

# Psychological Foundations of Workload, Stress, and Teacher Well-being in the Context of Education Reform: A Systematic Literature Review

Nurul Inayah B. Upara <sup>\*1</sup> , Rochmawati <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang; [nurul.inayah.2501328@students.um.ac.id](mailto:nurul.inayah.2501328@students.um.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang; [rochmawati.fip@um.ac.id](mailto:rochmawati.fip@um.ac.id)

\* Correspondence: [nurul.inayah.2501328@students.um.ac.id](mailto:nurul.inayah.2501328@students.um.ac.id)

## Abstract

**Purpose:** To identify and analyze the psychological basis underlying the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of educational reform through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA model.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This study used a qualitative approach with the PRISMA model. The research procedure included the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of articles obtained from the Scopus database with publication criteria from 2015 to 2025. From this process, 21 relevant articles were obtained for analysis.

**Results/Findings:** The results of this study indicate that educational reform has a significant impact on increasing teachers' workload and stress, especially when policies are not balanced with adequate institutional support. Conversely, teachers' well-being can improve if they receive social support, work autonomy, and self-management strategies such as mindfulness.

**Originality/Value:** This study is based on psychological aspects that highlight the mental-emotional balance of teachers in facing policy changes and work pressures in the era of education reform.

**Keywords:** teacher workload, work stress, teacher well-being, education reform, systematic literature review

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## 1. Introduction

Changes in the world of education today are rapid. Many countries are undertaking various reforms to improve the quality of learning, curriculum, and evaluation systems. However, these major changes often have new implications for teachers. Teachers are the ones who directly feel the demands of these reforms, from curriculum adjustments and the use of technology to increasingly complex administration. The increasing pressure of work makes many teachers feel tired, stressed, and even lose their enthusiasm for work. (OECD Report, 2019) shows that most teachers in various countries experience an increase in administrative burdens and psychological pressure during the implementation of new education policies. In recent years, discussions about work stress, workload, and teacher well-being have become increasingly common. Yao & Abdullah (2025)(Yao & Abdullah, 2025) ) explain that research on teacher burnout has been developing since the

1970s and continues to increase today. Social support, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction have been studied, but not much attention has been paid to how education policy affects teacher well-being. Similar results are also described by Pressley et al., (2025), who found that teacher well-being is greatly influenced by four main factors: emotional exhaustion, workload, support from school leaders, and relationships with coworkers. This means that teacher well-being is not only determined by personal conditions, but also by the system and work environment where they teach.

Educational reforms in various countries have also had a significant impact on teachers' workloads. Nurmukhamed et al. (2025) found that stress caused by reform policies directly affects teachers' desire to leave their profession. Teachers in Kazakhstan, for example, feel overwhelmed by the demands of new policies that add to their administrative work and professional responsibilities. This was also revealed by Corbett et al. (2025), that reforms and policy changes in Australia have led to an increase in teachers' workload, which has impacted the balance between work and personal life. As a result, teachers feel that they have lost the balance between work and personal life, and this affects their motivation and job satisfaction. Apart from policy factors, teacher well-being is also influenced by psychological and social factors. Shao et al. (2025) found that high work stress can reduce teacher well-being, especially if they continue to carry the burden of work outside of teaching hours. Conversely, teachers who have high work engagement and are able to manage their thoughts well tend to have more stable well-being. The results of research from Bian & Jiang (2025) also show that mindfulness-based training can help reduce stress and improve teacher well-being. This approach highlights the importance of personal strategies in maintaining well-being amid heavy work pressures.

Research in other countries also confirms that teacher well-being is a global issue that impacts the quality of education. Corbett et al. (2024) found that teachers in Australia have higher stress levels than other professions, mainly due to heavy workloads and a competitive work culture. Similar results were found by Agyapong et al. (2024) in Canada, who reported low psychological resilience among teachers during a period of educational policy change. Meanwhile, Polychroni et al. (2025) in Greece found that teachers in regular schools and inclusive schools had different levels of stress depending on the support they received from their institutions and social environments. All of these results show that teacher well-being is an important factor in maintaining the success of education in various countries. Although there have been many studies discussing teacher stress and well-being, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. Many studies only discuss psychological or social aspects without looking at the relationship with education policy and systems as a whole (Liao, Wang, & Wang, 2023; Sohail et al., 2023). In addition, most studies were conducted in specific countries. Teachers also face similar challenges. Since the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the digital transformation of education, teachers have been required to adapt quickly, while their administrative workload and additional responsibilities continue to increase (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted on how these changes affect the well-being of teachers in Indonesia.

Based on various previous studies that show the complexity of the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher well-being, a more comprehensive study is needed to understand the psychological basis of this phenomenon. This study aims to identify and analyze the psychological basis underlying the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher gap in the context of education reform. This study uses the PRISMA Systematic Literature Review (SRL) approach to review and combine various research results that have been conducted in various countries. Through this approach, this study aims to map the main factors that affect teacher well-being, identify the most dominant forms of workload and stress, and find research gaps that can be the basis for further research. The results of this study are expected to provide assistance and a more comprehensive understanding, as well as input for education policy, including in the Indonesian context.

## 2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a Systematic Literature Review (SRL) and a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) analysis model. This approach was chosen because it can help researchers systematically collect, select, and analyze previous research results to find patterns, differences, and gaps in the topics studied, namely workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of education reform. The inclusion criteria in this study included articles that: 1) were published between 2018 and 2025 to remain relevant to the current context of education reform, 2) originated from indexed scientific journals (Scopus, Web of Science, and Sinta) and were available in full text, 3) examine topics related to teacher workload, teacher stress, teacher well-being, or the impact of education policy and reform on teachers. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria were set for articles that: 1) did not focus on the context of formal education (e.g., studies in the corporate sector or non-formal training), 2) did not explicitly discuss the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher well-being, 3) were in the form of opinions, editorials, or non-empirical reports that did not have clear research methods.

This systematic review refers to the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines as described by Page et al., (2021) To assist in the data search and screening process, the researchers used Watase Uake Tools, a literature search platform connected to various scientific databases such as Elsevier, Sage Journals, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, and others indexed by Scopus. The keywords used were: teacher workload, teacher stress, teacher well-being, educational reform, and teacher burnout. The search was conducted using a combination of keywords with logical operators such as "AND" and "OR" to expand the search results. From the initial search results, the researchers obtained a number of articles which were then selected based on their titles, abstracts, and relevance to the topic being studied. The selection process followed four main stages in accordance with the PRISMA model, namely: 1) Identification – collecting all relevant articles based on keywords, 2) Screening – reviewing titles and abstracts to ensure relevance to the topic, 3) Eligibility – reading the content of the articles in more depth to ensure suitability with the inclusion criteria, 4) Included –

selecting the final articles for further analysis. From this entire process, 21 articles were obtained that met the criteria for further analysis. The articles that passed the selection stage were analyzed by reading them in depth to identify the focus of the research, the methods used, and the main results or findings.

### 3. Results

The article selection process can be explained through four main stages, namely: *identification*, *screening*, *eligibility*, and *inclusion*. In the *identification* stage, researchers conducted a literature search using the Scopus database with several keyword combinations, namely *teacher + administrative + workload + school*, *teacher + occupational + wellbeing + school*, and *teacher + administrative + stress + school*. The search results yielded 319 articles. Next, an initial screening was conducted to remove 28 duplicate articles, 58 articles that did not meet the publication year range (2015-2025), 21 articles from journals outside the specified category (Tier Q1-Q4), and 4 articles that did not have abstracts.

The next stage was Screening. From the initial identification, 211 articles remained, which were then reselected based on the suitability of the title and abstract with the research focus, namely: workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of education reform. At this stage, 187 articles were eliminated because they did not match the research focus. Thus, only 24 articles remained for further review. The third stage was Eligibility, in which a *full-text review* of the remaining articles was conducted to ensure their suitability with the inclusion criteria. Of the 24 articles, 6 could not be accessed in full. The final stage was Inclusion, with the final result showing that there were 18 main articles that met all the criteria and were used in the final analysis of this study. There were also 3 additional articles indexed by Scopus, bringing the total number of articles included to 21. Figure 1 shows the complete flow of the literature selection process using the PRISMA model used in this study.

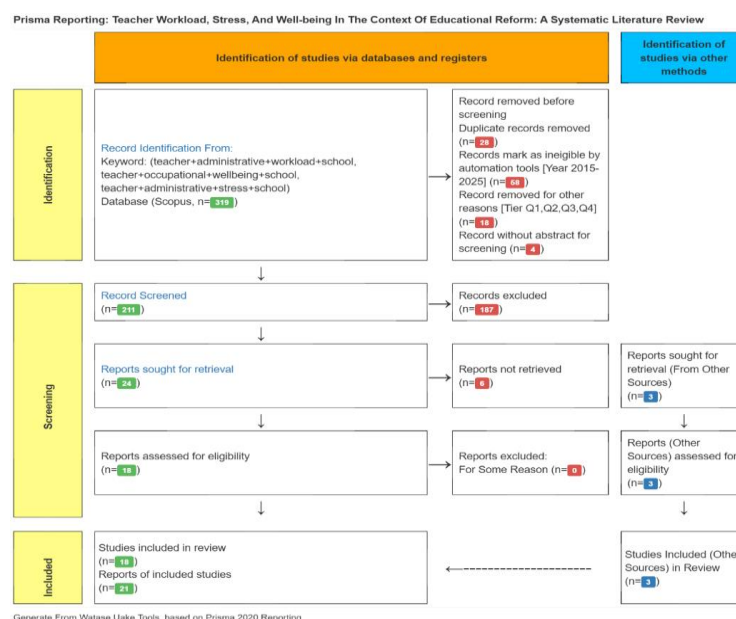


Figure1.PRISMA diagram

Table 1 below presents a summary of the selected articles based on author name, year of publication, research focus, methods used, and key findings related to workload, stress, and teacher disparities in the context of education reform.

**Table 1.** Presentation of 18 articles filtered using the PRISMA flow

No	Author & Year	Title	Method	Focus	Summary of Findings
1	(Nurmukhamed et al., 2025)	Stress stemming from educational reforms as a key determinant of teachers' turnover intentions	Quantitative (TALIS 2018)	Stress due to reform policies	Educational reforms increase stress and teachers' intentions to change professions in Kazakhstan.
2	(Yao & Abdullah, 2025)	Five decades of teacher burnout research	Bibliometrics	Teacher burnout	Burnout research has increased since 2012; psychological focus is dominant, policy aspects are still rarely studied.
3	(Corbett et al., 2025)	Teachers' experiences, needs, and recommendations for promoting their health and wellbeing in Australia	Qualitative	Teachers' health and wellbeing	Teachers need policy support and a healthy work environment.
4	(Pressley et al., 2025)	The Development of Brief Measures of Teacher Well-Being	Survey	Measuring teacher well-being	Four important factors: emotional exhaustion, workload, administrative support, and coworkers.
5	(Shao et al., 2025)	The relationship between work stress and well-being among Chinese primary and secondary school teachers	Quantitative (mediation)	Stress & work engagement	Stress reduces well-being; work engagement acts as a positive mediator.
6	(Ha et al., 2025)	Teacher voices matter: The role of teacher autonomy in enhancing job satisfaction and mitigating burnout	Quantitative	Autonomy & Burnout	Work autonomy reduces burnout and increases teacher satisfaction.
7	(Bian & Jiang, 2025)	Alleviating occupational stress in Chinese junior high	Experiment	Mindfulness intervention	Mindfulness effectively reduces stress and improves teachers' mental health.

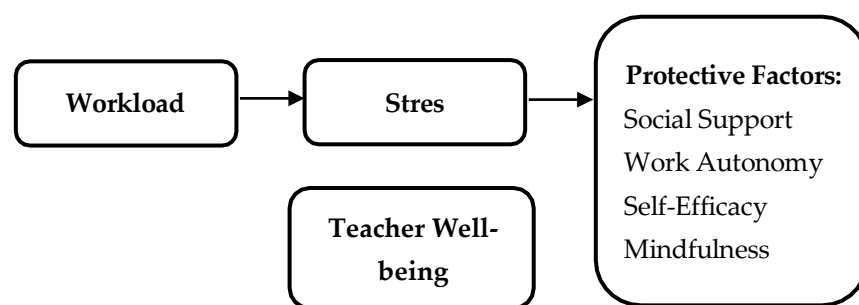
		school teachers: The role of mindfulness-based interventions			
8	(Zhou et al., 2024)	Factors Associated with Teacher Well-being: A Meta-Analysis	Meta-analysis	Teacher well-being	Social support and a positive work environment enhance teacher well-being.
9	(Polychroni et al., 2025)	Job satisfaction, occupational stress, and self-efficacy of Greek mainstream and special school teachers	Survey	Job satisfaction & stress	Self-efficacy and organizational support influence stress and job satisfaction.
10	(Corbett, L., Van Buskirk, J., Phongsavan, P., & Bauman, 2024)	A Cross-Sectional Nationwide Study of Australians' Health	National survey	Teachers' mental health	Teachers have higher levels of stress and psychological distress compared to other professions.
11	(Agyapong et al., 2024)	Prevalence and Correlates of High Stress and Low Resilience among Teachers in Canada	Survey	Stress & Resilience	Teachers with low resilience tend to experience high stress.
12	(Sohail et al., 2023)	Factors influencing teacher wellbeing and burnout in schools: A scoping review	Scoping review	Teacher burnout	Negative work environment factors and lack of support increase burnout.
13	(Liao et al., 2023)	The Effect of Work Stress on the Well-Being of Primary and Secondary School Teachers in China	Quantitative	Work stress	Work-family conflict reduces teachers' well-being.
14	(Nwoko et al., 2023)	A Systematic Review of the Factors That Influence Teachers' Occupational Wellbeing	Systematic review	Teachers' occupational well-being	Key factors: self-efficacy, organizational support, and classroom management.

15	(Camacho et al., 2021)	Burnout in urban teachers: The predictive role of supports and situational responses	Quantitative	Teacher burnout	Social support and self-control reduce burnout.
16	(Hepburn et al., 2021)	A Complementary Intervention to Promote Wellbeing and Stress Management for Early Career Teachers	Quasi-experimental	Mental health & stress	Mindfulness intervention reduces stress and improves well-being.
17	(Kim, 2019)	Teachers' administrative workload crowding out instructional activities	Quantitative	Teachers' administrative workload	Administrative tasks reduce teachers' time for teaching.
18	(Kidger et al., 2016)	Teachers' wellbeing and depressive symptoms, and associated risk factors	Quantitative	Depression & well-being	Teachers with high stress tend to have low wellbeing and depression.
19	(Kusumawati & Umam, 2025)	Strengthening teacher competence for leading and sustaining the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.	Conceptual Analysis & Policy Studies	Adaptation & Teacher Competence	The Merdeka Curriculum reform has increased teachers' workload due to high demands for adaptation and administration.
20	(Butt & Lance, 2005)	Secondary Teacher Workload and Job Satisfaction: Do Successful Strategies for Change Exist?	Quantitative	Teachers' workload & satisfaction	Teachers with high workloads due to curriculum reform and accountability tend to have low job satisfaction and well-being.
21	(Stacey et al., 2023)	Teacher attributions of workload increase in public sec-	Mixed-method	Policy Reform & Teacher Workload	Most teachers experience increased workload and administrative pressure that re-

tor schools: Reflections on change and policy development

duces their well-being, requiring more humane policy support.

Based on an analysis of 21 reviewed articles, the researchers developed a model of findings as a conceptual contribution that describes the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of education reform. This model maps the interrelationships between variables based on the patterns found in the majority of articles, and shows the protective and risk factors that affect teacher well-being. The following is a model of the interrelationships between workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of educational reform.



**Figure 2.** Model of Research Synthesis Findings.

The above findings model shows three main relationships:

1. Educational reform – increased workload for teachers

Rapid reforms and new administrative demands can lead to an increased workload. This is in line with the findings of Kim, (2019); Kusumawati & Umam, (2025); Stacey et al., (2023).

2. High workload – increasing teacher stress

Several studies (Liao et al., 2023; Nurmukhamed et al., 2025; Polychroni et al., 2025) confirm that both administrative and pedagogical workloads directly contribute to increased teacher stress.

3. High stress – reduces teacher well-being

Declining well-being is evident in mental and emotional aspects, as well as in the intention to leave the profession (Corbett, L., Van Buskirk, J., Phongsavan, P., & Bauman, 2024; Kidger et al., 2016; Pressley et al., 2025).

In addition, this model also identifies four psychological protective factors that were repeatedly found in the analyzed articles, namely: 1) Social support, 2) Work autonomy, 3) Self-efficacy, 4) Mindfulness and regulation strategies. These four factors have been proven to reduce stress and improve teacher well-being even when working in situations of policy change. Overall, these results show that teacher well-being is determined by a combination of individual factors and educational policy. These findings address a previously identified research gap, namely the need for studies that systematically integrate

aspects of workload, stress, and teacher well-being in the context of educational reform.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the study of 21 articles analyzed show that teachers' workload, stress, and well-being are closely related, especially in the context of educational reform that demands rapid changes in the learning system and practices. Most researchers describe that increased administrative workload and professional responsibilities are among the main sources of teacher stress. Nurmukhamed et al. (2025) explain that educational reform in Kazakhstan has created new work pressures that have led to increased stress and teachers' intentions to leave the profession. Kim (2019) expressed a similar view, finding that excessive administrative burdens reduce teachers' focus on teaching activities and decrease their work motivation. In addition, Corbett et al. (2025) highlighted that teacher well-being is greatly influenced by organizational support and school policies that favor teachers' mental health. The model of findings compiled from the results of this SLR integrates the pattern of interrelationships between workload, stress, and teacher well-being into a single conceptual framework. The model shows that educational reforms trigger an increase in teachers' workload, both administrative and pedagogical, which then leads to increased work stress. This stressful condition directly affects the decline in teachers' mental, emotional, and social well-being. However, several protective factors such as social support, work autonomy, self-efficacy, and self-management strategies such as mindfulness have been proven to reduce stress levels and maintain teachers' well-being amid the pressure of policy changes. These findings are in line with the results of studies by Zhou et al. (2024) and Bian & Jiang (2025), which confirm that protective factors originate not only from the work environment but also from teachers' internal psychological capacities.

Compared to previous research findings, the results of this SLR reinforce the understanding that the issues of teachers' workload and stress are not merely individual issues, but also structural issues directly related to the design and implementation of education policy. Previous studies tended to discuss burnout, stress, or well-being separately. However, through this SLR approach, these three aspects were mapped in an integrated manner, resulting in a better comprehensive understanding of the causal relationships between these variables. The model presented in this study is an important contribution because it places educational reform as an initial factor that influences teachers' psychological conditions, while also providing an overview of mitigation factors that can be used to strengthen teachers' well-being. Thus, this model is not only consistent with previous research findings, but also complements them with a more systematic and relevant conceptual relationship in the context of modern education.

The novelty of this SRL lies in its comprehensive integration of workload, stress, and teacher gap into a systematic study framework using the PRISMA approach. Most previous studies were fragmented and focused only on one specific aspect, thus failing to provide a comprehensive picture of the psychological relationship between these three

variables in the context of education reform. This study fills this gap by developing a literature synthesis-based model that explains the logical flow and how policy, work environment, and internal psychological factors play a role in determining teacher well-being. This model also provides a perspective on the importance of organizational support, strengthening work autonomy, and psychological intervention as internal components of successful educational reform.

The limitations of this study lie in the scope of the data, which only covers articles published between 2015 and 2025. In addition, the results of this SRL are still theoretical in nature because they are sourced from previous research, without direct empirical evidence. Differences in social contexts and education systems between countries may also influence the interpretation of results. Therefore, further empirical research is needed in the Indonesian context to examine in greater depth the relationship between workload, stress, and teacher well-being, especially amid policy dynamics such as the Merdeka Curriculum and the digital transformation of education.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 21 articles, it can be concluded that teachers' workload, stress, and well-being are closely related psychologically in the context of educational reform. Increased administrative demands and rapid policy changes have proven to be the main sources of psychological pressure for teachers, which have an impact on their well-being and work motivation. However, psychological factors such as social support, work autonomy, self-efficacy, and self-management strategies such as mindfulness can act as protective mechanisms that help teachers adapt to change. Thus, teacher well-being is not only determined by external conditions or educational policies, but also by internal psychological strengths that support teachers' ability to cope with work stress. These results emphasize that understanding teacher well-being needs to be based on psychological aspects, which can form the basis for developing more humane education policies that are oriented towards teachers' mental and emotional balance.

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