



HEALTH HABITS AND WORK-RELATED STRESS OF SNED TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers perform complex responsibilities that include individualized instruction, behavioral support, parent coordination, and extensive documentation. These professional demands may affect their health habits, increase work-related stress, and influence their overall well-being. This study investigated the health habits, stress level, and well-being of SNED teachers in the Division of Mandaue City for School Year 2025–2026 as basis for a Teacher Wellness Enhancement Plan. This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The participants were 31 SNED teachers from selected SPED centers in the Mandaue City Division, chosen through complete enumeration. Data were collected using a researcher-made demographic checklist and three standardized instruments: the Health Promoting Lifestyle Profile II (HPLP II), the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the variables, while Pearson r and mediation analysis through Jamovi were applied to determine their relationships. Findings revealed that the respondents generally manifested good health habits especially in spirituality and interpersonal relations. While physical activity and health responsibility were relatively lower. Their stress level was overall barely noticeable, although time management and workload were moderately noticeable. The respondents also showed moderately positive well-being. Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between health habits and well-being and a significant negative relationship between stress and well-being. However, health habits and stress were not significantly related. Mediation analysis further showed that stress did not significantly mediate the relationship between health habits and well-being. The study concluded that positive health habits directly contribute to teachers' well-being. Hence, a Teacher Wellness Enhancement Plan was proposed.

Keywords: *SNED teachers, health habits, stress, well-being, wellness enhancement plan*

INTRODUCTION

Being a SPED teacher in the Philippines is not just about teaching lessons—it's really a combination of many roles happening all at once. On most days, they prepare individualized education plans, respond to behavioral concerns, communicate with parents, and handle a lot of paperwork. All of these are done while trying to meet the academic and emotional needs of learners with disabilities. And in many cases, this happens in settings where resources are still limited. Because of these responsibilities, it's not surprising that teachers sometimes set aside their own needs. Some skip meals just to finish reports. Others stay up late to complete documentation or prepare materials. Physical activity becomes difficult to maintain. At first, these may seem like small sacrifices, but over time, they can affect both health and well-being. Stress slowly builds up, and it doesn't always go away after a long day.

Studies from different countries seem to reflect this situation. SPED teachers are often reported to experience high levels of stress and burnout, especially after the pandemic (Holzner & Gaunt, 2023). There are efforts that appear to help—such as mindfulness activities or professional development programs—but these do not always address the day-to-day realities teachers face (Jennings et al., 2025). Other research mentions the importance of support systems and self-confidence in teaching, suggesting that teachers who feel supported are more likely to cope better (Wang et al., 2022). In the Philippines, the situation feels very familiar. Teachers handle long hours, heavy workloads, and increasing administrative tasks. Over time, this can lead to exhaustion (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020; Cammayo



et al., 2023). Even in Cebu, where schools try to promote collaboration, SPED teachers still report high stress levels. Much of this is linked to documentation requirements and expectations from different groups—parents, administrators, and the system itself (Esperanza et al., 2024). This raises a question: aside from workload, could everyday health habits also be part of the picture?

Looking at the Division of Mandaue City, recent DSMEA results show that learners are doing well, especially in literacy. This clearly reflects the effort and dedication of teachers. However, when teachers share their experiences informally, a different concern comes up. Some admit that they rarely have time to take care of themselves. Meals are missed, rest is shortened, and exercise is often not part of their routine. So while student performance remains strong, teacher wellness may not be as stable.

This situation showed a gap that was easy to overlook. Many studies already talked about stress and coping strategies, but fewer looked closely at health habits as part of the problem. Even fewer tried to explain how stress connected these habits to overall well-being. In addition, there were still limited school-based programs that directly supported teachers in a practical and consistent way. Because of this, the present study proposed a Wellness Enhancement Plan that focused on the connection between health habits, stress, and well-being. It was guided by DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2021, which supported SPED programs through training and resources. More than that, it recognized that teachers also needed support—not only as professionals, but as individuals. The plan included simple and realistic strategies such as managing time better, creating opportunities for stress relief, building peer support, and encouraging healthier daily routines.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the health habits and work-related stress among SNED teachers of DepEd Mandaue City Division for School Year 2025-2026, as a basis for developing a teacher wellness enhancement plan.

Specifically, it sought to answer to the following questions:

1. What was the demographic profile of the SNED teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex;
 - 1.3 experience; and
 - 1.4 educational attainment?
2. What was the level of the SNED teachers in the following:
 - 2.1 stress level;
 - 2.2 health habits; and
 - 2.3 well-being?
3. Was there an interrelationship on the following:
 - 3.1 stress level;
 - 3.2 health habits; and
 - 3.3 well-being?
4. Did stress level mediate between the relationship of the health habits and well being?
5. Based on the findings what SPED teacher wellness enhancement plan could be proposed?

Significance

The importance of this study could be seen in different ways. For SPED teachers, it offered ideas on how to manage their work without completely neglecting their health. For learners, having teachers who were well and motivated improved the learning experience. School administrators used the results to improve support systems and plan more responsive programs. Policymakers also found the study useful in strengthening inclusive education policies. Parents, in turn, better understood what teachers went through, which led to stronger cooperation. For the



researcher, this study was also a step toward deeper understanding and continued advocacy. Finally, future researchers could use this as a reference when exploring similar concerns in other settings.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

When talk about SPED teachers, it is hard to ignore how different their situation is compared to others. Their work is not only about teaching lessons. Most of the time, they are also managing behavior, talking to parents, preparing individualized plans, and completing reports. In reality, all of these happen almost at the same time. Because of this, the work can easily become overwhelming, even if teachers are doing their best to manage it.

In many studies, this situation is not new. Teachers in other countries have shared almost the same experience. Some mentioned that large classes, lack of materials, and too many tasks make their work more difficult than expected. Over time, this affects not only how they teach but also how they feel. There are some cases where teachers think of leaving from work because the pressure becomes too much (Murangi et al., 2022; Fu et al., 2022). There are also instances where the stress does not come from the teaching itself, but from how things are organized. In many schools, expectations are not very clear, and teachers end up trying to do everything without proper guidance. This can be frustrating, especially when they are already handling many responsibilities. Studies show that this kind of setup can lead to burnout, no matter how experienced the teacher is (Stathopoulou et al., 2023).

If we look at different reports, stress among teachers is really common. It may not always look the same, but it is there. Some feel it because of workload, others because of class size or lack of support. Still, the result is almost similar teachers feel tired, pressured, and sometimes unmotivated (Ross et al., 2022). At the same time, there are studies that focus on what helps teachers stay well. One important factor is support. When teachers feel that someone is there to help—whether from colleagues or school heads—they are more able to handle stress. Confidence in teaching also matters. Teachers who believe in what they are doing tend to cope better, even in difficult situations (Wang et al., 2022). But teaching is not only physical work—it is also emotional. SPED teachers, in particular, invest a lot of patience and care in their learners. Over time, this can be draining. Some studies describe this as emotional fatigue, especially after the pandemic, where teachers felt more isolated and less appreciated. Even if they continue to perform well, the emotional side of teaching can slowly affect them (Ryan et al., 2023; Holzner & Gaunt, 2023).

Another thing that is sometimes overlooked is the teacher's daily routine. Easy and simple things like sleep, meals, and rest are often sacrificed. In a study, teachers who lacked proper sleep were more likely to feel exhausted when they returned to face-to-face classes. This shows that health habits, even the basic ones, play a big role in how teachers feel and function (Keller et al., 2024). Because of these concerns, a lot of programs have been introduced to support teachers. There are wellness activities, stress management sessions, and even programs that combine teaching strategies with self-care. Some of these have shown good results, helping teachers feel better and become more engaged in their work (Lessard et al., 2024; Roeser et al., 2022; Jennings et al., 2025).

Aside from programs, the school environment itself also matters. Teachers feel better when they are supported, when they are given time to rest, and when they are part of a positive working environment. Even small actions from school leaders can make a difference. It does not always have to be big programs—sometimes, simple support is enough to help teachers continue (Nwoko et al., 2023; Blazek et al., 2025).

Looking at all these, it becomes clear that the challenges faced by SPED teachers do not come from one source only. It is a combination of workload, emotional demands, daily habits, and the kind of support they receive. In some cases, these can also be addressed. With the right support, better routines, and practical programs, teachers can manage stress more effectively. This is why developing a Teacher Wellness Enhancement Plan is important—not just as a study output, but as something that can actually help teachers in their everyday work.

METHODOLOGY

Design



This study followed a quantitative approach and made use of a descriptive–correlational design. This type of design is often applied when the researcher wants to look at how variables are related without changing or controlling them. Simply put, the study focuses on what is already happening and then examines possible connections among the variables involved (Brodowicz, 2024).

The choice of this design was guided by the purpose of the study, which was to understand how classroom climate, student behavior, stress levels, and coping strategies were connected. Instead of trying to influence these factors, the study aimed to describe the situation as it was and determine whether certain patterns could be observed.

The descriptive part of the design helped in presenting the current classroom conditions, particularly the environment and the stress experiences of both teachers and learners. It provided a general picture of what was taking place. Meanwhile, the correlational part looked into whether these factors were related. For instance, classroom climate was examined alongside stress levels, while student behavior was also considered in relation to stress. Coping strategies were then examined in connection with both stress and learning outcomes. To add more depth to the analysis, mediation was also considered in the study. This went beyond simply identifying whether variables were related. It attempted to explain how one variable might influence another through a third factor.

Environment

The study was carried out in the Division of Mandaue City, focusing on selected public schools that served as Special Education (SPED) centers. These included Mandaue City SPED Center, Basak Elementary School, Canduman Elementary School, and Subangdaku Elementary School. These schools were recognized within the division for providing services to learners with special needs and for implementing SPED programs in their respective areas. In these schools, teachers handled a wide range of responsibilities. They delivered lessons that were adjusted to the needs of the learners, managed behavior inside the classroom, and guided students in developing daily living skills. Because of this, the learning environment was quite different from regular classrooms and often required more time, effort, and patience from teachers.

The study focused on these schools because they represented the actual setting where SPED teachers carried out their daily work. By looking into these contexts, the research aimed to gather more realistic information about their experiences, particularly in terms of stress, health practices, and overall well-being. The setting made it possible to better understand the challenges teachers faced while working in inclusive education.

Participants

The participants of this study were the SPED teachers in the Division of Mandaue City, particularly those assigned in schools that offered SPED programs. These included Mandaue City SPED Center, Basak Elementary School, Canduman Elementary School, and Subangdaku Elementary School. These schools were known within the division for serving learners with special needs and for providing support such as modified instruction, behavior guidance, and life skills development. A total of 31 SPED teachers were involved in the study. Instead of selecting only a sample, all identified SPED teachers from these schools were included. This was done to ensure that the views and experiences gathered would reflect the whole group, not just a portion of it.

To be part of the study, teachers were required to have at least three years of experience in special education. This was considered important so that the information collected would come from those who had already had enough exposure to the realities and demands of SPED teaching. Those who did not meet this requirement were not included. The participants were teachers who had gained experience through their actual work in the field. Their involvement in the study was voluntary, and each one gave consent before participating. Their willingness to take part showed their interest in contributing to the improvement of SPED practices within the Mandaue City Division.

Instruments



For this study, the researcher used a questionnaire to collect the needed data. It was organized into parts so that the information would be easier to gather and understand. The first part focused on the personal background of the teachers, while the next parts were based on existing tools that looked into health habits, stress, and well-being.

The first section asked for basic details about the respondents. This included their age, sex, years of teaching, and educational attainment. A checklist was used so they could simply choose their answers instead of writing them down. The age and years of experience were grouped into categories, while educational attainment included those with bachelor's degrees, those taking or who had finished master's degrees, and those with doctoral studies.

To understand the teachers' health habits, the study used a tool known as the Health Promoting Lifestyle Profile II. This looked at daily practices such as eating, physical activity, relationships, and how stress was managed. It also included how teachers took responsibility for their health and how they grew personally. The responses showed how often these habits were practiced in their daily lives.

For stress, the Teacher Stress Inventory was used. This tool covered common situations that may have caused stress among teachers, such as workload, time pressure, and emotional strain. It also included physical signs like tiredness. The teachers rated how much stress they experienced in each situation.

Data Gathering Procedure

This part explains how the researcher carried out the data gathering. It includes what was done before, during, and after collecting the information from the participants.

Pre-data gathering. Before starting, the researcher first made sure that all requirements were completed. Approval was secured from the University of the Visayas with letter of intent to the dean through the adviser and panel members. After that, the documents were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the study followed proper ethical standards. When permission to proceed was granted, coordination was done with the Division Office of Mandaue City as well as the school heads of the selected schools. The purpose of the study was explained, and permission was requested to involve the SPED teachers. At the same time, the participants were informed about the study, what they needed to do, and were assured that their responses would remain confidential. It was also emphasized that participation was voluntary.

Actual data gathering. When everything was settled, the researcher proceeded with the actual data collection. The questionnaires were given to the SPED teachers in the selected schools. Some answered printed copies, while others used an online form, depending on what was more convenient for them. They were given enough time to complete the questionnaire, usually around 20 to 30 minutes. The researcher stayed available in case there were questions or parts that needed clarification. Only teachers were included in the process, and no learners were involved.

Post-data gathering. After collecting all the responses, the researcher organized the data and checked them carefully. This was done to make sure that the answers were complete and usable for analysis. All the information gathered was handled properly and kept confidential. When the study was completed, the data were also managed in a way that would protect the identity of the participants. The results were then used as the basis in developing the Teacher Wellness Enhancement Plan, which aims to support SPED teachers in handling stress and improving their well-being.

Data Analysis

The data for this study came from the responses of SPED teachers using a questionnaire. The instrument included three basic information items as well as items that measured stress, health habits, and well-being. Because the study used a quantitative approach, statistical tools were applied to help make sense of the data and support the findings. To describe the profile of the respondents, frequency and percentage were used. These were helpful in showing how the teachers were distributed according to age, sex, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience. This gave a general idea of the background of the participants.

For the main variables—stress level, health habits, and well-being—the mean and standard deviation were used. The mean showed the average response of the teachers, while the standard deviation indicated how close or varied their answers were. By looking at these together, it became easier to understand the overall trend in their responses. Aside



from describing the data, the study also looked into how the variables were related to one another. This was done through mediation analysis using Jamovi. Through this process, the study examined whether health habits could help explain the relationship between stress and well-being.

All these methods helped make the results clearer and more organized. The use of frequency and percentage described the participants, while the mean and standard deviation explained the condition of the main variables. Mediation analysis, on the other hand, helped show how the variables may have influenced each other. Taken together, these approaches allowed the study to come up with findings that were based on actual data and supported the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

Ethical Consideration

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013). Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Visayas, with Reference No. 2026-022, dated February 19, 2026. Since the participants of the study were SNED teachers, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation. They were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as research participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were given the freedom to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by ensuring that the identities of the participants were not disclosed. All data gathered were securely stored and used solely for research purposes. Transparency in the research process was upheld, and all research activities complied with the ethical standards and institutional guidelines of the University of the Visayas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and corresponding discussion of the study. The findings are organized thematically, beginning with the demographic profile of the respondents, to provide a clear and systematic interpretation of the data in relation to the research objectives.

Demographic Profile of the SNED Teachers

The 31 SNED teachers' basic information is presented in Table 1 showing their age, gender, highest educational status and years of teaching experience.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the SNED Teachers.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	5	16.13
	Female	26	83.87
Age	20-29	3	9.68
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	30-39	14	45.16
	40-49	6	19.35
	50-above	8	25.81
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	10	32.26
	BS with Masters Units	7	22.58
	Masters Degree	7	22.58
	MA with Doctoral Units	7	22.58
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	3	9.68
	6-10 years	16	51.61
	11-15 years	8	25.81
	16-20 years	2	6.45
	21-above years	2	6.45



The table showed that most of the respondents were female, with 26 teachers (83.87%), while only 5 (16.13%) were male. This indicated that the majority of SNED teachers in the area were women. This was quite expected, as the teaching profession had long been observed to have a higher number of female educators.

In terms of age, most of the teachers belonged to the 30–39 age group, making up 45.16% of the respondents. On the other hand, only 9.68% fell within the 20–29 age bracket. This seemed to show that many of the teachers were already in the middle of their careers. At this stage, they were likely to have gained enough experience and confidence in managing their classes.

Looking at their educational background, 32.26% were bachelor's degree holders. The remaining respondents were spread across those with master's units, those who had completed a master's degree, and those already pursuing doctoral units, with each group accounting for 22.58%. This suggested that many of the teachers were still continuing their studies. It showed their effort to grow professionally and improve their practice, which was important in the teaching profession.

When it came to teaching experience, more than half of the respondents (51.61%) had been in the service for 6 to 10 years. This indicated that most of them already had enough classroom experience and were at a stage where they were more confident in handling their responsibilities. Only a small number fell under the longer years of service, with 6.45% each for those with 16–20 years and those with 21 years or more. This suggested that most of the teachers already had enough experience but were still actively growing in their profession.

Overall, the profile of the respondents showed that most of the SNED teachers were female, were in their mid-career stage, and had several years of teaching experience. Many of them were also pursuing further studies. These characteristics suggested that they were already equipped with both experience and training that could help them handle the needs of learners with special needs. At the same time, their continued efforts to study further showed their commitment to improving their practice and providing better support to their learners.

Teachers' Level of Stress

The stress level of teachers was measured through a 37-item questionnaire with four dimensions, namely: Time Management and Workload, Professional Role, Frustration with Student Behavior, and Emotional and Physical Response to Stress. Stress was assumed to have a direct bearing on teachers' well-being and an indirect influence on their performance in the workplace. As shown in Table 2, the stress level of teachers was barely noticeable. This indicates that most teachers were able to manage job-related demands effectively despite the challenges of their profession. The findings further suggest the presence of coping mechanisms or institutional support systems that help mitigate stress. Overall, the results portray a generally healthy work environment for teachers in terms of stress management.

Table 2

SNED Teachers' Level of Stress

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Time Management and Workload	2.69	1.030	Moderately Noticeable
Professional Role	1.85	0.724	Barely Noticeable
Frustration with Student Behavior	2.03	0.850	Barely Noticeable
Emotional and Physical Response to Stress	1.77	0.713	Not Noticeable
Average	2.09	1.980	Barely Noticeable

Legend: 1.00-1.80 = No Strength / Not noticeable / Not applicable; 1.81-2.60 = Mild Strength / Barely noticeable; 2.61-3.40 = Medium Strength / Moderately noticeable; 3.41-4.20 = Great Strength / Very noticeable; 4.21-5.00 = Major Strength / Extremely noticeable



The stress level of teachers was measured through a 37-item questionnaire with four dimensions; namely Time Management and Workload, Professional Role, Frustration with Student Behavior and Emotional and Physical Response to Stress. Stress was assumed to have direct bearing on the teachers' well-being and indirectly on the teachers' performance. As shown in Table 2, the stress level of teachers was barely noticeable. The findings show that time management and workload had the highest mean score of 2.69 (SD = 1.030), which falls under moderately noticeable. This suggests that teachers feel more pressure in handling their tasks and managing their time. For SNED teachers, this result is not surprising. Their work usually includes preparing individualized activities, completing required documents, and coordinating with parents and other professionals. With these responsibilities, the workload can become heavier than usual.

In contrast, areas such as professional role (M = 1.85, SD = 0.724) and frustration related to student behavior (M = 2.03, SD = 0.850) were rated as barely noticeable. This shows that teachers experience less stress in these aspects. It may be that they have already developed enough experience and strategies to manage their roles and handle student behavior more effectively in the classroom.

Furthermore, emotional and physical response to stress recorded the lowest mean score of 1.77 (SD = 0.713) and was described as Not Noticeable. This suggested that the respondents generally did not experience strong emotional or physical signs of stress. It also indicated that they had learned to adjust to the demands of their work and remained emotionally steady in their daily teaching. Overall, the results showed that while SNED teachers did feel some pressure, particularly in managing time and workload, their stress levels were still relatively low, especially when it came to emotional and physical strain.

The results also pointed out that SNED teachers were able to handle the demands of their profession despite the challenges that came with teaching learners with special needs. Their low stress in emotional and professional aspects was a sign of their commitment, experience, and the ways they coped with their work. However, the moderate level of stress related to time management and workload could not be ignored. This area needed more attention from school administrators. Providing fair task distribution, administrative support, access to teaching materials, and stronger support systems could have helped teachers manage their responsibilities more effectively.

There were studies that supported these findings. Sokal, Trudel, and Babb (2020) explained that teachers working with learners with special needs often carried additional responsibilities, like individualized instruction and documentation, which increased their workload and affected how they managed their time. In the same way, Pressley (2021) pointed out that time pressure and workload were among the common sources of stress for teachers. At the same time, other studies showed that stress could be managed when teachers had the right support. Kim and Asbury (2020) found that teachers who showed resilience and maintained a positive outlook were better able to deal with challenges, especially when they received support from the school. In the same way, Collie (2022) highlighted that a supportive school environment, along with continuous professional development, helped lessen stress and improved teachers' well-being and job satisfaction.

Teachers Way of Life and Health Habits

SNED teachers had their own way of living and health habits as measured by a 24-item questionnaire, with six dimensions distributed among the 24 items. Table 3 presented the way of life and health habits of SNED teachers in terms of health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spirituality, interpersonal relations, and stress management. The results indicate that SNED teachers generally practice behaviors that support their overall well-being. This suggests a conscious effort to maintain balance between professional responsibilities and personal health. Moreover, positive health habits may contribute to improved resilience and effectiveness in handling the demands of special needs education. These findings highlight the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles among teachers to sustain long-term professional performance.

Table 3

Way of Life and Health Habits of SNED Teachers



Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Health Responsibility	2.69	0.979	Good
Physical Activity	2.51	0.831	Good
Nutrition	2.94	0.374	Good
Spiritual	3.86	0.502	Very Good
Interpersonal Relations	3.46	0.670	Very Good
Stress Management	2.91	0.669	Good
Grand Mean	3.06	0.429	Good

Legend: 1.00-1.75= Poor; 1.76-2.51=Fair, 2.51-3.25=Good; 3.26-4.00= Very Good

The overall result showed a mean of 3.06 (SD = 0.429), which suggested that the respondents generally practiced good health habits. Among the areas, spirituality stood out with the highest mean ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.502$), described as very good. This showed that many SNED teachers placed strong value on their spiritual beliefs and practices in their daily lives. For some teachers, this was a source of strength, especially as they handled the everyday demands of working with learners with special needs. Kim and Park (2022) also stated that spirituality could support teachers' well-being and help them remain resilient during challenging situations.

Interpersonal relations followed ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.670$) and were also rated as very good. This showed that teachers were able to maintain positive relationships with their colleagues, learners, and other members of the school community. In special education, this was especially important because collaboration was a key part of supporting learners effectively. Collie (2021) also noted that having supportive relationships in the workplace could improve both job satisfaction and overall well-being. Nutrition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.374$) and stress management ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.669$) were both rated as good. These results seemed to show that teachers were generally able to maintain healthy eating habits and make use of some strategies to manage stress, although not always in a consistent way. As noted by Acton and Glasgow (2020), practices such as proper nutrition and effective stress management could help teachers stay productive and maintain emotional balance.

On the other hand, health responsibility ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 0.979$) and physical activity ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.831$) received the lowest scores, even if both still fell within the "good" range. This may have suggested that, while teachers were aware of the importance of taking care of their health, they did not always have enough time or opportunity to exercise regularly or consistently monitor their health. A similar observation was made by Bogaert et al. (2021), who found that teachers often found it difficult to maintain physical activity because of workload and time limitations.

Looking at the results, SNED teachers appeared to have generally good health habits, especially in areas like spirituality and relationships. However, aspects such as physical activity and health responsibility still needed more attention to help teachers maintain a more balanced and healthier lifestyle. These findings also pointed to the need for support to teachers beyond their instructional role in the classroom. While they manifested positive habits in some areas, the lower results in physical activity and health responsibility suggested that they may have benefited from additional support. Schools may have considered introducing simple wellness activities, such as exercise programs, health awareness sessions, or stress management activities, to encourage healthier routines. Collie (2021) emphasized that support from the institution could improve both well-being and job satisfaction.

At the same time, the strong results in spirituality and interpersonal relationships may be seen as strengths that helped teachers cope with their work. As noted by Kim and Park (2022), having strong spiritual practices and support systems could help teachers stay resilient and emotionally stable, even in demanding situations.

Well-Being Level of SNED Teachers

Teachers' well-being plays a crucial role in shaping their professional competencies, effectiveness, and overall performance in the educational environment. For teachers handling learners with special needs, maintaining



positive well-being is particularly important given the emotional, physical, and psychological demands of their work. In this study, the well-being of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers was examined in relation to their way of life and daily habits. The assessment focused on teachers' emotional states, energy levels, and general satisfaction with daily activities. The results, as presented in Table 4, provide an overview of the well-being indicators of SNED teachers and serve as a basis for understanding how their personal well-being may influence their teaching practice and professional functioning.

Table 4

Well Being of SNED Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits.	3.13	0.670	More than half of the time
I have felt calm and relaxed.	2.84	0.779	More than half of the time
I have felt active and vigorous.	2.97	0.752	More than half of the time
I woke up feeling fresh and rested.	2.87	0.885	More than half of the time
My daily life has been filled with things that interest me.	3.23	0.669	More than half of the time
Average	3.01	0.642	Moderately positive

Legend: 0.00-0.83= At no time/not positive, 0.84-1.67=Some of the time/Less positive, 1.68-2.50= Less than half of the time/fairly positive 2.49-3.33= More than half of the time/moderately positive, 3.34-4.17= Most of the time/Highly positive, 4.16-5.00= All of the time/extremely positive

Table 4 showed the well-being of SNED teachers in terms of their emotional and psychological experiences, including how often they felt cheerful, calm, active, well-rested, and engaged in what they did each day. The overall mean of 3.01 (SD = 0.642) fell under the “moderately positive” level. This seemed to suggest that, in general, teachers were doing emotionally well, although their experiences were not always the same from day to day.

One thing that stood out was that teachers reported spending more than half of their time doing things that interested them (M = 3.23, SD = 0.669). This suggested that many of them still found purpose in their work despite the usual demands of teaching. For example, interacting with learners, preparing lessons, or even participating in school activities may have given them a sense of fulfillment. When teachers felt that what they were doing mattered, it often helped sustain their well-being. This idea was also supported by Ryan and Deci (2020), who explained that people felt better psychologically when they were engaged in meaningful activities.

Teachers also shared that they felt cheerful and in good spirits more than half of the time (M = 3.13, SD = 0.670). While this did not mean they were always happy, it suggested that positive emotions were still present in their everyday experiences. Even small but consistent positive emotions seemed to matter, especially in a profession that could be both fulfilling and exhausting at the same time. When teachers experienced these positive feelings more often, it helped them stay motivated and better manage the everyday challenges in the classroom. This was also supported by Collie (2021), who noted that positive emotional experiences were linked to stronger motivation and coping.

When it came to energy, the score for feeling active and vigorous (M = 2.97, SD = 0.752) suggested that teachers were generally able to keep up with their daily responsibilities. At the same time, the slightly lower rating compared to the other areas hinted that this was not always consistent. There were likely moments when their energy dipped, especially after a long or demanding day. Given the nature of their work, this was not really surprising. Teachers often juggled multiple roles—handling lessons, managing learners, completing paperwork, and attending to other school-related tasks. Over time, these took a toll. As Acton and Glasgow (2020) pointed out, having enough energy was important for teachers to stay effective, but sustaining it could be challenging, particularly when support systems were limited.



The lower scores were seen in the areas of rest and relaxation. Teachers reported that they woke up feeling fresh and rested ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 0.885$) and felt calm and relaxed ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.779$) only more than half of the time. This suggested that rest was one aspect where teachers sometimes found it difficult to keep up. There were many instances when workload, deadlines, and even responsibilities at home made it hard for teachers to truly rest and regain their energy. In the same way, this echoed what Pressley (2021) described—that stress and fatigue were often part of a teacher’s day-to-day experience.

When the results were viewed as a whole, it seemed that teachers were able to carry on with their responsibilities, although not without some strain. They still found meaning in what they did and experienced positive moments in their work, yet there were also times when tiredness and pressure started to show. Seeing both sides of this gave a more realistic picture of their well-being. Because of this, it may have been important to look at how teachers were supported—not only in terms of their tasks and responsibilities, but also in their overall well-being. When this kind of support was present, teachers were more likely to stay effective and respond better to the needs of their learners, especially those with special educational needs.

Intercorrelation Among the Three variables

Each variable was related to the other two to determine their association using the Pearson r . The correlation matrix is in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlation Matrix of Teachers Well Being, Stress and Health Habits

Variable	Statistics	Health Habits	Stress	Well- being
Stress	Pearson's r	-0.157		
	Df	29		
	p-value	0.400		
Well being	Pearson's r	0.620***	-0.478**	
	Df	29	29	
	p-value	<.001	0.007	
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$				

Table 5 showed that health habits and stress were not significantly related ($r = -0.157$, $p = 0.400$). Although the value pointed to a slight negative relationship, it was too weak to be considered meaningful. This seemed to suggest that even if teachers practiced healthy habits, it did not necessarily translate to lower levels of stress. In reality, stress may have come from other sources that were harder to manage, such as workload, time pressure, or expectations in the workplace. As noted by Kyriacou (2021), teacher stress was often shaped more by school-related demands than by personal lifestyle alone.

The findings also pointed to a moderate but significant negative relationship between stress and well-being ($r = -0.478$, $p = 0.007$). Simply put, when stress levels rose, well-being tended to decline. This was not really surprising. When teachers felt overwhelmed or under pressure, it affected not only their mood but also their energy and how they viewed their energy and how they viewed their work as a whole. Collie (2021) observed similar pattern, noting that higher stress among teachers was often linked to lower well-being and reduced job satisfaction.

Looking at the results overall, a clear pattern could be seen. Health habits seemed to support well-being, while stress tended to work in the opposite direction. However, the absence of a significant link between health habits and stress was worth noting. It may have meant that even if teachers tried to live healthily, this alone was not enough to lessen the stress they experienced, especially if the source of stress came from the work environment itself.



These results pointed to a practical concern for schools and educational leaders. Supporting teachers should go beyond encouraging healthy habits. While these were important, there may also have been a need to look more closely at working conditions. Programs that promoted physical activity, balanced nutrition, or self-care could help improve well-being, but they may have been more effective when combined with efforts to reduce workplace stress. This could have included reviewing workloads, providing emotional support, or creating a more supportive school environment where teachers felt valued and understood.

Mediation Analysis

The study assumed that work stress could have acted as a mediating factor in the relationship between way of life, health habits, and well-being. In technical terms, even if a teacher maintained a generally healthy and positive way of life, this did not automatically mean their well-being would be high, especially when stress levels were elevated. It seemed that stress could have influenced how strongly these positive practices translated into overall well-being, sometimes weakening their effect. This assumption underscores the complexity of well-being as an outcome influenced by multiple interacting factors. High levels of occupational stress may diminish the benefits of healthy behaviors by taxing emotional and physical resources. Consequently, stress management becomes a critical component in sustaining teachers' overall well-being.

Table 6 presents the results of the mediation analysis, which explored whether stress plays a role in linking health habits to well-being among SNED teachers. In this model, both the direct and indirect effects were examined to better understand how these variables interact.

Table 6

Mediation Analysis Results: Path Coefficients and Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

<i>Mediation Estimates</i>						
Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	$a \times b$	0.0950	0.112	0.850	0.395	9.85
Direct	C	0.8689	0.193	4.502	<.001	90.15
Total	$c + a \times b$	0.9639	0.219	4.404	<.001	100.00

<i>Path Estimates</i>							
Variable			Label	Estimate	SE	Z	P
health habits	→	stress	A	-0.270	0.306	-0.883	0.377
Stress	→	well being	B	-0.352	0.112	-3.142	0.002
health habits	→	well being	C	0.869	0.193	4.502	<.001

The findings showed that the indirect effect of health habits on well-being through stress was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.095$, $p = 0.395$). This suggested that stress did not meaningfully explain how health habits influenced well-being in this group. While both health habits and stress were related to well-being on their own, stress did not appear to act as the pathway connecting the two. It was possible that other considerations—such as support systems, work environment, or personal coping strategies—played a more important role. Ryan and Deci (2020) also pointed out that well-being is shaped by several interacting influences, not just stress alone.

In contrast, the direct effect of health habits on well-being was strong and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.8689$, $p < .001$). This meant that teachers who consistently practiced healthier habits tended to have better well-being, regardless of their stress levels. It suggested that daily practices such as eating well, maintaining relationships, managing personal stress, or engaging in meaningful activities contributed directly to how teachers felt overall. This supported the study of Prilleltensky et al. (2020), which stated that positive lifestyle behaviors are closely tied to psychological well-being and life satisfaction.



The total effect of health habits on well-being was also significant ($\beta = 0.9639$, $p < .001$), reinforcing the importance of these practices. Looking more closely at the individual paths, the link between health habits and stress (a path) was negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.270$, $p = 0.377$). This suggested that even when teachers tried to maintain healthy habits, it did not always lead to a noticeable decrease in their stress levels. This was understandable, since many sources of stress—such as workload, administrative demands, and classroom challenges—were often beyond personal control. As Kyriacou (2021) explained, teacher stress was more strongly influenced by workplace conditions than by lifestyle alone.

Conversely, the relationship between stress and well-being (b path) was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.352$, $p = 0.002$). This showed that as stress increased, well-being tended to decrease. This pattern was consistent with what many teachers experienced in practice. When stress built up, it affected not only emotional balance but also energy and motivation. Similar findings were reported by Collie (2021), who noted that higher levels of occupational stress were often associated with lower well-being and reduced job satisfaction. Thus, the direct path from health habits to well-being (c path) remained positive and highly significant ($\beta = 0.869$, $p < .001$), further supporting the idea that health habits contributed directly to teachers' well-being, even when stress was present.

To summarize, the results suggested that health habits played a clear and important role in supporting well-being. Stress, on the other hand, had a negative effect but did not serve as a bridge between health habits and well-being in this case. In other words, improving health habits could enhance well-being on its own, but it may not be enough to reduce stress levels.

Findings

The findings of the study showed that SNED teachers generally practiced good health habits, especially in areas such as spirituality and relationships with others. In the same manner, aspects such as physical activity and personal health responsibility appeared to need more attention. In terms of well-being, teachers seemed to experience a moderately positive state, which suggested that they were generally doing well emotionally and psychologically, although there were times when fatigue and stress became noticeable.

The results also showed that health habits were closely related to teachers' well-being. Teachers who maintained positive lifestyle practices tended to feel better in terms of their emotional and psychological condition. In contrast, stress showed a negative relationship with well-being, meaning that higher levels of stress were often associated with lower levels of happiness, relaxation, and life satisfaction.

On the other hand, the findings suggested that stress did not act as a bridge between health habits and well-being. Instead, health habits appeared to influence well-being in a more direct way rather than through stress.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it appeared that maintaining healthy lifestyle practices played an important role in supporting the well-being of SNED teachers. At the same time, stress continued to be a factor that affected their overall psychological condition. Thus, it made it important to address both areas together. Practices such as eating well, staying physically active, building positive relationships, engaging in spiritual activities, and finding ways to manage stress seemed to contribute to how teachers felt and functioned in their daily lives. When these habits were present, teachers were more likely to be emotionally stable, stay motivated, and handle the demands of teaching more effectively. This was particularly evident in the special education environment.

However, the findings also suggested that personal efforts alone may not have been enough. The work environment and the kind of support teachers received also mattered. Because of this, promoting teacher well-being may have required a more balanced approach—one that supported both individual health practices and a supportive school environment. By encouraging healthy routines while also addressing sources of stress within the workplace, schools and educational institutions may have been in a better position to support teachers. In doing so, they could help



develop a more resilient and capable teaching workforce that was better prepared to meet the demands of special education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

For School Policy. The school leaders may consider giving more importance to teacher wellness by introducing programs that support healthy lifestyle practices. These might include activities that encourage regular physical exercise, balanced nutrition, and simple stress management strategies. Such efforts may help teachers maintain both their physical and emotional well-being. At a broader level, educational policymakers may also look into developing initiatives that focus on teacher health, especially for those in special education, where the demands of the work can be more complex.

For Improvement of Practice. Teachers may benefit from continuing to build on their existing health habits. This may mean setting aside time for physical activity, finding ways to manage stress that actually work in daily life, and keeping strong, supportive relationships both in and outside of school. At the same time, the school itself has a part to play. If teachers feel supported through access to mental health services, guidance when needed, and workloads that are kept reasonable. It can make a real difference in how they cope and function.

For Future Researchers. Future studies may take a consideration at other factors that could shape teachers' well-being. Such as the kind of support they receive in their workplace, how they balance work and personal life, their level of job satisfaction, and the ways they cope with challenges. taking into consideration a wider group of participants or trying different research approaches could also help provide a fuller picture of the issue.

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