



# Teachers' Mental Well-Being at Work

New York City Public School Teachers' Perceptions

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**ABSTRACT**

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Teaching is an important, yet mentally demanding occupation. Educators' work well-being has become a concern in recent years. The objective of this thesis was to gather information on New York City public school teachers' perception of their own occupational health and social emotional learning skills. Furthermore, since this thesis was commissioned by the Sustainable Brain Health Project which was coordinated by Tampere University of Applied Sciences, it aimed at exploring perceptions of social emotional learning as a tool to improve work well-being.

One hundred and twelve New York City public school teachers participated in this study. Perception data were collected about teachers' occupational well-being and social emotional learning competencies and processed using mixed methods research approach. The survey utilized for this purpose included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended answers were analyzed using the descriptive statistical method, while the thematic qualitative method was applied during the analysis of open-ended responses. Confidential research materials have been removed from this report.

The results suggest that utilizing self-awareness skills, as well as self-management and self-leadership strategies help increase New York City public school teachers' mental well-being at work and also aid with stress management.

The findings indicate that New York City public school teachers value social emotional learning as a tool to develop self-management and self-leadership skills, thereby enhancing occupational well-being for educators, however they would need more targeted training and support from the local school system to be able to effectively develop this skill set in themselves. Thus, further research is required in order to increase the validity and reliability of the study and allow for generalization of its findings.

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Key words: work well-being, social emotional learning, self-leadership

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Education is a cognitively demanding field which makes teacher well-being at the workplace essential to maintain and improve in order to prevent burnout and increase productivity. Social Emotional Learning (hereafter SEL) has been a trend in education which was heavily implemented into New York City (hereafter NYC) public school curricula during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SEL skills have explicitly been taught to students in NYC public schools for years. Following research findings by Osher and Kendziora (2010) as well as Jones and Bouffard (2012), New York State included SEL instruction as part of the State Student Learning Standards in order to provide students with positive educational experiences, such as feeling connected to the school, which will likely result in better academic achievements (NYSED 2018).

In addition to actively developing students' SEL skills to become more successful in academic and social settings, it is important to examine how SEL competencies impact educators' mental well-being and how this toolkit can be utilized to sustain educational employees' brain health and productivity. Strong teacher SEL competencies may likely lead to positive interactions and increased efficiency at the workplace, while it also may contribute to preventing – what Jennings and Greenberg (2009) call – educator “burnout cascade”. Consequently, improving these skills for educational professionals may aid the current nationwide teacher shortage prevalent in the United States of America over time.

Furthermore, the importance of improving teacher well-being and addressing feelings of burnout can be seen in Figure 1, which represents the results of a National Education Association poll that members took on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. 67% of responders indicated burnout as a very serious issue that educators are currently

facing, while a total of 90% of survey participants claimed it to be a serious or somewhat serious issue (NEA 2022). Development of strong SEL skills for educational professionals might be a valuable tool to help address this key stressor.

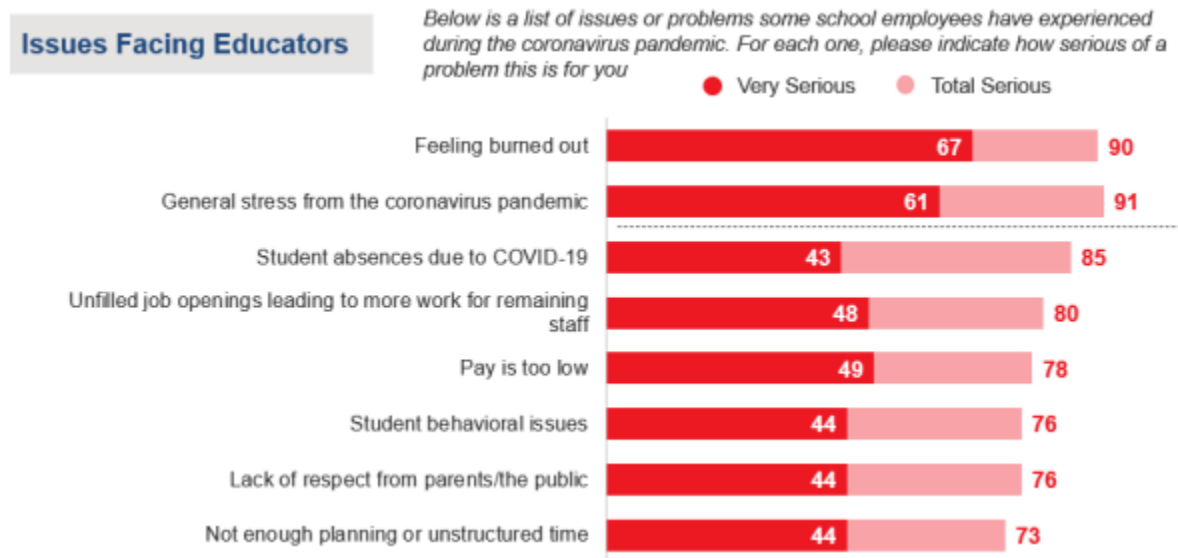


FIGURE 1. Issues Facing Educators Source: National Education Association (2022)

In alignment with the Sustainable Brain Health Project objectives (TAMK n.d.), this thesis studies NYC public school educators' perception of their own occupational health and well-being, more specifically their views on self-awareness, self-management and self-leadership skills. Furthermore, the thesis also examines NYC public school teachers' perception of their SEL competencies, such as self-awareness and self-management. In addition, this study intends to discuss and assess SEL as a tool to support development of teachers' self-management and self-leadership skills, thereby contributing to the Sustainable Brain Health research which aims at identifying procedures and tools that improve teachers' mental well-being at the workplace. Finally, this thesis aims to provide comparative international data and analysis for the Sustainable Brain Health Project about teachers' occupational well-being.

## **1.2 Research context**

This study was commissioned by the Sustainable Brain Health Project which was funded by the European Social Fund. The Sustainable Brain Health Project, which is coordinated by Tampere University of Applied Sciences (hereafter TAMK), partnered with Tampere University, Tampere University Hospital and Oulu University of Applied Sciences in a collaborative effort for research in Finland. The project runs for three years, from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. This project aims to create “a foundation for work-life evolution that brings brain wellbeing into focus” according to Project Manager Mirva Kolonen (2021). In order to achieve this goal, the project examines the impact that work demands have on mental health and professional performance in various high stress occupations, such as nursing, teaching and IT. The research project also intends to identify and “assess new methods and technologies that would counteract the detrimental effects of stress” (ESF 2021). This thesis aims to contribute to the Sustainable Brain Health Project by providing international data analysis based on survey responses collected from New York City teachers working in public education.

## **1.3 Research questions**

The following research questions were applied in this thesis:

- How do NYC public school teachers perceive their occupational health and well-being?
- How do NYC public school teachers perceive the current state of their SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management?

- How do NYC public school teachers perceive their self-leadership and self-management skills?
- What is NYC public school teachers' perception of SEL as a tool to improve occupational health?

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis begins with the presentation of the theoretical framework, which includes a literature review related to occupational well-being as well as SEL. Key concepts of the research topic are defined and previous research findings are outlined in this part. Research methodology used in the study is reviewed next, followed by the presentation and discussion of data results. Further implications of research findings are also considered. Finally, the thesis concludes with a discussion about the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.



## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Defining work well-being

Several research findings have proven the interconnected nature of the work environment, work relationships, mental and physical well-being and health at the workplace (Black 2008). In addition, neuroscience has further emphasized the interdependent systemic relationship between body and mind and called this bond a “living system” (Caine & Caine 2001). Since these concepts are interrelated, they should be examined and nurtured together.

This interconnectivity is a popular concept used both by organizations and in research to describe work well-being. For example, The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (hereafter OSH) at the International Labour Organization (hereafter ILO) defines workplace well-being as the quality of both physical and social factors, such as the workplace environment, workers’ feelings of safety, satisfaction, support and organizational climate (ILO n.d.).

The existing literature provides multiple interpretations of well-being. The meaning can be objective, subjective, or a combination of these two (Schulte et al. 2015). Objective well-being includes satisfying basic needs, such as shelter and food, as well as having access to sufficient resources, such as clothes and rights (Schulte et al. 2015). However, this thesis only took the elements of the subjective definition of well-being into consideration. Subjective well-being is often defined with the following three interrelated components (Diener 1984; Busseri & Sadava 2011; Tov & Diener 2013):

1. Frequent positive affect
2. Infrequent negative affect
3. Cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction

Figure 2 demonstrates the tripartite model of subjective well-being (Busseri & Sadava 2011). According to this model, the three components of subjective well-being mutually affect each other. It also presents how an individual's degree of life satisfaction is always connected to their emotions, both positive and negative.

### Subjective Well-Being Components

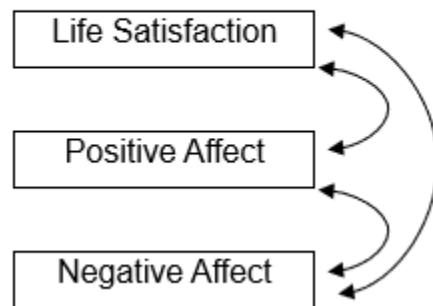


FIGURE 2. Tripartite model of subjective well-being (adapted from Busseri & Sadava 2011, 292)

#### 2.1.1 The importance of well-being at work

Work well-being – if maintained properly – can contribute to an organization's efficiency on multiple levels: a healthy, engaged, productive workforce leads to a positive workplace culture and environment, which contributes to organizational productivity. As a result, customer satisfaction can be increased as well as chances of workforce retention. On the contrary, ignoring work well-being of employees can easily lead to physical and mental health issues, such as feelings of stress, burnout, conflicts, drug abuse. Consequently, decreased productivity, unhappiness, lack of recognition, negative work environment and resignations may likely occur at the organization. Furthermore, worker retention may become challenging due to the significantly

decreased feeling of commitment to the workplace, which may lead to company failure (ILO n.d.).

Professionals working in public service fields, such as healthcare and education, are the most valuable resources at the organization since they closely work with and care for other people on a daily basis. Even though organizations have generally been helping workers address specific health issues – such as drug abuse –, recognizing that the meaning of health and well-being go beyond medical issues (Black 2008) and expanding support with a wide range of programs that promote mental health and address a variety of well-being challenges has been a recent phenomenon globally (ILO n.d.).

Figure 3 demonstrates the various fields the concept of well-being can be utilized for according to Schulte and Sauter (2021). These fields are research, practice and policy making. Research measures the impact of well-being on the organization's overall efficiency, identifies the causes for a lack of well-being at a specific organization and examines the role interventions play in increasing well-being at the workplace. Policies set a specific level of well-being as an organizational objective, identify tools and methods that help achieve this target and the efficiency of the implementation of these policies are assessed.

This thesis focuses on the practical use of well-being concepts and surveys by analyzing perception data collected from educational workers. This interpretation is most closely connected to the workers' self-appraisal component in the chart in Figure 3 (Schulte & Sauter 2021), as the questions of the study survey require personal self-reflection. In practice, well-being can be examined in terms of a cause-and-effect relationship between the concept itself and its impact on health, efficiency and productivity at a personal as well as at an organizational level. As such, well-being can function both as an indicator of success and a goal for both employers and employees. It is important to frequently measure the level of well-being at any organization for the aforementioned reasons.



FIGURE 3. Uses of well-being concepts and surveys (Schulte & Sauter 2021)

### 2.1.2 The importance of educators' mental well-being at work

Educators are key figures in creating a positive learning environment that enables children's academic and personal growth (Hamre & Pianta 2007; Eccles & Roeser 1999). In addition, McLean and Connor's research study (2015) has examined correlations between teachers' psychological well-being and their impacts on child development and on the learning experience. Studies, such as Jennings and Greenberg (2009), have also found that educator well-being affects relationships at work and efficacy in teaching social-emotional skills in the classroom. Meanwhile, research also shows that being an educator is an extremely demanding occupation due to stress and other emotional well-being related factors (Johnson et al. 2005).

According to research, teaching is one of the most stressful professions in the public service domain (Montgomery & Rupp 2005). Teachers can experience high stress levels at work due to intrapersonal factors, work conditions and student behavior

management challenges, as well as lack of resources and inadequate support. Prolonged work stress can have detrimental effects on well-being, such as burnout, exhaustion and feeling unaccomplished (Maslach et al. 2001). It can also affect job satisfaction, motivation, quality of instruction, which may lead to poor performance and learning outcomes (Schwarzer & Hallum 2008). In addition, educators who are frequently stressed are unable to facilitate SEL skill instruction for their students in a way that maximizes learning (Mashburn et al. 2008).

In addition to being an essential factor that contributes to personal well-being, job satisfaction likely increases worker retention, improves the efficiency of instruction (Ostroff 1992) and student-teacher relationships (Bloom 1986), which are all beneficial on an organizational level as well. On the contrary, studies have shown that job dissatisfaction may lead to feelings of burnout, decreased motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2009), as well as emotional overload, feelings of inadequacy and an increased desire to leave the field (Jepson & Forrest 2006; Saari & Judge 2004).

## **2.2 Defining Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

SEL has been described in a variety of ways, using different frameworks in research. Miles and Huberman (1994) define conceptual frameworks as “[explaining] either graphically or in a narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs or variables—and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal.” (278) Some frameworks define SEL as the process of learning and applying specific intra- and interpersonal skills, values, behaviors, including feelings, thoughts and actions, that will support students with setting appropriate goals and successfully achieving them in academic settings (Humphrey et al. 2011). Other definitions describe SEL within the framework of social and emotional competencies, which include identifying and self-regulating emotions and behavior, responding to others with empathy in social situations, relationship building and goal setting (Jones & Kahn

2017). This competency-based framework helps organize relevant data into categories and provides measurable and flexible sets of characteristics for research to identify and analyze (Jones & Kahn 2017; Osher et al. 2017). In a broader interpretation, SEL can also refer to cross-cultural competence and social responsibility skills, however this thesis only uses parts of the CASEL 5 SEL framework developed by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

CASEL defines SEL along five core competencies as demonstrated by Table 1:

- Self-awareness - the ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts and values
- Self-management - the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, behaviors
- Social awareness - the ability to empathize with others regardless of their cultural backgrounds
- Relationship skills - the ability to build and nurture positive relationships with others regardless of their cultural backgrounds
- Responsible decision making - the ability to set positive, healthy goals and choices for oneself and in social contexts (CASEL n.d.)

TABLE 1. The five SEL skills (modified from The CASEL 5 Source: [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org) )

SEL skill	Skill descriptors
<b>Self-awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand one's own emotions, thoughts and values</li> </ul> and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand how these emotions, thoughts and values influence behavior across contexts</li> </ul>
<b>Self-management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations</li> <li>• set and achieve goals and aspirations</li> </ul>
<b>Social awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the perspectives of others (including those from diverse backgrounds)</li> </ul> and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathize with others (including those from diverse backgrounds)</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish and maintain healthy, supportive relationships</li> </ul> and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals/groups</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible decision-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations</li> </ul>

In the United States of America, many states have incorporated this CASEL 5 framework into their state learning standards and school work (Eklund et al. 2018). For the purposes of the current study, only data related to individual teacher competencies, such as self-awareness and self-management were collected and analyzed. Social competencies were not analyzed and discussed in this thesis.

### **2.2.1 The importance of SEL for educators' mental well-being**

Teachers' well-being and mastery of their own social and emotional competencies influence efficient implementation of SEL into their work with students and affect their relationships at school. American researchers Jennings and Greenberg (2009, 492) found that "the quality of teacher-student relationships, student and classroom management, and effective social and emotional learning program implementation all mediate classroom and student outcomes." Positive teacher-student relationships create a classroom environment of trust, in which students will more likely take risks when facing challenging tasks and consequently they will be more likely to engage in deeper learning (Merritt et al. 2012). In order for educators to successfully implement SEL with students, they need to have well-rounded knowledge about SEL and they need to be aware and improve their own social-emotional competencies and well-being as well (Jennings & Frank 2015). Mielke (2019) also points out that research-based practices (such as SEL) can have transformational effects on enhancing teacher well-being. Furthermore, teachers with higher SEL competencies are more likely to manage their heightened negative emotions in healthy ways, without these negative feelings interfering with their work relationships and/or impacting their job satisfaction experiences (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy 2004).

The interconnected nature of teachers' well-being and SEL competence, and the various ways they interact with other factors within the school community are well demonstrated in Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) Prosocial Classroom Model, as

shown in Figure 4. High teacher SEL competence and well-being contribute to forming healthy relationships both inside the classroom with students and outside of the classroom with colleagues and other members of the school community. Teacher SEL competence can also strengthen classroom management skills and enable effective SEL implementation. These factors help establish a healthy classroom environment and likely lead to students' academic and social emotional growth. In addition, experiencing personal success as well as seeing students' achievements can contribute to enhanced positive feelings related to well-being, such as job satisfaction and self-efficacy, which fuels motivation for the educator. Jennings and Greenberg describe social emotional competence in educators within the categories identified in the CASEL 5 framework: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making skills.

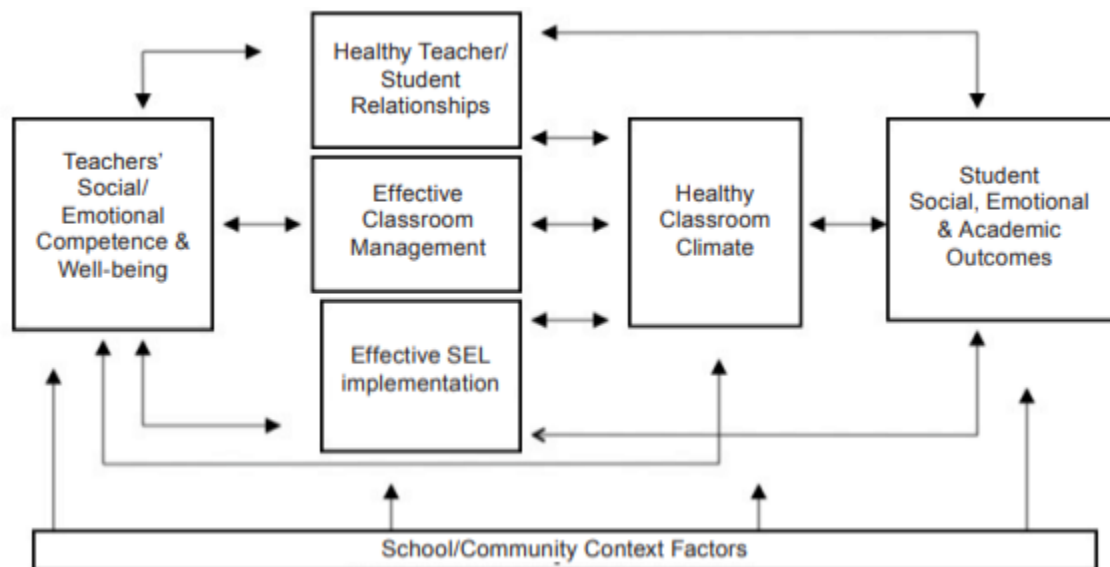


FIGURE 4. The Prosocial Classroom Model Source: Jennings & Greenberg (2009)

A significant challenge in the United States is that there is limited formal training available to teachers to develop their own SEL competencies and little access to best practices on how to implement SEL into their curricula and classroom instruction with students (Schonert-Richel, Hanson-Peterson & Hymel 2015; Jennings & Frank 2015).



This results in each educator being forced to rely on themselves and their school communities to find support, the quality of which may vary by the school.

### **2.2.2 Self-awareness**

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines self-awareness as “awareness of one’s own personality or individuality” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Understanding one’s own thoughts, values and emotions is especially important for people working in the human service industry, such as teaching, since according to Palmer (2007, 6), “the more familiar we become with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching - and living – becomes.” In other words, the stronger self-awareness skills an educator has, the better they will be able to build relationships and support students’ academic and personal growth as well. New York City’s adapted CASEL Framework description of self-awareness components, such as being able to identify personal strengths and challenges, ability to understand and identify emotions, relating feelings and thoughts to behavior and optimism echoes the statement of how knowing oneself impacts others’ behaviors. (NYC.GOV, n.d.) Goleman (1998) connects educators’ self-awareness competencies to “a well-grounded sense of self-confidence” (318), while Jennings and Greenberg (2009) consider this skill an indicator of having high social and emotional competence, which not only enables teachers to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, but also allows them to utilize this knowledge to motivate students better.

### **2.2.3 Self-management**

New York City’s adopted CASEL Framework identifies the following key components of the self-management SEL competency:

- Regulating one’s emotions
- Managing stress

- Controlling impulses
- Self-motivation
- Setting and achieving positive goals (NYC.GOV)

Emotions play a crucial role in educators' well-being and affect all aspects of the profession from relationships to designing and delivering instruction (Brackett & Cipriano 2020). Studies have shown clear correlation between teachers' strong ability to control displaying stress in the learning community and its positive impact on both student achievement and behavior (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa & Reinke 2018), and psychological benefits, such as feelings of joy, happiness and motivation, as well as lower levels of negative feelings such as anxiety and depression (Vaish, Grossmann & Woodward 2008; Allen 2018).

The importance of teachers being able to properly regulate their own emotions is emphasized in the so-called self-management theory which views the teacher as a self-manager whose efficiency increases the success of the organization (Toma 2010). According to the theory, educators have multiple professional responsibilities, including managing themselves, their students and to some extent the school community, therefore enhancing their management skills in addition to their content knowledge and instructional skills is beneficial for them as employees on a personal level as well as for the entire organization. Similarly, Jennings & Greenberg's (2009) Prosocial Classroom model presented in Figure 4 implies that teachers with strong self-management skills are able to respond in healthy ways to situations that are charged with heightened emotions, prevent stress, de-escalate negative behaviors and restore a positive learning environment for the class community. Finally, self-regulating emotions is a skill that can reduce feelings of stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction for teachers. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that higher self-management competencies lead to positive outcomes for all participants in the teaching and learning process.

### 2.2.4 Self-leadership

Self-leadership was defined as a process, through which a person is able to intentionally control their own behavior, motivate themselves and set goals for themselves with the help of behavioral and cognitive strategies (Manz, 1986, 2015; Manz & Neck, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001). It was developed to broaden the idea of self-management and as an extension to the self-control theory, which was created in the 1980s (Neck & Houghton 2006). Neck and Houghton's study (2006, 271) also identifies the concept as a means that helps "people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform", thereby increasing efficiency at work.

Self-leadership strategies can be distinguished either as being focused on behavior, natural rewards, or constructive thought pattern strategies (Anderson & Prussia 1997; Houghton & Neck 2002; Manz & Neck 2004; Manz & Sims 2001; Neck & Houghton 2006). Behavior focused strategies build on the personal, social emotional competencies of self-awareness and self-management through goal-setting and self-rewarding behavior (Houghton & Neck 2002; Manz & Neck 2004). Natural rewards strategies induce positive feelings, such as self-efficacy and self-accomplishment, in order to achieve self-motivation, and shape perceptions about completed work in a way that it feels naturally rewarding (Manz & Neck 2004; Manz & Sims 2001; Houghton & Yoho 2005; Neck & Houghton 2006). These strategies also drive the individual's attention towards positive aspects of the job, thereby incentivizing finding joy while working (Manz & Neck 2004; Manz & Sims 2001). Finally, constructive thought strategies convey utilizing cognitive strategies, such as positive self-talk and mental imagery, which focus on creating positive thinking patterns that can potentially enhance the individual's work performance (Godwin, Neck & Houghton 2006; Neck & Manz 1996).

Developing self-leadership skills has been proven to be beneficial for organizations since it offers new perspectives to both employees and employers on ideas of control and management (Alvesson & Wilmot 1992; Conger & Kanungo 1988). Self-leadership empowers employees by letting them be more active participants (Aktouf 1992) and

take more power and ownership over their work, which in return makes their performance more effective which benefits both the employer and the organization (Anderson & Prussia 1997; Houghton & Yoho 2005).

### 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Methodological approach

The aim of this research was to survey the state of well-being of New York City public school teachers and examine the target group's perception of their own SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management. Furthermore, this research intended to reveal how these competencies contribute to teachers' occupational well-being. A mixed method research approach was applied in this thesis. A commonly used definition of mixed methods research was created by Johnson, et al. (2007) by merging several other definitions of the process:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (123)

Collecting and analyzing a combination of data sets can lead to a clearer understanding of the research problem than using only either quantitative or qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, 5).

This study followed the convergent parallel mixed methods (hereafter CPMM) research design. Figure 5 describes the steps of this method (Creswell 2014). The reasons for choosing CPMM were the time limitation for data collection and that this method allows for the simultaneous collection of different types of data sets that complement each other (Edmonds & Kennedy 2017). In other words, CPMM is suitable for converging quantitative and qualitative data (Cohen et al. 2018, 39; Creswell 2014, 15). These two types of data were equally deemed necessary to be collected and analyzed since the aim was to gain in-depth insights into the topic (Creswell & Creswell 2018). After

separate analysis of the data sets, results were being compared to see if there is correlation between the conclusions. This method might not improve reliability but complementary data collection and analysis can increase research legitimacy (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson 2006; Shenton 2004).

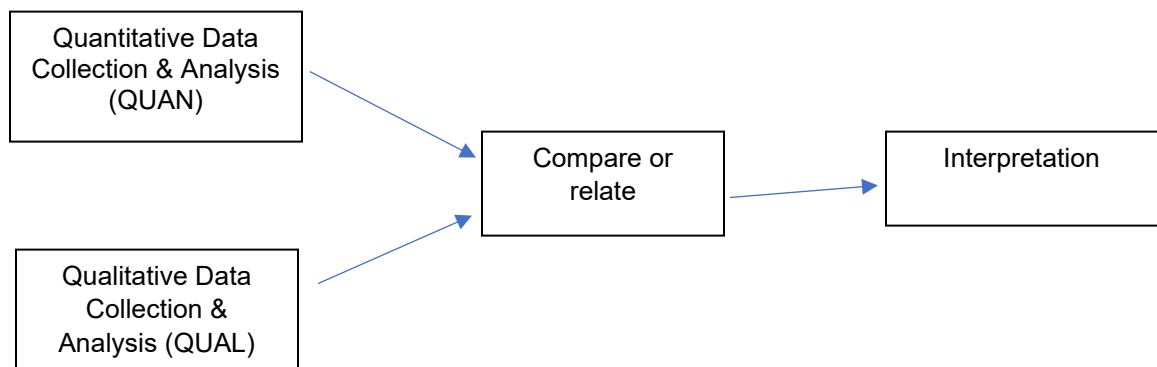


FIGURE 5. Convergent parallel mixed method design (adapted from Creswell 2014, 220)

The philosophical background driving research design choices for this thesis was pragmatism due to its inclusive perspective on “‘what works’ as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Tashakorri & Teddlie 2003, 713). This philosophy allows for a flexible approach to research and recognizes that various factors – such as politics, epistemologies and ethical values – play an important part in determining the researcher’s methodological choices (Morgan 2007).

### 3.2 Survey questions

An anonymized online survey was created and used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from target group members (Appendix 1). The rationale for utilizing an electronic data collection tool was that it is relatively fast, accessible and cost effective

while allowing for large amounts of responses to be collected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018, 622). Quantitative data was collected via multiple-choice questions and the psychometric method of Likert scale responses, which is a popular research tool capable of capturing human attitudes in scientifically measurable ways (McLeod 2008). Qualitative parts of the survey included open-ended questions.

The first part of the research survey aimed at identifying brain health perceptions of participants based on their work well-being experiences, self-management and motivational factors, emotions and ethical load. This part consisted of thirty-six closed-ended and four open-ended questions. Some of the closed-ended questions in this section consisted of five-point Likert scale responses ranging from *Totally disagree* to *Fully agree*. Other closed-ended questions aimed at identifying the frequency of the occurrence of experiences on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Very rarely or never* to *Very often or always*. Another set of questions asked respondents to evaluate the intensity of the experience regarding specific well-being factors on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Not at all* to *Very much*.

The second part of the survey aimed at gathering data on participants' perception of their own SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management and included eighteen closed ended questions. Participants were asked to self-reflect and respond to claims on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly Agree*.

The third and final part of the research survey consisted of four open ended questions: one about effective work-related stress management strategies, two questions about ways of effectively modeling self-awareness and self-management skills to students and one question asking research participants to evaluate the efficiency of SEL as a tool for developing educators' self-management and self-leadership skills.

After participants read a brief introduction to the research as well as the Privacy Notice and Data Protection Plan (Appendix 2), they voluntarily consented to participation in the study and provided background information about their gender, age, grade level they teach, time served within the NYC public school system, as well as responses about their current support systems and personal and professional responsibilities. Part I of the survey was adapted from questions developed by the Sustainable Brain

Health Project, measuring teacher perceptions of work well-being experience, self-management, motivational factors, emotions and ethical load. Participants were asked to evaluate claims based on a scale, respond to multiple choice and open-ended questions about the aforementioned topics. Research questions in Part II were adapted from the survey developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2020), measuring teachers' perception of SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management. This section only consisted of multiple-choice questions and collected responses to claims about the following topics:

- Emotional self-awareness
- Identity and self-knowledge
- Growth mindset and purpose
- Managing emotions
- Motivation, agency and goal-setting
- Planning and organization

Three qualitative adult well-being perception questions in Part III of the online questionnaire were adapted from Panorama Education's Social-Emotional Learning Survey (Panorama n.d.). The fourth question in this section was created by the research controller and aimed at collecting further narrative data on the role of SEL in developing self-management and self-leadership skills as perceived by survey participants. Open-ended questions are beneficial for qualitative research since they can provide "authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, 330).

### **3.3 Survey pre-test**

Data subjects often misinterpreting questions can pose a significant challenge to questionnaire design (Belson 1981; Hunt, Sparkman & Wilcox 1982). Since all questions in Part I of the survey were translated from Finnish to English using an online translation tool, pre-testing was deemed to be necessary by the researcher in order to



avoid ambiguity and confusion caused by language differences. This is considered a good practice in social research (Foddy 1993; Hague 1993). Furthermore, pre-testing can help reduce sampling errors and supports achieving an increased response rate (de Leeuw 2001). Feedback was requested during the pre-testing process regarding the formatting and presentation of the questions to increase face validity and to ensure that the question design's perspective does not differ from that of the subjects for whom the survey was intended for (Greco & Walop 1987). Four teachers who were not members of the target group had been asked to complete the initial survey and provide the research controller with feedback about the clarity of the questions and the duration of survey completion. All four test participants were educators in the private sector with different ethnic, language and age background. The pre-test subjects also taught different subjects and age groups of students. These pre-test responses were deleted and the four pre-test group participants were excluded from further participation in the research. Some questions were reworded and scale values were modified based on the feedback from pre-testing.

### **3.4 Research participants**

New York City Department of Education (hereafter NYC DOE) public school teachers working with 4-18 years old students were encouraged to fill out the final version of the online survey. Data collection started on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and ended on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The survey with a brief introduction about the research was advertised through a social media NYC DOE teacher chat and through two United Federation of Teachers group emails. Permission to promote the survey through these channels had been requested by the research controller and granted by the group administrators in advance of data collection.

A total of 121 participants responded to the anonymous online survey voluntarily. However, only 112 responses were used for data analysis since 9 participants had

indicated that they worked outside of the New York City public school system and therefore these responses were not considered for data processing.

Survey participants' demographical data was organized based on their gender and the grade level they teach as seen in Table 2. The majority of responders, 76.7%, self-identified as women, while 19.6% as men. In terms of school type, 55.3% of responders are holding a teaching position at a high school (grades 9-12), 27.6% at an elementary school (grades pre-Kindergarten-5) and 13.3% at a middle school (grades 6-8) within the NYC public school system. Even though only two participants identified their gender as "Other", two responders did not disclose their gender identity and four survey participants teach in "Mixed" settings, their survey answers were processed in order to maintain research transparency.

TABLE 2. Survey participant summary

Position Gender	Elementary school (Pre-K-5)	Middle school (6-8)	High school (9-12)	Mixed		Total
				Elementary- Middle (Pre-K-8)	Middle-High (6-12)	
<b>Woman</b>	29	9	45	1	2	86 (76.7%)
<b>Man</b>	2	6	14	0	0	22 (19.6%)
<b>Other</b>	0	0	2	0	0	2 (1.7%)
<b>Undisclosed</b>	0	0	1	0	1	2 (1.7%)
<b>Total</b>	31 (27.6%)	15 (13.3%)	62 (55.3%)	1 (0.8%)	3 (2.6%)	112

### 3.5 Data analysis

Quantitative method was used to analyze closed-ended survey questions. Qualitative method was used to analyze open-ended survey responses. The two data sets were analyzed independently, then results were merged together and interpreted in a comparative manner (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

Following the convergent parallel research design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously in the form of a survey containing closed-ended and open-ended questions and the two data sets were analyzed separately. Afterwards, the results were merged for comparison and interpreted. Quantitative data was

analyzed using the descriptive statistical method. In addition, Microsoft Excel was used to create charts. Qualitative data was processed using thematic analysis steps described by Braun and Clark (2006). After an initial familiarization with the data set, codes were assigned to identified patterns and grouped into themes based on similarities. After reviewing themes, findings were presented in a narrative form with supporting evidence from the data sets.

Before data analysis, survey responses were organized into groups according to grade levels participants worked with and based on years of teaching experience. 65 high school educator responses, 19 middle school educator responses, 32 elementary school educator responses were processed. Regarding the grouping based on work experience, 13 respondents had up to 5 years of teaching experience, 30 participants had between 6-10 years of teaching experience, 55 had between 11-20 years and 14 had over 20 years of work experience as a teacher. Due to the significant differences between subject group sizes, the results cannot be generalized. In order to increase population validity and to be able to draw more reliable generalized conclusions, more extensive research is suggested to be conducted in the future.

Work experience was provided in years and months but rounded to years according to the following: under 7 months of work experience the number was rounded down, while more than 7 months of work experience meant that the number of months was rounded up to the year) for easier data management which may have altered the work experience-based grouping.

Some survey participants indicated that they work with multiple grade levels, such as elementary and middle school, or middle school and high school, therefore their responses were counted to multiple groups which skewed the results in this grouping set up. However, these groupings were only utilized during the analysis of teachers' stress levels (see Figure 7) to identify if the amount of work experience or the school level taught is a determining factor.

### 3.6 Research ethics

Data subjects – New York City Department of Education teachers – participated in the research on a voluntary basis. Minimal personal data was collected, processed and stored securely, following the ethical research guidelines of Tampere University of Applied Sciences, the Sustainable Brain Health Research Project, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the New York Privacy Act – Senate Bill S6701. The survey had been approved by the New York City Department of Education Conflict of Interest Office. Each data subject provided their informed consent to participate in the research and was informed about their rights, all purposes of the research, the type of data to be collected and plans for securely collecting, storing, processing and – upon completion of the thesis – destroying data as per GDPR 2016/679/EU. All collected data was anonymized. Respondents had multiple opportunities to opt out of participation and to ask questions from the researcher throughout the process.

The researcher had permission to utilize parts of the Sustainable Brain Health Project's initial survey and did not and will not use the survey elsewhere other than for the purposes of this thesis. CASEL also provided written permission to the researcher to use SEL questions they developed for educators for the purposes of this thesis. The researcher also prepared the material management plan and data protection notice following TAMK guidelines. All research materials were stored securely in a password-protected Google Drive folder by the researcher and results were made available for international data comparison. In addition to password protection, the Google account used for the survey was protected by two-step user identification (MFA) and the account was only accessed by the researcher.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Sustainable Brain Health Questions

#### 4.1.1 Work well-being

The first five questions of the survey aimed at providing a general overview of NYC DOE teachers’ work well-being experiences. As Figure 6 demonstrates, 34% of responders (38 participants) reported feeling full of energy *a few times a week*, 26% (29 participants) *a few times a month* and 22% (25 participants) feel this way *once a week*. Only 3 teachers (3%) reported experiencing high levels of energy on a *daily* basis. Similarly, the majority of responders feel excited about their work either *a few times a week* (49 responders; 44%), *once a week* (26 responders; 23%) or *a few times a month* (20 responders; 18%). 7% (8 responders) feel this type of excitement *daily*. The majority of respondents were feeling completely immersed in their work while being at work *a few times a month* (8 participants; 7%), *once a week* (11 participants; 10%), *a few times a week* (36 participants; 32%), or *daily* (53 participants; 47%).

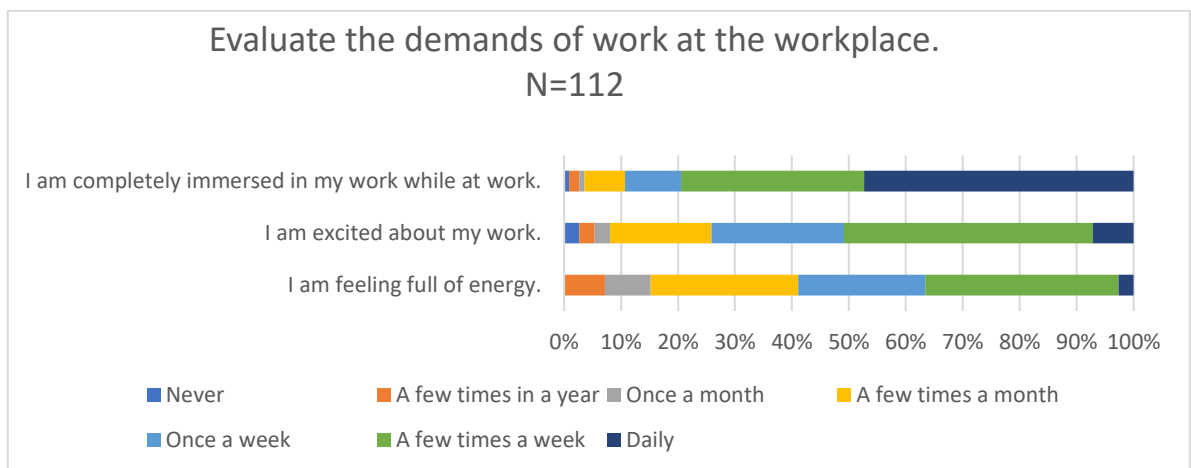


FIGURE 6. NYC public school teachers’ perception of work demands

The fourth question asked research subjects to evaluate the extent of work-related stress they currently feel. The results show that 44% (49 responses) of survey participants experience *quite a lot* or *some* stress (29 responses; 26%), while 18% (20 responses) of them feel *very much* stressed. As Figure 7 demonstrates, experiencing quite a lot of stress was the leading answer among teachers, regardless of school level they work at (high school, middle school, or elementary) and regardless of how many years of teaching experience they have.

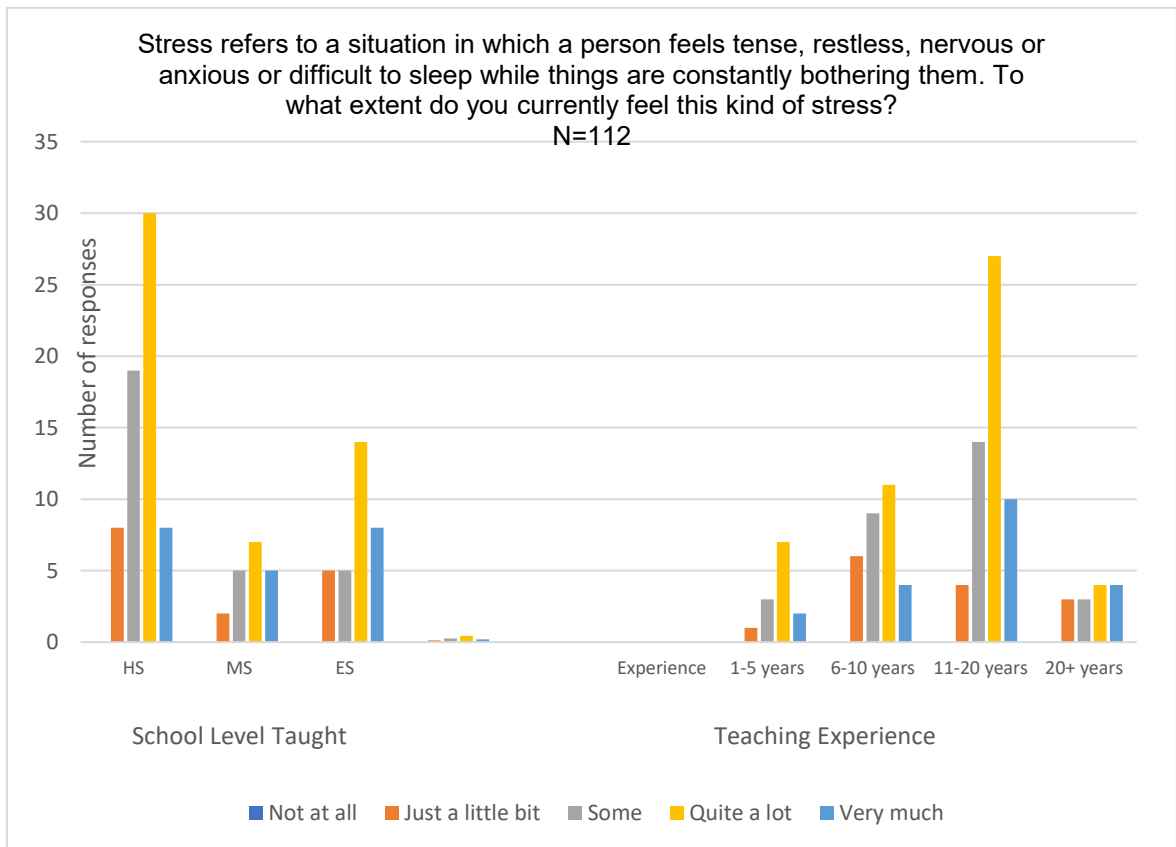


FIGURE 7. NYC public school teachers' stress level

Figure 8 shows the responses to question five, namely that 45% of participants (50 teachers) responded by saying that they are able to recover *moderately* well from stress, while 25% (28 participants) reported poor recovering abilities and only 24% (27

responders) are able to recover from stress *well*. Only 2 teachers reported to be able to recover very well from the strain of work.

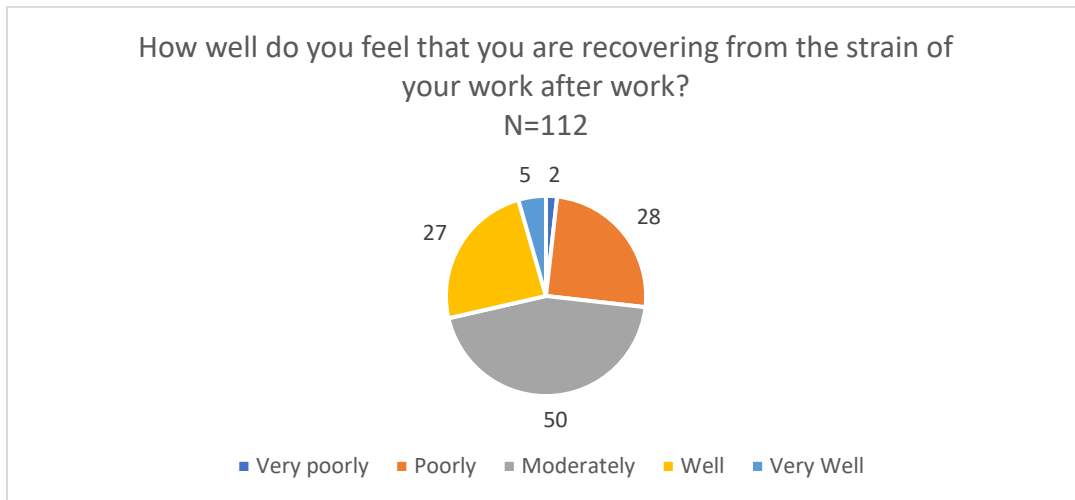


FIGURE 8. NYC public school teachers' ability to recover from work-related stress

#### 4.1.2 Self-management and motivational factors

The next set of questions asked participants to reflect on and evaluate their self-management skills on a Likert scale with a specific focus on goal setting and behavioral motivational strategies, such as positive self-talk, self-rewarding accomplishments and visualizing tasks. In addition, survey subjects were also asked to evaluate their self-leadership skills, identify their personal motivational factors and evaluate how well they are able to apply these motivational factors in their work in response to three qualitative questions.

As Figure 9 demonstrates, the majority of survey participants were able to set clear goals for themselves (75% of teachers *totally agree* or *somewhat agree*) and 78% of them reported that they *totally agree* or *somewhat agree* with the statement about

actively working towards their goals. Participants reported that they are self-aware in terms of their work performance (79%). The results also show that the majority of survey subjects apply a variety of self-management and cognitive self-leadership strategies, such as self-reflection about personal bias (74% *totally* or *somewhat agreed*) and positive self-talk (76% *totally* or *somewhat agree*) at work to manage stress. However, the results indicate that less than half of survey participants utilize the motivational strategies of self-rewarding (45% *totally* or *somewhat agreed*) and visualizing goals (45% *totally* or *somewhat agreed*), though 30% of participants neither agreed, nor disagreed with these statements. Therefore, it can be concluded that the above-mentioned motivational strategies are sometimes used by close to one third of NYC DOE teachers.

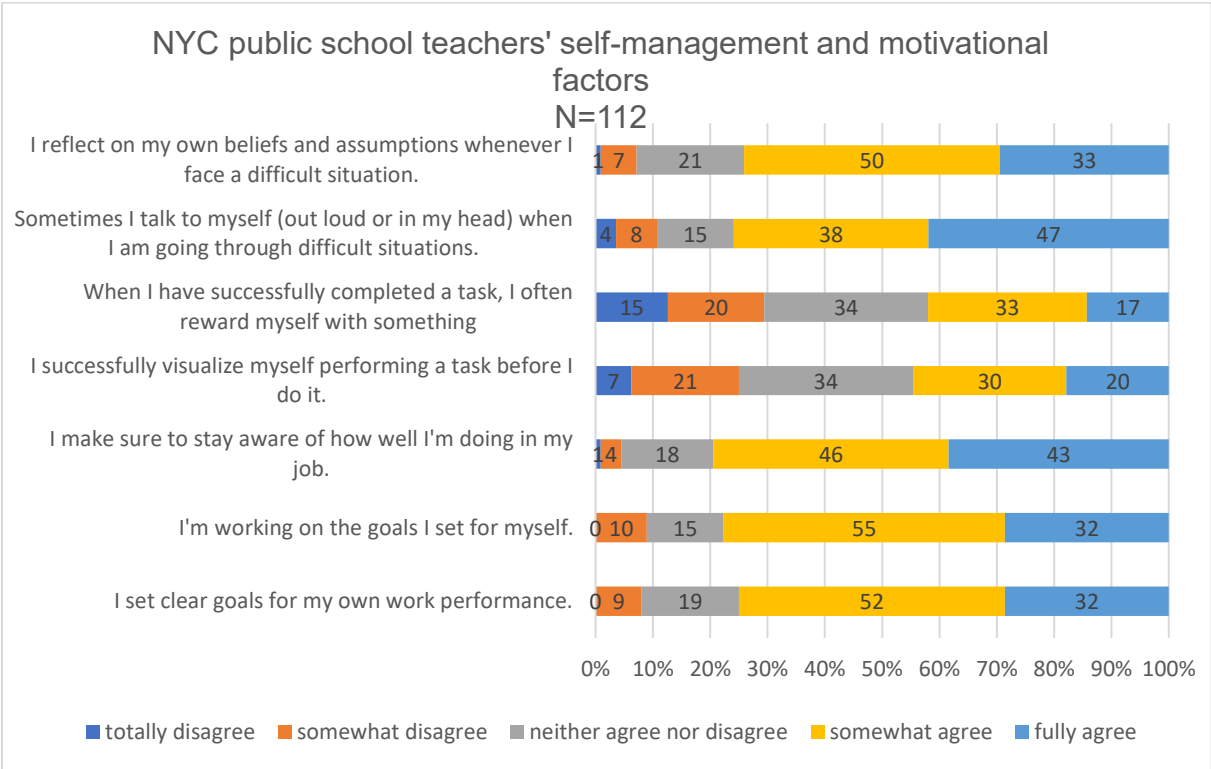


FIGURE 9. NYC public school teachers' self-management and motivational factors



Figure 10 demonstrates the extent of NYC DOE teachers' self-awareness about their own motivational factors at work. According to the results, 83% of teachers consider themselves *well aware* or *very well aware* of their own motivational factors at work. 17% of responders are *moderately* able to identify their motivational factors and no negative responses were provided to this question.

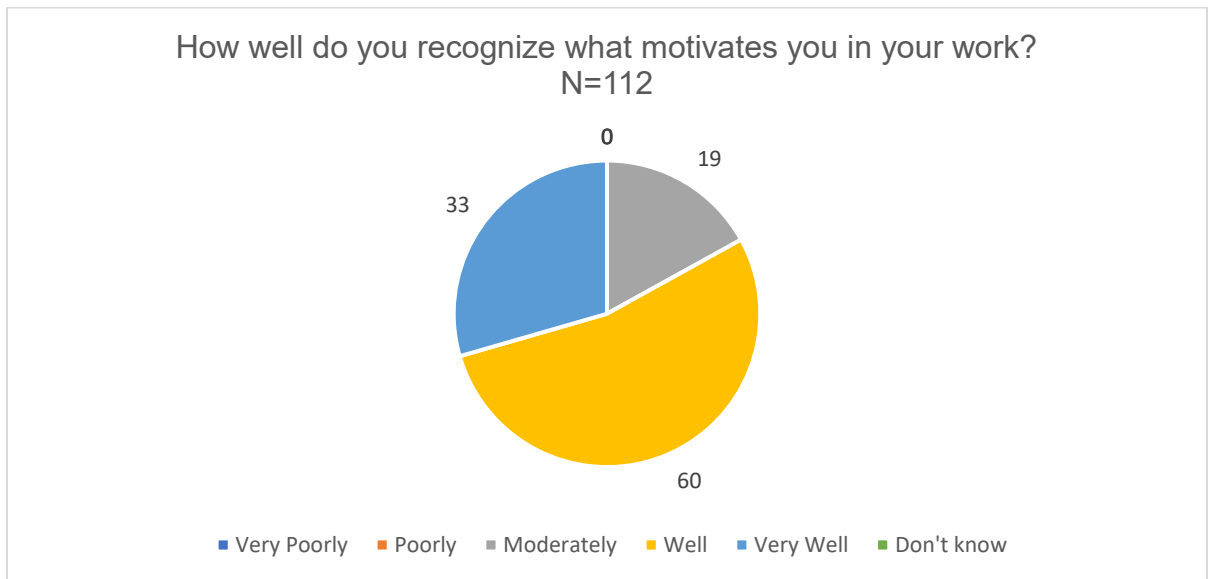


FIGURE 10. NYC public school teachers' awareness about their own motivational factors

In addition to the closed-ended questions, three open-ended questions were added to this section in order to gain a better understanding of survey participants' perception of their motivational factors, as well as the extent to which they are able to apply these factors at work. Participants were also asked to evaluate their own self-leadership skills and provide justification for their ratings.

The majority of teachers (60%) rated their self-leadership skills as *strong* or *very strong*. They justified their rating with being aware of and being able to apply the following self-leadership skills and strategies in their practice on a regular basis: *setting and visualizing realistic goals, good organizing skills, self-reflection, feelings of self-*

worth and self-accomplishment and being self-motivated due to their passion for the work they do in this profession, as exemplified below.

*Overall, I believe do pretty well at this point. I try visualization practices in order to help manifest these ideas.*

*I feel I have a large amount of self-direction, as I am able to set my own goals around work and feel that I achieve them.*

*well - I am motivated to complete my work because it makes me proud*

*I think I have strong self-leadership skills- I work to do my best and find ways to improve always. I appreciate positive feedback but don't rely on it for motivation.*

31% of survey participants indicated having moderate level of self-leadership skills. Reasons for this rating were awareness about possessing some skills while lacking at others, needing a motivational source from the outside and inconsistency due to pandemic stress, as exemplified below:

*3/5 I can set goals but struggle to know how to make a plan to follow through.*

*I need a catalyst for motivation so my self-leadership skills are in the middle.*

*I am fully capable of performing my role, but less capable than before and I am no longer taking on tasks and projects beyond my role. Post pandemic I feel less capable of maintaining positivity and inspiration in the face of constant stressors.*

2% of responders felt that their self-leadership skills are poor caused by lack of time and energy and feeling unmotivated at work. 6% of survey participants were unsure how to answer this question.

The second and third open-ended questions aimed at identifying the dominant motivational factors for NYC public school teachers and the extent teachers are able to implement these factors at the workplace. The majority (84%) of survey responses named *student success and student learning* as the dominant motivating factor, while *teachers' own success* (both personal and professional) was identified in 55% of the answers. The third largest factor was *a positive work environment*, which was defined by *supportive colleagues and administration, feelings of validation, respect, collaboration and appreciation*. This factor was described in 41% of the responses. The fourth motivational factor was *work benefits*, including *time off* for holidays, *vacation* and *salary*. 21% of teachers named these benefits as motivational factors. Some narrative examples included the following:

*Student engagement, supportive administration, peer validation*

*Seeing students succeed. Feeling accomplished myself.*

*positive work environment motivates me.*

*Supporting my students, supporting my coworkers, and the love of my content.*

In terms of the degree to which teachers are able to implement these motivational factors at work, 62% of them responded with either *very well* or *well*. Factors that survey participants identified as well applicable were *positive thinking, focusing on priorities* and *self-motivation*, as exemplified below:

*I can look for the positive in my work environment.*

*Very well because I make sure that I'm in control of what is important to me.*

*Well by focusing my attention, energy, and thoughts on what I enjoy about my job.*

25% of responses indicated that educators' motivational factors are *somewhat well* applicable at work, depending on *stress* levels, *fatigue* and degree of feeling *overwhelmed* on any given day at work. They also felt that the implementation of motivational factors they had named in the previous question were *not always under their control*.

*Somewhat well. My work can get overwhelming sometimes.*

*depending on how stressed I am, I can't always access that motivation*

*Positive feedback seems least under my control, so it seems impossible to implement.*

*I can find ways to implement them here and there, but it has been difficult lately since I have been really burnt out.*

Only 3% of survey participants indicated that they were unable to implement their motivational factors well at work due to influences outside of their control, while 10% were unsure how to answer this question.

#### **4.1.3 Emotions**

This set of questions aimed at identifying the emotional atmosphere at work. Participants were asked to evaluate positive and negative emotional claims by ranking their frequency of occurrence on a Likert scale. As Figure 11 demonstrates, 53% teachers experience positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, satisfaction and joy quite often, while negative feelings of anger, fear or shame is sometimes experienced by 46% participants. Based on these results, it appears that positive emotions are more frequently felt by teachers at the workplace than negative ones. However, the negative

emotions are more often present than not, which may contribute to educators' increased stress levels and affects their mental health negatively.

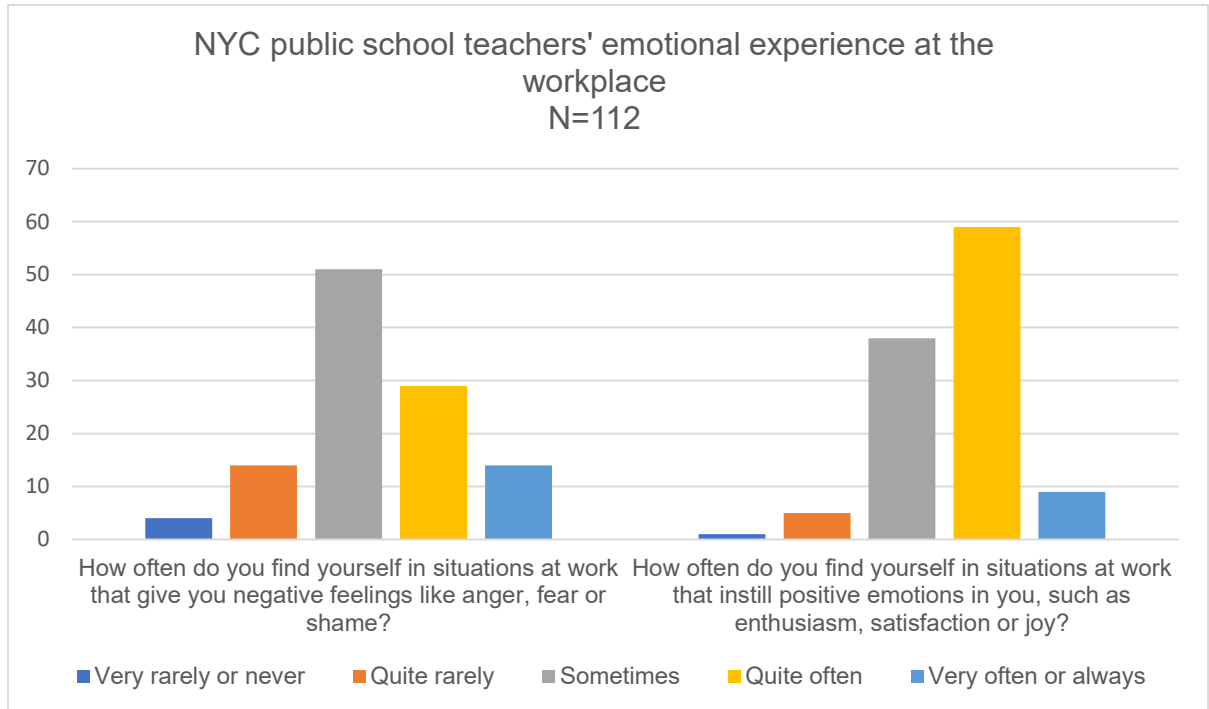


FIGURE 11. Frequency of NYC public school teachers' emotional experiences at the workplace

In addition to measuring how often positive and negative emotions are experienced, it is also important to identify which specific feelings are most often present in educational work communities. Based on the results demonstrated by Figure 12, most teachers reported positive feelings of *joy* (46%) *happiness* (44%) and *curiosity* (42%) as quite frequently felt emotions at work. Conversely, *anger* (42%) and *disgust* (29%) were indicated by most responses as negative feelings that are only *sometimes* experienced in the work community. Interestingly, *envy* and *fear* were identified by teachers as insignificant factors, since mostly they are *never* or *quite rarely* present in the emotional atmosphere at work.

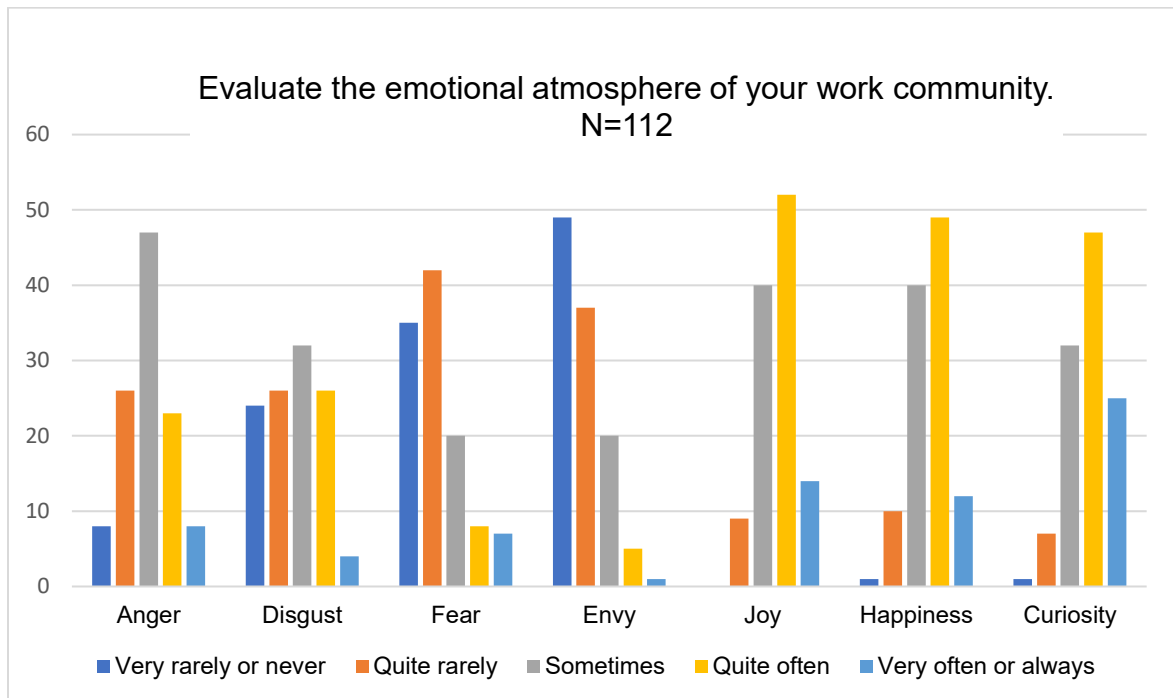


FIGURE 12. NYC public school teachers' emotional atmosphere at work

#### 4.1.4 Ethical load

The next set of survey questions aimed at exploring teachers' experiences of ethically loaded situations at work and related feelings of guilt and bad conscience these situations may entail. The seven questions presented to participants were:

1. How often do you have time to treat people at work the way you think they should be treated?
2. Do you have to do something in your job that you feel is ethically wrong?
3. Do you face conflicting demands in your work?
4. Do you have to see people who are the subject of your work being insulted and/or harmed?
5. Do you avoid someone who needs support at work?
6. Do you feel that you can't meet other people's expectations of your work?
7. Do you have to lower the requirements you set for a good job?

There was quite a lot of diversity in the responses to these questions (Figure 13). Responses indicate that teachers face ethically conflicting situations and/or demands to a varying extent. Responses to question 3 indicate that 34% of teachers face ethically conflicting demands at work on a daily basis, while another 19% of them have this experience about once a week. Possible causes may be the differences between individual schools, school culture and administration’s leadership style.

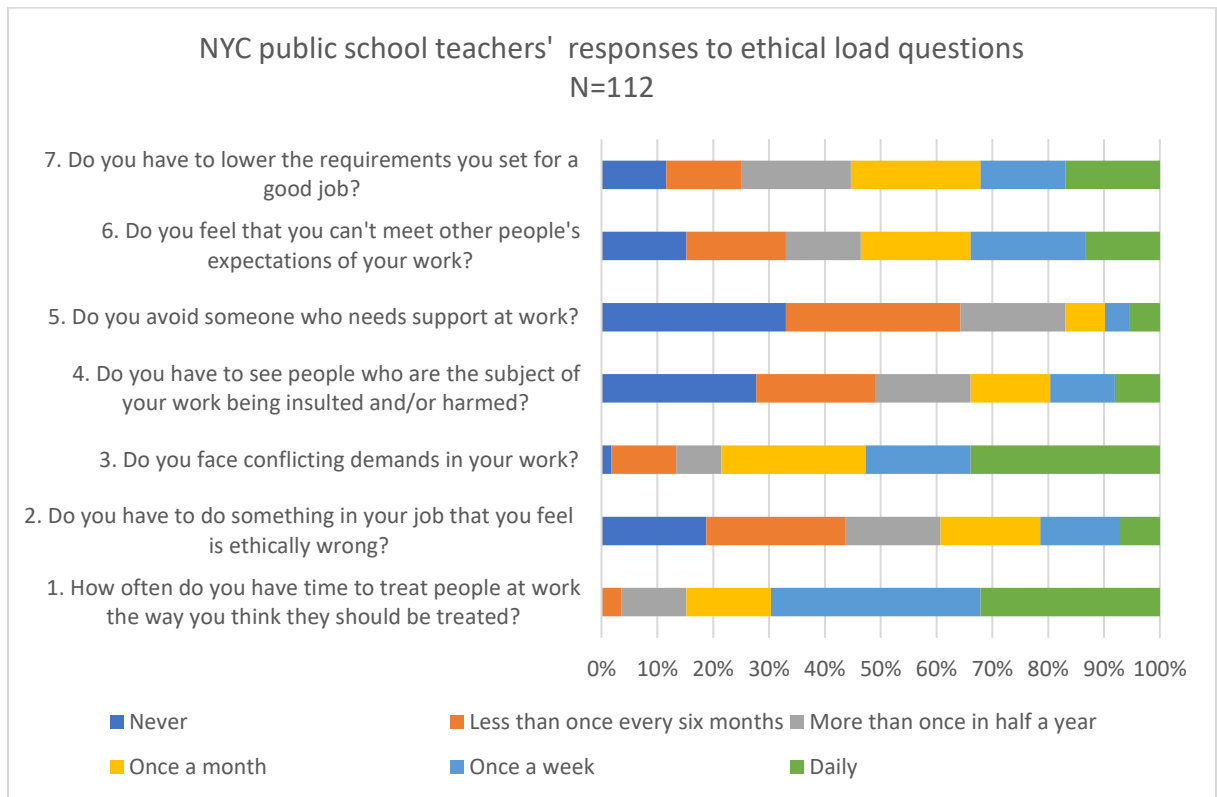


FIGURE 13. NYC public school teachers’ ethical load experience at work

As Figure 14 demonstrates, the level of teachers’ ethical load is in the mid-range with most responders feeling *some* degree of bad conscience about the majority of the questions presented to them in Figure 13. Responses to question 5 stand out in terms of correlation, since more than half of participants responded with *never* (33%) or *less than once every six months* (31%) avoiding someone who needs support at work and having *no* (40%) or *very little* (18%) bad conscience about it.

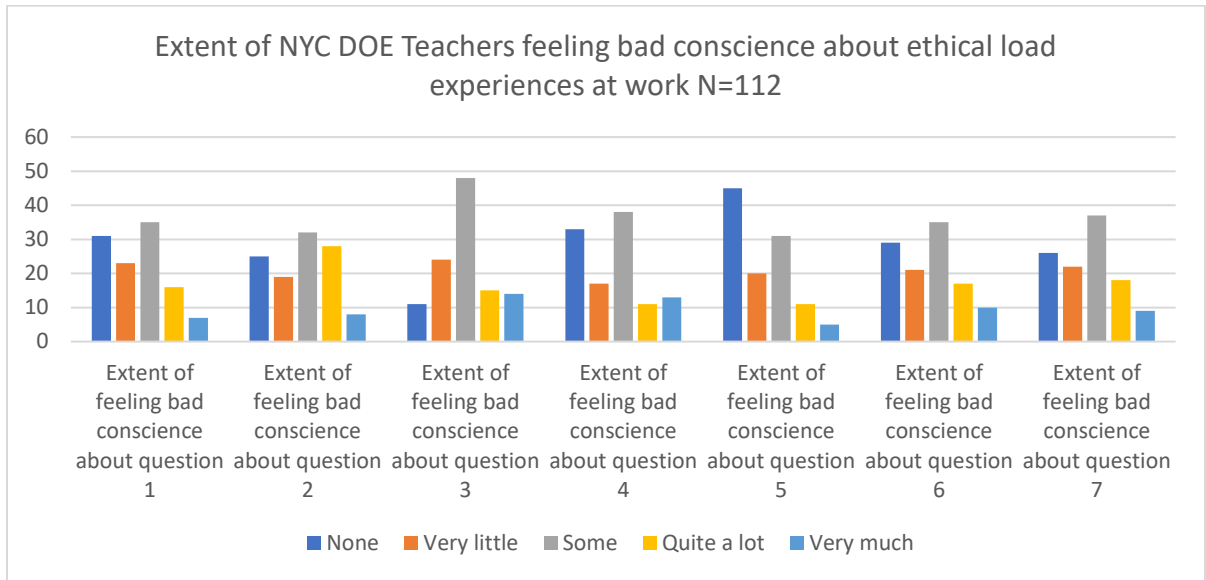


FIGURE 14. The role of bad conscience in NYC public school teachers' ethical load experience at work

In order to gain a better understanding about teachers' ethical load experiences, survey participants were asked to describe in detail the most ethically unsatisfactory situation they have experienced at work. 29% of teachers described feelings of *frustration, anger and guilt* due to being asked to follow *policies that they perceive to be unfair* and make *grading-related decisions that are perceived to be unethical*.

*Being forced a grading policy not voted by the staff, which results in grade inflation. It angers me that the lowest grade a student can get is a 45 even if they have not done anything. It is not fair for those students who work hard and come to class.*

*Having to assign passing grades to students who have not mastered the concepts and skills. There is such a push at all levels to have students pass and graduate, that sometimes actual learning is neglected.*

*I do not feel that my students are adequately prepared for college because I am often pushed to pass students who have not mastered the skills.*



28% of teachers described their *inability to properly support students* due to lack of resources as the most unethical experience at work.

*The fact that I do not have the time, resources, or bandwidth to meet all of my students where they are. Because of that, every single time I teach there are students who I know are being underserved, and it wrecks me.*

*Student needs being much deeper than what we can provide at our school.*

*I think my biggest source of bad feeling at work is not catering enough to strugglers. I am a general ed teacher in an ICT classroom with an extremely supportive special ed co-teacher. So, I usually leave the strugglers to her which I feel guilty about!*

23% respondents indicated that interactions or *relationships with colleagues, administration and/or parents* were the main causes of unethical experiences at the workplace. Emotions research subjects connected to these experiences were negative, such as *distress, feeling attacked and bullied*.

*My current administrator plays severe favorites, as did her previous boss; some teachers are showered with all good things (the best schedules, rooms, courses, compliments, etc.) while others are attacked, bullied, and nit-picked.*

*There is little support from admin for new teachers. They are left on their own, and experience much distress trying to meet expectations.*

*Colleagues that exhibit biased and condescending and self-serving behavior and my inability to challenge this.*

*Dealing with families who participate in billing, abusive behavior*

9% of teachers described systemic issues, such as too much bureaucracy as the leading cause of unethical experiences among NYC DOE teachers.

*I often find the top-down DOE bureaucracy can create negative experiences or negative emotions.*

8% of responses were counted as being unclear due to lack of details or responding with “NA”. Only 3% of survey respondents indicated that they are not feeling ethically conflicted at work.

## **4.2 SEL competencies: Self-awareness and self-management**

### **4.2.1 Self-awareness**

The first SEL competency explored in this part of the survey was self-awareness. Closed-ended statements centered around the following components of this skill:

- Emotional self-awareness (Statement 1-3)
- Identity and self-knowledge (Statement 4-6)
- Growth mindset and purpose (Statement 7-9)

Statements were presented to survey participants and they were asked to indicate the degree they agree or disagree with each one. Claims included the following:

1. I can identify and name my emotions in the moment.
2. I use self-reflection to understand the factors that contribute to my emotions and how my emotions impact me.
3. I recognize when my emotions, thoughts, and biases influence my behavior and my reactions to people and situations, both negatively and positively.
4. I know and am realistic about my strengths and limitations.

- 5. I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity is shaped by other people and my race, culture, experiences, and environments.
- 6. I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity shapes my views, biases, and prejudices.
- 7. I believe I will continue to learn and develop skills to better support all young people to succeed.
- 8. I believe I can influence my own future and achieve my ambitions.
- 9. I can see how I have a valuable role in my work, my family, and my community.

Results in Figure 15 indicate that the large majority of responders (over 85%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the nine statements, which implies that teachers perceive their self-awareness skills to be strong.

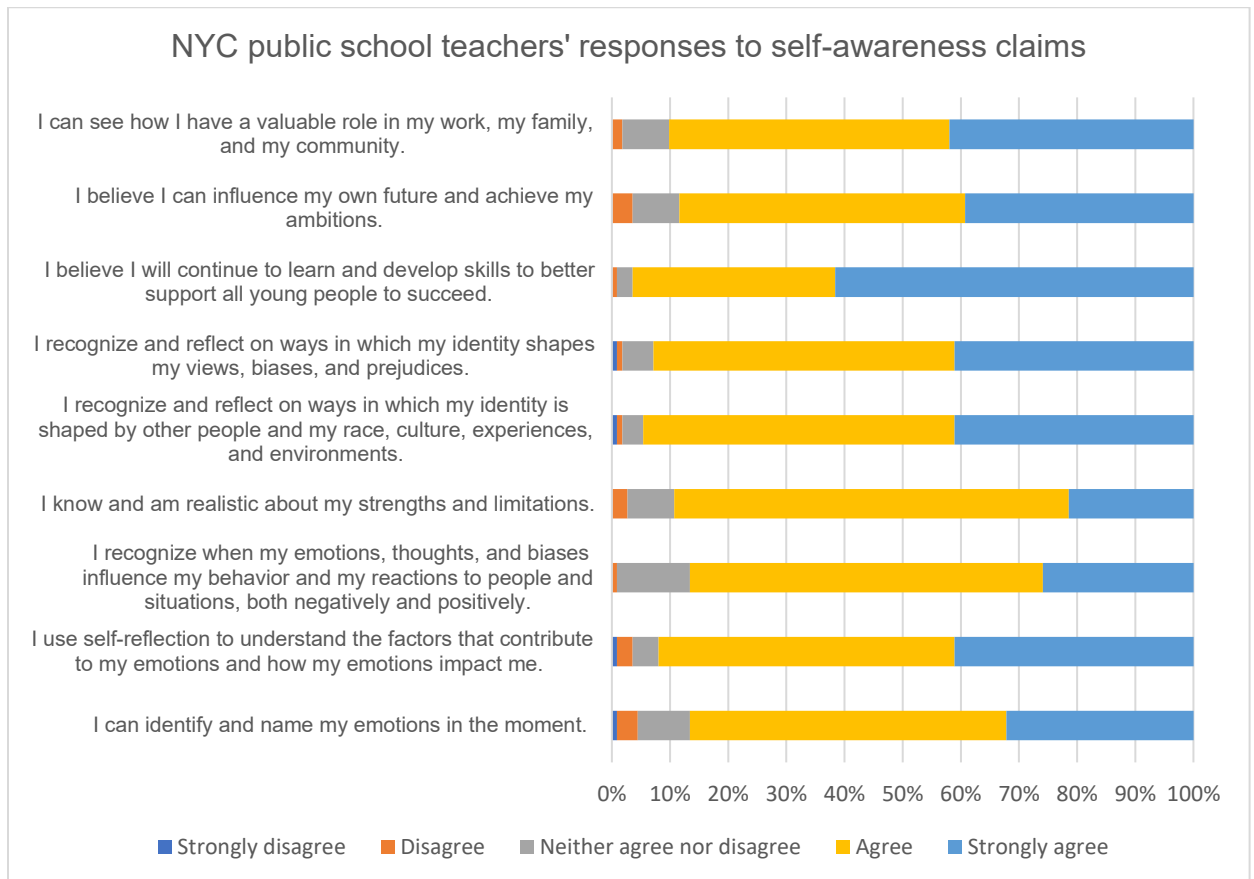


FIGURE 15. NYC public school teachers' perception of their own self-awareness skills

### 4.2.2 Self-management

The second SEL competency investigated in this part of the survey was self-management. The following components of this skill were examined through closed-ended statements that teachers were asked to agree or disagree with:

- Managing emotions (Statement 1-3)
- Motivation, agency, and goal-setting (Statement 4-6)
- Planning and organization (Statement 7-9)

The following claims were presented to teachers:

1. I find ways to manage strong emotions in ways that don't negatively impact others.
2. I can get through something even when I feel frustrated.
3. I can calm myself when I feel stressed or nervous.
4. I hold high expectations that motivate me to seek self-improvement and encourage growth in those I lead.
5. I take action and impact change on issues that are important to me and the larger community.
6. I set measurable, challenging, and attainable goals and have clear steps in place to reach them.
7. I modify my plans in the face of new information and realities.
8. When juggling multiple demands, I use strategies to regain focus and energy.
9. I balance my work life with personal renewal time.

As demonstrated in Figure 16, over 60% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the large majority of statements, which indicates an overall strong level of self-management skills within the group. Based on the responses, 21% of teachers neither agreed, nor disagreed, while 24% disagreed with statement 9, which implies that some teachers are struggling with setting boundaries and finding balance between work and personal life, including finding time to recover from the stress of work.

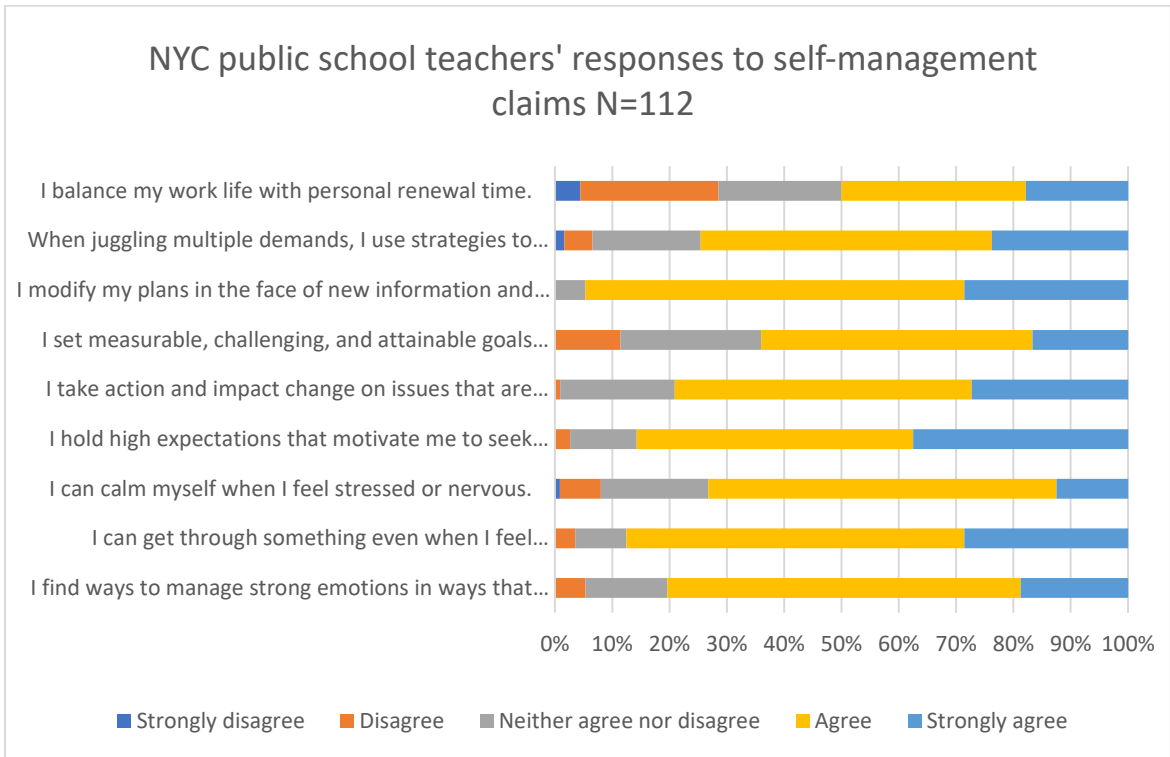


FIGURE 16. NYC public school teachers’ perception of their own self-management skills

**4.3 Teacher perceptions of SEL as a tool for promoting work well-being**

In order to gain a better understanding of teachers’ SEL skills of self-awareness and self-management, four open-ended questions were included in the last part of the survey. The first open-ended question in this section aimed at finding out what types of strategies helped teachers the most in managing work-related stress. 36% of survey participants responded to the question by mentioning self-care strategies and healthy habits such as *eating well, sleeping enough, meditating* and *exercising*. Constructive thought strategies of *positive self-talk* and *visualizing goals* as discussed by Godwin, Neck & Houghton (2006) and Neck & Manz (1996) were also mentioned in some of the responses in this category. 28% responders said *family and friends* are their most

powerful support that helps them cope with stress, while *organizing, prioritizing and setting boundaries* were mentioned in 25% of the responses. *Work community support* was mentioned in 23% of the responses. *Taking breaks* during the work day, on weekends and having *time off* for vacation was mentioned in 13% of the responses. *Going to therapy* was mentioned in 7% of responses as a valuable tool that helps maintain well-being for teachers. *Substances* were identified in 5% of responses as a tool that helps educators successfully cope with stress. One person responded by saying that *nothing* helped and there was one unclear response to this question as well.

Often multiple factors were identified in the same answer to this question, which implies that teachers are familiar with and utilize a variety of self-awareness, self-management and self-leadership techniques to cope with stress.

*Knowing that I'm not the only one stressed and leaving work at work. I'm very aware that there is not enough time in a day to attend to every task so I focus on high priority things first.*

*Talking with colleagues, leaving work at school instead of bringing it home with me, planning ahead.*

*I'm known as cool and calm. This helps me navigate difficulties in the moment. I always keep my thoughts on the broad end of the life spectrum – I'm visualizing the best way out of anything stressful and mindful that everything passes with time.*

*Working on the subway; getting enough sleep; being with my family*

The second open-ended question asked participants what they do to effectively model self-awareness skills to students. 60% of teachers described *discussions, open and honest communication about emotions* and the *think aloud* technique as strategies to model this SEL skill.

*Talk out loud through my feelings and thought processes.*

*I name emotions when I am feeling them in front of them to explain why I might be acting a certain way, i.e. "I am feeling frustrated right now because of some traffic I hit on the way to work this morning, so I might be a little more frazzled and have less patience."*

27% of the responses mentioned modeling *pausing, breathing and reflecting* in front of students, while 15% mentioned the importance of *admitting mistakes and apologizing* when they do or say something wrong.

*Pause and think about how this feeling popped up.*

*Take deep breaths and name my emotions.*

*Practice openness, apologize when I make a mistake, listen, and try to lead with compassion.*

*When I lose my temper I apologize to my students for the lapse - it lets them know I am human and make mistakes but also that I acknowledge my mistakes.*

Modeling and practicing *positive affirmations* and *self-talk* were only utilized by 5% of survey participants, while 5% of responders were unsure how to answer this question.

The third open-ended question in this set aimed at finding out what teachers do to effectively model self-management skills to students. 41% responses described the importance of open communication in the form of *narrating emotional self-regulation* and *modeling positive self-talk*. 29% mentioned modeling *breathing techniques* in order to keep negative emotions under control. 27% described explicitly teaching *organizational skills* to students related to time and task-management and the importance of *setting priorities* between tasks.

*I name a strategy I am using to regulate my emotion "I am feeling upset right now, so I am going to stop talking and take a minute to breathe and re-group."*

*Deep breathing, taking time before reacting.*

*I use advisory time to discuss organizational tools and tricks, and check in individually with students during study hall periods who I know need extra support in these skills.*

*I suggest kids that being organized with their notes and knowing when assignments are due helps them feel less anxious and be more prepared.*

9% of responders found this question unclear or were unsure about how to respond. Some of these participants were unsure whether modeling self-awareness and self-management skills were the same.

The fourth open-ended question in this section asked survey participants to evaluate the efficiency of SEL as a tool for developing self-management and self-leadership skills in educators. The results showed that participants' opinions varied: 35% of teachers found SEL moderately effective, while 26% of responders wrote that this tool is either very effective or effective in developing the aforementioned skills. Based on the positive responses, educators felt that teaching SEL has improved their communication, self-awareness and self-management skills, which improved their relationships with both coworkers and students at work. However, many teachers felt that more training would be necessary in order for the implementation of this tool to be truly efficient.

*I do think it has helped me and my co-teacher prioritize how we relate and communicate to one another and to our students. Our mantra is "behavior is a form of communication".*



*I think teachers are definitely learning from their work in SEL, and I hope that they continue to do so. I think it depends on what kinds of professional development are offered and how well they are administered.*

On the other hand, 25% of teachers answered this question negatively and considered SEL not effective at all. Reasons mentioned were not enough resources and training provided for effective implementation as well as lack of organizational and/or administrator support at individual schools.

*We educators all need SEL, but we are given literally NO TIME to do any of this at school and most of us have a difficult time carving out SEL space at home. School administration should be way more sensitive to what teachers need in this respect.*

*Not at all. Every SEL initiative has amounted to more bureaucratic initiatives that are focused on creating a paper trail to demonstrate that we've been implementing them and this obstructing the actual work (as well as sapping whatever energy we had).*

14% of survey participants were either unsure about the efficiency of SEL, or provided an unclear answer with no details to this question.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the first research question, this study intended to explore how New York City public school teachers perceive their occupational health and well-being in terms of emotions, ethical load and stress. Stress causing factors and most commonly used coping strategies were also identified during data analysis.

Well-being is a subjective experience and it is inseparable from emotions, as described by Busseri & Sadava's tripartite model (2011). Based on the study results, at work NYC public school teachers more frequently experience positive emotions (53% reported feeling them frequently), such as joy, happiness and curiosity, than negative ones (46% feel them sometimes), such as anger, envy or shame, which affects their lives in a positive manner and leads to job satisfaction. Furthermore, teachers' job satisfaction has both short- and long-term benefits for the school and the educational system as a whole, which can manifest in a higher quality of instructional work (Ostroff 1992) and better student-teacher relationships (Bloom 1986).

According to the results, quite a lot of educators reported somewhat high (26%), or quite high (44%) levels of work-related stress and moderately reduced ability to recover from it. Meanwhile, only 24% of research participants reported that they are able to recover well from this type of stress, which is a cause for concern. This finding aligns with results of previously conducted research studies, which concluded that education is a cognitively and mentally demanding, high stress occupation (Johnson et al. 2005; Montgomery & Rupp 2005). Unfortunately, *substances* were identified in 5% of responses as tools that help educators successfully cope with stress, which is alarming. One person responded by saying that *nothing* helped, which is also a cause for concern.

The second research question intended to gain insights into teacher perceptions about their self-awareness and self-management skills, while the third one aimed at exploring motivational factors as identified by the target group as well as perceived level of their self-leadership skills. As both Manz (1986) and Neck and Houghton (2006) pointed it out, self-awareness and self-leadership are interconnected skills, that increase motivation and self-efficacy, which can lead to better job performance and job satisfaction among other positive effects.

Findings of the study indicate that over 80% of New York City public school teachers possess strong self-awareness skills. They 83% of them reported to be able to identify their own motivations for work. The strongest educator motivational factors identified in the results were *seeing students learn and succeed* (84%) and *feeling self-accomplished* (60%). These self-motivational factors were identified as natural rewards in previous research studies (Manz & Neck 2004; Manz & Sims 2001; Houghton & Yoho 2005; Neck & Houghton 2006).

Results demonstrate that NYC public school educators are mostly aware of their own self-management and self-leadership skills as well. 62% of teachers utilize constructive thought strategies, such as positive self-talk as described by Godwin, Neck and Houghton (2006) and also by Neck and Manz (1996).

The fourth research objective for the study aimed to examine how NYC public school educators view SEL as a tool to improve their occupational health. According to the findings, 61% of survey participants perceived SEL as a moderately effective, effective or very effective tool that can be utilized to improve occupational health.

However, it can also be concluded based on the study that teachers working in the New York City public school system would benefit from more training about how to develop SEL skills in themselves, instead of the expectation of only including teaching these skills to students. They also indicated that they would like to see a more effective implementation of SEL programs both at the organizational and school levels. One way implementation could be improved if the NYC Department of Education's central administration would contract CASEL, or a similar expert organization to provide

authentic SEL professional development sessions to staff and administration at schools.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

Even though every effort was made to ensure this research study's validity and reliability, some factors may have contributed to altering the results. The Sustainable Brain Health Survey was translated into English from Finnish by the research conductor using Google Translate, therefore some meaning might have been lost from the original. However, the pre-test process aimed at bringing clarity and accuracy to interpreting the translated questions correctly by Native English speakers.

Research participants might have felt stressed and answered survey questions based on what they thought was expected of them. They might not have fully trusted the privacy of the data management, which might have easily affected the reliability of the collected data. In addition, a few teachers reached out to the researcher expressing worry that their responses would reveal the teachers' identities to their principals and they would face negative consequences for participating in this study. These participants were reassured about the anonymity and secure handling of the data by thoroughly explaining the process and referring to the laws and rules described in the Privacy Notice and Data Management Plan.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

The research study reassured the researcher, who also works as an educator in the New York City public school system, about the importance of developing SEL skills for teachers because the results confirm the personal and professional benefits of well-developed self-awareness, self-management and self-leadership skills. These universally applicable competencies may contribute to better understanding of one's

own personality, motivations and emotions. Furthermore, SEL includes a set of strategies that may help people stay well mentally and physically. Similarly to some research participants' perceptions about the usefulness of SEL, the researcher of this study also hopes that educators will continue growing and using self-awareness, self-management and self-leadership skills and strategies, so that they actively contribute to the betterment of both their personal and professional lives, thereby enhancing the well-being of their communities.

SEL skills can possibly be implemented at any organization globally and would benefit every employer and employee for the aforementioned reasons. However, in order to increase efficiency of the program and gain buy in for it from every community member, implementation should be carefully planned out following project management procedures, investing into sufficient resources, and implementing appropriate training for all stakeholders in the work community.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey for NYC public school teachers

1 (40)

### NYC DOE Teacher Sustainable Brain Health & SEL Survey

This research study focuses on the challenging conditions of current working life. It evaluates Social Emotional Learning as a tool to promote the brain health and well-being of NYC DOE teachers and improve the effectiveness of the organization. In alignment with the Sustainable Brain Health Project (<https://projects.tuni.fi/kestavaaivoterveys/in-english/>), the research also focuses on collecting data on cognitive information, affective ergonomics, self-management and self-leadership.

*\* Indicates required question*

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#### Informed Consent

Please read the Privacy Notice here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T50KideumZLMzufeJ9HTGn2IbEkK\\_J7i/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T50KideumZLMzufeJ9HTGn2IbEkK_J7i/view?usp=sharing)

Responding to the questions in this survey is interpreted as voluntary informed consent to participate in the study. Participation in the study can be interrupted at any time. The survey is anonymous.

1. Do you wish to participate in this survey? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes    *Skip to question 2*  
 No    *Skip to section 2 (Declined Participation)*

#### Declined Participation

You have declined to participate in the survey. Thank you for your time. You may close the browser or click submit below.

#### Background Information

2. Are you currently teaching at a NYC DOE public school? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No

2 (40)

3. What is your gender? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Woman  
 Man  
 Other  
 I would rather not say

4. How old are you? \*

---

5. Do you have any dependent children? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No

6. Are you involved in caring for a loved one? (e.g. an elderly relative) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No

7. What is your relationship status? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- In a relationship  
 Not in a relationship  
 I would rather not say

3 (40)

8. How long have you been working as a teacher? (Please respond with the number of years and months.) \*

---

9. What age group do you currently teach? Please check all that apply. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- 1st grade
- 2nd grade
- 3rd grade
- 4th grade
- 5th grade
- 6th grade
- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade
- 11th grade
- 12th grade
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you currently in a teacher leadership role? (e.g. grade team leader; department team leader, etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

4 (40)

### Part I - Sustainable Brain Health Questions

All questions in this part of the survey have been adapted from the survey used by the Sustainable Brain Health Project. <https://projects.tuni.fi/kestavaaivoterveys/in-english/>

Please respond to claims and questions about the following topics:

1. Work Wellbeing Experience
2. Self-Management and Motivational Factors
3. Emotions
4. Ethical Load

#### 1. Work Wellbeing Experience

Evaluate the demands of work at the workplace. Evaluate claims on a scale of 0-6.

0=Never

1=A few times in a year

2=Once a month

3=A few times a month

4=Once a week

5=A few times a week

6=Daily

5 (40)

11. 1.1 I feel full of energy. \*

Mark only one oval.

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

0

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_



6 (40)

12. 1.2 I am excited about my work. \*

Mark only one oval.

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

0

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

7 (40)

13. 1.3 I am completely immersed in my work while at work. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

0

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

14. 1.4 Stress refers to a situation in which a person feels tense, restless, nervous or anxious or difficult to sleep while things are constantly bothering them. To what extent do you feel this kind of stress these days? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Not at all

Just a little bit

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

8 (40)

15. 1.5 How well do you feel that you are recovering from the strain of your work after work? \*
- Scale: 0= Very poorly 1= Poorly 2= Moderately 3= Well 4= Very well

*Mark only one oval.*

Very poorly

0

1

2

3

4

Very well

## 2. Self-Management and Motivational Factors

Evaluate self-management claims for your work. Rate claims on a scale of 1 to 5.

1 = Totally disagree

2 = Somewhat disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Somewhat agree

5 = Fully agree

9 (40)

16. 2.1 I set clear goals for my own work performance. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

10 (40)

17. 2.2 I'm working on the goals I set for myself. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

11 (40)

18. 2.3 I make sure to stay aware of how well I'm doing in my job. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

12 (40)

19. 2.4 I successfully visualize myself performing a task before I do it. \*

Mark only one oval.

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

13 (40)

20. 2.5 When I have successfully completed a task, I often reward myself with something I like. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree



14 (40)

21. 2.6 Sometimes I talk to myself (out loud or in my head) when I am going through difficult situations. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

15 (40)

22. 2.7 I reflect on my own beliefs and assumptions whenever I face a difficult situation. \*

Mark only one oval.

Totally disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Fully agree

23. 2.8 Self-leadership is a "self-influence process through which people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform" (Neck & Houghton 2006, 271). How would you rate your self-leadership skills? Justify your answer. \*

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24. 2.9 How well do you recognize what motivates you in your work? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Very well
- Well
- Moderately
- Poorly
- I don't know

25. 2.10 Describe what motivates you in your work. List the three main motivating factors. \*

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---

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26. 2.11 How well can you implement these factors that motivate you in your work? \*

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3. Emotions

Evaluate emotional claims related to your work. Rank claims on a scale of 1 to 5.

- 1 = Very rarely or never
- 2 = Quite rarely
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Quite often
- 5 = Very often or always

17 (40)

27. 3.1 How often do you find yourself in situations at work that give you negative feelings like anger, fear or shame? \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

18 (40)

28. 3.2 How often do you find yourself in situations at work that instill positive emotions in you, \*  
such as enthusiasm, satisfaction or joy?

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

Evaluate the emotional atmosphere of your work community.

Estimate the occurrence of different emotions on a scale of 1 to 5.

1 = Very rarely or never

2 = Quite rarely

3 = Sometimes

4 = Quite often

5 = Very often or always

29. 3.3 Anger \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

20 (40)

30. 3.4 Disgust \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

21 (40)

31. 3.5 Fear\*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always



22 (40)

32. 3.6 Envy \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

23 (40)

33. 3.7 Joy \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

24 (40)

34. 3.8 Happiness \*

Mark only one oval.

Very rarely or never

1

2

3

4

5

Very often or always

25 (40)

## 35. 3.9 Curiosity \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Very rarely or never

1 2 3 4 5 

Very often or always

## 4. Ethical Load

Respond to claims about ethical load based on your own experiences. Evaluate claims on a scale of 1 to 6.

1 = Never

2 = Less than once every six months

3 = More than once in half a year

4 = Once a month

5 = Once a week

6 = Daily

26 (40)

36. 4.1 How often do you have time to treat people at work the way you think they should be treated? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

37. 4.2 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

27 (40)

38. 4.3 Do you have to do something in your job that you feel is ethically wrong? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

39. 4.4 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

28 (40)

40. 4.5 Do you face conflicting demands in your work? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

41. 4.6 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

29 (40)

42. 4.7 Do you have to see people who are the subject of your work being insulted and/or harmed? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

1

2

3

4

5

6

Daily

43. 4.8 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much



30 (40)

44. 4.9 Do you avoid someone who needs support at work? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

45. 4.10 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

31 (40)

46. 4.11 Do you feel that you can't meet other people's expectations of your work? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

47. 4.12 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

32 (40)

48. 4.13 Do you have to lower the requirements you set for a good job? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Never

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

4

\_\_\_\_\_

5

\_\_\_\_\_

6

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily

\_\_\_\_\_

49. 4.14 Have you had a bad conscience about this? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

None

Very little

Some

Quite a lot

Very much

50. 4.15 What has been the most ethically unsatisfactory situation in your current job? Describe \* related thoughts, emotions, people, etc.

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**PART II – SEL Competencies Self-Reflection Questions**

All questions in this section were adapted from the 2020 CASEL survey: (c) 2020 CASEL. School Guide. [casel.org](https://casel.org)

Please respond to claims about your self-awareness and self-management skills.

**1. Self-Awareness**

Please respond to claims about the following topics:

Emotional Self-awareness (Claim 1-3)

Identity and Self-knowledge (Claim 4-6)

Growth Mindset and Purpose (Claim 7-9)

51. 1.1 I can identify and name my emotions in the moment. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

34 (40)

52. 1.2 I use self-reflection to understand the factors that contribute to my emotions and how my emotions impact me. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

53. 1.3 I recognize when my emotions, thoughts, and biases influence my behavior and my reactions to people and situations, both negatively and positively. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

54. 1.4 I know and am realistic about my strengths and limitations. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

35 (40)

55. 1.5 I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity is shaped by other people and my race, culture, experiences, and environments. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

56. 1.6 I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity shapes my views, biases, and prejudices. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

57. 1.7 I believe I will continue to learn and develop skills to better support all young people to succeed. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

36 (40)

58. 1.8 I believe I can influence my own future and achieve my ambitions. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

59. 1.9 I can see how I have a valuable role in my work, my family, and my community. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

## 2. Self-Management

Respond to claims about the following topics:

Managing Emotions (Claim 1-3)

Motivation, Agency and Goal-Setting (Claim 4-6)

Planning and Organization (Claim 7-9)

60. 2.1 I find ways to manage strong emotions in ways that don't negatively impact others. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

37 (40)

61. 2.2 I can get through something even when I feel frustrated. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

62. 2.3 I can calm myself when I feel stressed or nervous. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

63. 2.4 I hold high expectations that motivate me to seek self-improvement and encourage growth in those I lead. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree



38 (40)

64. 2.5 I take action and impact change on issues that are important to me and the larger community. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

65. 2.6 I set measurable, challenging, and attainable goals and have clear steps in place to reach them. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

66. 2.7 I modify my plans in the face of new information and realities. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree  
 Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
 Strongly disagree

67. 2.8 When juggling multiple demands, I use strategies to regain focus and energy. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

68. 2.9 I balance my work life with personal renewal time. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**PART III**

Questions 1-3 in this part were adapted from "Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey" created by Panorama Education. Question 4 was developed by the creator of this research study.

69. 1. What has helped you most in managing work-related stress this school year? \*

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40 (40)

70. 2. What is the most effective thing that you do to model self-awareness as a social-emotional learning skill for your students? \*

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71. 3. What is the most effective thing that you do to model self-management as a social-emotional learning skill for your students? \*

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72. 4. In your perception, how effective has SEL been as a tool for developing self-management and self-leadership skills in educators? \*

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**Survey Submission**

If you have decided not to participate, please close your browser window now.  
If you are still willing, please click the submit button below.

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## Appendix 2. Privacy notice and data management plan

1 (5)

Scientific research 1(4)  
Privacy Notice June 1st, 2022  
New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701

**1.Name, nature and duration of the study**

Name of the research study: Teachers’ Mental Well-Being at Work – NYC DOE  
Teachers’ Perception of Social Emotional Learning as a Tool to Improve Occupational  
Health

One-time study

Duration of the study: January 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022  
Processing time of personal data: July 15th, 2022 – August 31st, 2022

**2.Controller**

The controller of this research study is a Master’s program student at Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Tampere University of Applied Sciences Ltd Kuntokatu 3, 33520 Tampere, Finland). The controller does not have an employment relationship with the Tampere Higher Education Foundation.

**3.Contact person in matters concerning the research and/or data protection**

Name: Annamaria Horvath  
E-mail address: nycteacherselbrainhealthsurvey@gmail.com

**4.Survey participants**

Survey participants are NYC DOE public school teachers. Participation in the survey is voluntary, anonymous and based on data subjects’ informed consent.

**5.Data content of the research register**

Participants’ information is collected concerning their personal perception of mental health and well-being at work and personal perception of their social emotional skills.

**6.Data sources of personal data**

All data is collected directly from the participants in the form of an anonymous Google Forms online survey.

2 (5)

## 7. Purpose of processing personal data

This research study focuses on the challenging conditions of current working life. It evaluates Social Emotional Learning as a tool to promote the brain health and well-being of NYC DOE teachers and improve the effectiveness of the organization. In alignment with the Sustainable Brain Health Project (<https://projects.tuni.fi/kestavaaivoterveys/english/>), the research also focuses on collecting data on cognitive information, affective ergonomics, self-management and self-leadership.

Scientific research 2(4)

Privacy Notice June 1st, 2022

New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701

This research study's objectives are:

1. Survey the state of well-being at work and the stress experienced by the target group.
2. Survey the target group's perception of their own Social Emotional Learning skills, such as self-awareness and self-management.
3. Evaluate Social Emotional Learning as a tool that promotes and supports brain health and is applicable on both individual and work community level.
4. Provide comparative international data analysis for the Sustainable Brain Health Project.

Through collaborative development, the Sustainable Brain Health Project builds practices and tools that promote and support brain health and can be utilized in work communities in a variety of professions. As a result of collaborative development, the working atmosphere of the target organizations and the competence of supervisors in promoting well-being at work will be strengthened. As a result of cooperative development, a development plan developed jointly by experts and staff will be built for the work communities participating in the project, taking into account the specific characteristics of each work community. The development plan focuses on promoting information on cognitive ergonomics, strengthening self-leadership and reducing ethical loads.

## 8. Legal basis for the processing of personal data

Legal basis for the processing of personal data: *New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701*  Consent of the subject

Consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn by means of a written request addressed to the controller.

Task of general interest/exercise of public authority vested in the controller  scientific or historical research or statistics

Implementation of the legitimate interests of the controller or a third party The legitimate interest: This research study is part of the thesis the controller is writing as

3 (5)

part of her Master's Program at TAMK University of Applied Sciences in Tampere, Finland (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/about-us/tampere-university>).

**9. Sensitive personal data (data and criminal data belonging to specific categories of personal data)**

The study will cover the following sensitive personal data:

Health information

The study will cover information on a criminal conviction or misdemeanor:

No

**Legal basis for the processing of sensitive personal data**

Consent of the data subject

Scientific or historical research, statistics or exercise of public authority of general

interest **10. Transfer of personal data outside the research**

Data containing personal data will not be transferred to the Sustainable Brain Health project's research group.

Scientific research 3(4)

Privacy Notice June 1st, 2022

New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701

**11. Transfer of personal data outside of The United States of America**

Will data in the register be transferred to another country or to an international organization outside of The United States of America?

No

**12. Automated decision-making**

Automated decisions are not made in this study.

**13. Principles of registry security**

**Protection of manual material (e.g. paper material):**

In a locked closet which only the controller of this study has access to.

**Protection of digital materials (e.g. voucher systems and equipment):**

user ID

4 (5)

- password
- two-step user identification (MFA)

**Processing of direct credentials:**

- No direct credentials are collected from participants in the study.
- The material is pseudonymized.

**To protect data in data transfers and at rest:**

- Data is encrypted in transfer and at rest.
- File encryption: Files that contain confidential information are password protected.

**14. Processing of personal data after the completion of the study**

- The research register will be destroyed.

**15. The rights of the data subject and their possible limitations**

***New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701***

Right to Notice

Participants have the right to withdraw consent concerning their personal data. Participants have the right to be notified of the categories of personal data processed by the controller or any third-party entity.

Participants have the right to be notified of the identity of all parties to whom their personal data is disclosed, shared, transferred, or sold.

Scientific research 4(4)  
Privacy Notice June 1st, 2022  
New York Privacy Act –Senate Bill S6701

Participants have the right to be notified of the source and purpose of data collection & processing. Participants have the right to be notified of the retention period for each category of personal data collected & processed.

Participants have the right to be notified about whether the personal data is used for targeted advertising and the expected Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) generated through targeted advertising.

Opt-in consent

Opt-in consent is sought from participants to allow the following:

- Processing of personal data

5 (5)

- Changes in the purpose, method, or scope of collecting personal data

#### Right to access, port, & correct data

The following action will be processed on receipt of a valid request from a participant: - Confirm whether the personal data is processed

- Provide access to the participant's personal data in a structured and machine-readable format - Provide the identity of each processor, including third parties to whom personal data is disclosed, transferred, or sold
- The category of personal data shared and its purpose
- Freely transmit the data to another person as per the participant's specification - Investigate any inaccuracies brought up in the personal data by a participant and correct those as necessary within a defined timeframe.

#### Right to delete

A company or controller must delete the participant's personal data upon receipt of a verified request for deletion.

The controller will communicate the deletion request to all the third parties to whom it had shared or disclosed the personal data.

The controller will delete the personal data associated with deleted user accounts. The controller must establish procedures to avoid any reoccurrence of the deleted data in its systems.