

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY
AND COUNSELLING
(IJEPC)**
www.ijepc.com



EXPLORING EMOTIONAL DEMANDS AND TEACHER WELLBEING: A SCOPING REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 30.07.2025

Revised date: 20.08.2025

Accepted date: 21.09.2025

Published date: 27.10.2025

To cite this document:

Hasism, A., & Shokory, S. M. (2025). Exploring Emotional Demands and Teacher Wellbeing: A Scoping Review of the Evidence. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 10 (60), 771-788.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.1060056

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Abstract:

The teaching profession has long been recognized as emotionally demanding, yet fewer studies have examined how these emotional demands specifically affect teacher well-being. This scoping review aims to systematically assess the current evidence regarding the influence of emotional demands on teacher well-being, with a particular focus on their role in shaping teachers' intentions to retire early. Following Arksey and O'Malley's model and the PRISMA-ScR guidelines, this study reviewed 11 quantitative studies published between 2016 and 2025. Three broad themes emerged: emotional processes, impact outcomes, and supportive enablers. The findings indicate that high emotional demands, especially related to surface acting and work-life conflict, are strongly associated with burnout, emotional exhaustion, and the intention to retire early, particularly among mid- to late-career teachers. Conversely, deep acting, emotional regulation skills, and supportive leadership were found to mitigate these negative impacts. This review underscores the necessity for schools to create emotionally supportive environments and implement leadership strategies that prioritize teacher well-being. It also highlights the importance of developing targeted interventions and culturally sensitive policies to address emotional demands. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to explore the effects of different time horizons and intervention strategies on this critical issue.

Keywords:

Emotional Demands; Teacher Wellbeing; Scoping Review; Intention To Retire Early

Introduction

Teaching is widely recognized as an emotionally demanding profession (Li et al., 2022a; Zheng et al., 2025). It requires constant emotional regulation during interactions with students, parents, colleagues, school administrators, and other stakeholders (Gkonou & Miller, 2023). When emotional demands are not managed effectively, they can lead to stress, burnout, and decreased teacher well-being (Zhang et al., 2022). Teachers who struggle to cope with these emotional pressures are more susceptible to burnout, physical and psychological health issues, and lower job satisfaction. This highlights the need to provide teachers with adequate support and coping strategies to navigate their daily emotional challenges. In Malaysia, teachers frequently encounter emotional stressors stemming from overwhelming administrative workloads and daily demands, which heighten the risk of burnout and negatively impact mental well-being (Habibah Basiron et al., 2024; Ming, 2024; Tajul Rosli Shuib et al., 2023). In response, the government, through the Ministry of Education (MOE), has implemented initiatives such as the Seven Step Policy to Enhance Teacher Well-being (Ministry of Education, 2023). This initiative aims to reduce teachers' workloads and enhance their job satisfaction.

While teacher stress is a widely researched area, the concept of emotional demands has often been overlooked or fragmented in the literature. Emotional demands may influence teacher well-being through unique pathways that are not fully captured in general studies of workload or stress (de Ruiter et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022a). This distinction underscores the necessity of examining emotional demands separately from general stressors. However, there is currently a lack of comprehensive reviews that specifically address emotional demands and their impact on teacher well-being. This gap in synthesized knowledge hinders our understanding of the specific emotional factors that must be addressed to safeguard teacher well-being. Addressing this gap is essential for developing effective strategies and interventions to help teachers manage their emotional demands (de Carvalho et al., 2021). Existing evidence indicates a need for interventions that are not only evidence-based but also tailored to the specific emotional needs of teachers (Cheung et al., 2025; de Carvalho et al., 2021; Matos et al., 2024). A deeper understanding in this area will enable policymakers and school administrators to foster more compassionate work environments focused on teacher well-being. While global concern for teacher well-being is increasing, the cultural and contextual differences in Malaysia may affect how emotional demands are perceived and managed by teachers (Wang et al., 2023). Much of the existing research is rooted in Western contexts, which may not accurately reflect the unique educational, cultural, and administrative landscapes of Malaysian schools (Corbett et al., 2025). Consequently, a research gap exists in exploring emotional demands across different educational systems to ensure that solutions and interventions are culturally relevant and practically viable (Beames et al., 2023; Corbett et al., 2025). By taking these contextual factors into account, this scoping review aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional demands and assist in creating support mechanisms that are both effective and locally relevant. The objective of this scoping review is to systematically search for and map the literature on emotional demands and their effects on teacher well-being.

This review aims to identify the most significant emotional demands faced by teachers, their impacts on well-being, and current research trends in this area. Additionally, it seeks to uncover gaps in the existing literature, providing a comprehensive overview that can guide future studies and inform targeted interventions to enhance teacher well-being. By mapping the available evidence, this review will offer critical insights into how emotional demands uniquely

affect teachers, beyond generic stressors. The findings will assist researchers, policymakers, and school leaders in developing more effective policies and practices to achieve a healthier and more sustainable teaching workforce.

Materials and Methods

This scoping review utilizes the five-stage approach developed by Arksey & O'Malley (2005), which includes defining the research question, searching for relevant studies, selecting studies, charting data, and collating results. To further enhance the quality of the methodology, this review incorporates recommendations from Levac et al. (2010). Additionally, it adheres to the PRISMA-ScR guidelines for transparent and systematic reporting (Tricco et al., 2018). The PRISMA-ScR flowchart is presented in Figure 1.

Step 1 – Developing Research Question

The first stage of the scoping review process involves the precise formulation of the overarching research question (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). This question will serve as a foundational guide throughout the review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). For this review, the key research question developed is: What is the best available evidence regarding emotional demands and their effects on teacher well-being? This question aims to thoroughly investigate the extent to which emotional demands impact various aspects of teachers' well-being and job satisfaction. Additionally, the inquiry seeks to analyze the main emotional variables most relevant to teaching and to identify significant knowledge gaps and shortcomings in the existing literature.

Step 2 – Search Strategies

In the second step, a systematic literature search will be conducted to identify studies relevant to the goals of this scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). The search will encompass several reputable databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC. The search string to be used is: ("emotional demands" OR "emotional labour") AND ("teacher*" OR "educator*") AND ("wellbeing" OR "job satisfaction"). This search term is designed to capture articles specifically discussing emotional demands or emotional labour among educators or teachers, as well as their relationship with well-being or job satisfaction. Keywords will be tailored to match the index terms used in each database to maximize the number of relevant studies retrieved.

Step 3 – Eligibility Criteria

The selection process will involve systematic screening of titles, abstracts, and full texts of all articles to ensure they meet the specific requirements of this scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). Each article will be carefully evaluated against pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria to assess its relevance and suitability for analysis. Studies that meet the inclusion criteria will be selected for review, while those that do not will be excluded from the final analysis. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are as stated in Table 1.

Step 4 – Charting the data

Data were exported into a five-column table designed to systematically capture key information from each study. The table includes the title, publication details (authors and publication year), variables or constructs, and primary findings regarding the impact of emotional demands on teachers' well-being. A fifth column was added to capture recurring themes, ideas, and

important concepts that emerged during the discussions in the selected studies through thematic analysis. The charting process involved continuous refinement of the columns to facilitate in-depth and detailed data capture (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010).

Step 5 – Collating, summarizing and reporting

During this step, the accumulated data will be integrated through a combination of descriptive and narrative analysis to create a comprehensive representation of the evidence (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). This integration will map the distribution of studies by country and publication year, highlighting patterns within the literature. The process will also critically examine the key determinants of emotional demand and their specific impacts on teacher well-being. Additionally, the review will identify common types of emotional demands faced by teachers in various learning environments. Trends in research and emerging patterns will be highlighted to clarify the current focus and scope of studies in this area. The synthesis will identify existing research gaps and suggest areas for future inquiry. The results will be presented using tables, thematic summaries, and graphical charts to enhance transparency and ensure systematic reporting.

Table 1: Eligibility Criteria for the Scoping Review

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Type	Articles published in peer-reviewed journals	Theses, grey literature, annual reports, conference proceedings
Time Period	Studies published between the year 2000 and 2025	All studies published before year 2000
Population	School teachers, regardless of their teaching level. e.g., preschool, primary, secondary, private school, government school	Non-teaching professions. e.g., health-care, nurses and etc.
Language	English	Other than English language
Focus of Study	Articles discussing the impact of emotional demands on teacher wellbeing or job satisfaction	A related articles but focusing on other than the impact of emotional demands toward teacher wellbeing or focusing only on job satisfaction without any discussion related to emotional demands

This review focuses exclusively on quantitative empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals over the past ten years. This emphasis is based on several key considerations. First, proceedings papers and non-peer-reviewed journals were excluded due to potential limitations in methodological rigor and a lack of systematic reporting, which could undermine the reliability of findings (Hodgkinson & Ford, 2014). Second, the study of emotional demands in teacher well-being has garnered significant scholarly attention and theoretical refinement in recent years, warranting a focus on contemporary literature (de Ruiter et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022a). Third, selecting studies from the last six years is often viewed as an indicator of

research maturity in the field (Kraus et al., 2020). Thus, the inclusion of recent, high-quality studies ensures that this review presents relevant, contemporary, and methodologically sound evidence for meaningful discussion. The following Figure 1 explained the steps involve in this review as suggested in PRISMA guideline

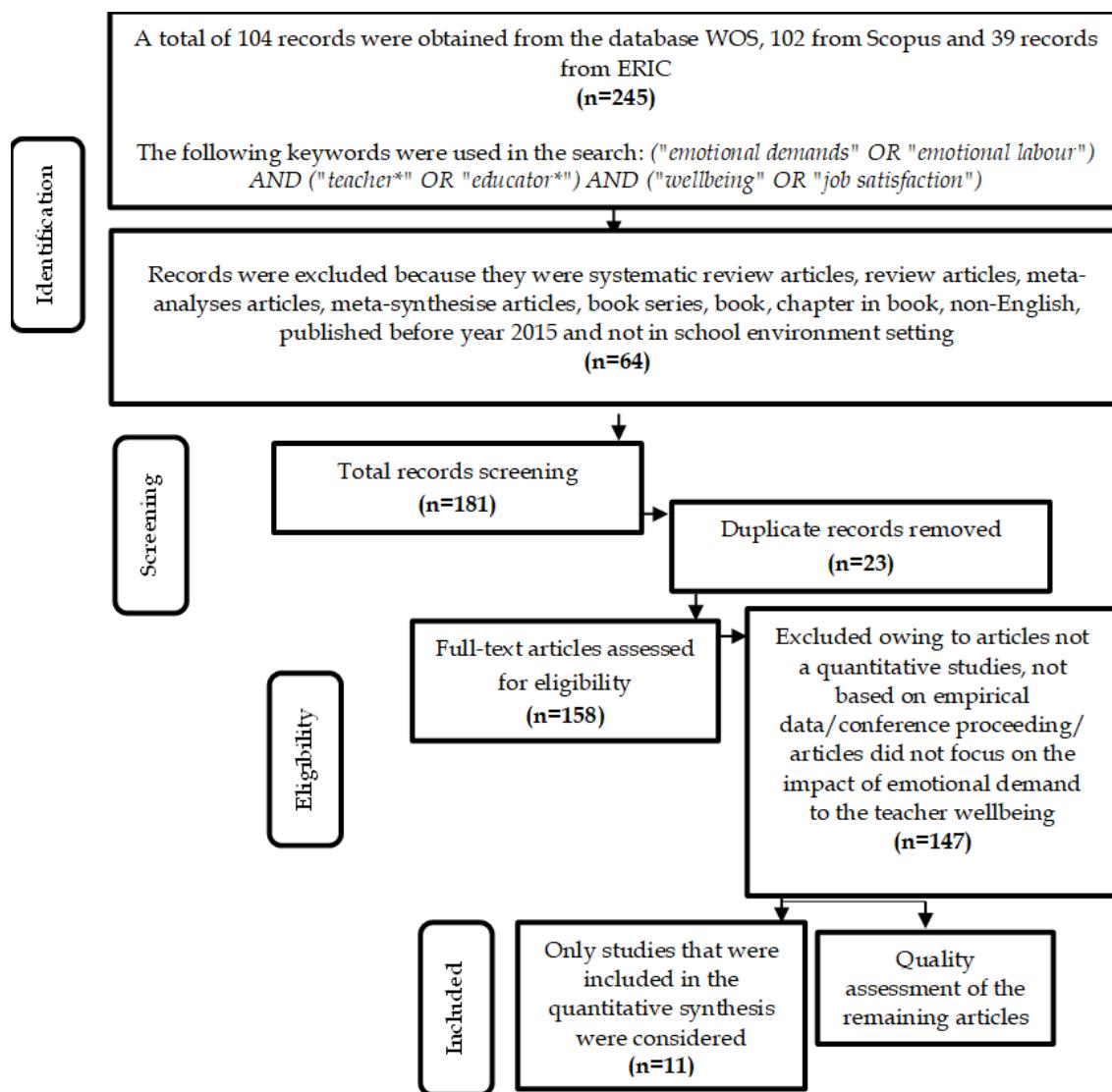


Figure 1: Steps Involve as Suggested in PRISMA Guideline

Sources: Adapted from Moher et al. (2015)

Note: A total of 234 records were excluded due to its year's publication, duplication, non-quantitative research, not an empirical research, conference proceeding and articles that did not focus on the impact of emotional demands to teacher's wellbeing or job satisfaction.

Findings

Table 2 outlines 11 recent research papers included in this scoping review, as per the selection criteria. The studies were conducted by Arnold and Rahimi (2025), Chandler and Backhouse (2023), Drüge et al. (2021), Mingmei and Pek (2024), Smith et al. (2025), Su et al. (2025), Wu et al. (2020), Xia et al. (2024), Yan (2024), Yin et al. (2016), and Zhu and Zhou (2022). Each

of these studies offers valuable insights into how emotional demands affect teacher well-being and their intention to retire early. From this scoping review, three broad themes and several subthemes were identified: emotional processes, impact outcomes, and supportive enablers. The theme of emotional processes emerged from studies that examined teachers' adoption of emotional labor strategies, such as deep acting, surface acting, and emotional regulation, to manage their daily emotional demands (Chandler & Backhouse, 2023; Mingmei & Pek, 2024; Smith et al., 2025; Su et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024; Yan, 2024; S. Zhu & Zhou, 2022). Emotional labor processes are particularly relevant in preschool, primary, and secondary school settings, where emotional self-management and social-emotional capacity are emphasized as essential coping strategies for addressing teaching-related emotional pressures. The second theme, impact outcomes, includes subthemes such as job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, stress, and the increased intention to leave or retire early (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Drüge et al., 2021; Su et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2016).

Numerous studies indicate that chronic exposure to emotional demands significantly undermines teachers' psychological well-being, leading many to consider leaving the profession. Additionally, the theme of supportive enablers emphasizes the critical roles of leadership, organizational climate, and social support in alleviating these emotional demands (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Smith et al., 2025; Su et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024). Research suggests that transformational leadership, emotionally supportive school environments, and strong support networks can help teachers cope more effectively with emotional strain, thereby reducing the risk of premature retirement. Furthermore, the review highlighted that a significant majority of the articles examined underscored the importance of developing emotional regulation skills and enhancing institutional support mechanisms (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Chandler & Backhouse, 2023; Mingmei & Pek, 2024; Su et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020). This underscores the urgent need for schools to create emotionally supportive working environments and prioritize teacher well-being as a key aspect of retention strategies. Understanding the complex interplay between emotional demands and teachers' intentions to retire is essential for developing long-term policies that retain a committed and emotionally healthy teaching workforce.

No	Article Title	Publication Details	Variables	Key Findings	Themes
1	Relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction: a study on preschool teachers	Yang Mingmei & Lim Seong Pek (2024).	IV: Emotional labour, DV: Job satisfaction	Deep acting significantly enhances job satisfaction among preschool teachers, while levels of emotional labor vary by gender, age, and position.	Preschool teacher emotional labour and job satisfaction
2	Emotional Labour and Developing Schools as	Philippa Chandler & Sarah Backhouse (2023).	IV: Emotional labour, DV: Wellbeing,	Developing community hub school's places significant emotional demands on school	School leadership emotional labour in community-focused schools

Community Hubs Australia - School leaders in community hubs job satisfaction leaders, affecting their wellbeing and job satisfaction. This highlights the need for institutional support.

Cont.

No	Article Title	Publication Details	Variables	Key Findings	Themes
3	High school English-as-a-foreign-language teachers' emotional labour and job satisfaction: A latent profile analytical approach	Shenhai Zhu & Maojie Zhou (2022). China - High school EFL teachers	IV: Emotional labour profiles, DV: Job satisfaction	High school teachers who engage in naturally felt emotions and deep acting report greater job satisfaction than those who rely on surface acting strategies.	EFL teacher emotional labour profiles and satisfaction
4	The relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers: a chain mediation model of occupational stress and emotional labour	Wei Xia et al. (2024). China - Kindergarten teachers	IV: Organizational climate, Mediators: Occupational stress, Emotional labour, DV: Job satisfaction	Organizational climate affects job satisfaction both directly and indirectly, with occupational stress and emotional labor serving as mediators in the kindergarten context.	Organizational climate, stress and emotional labour in kindergartens

5	Work Environment Characteristic s and Teacher Well-Being: The Mediation of Emotion Regulation Strategies	Hongbiao Yin et al. (2016). Hong Kong - Primary school teachers	IV: Emotional job demands, Trust in colleagues, Mediators: Emotion regulation strategies, DV: Teacher well-being	Emotion regulation strategies play a significant role in mediating the impact of emotional job demands on teacher well-being. High emotional demands tend to decrease job satisfaction, whereas trust enhances it.	Emotion regulation mediating emotional demands and wellbeing
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No	Article Title	Publication Details	Variables	Key Findings	Themes
6	Social Support and Well-Being of Chinese Special Education Teachers An Emotional Labour Perspective	Tung-Ju Wu et al. (2020). China - Special education teachers	IV: Social support, Mediator: Emotional labour, DV: Well-being	Emotional labor plays a crucial role in how social support affects the well-being of special education teachers, emphasizing the significance of emotional management and institutional support.	Social support and emotional labour in special education settings
7	Well-being and emotional labour for preschool teachers: The mediation of career commitment and the moderation of social support	Su et al. (2025). China - Preschool teachers	IV: Well-being, Mediator: Career commitment, Moderator: Social support, DV: Emotional labour	Career commitment fully mediates the relationship between well-being and emotional labor, with social support acting as a moderator; higher levels of support strengthen this mediating effect.	Career commitment and emotional labour in preschool education

8	Psychosocial Burden and Strains of Pedagogue Using the Job Demands-Resources Theory to Predict Burnout, Job Satisfaction, General State of Health and Life Satisfaction	Marie Druge et al. (2021). Germany - Teachers and social workers	IV: Emotional demands, DV: Burnout, job satisfaction, health, life satisfaction	Emotional demands contribute to burnout and decreased job satisfaction, highlighting the dual impact of job demands and resources in educational environments.	Job demands and resources influencing teacher wellbeing and satisfaction
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No	Article Title	Publication Details	Variables	Key Findings	Themes
9	A study of the relationship between elementary school teachers occupational self-efficacy, emotional labour strategies and occupational well-being	Shuo Yan (2024), China - Elementary school teachers	IV: Self-efficacy, Mediator: Emotional labour strategies, DV: Occupational well-being	Self-efficacy affects the selection of emotional labor strategies, which in turn has a significant impact on job satisfaction among elementary school teachers.	Self-efficacy, emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction
10	Teachers emotional labour: the joys, demands, and constraints	Kyle Smith et al. (2025), Australia - Teachers across school levels	IV: Emotional labour, DV: Teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction	Teachers often face emotional tension due to conflicting demands, but they can improve their emotional regulation and job satisfaction through supportive networks.	Emotional labour investment, emotional regulation and support networks

11	Teachers working conditions, wellbeing and retention: an exploratory analysis to identify the key factors associated with teacher's intention to leave	Ben Arnold & Mark Rahimi (2025), Australia - Primary and Secondary School Teachers	IV: Emotional demands, DV: Intention to leave, Moderators: Career stage, Mediators: Work-life conflict, job satisfaction, work engagement, depressive symptoms	Emotional demands notably heighten the intention to leave, particularly among those in mid and late stages of their careers. Key factors that predict teachers' intentions to leave including emotional demands, work-life conflict, low job satisfaction, low work engagement, stress, depressive symptoms, and exposure to work-related violence. In contrast, commitment to the workplace emerged as the strongest negative predictor of this intention.	Psychosocial work environment, emotional demands, teacher wellbeing, career intentions and teacher retention
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Sources: Relevant Records Selected from Web of Science and Scopus

Background Of the Studies Included In the Review

The following graph showing the distribution of the study included in this review based on location;



Figure 2: Distribution of the Study Location

As shown in Figure 2, the distribution of study locations highlights a global interest in exploring the emotional demands placed on teachers and their effects on teacher wellbeing and retirement intentions. The review indicates that most studies were conducted in China

(Mingmei & Pek, 2024; Su et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024; Yan, 2024; S. Zhu & Zhou, 2022), reflecting a growing focus on emotional labor among teachers in various Chinese schools. Australia was the second most studied context, with three investigations (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Chandler & Backhouse, 2023; Smith et al., 2025) examining teachers' emotional experiences within school communities and their intentions to leave the profession. Additionally, one study was conducted in Hong Kong (Yin et al., 2016), which emphasized the importance of emotion regulation for teacher wellbeing in high-demand school environments. Another study took place in Germany (Drüge et al., 2021), contributing valuable insights into emotional demands within European school settings.

These findings indicate that research on emotional demands and teacher wellbeing spans both developing and developed nations, offering a broader perspective on how emotional pressures are perceived in various teaching environments. Cross-national representation enhances our understanding of how cultural, organizational, and policy contexts influence emotional labor. Collectively, these studies highlight the significance of emotional control, school leadership, and positive work environments as essential factors in alleviating teacher stress and delaying early retirement plans. The scoping review further suggests that emotional demands are increasingly recognized as a key factor impacting teacher retention across different education systems (Smith et al., 2025; Yan, 2024). Schools are evolving into emotionally responsive organizations that strive to balance emotional investment with institutional support to foster teacher wellbeing (Cann et al., 2021). To effectively formulate policies that not only retain experienced teachers but also cultivate sustainable and emotionally healthy teaching environments, it is crucial to understand the complex relationship between emotional demands and teachers' career decisions (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Casely-Hayford et al., 2024).

The following figure illustrates this information in terms of publication years and the sources of the studies covered in this review.

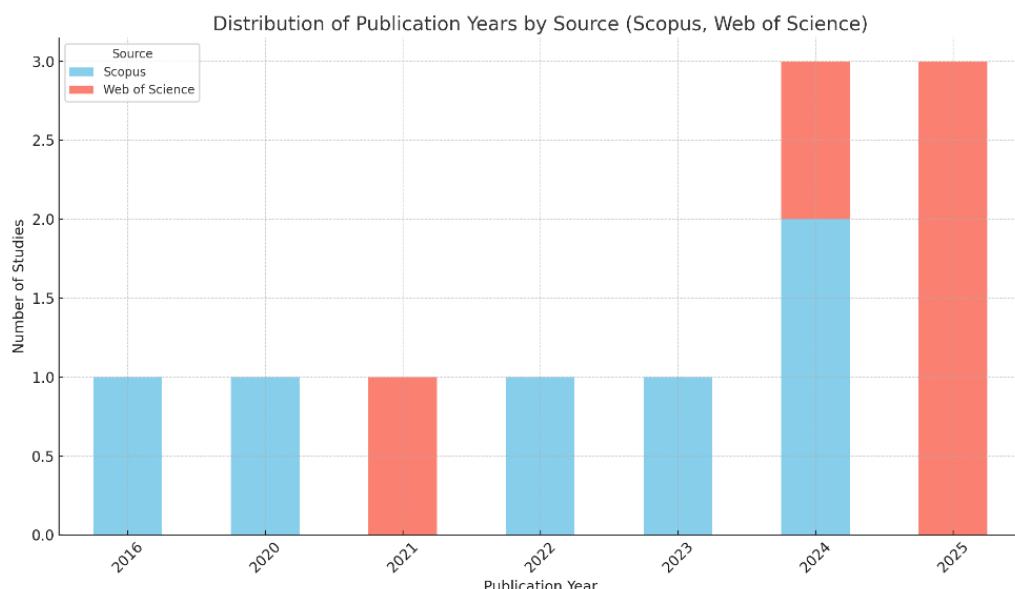


Figure 3: Year and Source of Publication

Figure 3 illustrates that the studies included in this selection were published between 2016 and 2025. The earliest study, conducted by Yin et al. (2016), focused on emotion regulation strategy mediation in Hong Kong. This was followed by publications in 2020 (Wu et al.) and 2021 (Drüge et al.) that explored social support and psychosocial pressures in school settings. More recent studies emerged in 2022 (Zhu and Zhou), 2023 (Chandler and Backhouse), 2024 (Mingmei and Pek; Xia et al.; Yan), and 2025 (Arnold and Rahimi; Smith et al.; Su et al.), reflecting a growing interest in emotional demands and teacher well-being. The evidence indicates an increasing focus on this topic, with the highest number of publications occurring in 2024 and 2025. This trend highlights that emotional demands and their impact on teacher retention and retirement intentions are becoming more prominent in education research. Compared to earlier years, recent studies emphasize developing emotional control measures, enhancing school support systems, and improving teacher welfare to tackle retention challenges. As research in this area expands, further investigation is necessary, particularly as schools confront rising emotional issues in dynamic learning environments. The positive trajectory of recent research suggests that emotional demands and their effects on educators' retirement intentions will continue to be a significant focus, especially regarding supportive leadership and school-based well-being programs.

Discussion and Recommendation

This scoping review synthesizes the existing evidence on emotional demands and their impact on teacher well-being. An analysis of the 11 selected quantitative studies shows strong evidence that emotional demands are key predictors of teacher stress, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to retire early. The findings consistently indicate that emotional demands directly affect teachers' psychological well-being and their long-term decisions to remain in the profession. The review concludes by affirming the principal research question: emotional demands significantly influence teacher well-being. Teachers often employ emotional labor strategies, such as deep acting and surface acting, to manage emotional strains in the school environment (Chandler & Backhouse, 2023; Wu et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024; Yin et al., 2016). However, some studies indicate that surface acting is associated with higher stress levels, reduced job satisfaction, and deteriorating well-being, while deep acting and genuine emotional control have positive psychological effects (Mingmei & Pek, 2024; Yan, 2024; S. Zhu & Zhou, 2022). If emotional demands are not adequately addressed, they can lead to prolonged stress, increasing the risk of burnout and prompting teachers, particularly those in mid to late career stages, to consider leaving the profession (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Su et al., 2025).

Implication for School Leadership

The findings of this scoping review highlight the crucial role of school leadership in managing teachers' emotional demands. Research indicates that schools led by transformational leaders and those with emotionally supportive classrooms effectively help teachers cope with emotional labor, thereby reducing their intention to retire (Smith et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024). Transformational school principals can create nurturing environments that lessen the negative impacts of emotional labor on teacher well-being (Zhu et al., 2025). Empathy, emotional validation, and the establishment of emotionally safe workplaces should be primary objectives for effective school leadership in addressing teachers' daily emotional challenges (Drüge et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2025). The review also emphasizes that organizational climate, positive leadership, and social support networks are essential protective factors that shield teachers from burnout, job dissatisfaction, and emotional

exhaustion. Emotionally responsive and proactive leaders who prioritize teacher well-being can reduce the likelihood of early retirement and enhance teacher retention (Casely-Hayford et al., 2024; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Additionally, school leaders should implement formal emotional support systems, such as peer support groups, well-being committees, and regular emotional check-ins. These programs provide teachers with safe spaces to discuss their challenges and address their emotional needs more effectively (Wang et al., 2025). Ultimately, addressing emotional needs should not fall solely on individual teachers; it must be prioritized at the leadership and policy levels. School leaders need to develop targeted, evidence-based interventions that foster long-term emotionally healthy classrooms, particularly for mid- and late-career teachers who are more susceptible to emotional burnout (de Carvalho et al., 2021; Dreer, 2020). Furthermore, supportive school administrations play a crucial role in creating a healthy organizational climate and social support systems, which are critical buffers against the negative effects of emotional demands.

Cultural Context

The studies reviewed were conducted in various geographical locations, including China, Australia, Germany, and Hong Kong. These cultures provide evidence that emotional demands and coping strategies may differ due to each nation's education policies, school administration approaches, and social norms (Chandler & Backhouse, 2023; Wu et al., 2020). This highlights the need for culturally responsive interventions that address emotional labor in unique school contexts. Furthermore, this review strongly suggests that emotional demands are not just an occupational issue but also a critical factor influencing teachers' decisions to retire early. Arnold and Rahimi (2025) present compelling evidence that emotional demands, when coupled with work-life conflict and job dissatisfaction, significantly increase the likelihood of teachers considering early retirement. This underscores the importance of prioritizing emotional demands in any teacher retention policy. Based on these findings, several targeted recommendations are proposed. At the school level, emotional support structures should be strengthened (Corbett et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2025b). Schools are encouraged to establish peer support groups, well-being committees, and regular emotional check-ins to provide teachers with opportunities to express and manage emotional stresses (Smith et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2020). Additionally, school leaders should adopt transformational leadership strategies that focus on empathy, emotional recognition, and the creation of emotionally safe working environments (Xia et al., 2024).

Implication for Practice and Human Development Program

In terms of teacher training and professional development, it is essential to integrate emotional regulation skills and emotion-focused coping strategies into both pre-service and in-service training programs (Mingmei & Pek, 2024; S. Zhu & Zhou, 2022). Emotional regulation training should provide teachers with sustainable strategies to effectively manage emotional labor. Additionally, mid-career and late-career teachers require career-stage specific support, as they are more vulnerable to emotional burnout and may exit the teaching profession early (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025). At the policy level, the Ministry of Education should officially prioritize teacher well-being within national education policy and school performance measures. Reducing unnecessary administrative workloads is also crucial to alleviate the compounded emotional strain that often contributes to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition (Chandler & Backhouse, 2023). To enhance the quality of education services in Malaysia, the Ministry should conduct research to explore this underrepresented area, allowing for the development of culturally tailored interventions. Longitudinal studies are particularly important to assess the

long-term effects of emotional demands on teacher well-being and career decisions (Li et al., 2022b). Furthermore, intervention-based studies should be prioritized to evaluate specific strategies that may effectively buffer emotional demands and support teacher retention. Overall, emotional demands significantly and multifacetedly influence teacher well-being and retirement intentions (Cann et al., 2021; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2025a). Addressing these demands through compassionate leadership and school-based interventions focused on professional learning and evidence-based policy is essential for maintaining a healthy and committed teaching workforce. Figure 4 illustrates the impact of emotional demands on teacher well-being.

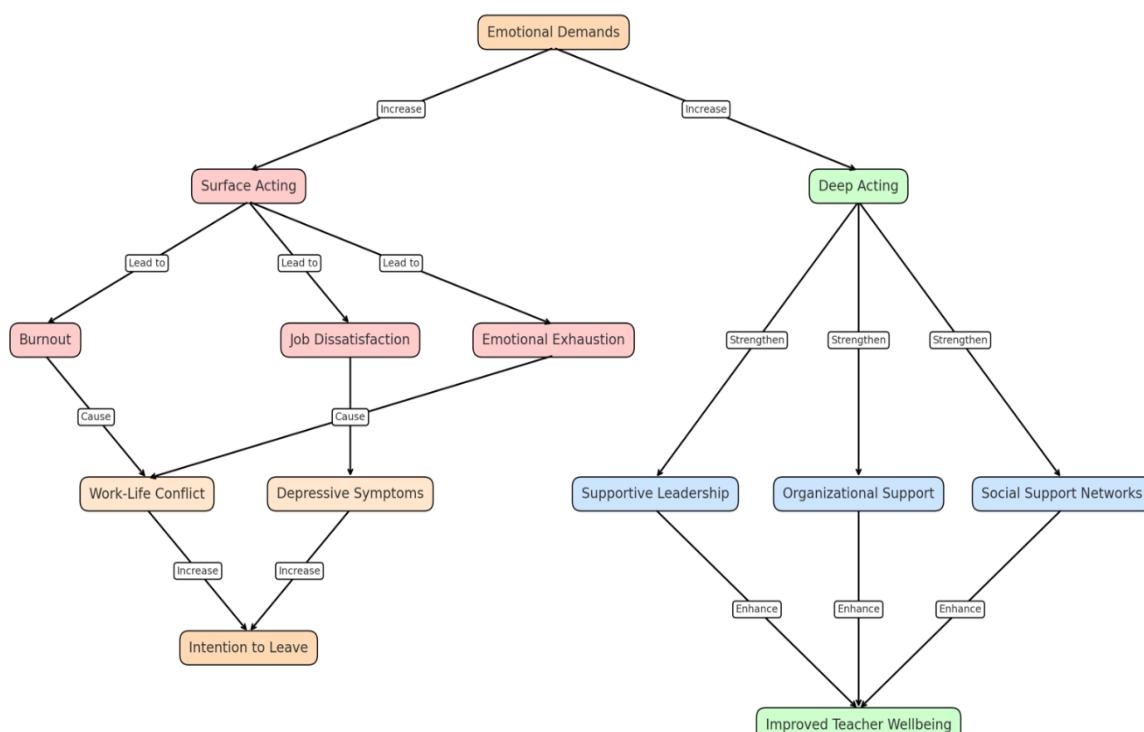


Figure 4: Conceptual Mapping on the Impact of Emotional Demands to Teacher Wellbeing

Conclusion

This scoping review offers a thorough overview of the existing evidence regarding emotional demands and their impact on teacher well-being, particularly concerning teachers' intentions to retire early. The findings indicate that emotional demands are a significant and distinct stressor within the teaching profession, leading to emotional exhaustion, decreased job satisfaction, and increased thoughts of leaving the profession (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025; Xia et al., 2024; Yan, 2024). Additionally, the review highlights that emotional labor strategies, especially surface acting, can adversely affect teachers' psychological well-being, whereas deep acting and emotional regulation can act as protective factors. Supportive leadership, positive organizational climates, and strong social support networks are crucial in mitigating the negative effects of emotional demands, fostering emotionally safe school environments that promote teacher well-being and retention. The review further reveals that mid to late-career teachers are particularly susceptible to the effects of emotional demands, underscoring the need for targeted interventions at various career stages. Geographically, the studies primarily focus on China and Australia, with limited research from regions like Malaysia and Southeast Asia, indicating a need for more diverse and culturally sensitive research in the future. In conclusion,

this review emphasizes that emotional demands are a critical factor influencing teacher wellbeing and retention. Addressing these demands should not only be the individual responsibility of teachers but also a strategic priority for school leaders, policymakers, and educational stakeholders. Future research should continue to investigate longitudinal impacts, develop intervention-based studies, and expand cross-cultural perspectives to support sustainable and emotionally healthy teaching environments. The insights from this review aim to inform policies and practices that enhance teacher wellbeing and address the increasing issue of early retirement in the teaching profession.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the Bahagian Tajaan Pendidikan, Ministry of Education, Malaysia for supporting this work.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest

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