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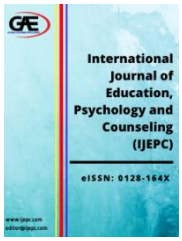

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYSIAN VERSION OF WELL-BEING INSTRUMENT FOR EDUCATORS

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Abstract:

Introduction: This study aims to explore, modify, and develop the revised instruments for measuring multidimensional well-being construct (PERMA) among educators in Malaysia. **Methods**: The researcher adapted 34 items from previous study and modified the statement to suit current study. The PERMA model statement was translated into Bahasa Malaysia, resulting in a dual-language format, and was validated by experts for content validity and face validity. Purposive sampling was used to obtain a sample of 123 patients to participate in this study. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine and interpret the data. **Results:** 34 items loaded into four underlying components based on the EFA procedure. The components are renamed as positive emotion, positive relationship, meaning, and sense of accomplishment. The items under these four components explained 69.89% of the total variance. The internal reliability of the well-being constructs was above 0.80. The newly validated and modified instruments will be the outcome of this study. **Conclusion:** These findings not only building on existing body of knowledge but also provide a reliable source of information for researchers and professional practitioner interested in future research in well-being among educators in Malaysia.

Keywords:

Well-being, PERMA, Educators, Exploratory factor analysis

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a global increase in the study of educators' well-being, which is indicative of the increasing recognition of the relationship between student outcomes, teaching effectiveness, and psychological health. Among the frameworks developed to conceptualise well-being, Seligman's (2011) PERMA model has become one of the most widely cited in educational institutions (Dixit & Upadhyay, 2021). The model captures well-being as a multidimensional construct composed of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Scholars in Western contexts have extensively applied and debated this framework, recognising both its practical value and its theoretical limitations. For example, Goodman et al. (2017) questioned whether PERMA represents a comprehensive measure of well-being, while Donaldson et al. (2022) argued for its expansion through the PERMA+4 model to include additional workplace-related dimensions. These perspectives indicate that although the PERMA framework serves as a useful multidimensional theory, its adequacy remains subject to scholarly debate.

Beyond theoretical issues, international studies have also emphasised methodological challenges in assessing educators' well-being. Lavidas et al. (2022), for instance, explored teachers' participation in web-based surveys and identified factors influencing response rates, emphasising the importance of carefully designed and culturally appropriate measurement instruments. Their work demonstrates that accurate assessment of teacher well-being depends not only on sound conceptual foundations but also on practical considerations of instrument validity and participant engagement. This line of research strengthens the argument that instruments require adaptation to ensure contextual relevance.

In contrast, Malaysian scholarship on educators' well-being remains comparatively limited. Studies showed that teachers in Malaysia experience high levels of stress, workload pressures, and depression (Zakaria, Don, & Yaakob, 2021; Alzahari et al., 2022). Reports suggested that nearly half of the teachers suffer from stress-related conditions (The Sun Daily, 2022), and yet, systematic efforts to measure their well-being with validated frameworks are scarce (Ngui & Lay, 2020; Amzat et al., 2021; Zulkifli, Mohd Hashim, & Yahaya, 2022). Although recent studies have highlighted the importance of teacher well-being for motivation and job performance (Chan, Assim, & Lim, 2021; Kaur et al., 2022), these contributions largely focus on descriptive accounts rather than rigorous validation of measurement instruments.

Ibrahim et al.'s (2023) systematic review of educator well-being in Malaysia sparked critical arguments on the applicability and adaptability of Western-derived well-being models within Asian contexts. This raises greater concerns regarding the frameworks' generality and their relevance for contextual modification in non-Western cultures. Thus, the calls for a validated multidimensional of well-being instrument. The existing measurement of PERMA model (Butler & Kern, 2016a) had yet to be validated in Malaysian populations particularly among educators.

Taken together, the literature illustrates two major concerns. First, while PERMA has been widely applied in global contexts, ongoing debates highlight the need to critically examine its theoretical adequacy. Second, methodological challenges, stress the importance of cultural adaptation and validation. Addressing these concerns is crucial for Malaysia, where educators face unique socio-cultural and systemic challenges. This study therefore aims to adapt and validate a dual-language (English and Bahasa Malaysia) version of the PERMA-based

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instrument, ensuring both contextual suitability and alignment with international standards. In doing so, the study contributes to global scholarly conversations on the applicability of Western-derived models and extends understanding of educator well-being in non-Western educational settings.

Educator's Well-being

Early discussions of well-being often drew on Bradburn's (1969) conceptualisation, which emphasised the balance between positive and negative emotions as a determinant of life satisfaction. Over time, the scope expanded to include both hedonic experiences, such as joy and comfort, and eudaimonic dimensions, such as meaning and accomplishment. In the context of education, teacher well-being has been broadly defined as encompassing personal fulfilment, quality relationships, a sense of purpose, and professional accomplishment (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; McCallum, 2020). However, there is no single definition, as scholars highlight the complexity and multidimensional nature of well-being among educators (Dreer, 2021; McCallum, 2020).

Western studies have provided extensive evidence on the role of well-being in educational contexts, often through the PERMA framework. For example, Morgan and Simmons (2021) examined its application in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, while Goodman et al. (2017) critiqued its coverage of relevant dimensions. Such international perspectives underscore the importance of adopting multidimensional approaches while also questioning the universality of Western-derived frameworks. This reinforces the necessity of contextual validation, particularly in Asian countries where cultural factors may shape how educators experience and report well-being.

Given these insights, the present study adapts the PERMA model to measure positive well-being among Malaysian educators. The instrument seeks to capture four core elements: positive emotion, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). By developing and validating a culturally relevant version of this instrument, the study aims to address gaps in the existing literature and contribute to both local educational practice and the broader global discourse on educators' well-being.

Methodology

The primary data collection method was employed by distributing a self-administered survey. The questionnaire was adapted from existing instruments developed by Butler and Kern (2016) and Zeng et al. (2019) with changes made to align the items to the specific focus and context of the current study. This study adapted a total of 34 items related for measuring the educator's well-being. There are four constructs which consist of positive emotion (9-items), positive relationship (8-items), meaning (8-items), and sense of accomplishment (9-items). All items used in this study's instruments were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale was chosen to ensure consistency across the instrument and to allow for comparison with findings from the original questionnaires, which were also based on a five-point Likert scale.

Further, to confirm the instrument's quality and suitability, both content and face validity tests were performed as part of the pre-testing process. Two subject matter experts examined the items' relevance and clarity, while face validity was determined through a review by language experts in both English and Bahasa Melayu to verify linguistic accuracy and compatibility with

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local culture. Several constructive comments were identified from the two panel experts to enhance the content validation of the questionnaire. Comments and suggestions included re-writing sentences to make them more suitable for the scale of measurement. For example, one panel commented, "*PE5, PE6, PE7, and PE 8– "Sentence is not suitable. You may need to change it*". The necessary amendments were made accordingly.

A purposive sampling was employed to select school teachers in Malaysia. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained prior to completing the survey. A total of 123 valid questionnaires were collected out of 200 distributed. According to Awang et al. (2023), a minimum of 100 respondents is required to conduct Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and obtain valid results. Therefore, the 123 respondents are sufficient and valid for running EFA to validate the instrument.

Data Analysis

In this pilot study, a reliability analysis was performed to determine the internal consistency of each component in the multidimensional well-being framework. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the items, following Taber's (2018) recommendation that a coefficient value greater than 0.70 be regarded satisfactory. To further validate the construct, IBM SPSS (version 30.0) was used to conduct an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). This analysis sought to discover the underlying factor structure and analyse the dimensionality of the construct, especially as some items were modified and adapted to fit with the particular context of the current study. To ensure that the data was suitable for EFA, preliminary sampling adequacy tests were carried out. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to assess sample sufficiency, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity revealed that the correlation matrix contained adequate intercorrelations across variables to allow factor analysis. This study followed the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2017) for determining the appropriate number of factors to retain, which include: (1) retaining factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, (2) achieving a minimum cumulative variance explained of at least 60%, and (3) interpreting the scree plot to identify the point of inflection. Therefore, a model with satisfactory goodness of fit value should be obtained to accurately measure the well-being constructs.

Results

Results in Table 1 indicates that Bartletts' test of sphericity was significant (p-value < 0.05). Additionally, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measuring of sampling adequacy has exceeded the required threshold value of 0.6 (Awang,et al., 2023). These two tests, Bartletts' test and KMO, demonstrated that the data is sufficient and ready for the subsequent procedure in EFA.

Table 1: KMO And Bartlett's Test Of Sphericity Score

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.853
Bartlett's Test of Sphericit	Approx. Chi-Square	4913.155
	df.	561
	Sig.	.000

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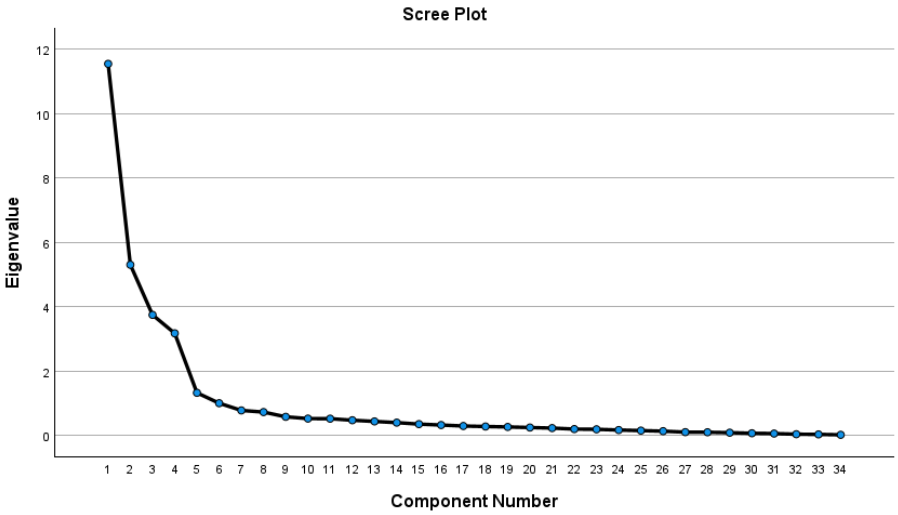

Figure 1: The Scree Plot Of Well-Being

Figure 1 exhibits the components identified from the scree plot generated using EFA. The analysis resulted in a downward curve, classifying 34 items into four well-being components: positive emotion, positive relationship, meaning, and a sense of accomplishment. Each component represents a collection of measurement items and the rotated component matrix determines which items belong to which component (Awang et al., 2023).

Table 2: The Total Variance Explained For Every Component

The Total Variance Explained			
	Rotation Sums of squared Loadings		
Components	Total	% of Varians	Cumulative %
Positive Emotion (PE)	8.674	26.283	26.283
Positive Relationship (RT)	5.591	16.942	43.225
Meaning (MN)	5.141	15.579	58.804
Sense of Accomplishment (AC)	3.691	11.185	69.989

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The total variation explained by the items that correspond to each component of well-being is shown in Table 2. The 'positive emotion' component accounted for 26.28% of the variance, followed by 'positive relationships' at 16.94%, 'meaning' at 15.57%, and 'a sense of accomplishment' at 11.18%. Collectively, these components explain a cumulative variance that exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 60% as recommended by (Awang et al., 2023).

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Table 3: Items To Measure The Well-Being Constructs

Rotated Component Matrix				
	Components			
	1	2	3	4
MN 1 I always feel my work is valuable and worthwhile.	.868			
MN 2 I always feel my role in the working environment is useful.	.911			
MN 3 My work life has a very clear goal or purpose.	.925			
MN 4 In general, I always feel inspired.	.912			
MN 5 I always feel my work is purposeful and meaningful.	.873			
MN 6 I live in accordance with my values and beliefs.	.842			
MN 7 I like planning and preparing myself for the future.	.873			
MN 8 I have personal projects or goals that I feel are important to pursue.	.872			
PE 1 I often feel cheerful when I am at work.		.867		
PE 2 I always feel joyful when I am at work.		.886		
PE 3 I always feel energetic when I am at work.		.827		
PE 4 I always feel proud when I am at work.		.769		
PE 5 I always feel happy when I am at work.		.749		
PE 6 I always feel excited when I am at work.		.630		

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PE 7 I always feel relaxed when I am at work.	.791			
PE 8 I always feel anxious when I am at work.	.699			
PE 9 Taking into consideration all aspects, I always feel happy with my work.	.562			
AC 1 I always stick to my aims.		.798		
AC 2 I am always successful in achieving goals that I have set for myself.		.820		
AC 3 I am always able to handle my responsibilities.		.792		
AC 4 I believe that I have many opportunities to show my capability in my daily life.		.773		
AC 5 In general, I always feel competent and capable in activities that I deem important to me.		.776		
AC 6 In general, I always feel pleased after having accomplished something.		.764		
AC7 I usually feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do.		.810		
AC 8 I always feel disappointed about my achievements in life.		.736		
AC 9 In general, I have been pleased after completing something that is hard to do.		.843		
RT 1 I always give my support and benefits in relationships.				.915

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RT 2 I actively work to improve other people's happiness and well-being.	.847
RT 3 There are people in my life that I truly care about.	.846
RT 4 In my life, there are people who genuinely care about me.	.857
RT 5 I have someone who will support me in times of need.	.631
RT 6 I feel that I am loved.	.615
RT 7 I feel that my life has a purpose.	.590
RT 8 I always receive help and support from my superiors and colleagues at work when I need them.	.555

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 3 shows the distribution of items across the four components used to assess well-being. Items MN1–MN8 assessed Component 1 (Meaning), whereas PE1–PE9 assessed Component 2 (Positive Emotion). Items AC1-AC9 assessed Component 3 (Sense of Accomplishment), whereas RT1-RT8 tested Component 4 (Positive Relationship). According to Awang et al. (2023), an item's factor loading must be more than 0.6 in order for it to be retained, meanwhile items below this criterion will be removed. However, Hair et al. (2017) argued that factor loadings of 0.50 or above are practically significant. Hence, no items were deleted from any of the four constructs, which had factor loadings larger than the threshold value of 0.50.

Table 4: The Reliability Assessment For Each Component

Component	No Item	Cronbach Alpha
Positive Emotion	9	.929
Positive Relationship	8	.808
Meaning	8	.972
Accomplishment	9	.892

Table 4 outlines the Cronbach's Alpha values for each component, reflecting the internal consistency of the items used to measure the well-being constructs. All components recorded alpha values above 0.7, suggesting a high level of reliability in the measurement instruments, as recommended by (Hair et al., 2017). Specifically, the composite reliability (CR) values were

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0.929 for Positive Emotion, 0.808 for Positive Relationship, 0.972 for Meaning, and 0.892 for Sense of Accomplishment, indicating strong internal reliability across all components among school educators.

Discussion

The findings of EFA revealed that the well-being construct among school educators might be represented by several underlying dimensions or components. The research was based on data from 123 respondents, which is deemed appropriate for EFA, particularly for evaluating the validity of individual items and the underlying factor structure. Although the sample size of 123 teachers exceeded the minimum threshold for EFA (Hair et al., 2017), it remains relatively small and purposively sampled. This restricts the generalisability of the findings to the broader population of Malaysian educators. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples to confirm the stability of the factor structure identified in this study. The factor loadings supported the multidimensional nature of the construct, suggesting that the adapted instrument is suitable for assessing educators' well-being within educational settings. Although some items load were close to the 0.50 threshold, they were retained because of their theoretical relevance to the PERMA dimensions and their cultural significance in the Malaysian context. Eliminating these items could have reduced the conceptual breadth of constructs such as positive relationships and meaning, which are often interpreted differently across cultural environments. Nevertheless, it is recognised that very high Cronbach's alpha values may also signal potential redundancy among items. Future research employing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is recommended to explore whether item reduction could improve parsimony while preserving construct validity.

This EFA study has been using the Butler and Kern instruments, which has been translated into Bahasa Malaysia, to assesses positive well-being. As a result, four components of the PERMA model explained 69.89 % of the variance between the items. All four components, including the items for components 1, 2, 3, and 4, have strong internal consistency because the Cronbach Alpha value for all four components exceeds 0.7. Thirty-four items remained with (i) Positive Well-being: 9 items; (ii) Positive Relationship: 8 items; (iii) Meaning: 8 items; and (iv) Accomplishment: 9. The high reliability scores showed that responses were consistent, but values above 0.90 may also mean that some items were too similar and did not measure different aspects of the construct (Taber, 2018). This suggests the need to balance reliability with simplicity when adapting measures from Western contexts. Further refinement of the cultural adaptation process may also help ensure that the translated items capture subtle meanings without repeating the same content.

Following on the EFA results, the researcher reorganised the items inside each component to better reflect the fundamental elements of the well-being construct. This validated structure provides a reliable framework for data collection among Malaysian educators. This affirms that the validated instrument used in this research is stable, internally consistent, and it can be employed in future studies to measure well-being among educators within the Asian context.

This study has limitations regarding generalisability. As the research was conducted solely in Malaysia, the findings may reflect the local context and may not be fully representative of educators' well-being across the wider Asian region.

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Conclusion

The dual (English and Bahasa Malaysia) adaptation of the PERMA model instrument demonstrates strong internal reliability, as evidenced by yield high Cronbach's Alpha values, satisfying the Bartletts test requirement (significant). The KMO scores showed satisfactory sampling adequacy (>0.6) and factor loadings exceeded 0.5 threshold. Hence, the KMO measure indicating acceptable item contributions to their respective constructs. As a result, this study establishes its potential as a dependable and substantial tool for measuring educator's well-being to enhance the recognition of educators whose impacted their health-related beliefs may impact their quality of life.

The dual version of the PERMA instruments offers a comprehensive approach to assessing multidimensional well-being, with promising implications for future research and clinical applications, particularly within educational institutions in Malaysia.

Given the limited data available in the existing literature, researchers may consider reconfiguring the questionnaire items within each component to better measure the specific constructs related to educators' well-being and motivation. This adaptation could serve as a valuable instrument for data collection in research involving educators in Malaysia.

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