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The Role of Human Values on Teachers' Well-Being in the UK

Struggling with mental health is said to be most prevalent in teachers than any other occupation. The mental health and well-being of teachers can be affected by an array of issues. These include: changes in policy, budget cuts in total school spending, bigger staff to student ratio and higher burnout rates. As a consequence, this hinders the effectiveness of teaching and can negatively impact children and young people's education. Rather than just stating the macro factors that affect teachers' mental health, this study seeks to explore the relationship between human values and depressive symptoms in individuals, using data from the European Social Survey (ESS-7). Using a sample of 105 teaching professionals in the UK. The human values scale (Schwartz 2012) was used to measure individuals' human values, and the depression scale - the shorter version of Centre for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CES-D) (Radloff 1977; ESS 2014) was used to measure individuals' depressive symptoms in terms of happiness and depression. Findings from the study show that teachers with higher levels of self-transcendence values are more likely to report being happy. Although, there was a significant relationship between openness to change and happiness, the correlation was not in the direction hypothesised.

Keywords: Human values, European social survey, well-being, education.

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INTRODUCTION

In many cases, teachers are more susceptible to mental health issues than employees in other occupations (Stanfeld et al. 2011; Kidger et al. 2016). The levels of mental health disorders in education professionals is rapidly soaring. In the last four years, 1.3 million teachers took days off for mental health/stress related reasons (Moran 2018), but to date not much has been done to solve these issues which is reflected through high levels of burn out rates amongst this profession (Tapper 2018). As a consequence, this hinders

students' overall experience in education (Kidger et al. 2010). Hence, understanding the factors contributing to teacher's wellbeing in education becomes paramount (Tapper 2018; Johnson 2006) to improve students' experience in general.

The literature on teachers' wellbeing tend to conceptualise this term through looking at general aspects of wellbeing including burnout, stress, job satisfaction, commitment (van Horn et al., 2004; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs 2011). The literature also largely studies organizational and social pressures such as administration workload, classroom management issues, and lack of supervisor and team support have been extensively studied (Borg and Riding, 1991; Burke and Greenglass 1995; Greenglass *et al.* 1997; Kokkinos 2007; Smith and Bourke 1992). There are also several key issues including changes in policy, budget cuts in total school spending, bigger staff to student ratio, rising costs and higher burnout rates have been identified as negative impacts on teachers' wellbeing and mental health (Tapper, 2018).

To date, however, human values have been largely ignored as factors to understand teachers' wellbeing. More particularly, personal values are investigated as guiding principles for specific behaviour and beliefs that can be used to promote higher social wellbeing (Choy, 2017; Kasser, 2002; Kasser, 2005; Schor, 2004). Although other studies have indicated a general consensus of what values is linked to the different dimensions of mental well-being (e.g. Bilsky and Schwartz 1994; Schwartz 2018; Sagiv and Schwartz 2000; Sagiv and Schwartz; Schwartz 2012), there has been limited contemporary research investigating values in teachers, particularly in relation to their well-being and depressive symptoms. Therefore, the goal of this study aims to explore how different values may lead to different state of well-being amongst the teachers in the UK. As human values are valuable to understand wellbeing and mental health, we decided to use Schwartz (2012) values model including self-transcendence, self-enhancement, conservation and openness to change. Schwartz (2012) highlights in these four variables, ten idiosyncratic values that are recognised amongst every culture, all in which can be related to satisfaction, as it requires the fulfilment of individual needs (Davidov et al. 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wellbeing and Depression

In relation to the psychology state of teachers' in education there is a wide study surrounding 'low mood' and 'depression' (Mintel 2018). There are several psychological tests in order to understand low mood and depression. Radloff (1977) developed one of the most common screening tests used, to help individuals determine their depression quotient, which is supported by various scholars. The author further suggests that the validity of the scales is based on the re-occurring patterns with other individual report measures on clinical ratings of low moods (depression) and various other factors supporting its rationality.

It has been scholarly agreed that, there is an urgent need to understand the key shifts within an individual's psychological state and the implications of this, as it not only has a direct impact on the individual in question, but others can also be at risk (Bergin and Garfield, 2003). It has been identified that low mood and depression is mostly significant

in the western world, which could implicate that this is due to the rise in workload and lack of emotional well-being support in various professions (Mintel Report 2018).

A sound institutional example of where this implication can be applied is within the education sector, where “students with depression present a challenge for teachers” (British Columbia Report 2011). New research highlights that teachers have to adopt both vulnerable students’ ‘low mood’ and ‘depression’, as well as their own personal matters (Sparks 2017), and are held accountable for more than what their role entails (Levitt et al. 2008). A qualitative research report exploring teacher workload (2018) despite acknowledging that teaching involves an element of pastoral care, Hughes and his colleagues argue that teachers should be a personal point of contact and play a frontline role, whilst there is still a huge misconception on how much involvement should be given before it starts to impact teachers’ well-being. Loughran et al. (2015) further contributes to the study and suggests that maintaining equal levels of support for every student is often seen as a challenge, especially with unprecedented levels of mental health amongst young people (Mintel Report 2018) and a decrease in teaching assistance and full-time staff, due to the financial crisis across the UK (Mintel Report 2018).

There are several factors discussed that cause stress for teachers, including child behaviour, conflict interactions between staffs (Stemmel, Benson & Powell, 1993), parent related issues, long working hours (Curbrow, Spratt, Ungaretti, McDonnell & Breckler, 2000), work ethics and differing philosophy (Gratz & Claffey, 1996). These further link higher levels of chronic stress and low job satisfaction, as they are not receiving full support to tackle this major cause for concern. Additional research displays that between 30-50% of teachers leave the industry within their early years of teaching based on the correlation between elements of the classroom, student progression and depression amongst teachers (McClean et al. 2017).

Within the education sector the retention of teachers that has been attributed to multiple problems, has been a growing area of concern (Harris, 1988). The issue of low retention of staffs within the education system has been attributed to lower levels of happiness, undesirable working conditions along with the low status associated with teaching (Billingsley and Cross 1991). Accordingly, it has been found that teachers with poor mental health tend to find managing the class and developing relationship with students difficult (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia and Greenberg, 2011).

The Basic Human Values’ Impact on Teachers’ Wellbeing

In order to derive the understanding of individuals’ wellbeing that might impact their working environment, several scholars focus on beliefs and values (Ashton, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). It has been discussed in the psychotherapy literature that specific values can positively contribute to individuals’ mental well-being (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). For example, Strupp (1980) identified self-direction, benevolence and fairness to others as ‘healthy values’. On the other hand, values of the conformity, tradition, security and power types are identified as ‘unhealthy values’ (Gat, 1997).

Values has been explored by the basic theory of human values ‘identifies then motivationally distinct value orientations and specifies the dynamics of conflict and

congruence among these values' (Schwartz, 2006, p.2). Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) discuss that particular values may tend to have different impacts on their sense of well-being. Their study shows that stimulation, self-direction and achievement values have positive affect on mental well-being. Therefore, we adopt Schwartz's basic human values' theory to conceptualise the impacts of basic values (openness to change, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, conservation) on teachers' well-being.

Openness to Change

In today's ever-changing work environment, employees are experiencing greater degrees of change at rapid paces, compared to ten years ago (Beal and Ghandour 2011). Change is not the easiest for everyone and some individuals find it very difficult to adapt to a constant state of flux (Cockerill 1989). Change for employees often leads to them feeling displaced and unsure about their position and what their future holds, hence they may become afraid of failure when tasked with new projects (Beal and Ghandour 2011). In contrast some employees view change in the organisation as an opportunity learn and grow, while other employees may respond negatively to the slightest of changes (Rosenholtz 1989).

The cognitive adaption theory (Taylor and Brown 1988) suggests that people with very high levels of well-being during life events which are highly stressful are those who have high levels of optimism, perceived outlook of life, self-esteem and perceived control of their life. Taylor and Brown (1988) maintain that change is stressful and that individuals who are optimistic have a high level of self-esteem, as well as a positive outlook on life are more likely to be open to change. Taylor and Brown (1988) claim that people with the above traits are prone to seeing change in the best possible light. Whereas, individuals with a negative attitude towards change can have a negative impact on an organisation. Rush and Schoel et al. (1995) suggest that this is because when government employees such as teachers are pressured into change they feel an increased level of stress which is associated with lower job satisfaction and increased intentions to quit. Similarly, a study conducted by Schweiger and Denisi (1991) reveals that employees who experience irritation whilst at work or a change which is distasteful, frustrating or stressful more than likely have a low level of job satisfaction.

Conversely, it is useful to consider key research exploring the relationship between personal and social values and mental wellbeing as they relate to the proposed hypothesis. Jarden (2010), using 2 surveys and 1 longitudinal study, explored the relationships between depressed mood, personal value and subjective- wellbeing. Jarden's findings revealed that lower openness to change values (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism and benevolence) was linked to depressive symptoms and higher valuations of openness to change values was linked to greater subjective well-being. The argument presented by Jarden (2010) leads us to postulate the following hypothesis:

H1: *Lower levels of openness to change values in teachers are more likely to be positively related to depressed moods*

Self - Transcendence

Spirituality in the workplace has been described as a system of values displayed in a work culture which encourages employee experience of transcendence in various aspects of their work process (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003). This feeling of transcendence provides employees a feeling of utter joy and completeness and they view their workplace as a means to connect with other people (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Consequently, individuals are trying to combine both their personal and private values in order to achieve personal fulfilment through their work (Block 1993). Furthermore, employees are shifting from wanting a career that provides them financial security, to a vocation that fulfils them where they can make a positive impact in the world (Neal 2000). Additionally, Reder (1982) postulates that government bodies or organizations that incorporate transcendent goals are highly productive. Similarly, Buchanan (1994), claims that an individual's effort positively correlates with policies in workplaces that are spirituality hinged that reward innovation and progress. Hence, the argument suggests the following hypotheses:

H2: *Self-transcendence values in teachers are more likely to be positively related to being happy*

Self-Enhancement

Organisations should aim for their employees to be 'self-determining', which refers to an individual experiencing a sense of choice in commencing and regulating their own actions (McGregor 1960). McGregor (1960) suggests that employees who are given the opportunity to satisfy their needs, in particular those highest in their hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943) are more productive. Additionally, organisations that promote a conducive environment for more participation in decision making and allow employees greater flexibility when doing their job are found to positively impact employee satisfaction, their level of effectiveness in the organization and their quality of work life (Lawler 1986).

Power is the ability to assemble resources to get things done (Kanter 1993). Kanter (1993) proposes that organisations should focus on establishing conditions where employees can work at an optimal level of efficiency by making sure employees have access to the resources, support and information required to accomplish their job and that they are given ongoing opportunities for development. This is because employees who believe their places of work grant them access to the above factors feel empowered. As a result, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H3: *Self-enhancement values in teachers are more likely to be positively related to being happy*

Conservation

Price and Muller (1981) argue that organisations which have employees with a higher rate of commitment result in lower rates of turnover for that company. Moreover, it is believed that there is a positive correlation between high levels of commitment and enhanced levels of productivity (McGregor 1960). Miller and Stiff et al. (1988) argue that employees who experience burnout are less likely to be committed to the organisation and are more likely to consider leaving their jobs. When employees develop

depersonalised views of their students, clients, customers or colleagues, or feel emotionally exhausted by their jobs and feel ineffective, they become less enthusiastic and motivated about their work and are less likely to carry out and achieve their organisations goals. Employees in this frame of mind are more prone to psychologically and physically withdrawing from work (Price and Muller 1981).

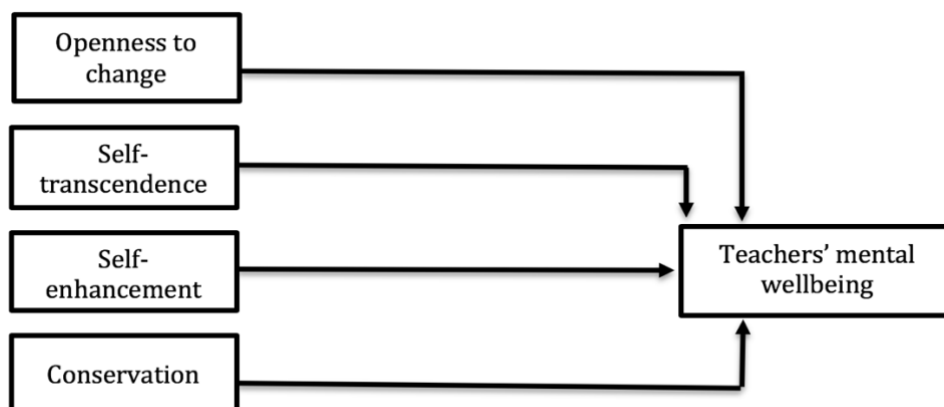
Blisky and Schwartz (1994) using the work of Maslow’s (1943 cited by Schwartz 2018) theory of motivation and Rokeach’s (1973 cited by Schwartz 2018) nature of human values identified the healthy values necessary in order to fulfil their growth needs in terms of self-actualization are categorised as benevolence, self-direction, universalism, achievement and stimulation values. Unhealthy values are categorised as conformity, security and power. People who attribute higher valuations to healthy values are more likely to experience increased well-being, whereas, people who pursue unhealthy values are likely to weaken their well-being (Sagiv and Schwartz 2000).

Similarly, in a sample size of 441 people with four different cultural groups, Schwartz et al. (2000) set out to find similarities and distinctions between worries and value priorities of individuals. The outcomes of their findings suggested that participants with higher valuations of self-transcendence had lower micro worries and higher macro worries. In this context micro ‘worry’ refers to the individual and its extension for example family and close friends and macro worries refers to wider societal factors. Schwartz (2012) further states that the values of self-enhancement and openness to change expressed self-interest and self-transcendence, and conservation values express how individuals relate to others.

However, in a recent study conducted by Barni et al. (2018) to measure the importance teachers gave to self-enhancement, self-transcendence, conservation and openness to change. They found that teachers give less importance to personal values which are conservation and self-enhancement values and more importance to socialisation values such as self-transcendence and openness to change. Thus, from the given arguments above (Bilsky and Schwartz 1994; Schwartz 2018; Sagiv and Schwartz 2000; Sagiv and Schwartz; Schwartz 2012), the following hypothesis is presented:

H4: *Conservation values in teachers are more likely to be positively related to depressed moods*

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Adapted by: Radloff (1977); Schwartz (2012)

METHODOLOGY

Data and Sample

A pre-coded data set was used from ESS 7 -European Social Survey Round 7 2014 with specific focus on educational professionals. The cross-national survey involves strict random probability sampling that is representative to all people aged 15 and over. Surveys are designed using a standardised format which not only makes it easy to be completed by respondents in various situations, but also gives researchers the ability to analyse answers effectively regardless of context (Matthews and Ross 2010).

Measurement of Variables

The survey used in our study had a total of 2264 respondents from the UK. In reference to the hypothesis, the independent variable, human values, is operationally defined through 21 questions using Schwartz's (2012) 10 basic human value types: Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Universalism, Power, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, Self-direction and Security. This was measured on a six-point Likert scale (1= Very much like me and 6= Not like me at all). The dependent variable, psychological state, is measured by the 8-item version of the Centre of Epidemiological Studies - Depression (CES-D) (Radloff 1977) which is a multi-self-report that is used to measure the prevalence of society's depressive symptoms. Respondents were asked to self-report how often during the previous week they felt "depressed; everything was an effort; sleep was restless; happy; lonely; enjoyed life; sad; could not get going" (4 point Likert scale).

Demographics

The demographic of this study focuses on educational professionals. The sample size of respondents who answered all questions relating to the Human Values (IV) and Psychological State DV is 105. Further information about demographic can be found below in table 1. This sample was 70.5% female. Even though this may be seen as not equal, it is representative of the education sector across UK, 69.5% of teachers are women (BESA 2018). The key age group of this sample are boomers age 54-72. While 97.1% of respondents in the survey were university educated.

Reliability and Validity

Exploratory factor analysis is highly subjective, and the interpretation of results chiefly relies on researcher judgment (Henson and Roberts 2006). Additionally, where researchers face an already established data, Cronbach's alpha is more acceptable to test the reliability and validity rather than the EFA (Statistics Solutions 2019). For this reason, the Cronbach Alpha was used for the purposes of this study (please see table 1 for the outcome). A total of 17 statements of ESS's 21 statements to measure human values were used as these were found to be reliable.

Nunnally (1978) has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. Whilst this

shows high reliability of the data, result over 0.5 is considered satisfactory as it indicates a moderately reliable scale (Hinton et al. 2004).

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To test hypothesis 1, 2, 3 and 4, a linear regression using SPSS 25 was conducted. In model 1, the predictability of the individual scores for the four variables of human values on happiness was explored. Similarly, in model 2, the predictability of the individual scores for the four variables of human values on depression was also explored. In addition, the analysis controlled for age, gender and university education.

Correlations

Self-transcendence, as well as, rules and traditions have a significant negative correlation with buying energy efficient home appliances. On the contrary, openness to change and fun and adventure had no correlation with the dependent variable (see table 2).

Table 2: The correlations of independent and dependent variable

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlations											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1. Happy	3.16	0.699	0.833											
2. Sad	1.51	0.468	-.515**	.748										
3. Openness to change	3.22	0.847	-.244*	0.089	0.701									
4. Self-enhancement	3.69	1.033	0.008	-0.012	.451**	0.811								
5. Self-transcendence	1.88	0.558	.293**	-0.159	.219*	0.176	0.591							
6. Conservation	2.71	0.948	0.146	0.011	0.141	.406**	.350**	0.792						
7. Gender	1.70	0.458	-0.105	0.016	.242*	0.125	0.061	-0.035						
8. Education Uni	0.97	0.167	-0.083	0.084	-0.023	-0.149	-0.017	0.039	0.140					
9. Millennials	0.26	0.439	-0.027	0.109	-.282**	-.390**	-0.122	-.260**	-0.145	0.101				
10. Generation X	0.18	0.387	-0.109	-0.033	0.025	-0.027	0.068	0.126	0.087	-0.068	-			
11. Boomers	0.36	0.483	-0.033	-0.117	0.115	0.164	-0.113	-0.075	0.140	0.010	.277**	-		
12. Silent	0.20	0.402	0.175	0.053	0.147	.255**	.204*	.253**	-0.094	-0.057	.443**	-	-0.354**	
											.294**	-	-0.235*	-0.377**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
N=105, Cronbach Alpha's in bolded parenthesis

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 anticipates that teachers who hold higher levels of self-transcendence values are more likely to report being happy. Here, self-transcendence is significantly related teachers' wellbeing ($B=0.422$, $p<0.001$). Teachers who have lower levels of openness to change (H4) were more likely to report being happy ($B=-0.304$, $p<0.001$), this is displayed through the negative coefficient. However, there was insignificant relationship in conservation values ($B=0.024$, $p= 0.761$), and Self-enhancement values ($B= -0.304$, $p=0.651$). A significant relationship was signalled between valuations of self-transcendence and depression (H4) ($B=-0.195$, $p<0.05$). The negative coefficient suggests that teachers with lower valuations of self-transcendence values are more likely to report being depressed.

In model 2, hypothesis 4 expects teachers with lower levels of openness to change values to report being depressed, that relationship insignificance was found ($B=0.097$, $p=0.131$) meaning hypothesis 4 is not supported. Insignificance was also found in conservation ($B=0.049$, $p=0.393$) meaning hypothesis 3 is not supported. Self-enhancement ($B=-0.024$, $p= 0.676$) and openness to change ($B=0.097$, $p=0.131$) indicated no significance.

Table 3: The regression of independent and dependent variables.

	Coefficients			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	DV: HAPPY		DV: DEPRESSION	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	3.281	0.419	1.361	0.306
CST_HV	0.024	0.079	0.049	0.058
UNBE_HV	0.422***	0.123	-0.195*	0.090
POAC_HV	0.035	0.077	-0.024	0.056
SDSH_HV	-0.304***	0.087	0.097	0.063
Gender	-0.051	0.144	0.035	0.105
Silent	0.146	0.182	0.155	0.133
Generation X	-0.224	0.184	0.056	0.134
Millennials	-0.121	0.174	0.205	0.127
R Squared	0.228		0.081	
Adjusted R Squared	0.163		0.005	
F-test	8(3.538) $p<0.01$		8(1.062) $p<0.01$	
Note: '***', $p < .001$; '*', $p < .05$;				

DISCUSSION

As anticipated there was a significant relationship between self-transcendence values and happiness in teachers. This supports Aristotle's view that in order for an individual to have a good life their personal strengths must be aligned with having an impact on society (Aristotle et. al 2009). Further evidence to support our study comes from

Belliotti (2004) and McMahan and Estes (2010), who found that greater well-being is associated with moral and intellectual qualities in an individual which would mean their lives would be more meaningful and valuable.

However, our findings suggest that those with lower levels of openness to change values are more likely to report being happy and opposes Jarden's (2010) findings that lower levels of openness to change values is significantly related to depressive symptoms. This finding can be explained through the notion that healthy values (Bilsky and Schwartz 1994) particularly self-direction (Schwartz 2018) are not conducive to greater wellbeing and instead what constitutes greater wellbeing/happiness is the extent to which an individual attains their goals. Ryan and Deci (2001) also argue that direct pursuit of pleasure does not promote greater wellbeing.

Interestingly, findings from our analysis suggest that there was no significant relationship between conservation values and depression, self-enhancement values and happiness in teachers. This was unexpected as findings from Sagiv and Schwartz's (2000) representative sample size of 1261 students and adults from Israel and Germany, showed that conservation values weaken an individual's well-being, which in turn decreases personal happiness. However, Barni et al. (2018) found that teachers give less importance to personal values such as conservation and self-enhancement values and more importance to self-transcendence values followed by openness to change. Our findings, in conjunction with Barni et al. (2018), reflect the importance of interpersonal and social values of teaching as an occupation.

Furthermore, all control variables were insignificant in the context of our analysis. This was unexpected as Konu et al. (2010), in a study of 1,294 Finnish teachers, found that the well-being of female teachers was lower than that of male teachers. In our study, male teachers were more likely to report being happy, whilst female teachers were more likely to report being depressed. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Also, research from Thomas et al. (2016) indicates that with ageing comes better mental health. Yet, in our study, the relationship between age and both dependent variables were insignificant. Control variables were used primarily to determine whether there is a relationship with other variables (Pedhazur and Schmelkin 1991).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research paper was to determine which human values impact teacher's psychological state in the UK. The empirical results reveal that increased levels of self-transcendence values are more likely to lead to higher levels of happiness in teachers across the UK. While teachers with lower levels of openness to change are more likely to report being happy. Finally, our findings reported that conservation values along with self enhancement values were insignificant to teachers' levels of happiness. An emerging conceptual framework (see Figure 1) has been developed from analysis of extant literature to provide a possible description of concepts relevant to teachers' wellbeing.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are various managerial implications for teachers in the UK. Firstly, from data showing that self - transcendence is positively correlated to happiness, and literature

suggesting that policies on reward and acknowledgment produce favourable work outcomes. Along with the rise in mental health issues amongst teachers and the current situation of teachers in the UK having a high turnover rate implies that managers are not maximising teachers' potential by providing them with the necessary resources and support required to ensure they operate at an optimum level of productivity. Therefore, it is recommended that managers in institutions consider focusing their attention on ensuring they provide ample support and opportunity for growth as well as acknowledge their teachers' achievements in order for the teachers in their department/ institution to thrive and produce excellent work. Resulting in happier teachers, better work productivity which in turn reflects on students' rate of achievement which adds to bolstering the reputation and global position of that institution, attracting high quality

LIMITATIONS

Much like other research, our study has certain consequential limitations that justify further attention. First, the fact that we used cross sectional data prohibits conclusive assertions concerning causality and directionality. Additionally, the statistical methodology used in our research is not undisputable when depicting the true direction of work relationships. Longitudinal data is needed in future to prevent such issues. For example, further research into assessing whether psychological states in teachers varies across different regions within the UK over a substantial period of time, perhaps suggesting a linear or adverse relationship to human values. The second limitation comes from the fact that the data collected throughout the study was self-reported which increases the possibility that our findings may be invalidated by source variance or common method variance. Though the possibilities of this cannot be denied, it can equally be argued that it is unlikely that source/ common bias is a sufficient explanation for the findings in the present day. We close by noting an important area that requires further study. To exemplify this, a study should be conducted into the impacts of self-transcendence values, because the Cronbach Alpha for these values indicated low reliability. Also, the contrasting nature of our results may be due to a limitation from our research because we analysed results from a 2014 sample. Meanwhile, the literature suggesting that teachers give less importance to personal values was written in 2018. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if future research supports or opposes the claim made by Barni et al. (2018).

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