher SWB

The basic assumption was that optimism constitutes a persoal resource factor that contributes to the growing of self-efficacy beliefs, and thus would make experience subjective well-being more likely. To examine this assumption, mediation analysis was performed. It was investigated the relationship between the independent variable (optimism) and the dependent variable (teacher SWB) via the inclusion of a third explanatory variable (mediator - general self-efficacy). The mediational model hypothesezes that the independent variable significantly predicts the mediator variable, which in turn predicts the mediator variable. In other words, mediator variable serves to clarify the nature of the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable (MacKinnon, 2002). Verifying the three requirements for mediation, described in the literature by Baron and Kenny (1986), it has been noticed that all of them were satisfied. Regarding the first requirement (concerning the relation between independent variable and dependent variable), it has been found that the optimism significantly predicts the teacher SWB ($\beta = .47$, $B = .62$, $p < .001$). The second requirement involves that the mediator variable is predicted by the independent variable. The results showed that optimism significantly predicts the general self-efficacy ($\beta = .43$, $B = .62$, $p < .001$). The third requirement asserts that the mediatior variable predicts the dependent variable. It has been obtained that general self-efficacy significantly predicts the teacher SWB ($\beta = .46$, $B = .43$, $p < .001$).

To explore the mediation effect, a Sobel test (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) was performed. It has been noticed that the mediation effect was significant ($z = 4.05$, $p < .001$). The results showed that there was a partial mediation (not complete) because the measured effect changes upon fixing the mediator (general self-efficacy), but remains significantly different from 0. The total effect measures the extent to which the dependent variable changes when the independent variable increases by one unit ($Et = .66$). The direct effect of optimism on teacher SWB was significant ($Ed = .47$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect measures the extent to which the dependent variable (teacher SWB) changes when the independent

variable (optimism) is held fixed and the mediator variable (general self-efficacy) changes to the level it would have had obtained the independent variable increased by one unit (MacKinnon, 2002). The indirect effect of optimism on teacher SWB through general self-efficacy was significant statistically (*Ei* = .19, $p < .001$).

Teacher self-efficacy as mediator of the relation between perceived social support and teacher SWB

In the second mediation model, it was investigated the role of teacher self-efficacy in the association between perceived social support and teacher SWB. The results showed that perceived social support significantly predicts teacher SWB ($\beta = .55$; B = .35; $p < .001$); perceived social support significantly predicts teacher self-efficacy ($\beta = .33$; B = .17; $p < .001$), and teacher self-efficacy significantly predicts teacher SWB ($\beta = .32$; B = .40; $p < .001$). Aplying the Sobel test, it has been obtained that the mediation effect was significant ($z = 3.75$, $p < .001$). The results showed that there was a partial mediation (not complete) because the measured effect changes upon fixing the mediator (teacher self-efficacy), but remains significantly different from 0. The total effect measures the extent to which teacher SWB changes when perceived social support increases by one unit (*Et* = .65). The direct effect of perceived social support on teacher SWB was significant (*Ed* = .55, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of perceived social support on teacher SWB through teacher self-efficacy was significant (*Ei* = .10, $p < .001$). The teachers who perceive that they really benefit by social support from others, tended to appreciate that they are self-efficacious at their job, which in turn predicted their SWB.

Discussion

The results of this research showed that SWB is positively related to: self-esteem, general self-efficacy (core self-evaluation), teacher self-efficacy, optimism, and perceived social support. Effect size was high for the correlation between SWB and perceived social support; medium for the correlations between SWB and: optimism, self-esteem, general self-efficacy, and teacher self-efficacy. Teachers who have high levels of SWB are optimistic, holding positive self-esteem, strong sense of their effectiveness (general and professional), knowing that in the difficult situations they could receive social support from family, friends and significant others. These results are similar with some findings in previous studies, with the mention that the present research explored SWB in a sample of Romanian teachers. Cummins and Nistico (2002) showed that self-esteem is very important to individuals' life satisfaction. Lucas *et al.*, 1996 underlined that when the optimism is conceived such as dispositional construct,

there is a strong predictor of life satisfaction. In the same line, in this study it was obtained that optimism is a psychological correlate and predictor of the teacher SWB.

Another finding of this research was that the general self-efficacy has a mediating role in the association between optimism and teacher SWB. The basic assumption was that optimism represents a personal resource that influences the general self-efficay, which in turn contributes to the teacher SWB. The optimism was specified as the independent variable, the general self-efficacy as the mediator, and the teacher SWB served separately as the dependent variable.

The last mediation analysis confirmed the assumption that having a strong social support enhances the teacher SWB via the teacher self-efficacy. The results confirmed that perceived social support is the independent variable, teacher self-efficacy being the mediator for the dependent variable teacher SWB. When teachers have high level of perceived social support and a good sense of their abilities to affect the students outcomes (teacher self-efficacy), they experience subjective well-being. In the same line, Caprara *et al.* (2003) pointed out that teachers self-efficacy beliefs have an important role in job satisfaction. Hamama *et al*., (2013) found that the peer support at work contributes to the subjective well-being.

Contributions

The specialists focused their interest in studying the relationship of SWB with the personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, and consciousness predict positive affect, neuroticism predicts negative affect), psycho-social well-being (Burns & Machin, 2010), character strengths (Chan, 2009), job stress or burnout (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008), and social intelligence (Wee, 2013).

The concept of teacher SWB was rarely examined taking into consideration the personal resources of optimism, perceived social support, general and teacher self-efficacy. In this research it was investigated for the first time in the Romanian literature this complex construct from the perspective of positive psychology. The optimism and the perceived social support were the predictors of the teacher SWB. The mediating role of general self-efficacy and teacher self-efficacy was investigated also. It has been found that the relationship between the optimism and teacher SWB is mediated by the general self-efficacy (core self-evaluation). Teachers, who are optimistic, have the tendency to perceive themselves as self-efficacious, which in turn predicts their SWB.

Implications for the work of school counselors

Before to discussing the implications of this research, it should be assumed that they are not only statistically significant, but also educational meaningful. Using valid and reliable instruments for psychological strengths measurement should be relevant to gather information before and after psychological interventions designed to increase teacher SWB. The findings of this study may have implications for school psychologists working with teachers who have job dissatisfaction, due to a fragile sense of teacher self-efficacy. The specialists are agreed that self-efficacy could be modified (Duffy & Lent, 2009), therefore those teachers who encounter difficulties in classroom, having negative emotional experiences and low self-efficacy, might be helped to improve their teaching skills, which in turn stimulate strong beliefs in own work effectiveness.

It has been showed in the literature (Muntean & Munteanu, 2011) that individual's tendency to cope with adversity is influenced by the good experiences and positive emotions (affective dimension of the SWB). The preservation of the good psychological functioning (in the context of exposure to cumulative risk factors) depends on some protective factors such as: positive self-esteem, self-efficacy, and supportive relations with others.

School counselors have to take into consideration that teacher SWB could be improved by stimulation of positive orientation. That includes: judgments teachers hold about themselves, their general and job self-efficacy, perceived social support, and optimism. Stimulating personal resources related to teacher SWB, it seems to be likely to have more involved and efficacious teachers.

Limitations and directions for future research

All the instruments used in this study were self-report scales, reflecting a mono-method bias. Because the SWB is by definition subjective, self-report is not the only way to assess such a subtle experience. For this reason, it seems to be very important to create a battery of diverse measures in order to produce a most informative composite. The strengths of the different types of measures are often complementary to each other. The extent to which self-report endorsement and actual experience is consistent or inconsistent under certain conditions warrants more investigations in future studies, to provide insight into the research on teacher SWB. It should be necessary to investigate the SWB in teachers taking into consideration the benefit of an integrative model of this complex psychological construct, in which explanatory variable be not only personality traits, but contextual factors related to educational settings.

Another direction for research will be further explore a complementary topic, examining if self-efficacy, optimism, perceived social support build subjective well-being, which in turn endures personal and social resources such as: altruism, empathy, psychological hardiness, and relationships satisfaction. Related question for next research concerns could be: experience of SWB may lead to higher levels of optimism, although one of the findings of the present research was that optimism led to teacher SWB? Bilateral influence might be more likely. If this aspect will be found, it will be necessary to establish the validity of the dominant direction in the context of this bilateral influence.

Conclusions

Because the teaching is a demanding and challenging activity, it should be necessary to increase teacher SWB. The present study was investigated the correlates, predictors, and mediators of teacher SWB. In sum, the current results provide empirical support for the next relations: general self-efficacy mediates association between optimism and teacher SWB, and teacher self-efficacy mediates the association between perceived social support and teacher SWB.

Given that teaching is sometimes a source of stress, teachers could maintain their subjective well-being if they have high self-acceptance, trusting in their efficacy, being able to think positively, even in the context of adversity and challenges, having around supportive people. In other words, teachers with positive attitudes towards themselves, towards previous experiences and those who know and accept their strengths and weaknesses, maintaining high standards, will be more likely to experience SWB comparing to those who have low self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Optimism (one of the predictors of SWB) increases the chances to access own resources, in order to adapt to the difficult situations, finding the best solution. Implications of the findings on the relation between general self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, optimism, perceived social support, and SWB in teachers are conducive to the conclusion that promoting psychological strengths, it is possible to contribute to a good and fulfilled life or a life worth living. On the basis of limited studies on predictors and mediators on teacher SWB (especially in the Romanian literature), it is suggested that the descriptive and predictive researches should be developed on this topic.

References

Albuquerque, I., Pedroso de Lima, M., Figueiredo, C., & Matos, M. (2012). Subjective well-being structure: CFA in a Teachers' Portuguese Sample. *Social Indicator Research*, *105*, 569-580.

Baban, A. (2002). Psihologia sanatatii publice: abordarea psihosociala a sanatatii publice, Cluj-Napoca: ASCR Publishing.

Baban, A., Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1996). *Rumanian Version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale*, userpage.fu-berlin.de/'health/Rumania.html.

Bandura, A. (1995). Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, *28*, 117-148.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*, New York: Freeman.

Baron, R.M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 1173-1182.

Burns, R. A. & Machin, M. A. (2010). Identifying gender differences in the independent effects of personality and psychological well-being on two broad affect components of subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *48*, 2-27.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Borgogni, L., & Steca, P. (2003). Efficacy beliefs as determinants of teachers' job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 821-832.

Chan, D. W. (2009). The hierarchy of strengths: Their relationships with subjective well-being among Chinese teachers in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*, 867-875.

Chenkseven-Order, F., & Sari, M. (2009). The Quality of School Life and Burnout as Predictors of Subjective Well-being among Teachers. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, *9*(3), 1223-1236.

Cummins, R. A., & Nistico, H. (2002). Maintaining life satisfaction: The role of positive cognition bias. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *3*, 37-69.

Diener, E., & Seligman, M. (2004). Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *5*, 1-31.

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). Satisfaction with Life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *49*, 71-75.

Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2005). Subjective Well-Being. The Science of Happiness an Life Satisfaction. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 63-73.

Duffy, R., & Lent, R.W. (2009). Test of a social cognitive model of work satisfaction in teachers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *75*, 212-223.

Frey, B.S., & Stutzer, A. (2002). *Happiness, Economics, & Institutions Affect Human Well-Being*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hamama, L., Ronnen, T., Schachar, K., Rosenbaum, M. (2013). Links between Stress, Positive and Negative Affect and Life Satisfaction among Teachers in Special Education Schools. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *14*, 731-751.

Hewitt, J. P. (2005). The Social Construction on Self-Esteem. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 135-146.

Kotrlik, J. W. & Williams, H. A. (2003). The Incorporation of Effect Size in Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Research. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, *21*, 35-42.

Lucas, R.E., Diener, E., & Suh, E.M. (1996). Discriminant validity of well-being measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*, 616-628.

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research*, *46*, 137-156.

Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K.M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing the happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, *9*, 111-131.

MacKinnon, D. P. (2002). Mediating variable. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, New York: Elsevier, pp. 9503-9507.

Maddux, J. E. (2005). Self-efficacy. The Power of Believing You Can. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 277-287.

Maddux, J. E., & DuCharme, K. A. (1997). Behavioral intentions in theories of health behavior. In D. Gochman (Ed.), *Handbook of health behavior research I: Personal and social determinants*, New York: Plenum, pp. 133-152.

Muntean A., & Munteanu, A. (2011). *Violenta, trauma, rezilienta*, Iasi: Polirom.

Muntele Hendres, D. (2009). *Starea subiectiva de bine (Subjective well-being)*, Iasi: Editura Universitatii Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

Negovan, V. (2010). Dimensions of students' psychosocial well-being and their measurement: Validation of a students' Psychosocial Well-Being Inventory. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *2*, 85-104.

Pavot, W. (2008). The Assessment of Subjective Well-Being. Success and Shortfalls. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds), *The science of subjective well-being*, London: The Guilford Press, pp. 124-141.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ross, S. W., Romer, N., Horner, R. H. (2013). Teacher Well-Being and the Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *14*(2), 118-128.

Scheier, M., & Carver, C. (1992). Effects of optimism on psychological and physical well-being: Theoretical overview and empirical update. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *16*, 201-228.

Schwarzer, R., & Hallum, S. (2008). Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy as a Predictor of Job Stress and Burnout: Mediation Analyses. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *57*, 152-171.

Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale. In J. Weisman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, (Eds.), *Measures in health psychology. A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs*, Windsor: NFER-Nelson, pp. 35-37.

Schwarzer, R., Schmitz, G. & Daytner, G. (1999). *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale*, http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/Îhealth/materials/

Seligman, M., & Csicszentmihaly, M. (2000). Positive Psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 236-240.

Seligman, M., Steen, T.A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, *60*, 410-421.

Sharma, A. (2011). Subjective Well-Being of Retired Teachers: The Role of Psycho-Social Factors. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, *3*(1), 36-42.

Shonfeld, I.S., & Ruan, D. (1991). Occupational stress and preemployment measure of depressive symptoms: The case of teachers. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, *6*, 95-114.

Smith E. J. (2006). The strength-based counseling model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *34*, 13-79.

Smith-Lovin, L. (1995). The sociology of affect and emotion. In K. Cook, G. A. Fine, & J. S. House, (Eds.), *Sociological perspectives on social psychology*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, pp. 118-148.

Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, S.J. (2005). *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stanculescu, E. (2008). Optimism and self-efficacy: Psychological and psychosocial aspects. *International Journal of Psychology*, *43*(3-4), 476-486.

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, pp. 1063-1070.

Wei, M. H. (2013). Multiple Abilities and Subjective Well-Being of Taiwanese Kindergarten Teachers. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *41*(1), 7-16.

Williams, S. L. (1995). Self-efficacy, anxiety, and phobic disorders. In J. E. Maddux (Ed.), *Self-efficacy, adaptation, & adjustment: Theory, research, and application*, New York: Plenum, pp. 69-107.

Zimet, G., Dahlem, N., Zimet, G. F., & Farley, G. (1988). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *52*, 30-42.