

Principal Well-Being at Hong Kong: A Quantitative Investigation

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Abstract : The occupational well-being of school principals has played a vital role in the pursuit of individual and school wellness and success. However, principals' well-being worldwide is under increasing threat because of the challenging and complex nature of their work and growing demands for school standardisation and accountability. Pressure is particularly acute in the post-pandemic future as principals attempt to deal with the impact of the pandemic on top of more regular demands. This is particularly true in Hong Kong, as school principals are increasingly wedged between unparalleled political, social, and academic responsibilities. Recognizing the semantic breadth of well-being, scholars have not determined a single, mutually agreeable definition but agreed that the concept of well-being has multiple dimensions across various disciplines. The multidimensional approach promises more precise assessments of the relationships between well-being and other concepts than the 'affect-only' approach or other single domains for capturing the essence of principal well-being. The multiple-dimension well-being concept is adopted in this project to understand principal well-being in this study. This study aimed to understand the situation of principal well-being and its influential drivers with a sample of 670 principals from Hong Kong and Mainland China. An online survey was sent to the participants after the breakout of COVID-19 by the researchers. All participants were well informed about the purposes and procedure of the project and the confidentiality of the data prior to filling in the questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling performed with Mplus were employed to deal with the dataset. The data analysis procedure involved the following three steps. First, the descriptive statistics (e.g., mean and standard deviation) were calculated. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to trim principal well-being measurement performed with maximum likelihood estimation. Third, structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the influential factors of principal well-being. The results of this study indicated that the overall of principal well-being were above the average mean score. The highest ranking in this study given by the principals was to their psychological and social well-being ($M = 5.21$). This was followed by spiritual ($M = 5.14$; $SD = .77$), cognitive ($M = 5.14$; $SD = .77$), emotional ($M = 4.96$; $SD = .79$), and physical well-being ($M = 3.15$; $SD = .73$). Participants ranked their physical well-being the lowest. Moreover, professional autonomy, supervisor and collegial support, school physical conditions, professional networking, and social media have showed a significant impact on principal well-being. The findings of this study will potentially enhance not only principal well-being, but also the functioning of an individual principal and a school without sacrificing principal well-being for quality education in the process. This will eventually move one step forward for a new future - a wellness society advocated by OECD. Importantly, well-being is an inside job that begins with choosing to have wellness, whilst supports to become a wellness principal are also imperative.

Keywords : well-being, school principals, quantitative, influential factors

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