

Sustaining Work Life Balance of Senior High School Principal and Teacher

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Abstract

This study adopts a phenomenological perspective to explore how principals and teachers in Indonesia experience and navigate issues related to work-life balance and overall well-being. The results indicate that educators frequently encounter challenges that disrupt this balance, including excessive workloads, heightened performance expectations, limited institutional support, and the absence of structured work-life policies. Despite these difficulties, the study also uncovers several enriching aspects of working in schools, such as collaborative environments, a strong sense of purpose, and meaningful interactions with students, all of which contribute positively to professional well-being. In light of these findings, the study offers several recommendations aimed at fostering a healthier work-life balance for school leaders and teachers. These include strengthening institutional support systems, investing in leadership training, promoting collegial collaboration, reassessing workload distribution, expanding access to mental health services, introducing flexible work arrangements, and cultivating a school culture that respects and encourages personal time.

Keywords: Work-life balance, well-being, principals, teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamentally a deliberate process undertaken by individuals or collectives with the aim of nurturing logical and responsible thinking as part of one's personal development. The progress in such cognitive and reasoning abilities is typically assessed through predetermined performance indicators, often reflected in the form of individual or group-based scores (Perkasa et al. 2023). In the context of school education, Lang and Valk (2023) defined the value or score of a student's achievement in learning activities is usually described through the value of learning outcomes contained in the academic record. Therefore, the success of students certainly cannot be separated from the role of the teacher who educates them.

Teachers hold a vital role in enhancing overall school performance. They must be able to coordinate and lead the course of learning (Noval, et al, 2022). Therefore, any obstacles encountered by teachers should be addressed promptly to prevent disruptions in the teaching and learning process. Teachers who are competent are expected to motivate students to apply the knowledge they acquire in meaningful ways.

Among the various factors that can influence school development, one significant element is the work-life balance experienced by educators (Nyamugoro et al. 2023).

As the frontline agents of any educational system, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation. Nevertheless, the rigorous demands inherent in the teaching profession can be overwhelming, often posing challenges to maintaining a healthy work-life balance and adversely affecting educators' overall well-being. Nyoto et al. (2023) identified four main pillars of stress, described in terms of "pupil misbehavior", "poor working conditions", "poor staff relations", and "time pressures", concerning the school culture of that period. In the present context, working conditions in schools have become increasingly complex, partly due to a growing crisis of confidence in the educational process—particularly concerning the link between formal training and real-world employment.

Global research has consistently highlighted the detrimental effects of teacher stress, underscoring its far-reaching impact on both educators and the broader educational environment (Hernandez et al. 2024), including burnout (Sideridis and Alghamdi 2023), decreased job satisfaction (Sun, Chen, and Xu 2023), and even teacher absenteeism (Arbia et al. 2023). In the Indonesian context, various studies have examined the widespread occurrence of teacher stress and its association with factors such as work-life balance, high-stakes testing, and administrative responsibilities. These insights underscore the urgency of conducting deeper investigations into the unique challenges confronting educators in Indonesia.

Although existing research has explored aspects of teacher well-being in Indonesia, there remains a notable gap in understanding the lived experiences of educators, particularly within the context of private senior high schools. This study seeks to fill that gap by employing qualitative methods to investigate how Indonesian teachers navigate issues related to work-life balance and personal well-being. The findings are expected to offer meaningful contributions toward enhancing the professional lives of educators in this specific setting, while also enriching the broader discourse on teacher well-being in the Indonesian educational landscape.

This study seeks to examine the well-being of teachers in Indonesian schools and to identify effective strategies for its enhancement. Specifically, the research will explore the extent to which work-life balance is experienced by teachers and how various stressors impact their overall sense of well-being. By gaining a deeper understanding of the particular challenges faced by educators in Indonesia, the study aims to propose evidence-based interventions that can alleviate stress and foster improved well-being. Ultimately, this focus on teacher well-being aspires to support the development of a more positive and productive educational environment for all stakeholders.

Work Life Balance

Santiago (2023) defines work-life balance is widely explored in various professional contexts, organizations, and educational institutions. Moreover, the quality of work life, in the technology aspect, refers to a user's unlimited Internet access that facilitates the increase in satisfaction, enjoyment, and personal values on their works (Nyoto et al. 2023). In e-learning, some researches reveal, quality of work-life is students; perceptions and beliefs on technology utilization to improve their quality of life, such as cost savings for material access activities (Francotte et al. 2023) and e-mail communication with instructors and friends (U. Escobar 2023).

Work-life balance affects the quality of one's working life; as a result, companies must take this seriously in order to satisfy their legal and ethical duties to safeguard their employees' wellbeing. The instrument used to explain the perceived. Cayupe et al. (2023) stated that individuals' quality of life is also affected by their work-life balance; according to the findings in our traditional culture, where women are still expected to have more home duties, the severity of this problem increases several times in the situations especially women employees. She believed that women are also responsible for looking after their children, entertaining guests, caring for their parents, in-laws, and other senior family members, as well as managing the kitchen and other home duties.

Stacey et al. (2023) found that quality of work life is essential in e-learning to describe the benefits of accessing materials and communication facilities in the learning process. Quality of work life consists of five statements: (1) lecture materials accessed online help the students to have more time to think creatively and have fun, (2) using online learning materials freely helps to save money and energy, (3) using online learning provides more opportunities to participate in class, (4) using the e-mail/chat in communicating with friends or groups saves money and energy, and (5) overall, online learning helps to improve the quality of work.

In contrast, poor work-life balance greatly affects either the professional or personal life of an individual, according to the high degree of stress and anxiety, discord at home, job burnout, and the inability to reach one's full potential are all crucial determinants of a bad work-life balance (Santiago 2023). Due to their failure to reconcile job and family life, they are frequently angry and resentful (Gadermann et al. 2023). Baniadamdzaj (2023) clearly define the line between work and personal life by conducting work just during work hours and without sacrificing time for family and personal life.

Job Performance

Teacher performance is the competence of a teacher to fulfill instructional duties and assume responsibility for students, by increasing student learning achievement (Solania et al. 2023). Teacher performance indicators are pedagogic abilities (Schat 2023), personality (Gadermann et al. 2023), social and professional (Admiraal et al. 2023). As teacher teaching performance, both within and outside the classroom, is regarded as the most crucial factor influencing student learning outcomes, this study focuses on describing the teaching performance of Indonesian language teachers and how it affects students' learning outcomes.

Teacher teaching performance is the main indicator in assessing school performance and is largely determined by the level of participation in school organizations. Chin (2023) defined teacher teaching performance as a combination of the results of the teacher's own efforts, abilities, and perceptions about his teaching work both inside and outside the classroom. Sudiono et al. (2023) defined teacher teaching performance as the teacher's ability to combine various relevant inputs to improve the quality of the learning process. So that teachers can participate optimally for the success of students, Rao (2023) suggested the importance of providing all the facilities needed by teachers for the smooth running of learning activities in the classroom. The teaching performance of teachers in schools in general and especially in the classroom is determined by many factors. The first factor is the school principal.

The school principals assist teachers with discipline and support teachers in enforcing school rules (Feiss et al. 2023). Professional school principals do not leave school for no apparent reason and will always accompany teachers and students in the

schools they lead. Professional school principals always try to provide positive and constructive input to improve the quality of the learning process and encourage teachers to always use learning facilities and time effectively and efficiently (Klusmann et al. 2023).

Täht et al. (2023) stated an effective and efficient school management system by school principals tends to lead to an increase in the quality of education which is very clearly illustrated in student learning outcomes. Therefore, the increased student learning outcomes are a reflection of the success of the state junior high school principals in empowering teachers in developing various media (Pan et al. 2023) and learning methods to help the student understand (Francotte et al. 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

The chosen method for data collection in this study was a semi-structured interview. This approach utilizes a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing for both focused inquiry and in-depth exploration of participant experiences. The interview questions were specifically crafted by the researcher to address the research objectives concerning teacher work-life balance and well-being. The interviews were conducted face-to-face to facilitate rapport building and encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences. All interviews were noted with the informed consent of the participants. The verbatim transcription of the recordings ensured the accuracy and faithfulness of the captured data.

Research site and participants

The study focuses solely on private schools, which may not fully represent the broader teaching landscape in Indonesia. Private schools differ from public schools in terms of work-life balance demands, salary structures, and potential benefits. These differences could significantly impact teacher work-life balance and well-being. The research draws conclusions from a single private school in Indonesia. This restricts the generalizability of the findings. The experiences of teachers in this specific school might not reflect the overall situation for private school teachers across Indonesia. The study primarily examines work-life balance and well-being from a general perspective, disregarding other potentially influential variables. Factors such as individual teacher characteristics, school size, curriculum, and the socioeconomic context of the school could all play a role in shaping teacher experiences.

The participants of this study invited principal and teacher with a huge disparity teaching experience. The principal is a female with 9 years of experience in the role. At 41 years old, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her leadership position. Her educational background is impressive, holding a Master's degree in Educational Management from a well-respected state university in Indonesia. Prior to becoming a principal, she spent 9 years as a teacher in a primary school. This extensive experience, both as a teacher and an administrator, suggests a deep understanding of the educational landscape in Indonesia, from the classroom to the school leadership level. Her background, particularly her Master's degree, suggests a strong commitment to improving educational outcomes.

The teacher is a female who recently joined the school, having only been there for around 6 months at the time of the study. At 22 years old, she offers a fresh perspective on the challenges and experiences of new teachers entering the profession. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from a reputable private university in Indonesia. While her teaching experience is limited to her current position, her background in psychology

could be valuable in understanding the well-being and mental health aspects of teachers' experiences. Additionally, her experience as an assistant lecturer and a freelance tutor for young children demonstrates her passion for education and working with students.

Data collection and analysis

To gain a nuanced understanding of teacher stress, well-being, and coping mechanisms, a multi-step approach is valuable. First, develop an interview guide with open-ended questions that delve into these topics. These individual interviews provide in-depth exploration of each teacher's experience. This approach aligns with qualitative data analysis methods, which prioritize understanding experiences over numerical data. After the interview, a thorough analysis of the transcripts and discussions is crucial. Here, identify recurring themes related to work-life balance and well-being.

Finally, to ensure the interpretations accurately reflect the principal and teacher' experiences, Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method is applied to analyze the data (Santiago 2023). Furthermore, the initial findings will be confirmed to the participants through a process called member checking. This allows them to confirm or correct the interpretations, strengthening the credibility of the research and leading to a more accurate understanding of their experiences.

Table 1: Steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method

Step	Description
1. Familiarization	The researcher becomes acquainted with the data by going over all of the participant accounts numerous times.
2. Identifying significant statements	All remarks in the interviews that are directly relevant to the phenomena under inquiry are identified by the researcher.
3. Formulating meanings	A comprehensive examination of the important statements leads to the discovery of meanings relevant to the phenomena by the researcher. To stay as near to the phenomena as feasible, the researcher must "frame" his or her preconceptions reflexively (though Colaizzi recognizes that complete bracketing is never possible).
4. Clustering themes	The researcher groups the discovered meanings into themes that appear in all of the narratives. Again, presupposition bracketing is critical, especially to eliminate any potential effect of current theory.
5. Developing an exhaustive description	The researcher composes a comprehensive account of the phenomena that incorporates all of the topics generated in step 4.
6. Producing the fundamental structure	The researcher condenses the lengthy explanation into a brief, dense statement that retains just the components believed to be critical to the phenomenon's structure.
7. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	The researcher asks all participants (or a sub-sample in bigger studies) if the essential structural statement accurately describes their experience. In light of this input, he or she may go back and change earlier phases in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Work-life balance and well-being between principal and teacher

The teacher grapples with time management challenges. They identify a perceived lack of creativity as a hurdle in crafting engaging lesson plans, leading to increased planning time. Balancing work and personal life also present difficulties due to time constraints. These time pressures could be a significant source of stress. Additionally, the teacher describes feeling disconnected from students at times. This disconnect could be another stressor if it hinders their ability to connect and teach effectively.

The interview with the principal reveals different stressors. They face challenges in making difficult decisions, such as employee terminations. Following potentially flawed directives from superiors, despite reservations, can also create stress. The interview doesn't delve into the principal's specific coping mechanisms, but their focus on leadership development and staff well-being suggests an emphasis on creating a supportive work environment. This focus could indirectly reduce their own stress by fostering a more positive school culture.

Despite these challenges, the interview also reveals positive aspects of the work environment for both the principal and teacher. The principal emphasizes staff well-being, which could contribute to a less stressful environment for everyone. The teacher benefits from a supportive school culture with collaborative colleagues who readily assist each other. This collaborative approach can potentially reduce individual work-life balances and stress.

In conclusion, the interview suggests that work-life balance exists for both the principal and teacher in Indonesia. However, the specific extent remains unclear. A broader study with more participants would be necessary to accurately assess stress levels among educators in the city.

Stressors and Coping Mechanisms

The interview with the principal suggests a demanding work-life balance. Managing human resources, infrastructure, and overall school operations likely translates to a significant administrative burden. Additionally, leadership duties like facilitating colleagues, acting as a policymaker, and overseeing school development require considerable time and effort. The interview also highlights the complexity and stress of making difficult decisions, such as employee terminations, and potentially following flawed directives from superiors.

The teacher identifies lesson planning, particularly incorporating creative elements, as their most significant work-life balance contributor. Their perceived lack of creativity necessitates extra time for planning engaging activities. Time management presents another challenge, as they struggle to balance work and personal life due to time constraints. Building positive relationships with students, which they strive to do, likely requires additional time and effort as well.

The impact of work-life balance on the well-being of both the principal and teacher isn't explicitly discussed in the interviews. However, the principal's focus on staff well-being suggests an awareness of the potential negative effects of work-life balance. Their emphasis on creating a supportive work environment might be a strategy to mitigate stress for themselves and staff. The teacher acknowledges the challenge of balancing work and personal life, implying a negative impact of work-life balance on their well-being. Their coping mechanisms, such as prioritizing tasks, seeking help from colleagues, and taking breaks, suggest efforts to manage work-life balance and maintain well-being.

Despite the work-life balance, the interviews also reveal positive aspects of the work environment that likely contribute to well-being. The principal might find benefits from having a supportive staff to collaborate with, easing the work-life balance and creating a

more positive environment. Additionally, the ability to influence school development and potentially make positive changes could be a source of satisfaction. The teacher benefits from a supportive school culture with colleagues willing to help with tasks, which can lighten the work-life balance and create a sense of community. Building strong connections with students could be a rewarding aspect of the job that contributes to their well-being.

Both the principal and teacher experience a significant work-life balance in their respective roles. While the specifics differ, the work-life balance creates challenges for well-being. However, the interviews also highlight positive aspects of the work environment that likely contribute to well-being. A broader study would be necessary to understand the overall work-life balance and well-being of educators in Indonesia schools.

Strategies for a More Positive and Productive Work Environment

The interviews with a principal and teacher provide a springboard to explore evidence-based strategies that can specifically target their stress factors and enhance well-being. There are some potential approaches designed for their unique context such as leadership training programs focused on effective decision-making in challenging situations could equip the principal with tools to navigate difficult choices and reduce stress. Additionally, fostering a culture of open communication with staff can provide valuable input and potentially lessen the burden of unilateral decisions. However, encouraging the principal to delegate tasks effectively and prioritize personal time can help maintain a healthy work-life balance. The school board could explore options for administrative support to lessen the principal's work-life balance, allowing them to focus on strategic leadership.

Professional development workshops focused on fostering creativity in lesson planning could address the teacher's perceived lack of creativity and equip them with new strategies for teacher. Exploring collaborative lesson planning with colleagues who have strengths in creative approaches could also be beneficial. Individualized coaching or workshops on effective time management skills could help the teacher prioritize tasks, delegate when possible, and create realistic schedules. This could free up valuable time for lesson planning and fostering positive student relationships.

Moreover, implementing programs that promote healthy lifestyle habits like on-site fitness classes, stress management workshops, or mindfulness programs can benefit both the principal and teacher. Encouraging collaboration between teachers and the principal fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility. This can reduce feelings of isolation and work-life balance overwhelm, leading to a more positive work environment for all.

The interview reveals positive aspects of the school environment that can be further strengthened. The principal's focus on staff well-being suggests a positive step; fostering a culture of open communication, trust, and appreciation can significantly improve well-being for both the principal and teacher. Additionally, the supportive school culture with collaborative colleagues already offers benefits. Highlighting these positive aspects and encouraging further collaboration can create a more positive work environment for everyone.

DISCUSSION

Dissection of Work-Life Balance and Well-being for Senior High Principal and Teacher

This study looks at how principals and teachers in Indonesia balance work and their personal lives. It finds that many principals and teachers have a lot of work to do and not enough time or resources. They struggle with long hours, paperwork, and pressure to improve student learning. Principals also have to make tough decisions and deal with complex financial issues.

My biggest challenge in dealing with work-life balance is time. Sometimes meetings, school agendas, invitations to activities, etc. are carried out after working hours or even late at night.

However, principal uses different strategies to manage stress and find a better work-life balance.

The way I manage stress or fatigue that occurs is actually very easy because my hobby is singing.

These include making clear schedules, sharing tasks with colleagues, and taking time for breaks and personal activities. Schools that encourage teamwork and support from colleagues can also make a big difference. In these schools, teachers and principals feel more like they're part of a team and can work together to solve problems.

Implications and Recommendations for a Healthier Work Life

This study examined the challenges faced by principals and teachers in Indonesia as they juggle work and personal life. The heavy workloads, demanding expectations, and limited resources paint a picture of a demanding profession. Both principals and teachers struggle with long hours, administrative burdens, and the pressure to improve student learning while maintaining quality instruction.

What I don't like about my job as a school principal is that sometimes I have to make unilateral decisions, for example in dismissing employees or teachers who violate regulations, because I realize that I am the type of person who really thinks about other people

Principals, in particular, face the weight of weighty decisions that impact the entire school community and often find themselves bogged down by complex administrative and financial matters.

There is, however, a glimmer of hope. Principals and teachers themselves employ various strategies to manage stress and achieve work-life balance. These strategies include creating structured work schedules, delegating tasks effectively, and dedicating time for rest and personal pursuits. More importantly, a supportive school culture emerges as a crucial factor. Environments where colleagues can assist each other, share experiences, and find solutions together contribute significantly to a sense of community and shared purpose.

These findings hold significant weight for policymakers and school administrators in Indonesia. The government and other stakeholders need to prioritize the well-being of principals and teachers when formulating policies and professional development programs. Increasing human resources and financial support for schools can alleviate workload pressures and provide more space for educators to focus on core teaching tasks.

Investing in leadership development programs can empower principals to become champions for staff well-being. Equipping them with stress management skills, effective communication techniques, and strategies for creating a supportive work environment can create a ripple effect throughout the school community.

The research also underscores the value of fostering a collaborative school culture. Encouraging teamwork, peer support networks, and knowledge-sharing among teachers can create a more positive and supportive work environment. This approach not only reduces individual burdens but also fosters a sense of community, where educators feel supported and valued.

Furthermore, a critical review of current workload expectations for both principals and teachers is necessary. Streamlining administrative tasks, providing adequate planning time, and offering workload reduction strategies can significantly contribute to a healthier work-life balance.

What I don't like most about a teacher's job is preparing material, because as I said before I am a person who might be said to be less creative, whereas I always want the class or material I present to be fun and easy for children to accept and understand

Schools can further support well-being by providing access to mental health resources and support services for both principals and teachers. Workshops on stress management, mindfulness techniques, and building resilience can equip them with tools to cope with work-related stress and maintain overall well-being.

Promoting flexible work arrangements, implementing clear boundaries between work and personal life, and encouraging educators to utilize their vacation time are crucial steps towards creating a more sustainable work environment. Additionally, fostering a culture that values and respects personal time can contribute significantly to well-being.

By prioritizing the well-being of principals and teachers, policymakers, school administrators, and the school community as a whole can create a more positive and productive work environment. This, in turn, can empower educators to be their best selves for their students, fostering a thriving learning environment for future generations.

The Principal's Burden: A Symphony of Responsibilities

The interview with the principal shows just how hard the job is. There are many things to do, from managing the staff and building to making sure everything runs smoothly. It is like being the conductor of an orchestra, keeping everything in tune.

Due to the various characters of each unit within one school institutional under a foundation, each of which has a leader, sometimes has different characters and policies so that they can work together in synergy.

On top of that, the principal has to help teachers, make school rules, and plan for the future, which takes a lot of time and brainpower. They even have to go to meetings and training sessions outside of school hours.

Another challenge is determining policy steps that must involve the management team and the foundation. Because the management team/foundation is not at school every day, sometimes when we need a quick decision to resolve something, it sometimes gets hampered.

The interview also mentions that principals have to make tough decisions, like firing someone. This can be really stressful because they have to think about the person's feelings and what's best for the school. Sometimes they might even have to follow orders from their bosses that they don't agree with, which can be frustrating.

My biggest challenge in dealing with work-life balance is time. Sometimes meetings, school agendas, invitations to activities, etc. are carried out after working hours or even late at night.

Even though the interview doesn't say exactly how stressed the principal is, the fact that they care about their staff's well-being suggests they know the job can be overwhelming. Maybe they've noticed how hard it is for their teachers and are trying to make things better for everyone. It could also be that they themselves need a supportive environment to do their job well.

The Teacher's Struggle: Finding Creativity in a Time Crunch

The interview with the teacher shows a different kind of struggle with work-life balance. Planning lessons is a big challenge for teachers. They feel like they need to be extra creative to keep students interested, which takes a lot of extra time. In today's schools, it is important to keep students engaged, so the pressure to come up with fun and interesting lessons can be stressful.

I think my most typical workload is when I have to design lessons. I always want the children in class to feel happy when studying with me, so I have to think hard about what I can do to achieve that, especially since I still feel that I am not creative enough, so planning exciting and fun learning is certainly not easy for me.

Time management is another battle for teachers. The interview shows that it's hard for them to find a good balance between work and their personal lives because there's just not enough time. Planning lessons, grading papers, and doing other things besides teaching can easily take over their evenings and weekends, making them feel overwhelmed and tired.

by learning not to postpone work, even now I am still in the process of learning to be able to manage the time I have

Teachers also try to build good relationships with their students, which takes extra time and effort on top of everything else they have to do. Just like with the principal, the interview doesn't say exactly how stressed the teacher is, but the fact that it's hard for them to balance work and life suggests they're feeling the pressure. The ways they try to cope, like figuring out what's most important to do first, asking colleagues for help, and taking breaks, show that they're working hard to manage their workload and well-being.

The stress management strategy that I use is to be silent or reflect while validating my feelings, usually after that I get answers about what things are making me stressed, and what small things I can resolve first to reduce my stress. naturally may decrease. but when I'm tired, I usually just need to rest and sleep.

Figuring out what's most important first shows that teachers are trying to be organized and tackle the biggest tasks first. Asking colleagues for help shows that it's helpful to have a supportive school environment where teachers can rely on each other.

Finding Positivity in the Workplace: Collaboration and Connection

Even though balancing work and life is tough, the interviews also found some good things about working in these schools. The principal might feel better because the teachers are willing to work together and help each other out. Having a team to share the workload and ideas can make the job less stressful and more enjoyable. Plus, the principal gets to decide how the school will improve, which can be really rewarding. Seeing the school get better because of their hard work can make them feel good about their job.

What I like and enjoy most when I work as a school principal is that I can be a facilitator and motivator for my other colleagues. Then I can accommodate the imagination of broader ideas as a policy maker.

Teachers also benefit from working in a school where everyone helps each other. Working together makes the workload lighter, and teachers feel more like part of a team. Knowing they can ask their colleagues for help reduces feelings of being alone and overwhelmed.

I like it best when I can be intimate and close to children. I also like it when children open up to me, because with that I feel the children don't keep the problems they feel alone.

Building strong relationships with their students can also be a very positive part of the job. Seeing their students learn and grow can make teachers feel proud and remind them why they became teachers in the first place.

CONCLUSION

Conducting a broader needs assessment among all staff could provide valuable data to tailor interventions and ensure they address the most pressing concerns. Additionally, implementing any strategies should be done collaboratively with the principal, teacher, and other staff members, ensuring their voices are heard and their specific needs are met.

By implementing evidence-based strategies that address work-life balance, promote collaboration, and cultivate a positive school culture, Indonesia schools can create a more supportive and healthy work environment for both the principal and teacher. This, in turn, can lead to a reduction in stress, improved well-being for all staff, and ultimately benefit students and the overall success of the schools.

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