

Promoting Kindergarten Teachers' Personal and Professional Well-Being Through a Program Based on Positive Psychology

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Abstract

Keywords:

personal well-being, professional well-being, kindergarten teachers, positive education, social-emotional learning, occupational stress

This study aims to test the effect of a program intended to promote personal and professional well-being for kindergarten teachers. The program is based on positive psychology and social-emotional learning (SEL) principles. Seventy-seven kindergarten teachers from Israel participated in the study. The research tools used were four questionnaires that had to be filled out at the program's beginning and end. The results indicate that the program was able to promote the personal and professional well-being of kindergarten teachers, lower the level of stress they experience in their work, and increase the degree of job satisfaction. These findings were achieved through practical and applied tools for their daily and professional lives based on the PARMA model of positive psychology and the SEL model. The research findings have an important value in raising awareness of the issue and implementing similar programs as an integral part of the training processes of kindergarten teachers and their professional development processes.

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselworte:

persönliches und berufliches Wohlbefinden, Kindergärtner, positive Erziehung, sozial-emotionales Lernen, beruflich bedingter Stress

Ziel dieser Studie ist es, die Wirkung eines Programms zur Förderung des persönlichen und beruflichen Wohlbefindens von Kindergärtnerinnen zu testen. Das Programm basiert auf den Grundsätzen/Prinzipien der positiven Psychologie und des sozial-emotionalen Lernens (SEL). Siebenundsiebzig Kindergärtnerinnen aus Israel nahmen an der Studie teil. Als Forschungsinstrumente dienten vier Fragebögen, die zu Beginn und am Ende des Programms ausgefüllt werden mussten. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass das Programm in der Lage war, das persönliche und berufliche Wohlbefinden der Kindergärtnerinnen zu fördern, den Stress, den sie bei ihrer Arbeit erleben, zu verringern und die Arbeitszufriedenheit zu steigern. Diese Ergebnisse wurden erreicht, durch praktische und angewandte Werkzeuge/Instrumente für ihr tägliches und berufliches Leben, die auf dem PARMA-Modell der positiven Psychologie und dem SEL-Modell basieren. Die Forschungsergebnisse sind von großem Wert für die Sensibilisierung für dieses Thema und die Umsetzung ähnlicher Programme als integraler Bestandteil der Ausbildungsprozesse von Kindergärtnerinnen und ihrer beruflichen Entwicklung.

1. Introduction

Early childhood education is considered one of the most influential factors for children's development and future. According to studies from the last decades, early childhood experiences can shape behaviors, attitudes, and skills throughout life and affect academic achievements, mental health, and social leadership (Barnett, 2000; Danis et al., 2011; Heckman et al., 2010; Schweinhart et al., 1993).

Kindergarten teachers are at the center of the early childhood education process, by having a crucial role in shaping the children's learning and play environment (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990). Even though there is indication that their teaching and care quality can be affected by occupational and personal (De Stasio et al., 2017), there is a lack of quantitative

studies examining methods to improve the personal and professional well-being of kindergarten teachers.

2. Theoretical foundation

Personal well-being is a multifaceted concept encompassing subjective experiences, cognitive evaluations, emotional states, and behavioral patterns. Seligman (2002) defines personal well-being as a subjective experience influenced by positive emotions, engagement in meaningful activities, nurturing relationships, finding life purpose, and achieving personal goals. This understanding aligns with the PERMA model, highlighting the interconnectedness of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment in fostering well-being. Benevene et al. (2018) further elaborate on personal well-being, emphasizing its



association with individual resources that facilitate optimal functioning in the workplace. Components such as life satisfaction, positive self-esteem, and absence of negative influences contribute to an individual's overall well-being.

Keyes (2002) expands the definition of personal well-being to include social aspects, such as social interaction, coherence, self-realization, acceptance, and contribution. This broader perspective underscores the significance of social connections and community engagement in enhancing overall well-being. Barry (2013) emphasizes the interconnectedness between mental health, subjective personal well-being, and physical health. Positive mental health, characterized by self-esteem, self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, autonomy, and positive relationships, is crucial in promoting effective life management and overall functioning. Research suggests that individuals with higher levels of subjective well-being are better equipped to cope with stressors, maintain positive relationships, and adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors, enhancing their physical well-being.

In the context of preschool education, the personal well-being of kindergarten teachers emerges as a critical factor influencing the quality of education provided to young children (Wong & Zhang, 2014). Emotional work, defined as the effort required to manage emotions and display appropriate responses in interactions with children, families, and the community, represents a significant aspect of kindergarten teaching (Cumming, 2017). Teachers' well-being directly impacts their ability to form positive relationships with students, create supportive learning environments, and effectively manage classroom dynamics.

By prioritizing teachers' well-being and addressing their unique challenges, educational institutions can promote a culture of support and resilience, ensuring that teachers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. Professional development programs focusing on stress management, self-care strategies, and emotional regulation can empower teachers to navigate the demands of their profession while maintaining their personal well-being. Additionally, fostering a collaborative and inclusive school culture can enhance social support networks and promote collective well-being among educators.

Professional well-being is a multifaceted construct significantly influencing educators' personal fulfillment, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in

educational roles. By addressing the various dimensions of professional well-being and implementing supportive interventions, educational institutions can create environments that prioritize educators' holistic development and facilitate positive outcomes for both educators and students (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Warr, 1990). Professional well-being comprises dimensions such as emotional well-being, autonomy, and purpose in life. Professional well-being is integral to educators' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall quality of life (Cumming, 2017; Van Horn et al., 2004). Amidst growing recognition of the importance of educators' well-being, there is a need for comprehensive understanding and interventions to support their holistic development and mitigate potential stressors within educational settings.

Educators' well-being is influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, efficiency, and achievement, which collectively shape their experiences in the workplace (Yildirim, 2014). Moreover, the quality of relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators significantly impacts educators' sense of fulfillment and job engagement (Cefai & Askeff-Willians, 2017). Central to professional well-being is the concept of job satisfaction, characterized by positive emotions, experiences, and perceptions related to work (Aziri, 2011). High levels of job satisfaction contribute to educators' sense of fulfillment, productivity, and overall well-being, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in educational roles (Royer & Moreau, 2016).

The educational environment plays a pivotal role in shaping educators' well-being and job satisfaction. Initiatives aimed at enhancing professional well-being should focus on improving communication skills, teaching techniques, and classroom management strategies (Yildirim, 2014). A positive classroom climate characterized by caring relationships, empathy, and mutual respect fosters educators' sense of belonging and supports their holistic development (Cefai & Askeff-Willians, 2017). Additionally, promoting personal well-being and mental health is imperative for creating a supportive organizational culture that prioritizes educators' well-being and fosters collaboration among staff members (Miri et al., 2023).

Despite the critical role of educators in fostering student success, they face numerous challenges that impact their well-being and job commitment. Factors

such as increased workload, role ambiguity, and limited resources contribute to stress and burnout among educators (Pete, 2016). Moreover, high turnover rates exacerbate instability in educational settings, hindering continuity in learning and relationships (Holochwost et al., 2009). Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies prioritizing educators' well-being, including interventions to mitigate stressors, enhance job satisfaction, and promote supportive workplace climates (Jeon & Ardeleanu, 2020).

3. Research methodology

The main goal of this study is to examine the impact of the training program on the personal and professional well-being of the kindergarten teachers (KTs) and their kindergarten climate using quantitative research tools. Proving the program's impact can support policymakers in integrating the content into academic studies of new KT's and professional training during their years of work, relying on supporting theories. The purpose of the study was to check the state of personal and professional well-being of the KT's and their perceptions of their kindergarten climate in the experimental and control groups before and after the training program. The perceptions collected before the training aimed to serve as relevant information in the process of developing and implementing a training program based on various tools developed from the principles of positive psychology and Social-Emotional Learning theories. At the end of the training program implementation, the aim was to re-examine the state of well-being and the kindergarten climate using quantitative and qualitative tools. The current paper presents only the quantitative data analysis.

The study examined four research questions: (1) Would significant differences be found between the two study groups (experimental, control) in the KT's personal well-being following the intervention program? (2) Would significant differences be found between the two study groups (experimental, control) in the KT's professional well-being following the intervention program? (3) Would significant differences be found between the two study groups (experimental, control) in the kindergarten climate where the KT's work following the intervention program? (4) Do the KT's demographic characteristics and grouping variables significantly contribute to the explained variance (EPV) of their improvement in their personal and professional well-being as well as in the climate of their kindergarten?

3.1. Participants

The participants were KT's for children ages 3-6 in practice, in regular preschool education and special education settings in Israel, in different roles (kindergarten management, substitute KT, part-time basis), and at varied levels of seniority ranging from young to senior KT's. Seventy-seven female KT's aged 24 to 63 were recruited to participate in the research. The KT's were randomly assigned into two study groups: 38 KT's in the experimental group that underwent a training program aiming to empower KT's personal and professional well-being using Positive Psychology and SEL tools to promote a positive kindergarten climate, and 39 KT's in the control group that answered the questionnaires.

3.2. Research Tools

In order to examine KT's personal well-being, two questionnaires were administered: *Subjective Happiness Scale* (SHS) and *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS).

The SHS was developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999). In this study, the officially translated Hebrew version was used. SHS assesses the level of subjective happiness using a 7-point Likert scale. This scale was used in numerous studies in Israel and other countries worldwide. The scale includes four items. Higher scores on this measure indicate higher subjective happiness. The internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha for the four items of SHS was high $\alpha = .75$.

The SWLS, which stands for the Satisfaction With Life Scale, is a concise questionnaire comprising five items, initially developed by Diener et al. (1985). It aims to assess an individual's overall cognitive evaluations of their life satisfaction. Previous research has established the scale's strong internal consistency, with a coefficient alpha of .87 (Diener et al., 1985; Lucas et al., 1996). It has also demonstrated both convergent and discriminant validity when compared to other measures of subjective well-being, independent ratings of life satisfaction, self-esteem, clinical symptoms, neuroticism, and emotionality (Diener et al., 1985; Lucas et al., 1996). The Cronbach's alpha value for the five questionnaire items was high $\alpha = .81$.

In order to examine the KT's professional well-being, the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (TSWQ) was administered. Renshaw et al. (2015) developed the TSWQ to assess the positive psychological well-being of teachers in their

workplace. The scale's initial structure was established based on van Horn et al. (2004) theory, which emphasizes three key indicators of teacher well-being: self-efficacy, positive emotional states, and nurturing relationships. These three concepts were incorporated into the envisioned subscales of the TSWQ, specifically, self-efficacy, Joy of Teaching, and School Connectedness. The items related to teaching efficacy were adapted from those found in the Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (Caprara et al., 2006). Similarly, the school connectedness items were fashioned after items used in the California School Climate Survey (Furlong et al., 2014). The internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha for all eight questionnaire items was high $\alpha = .77$ and $\alpha = .76$ for the School Connectedness Scale and Teacher Efficacy Scale factors, respectively.

In order to examine the kindergarten climate, a questionnaire from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) was administered. In 2018, the OECD conducted the TALIS research, which is an international study aimed at investigating the perspectives of teachers and school principals. The study focused on their views concerning aspects such as teaching and learning, classroom instructional methods, and the professional development of educators. Furthermore, in 2018, the TALIS research was extended by RAMA (Israel's National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education) to include kindergartens in Israel. In this study, only specific sections of the questionnaire were utilized to explore factors such as KT's personal and professional background and various indicators associated with evaluating the kindergarten climate and job satisfaction. The internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha for the 14 items of the KT stress level questionnaire was high $\alpha = .87$. The internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha for the 13 items of the KT satisfaction level questionnaire was high $\alpha = .77$.

3.3. Procedure

Training programs in education are a form of training for students that can help them develop key competencies and enhance their performance in the workplace (Marinescu & Toma, 2013). Axinte and Pruteanu (2021) state that training programs are essential to teachers' professional development strategy since they provide professional growth and development opportunities. By participating in training programs, teachers can learn new skills, techniques, and strategies to improve their teaching practices and better meet the needs of their students

(Axinte & Pruteanu, 2021). KT are in charge of promoting social-emotional activity from an early age. Therefore, it is essential to be provided training in this field, integrating these programs into their educational curriculum, if possible. Acquiring theoretical and procedural knowledge in these areas will provide the teachers with tools, skills, and feelings of personal well-being, resilience, management, and empowerment. There is widespread agreement that professional development and training in socio-emotional learning will improve educational frameworks' short- and long-term climate, leading to realizing personal, academic, and social potential and successful results. The effective way to instill these skills is through long-term training .

This research included the development of a training program for KT's named "Positive Education for Well-being (PEW)." In order to attract KT's to register for the training program, it was necessary to define a more attractive name for the program. The name "Happiness (in Kindergarten) Begins in You" (HBY) was created to reflect the essence of the program and its core principles. The purpose of the HBY program is to provide KT with tools of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) (CASEL, 2005), mindfulness, and Compassionate Communication (Rosenberg, 2003). This tool aims to empower KT and promote an optimal kindergarten climate originating from feelings of personal and professional well-being and resilience. This training program includes various techniques, from personal coaching to actively sharing experiences and using different learning styles. In the first stage, KT's established these behaviors personally, developed skills, practiced communication tools, and engaged in critical thinking. KT's gained a sense of ownership and naturalization of the developmental processes affecting the children, the staff, the parents, and the community.

The goals of the HBY Program:

1. To deepen the familiarity with Positive Psychology and Social and Emotional Learning theories.
2. To provide practical and applicable tools for KT to increase personal and professional well-being and self-awareness, manage positive relationships and personal resilience, and achieve personal and professional goals.
3. To create guided reflective experiences in order to promote an optimal kindergarten climate.

4. To create a supportive professional group to build joint knowledge in this field .

The program was held at a training center for educators and delivered by the researcher for 30 academic hours during the school year. The structure was a 17-week training program with ten lessons, 135 minutes each (3 academic hours). The program included Emotional self-awareness, Emotional management and proactivity, and emotional discourse in kindergarten. Signature strengths according to Positive Psychology. Empathy, giving, and helping others. Effective, respectful, and empowering communication. The power of gratitude. At each meeting, the kindergarten teachers learned how Positive Psychology can be integrated into the kindergarten's work and ongoing learning program and into the annual curriculum.

4. Findings

Before examining the research questions and hypotheses, we examined whether the dependent variables were normally distributed. Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted for each study group. The dependent variables were the KT scores on the SHS, SWLS, and TSWQ questionnaires and four measures from the TALIS questionnaire (kindergarten climate, work climate, job satisfaction, and stress level). The results indicated that the dependent variables in each study group were not normally distributed ($p < .05$). Therefore, we conducted non-parametric and parametric analyses. The Mann-Whitney tests served as the non-parametric analyses to examine the differences between the two groups on each measure. The Wilcoxon test served as the non-parametric

analysis in order to examine the differences in the performance on all measures between the two-time points among each study group. The findings and the significance level of the non-parametric analyses matched the findings of the parametric analyses. Therefore, we presented the findings of the ANOVA analyses and reported the means and standard deviations instead of the means and sum ranks among each group.

4.1. Differences in the kindergarten teachers' personal and professional well-being and their kindergarten climate

Before examining the first three research questions and hypotheses, a t-test analysis was conducted to examine whether the two study groups differed in their personal and professional well-being and kindergarten climate at T1 (see Table 1).

As seen in Table 1, the KT efficacy scale (TES) score was significantly higher among the teachers assigned to the control group than those assigned to the experimental group. According to the first three research hypotheses, the KT will report a significantly higher level of personal and professional well-being and a more positive kindergarten climate due to the training program compared to the KT from the control group. In order to examine these research hypotheses, one-way ANCOVA analyses were conducted for each study measure. In each analysis, the independent variable was the study group, the covariate variable was the KT scores on each measure at T1, and the dependent variable was the KT scores on each measure at T2 (See Table 2).

Table 1. Mean, SD, and t-values of the KTs' personal and professional well-being and their kindergarten climate by group (N = 77, df = 75)

	Control (n = 39)			Experiment (n = 38)			t	p	ES ¹
	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range			
Personal well-being									
SHS	5.60	0.90	3.75-7.00	5.50	0.83	3.75-7.00	.50	.620	0.12
SWLS	5.51	0.82	3.60-7.00	5.12	0.96	3.20-6.80	1.93	.057	0.44
Professional well-being – TSWQ									
SCS	3.21	0.53	2.00-4.00	2.99	0.74	1.00-4.00	1.54	.128	0.34
TES	3.47	0.45	2.25-4.00	3.28	0.37	2.25-4.00	2.12	.037	0.46
*									
Kindergarten climate									
Stress level	3.01	0.72	1.29-3.93	3.06	0.46	2.14-3.86	.31	.754	0.08
Satisfaction level	3.01	0.39	1.62-3.69	2.88	0.32	2.08-3.46	1.57	.121	0.36

* $p < .05$; ¹ES = Effect Size of Cohen's d

Table 2. Mean, SD, and F-values of the KT's personal and professional well-being and their kindergarten climate by group and time ($N = 77, df = 75$)

	T1		T2			F-values - ANCOVA		
	M	SD	M	SD	M.E ¹	F	p	η_p^2
Stress level								
SHS	5.60	0.90	5.37	0.86	5.35			
	5.50	0.83	5.82	0.82	5.85	9.82**	.002	.12
SWLS	5.51	0.82	5.30	0.97	5.21			
	5.12	0.96	5.57	0.69	5.66	6.97**	.010	.09
Professional well-being – TSWQ								
SCS	3.21	0.53	3.16	0.60	3.13			
	2.99	0.74	3.45	0.47	3.48	8.38**	.005	.10
TES	3.47	0.45	3.38	0.54	3.33			
	3.28	0.37	3.63	0.37	3.68	10.78**	.002	.13
Kindergarten climate								
Stress level	3.01	0.72	3.11	0.57	3.12			
	3.06	0.46	2.83	0.59	2.82	6.14*	.016	.08
Satisfaction level	3.01	0.39	3.05	0.39	3.04			
	2.88	0.32	3.06	0.29	3.07	.17	.677	.00

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; ¹M.E = Mean Estimated

Table 2 shows significant differences between the two KT groups in their personal and professional well-being at T2, controlling over these measures at T1. In line with our hypotheses, the KT in the experimental group reported a higher level of personal and professional well-being at T2 compared to the KT in the control group. A paired sample t-test, examining the differences between the two time points in each group, indicated that only the KTs from the experimental group reported an improvement in their personal and professional well-being. The Cohen's d effect size indicated a medium effect of the training program for the SHS, SWLS, and SCS measures ($d = 0.43 - 0.56$) and a high effect for the TES measure ($d = .81$).

Regarding the two measures of the kindergarten climate, a significant difference was found between the two KT groups in their stress level at T2, controlling over this measure at T1. In light of our hypotheses, the KT assigned to the experimental group reported a lower stress level at T2 compared to the KTs assigned to the control group. A paired sample t-test, examining the differences between the two time points in each group, indicated that only the KTs from the experimental group reported a decrease in their stress

level at work. The Cohen's d effect size indicated a medium effect of the intervention for the stress level measure ($d = 0.42$). Finally, no significant difference was found between the two KT groups in their satisfaction level at T2, controlling this measure at T1. Nevertheless, the paired sample t-test, examining the differences between the two-time points, indicated that only the KTs from the experimental group indicated an improvement in their satisfaction from working at the kindergarten. Cohen's d effect size indicated a medium effect of the training program for the satisfaction level measure ($d = 0.55$).

4.2. The contribution of the kindergarten teachers' background characteristics and the grouping assignment to the EPV of their improvement of the target variables

In order to examine the fourth research hypothesis, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. In the first step of the regression model, the teachers' background characteristics were entered in a stepwise manner. In this manner, only variables that contributed significantly to the EPV were entered into the regression model.

In the second step of the regression model, the grouping assignment was entered into the regression

model stepwise. This variable was entered only in the second step of the regression for two reasons. First, significant differences between the two study groups were found in KT's country of birth and residence area distribution. As a result, we aimed to control these differences between the two study groups and examine the contribution of the grouping assignment to the

EPV of the improvement on the levels of personal and professional well-being and the kindergarten climate beyond these differences. Second, we desired to examine the unique contribution of the grouping assignment beyond the contribution of the teachers' background characteristics (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of hierarchical regressions for the KT's personal and professional well-being and their kindergarten climate by the teachers' background characteristics and the grouping assignment (N = 80)

Explained variables	Steps	Explanatory variables	B	SE.B	β	R ²	ΔR ²
Improvement in Personal Well-Being							
SHS	1	Job at the kindergarten ¹	-.47	.22	-.24*	.056*	---
	2	Job at the kindergarten ¹ Group ²	-.46 .56	.21 .18	-.23* .33**	.168***	.112**
SWLS	1	---	---	---	---	---	---
	2	Group ²	.66	.20	.36**	.128**	---
Improvement in Professional Well-Being							
SCS	1	Residence ³	.44	.19	.26*	.068*	---
		Residence ³	.44	.18	.26*		
		Job at the kindergarten ¹	-.40	.19	-.23*	.123**	.054*
	2	Residence ³	.23	.20	.14		
		Job at the kindergarten ¹	-.39	.18	-.23*		
		Group ²	.41	.18	.28*	.184**	.061*
TES	1	Residence ³	.31	.14	.25*	.063*	---
	2	Residence ³ Group ²	.09 .43	.15 .13	.07 .39**	.185***	.121**
Improvement in Kindergarten Climate							
Stress level	1	---	---	---	---	---	---
	2	Group ²	-.31	.15	-.24*	.060*	---

*p < .05, **p < .01; ¹Job at the kindergarten: 0 = Not a manager, 1 = Kindergarten manager; ²Group: 0 = Control, 1 = Experiment; ³Residence: 0 = Not in a city, 1 = Living in a city.

As seen in Table 3 and in line with the ANCOVA results, the grouping variable contributed significantly to the EPV of all measures (between 6%-12.8%). The positive β coefficients indicated that KTs assigned to the experimental group reported significantly higher improvements in all measures than those assigned to the control group.

Regarding the first step of the regression model, i.e., the job at the kindergarten (whether the participant is the kindergarten manager or not) contributed significantly to the EPV of the SHS and SCS

measures, with negative β coefficients. These results indicated that the KT who were not the managers improved their subjective happiness (SHS) and school connectedness (SCS) compared to KTs who were managers. In addition, the KT's residence (whether the teacher resided in a city) contributed significantly to the EPV of both professional well-being measures (SCS and TES), with positive β coefficients. These results indicated that the KT who lived in a city improved their professional well-being compared to KTs who did not live in a city. It should be noted that

although the percentage of KT residing in a city was significantly higher among the experimental group, the grouping assignment contributed significantly beyond this demographic variable.

5. Discussions

The purpose of the study's second phase was to examine the effect of the PEW training program on the personal and professional well-being of KT and the perception of the climate of their kindergarten. Another purpose was to examine the contribution of the demographic data on the personal and professional well-being of the KT and their effect on the climate of their kindergarten. In order to achieve this, questionnaires were given to the two research groups (the experimental group that went through the PEW training program and the control group) at two-time points, before and after the training program.

The results indicated significant differences in the personal and professional well-being between the experimental group and the control group after the PEW training program. The KTs in the experimental group reported an improvement in their personal and professional well-being indicators. These findings are consistent in accordance with the theories of positive psychology and social-emotional learning on which the program was based, that intrapersonal skills, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, social conduct, and communication provide educators with tools to maintain personal and professional resilience, reduce the degree of burnout and enable personal and professional development and growth (Ergas & Avisar, 2022).

Another aim was to examine whether there is a significant difference in the kindergarten climate between the KTs who went through the training program and the control group. In this part of the study, two leading indicators were used to examine the kindergarten climate: the KT's stress level and job satisfaction. In accordance with the research hypothesis, which assumes that there will be a significant difference in the kindergarten climate between the two research groups, in these two indicators, the KT in the experimental group reported a significant decrease in the level of stress and an increase in the level of job satisfaction.

The stress in KT's work is influenced, according to Korczyński (2018), by various factors, including didactic and administrative responsibility of the kindergarten, lack of social recognition of the profession, low financial compensation, dealing with children with developmental problems that require

special support, and physical difficulties such as working in a constantly noisy environment. According to Jeon et al. (2018), reducing the feeling of stress contributes a lot to the quality of activities in the kindergarten and to a positive kindergarten climate. Friedman-Krauss et al. (2014) claim that moderate stress levels in preschool teachers were associated with the perception of a more positive classroom atmosphere. However, high and low stress levels were associated with a less favorable emotional environment. Their study suggests that well-regulated teachers are more likely to create a positive emotional environment in the classroom. Therefore, reducing stress levels is crucial for professional advancement and the kindergarten climate.

The second indicator that affects the kindergarten climate is the level of job satisfaction. According to Kume (2022), job satisfaction is influenced by the work environment, measured by factors such as systemic support, working conditions, relationships between colleagues, and workload. The study of Tatalović Vorkapić and Velan (2023) links job satisfaction and a positive kindergarten climate. In accordance with previous research findings, our current findings indicate that the PEW training program improved the participants' job satisfaction in the experimental group.

Another objective of the study was to examine the relationship between demographic data and the PEW training program's impact on KT's personal and professional well-being and their perceptions of the kindergarten climate. Consistent with the research hypothesis, which assumes that demographic data will impact the results of the PEW training program, the study has found that the PEW training program had a more significant impact on KT in those roles that do not include kindergarten management. In Israel, there are KT who work in several kindergartens, one day a week in each kindergarten. These KT are known as "supplementary KTs".

6. Conclusions

The results of the current studies are supported by concepts presented in the literature. The first concept is the need for belonging, in accordance with the Social Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which specifies three basic needs for boosting motivation – self-efficacy, autonomy, and the need for belonging. According to Huppert and So (2013), resilience, one of the foundations of personal well-being, is based on the three needs of the Social Determination theory. KTs who are not in

management roles have a lower sense of belonging than managing KT because of their multiple affiliations. Belonging to a KT group and the close conversation created in the group can offer them a sense of belonging and connection to the KT community in general and the experimental group in particular. The second concept is social recognition. Supplementary KTs receive lower social recognition for their role than the managing KT, negatively affecting job satisfaction. According to Korczyński (2018), social recognition is essential for reducing stress, which contributes to improving the quality of education (Jeon et al. (2018; Jennings et al., 2020). The third concept refers to the level of pressure and responsibility. One can assume that the level of pressure and responsibility of supplementary KTs is lower due to their role. The PEW training program provided them with a sense of meaning in their work, reflected in the unique content they acquired.

In terms of identified limitations of the research, it is important to mention that the participants' sample was selected as a convenience sample of the researcher. The KT's choice to participate in the training program was based on their knowledge and openness to the topics of the training program or the recognition of their need for those tools. Also, answering questionnaires implies a certain degree of subjectivity and it can be influenced by external personal and professional factors that constantly change and can provide a biased answer when filling out the questionnaire, affecting the results. Therefore, backing up the research with additional qualitative data is essential for gathering relevant information on the target variables.

Authors note:

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