

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers play roles that demand high levels of emotional and affective involvement, making psychological well-being a crucial aspect in sustaining the quality of early childhood learning. Various job demands, limited resources, and the dynamics of the educational system may influence the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. This study aims to systematically review research findings related to the psychological well-being of ECE teachers and to identify factors that influence it. The method employed was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The literature search was conducted through reputable online databases using the inclusion criteria of articles published between 2020 and 2025, resulting in 11 articles selected for analysis. The findings indicate that the psychological well-being of ECE teachers is influenced by individual factors such as self-efficacy, gratitude, and resilience, as well as work environment factors including organizational support and a supportive work climate. Psychological well-being is also related to levels of job stress and teacher performance. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of paying greater attention to the psychological well-being of ECE teachers through strengthened institutional support and the development of sustainable psychological interventions.

KEYWORDS : psychological well-being, PAUD teachers, psychological well-being, early childhood education

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) represents a foundational phase in shaping children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, thereby positioning ECE teachers in roles that require high levels of affective and emotional interaction (Sulistianingsih, 2022). These conditions make the profession particularly vulnerable to sustained psychological pressure. Psychological well-being, which encompasses self-acceptance, positive social relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth, serves as a fundamental basis for teachers' emotional stability and resilience in fulfilling their professional roles (Frost et al., 2022). Maintained psychological well-being supports the quality of educational interactions and ensures the sustainability of ECE teachers' performance in early childhood learning processes.

The characteristics of ECE teachers' work are marked by intensive physical and emotional involvement, behavior management of young children, and continuous communication with parents, often conducted under conditions of limited facilities, administrative demands, and uneven professional recognition (Permata et al., 2022). Changes in the educational system and broader social dynamics have further intensified psychological pressure, particularly through demands for adaptation to distance learning and reduced direct interaction with children. Research by Rosita & Suherman (2021) indicates that the psychological well-being of ECE teachers varies across categories, reflecting differences in adaptive capacity toward changes in workload and educational environment.

In addition to external factors, personal characteristics such as self-efficacy play a significant role in shaping the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. As shown by Suranto & Sugiarti (2021), who found that teachers with stronger beliefs in their professional abilities tend to demonstrate greater psychological stability. Social factors have also received considerable attention in studies of ECE teachers' well-being. Research by Nagari and Nagari & Hapsari (2023) involving kindergarten teachers revealed that social support contributes to maintaining psychological well-being, particularly when teachers face high levels of work-related stress. Studies conducted during the pandemic further indicate that teachers who receive support from both their work environment and family tend to exhibit more adaptive psychological conditions than those experiencing limited support.

International scholarship on the well-being of early childhood educators has also expanded, including systematic reviews that examine well-being initiatives for teachers and educators. The findings of Berger et al. (2022) show that most existing research continues to focus on individual-level interventions, with relatively limited attention given to the structural characteristics of early childhood educators' work comprehensively. This indicates that research findings related to the psychological well-being of ECE teachers remain fragmented and insufficiently integrated.

Based on this overview, there is a need to compile a study that summarizes and systematically reviews empirical research on the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. Accordingly, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review to identify patterns of findings, commonly examined variables, and existing research gaps. The results of this review are expected to serve as an academic reference for the development of future research and to provide a conceptual foundation for strengthening the psychological well-being of ECE teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method guided by the PRISMA 2020 guidelines developed by Page et al. (2021). This approach was selected to systematically and transparently identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical research findings addressing the psychological well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers. A prior review protocol was not registered or published; therefore, the review process followed the PRISMA 2020 checklist as the primary guideline for reporting and article selection flow.

The literature search was conducted using Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software by accessing reputable online databases, namely Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected due to their extensive coverage of scholarly publications in the fields of education, psychology, and mental health. The search strategy was systematically developed using a combination of keywords in both Indonesian and English to capture national and international literature. The keywords used included "kesejahteraan psikologis guru PAUD," "psychological well-being early childhood teachers," "early childhood educators well-being," and "psychological well-being teachers."

The initial search process yielded 143 articles relevant to the research topic. Subsequently, a screening process was conducted based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles published between 2015–2025	Articles published before 2015
Articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals or conference proceedings	Articles from non-scholarly sources such as blogs, opinion pieces, popular reports, or news articles
Articles addressing psychological well-being, psychological welfare, or related aspects among Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers or early childhood educators	Articles focusing on psychological well-being in other professions without a specific focus on ECE teachers or early childhood educators
Studies employing empirical approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods	Articles consisting of purely conceptual reviews, editorials, scholarly essays, or opinion papers without empirical data
Articles written in Indonesian or English	Articles written in languages other than Indonesian and English
Articles available in full-text and accessible in their entirety	Articles available only as abstracts or previews

Source: Authors' data processing, 2025

Following the initial screening based on titles, abstracts, and full-text content, a total of 143 articles met the basic eligibility criteria. A subsequent screening stage was conducted to ensure alignment with the primary focus of the review, namely the conditions, influencing factors, or measurement outcomes of psychological well-being among Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers. Based on this process, 11 final articles met all inclusion criteria and were deemed suitable for further analysis.

The article selection and screening process is illustrated through the PRISMA flow diagram, as presented in Figure 1.

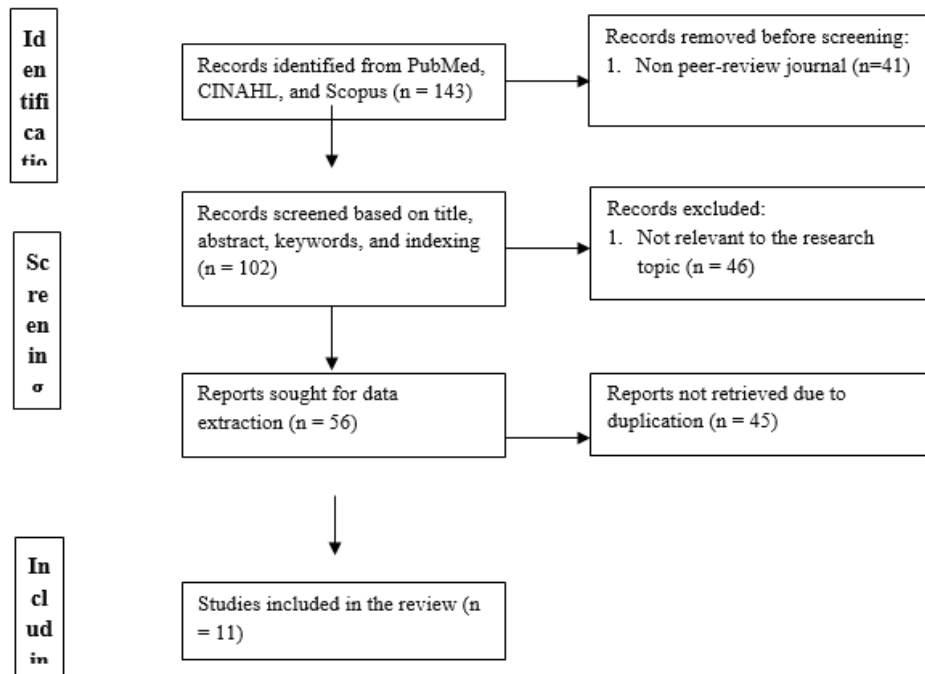


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Diagram.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the 11 Selected Articles

Based on the selection process and thematic analysis, various findings were identified and are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Analysis of 11 Articles.

No	Title & Author	Objective	Theme	Method	Key Findings
1	Psychological Well-being Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Kota Bandung Pada Saat Pandemi Covid-19 (Rosita & Suherman, 2021)	Describing the level of psychological well-being of ECE teachers during the pandemic	Psychological well-being of ECE teachers	Descriptive quantitative	ECE teachers predominantly demonstrated a moderate level of psychological well-being. The dimensions of positive relations and self-acceptance were relatively more stable compared to environmental mastery and purpose in life.
2	Self-Efficacy on Psychological Well-Being of Early Childhood Education Teachers (Suranto &	Analyzing the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological	Self-efficacy and well-being	Correlational quantitative	Self-efficacy showed a positive relationship with the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. Teachers with stronger beliefs in their

	Sugiarti, 2021)	well-being			abilities exhibited more adaptive psychological conditions in coping with work demands.
3	Kesejahteraan Psikologis pada Guru PAUD laki-laki (Sebuah Pemaknaan Diri sebagai Figur Ayah) (Syahida & Daliman, 2023)	Exploring the psychological well-being experiences of male ECE teachers	Role identity and well-being	Phenomenological qualitative	The psychological well-being of male ECE teachers was influenced by the meaning of their roles as caregivers and educators. Social acceptance and clarity of professional identity contributed to maintaining their psychological stability.
4	“Legowo”: Sebuah Gambaran Kebersyukuran dan Kesejahteraan Psikologis Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Scarvanovi, 2023)	Examining the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being	Positive emotions and well-being	Correlational quantitative	Gratitude was positively associated with the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. Teachers who were able to interpret their work experiences positively demonstrated higher levels of well-being.
5	Gambaran Kesejahteraan Psikologis Guru Honorer Non Kependidikan pada Tingkat PAUD dan TK di Kabupaten Aceh Utara (Nurbalqis et al., 2023)	Describing the psychological well-being of honorary ECE teachers	Employment status and well-being	Descriptive quantitative	Honorary ECE teachers showed individual variations in psychological well-being. Self-acceptance and social relationships tended to be stronger than autonomy and environmental mastery.
6	Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Psychological Capital in Pre-Kindergarten Teachers’ Well-Being (Sufya & Retnaningsih, 2024)	Analyzing the influence of organizational citizenship behavior and psychological capital	Psychological capital and well-being	Quantitative	Psychological capital contributed to the well-being of ECE teachers. Organizational citizenship behavior supported the creation of a more conducive work climate for teachers’ psychological stability.
7	Pengembangan E-	Developing an	Mindfulness	Research and	The use of a mindfulness-

	Modul Berbasis Mindfulness untuk Meningkatkan Well-Being Guru PAUD (Sagita et al., 2024)	intervention to enhance psychological well-being	intervention	Development	based e-module increased ECE teachers' psychological well-being scores. Teachers demonstrated improved emotional regulation and greater calmness in carrying out teaching activities.
8	Hubungan Kesejahteraan Psikologis dengan Kinerja Guru PAUD (Estikhomah et al., 2023)	Analyzing the relationship between psychological well-being and performance	Well-being and performance	Correlational quantitative	Psychological well-being was positively associated with ECE teachers' performance. Teachers with more stable psychological conditions exhibited more consistent work quality.
9	Peran Psychological Well-Being dan Efikasi Diri terhadap Stres pada Guru PAUD (Maharani & Wati, 2021)	Examining the role of well-being and self-efficacy in work-related stress	Work stress and well-being	Quantitative	Psychological well-being was related to the level of work stress among ECE teachers. Teachers with higher well-being tended to experience lower levels of job-related stress.
10	Psychological Wellbeing of Kindergarten Teachers : A Quantitative Review (Nofriza & Karosekali, 2024)	Describing the psychological well-being of kindergarten teachers	Early childhood teacher well-being	Quantitative	The psychological well-being of kindergarten teachers varied across dimensions. Social relationships and self-acceptance were more prominent than autonomy.
11	The Relationship Between Resilience and Professional Well-being Among Early Childhood Teachers: The Chain Mediating Role of Teacher Pedagogical Competence and Self-efficacy (Yang et al., 2025)	Analyzing the role of resilience in professional well-being	Resilience and well-being	Quantitative	Resilience played a role in maintaining the professional well-being of early childhood teachers. Teachers with higher resilience demonstrated better adaptive capacities in dealing with work-related pressures.

Source: Data compiled from 11 articles published between 2020 and 2025

Based on the review of the twelve articles presented in Table 2, the findings indicate that the psychological well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers is influenced by the interaction between personal factors and the work environment. Most studies report that ECE teachers' psychological well-being falls within a moderate category, with variations across dimensions, particularly in self-acceptance, positive relations with others, and purpose in life (Rosita & Suherman, 2021; Nurbalqis et al., 2023; Nofriza & Karosekali, 2024). This condition is closely associated with high job demands, limited economic welfare, and job characteristics that require intense emotional involvement in early childhood caregiving. The psychological stability of ECE teachers is often influenced by employment status and unequal professional recognition (Syahida & Daliman, 2023).

Several studies emphasize the role of teachers' internal factors in shaping psychological well-being. Self-efficacy, gratitude, resilience, and psychological capital have been reported to have positive relationships with the psychological well-being of ECE teachers (Suranto & Sugiarti, 2021; Scarvanovi, 2023; Maharani & Wati, 2021; Yang et al., 2025). Teachers who possess stronger beliefs in their professional capabilities and are able to interpret their work experiences positively tend to demonstrate more adaptive psychological conditions in response to work-related pressures. Other findings reveal that psychological well-being is associated with teacher performance and levels of job-related stress, indicating that teachers' psychological conditions play a critical role in sustaining the quality of early childhood education services (Estikhomah et al., 2023; Maharani & Wati, 2021).

In addition to individual factors, several studies discuss the role of the work environment and psychological strengthening interventions in supporting the well-being of ECE teachers. Organizational psychological capital and organizational citizenship behavior contribute to the creation of a work climate that supports teachers' emotional balance (Sufya & Retnaningsih, 2024). Mindfulness-based intervention innovations through the development of e-modules have been shown to enhance teachers' emotional regulation and sense of calm in carrying out instructional activities (Sagita et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the review also highlights limitations in the existing literature, which remains predominantly quantitative and largely focused on individual variables, while integrative studies linking personal, organizational, and early childhood education policy factors are still rarely discussed comprehensively.

Psychological Well-Being of Early Childhood Education Teachers from the Perspective of Individual and Work Environment Factors

The psychological well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers varies across studies, with a dominant tendency toward a moderate level. Several studies report that the dimensions of self-acceptance and positive relations with others emerge as relatively strong aspects among ECE teachers, reflecting their emotional attachment and professional commitment to their roles as early childhood educators (Rosita & Suherman, 2021; Nofriza & Karosekali, 2024). This condition shows that despite facing high job demands, ECE teachers are generally able to maintain supportive social relationships and perceive their educational roles as an integral part of their self-identity. However, variations in well-being across individuals remain evident, largely influenced by employment background and the level of institutional support.

Several studies highlight employment status and working conditions as factors closely associated with the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. Temporary employment teachers (honorary) tend to experience greater psychological pressure due to limited economic welfare and career uncertainty, which in turn affects lower levels of autonomy and environmental mastery (Nurbalqis et al., 2023). Syahida & Daliman (2023) further indicate that social recognition and clarity of professional roles play a significant role in maintaining psychological stability, particularly among male ECE teachers who continue to encounter gender role stereotypes within the field of early childhood education.

Internal teacher-related factors have also been shown to contribute substantially to the formation of psychological well-being. Self-efficacy consistently emerges as a key variable associated with ECE teachers' capacity to manage work demands and instructional challenges (Suranto & Sugiarti, 2021). Teachers who possess strong beliefs in their professional competence tend to demonstrate more adaptive and confident attitudes in carrying out their duties. In addition to self-efficacy, gratitude has been linked to psychological well-being through teachers' ability to interpret work experiences positively, thereby enabling more effective management of emotional pressures (Scarvanovi, 2023).

Resilience and psychological capital appear as protective factors that support the long-term well-being of ECE teachers. Findings by Yang et al. (2025) show that resilience plays a role in helping teachers cope with work pressure, changes in education policy, and emotional dynamics in interactions with children and parents. Psychological capital, which includes

hope, optimism, and emotional endurance, further contributes to greater psychological stability, particularly when supported by organizational citizenship behavior and a cooperative work climate (Sufya & Retnaningsih, 2024).

The relationship between psychological well-being and ECE teachers' performance represents a critical finding across several studies. Teachers with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to demonstrate more consistent performance and lower levels of job-related stress (Estikhomah et al., 2023; Maharani & Wati, 2021). This condition indicates that psychological well-being not only affects individual teachers but also has broader implications for the quality of early childhood education services. Teachers' emotional stability contributes to the creation of a more supportive and responsive learning environment that aligns with children's developmental needs.

Several studies have also begun to explore interventions aimed at enhancing the psychological well-being of ECE teachers, including mindfulness-based approaches delivered through digital media. The development of mindfulness e-modules has been shown to improve teachers' emotional regulation and sense of calm in their daily instructional activities (Sagita et al., 2024). Nevertheless, most existing studies remain focused on individual-level variables, while research integrating organizational aspects, educational policy, and the economic welfare of ECE teachers remains limited. These findings highlight opportunities for future research to develop more comprehensive approaches to supporting the psychological well-being of ECE teachers.

Implications of Early Childhood Education Teachers' Psychological Well-Being on the Quality of Early Childhood Learning

The psychological well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers has been described in the literature as a condition that varies across levels. A study by Rosita & Suherman (2021) involving ECE teachers in Bandung City found that most teachers were at a moderate level of psychological well-being, while others fell into low and high categories. Similar patterns have been reported in studies of kindergarten and ECE teachers in other regions, showing variations across dimensions of psychological well-being, particularly in self-acceptance, social relationships, and purpose in life (Nurbalqis et al., 2023; Nofriza & Karosekali, 2024). These findings suggest that the psychological well-being of ECE teachers is not homogeneous and is shaped by both personal conditions and workplace characteristics.

Several studies emphasize the role of internal teacher-related factors in shaping psychological well-being. Self-efficacy consistently emerges as a key variable associated with ECE teachers' psychological well-being, as demonstrated by Suranto & Sugiarti (2021), who found that teachers with stronger beliefs in their professional abilities exhibited more stable psychological conditions. In addition to self-efficacy, gratitude contributes to enhanced psychological well-being by enabling teachers to interpret their work experiences more positively (Scarvanovi, 2023). Resilience also plays a role as a psychological protective factor that helps teachers cope with work-related pressures and the dynamics of educational change (Yang et al., 2025).

The work environment and organizational support have likewise emerged as important determinants of ECE teachers' psychological well-being. Research by Sufya & Retnaningsih (2024) indicates that organizational psychological capital and organizational citizenship behavior contribute to the creation of a more supportive work climate, thereby helping teachers maintain emotional balance. Cooperative working conditions and social support from colleagues strengthen teachers' capacity to manage job demands. Conversely, limited facilities, administrative burdens, and insufficient professional recognition tend to undermine teachers' autonomy and environmental mastery, particularly among non-permanent employment status (Nurbalqis et al., 2023).

The relationship between psychological well-being and ECE teachers' performance is a recurring finding in the literature. Estikhomah et al. (2023) demonstrate that teachers with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to exhibit more consistent performance. This finding is reinforced by Maharani & Wati (2021), who report a correlation between psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and job-related stress, indicating that teachers with higher well-being experience lower levels of work pressure. Stable psychological conditions support the quality of educational interactions with young children, thereby contributing to the overall quality of early childhood education services.

Beyond descriptive and correlational approaches, several studies have begun to explore interventions aimed at enhancing the psychological well-being of ECE teachers. The development of mindfulness-based e-modules has been shown to improve teachers' emotional regulation and sense of calm in managing daily instructional activities (Sagita et al., 2024). However, research on ECE teachers' well-being remains largely dominated by individual-level and short-term approaches.

CONCLUSION

The psychological well-being of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers is a phenomenon shaped by the interaction between personal factors, working conditions, and organizational environmental support. Overall, the psychological well-being of ECE teachers tends to fall within a moderate category, with variations across individuals and dimensions. The dimensions of self-acceptance and positive relations with others generally demonstrate more stable levels. In contrast, autonomy and environmental mastery remain challenging, particularly among teachers with temporary employment and those with limited access to professional development opportunities. Internal factors such as self-efficacy, gratitude, and resilience play important roles in maintaining teachers' psychological stability amid high job demands. In addition, a supportive work environment, organizational psychological capital, and a cooperative work climate contribute significantly to sustaining the psychological well-being of ECE teachers.

Based on these findings, future research is encouraged to develop studies that integrate individual, organizational, and early childhood education policy factors. The use of longitudinal research designs is recommended to examine changes in ECE teachers' psychological well-being over time. Furthermore, future studies may explore the utilization of digital technologies and professional community-based approaches to support teachers' psychological well-being. From a practical perspective, ECE institution administrators and policymakers are expected to design teacher development programs that prioritize psychological well-being through supportive work environments, professional recognition, and the provision of sustainable psychological interventions.

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