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Approaching teachers' professional wellbeing from different angles. Teachers' self-efficacy, burnout and resilience through participation in the Online Wellbeing course

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Approaching teachers' professional wellbeing from different angles: Teachers' self-efficacy, burnout and resilience through participation in the Online Wellbeing course

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Abstract

During the last decade, consistent and systemic work has been done to develop interventions and shape policies to promote social-emotional learning and support wellbeing in Latvian schools. Several interventions aimed to develop students' social-emotional skills both directly and indirectly have already been implemented in Latvia, providing evidence that not only students but also teachers gain from the implementation of social-emotional learning and promoting mental health in schools. Nevertheless, there has been insufficient focus specifically on teachers themselves when considering mental health and wellbeing at schools. This empirical research aims to analyze different factors of teachers' professional wellbeing in Latvia, namely teachers' self-efficacy, resilience and burnout, at two time points – before (T1) and after (T2) implementing the Online Wellbeing course (OWC) for teachers. The research sample consisted of 281 teachers from 15 schools from different regions of Latvia. Group A (N=83) took part in the course's development and later implemented it, Group B (N=102) implemented the course, and Group C (N=96) participated in the control condition. The results showed that the teachers' wellbeing was initially characterized by moderate levels of self-efficacy and resilience and a relatively low level of burnout rates. However, there was a wide variation in data, indicating significant individual differences among teachers. Over time, teachers' self-efficacy in terms of their ability to motivate students, adapt instructions and maintain discipline increased significantly in both experimental groups compared to the control group. Teachers' resilience increased significantly in the experimental groups and decreased in the control group. During the project,

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no changes were found in terms of teachers' burnout, which slightly increased in both the experimental and control groups. The results have implications for educational practice and policy.

1 Introduction

In psychology, the term "subjective wellbeing" refers to a person's evaluations of their quality of life, including self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relationships with others, personal growth and a sense of the meaning of life (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Wellbeing is a multi-dimensional construct reflecting a person's professional, personal, and interpersonal success (Ruggeri et al., 2020). When considering work life, professional wellbeing as a broad concept and its organizational, personal and professional components come to the fore. Professional wellbeing reflects the employee's satisfaction with work and the positive feelings experienced (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Diener et al., 1991). It is affected both by external factors such as the physical work environment and organizational management style (Guest, 2002; Lawson et al., 2009) and by individual factors such as the employee's personality traits, behaviour, and ability to cope with stress (Biggio & Cortese, 2013; Graham & Shier, 2010; Hodkinson et al., 2004; Loftus & Higgs, 2010). Professional wellbeing improves positive attitudes and job motivation, thus providing better work results, strengthening the organizational community, and improving cooperation with colleagues (Donald et al., 2005; Ford et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2003; Isham et al., 2019; Robertson & Cooper, 2011).

Teachers wellbeing

In recent years, research on teachers' wellbeing has increased (Hascher & Waber, 2021), reflecting the importance of the topic, because the professional wellbeing of teachers is closely related to their work and the overall quality of education. The OECD conceptualizes teachers' professional wellbeing in terms of their responses to the cognitive, emotional, physical and mental health, and social conditions associated with their profession (Davydovskaia et al., 2021; Viac & Fraser, 2020). Teachers' professional knowledge and skills are indisputably among the most important factors contributing to student achievement (Baumert et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2005; Tatto et al., 2012). Nevertheless, studies have shown that teachers' wellbeing is also related to the achievements of their students (Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Goddard et al., 2000). Such factors as the teacher's motivational and social-emotional characteristics significantly affect students' learning motivation and achievement (Frenzel et al., 2009; Kunter et al., 2013). Less satisfied teachers are more susceptible to stress and burnout, which, in the short term, affects teachers' effectiveness in the classroom (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Students taught by

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teachers who report higher levels of emotional exhaustion tend to exhibit lower average levels of academic achievement (Arens & Morin, 2016) and report lower levels of behavioural adjustment (Chang, 2009). Teachers' ability to establish and sustain positive teacher-student relationships has been recognized as vital during investigations of students' contentment with school (DeSantis-King et al., 2006; Zullig et al., 2011). Consequently, teachers' wellbeing is a significant variable in the context of the school as a successful learning organization.

Research has shown that such negative factors as work-life imbalance (Moeller et al., 2018), stress and burnout negatively affect teachers' ability to teach and are related to work overload, increased requirements, insufficient autonomy and negative school climate (Brackett et al., 2010; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Increases in teacher stress are directly related to decreases in perceived school connectedness and teaching effectiveness (Von der Embse & Mankin, 2020). Moreover, there is evidence of a relationship between teachers' wellbeing, burnout and leaving the profession (Roffey, 2012). Previous research indicates that many young professionals leave the profession within the first five years. OECD studies also show that teachers experiencing high levels of stress at work are more likely to report their intention to leave teaching and move to other careers within the first five years (Davydovskaia et al., 2021). The results of the TALIS 2018 study are in line with the results of research in other countries and show that 13% of teachers in Latvian schools have less than five years of experience, while the number of teachers with six to ten years of experience is twice as low (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

It is known that a positive school climate reduces the stress experienced by teachers at work, promotes their perceived effectiveness and can reduce the risk of burnout (Gribusts, 2021; Martinsone et al., 2023). Research suggests fostering a supportive school climate and teachers' stress management skills to boost teachers' wellbeing (Gray et al., 2017). Despite the different objective factors associated with teachers' wellbeing (e. g., workload, time pressure, salaries, prestige of the profession in society and others), various aspects of wellbeing depend on schools and teachers themselves.

This study addresses three aspects of teachers' professional wellbeing, namely, self-efficacy, resilience and burnout, since these are among the most important factors determining teachers' work performance, job satisfaction and overall wellbeing (Li, 2023).

Teachers' self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the teacher's perceived ability to work towards reaching educational goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Zee & Koomen, 2016) in terms of teaching, adjusting instructions, motivating students and maintaining classroom discipline. Teachers' self-efficacy can be facilitated by their engagement in social-emotional

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learning (Bradley et al., 2018), and it has been found to relate to teachers' job satisfaction, higher motivation and professional commitment, as well as better teaching quality (e. g., Caprara et al., 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Self-efficacy can be considered as an asset helping to promote resilience when facing adversities.

Teachers' resilience

Resilience involves the activation of multiple individual and contextual resources to manage challenging situations successfully (Ungar, 2012). Research has shown that there is a strong positive correlation between teachers' wellbeing and resilience (Hascher et al., 2021), increasing teachers' ability to respond to challenges (Mansfield et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the multidimensionality of resilience in research has been covered by measuring teachers' self-efficacy, workload and perceived support, as well as school climate and student behaviour (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). Consequently, resilience, wellbeing and self-efficacy are variables interrelated in a complex way (Hascher et al., 2021). The authors propose the AWaRE (Aligning Wellbeing and Resilience in Education) model, reflecting the crucial role of resilience in developing and maintaining teachers' wellbeing through an adaptive process of re-establishing and sustaining wellbeing when facing challenges. Stress and burnout (Agyapong et al., 2022) are among the issues teachers face when the process of restoring and maintaining their wellbeing is jeopardized.

Teachers' burnout

The concept of burnout describes a condition when a person experiences exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of personal inadequacy due to prolonged stress (e. g., Kim & Burić, 2020; Yang & Hayes, 2020). The teaching profession is associated with a high level of responsibility and intense emotional involvement, thus sustaining the risk of emotional burnout and physical and mental health issues (e. g., Collie, 2021; De Clercq et al., 2021). Teachers' burnout is characterized by such deficits as emotional exhaustion (i.e., fatigue and low energy), depressed moods (i.e., sadness, hopelessness) and psychosomatic responses like pain, tension and problems sleeping (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

In a sample of 506 teachers working in Latvia during the COVID-19 pandemic, higher levels of emotional burnout among teachers were associated with a lower ability to psychologically distance themselves from the work to keep a balance between professional and personal aspects of their lives (Ronesala & Martinsone, 2023). These results were in line with the conclusions of other studies (e. g., Herman et al., 2018), underlining the necessity to promote teachers' mental health and professional wellbeing.

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Promoting the professional wellbeing of teachers

There are several research-validated tools targeted to improve teachers' wellbeing, such as 1) maintaining a learning journal to note and reflect on thinking errors or to monitor one's own exercise and sleep habits to develop self-regulation and awareness in a balanced daily routine (Taylor, 2018); 2) using positive psychology strategies like focusing on the positive aspects of one's work, applying individual character strengths in the workplace, or ensuring social support (Turner et al., 2021); 3) completing additional exercises like keeping an emotion diary, writing a letter of gratitude, or organizing a happiness day (Rahm & Heise, 2019); and 4) using teaching and formative assessment strategies to promote social-emotional learning (Ferreira et al., 2020). Such initiatives as social-emotional learning, maintaining a strong collaboration, increasing teacher's confidence to work effectively, giving teachers the autonomy and capacity to sustain their own professional wellbeing, and investing in building and sustaining a positive school climate (Martinsone & Žydžiūnaite, 2023; Martinsone et al., 2023) are recognized as key factors of wellbeing at schools.

Research shows that teachers must develop their ability to self-observe and reflect (Martinsone & Damberga, 2017) and strengthen their mental health (Weston et al., 2018) to become active facilitators of wellbeing at school. Nevertheless, there are still insufficient evidence-based interventions that develop teachers' skills and practices to maintain a high level of wellbeing. As a response to this gap, the project "Teaching to Be" aims to increase teachers' professional wellbeing by developing and implementing the Online Wellbeing course (OWC) for teachers. In this research, we address the status of teachers' professional wellbeing at T1 and the effectiveness of the "Teaching to Be" project in Latvia by comparing the changes between T1 and T2 longitudinally. Thus, we posed the following research question and hypothesis:

Q What was the status of Latvian teachers' professional wellbeing in terms of perceived self-efficacy, resilience and burnout in October 2022?

H There will be an increase in teachers' self-efficacy and resilience and a decrease in burnout among teachers who implemented the OWC. No such change will exist in the control group.

Method

Description of the intervention: The "Teaching to Be" project in Latvia

The Erasmus+ project "Teaching to Be: Supporting Teachers' Professional Growth and Wellbeing in the Field of Social and Emotional Learning" aims to promote teachers' professional wellbeing by developing and implementing innovative professional development practices. To reach this goal, the project developed and tested two innovative professional wellbeing materials: the OWC and a teacher's handbook.

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The OWC was developed to assist teachers in developing the competence to build and sustain their wellbeing through self-regulated and game-based learning. To complete the online course, teachers should apply such social-emotional skills as self-awareness and management, social awareness and relationship skills, goal-setting, problem-solving, and responsible decision-making. Thus, the OWC is intended to use both the content and process of playing to facilitate teachers' social-emotional growth and consequently increase perceived wellbeing. The handbook is incorporated into the OWC but is also provided as a separate tool to use independently to obtain new professional skills, collaborate with colleagues and address important issues in the school.

The course, consisting of 12 modules, was recommended to be implemented within 12 weeks, with one whole week devoted to the implementation of one specific topic from the course (Talič et al., 2023). The OWC's content is based on the sailboat metaphor. By playing the game interactively, teachers navigate their sailboat and follow the story, reflecting on their personal needs and values, strengths and weaknesses, goals and different aspects of their personal growth. Teachers are free to choose when and for how long to play the game and whether to do it individually or to collaborate with colleagues. Among the themes of the course are building skills relating to self-awareness, self-efficacy, available support from others, self-regulation, resilience, coping with stress, empathy and relationships, leadership, responsible decision-making, and adaptiveness.

The "Teaching to Be" project was implemented in three stages:

- The preparation phase took place in the 2021/22 academic year. The content of the project's materials was developed and created in collaboration with five schools (Group A) through focus group interviews. Feedback from teachers was collected to improve the OWC's planned content. Simultaneously, a survey was developed and validated to prepare for measuring the intervention's effectiveness.
- The intervention took place in the 2022/23 academic year, when two experimental groups (Group A, which co-developed the course in the previous year, and Group B, another five schools) participated in professional training and implemented the OWC and the teacher's handbook. In this phase, an additional five schools were involved as a control group (Group C), and teachers from these schools completed the research questionnaire before and after the experimentation.
- In the final phase of the project, teachers from Group C received teacher training and were provided with the project's materials. Assessments were conducted concerning the project's effectiveness and the development of evidence-based recommendations for educational policymakers.

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Participants and procedure

The project involved teachers from 15 municipality-founded general education schools from different regions of Latvia, including Riga. Participating schools were selected based on their availability and interest in taking part. Initially, 289 teachers started the project and participated in the pre-test survey (T1), and 281 teachers participated at both time points (T1 in October 2022 and T2 in April/May 2023), implying a drop-out rate of 2.8%.

Schools were divided into three groups – two experimental (A and B) and one control (group C). Group A (five schools) comprised 83 teachers participating in the survey at both time points. Group B (five schools) comprised 102 teachers implementing the ready-to-use OWC and completing the survey at T1 and T2. Group C (five schools) comprised 96 teachers participating in the surveys before and after experimentation.

Of the teachers participating in the survey at T1, 94% were women and 5% were men (1% declined to answer). The majority of the respondents (37%) were in the 45-54 age group. The mean age and gender distribution accurately illustrate the demographics of the Latvian teacher population (see, e. g., Martinsone & Damberga, 2017; Martinsone & Žydžiūnaite, 2023). Teachers' work experience was mostly 25 years or more (see Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' age and work experience (whole sample at T1, N=289)

Age in years	Relative frequency (%)	Absolute frequency (N)
>21	0.3	1
21-29	7.3	21
30-44	25.6	74
45-54	36.7	106
55-64	27.7	80
65 +	2.4	7
Work experience in years		
>1	0.7	2
1-5	8.3	24
6-10	11.8	34
11-15	9.7	28
16-20	9.3	27
21-25	19.7	57
25 +	40.5	117

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Data on teachers' wellbeing was collected at the beginning (October 2022, T1) and end (April/May 2023, T2) of the 2022/23 academic year. Every participant received a unique code to be mapped to T1 and T2 data. A, B or C was added to the code according to the group to which the respondent belonged. The links to online surveys were sent personally to each participating teacher's e-mail, which respondents provided when giving their informed consent before entering the project.

Measures

The survey on teachers' professional wellbeing was developed for this specific research, based on measures with already proven validity. The survey assessed such variables as teachers' professional self-efficacy, work engagement, turnover intentions, workload, support and empowerment from school administration, relationship with colleagues, perceived stress and burnout, work autonomy, resilience, job satisfaction, and self-reported health. This paper analyzes the overall sample's results at T1 to answer the research question and evaluates longitudinal changes in teachers' self-efficacy, resilience and burnout in experimental and waiting groups to prove hypothesis.

Self-efficacy was measured using the Teacher Professional Self-Efficacy Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), addressing such dimensions as instruction/teaching, adapting instruction/teaching to individual needs, motivating students, maintaining discipline, and cooperating with colleagues and parents. Each factor included four statements evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely certain). The 9-item Bergen Burnout Inventory (Feldt et al., 2014) was used to assess teachers' burnout. Besides the summative burnout score, several dimensions of burnout were assessed – namely, emotional exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy – using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). Teachers' resilience was measured by the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith et al., 2008), which consists of six items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The survey was translated by a bilingual translator applying a staged process of translation (including forward translation and review and back-translation and review) to reach a semantic and conceptual equivalence. The reliability of the translated measures was checked and compared with Cronbach's alphas for the original measures (see Table 2). All scales demonstrated satisfactory to excellent internal consistency.

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Table 2: Internal consistency of the scales and composite scores in the original measures and Latvian versions based on teachers' evaluations at T1 and T2

		Original	Latvian T1 October 2022	Latvian T2 April/May 2023
Teacher self-efficacy	Instruction	0.81	0.88	0.90
	Adapt instruction to individual needs	0.87	0.92	0.94
	Motivate students	0.91	0.89	0.89
	Maintain discipline	0.9	0.92	0.95
	Cooperate with colleagues and parents	0.74	0.80	0.83
Burnout	Exhaustion	0.7	0.72	0.73
	Cynicism	0.82	0.78	0.77
	Inadequacy	0.71	0.60	0.66
	Overall	0.85	0.87	0.87
	Resilience	0.8-0.91	0.89	0.88

Data analysis

The mean scores were calculated using Microsoft Excel. The chi-square test was applied to compare all three groups at T1. JASP's repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to analyze the intervention's effectiveness in terms of changes in teachers' self-efficacy, resilience and burnout in the experimental and control groups. Following the ANOVA, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was applied.

First, all three groups were compared to check whether there were any initial differences among them. No differences were found regarding gender distribution ($X^2(4)=4.34$, $p=0.36$), education level ($X^2(12)=11.13$, $p=0.52$), overall pedagogical experience ($X^2(12)=8.17$, $p=0.77$), or work experience in the particular school ($X^2(8)=4.58$, $p=0.80$). Accordingly, all groups are comparable, and the sample of teachers is homogenous with respect to all demographic variables.

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2 Results

The results of teachers' self-reported self-efficacy, resilience and burnout were calculated (see Table 3) to answer the research question about the status of teachers' self-efficacy, burnout and resilience in the whole sample of Latvian teachers.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of teachers' self-efficacy, resilience and burnout at T1

		M	*SD*	Absolute minimum	Absolute maximum	Responded minimum	Responded maximum
Self-efficacy	Instruction	23.16	3.07	4.00	28.00	4.00	28.00
	Adapt instruction to individual needs	19.89	3.92	4.00	28.00	6.00	28.00
	Motivate students	20.22	3.77	4.00	28.00	6.00	28.00
	Maintain discipline	20.43	4.62	4.00	28.00	5.00	28.00
	Cooperate with colleagues and parents	23.57	2.87	4.00	28.00	13.00	28.00
Burnout	Exhaustion	3.31	0.92	1.00	6.00	1.00	6.00
	Cynicism	2.69	0.89	1.00	6.00	1.00	6.00
	Inadequacy	2.63	0.84	1.00	6.00	1.00	6.00
	Overall	2.87	0.77	1.00	6.00	1.00	6.00
	Resilience	3.16	0.78	1.00	5.00	1.00	5.00

Note: *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation.

At the beginning of the school year in October 2022, teachers mostly felt self-effective, but the considerable variation in the data shows that there were teachers who felt ineffective and others who felt a mastery of self-efficacy. The average varies from 19 to almost 24 on the 28-point scale, where a higher score means higher self-efficacy. Comparing the mean scores for different dimensions of self-efficacy (Figure 1), the higher scores are for teachers' reported cooperation with colleagues and perceived ability to teach their students. This means that teachers evaluate their strengths to be able to explain central themes of subjects they are teaching to students with different levels of knowledge and ability and to create and maintain collaborative partnerships with colleagues and students' parents.

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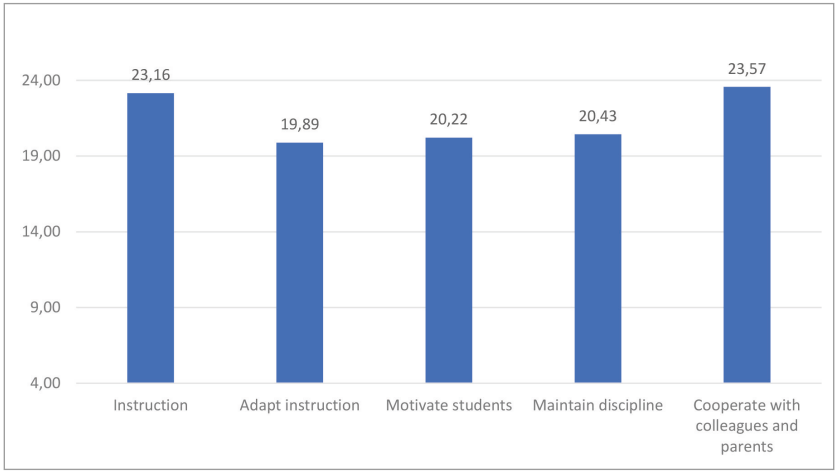

Figure 1: Mean scores of teachers' self-efficacy dimensions at T1 (N=289)

The teachers' burnout score varies from 2.63 to 3.31 on a 6-point scale, where higher results mean higher levels of burnout at work. Regarding the different dimensions of their burnout, their exhaustion scores are relatively higher (Figure 2). Resilience rates, recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, are also relatively average (3.16, *SD=.78*). The variation in data was from the minimal to the maximal value, meaning that there are resilient teachers and those reporting low levels of resilience.

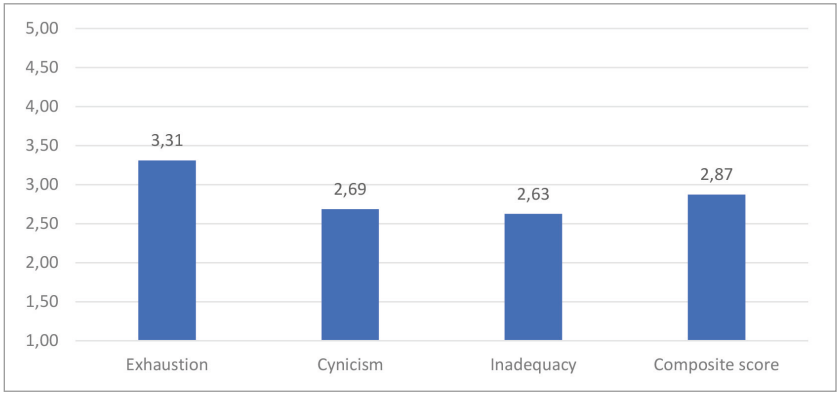

Figure 2: Mean scores of teachers' burnout dimensions at T1 (N=289)

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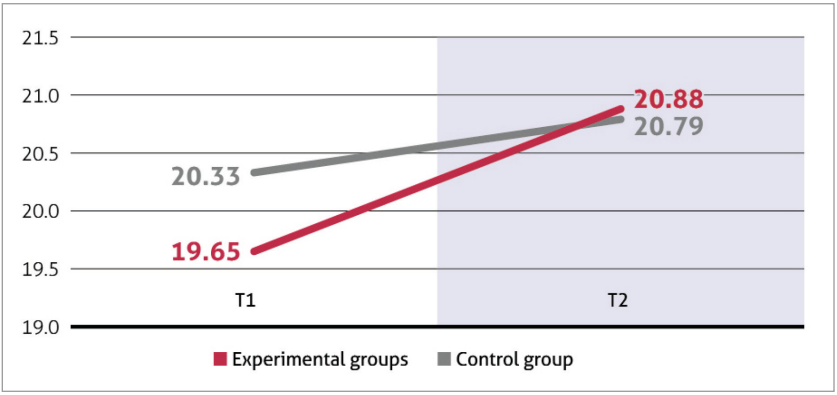
Next, data from the experimental groups (Groups A, B) at T1 and T2 was compared to test the hypothesis that teachers who implemented the project's materials, namely the OWC and the teacher's workbook, will report a significant increase in their self-efficacy and resilience and a decrease in burnout, while such changes will not be found in the control group (Group C).

The self-efficacy dimension "Adapting instructions" significantly increased in the experimental group ($F=12.73$, $p < 0.001$), and there is a trend of interaction between "Adapting instructions" and group ($F=2.71$, $p=0.10$). This means that implementing the project had an impact on teachers' self-reported ability to adjust instructions and, at a trend level, the increase in the experimental group in this indicator was more significant than the increase in the control group (post-hoc $t=-4.44$, $p_{bonf} < 0.001$ for the experimental group) (see Table 4 and Figure 3).

Table 4: Descriptive and inferential statistics for teachers' self-efficacy dimension "Ability to adapt instructions"

	Experimental groups		Control group		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
T1	19.65	3.92	20.33	3.93	12.74***
T2	20.88	3.82	20.79	3.88	
Teachers' self-efficacy *group					12.74

***p<0.001



Note: The interaction is statistically significant ($F=12.74$, $p < .0001$).

Figure 3: Changes in teachers' ability to adapt instructions between T1 and T2

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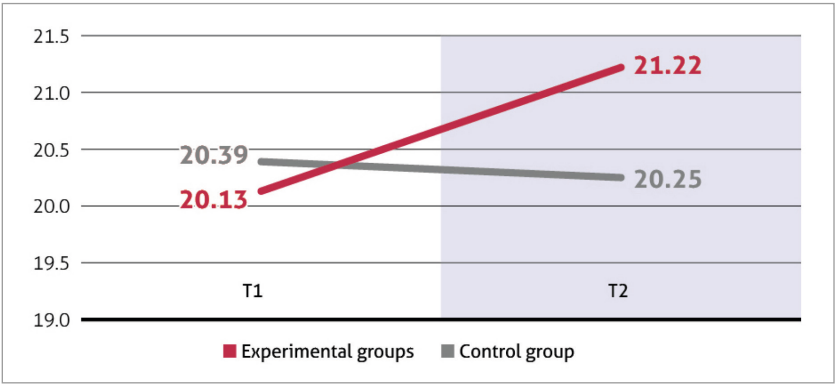
The self-efficacy dimension "Ability to motivate students" increased in the experimental groups (t=-3.84, $p_{bonf} < 0.001$) and decreased in the control group. Both experimental effect (F (1, 267)=3.87, p=0.05) and the interaction between students' motivation and group are statistically significant (F (1,267)=6.49, p=0.01) (see Table 5 and Figure 4).

Table 5: Descriptive and inferential statistics for teachers' self-efficacy dimension "Ability to motivate students"

	Experimental groups		Control group		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
T1	20.13	3.65	20.39	3.97	3.87
T2	21.22	3.16	20.25	3.66	
Teachers' self-efficacy *group					6.49***

***p<0.001



Note: The interaction is statistically significant (*F*(1.267)=6.49, *p*=.001)

Figure 4: Changes in teachers' ability to motivate students between T1 and T2

The experiment had a significant effect on the self-efficacy dimension "Ability to maintain discipline" (F (1,267)=5,53, p=0,02), and the interaction between discipline maintenance and group was close to significant (F (1,267)=3,30, p=0,07). This means that self-efficacy in maintaining discipline among teachers

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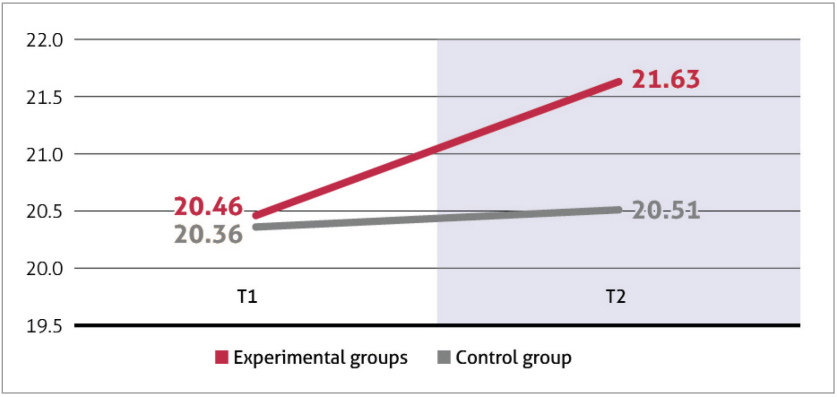
implementing the project increased during the experiment (post-hoc t=-3.55, p_{bonf}=0.003) (see Table 6 and Figure 5).

Table 6: Descriptive and inferential statistics for teachers' self-efficacy dimension "Ability to maintain discipline"

	Experimental groups		Control group		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
T1	20.46	4.58	20.36	4.70	5.53*
T2	21.63	4.40	20.51	4.17	
Teachers' self-efficacy *group					3.30

*p<0.05



Note: The interaction statistically significant (F(1.267)=5.53, p=.02)

Figure 5: Changes in teachers' ability to maintain discipline between T1 and T2

There is a tendency to increase in the quality of teachers' perceived collaboration with colleagues and parents in the experimental groups and a tendency to decrease in the control group; nevertheless, these changes do not quite reach a statistical significance (time*group F (1.267)=2.80, p=0.10). No changes in teachers' ability to teach/instruct students were found between the experimental and control groups.

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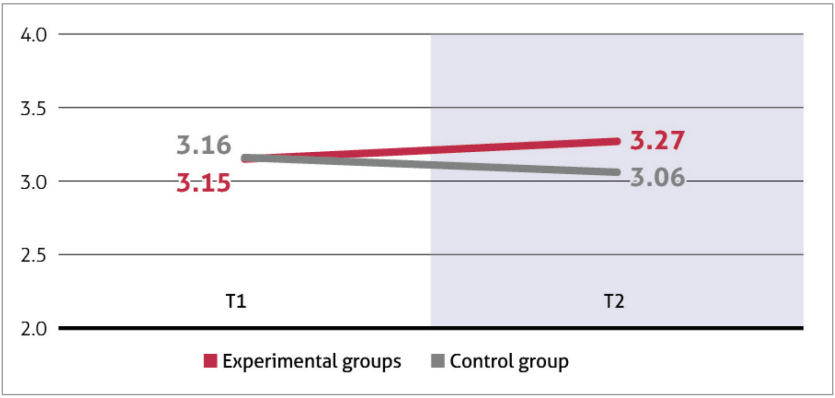
Changes in teachers' resilience during the experiment are statistically significant. The interaction between resilience and group (F (1.367)=7.07, p=0.008) indicates a significant increase in resilience in the intervention group during the project and a decrease in teachers' resilience in the control group (see Table 7 and Figure 6).

Table 7: Descriptive and inferential statistics for teachers' resilience

	Experimental groups		Control group		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
T1	3.15	0.80	3.16	0.78	0.06
T2	3.27	0.76	3.06	0.74	
Teachers' self-efficacy *group					7.07**

**p<0.01



Note: The interaction is statistically significant (F(1.367)=7.07, p=.008)

Figure 6: Changes in teachers' resilience between T1 and T2

There was no change in the burnout dimension "Exhaustion" during the experiment (the models are not statistically significant). The change in another burnout dimension, namely "Cynicism", tends towards statistical significance (F (1.267)=3.23, p=0.07), indicating that this burnout rate increased in both experimental and control groups during the project. However, it cannot be claimed that the increase was lower in the experimental group than in the control group

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(time*group F (1.267)=1.29, p=0.26). The same can be said for changes in the trend level in the "Inadequacy" dimension (F (1.267)=3.27, p=0.07). Feelings of inadequacy increased in all groups during the project, and we cannot conclude that the increase of this aspect of burnout was smaller in the experimental groups compared to the control group (time*group F (1.267)=0.65, p=0.42). The composite score of teachers' burnout showed no differences between groups during the intervention (the models were not statistically significant).

3 Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the status of Latvian teachers' professional wellbeing at the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year in October 2022, addressing teachers' self-reported resilience, self-efficacy and burnout. It was found that Latvian teachers involved in the "Teaching to Be" project perceived themselves as sufficiently effective teachers. The majority of teachers perceived that they were able to collaborate with colleagues and parents effectively in terms of positive everyday cooperation and teamwork, as well as constructive problem-solving. Another highly-rated dimension of teachers' self-efficacy was their belief in their ability to teach students. Teachers reported that they feel able to explain subject matter to students with different levels of achievement, adapt instructions, and answer questions so that most students can understand the main principles of a topic. Previous research allows us to assume that teachers' perceived self-efficacy is associated with higher work engagement, commitment to teaching and less emotional exhaustion (e. g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

At the beginning of the school year, the Latvian teachers also reported sufficient resilience concerning their ability to go through hard times and recover quickly after stressful situations. However, resilience should not be perceived as a synonym for positive adaptation since the ability to recover from stress or adversity is even more important than resistance in the face of negative events (e. g., Smith et al., 2008). It is also important to remember that resilience is strongly related to contextual and cultural factors (e. g., Ungar, 2012).

Teachers' level of burnout at the beginning of the school year was average, with a higher contribution made by the exhaustion dimension. Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by their workload, which leads to poor sleep, bad consciences and neglected relationships with relatives and friends. One could speculate that it is perhaps easier to identify exhaustion among teachers since the survey items focused on work overload, sleep quality and neglect of meaningful relationships due to work circumstances. Previous research findings reported by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) show that high self-efficacy is related to lower emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, a risk factor for becoming exhausted was found in previous research in a sample of 630 Latvian teachers (Martinsone & Damberga, 2017),

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where more than half of the respondents associated their professional performance with their students' achievements. Therefore, linking professional self-esteem with student outcomes can increase teachers' stress and vulnerability.

The results showed a high degree of variation in self-efficacy, resilience and burnout. Thus, an individualized approach to promoting teachers' wellbeing should be applied. This finding is of great importance to allow employers to build their awareness of individual differences between teachers in terms of their stress tolerance, vulnerability to burnout and other factors crucial for teachers' wellbeing. Therefore, school administrators should plan, adapt and organize work tasks accordingly to prevent employees from experiencing work-related stress and provide sufficient support. However, this also highlights teachers' own responsibility to support their wellbeing based on their knowledge of their needs, strengths and available support. The OWC was built to help teachers strengthen their professional wellbeing both individually and collectively with colleagues.

Another goal of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the "Teaching to Be" project in the sample of Latvian teachers. The hypothesis that teachers implementing OWC would report increased self-efficacy and resilience and lower burnout and those in the control group would not was partially confirmed. It was found that the self-efficacy of teachers in the intervention group increased significantly in three aspects: adapting instructions, motivating students and maintaining discipline. There were also increases in their perceived ability to instruct students and build relationships with colleagues and parents; however, these were not statistically significant. It should be noted that these two dimensions of teachers' self-efficacy were rated the highest in the pre-test phase, which could explain why there was no significant increase during the experiment.

The finding that teachers' self-efficacy increased during the wellbeing-targeted interventions is in line with previous research results. For example, Cavioni et al. (2023) reported that teachers who implemented a mental health promotion curriculum in their classes reported a significant increase in self-efficacy and resilience. The current research also found a significant increase in the resilience of teachers in the intervention group, whereas teachers in the control group reported a significant decrease in their resilience.

The increase in resilience and self-efficacy may be attributed to both the content of OWC and the implementation of the "Teaching to Be" project. Teachers were trained before the project's implementation, and the project's team offered ongoing support (including technical support with the OWC game). The content of teachers' training and the OWC was specifically targeted to build teachers' social-emotional skills, improve coping, time management and instruction strategies, facilitate collaboration, etc. This could have a positive effect on teachers' individual resources and increase the availability of support from colleagues following their collaboration during the project.

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According to the results of previous studies that found teacher burnout decreases when their wellbeing is promoted (e. g., Bradley et al., 2018; Taylor, 2018; Turner et al., 2021), a decrease in Latvian teachers' burnout after participating in the OWC was expected. However, there was no decrease in teacher burnout in the intervention group. In fact, at the end of the school year, teachers' burnout had slightly increased in both the experimental and control groups in such aspects as diminished interest in students and ideations to leave the job, though the increases were not significant. It should be taken into account that the pre-test data was collected at the beginning of the school year when teachers had not yet been exposed to work-related stressful conditions, while the post-test data was collected at the end of the school year. Nevertheless, teachers' burnout might have been impacted by various factors, not just individual ones. Such objective factors as stress due to intensive socialization and high expectations regarding students' performance (Agyapong et al., 2022), as well as work overload, time pressure, etc., can contribute to increased levels of burnout among teachers. This result could thus be attributed to the presence of objective factors, which are not directly dependent on teachers, while the "Teaching to Be" intervention tools were intended to promote aspects of professional wellbeing dependent on teachers themselves.

4 Conclusions and Implications

The scores of teachers' self-reported resilience, self-efficacy and burnout at the beginning of the 2022/23 school year were moderate. Teachers reported more confidence in their ability to teach/instruct students and collaborate productively with colleagues and students' parents. Teachers reported a sufficient level of resilience, and their burnout rates were moderate. However, the variation in data was considerable, indicating that some teachers experienced low self-efficacy, insufficient resilience and high levels of burnout. This finding implies that teachers should be supported not just as a whole group; their individual needs and vulnerabilities should also be considered and addressed when implementing interventions for teachers' wellbeing.

As expected, the resilience of teachers implementing the OWC increased significantly, whereas in the control group, there was a decrease in teachers' resilience. In both experimental groups, an increase was found in three aspects of teachers' self-efficacy, namely adapting instructions, motivating students and maintaining discipline. However, no changes were found in teachers' reported burnout rates in the experimental and control groups at the end of the school year. Taken together, the results indicate that teachers' professional wellbeing can be supported by game-based learning and acquiring competence to support their social-emotional growth.

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Based on the "Teaching to Be" project's results in Latvia, several implications for education practice and policy can be proposed. First, social-emotional learning and promoting wellbeing should be included in pre-service teachers' education. Second, the whole-school approach to wellbeing, including the active leadership of the administration, should be implemented in every school. Third, implementing evidence-based programs with proven effectiveness has to be among the most important criteria when considering innovations in educational settings. Fourth, wellbeing programs should be integrated into already existing systems in schools. Fifth, efforts should be made in the public discourse to strengthen the education sector through positive feedback and appreciation for the significant impact of the teaching profession and supporting teachers' ability to invest in their professional wellbeing.

5 Limitations

This longitudinal quasi-experimental study has several limitations. Despite the involvement of schools from different regions of Latvia, the sample is not representative. For example, the gender distribution was disproportional, as the vast majority of respondents were female. Although this represents a typical population of teachers in Latvia, the conclusions from this study cannot be generalized to the whole population of Latvian teachers. Additionally, during the project's implementation, it was not possible to control for variables having a possible impact on the results, such as the introduction of the new competency-based curriculum in Latvian schools, regional reform at the national level, or school reforms, which led to school consolidation at one of the participating schools and a change of administration in two schools during the project's lifetime.

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