

Relevance of Well-Being for Innovation at School - the Role of Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence in Times of Change

Berit Breins & Prof. Dr. Michaela Gläser-Zikuda

School Education and Instructional Research
University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany

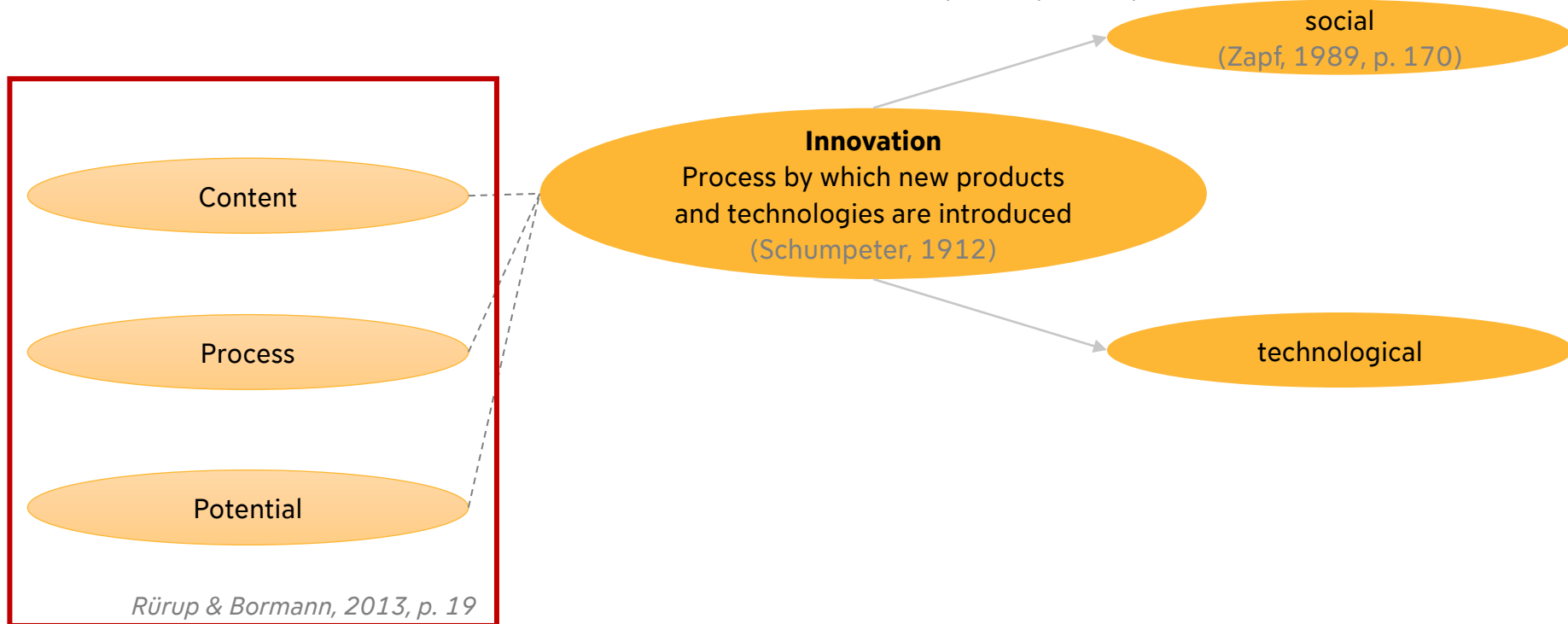
5th Global Forum for Teacher Professional Development (UNESCO)
Teachers' Social-Emotional Development & Support for Students

Why talk about innovation in education?

Rapid social or societal and technological changes challenge schools globally (OECD, 2019).

Innovation is essential for school success and adaption (Schleicher, 2018).

Teachers are at the heart of educational transformation (OECD, 2020).

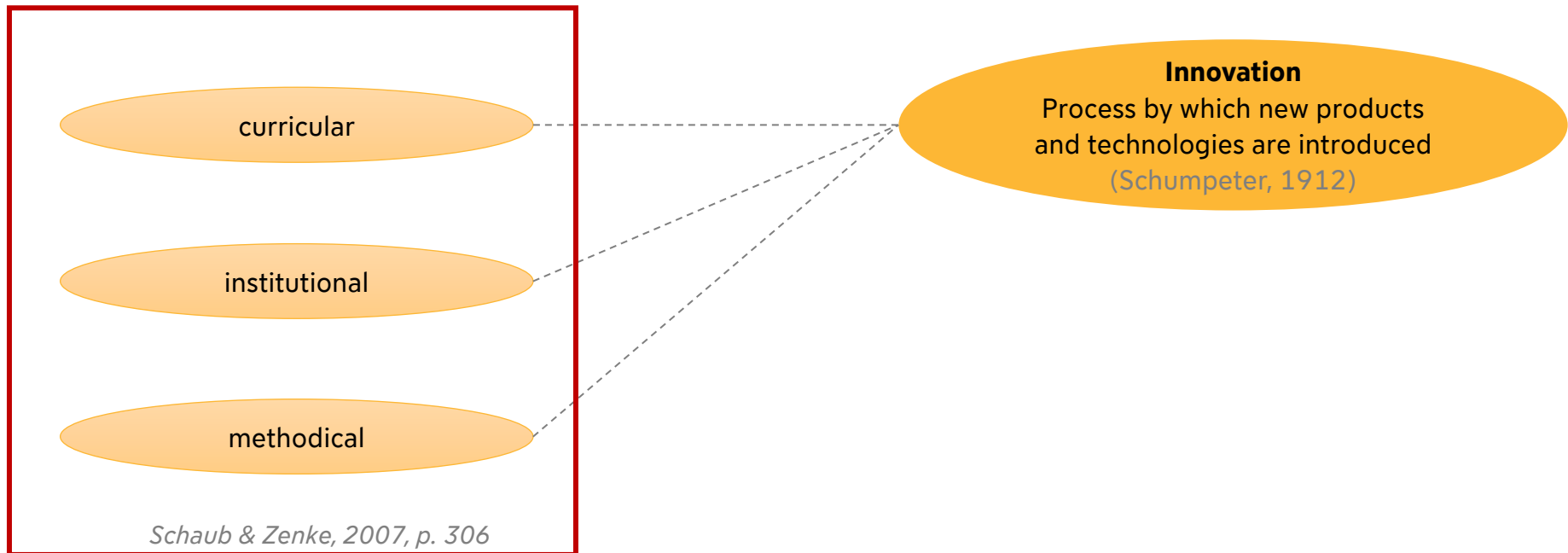


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The Challenge

Well-Being under pressure



High expectations, digitalization, and social demands continue to transform the realities of teachers' work (OECD, 2025)

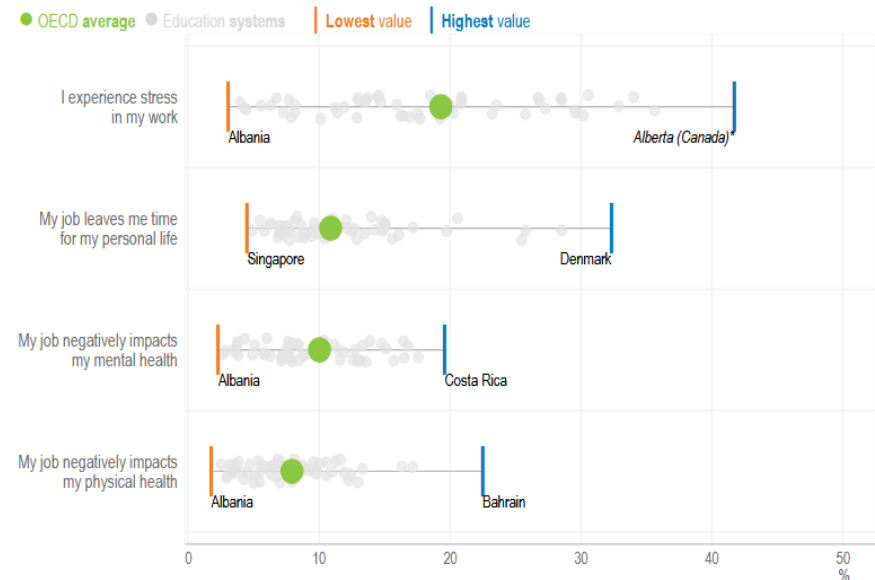
OECD & TALIS data: teacher well-being strongly predicts job satisfaction, retention, and teaching quality

Negative factors such as work overload, insufficient autonomy, poor school climate can undermine mental and physical health.

Teachers' resilience, self-efficacy, and access to supportive school environments are key to sustaining their well-being and professional motivation (Martinsone & Vanaga, 2024; OECD, 2025).

Figure 1.

Teacher well-being. Percentage of lower secondary teachers who report experiencing the following occurrences a lot in their work.



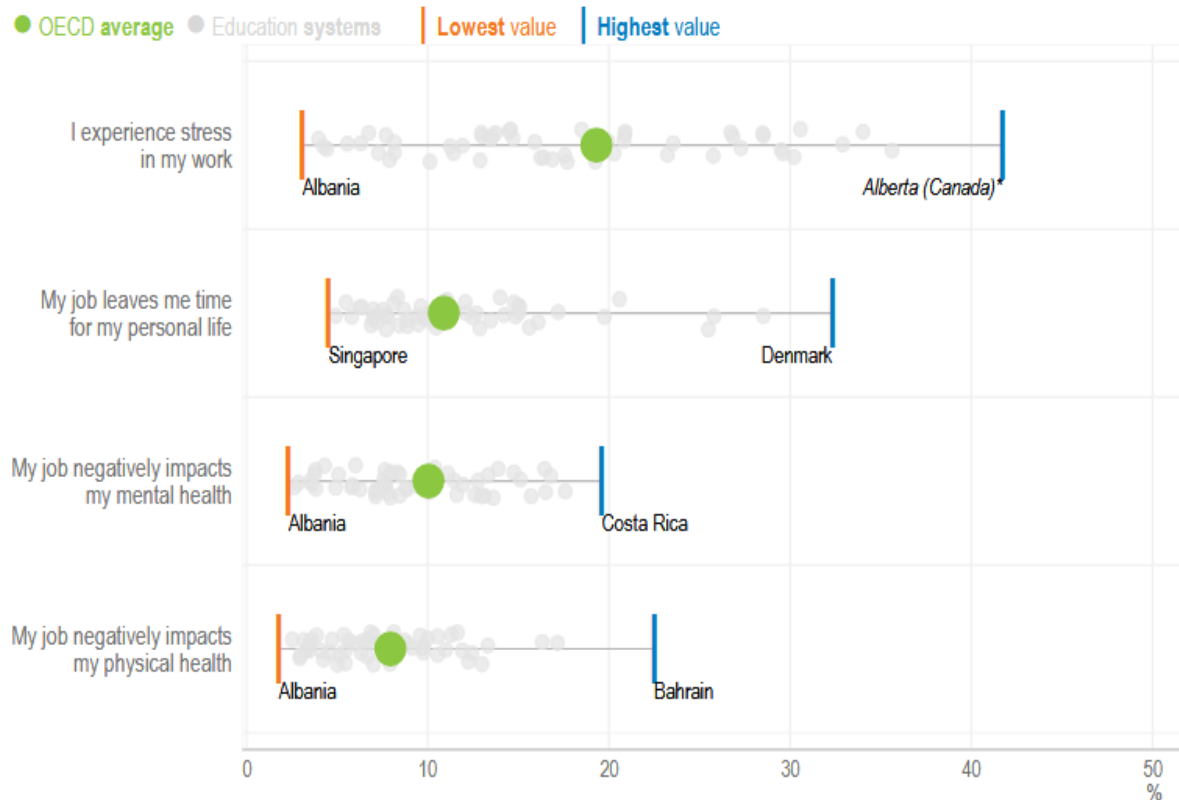
Note: *Estimates should be interpreted with caution due to higher risk of non-response bias.
Source: OECD, TALIS 2024 Database, Table 2.3.

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What is teacher well-being ?

Multidimensional construct: physical, mental, cognitive, subjective, and social aspects

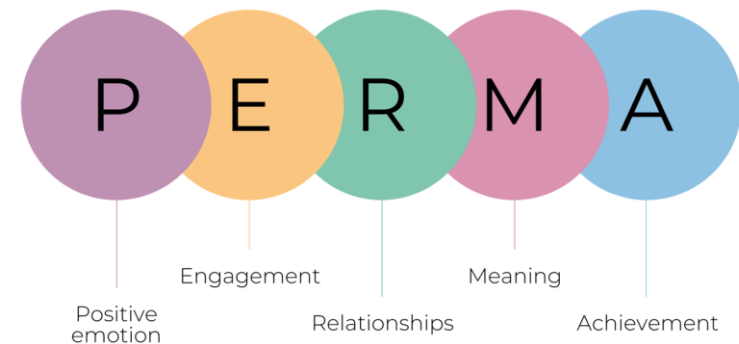
Subjective well-being encompasses both cognitive evaluation (life satisfaction, sense of purpose) and emotional balance (positive and negative affect) (Dreer, 2023)

Contextual influences: individual well-being is shaped by both personal factors (health, career stage) and school environment (leadership, climate, material conditions) (Dreer, 2021)

Outcomes: high well-being linked to teacher engagement, lower intention to leave, and positive student/classroom outcomes (Dreer, 2021, 2023)

Figure 2.

PERMA model of teacher well-being (Seligman, 2012)



Positive emotions broaden attention and cognitive flexibility, which fuels idea generation and creative problem-solving in teaching (Dreer, 2023).

Teacher well-being predicts innovative work behavior; effects are strengthened by supportive leadership and a strong sense of belonging in the school (Lu et al., 2025; Liu & Zaman, 2025).

Well-being → perceived insider status → greater experimentation with new methods and technologies in class – well-being accounting for 25% of variation in innovative teaching behavior (Lu et al., 2025).

Creative self-beliefs and metacognition correlate with higher well-being and readiness to try novel practices (Anderson, 2018).

Innovation is more than creativity: it requires implementation; healthy climates convert ideas into adopted practices and school-level improvement (Hosseini & Rastegar Haghighi Shirazi, 2018).



Theoretical lens

Emotions, Engagement, and Innovation



Control-Value-Theory (Pekrun, 2006)

Positive control and high value lead to enjoyment, engagement, and openness to change

low control or value increases anxiety and resistance to innovation

CASEL-framework

emphasizes self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making

internationally used for developing SEL (social-emotional learning) skills in teachers and students



RULER & CARE Programs

RULER (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence): builds emotional literacy and climate across school communities

CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education): Teacher-focused, evidence-based support for emotional awareness and stress reduction

Key evidence

positive emotions and strong social-emotional skills foster creativity, innovation and openness (Fredrickson, 2001)

Trust and collaboration act as emotional safety nets for educational teams

Theoretical lens

Emotions, Engagement, and Innovation



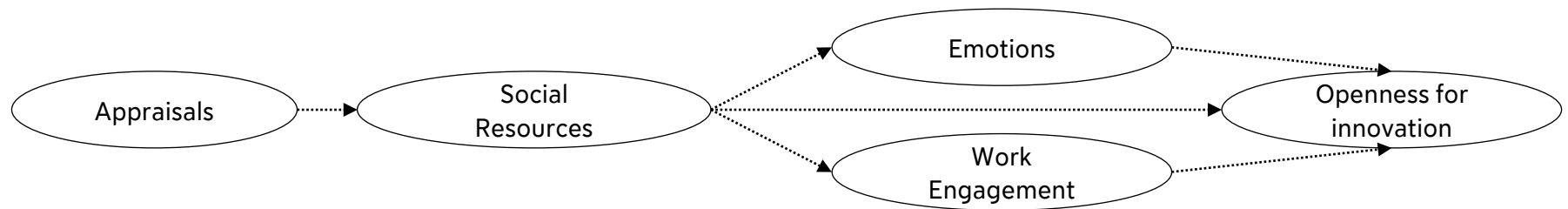
Method and theoretical background:

Mixed-method design; research study on teacher motivation and innovation

Based on CVT and social-emotional theories

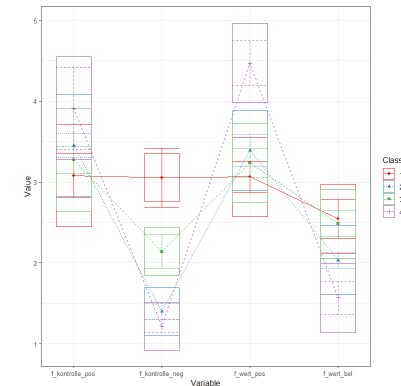
Figure 3.

Hypothetical model linking appraisals to innovative behavior through emotional and social resources of teachers.



Preliminary results:

identification of four profiles of different control- and value-appraisals ($25 < n < 103$)



Our research

Emotions, Resources, and Innovation at School



(Breins et al., 2025)

Method and theoretical

Mixed-method

Based on CVT

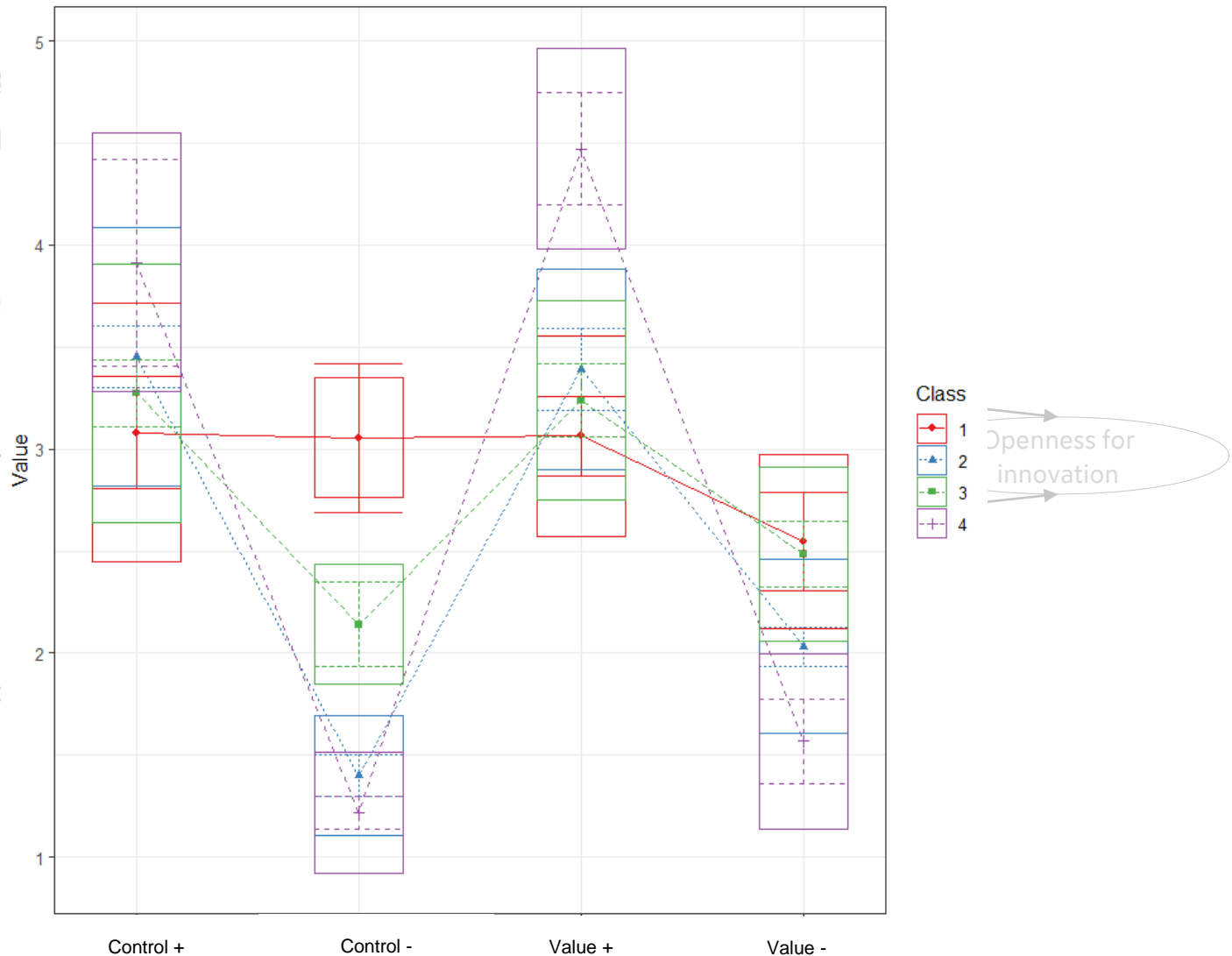
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Hypothetical model linking a

Appraisals

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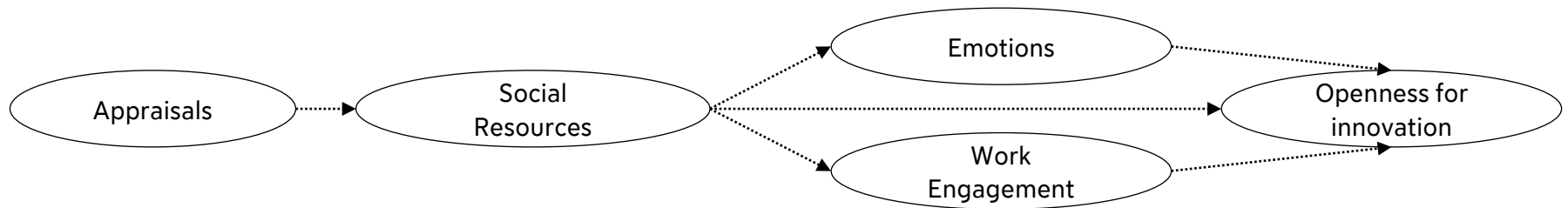
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Preliminary results:

identification of four profiles of different control- and value-appraisals ($25 < n < 103$)

Group membership explains up to 33% of the variance in the emotions experienced and the self-reported willingness to innovate

→ Teachers' emotional experiences and social resources might form the foundation for innovation-ready school cultures



Higher teacher well-being leads to greater classroom effectiveness, engagement, and innovation (Boldbaatar, 2025; Viac & Fraser, 2020).

Teachers who support high well-being are less likely to leave the profession, supporting school stability and improvement (OECD, 2020; Viac & Fraser, 2020).

Well-being is associated with more positive student-teacher relationships and better classroom climate (Fatahi & Warner-Griffin, 2024).

Key predictors: grit, life satisfaction, and optimism predict higher teaching effectiveness and openness to change (Boldbaatar, 2025).

Support from school leadership and strong collegial networks are critical to sustaining long-term well-being and innovation (Boldbaatar, 2025; Fatahi & Warner-Griffin, 2024).

Teachers' emotional intelligence and satisfaction foster student well-being and achievement through positive classroom dynamics (Boldbaatar, 2025; Fatahi & Warner-Griffin, 2024)

Case Study

Linking Social-Emotional Competence to Innovation

Context:

- Professional development program for teacher teams focused on social-emotional skills

Activities:

- emotional regulation exercises, peer coaching, collective reflection sessions

Outcomes:

- Improved emotional well-being and resilience reported by participants
- enhanced trust and communication in teams
- increased experimentation with innovative teaching methods and collaborative processes

Implications:

- strengthening social-emotional competence lays the foundation for emotional health, which in turn fosters innovative capacities and school development



Enhancing wellbeing among pre-service teachers through a mindfulness-based social and emotional learning curriculum: a quasi-experimental study in China



Yunpeng Wu^{*†}



Liping Qin[†]

School of Teacher Education, Dezhou University, Dezhou, China

OECD > Publications > Social and emotional skills

Social and emotional skills

Latest evidence on teachability and impact on life outcomes

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has a crucial role to play in these collective efforts to transform education to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for positive social change as called for by [SDG 4](#), the [Transforming Education Summit](#) [\[3\]](#), the [Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education](#), and the [2023 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development](#) adopted unanimously in 2023.

[Link 1](#) | [Link 2](#) | [Link 3](#)

- Embed social-emotional learning (SEL) into teacher professional development and school culture to sustain well-being and innovation.
- Promote leadership strategies that prioritize teacher autonomy, recognition, and emotional support to foster trust and resilience.
- Institutionalize reflective practices and peer collaboration to build collective emotional competence and shared ownership of innovation.

"Innovation is change that unlocks new value."

Jamie Notter

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Thank you for your kind attention