Conceptualization and Interaction of University Student and Teacher Well-Being

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Abstract

According to ample research, university students as well as teachers experience more stress and mental health issues than the general population, which also negatively affects the academic and professional performance. Moreover, studies strongly suggest a strong interconnection and reciprocal relationship between student- and teacher well-being. Nevertheless, research and practical interventions aimed at increasing student or teacher well-being have not yet considered this relationship enough. The lack of a common understanding of well-being in academia further complicates the matter. Thus, this study attempts to fill the research gap, explore how students and teachers understand well-being and how their well-being is intertwined. Furthermore, external factors influencing teachers' well-being are investigated, as previous efforts to enhance well-being in academia mainly focused on students and factors influencing them. Six students and six teachers from two universities in the Netherlands and Germany voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews, which were qualitatively analyzed using multistage coding. Findings suggest well-being in academia to be understood as a multifaceted notion, consisting of multiple components. It is strongly connected to the concept of resilience and to the field of positive psychology. Student- and teacher well-being seems to be highly interconnected and well-being in academia seems to depend on several factors outside of the university context, suggesting a systemic approach to well-being to be appropriate. Supporting students and teachers, by decreasing the workload for instance, as well as the relationship to one another could lead to long-term improvement of well-being in academia.

Keywords: well-being, students, teachers, university, interaction, systemic approach, positive psychology, SDT, resilience

Conceptualization and Interaction of University Student and Teacher Well-Being

The general stance of positive psychology toward prevention […] claims that there is a set of buffers against psychopathology: the positive human traits. […] By identifying, amplifying, and concentrating on these strengths in people at risk, we will do effective prevention. (Seligman, 2002, p.5)

The field of positive psychology, which aims to shift the focus of psychology from curing illness to promoting health (Seligman, 2000), seems to become a promising field regarding the university environment. Various studies show that university students and teachers struggle with mental health issues and increased distress, more than the general population does (Auerbach et al., 2018; Sha et al., 2021;2022). Across culturally diverse contexts, stress, anxiety, and depression disorders tend to be higher among university students compared to community samples, suggesting that there are common stressors affecting university students (Larcombe et al., 2016). According to a review of 40 qualitative studies, social relationships are a common stressor among university students, which comprises families having unrealistic expectations, students experiencing loneliness (Hurst, Baranik, & Daniel, 2013), and transitioning to university having the potential to disrupt social support networks (Goodday, 2019). In addition to that, several students also expect much from themselves, leaving them stressed out. (Hurst, Baranik, & Daniel, 2013). Furthermore, many university students struggle with time management issues, others have difficulty with finding a work-life balance, especially those working a side job, and overcoming procrastination (Hurst, Baranik, & Daniel, 2013).

While increasing university student well-being in itself is something worth striving for to increase general health, it also has a positive effect on learning and academic performance (Zheng, 2021;2022). Therefore, enhancing student well-being should be taken as a higher priority as university students are "a key population segment for determining the economic

growth and success of a country" (Auerbach et al., 2018, p.625). One way to approach the enhancement of university student well-being is by taking the teachers and their well-being into account. Kiltz and colleagues (2020) found a reciprocity between student and teacher well-being, meaning that it positively impacted teachers' well-being when students seemed well, and vice versa, because teachers' enhanced well-being served as an enabling factor allowing them to create an atmosphere promoting student well-being. Thus, enhanced teacher well-being is not only good for teachers, but also for students, as the teachers' professional development, the quality of teaching, the sustainable development of education, and thus students' mental health and professional development is affected by it (Chong, 2011). However, teachers also seem to be at high risk of experiencing diminished well-being, elevated stress, and burnout syndrome due to teaching-specific demands and resources. Teaching at a university is associated with high job demands, including maintaining high levels of professional performance, complying with deadlines, constantly interacting with students, dealing with role conflicts, and dealing with constant change and the need for innovations (Teles et al., 2020). Therefore, university teachers tend to have lower subjective well-being than other professionals (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2012; Kinman & Johnson, 2019).

Even though various evidence points toward a reciprocal interaction between student and teacher well-being, much more work has been done to promote university students' well-being than that of teachers (Kiltz et al., 2020). Hence, to enhance both university and student well-being, this study aims at contributing to the research regarding the direct associations between student and teacher well-being and factors that influence university teacher well-being. Understanding this link and factors contributing to it has the potential to inform future strategies and interventions that mutually foster university- student and teacher well-being.

Conceptualization of Well-Being

However, in order to enhance well-being in academia, one needs to understand what is exactly meant by well-being, specifically in the context of academia. In the literature, there is no generally accepted definition of well-being and a variety of different well-being models are being used, which poses a problem with regard to comparing research findings. Furthermore, having a common understanding and conceptualization of well-being is necessary to create and review interventions aiming to enhance well-being (Kiltz et al., 2020). Conceptualizing well-being in the context of academia is additionally challenging as student- and teacher well-being cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader university context since it not only provides the defining context, but also has potential to influence student and teacher well-being (Fraillon, 2004). Kiltz and colleagues (2020) conducted a qualitative study to gain a comprehensive understanding of how students and teachers define and perceive well-being at the university, including their perception of how well-being of these two groups interacts.

It has already been established that it is important to view university student and teacher well-being within the context of academia and that there is a reciprocal link between the well-being of the two groups. Thus, we view the matter from a systemic approach, meaning that a person is not seen in isolation, but always in context. The environment, the social surrounding, the person's learning history and earlier experiences, and current stressors among other factors need to be considered to study and better understand a person (Bone, 2015).

This approach is based on social constructivism, which is the proposition that social relations make people into who they are. Vice versa, people make the world to what it is by interacting with each other - with their surrounding systems, namely families, friends, work environment, and so on. (Onuf & ProQuest, 2013;2012;). If one system member presents problematic behavior, emotions, or cognitions, it is seen as a symptom carrier of a malfunctioning system and its relationships rather than the problem being of individual

nature. Looking at well-being in academia from this perspective, relationships can be seen as the root issue of high numbers of distressed students and teachers (Kiltz et al., 2020). This implies that well-being interventions should take into account both students and teachers and their interconnectedness in order to be effective.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, we consider well-being from a positive psychology perspective: the focus is on enhancing one's strengths, striving toward personal growth, and building what is right instead of fixing what is wrong. In other words, the goal of the positive psychology framework goes beyond fixing a weakness or an illness to get to a state of absence of that illness or that weakness (Seligman, 2002). Instead, the goal is to strive toward growth and insight, thus adding something valuable to one's life. The positive psychology movement has shown that, while most previous studies within the field of psychology have focused on fighting illness and psychological problems, investigating positive subjective experiences and enhancing positive aspects of life beyond the mere absence of negative aspects is beneficial and vital in the attempt to better peoples' lives (Seligman, 2002; Talbot & Mercer, 2018).

The positive psychology perspective goes hand in hand with the definition of health according to the World Health Organization (WHO), stating that health is a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of infirmity" (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020, P.6). This definition describes well-being as it being a multifaceted construct, which is also reflected by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT suggests that, in order to obtain personal well-being, three basic needs have to be met: relatedness, described as the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others, competence, which is the need to experience behavior as effectively enacted, and autonomy, meaning the need to experience the behavior at hand to be self-directed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Kiltz et al. (2020) found several aspects of teachers' and students' perception of well-being

relating to these needs. Additionally, she found the interaction of student and teacher well-being to be just as multifaceted and also relating to the three needs in terms of student-teacher relationships (relatedness), choice and freedom (autonomy), and feedback (competence) among others. Other researchers have confirmed the relationship between well-being and the basic psychological needs within the university context (Stanton et al., 2016; Larson et al., 2017; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). With regard to factors influencing teacher well-being, Talbot and Mercer (2018) found locus of control (autonomy), colleagues and collaboration (belongingness), and emotional self-regulation strategies, which refer to competence and resilience, including cognitive reappraisal and problem-directed action. SDT aligns with our aim to consider well-being within a systemic network, thus from a social constructivism perspective. Belongingness can only be analyzed if one's social surrounding is being considered, while autonomy and competence can be facilitated or hindered by one's environment.

Lastly, the concept of resilience is closely tied to well-being, because it often serves as a predictor of well-being and seemingly influences initial perceptions of work-related stressors (Kinman & Johnson, 2019). Comparable to well-being, resilience is not clearly defined, which makes it difficult to compare research findings and use them for interventions. Essentially, it refers to a range of positive processes and attributes related to how individuals respond to stressful circumstances in terms of positive adaptation and building personal resources. Some definitions include posttraumatic growth, meaning that individuals not only manage to "bounce back" after an adverse event, but change positively and demonstrate psychological growth following the event (Britt et al., 2016). Mansfield and colleagues (2016) demonstrated that resilience measures predicted outcomes of well-being and job satisfaction, with resilience serving as a personal resource buffering the effects of special occupational challenges faced by teachers. They suggested that resilience involves a variety of personal and

contextual resources interacting over time, so that (pre-service) teachers would benefit from training programs strengthening those resources. Resources include building personal and professional support networks in the university context, understanding personal well-being, managing work-life balance, maintaining motivation, and help seeking. Braeunig et al. (2018) concluded, after analyzing a resilience coaching program, that the intervention had positive effects on teachers' health through adjusting commitment, increasing distancing ability, and decreasing the willingness to work to exhaustion, thus promoting a work-life balance. Another health-promoting factor was focusing on good interpersonal relationships in the school environment, which related to the need of belongingness and to the social constructivism perspective placing the individual in the context. Expanding the literature on teachers' resilience and, consequently, their well-being is important as most research has focused on students, while the social constructivism perspective suggests that enhancing teachers' resilience and promoting teachers' well-being will be beneficial for both students and teachers. Moreover, social constructivism also suggests to not only analyze internal factors such as resilience, but also to take into account external factors influencing well-being, such as the university environment and what it offers to the teachers, in order to extend our understanding of well-being in the university context.

Kiltz and colleagues' (2020) findings support the notion of well-being being a multifaceted concept encompassing mental, physical, social, and eudaimonic well-being, with these elements being intertwined with contributing and regulatory factors relating to the basic psychological needs, resilience, work-life balance, motivation, emotion, and self-regulation. Furthermore, their findings suggested a dynamic and reciprocal interplay between student and teacher well-being. This current study has been conducted with the aim of expanding upon the research of Kiltz et al. (2020), attempting to gain a better understanding of how university students and teachers conceptualize well-being and what the direct associations between

student and teacher well-being are. Furthermore, we also analyzed teacher well-being and external factors influencing their well-being in order to fill the research gap regarding this topic. According to theories of social constructivism, gaining knowledge about teacher well-being can help enhance teacher- as well as student well-being.

Therefore, we conducted a qualitative study aimed to answer the following questions:

RQ1   a: How do students and teachers conceptualize well-being at the university?

b: What are the differences between and similarities of students' and teachers' conceptualization?

RQ2   a: How does student and teacher well-being interact?

b: What external factors influence teacher well-being at the university?

Methods

Participants

In order to explore the view and the understanding of teachers' and students' well-being in the academic context, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of 12 participants. The choice of the amount of 12 participants is based on the work of Guest et al. (2006), who's research suggested that saturation seems to occur within the first twelve interviews. The sample was heterogeneous which ensured the inclusion of various experiences and views on the concept of well-being. It consisted of equal numbers of students and teachers (6 students and 6 teachers), among which 5 were female and 7 male. The teacher participants originated from 6 different countries (Germany, Netherlands, USA, Italy, Greece, and Spain) and included teachers with 4 to 30 years of experience (see Table 1). The ages of the teachers ranged from 29 to 62 years. Student participants included 3 different nationalities (Germany, Spain, and Italy) with ages ranging from 21 to 30 years. Most participants study or teach at the Behavioural and Social Sciences faculty of the University of Groningen, whereas

one participant studied at the faculty of Economics and Business and one worked at the

faculty of Philosophy (University Bonn).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participants	Distribution	
	n	%
Gender		
Female	5	42
Male	7	58
Employment		
Teacher	6	50
Student	6	50
University		
University of Groningen (NL)	11	92
University of Bonn (GER)	1	8
Nationality		
German	6	50
Greece	1	8
Italy	1	8
Spain	1	8
United States of America	1	8
Dutch	2	17

Research Design and Procedure

Prior to starting the interviews, a strict ethical protocol was conducted to ensure the

anonymity and safe storage of the data. The ethics committee gave permission to conduct the

study and all participants were provided with informed consent and an information letter.

Furthermore, the participants filled out a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A

and B) before the semi-structured interview was administered. The interviews were conducted

by one interviewer in a conversational style. Each interviewer used an interview guide that

contained questions and optional follow-up questions. Depending on whether a student or

teacher was interviewed, the questions were slightly adjusted (see Appendix C). The

interview script consisted of two parts. The first addressed the conceptualization of well-being

in general, participants were interviewed about their coping styles in a stressful period, as well as external factors that influence their well-being. Additionally, the first part focused on exploring well-being within the academic context. The second part focused on exploring the interaction between students' and teachers' well-being. The interviews lasted between 30 to 55 minutes. They were first recorded by mobile devices, transcribed, and stored in the y-folder. All personally identifiable information was pseudonymized. The transcript was sent back to the participant to report possible misunderstandings and to decide to withdraw from the study completely.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, an open coding approach was used as described by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Open coding allows an analyst to examine the context of the data carefully before putting interpretive labels on it. The coding was conducted using the program ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH (designed for qualitative research and data analysis). The coding process consisted of three phases: First, each of the four coders independently coded half of an interview to gain insight into the general themes that were talked about during the interviews and to explore possible ways to code the data. Next, all coders collectively coded one interview with a student and one with a teacher, using the line-by-line coding method, so that no important concept is omitted (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This phase of collectively coding interviews and discussing specific labels of codes resulted in a shared protocol of codes and it functioned as the basis for subsequent coding. During this process, code categories were established by observing differences and commonalities among codes. This was done to further organize and understand the content of the interviews and to create broader and more abstract codes, which were able to generalize across multiple interviews. Creating these code categories also served as a first step to divide the data according to the research questions. For instance, one code group called "INTERACTION

STUDENT TEACHER" was created, which incorporated all codes regarding research question 2a. "How does student- and teacher well-being interact?". The established codes within their code groups were used to create a preliminary codebook.

Subsequently, using the preliminary codebook as a basis, the previously coded interviews as well as the remaining interviews were coded by the four coders independently. Afterwards, newly created codes and unclarity regarding initial codes were discussed between the coders and the codebook was revised and enlarged until saturation, thus until no new themes were observed in the data (Guest & Johnson, 2006). In the process, clusters and overarching themes were jointly developed and discussed by looking at what codes and code groups most often co-occurred, as multiple codes could apply to one passage. These themes and clusters emerged through inductive (derive label of codes based on the interview sections) as well as deductive reasoning (using established theories e.g., SDT to code related patterns in the data) and concluded the final codebook (see Appendix D).

Lastly, each of the four coders re-coded three interviews using the final codebook to update the link of interview sections with the final codes. During the process, the coders were in constant contact, sharing the meaning of specific codes and further structuring them into the code groups. To complete the coding process and to have all quotes attached to the subsequent codes all re-coded interviews were merged into one final project in ATLAS.ti.

Results

In this section, the main results will be reported. The first part focuses on the results regarding students' and teachers' conceptualization of well-being at the university, subsequently the similarities and differences in teachers' and students' conceptualizations will be described. Next, the results related to how student- and teacher well-being interact will be reported, followed by the results on the external factors which might influence teacher well-being.

RQ1a: How do students and teachers conceptualize well-being at the university?

As there is no general and universally accepted definition of well-being, we first needed to understand how the participants conceptualize it to know what they refer to when talking about well-being.

For the participants, well-being consisted of multiple components including physical health, mental health, emotional well-being, social well-being, safety in terms of feeling safe and not endangered in one's environment, and financial security (see Table 2). Physical health was mostly related to the absence of pain and physical problems, while mental health was associated with the absence of mental health issues and a general feeling of satisfaction and feeling energetic and engaged, which relates to the view of positive psychology. Generally, well-being was not only conceptualized as the absence of ill-being and stressors, but the presence of a good feeling and satisfaction. Social well-being in terms of having a social support system, a stable social network, and feeling a sense of belonging also played a big role.

Table 2

General Conceptualization of Well-Being

	Categories		Definition	Quotes/Examples
Components of well-being	Physical health		The physical state of the body ((no) pain, (no) suffering, functionality)	"It relates to physical health, like um, being healthy, being mobile, being able to do the things you want to do, to functional ability."
	Mental health/emotional well-being		(No) mental disorders; psychological, emotional, and social well-being; (in)adequate adjustment to one's current situation	"Psychological [well-being as] not having anxiety, being free mentally to, to pursue your interests without any kind of obstruction, without any kind of fear, without any kind of limitation."
	Social well-being			
		Social acceptance	Perception of (not) being accepted as one is by society (in the university context: in the role of a student/teacher)	"I feel like I'm so accepted by the society because I am doing something and I am moving forward."

Categories		Definition	Quotes/Examples
	Social network and intimate relationships	Belongingness to friends, family, peers, social groups or other individuals you interact with; relation with colleagues and teams, socializing…	"I think relationships are one of the strongest predictors of a sense of meaning in life. And so, if you have a relationship in which both are committed to. […] When people open up more that leads to a great sense of wellbeing."
	Social support		"[If I] experience not feeling well or I'm unhappy with what I'm doing or I don't have the necessary support sometimes … I think I can take on a lot of tasks, but I also need a lot of support to kind of cope with it"
Financial security		(Not) having a stable amount of money available to cover one's basics (food, shelter…)	"Financial security. How do we make a social backup or having food, a shelter and some sort of back up like that the basic needs are covered?"
Safety		(Not) feeling safe and protected	"I'm kind of thinking about also, especially because of this moment of wars really, or were we are aware about wars around the world […] Maybe it sets the basis of that all to be in a place where you can be safe - Safety, I guess you call it."

Within the university context (see Table 3), all aspects of well-being mentioned and the absence thereof seemed to be closely related to stress and a perception of balance:

"*If I feel totally relaxed and comfortable in the situation without either having physical troubles [...] or mentally that I feel stressed out with studying [...]. So, I think that's kind of for me well-being that everything is in balance, and I feel it's okay.*"

Another student related the concept of well-being to balance, in the sense that the positive aspects of life outweigh the negative ones during a state of well-being.

When looking at well-being specifically in the university context, several participants stated that their well-being in the university is influenced by other aspects of their lives and vice versa, which highlights the importance of the systemic approach. Moreover, well-being in academia was perceived to be influenced by the students, the teachers, and the university itself, which I will go into more detail about in the following sections. Furthermore, well-being at the university did not only depend on enjoying what teachers and students are doing,

which relates to hedonic well-being, but also on seeing meaning in what one is doing, which reflects eudaimonic well-being. Eudaimonic well-being relates to the feeling of having the optimal challenge in order to grow as a person and finding meaning in, as well as identifying with, what one is doing (see examples in Table 3). Previously mentioned aspects of well-being were also connected to eudaimonic well-being in the sense that, for instance, physical and mental health need to be given to further pursue one's goals, which then gives a sense of meaning.

Furthermore, the aforementioned perceived optimal challenge describes stress being seen as functional and positive as long as what is being asked is achievable. However, on the other hand, too much perceived work- or study load seemed to be the biggest stressor for all participants and affected well-being the most. A teacher mentioned *"Well-being is also feeling that you can cope with whatever is thrown at you."*, which reflects resilience and the concept of competence within the SDT framework.

Table 3

Conceptualization of Well-Being Within the University Context

	Categories		Definitions	Quotes/ Examples
Types of well-being	Hedonic well-being		Focus on enjoyment, fun, and pleasure	"I think well-being is, um, having a sense of life satisfaction […] and feeling free to do what you want to do […] and enjoying what you are doing."
	Eudaimonic well-being	Self identity	Identifying with what one is doing (through social roles)	"I love my job as a teacher. I, identify as a teacher at the university."
		Meaning	(Not) having a sense of purpose, personal relevance, and fulfillment; making an impact in a way that is important to oneself	"There's nothing more meaningful and validating than having good interactions with students. Interactions where you get the impression where you make an impact in people's life."
		Personal development	Ongoing development and growth of the self in professional and personal aspects, identity crises, …	"I think I really grew up, grew up and matured from the first year"
		Optimal challenge	Getting the right amount of stimulation out of an activity, a challenge cannot be too hard nor too easy	"Not being to overloaded. You know you should be challenged, there should be plenty of work, but not so much, because it also needs to be some balance."

Resilience	Distress/negative stress		Reasons and consequences of stress perceived as negative (too much work/study load, ill-being of a loved one, feeling of uncertainty, financial insecurity…)	"I think I perceive wellbeing in general as just being an absence of like major problems or major complications, major stressors, which is then accompanied also by feeling good about it."
	Functional/ positive stress/ competence		Reasons and consequences of stress perceived as positive (connected to personal development) → being able to cope with it	"I also try to do a lot of sports to balance out the mental activity and the physical activity, because I like cycling."
	Resilience		The ability to bounce back after adversity	"Wellbeing is also feeling that you can cope with whatever is thrown at you as such to say."
	Awareness	Self-awareness	(Not) being aware of your inner feelings, knowing oneself (do I need a break?)	"I generally have a sense of what is needed and my capacities for doing what's needed."
		Well-being awareness	(No) awareness of the concept itself	"Speaking of generational and stuff, I don't, I find it difficult to relate to the concept of wellbeing and even less so with the other word, wellness."
	Balance	Work-life	Balance between time invested in work on one side and recreation and family (social life) on the other	"Classic tensions are, if you have really a family, you know, um, many of us are invited to conferences, then you're away from home for instance. I know I have a friend in Brazil and he very often stays in Germany for two months. This would be impossible in my situation. So, my wife would kill me if I [did this]"
		Recreation-studying	Balance between time invested in studying and time invested in other aspects of life	"In the university context, I would say, for me being as a student would be having a balance between how much I study […] and then on the other hand, I'm enjoying it and I also have time to recharge and everything has just taken a good balance."
		Positive and negative aspects of life	The positive aspects of life outweigh the negative ones	"The positive aspects of life outweigh the negative ones"
		Autonomy: Responsibility-Freedom	The freedom to choose your tasks and schedule should not be burdening and feel like too much responsibility	"I realize we are given a lot of freedom, which is nice on the one hand, but on the other hand, I think it would be important for management to just check in and say regularly what are you working on? How's it going?"
	Coping strategies			
		Recreation	Engaging in recreative activities and activities unrelated to the main task (studying e.g.) to alleviate stress	"At the time where it is hardest to find time for recovery, I think it's most important to do it, to take the time. […] I think having a proper break, so sit down, eat calmly, talk with colleagues, or go outside and have a little walk or something like that."
		Avoidance	Ignoring problems and/or engaging in	"I also noticed after a while, the alcohol consumption was a bit higher normally I"

			emotional/physical avoidance by e.g., using drugs	think, because you just feel stressed and then inhibitions are sometimes hard to control when you're with friends and then you finally feel good."
		Problem-focused	Cognitive restructuring (changing one's perspective on an issue), acceptance, addressing the issue…	"Normally, [I am] trying to resolve anything that causes the stress."
		Pushing through	Ignoring inner signals of distress and exhaustion and simply working through the workload (as long as possible)	"When I'm in a very stressful situation […] I tend to focus on whatever it is, however long it's going to be, however difficult it's going to be. Going through it. And only the afterward […] noticing the effect that it had on me."
	Stress prevention		Preventing stress to come up through e.g. time management strategies, preventive interventions…	"I'm very much like a person that tries to do everything well in advance, everything that you can do well in advance of the plan I try to."
Systemic approach	University-other aspects of life		The entirety of a person affecting each aspect of their lives	"My personal wellbeing is just a bigger in the Venn diagram. My wellbeing as a teacher is just part of my general personal wellbeing, which is affected also by factors outside of my work, my personal life."

RQ1b: What are the differences and similarities between students' and teachers' conceptualizations?

Generally, both students and teachers mentioned all aspects that were described above and seemed to have a similar understanding of well-being and well-being in the university context. However, there were some differences worth mentioning:

Both groups often mentioned autonomy. However, for teachers, autonomy was generally considered to be positive and mostly related to being able to manage one's time autonomously and choosing one's subjects of interest. In contrast, students often mentioned autonomy in a negative light. Having too much autonomy was equated with overwhelming responsibility and too little instruction and clarity, which contributed to increased uncertainty and stress, and thus decreased well-being (see Table 3: Autonomy: Responsibility - Freedom).

Furthermore, one aspect of well-being was balance. While most teachers related to maintaining a good work-life balance in terms of having time for family, students mostly referred to having time for recreation to maintain well-being.

Lastly, eudaimonic well-being was a lot more present in the teachers' conceptualization of well-being. Having an impact on the students and seeing the importance of their job seemed to be highly valuable and important for their well-being. Many sacrifice their time and energy from other parts of their lives to be a better teacher, because that gives them a sense of meaning. On the other hand, meaning was a lot less present in the students' conceptualization of well-being. Instead, it was mostly noticed when there was no meaning in a task, thus when a certain task they had to do for the university seemed to be pointless.

RQ2a: How does student and teacher well-being interact?

All participants perceived student and teacher well-being to be strongly affected by one another. One teacher stated:

> *We do the same thing. We just do it from different sides. […] Your well-being is very important to me because no matter how interested I am in teaching you research methods and regression to the mean if you, as an individual, have circumstances in your life that make you unreceptive to the content, my job is meaningless.*

The relationship between student and teacher well-being includes respect and care for one another, which incorporates a mutual understanding for each other's needs and feelings, and showing interest for the other party (see Table 4). Furthermore, engagement was mentioned by both groups. Teachers stated to be more motivated and satisfied with their job if their students were committed to the studies and engaged in lively discussions, while students reported to be more willing to interact in class when they felt like the teacher put effort into their teaching. To students, the teaching content in terms of clarity and relevance was quite important for their enjoyment and satisfaction with their studies.

Depending on these factors, the relationship can also be negative. Aspects mentioned to contribute to a negative reciprocal relationship were power disbalance between students and teachers and the perception of students and teachers fighting against each other due to conflicts of interest.

Awareness of this reciprocal relationship seems to play a big role (see example of "Interaction Awareness" in Table 4). Related to this, some teachers mentioned how harsh students' feedback can be and that they think students are not aware of how teachers are affected by what students do: *I mean, for the student it's just rambling and it doesn't help anybody in any way. They are just getting out frustration."*

Furthermore, both groups mentioned that the interaction between their well-being cannot be viewed in isolation as each person's well-being is part of a systemic reciprocal network, so that everyone's personal situation and circumstances influence the interaction with one another.

Table 4

Student- and Teacher Well-Being Interaction

	Categories		Definitions	Examples/Quotes
Interaction	Interaction	Awareness	Student and teacher interactions	"I think that generally the relationship between teacher and student is really underestimated […] I think students are not aware of how much they can influence a teacher. The teachers are also not aware of how much they can influence a student."
		Care	Mutual understanding (of each other's' feelings and goals), showing interest and empathy for the other party	"I care about that they do well."
		Communication	Feedback, structure, clarity and amount of information given out	"With students, I feel that it's much more directly rewarding when you noticed that they listen and they feel inspired by what you tell them. Yeah. And even, you get the more short-term positive feedback, but also longer-term positive feedback."

Categories			Definitions	Examples/Quotes
		Conflict	Conflicts between students and teachers, mostly conflicts of interest	"I had a colleague who had a group that was very negative. They were very rebellious, taking advantage of her. I think she was a kind spirit and she came to me and said "I need another group because I [am] crying every session when it's done. I walk out sometimes or do a break because I really can't deal with their negativity""
		Engagement	Interplay of engagement of students and teachers	"And then when there is interactions and interest by the students. I find that deeply rewarding."
		Power disbalance	Role conflicts, not working as a team but against each other, seeing the other as inferior or superior	"The thing is that a teacher is kind of responsible in a way for 20 students and the students are not really responsible for the teacher."
		Respect	Showing general respect and respecting personal boundaries	"Well, it depends if they're friendly. There has to be certain respect."
		Teaching content	Content of teaching and clarity and relevance thereof	"[…] can be clear with their subject. They can be clear with their teaching, um, or just not really care about how they give out information. […] Then they can be available for like explanations or not, or clarifications or provide extra exercises depending on the subject."
Systemic approach	Well-being on different levels		Well-being at the university understood not as one entity, but as well-being made up of the well-being of each interacting entity (e.g. individual → immediate surrounding → formal networks → broader economic context)	
		Individual well-being		"Of course, you can think of individual wellbeing of people at the university."
		Group well-being		"And then it's both employees and students' wellbeing you can think about, but you can also think about wellbeing of teams. Like how the teamworking context works and if you function well as a team, and if you feel inspired and happy working together as a team"
		Organizational well-being		"You can even see a broader like organizational wellbeing. Like what kind of well-being policies are in place. How do we, as an organization, define wellbeing, what makes wellbeing in the employees and what

Categories	Definitions	Examples/Quotes
		makes a healthy and sustainable organization. So, I think that should include wellbeing of all its members."

RQ2b: What external factors contribute to teacher well-being at the university?

Students greatly influence teachers' well-being. Interactions with engaged students were said to be very rewarding and teachers seeing their work positively influencing students seemingly enhances their well-being. Yet, there are other factors that can contribute to teacher well-being (see Table 5).

As mentioned earlier, stress, especially related to workload, was the main factor mentioned to decrease well-being. According to the participants, the high workload seems to be a result of a lack of funding by the government, because there is not enough money available to the universities to hire more staff in order to divide the workload between more people. Most teachers mentioned to have too many students and too little time to properly engage with them, do research, and have a good work-life balance. But not only the workload is considered to be stressful, but also job uncertainty, so that job security is another aspect that the university could increase to enhance well-being.

Furthermore, the general university system and labor laws that teachers are liable to also influences their well-being, depending on how satisfied they are with them (see example in Table 5). In this regard, teachers mentioned (dis)satisfaction with the general pathway of how to become a teacher, administrative work, the official syllabus that has to be taught and so on. This is especially different depending on one's cultural background and experiences. Teachers with intercultural experiences also mentioned the culture of the environment to be important. Welcoming, open, fair, and accepting attitudes were said to influence one's well-being positively (see example for "Cultural Differences" in Table 5).

Another external factor related to well-being are colleagues. Some teachers mentioned having student assistants or having worked out new solutions with other colleagues during the Covid-19 pandemic, which relieved feelings of distress. Generally, having professional connections and a supportive working environment seemed to influence well-being greatly among teachers. The working environment, though, does not only consist of colleagues, but also includes the university as an institution, meaning how the university communicates tasks, demands, plans, and goals to teachers, and what the university offers to enhance or maintain well-being.

These offers can also go beyond the university context. One teacher mentioned German universities offering cheaper bus tickets, while another suggested support regarding the search for housing. In accordance with the systemic approach, university offers beyond the direct university context also influence teacher well-being at the university:

> *This is a problem of the society. If you really want to have more women at the universities, create stability for the families; You depend on your circumstances in which you stay and what the university does as a social institution.*

Many teachers mentioned their current personal situations such as conflicts at home to hinder their ability to teach, which in turn is not perceived well by students, thus starting a vicious cycle of demotivating one another. This was also stated to go the other way around, meaning that positive events in one's private life can influence the teachers' engagement, which in turn motivates the students to engage more as well.

Table 5

External Factors Influencing Teacher Well-Being

	Categories	Definitions	Examples/Quotes
Government	Government	Labor laws and general university system controlled by the government	"I know that the labor laws and the labor structure here mean that if for some reason I'm out, I can feel secure that this will be cared for. In other places that I've been, this was not the case"

Categories			Definitions	Examples/Quotes
		Funding	Money the government provides to universities	"The government does not give enough money to universities that they can arrange work well for employees."
Social	City atmosphere		The environment you live in, including bars, sport facilities, events etc.	"I guess that would also help. I guess living in a cool city. Because being a student is about social life as well. And if you live in a city where not a lot of students live"
	Cultural differences		Language barriers, different values, different educational background etc.	"My wife still tells me when she did philosophy in Columbia […] that it was not accepted, that she […] starts to do philosophy- that is for men. And it happens that they got the second-best mark, because a woman cannot be the best among male students."
	Social	Network	Belongingness to friends, family, peers, social groups or other individuals you interact with; relation with colleagues and teams, socializing…	"I think relationships are one of the strongest predictors of a sense of meaning in life. And so, if you have a relationship in which both are committed to. If you have some loyalty, care for each other. That's a very good start. If you also have an element of depth in your relationship. When people open up more that leads to a great sense of wellbeing."
	Systemic approach		Mutual influences, various factors and people influencing one another	"My personal wellbeing is just a bigger in the Venn diagram. My wellbeing as a teacher is just part of my general personal wellbeing, which is affected also by factors outside of my work, my personal life, my you know own personal health for which my employer isn't responsible necessarily, but should take into account."
Student-Teacher Interaction			See Table 4	
University		Communication	How the university communicates tasks, demands, plans, goals	"If the university gives them clear directions or like how to act or what to do or what's required from them, what their university asks from the lecturers definitely helps. It helps them do their job. So, the clear communication really helps them as well as the student."
		Offers	Coaches, study advisors, mental health workshops, non-binding social activities etc.	"Balance is the name of the university organization. They organize all sorts of wellbeing activities. One of the things that they offer is that you can go to their office and they have a

Categories			Definitions	Examples/Quotes
				room with a massage therapist and you get the massage at a quite discounted price."
Working Conditions	Working Conditions		General working conditions	"If my work impacts my wellbeing, it's because of the conditions of it and my interactions with it. My employers should create infrastructures or create structures through which my personal wellbeing, as it interacts with my job are in good balance."
		Staff	Assistants, colleagues, sharing tasks, professional connections	"Colleagues are a bit big support mechanism, I guess, for, for most part, but sometimes there's also conflict and then it's a big stressor and there's not a good well-being thing."
		Workload	Time given for tasks at hand	"If your schedule is completely filled up you don't really have lots of time for even contemplating and brainstorming about what you could do better, you know, what you might even need."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to get a better understanding of how well-being is conceptualized by students and teachers within the university context, how teacher- and student well-being interact, and what external factors influence teachers' well-being specifically. The analysis was done in the light of positive psychology and the systemic approach. Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings of the SDT and the concept of resilience were taken into account. Through our research, we contributed to closing the research gap regarding student- and especially teacher well-being in the university context through the lens of positive psychology, as most attempts to improve well-being at the university have been addressing students and have focused on decreasing ill-being in contrast to increasing well-being (Kiltz et al., 2020). Additionally, we contributed to the literature by revealing lived experiences of the population at interest.

The Conceptualization of Well-Being and Differences Between Students and Teachers

Our results suggest that well-being is a multifaceted concept, which is closely tied to SDT and the concepts of resilience and positive psychology, and should be viewed in a holistic and systemic way (see Figure 1).

Multifaceted Concept

In line with previous research (Kiltz et al., 2020) and according to our findings, well-being seems to be a multifaceted concept made up of various components. The components most prominent in our findings were physical health, mental health and emotional well-being, social well-being, financial security, and safety. Additionally, on the one side, well-being was talked about in a sense of purely enjoying life and experiencing pleasure, which can be summarized under the concept of hedonic well-being (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). On the other hand, all participants referred to eudaimonic well-being, meaning seeing a purpose in what they are doing, having an impact on others, finding meaning in life, identifying with what one is pursuing, and developing and growing through challenges (Kashdan, Uswatte & Julian, 2006).

By taking a closer look at the above-mentioned components of well-being, one may find close resemblance with the rectified version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1969a). Physical well-being may reflect physiological (survival) needs, which may also be represented particularly in view of the fact that having enough food and sleep have been mentioned *("And if I'm stressed in those aspects of my life and if I'm not sleeping well or whatever else they might be it impacts my work, certainly impacts my wellbeing at work.").* Safety needs are represented by safety and financial security within our conceptualization, while belongingness and love needs are reflected by social well-being. Esteem needs can be viewed in terms of social acceptance and recognition by others, as, for instance, one participant mentioned the following: *"Well-being depends on students who want to be really good students. Then you feel comfortable, you know, feel accepted, recognized,*

acknowledged". Furthermore, the concept of self-actualization can be found within the category of eudaimonic well-being, including personal development and having the optimal challenge, since the definition of self-actualization according to Maslow is seeking fulfillment of personal potential (Maslow, 1969a). Lastly, self-transcendence, defined as striving to "further a cause beyond the self" is also reflected by eudaimonic well-being in terms of having an impact on others and finding meaning and a purpose. Thus, it could be interesting to link Maslow's concept with future research with regard to well-being in the university context.

The Basic Psychological Needs

SDT was found to play a role for well-being, albeit somewhat differently than expected considering previous research. Relatedness played a big role and was mentioned in terms of social well-being, getting social support, having a social network, and feeling socially accepted. Competence was understood as a factor influencing well-being and as part of the concept itself (See functional/ positive stress/ competence in Figure 1). It was mostly connected to the amount of work one has to do, whether they were able to finish everything on time, and the stress accompanied with that rather than the actual content and its complexity. Thus, it was less the question of whether one is able to do is, but more the question of whether one has time to do it, which seems to be closely related to resilience and withstanding stress.

As mentioned earlier, autonomy did not seem to enhance well-being for everyone and could also lead to feeling lost and left alone with too much responsibility at hand. Autonomy was more likely to be perceived negatively by students, however, there were mixed results, suggesting that the effect of autonomy on well-being depends on the perceived balance between responsibility and desired freedom of choice. These differences should be kept in

mind and possibly be studied further in future research. One possible explanation for the different perceptions regarding autonomy might be age and maturity differences.

Positive Psychology and Resilience

Another difference between the conceptualizations of well-being between students and teachers was the prominence of meaning and eudaimonic well-being within the university setting. A possible reason for that could be that students seem to derive more meaning from other parts of their lives as they are still developing interests and their studies are often seen as just the means to later have a fulfilling job, while teachers are in a different state in life. They already worked their way through their studies and often dedicate their lives to their jobs, as mentioned in the example quote for "meaning" in Table 3. Nonetheless, meaning and personal development were generally prominent concepts, which are related to functional stress and resilience and, thus, positive psychology.

Despite mentioning stress and the absence of well-being, participants conceptualized well-being in positive terms. Stress was not just seen as something negative, but as something that can be motivating and can lead to personal growth. *"Well-being is also the feeling that you can cope with whatever is thrown at you"* reflects resilience and personal growth. Many participants mentioned coping strategies and stress prevention strategies they have adopted throughout their careers.

While positive and negative stress were both acknowledged by the participants, having balance between these aspects as well as between different areas in life, such as maintaining a work-life balance, seemed to be important for maintaining well-being. All of the above-mentioned aspects of positive psychology, together with awareness of the self and well-being as a concept, and resilience were closely connected to each other. The concepts were rarely talked about without mentioning the others, which is reflected in Figure 1. Resilience only seemed to develop through stress and those who became more resilient developed more
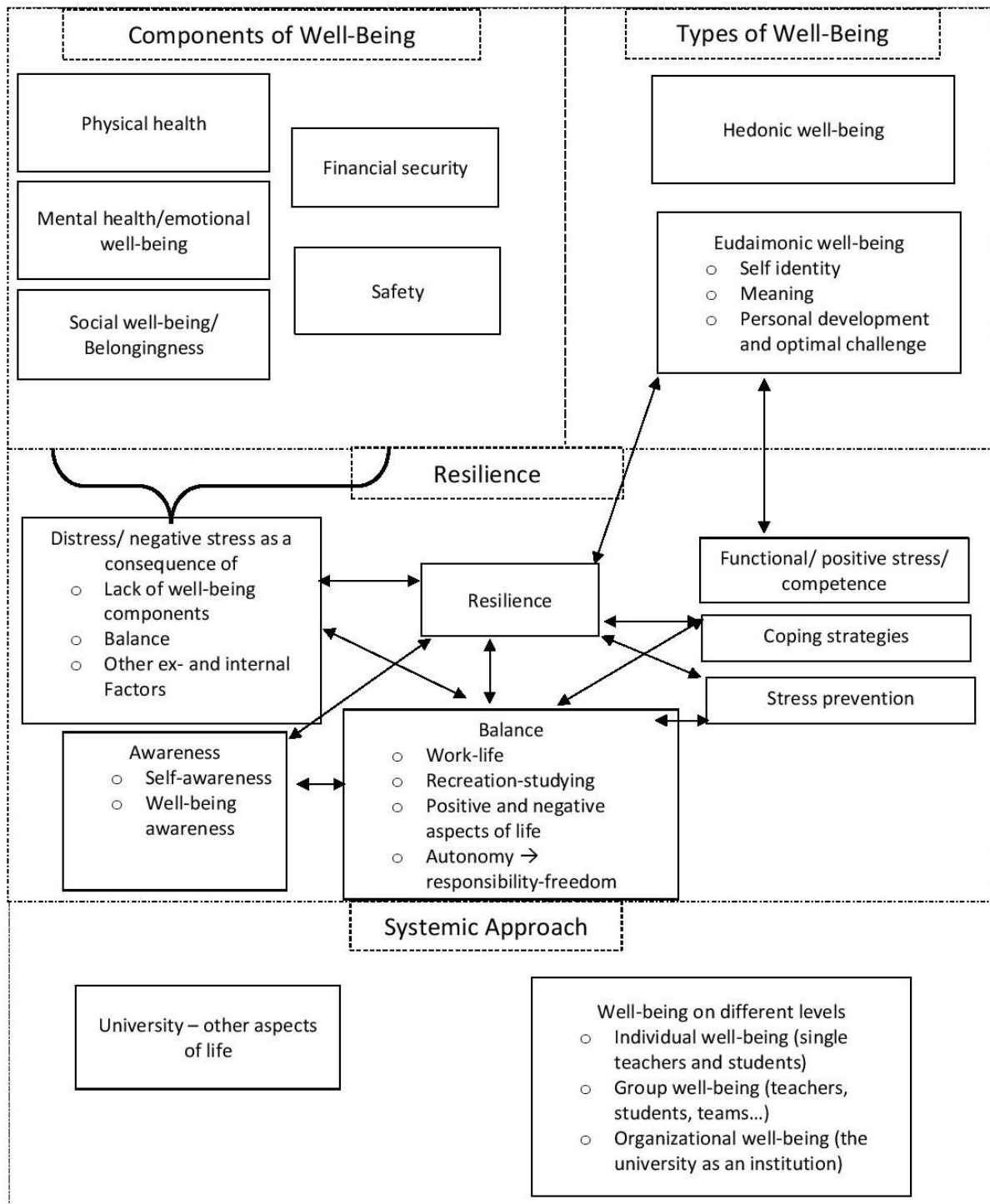
coping strategies, maintained a better life balance, and were more aware of their well-being, and vice versa.

Systemic Approach

Concluding, the different aspects of well-being are interconnected and influence each other, just like the well-being of different people and in various aspects of life are interconnected. Our results support the notion that well-being of one person in a specific environment, for example the university, cannot be understood in isolation. Furthermore, since everyone is influenced by one another, well-being seems to exist on different levels, which could be reflected by Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (1999). The model has already been applied to workplace well-being management by Bone (2015), who concluded that the model can serve to holistically analyze workplace health promotion and management, because it takes into account the individual experiences of employees, who are seen in a holistic nature. The model could potentially serve to enhance teacher well-being by analyzing the individual, the microsystem (friends, family, colleagues, etc.) the mesosystem, which is the microsystem interacting, the exosystem, including the local environment, formal networks, and services, and eventually the macrosystem, which entails the surrounding culture, politics, economy, and mass media. All of these aspects have been mentioned throughout our interviews, reaching from intercultural differences as affecting one's well-being (macrosystem) to having a good relationship with colleagues (microsystem). While SDT covers many factors influencing teacher well-being, it may miss external factors the Bioecological Model does take into account by expanding the focus beyond the university context. Thus, further research and future interventions to enhance well-being could take this model into account.

Figure 1

Conceptualization of Well-Being at the University

Components of Well-Being

Physical health

Mental health/emotional well-being

Social well-being/ Belongingness

Financial security

Safety

Types of Well-Being

Hedonic well-being

Eudaimonic well-being
- o Self identity
- o Meaning
- o Personal development and optimal challenge

Resilience

Distress/ negative stress as a consequence of
- o Lack of well-being components
- o Balance
- o Other ex- and internal Factors

Resilience

Functional/ positive stress/ competence

Coping strategies

Stress prevention

Awareness
- o Self-awareness
- o Well-being awareness

Balance
- o Work-life
- o Recreation-studying
- o Positive and negative aspects of life
- o Autonomy → responsibility-freedom

Systemic Approach

University – other aspects of life

Well-being on different levels
- o Individual well-being (single teachers and students)
- o Group well-being (teachers, students, teams…)
- o Organizational well-being (the university as an institution)

Interaction

The Bioecological Model also supports the strong interconnectedness of student- and teacher well-being that our and other researchers' findings (Kiltz et al., 2020; Chong, 2011) suggests. Accordingly, many mentioned how conflicts at home impacted the classroom environment and vice versa. Teachers and students described a cycle of interactions going

both ways, meaning that, for example, happy students were more engaged in class, making the teacher more engaged, and so on. There does not seem to be a beginning stating who influences whom and how, but it seems to be rather continuous.

Consequently, it becomes evident that long-term enhancement in well-being is facilitated by considering the students and teachers as well as the interaction between the groups, since that is the heart of the cycle connecting their well-being to one another.

External Factors Influencing Teacher Well-Being

Thus far, much more work has been done to promote university students' well-being than that of teachers (Kiltz et al., 2020). Hence, the factors influencing teacher well-being should be taken into account more. External factors influencing teacher well-being can be found in all subsystems of the Bioecological Model (Bone, 2015). Teachers reported friends, colleagues, and family to positively and negatively affect their well-being. Some reported having difficulty maintaining a work-life balance, which creates conflict at home, affecting their well-being. Maintaining a good work-life balance, however, strongly depends on the workload, which the university partly prescribes. Yet, the university depends on the government and the funding assigned to the university. Thus, if there is less funding by the government, there is more work assigned to a single teacher due to less money available for more staff. The cycle starts to emerge. Furthermore, the general expectations at the workplace, which are shaped by the specific university environment and the general cultural environment, influence teachers' well-being as well as their actions. One teacher mentioned the following:

> *"At the time where it is hardest to find time for recovery, I think it's most important to do it, to take the time. […] And when companies talk about stress, there is a lot of responsibility shifted to the individual employee. […] I think that there is a lot of responsibility at the employer's side, which they often don't take enough. And the*

universities in general […] are good examples of environments that have really high

workloads and do not take care so well of employees."

Interventions that were suggested to support teacher well-being were investing in standing desks to relieve back pain and promote movement, promoting taking breaks instead of pushing through, and university associations organizing well-being enhancing activities such as sport offers and resilience trainings. Additional interventions included enhancing job security and providing support outside of the university context like providing kindergarten places for teachers' children or helping new teachers find housing. Most of these interventions include a broad and substantial change within the university system, which would have to be supported by the government at hand. Possible interventions focusing on the student-teacher interrelatedness could include education regarding the awareness of this bidirectional relationship, as it was mentioned that they might not be aware of how much they affect one another. These educational programs could also promote clear communication between the two parties involved to clarify goals and stressors of the other groups, since communication and conflicts of interest were mentioned to influence the relationship.

To conclude, research and interventions thus far have focused on SDT and other conceptualizations of well-being, which did not take external factors and the relationship of students and teachers into account. On the contrary, our results show that external factors strongly influence teacher well-being and could, therefore, be vital to take into account when creating future interventions to enhance well-being.

Limitations

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. Firstly, a selective sample has been used, so that our results might not reflect the true population of interest. Furthermore, all participants agreed to voluntarily participate without any reward, while having been informed about the length of the interviews in advance. Thus, our sample

might have been specifically interested in the topic and, again, might not represent the true population. Another aspect is the cultural background of students and teachers as well as the country they study and work in. Our sample only entails students and teachers from two universities, one being in the Netherlands and one being in Germany. Future studies could broaden the scope of our knowledge regarding well-being in the university context in different countries and cultures.

Additionally, although all four interviewers used a jointly created question scheme, the nature of semistructured interviews held by four different individuals leaves the possibility that each interviewer might have had a different interview-style asking different follow-up questions, which could have led to participants responding differently to the questions.

Moreover, the time students and teachers reflected on within the scope of this study has been strongly influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused high levels of distress and education took place in a way that does not reflect usual circumstances. This might have been reflected in the results.

Lastly, the nature of qualitative research does not allow for quantitative analyses, which might be of interest to future research.

Implications and Future Research

Students and teachers at the university are exposed to different stressors (Larcombe et al., 2016) and experience more mental health issues than the general population (Auerbach et al., 2018; Sha et al., 2021;2022), which also affects their professional development and educational performance (Chong, 2011). Thus, enhancing student and teacher well-being should be of great priority. The results of this study can aid in creating a common and universally accepted conceptualization of well-being in the university context, so that researchers within the field will be able to compare their results and jointly work towards practical implementations of the results.

As already mentioned, future research could benefit from including the Bioecological Model (Bone, 2015) to incorporate lived experiences of the population at hand and avoid viewing the matter in isolation, meaning only in the university context. Our findings have shown that SDT does not sufficiently account for external factors influencing well-being, so that it would be beneficial to incorporate other models. In addition to that, the differences in autonomy perception between teachers and students and in what teachers in contrast to students prescribe meaning to hint towards the two parties having different goal orientations. This might have contributed to conflicts of interests reported by participants and the inability to understand the other party and their goals. Thus, as suggested by Kilzt et al. (2020), incorporating the analysis of goals and motivations of students and teachers and how they affect well-being could be of interest (Daumiller & Dresel, 2020).

Secondly, the teachers stated that teachers would like to support students more and are generally aware of the strong interconnection of students and teachers. However, teachers already experience a lot of stress through external stressors, the educational system and the high workload, making it difficult to invest more time in individual students and being fully engaged in each class. Therefore, further focusing on teacher well-being and how to enhance it has the potential of influencing both the teachers themselves and the wellbeing of the students in the long-term, which should be the focus of future research.

Conclusion

All in all, the current study enriches the understanding of well-being in the university context and the interactions between student and teacher well-being. Results suggest that well-being in academia is understood as a multifaceted concept including physical, mental, and social health and wellness as well as safety, financial security, hedonic well-being, and eudaimonic well-being. Most participants understood well-being to be connected to perceiving balance in life and the ability to deal with stress, or even develop and grow with

the challenges experienced. Student- and teacher well-being seem to be strongly intertwined and influence one another. However, this interaction cannot be viewed in isolation as external factors and each person's individual life plays a role and has an impact on the well-being of each entity involved. As teachers' well-being and interventions to increase it are not yet studied extensively, focusing on that, while not ignoring the reciprocal relationship between students and teachers, might be a possible next step in research. Through this qualitative study, new hypotheses to be tested were created, which relate to the possible importance and incorporation of the Bioecological model and the rectified version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Future research might attempt to quantitatively analyze the matter to, then, get closer to practical implementations aimed at increasing well-being in academia.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire Student

Interview Study
"Well-Being in the University Context"

Participant _____ (filled out by the researcher)

Before beginning with the interview, We need some short sociodemographic information about you as a participant. That will help us to put your answers into context.

1. I am ☐ male ☐ female ☐ other

2. Age _____ years

3. Nationality _____

4. Concerning my studies

    a. Faculty: _____

    b. Department: _____

    ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master

    ☐ 1st year ☐ 2nd year ☐ 3rd year

Now, if you have any further questions concerning the interview study, do not hesitate to ask them.

Again, thank you very much for participating in our study and therefore helping us to get better insights into well-being at the university.

Appendix B
Demographic Questionnaire Teacher

Interview Study
"Well-Being in the University Context"

Participant _____ (filled out by the researcher)

Before beginning with the interview, we need some short sociodemographic information about you as a participant. That will help us to put your answers into context.

1. I am   ☐ male   ☐ female   ☐ other

2. Age   _____ years

3. Nationality   _____

4. Concerning my work

     a. Faculty: _____

     b. Department: _____

     c. Title: _____

     d. Since: _____ years

     e. Total Years of Experience: _____ years

Now, if you have any further questions concerning the interview study, do not hesitate to ask them.
Again, thank you very much for participating in our study and therefore helping us to get better insights into well-being at the university.

Contact: L.Ballato@rug.nl   Bachelor Thesis Project
University of Groningen   "Well-Being in the University Context"
Academic Advisor, Lecturer, and Psychological Coach   Interview Study 2022

Appendix C

Question Scheme

Questions for University Students	Questions for University Teachers
Conceptualization of Well-Being	
I am really interested in how you experience your life at university, could you please tell me how you have experienced your studies so far?	I am really interested in how you experience your life at university, could you please tell me how you have experienced your time as a teacher so far?
In general what does well-being mean to you? (Considering your role as a university student) Can you tell me what well-being in the university context means to you?	In general what does well-being mean to you? (Considering your role as a university teacher) Can you tell me what well-being in the university context means to you?
Think of a moment in the past where you experienced stress or pressure, how did you cope with it?	Think of a moment in the past where you experienced stress or pressure, how did you cope with it?
What can the university do to enhance student well-being?	What can the university do to enhance teacher well-being?
→ What is the university doing already?	→ What is the university doing already?
Interaction Between Students and Teachers	
Who is in your opinion responsible for student well-being?	Who is in your opinion responsible for teacher well-being?
How do you think external factors* influence student well-being?	How do you think external factors* influence teacher well-being?
*(other sources of influence, e.g. other people, the environment): parents, roommates, teachers, partners, housing, finances, chronic conditions How do teachers influence student well-being?	*(other sources of influence, e.g. other people, the environment) : colleagues, partners, salary, office environment, chronic conditions How do students influence teacher well-being?
(make sure they talk about positive and negative aspects)	(make sure they talk about positive and negative aspects)
→ What can teachers do to prevent student distress?	→ What can students do to prevent teacher distress?
Please put yourself in the shoes of a teacher, what do you think would contribute to their well-being?	Please put yourself in the shoes of a student, what do you think would contribute to their well-being?

→ What can the university do to enhance teacher well-being?	→ What can the university do to enhance student well-being?
How do you think student and teacher well-being are connected?	How do you think student and teacher well-being are connected?
Do you think there is a question of interest that I did not ask? Is there anything you like to add?	Do you think there is a question of interest that I did not ask? Is there anything you like to add?

Appendix D

Extensive Codebook With Example Quotes

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
Autonomy	Autonomy		Negative: too much responsibility, too much freedom and no clear structure or task. Positive: having freedom to create one's own structure and choose the topic/task	"I realize we are given a lot of freedom, which is nice on the one hand, but on the other hand, I think it would be important for management to just check in and say regularly what are you working on? How's it going?"
		Time management	Having the possibility to manage the time individually and self-determined in accordance with your desired schedule	"I start in the morning and I use my autonomy that I have and think "Okay, what do I start with?". And then I can flexibly go along."
Balance	Balance	Optimal challenge	Getting the right amount of stimulation out of an activity, a challenge cannot be too hard nor too easy	"Not being to overloaded. You know you should be challenged, there should be plenty of work, but not so much, because it also needs to be some balance."
		Work-life	Balance between time invested in work/studying on one side and recreation and family (social life) on the other	"Classic tensions are, if you have really a family, you know, um, many of us are invited to conferences, then you're away from home for instance. […] My wife would kill me if I say ´Ciao. I will spend now two months in another country, they invited me and it's good for my career.´"
Basic needs	Basic needs	Financial security	(Not) having a stable amount of money available to cover one's basics (food, shelter…)	"Financial security. How do we make a social backup or having food, a shelter and some sort of back up like that the basic needs are covered?"
		Housing	Housing situation and conditions	"Not having a place or like a house or accommodation. I think that also really comes in the way of their wellbeing"
		Safety	(Not) feeling safe and protected	"I'm kind of thinking about also, especially because of this moment of wars really […] Maybe it sets the basis of that all to be in a place where you can be safe - Safety, I guess you call it."
		Sleep	(Not) being able to get enough sleep	"If I'm stressed in those aspects of my life and if I'm not sleeping well or whatever else there might be it impacts my work, certainly impacts my wellbeing at work."
Competence	Competence		(Not) feeling able to do the things one would like to do/ currently does	"Then, the first say "Oh no, that's too hard." So, in the first year, we lose many students immediately."
		Flexibility	Ability to adjust to uncertain events	"And because of this suddenly my job; I had to adjust to these new circumstances."
		Personal development	Ongoing development and growth of the self in professional and personal aspects,	"I think I really grew up, grew up and matured from the first year"

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
			identity crises, gaining knowledge …	
		Recognition	Feeling recognized and valued for one's work and achievements; the appreciation of the effort put into one's work	"Wellbeing depends on students who want to be really good students. Then you feel comfortable, you know, feel accepted, recognized, acknowledged"
Engagement	Engagement	Students	Being committed to the studies and actively taking part in classes and homework	"Disengagement, this is not good for the students."
		Teachers	Being committed to the job and putting effort into classes and their preparation	"Having professors who are engaged with the material would be useful and give worth challenging or challenging in the way they teach."
Government	Government		Labor laws and general university system controlled by the government	"I know that the labor laws and the labor structure here mean that if for some reason I'm out, I can feel secure that this will be cared for. In other places that I've been, this was not the case"
		Funding	Money the government provides to universities	"The government does not give enough money to universities that they can arrange work well for employees."
		Number of students	Government decides how many students are taken in by the university	"The government says that universities have to take every student. There is no limit in that sense. So, there are lots of students. That's not good for students."
Interaction	Interaction		Student and teacher interactions	"I think students are not aware of how much they can influence a teacher. The teachers are also not aware of how much they can influence a student."
		Care	Mutual understanding (of each other's' feelings and goals), showing interest and empathy for the other party	"I care about that they do well."
		Communication	Feedback, structure, clarity and amount of information given out	"With students, I feel that it's much more directly rewarding when you noticed that they listen and they feel inspired by what you tell them. Yeah. And even, you get the more short-term positive feedback, but also longer-term positive feedback."
		Conflict	Conflicts between students and teachers, mostly conflicts of interest	"I had a colleague who had a group that was very negative. They were very rebellious, taking advantage of her. I think she was a kind spirit and she came to me and said "I need another group because I [am] crying every session when it's done. I walk out sometimes or do a break because I really can't deal with their negativity""
		Engagement	Interplay of engagement of students and teachers	"And then when there is interactions and interest by the students. I find that deeply rewarding."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
		Power disbalance	Role conflicts, not working as a team but against each other, seeing the other as inferior or superior	"The thing is that a teacher is kind of responsible in a way for 20 students and the students are not really responsible for the teacher."
		Respect	Showing general respect and respecting personal boundaries	"Well, it depends if they're friendly. There has to be certain respect."
		Teaching content	Content of teaching and clarity and relevance thereof	"[…] can be clear with their subject. They can be clear with their teaching, um, or just not really care about how they give out information. […] Then they can be available for like explanations or not, or clarifications or provide extra exercises depending on the subject."
Meaning	Meaning		(Not) having a sense of purpose, personal relevance, and fulfillment; making an impact in a way that is important to oneself	"There's nothing more meaningful and validating than having good interactions with students. Interactions where you get the impression where you make an impact in people's life […] and where you see that there's meaning in the work that you do."
	Balance	Sacrifice for meaning	Choosing something that gives you meaning over other (pleasurable) things	"I could have done the course in a much, much simpler way that requires much less work on my part, much less challenge, much less complication. And that would, in some ways, increase my wellbeing. I would have more time for myself, more time for my family, more time for other work. But I consider the value of that work to be sufficiently high that it overcomes whatever challenges that I put on my plate because of this extra work."
Resilience	Coping strategies	Avoidance	Ignoring problems and/or engaging in emotional/physical avoidance by e.g. using drugs	"I also noticed after a while, the alcohol consumption was a bit higher normally I think, because you just feel stressed and then inhibitions are sometimes hard to control when you're with friends and then you finally feel good."
		Problem-focused	Cognitive restructuring (changing one's perspective on an issue at hand), acceptance, addressing the issue…	"Normally, [I am] trying to resolve anything that causes the stress."
		Pushing through	Ignoring inner signals of distress and exhaustion and simply working through the workload (as long as possible)	" I have the tendency to when I'm in a very stressful situation […] I tend to focus on whatever it is, however long it's going to be, however difficult it's going to be. Going through it. And only then afterward sort of reflecting on it and seeing, noticing the difficulties, noticing the, the outcome of this or noticing the effect that it had on me, but when I'm in a highly stressful period, I just tend to work."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
		Recreation	Engaging in recreative activities and activities unrelated to the main task (studying e.g.) to alleviate stress	"I learned that it's during the busiest times that you need recovery most. At the time where it is hardest to find time for recovery, I think it's most important to do it, to take the time. […] So I try to, for example, I almost never skip the lunch break. I think having a proper break, so sit down, eat calmly, talk with colleagues, or go outside and have a little walk or something like that."
	Resilience		The ability to bounce back after adversity	"Wellbeing is also feeling that you can cope with whatever is thrown at you as such to say."
	Social Support		Support from social surrounding when one is feeling down	"Well, I think just like having people around you that can help you. Or even if they don't help you directly with the task at hand, for example, that they are just there for you."
	Stress prevention		Preventing stress to come up through e.g. time management strategies, preventive interventions…	"I'm very much like a person that tries to do everything well in advance, everything that you can do well in advance of the plan I try to."
Self	Enjoyment	studying	Liking one's studies, finding it insightful and pleasurable	"It's about enjoying what you currently do, like being excited to do it. So if I have a course that I enjoy doing, and I like the challenge, like putting effort in is, um, this is where I feel satisfied, where I get energy from what I'm doing."
		teaching	Linking one's teaching, finding it insightful and pleasurable	"Just enjoying the interaction with the students. That's something where I get a lot of energy from. In most of the cases it is contact with students that affects me positively."
	Recreation		Leisure time, sports, reading, meditation; doing recreative activities for enjoyment or balance	"To be able to do, my exercise that's important to do. So having time for that, so that's it not too crunched. Having time with my family, having some time to relax with a book or a movie, or to go see friends."
	Self	Awareness	Ability to self-reflect, notice feelings and have a sense of own needs and capacities	"I generally have a sense of what is needed and my capacities for doing what's needed."
		Expectations	Expectations of the self, perceived responsibility, taking charge	"It's just these self-expectations that you have because if you study and for me, at least, if I decided to do a master and I could have worked before after my bachelor's, but I wanted to do a masters. So, my self-expectation was "Okay, if -I am going to do a master, I will do it good."
		Identity	Identifying with what one is doing (through social roles)	"I love my job as a teacher. I, identify as a teacher at the university."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
		Regulation	Ability to manage time efficiently, focus, setting priorities	"There are many tasks like teaching, for example. I mean, you can prepare a lecture and you can take two days to prepare the perfect lecture and you find the nicest pictures ever, and you have the best slides and you record maybe a lecture five times before you put it on the internet. But you can also just force yourself to do it in two hours."
		Responsibility	Awareness of being responsible for one's state of well-being	"In my case. I would say, if I'm not doing well, if I don't feel well, then I think in the first place it's my responsibility to react."
Social	City atmosphere		The environment you live in, including bars, sport facilities, events etc.	"I guess that would also help. I guess living in a cool city. Because being a student is about social life as well. And if you live in a city where not a lot of students live"
	Cultural differences		Language barriers, different values, different educational background etc.	"Thinking about like an international environment context, also the degree to which you feel at home and integrated in a place where you live. I think, I see quite some students that are just really waiting to go home and that makes their whole university experience very difficult or just like a burden."
	Social	Acceptance	Perception of (not) being accepted as one is by society (in the university context: in the role of a student/teacher)	"I feel like I'm so accepted by the society because I am doing something and I am moving forward."
		Intimate relationships	deep, trustful connections and romantic relationships	"I think a real good friend cares about you. And then I think there can be energy going both ways."
		Network	Belongingness to friends, family, peers, social groups or other individuals you interact with; relation with colleagues and teams, socializing…	"I think relationships are one of the strongest predictors of a sense of meaning in life. And so, if you have a relationship in which both are committed to. If you have some loyalty, care for each other. That's a very good start. If you also have an element of depth in your relationship. When people open up more that leads to a great sense of wellbeing."
	Systemic network		Mutual influences, various factors and people influencing one another	"My personal wellbeing is just a bigger in the Venn diagram. My wellbeing as a teacher is just part of my general personal wellbeing, which is affected also by factors outside of my work, my personal life, my you know own personal health for which my employer isn't responsible necessarily, but should take into account."
Stress	Covid		Any factors related to the pandemic	"Now in the last two years was a horror I'm absolutely sure. Now with zoom, there was no university life, really."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
	Social	Stress	Interpersonal conflict, ill-being of a loved one, peer pressure etc.	"If I have an exam and there's another thing that I have to deal with my family, it's additional stressors"
	Stress	Uncertainty	Not knowing how events and circumstances will turn out	"And then you're just left there waiting, and you don't know what's going to happen like down with this selection tests that they made. I hear it so much from people around me that they feel that they were future so unclear."
Study conditions	Study conditions	Assessment	Exams, competition between fellow students, fairness of assessment etc.	"I think here for me. It's more having more time between finishing group assignments and exam period. Because in some courses, we had the deadline of our group assignments or individual assignments in this exact same week when we had our exams and that was annoying"
		Block system	Block system structure	"I think in terms of, for students and also for teaching, I would like when we would have semesters instead of blocks. Courses would also be a bit more stretched out that you have a little bit more time to ponder, to reflect, to make mistake, to correct these, to also learn, to get to know your teammates better when you do a course."
		Class size	Class size	"Maybe we should engage in smaller classes, I feel like they would encourage it so much more."
		Study Environment	At home: loud roommates, desk and quiet place at home, opportunities to study	"Whether you live alone, whether there are others, whether you have your private space too. And I know some people prefer studying alone or with others and that can be a big influential point. Especially if you have very loud house or uncomfortable roommates."
		Study peers	Other people one studies with, study associations	"So maybe it's the most important resource for students. I would think to have study mates, even if it's only two, that's already fine, but at least have some people around you that support you and that you can count it on."
		Study load	Demand vs. time, the amount of tasks one has to do	"Study pressure. […] For me, that's the single most, uh, like variable that, um, about university that has an impact on my wellbeing. Right. Um, can I handle the workload?"
University	University		The university as an institution, equal chances for everyone, decision-making process, university structure	"I would first like to point out that the university is I think trying to set up structures to ensure with teacher wellbeing."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
		Communication	How the university communicates tasks, demands, plans, goals	"If the university gives them clear directions or like how to act or what to do or what's required from them, what their university asks from the lecturers definitely helps. It helps them do their job. So, the clear communication really helps them as well as the student."
		Offers	Coaches, study advisors, mental health workshops, non-binding social activities etc.	"With the student service center, they have courses you can follow to like how to study better, how to not procrastinate, how to have less stress or like everything like that. I almost did all of them."
Well-being conceptualization	Emotional well-being		ability to produce positive emotions, moods, thoughts, and feelings, such as experiencing negative emotions	"I feel like it is not like I strive to be happy all the time"
	Mental health		absence of mental illnesses that conflict with mental, emotional, psychological, and social functioning	"Not having anxiety, being free mentally to pursue your interests without any kind of obstruction without any kind of fear without any kind of limitation."
	Hedonic well-being		Focus on enjoyment, fun, and pleasure	"I think well-being is, um, having a sense of life satisfaction […] and feeling free to do what you want to do or what you'd like to do, within certain structures, of course you'd come through anything you'd like, and enjoying what you are doing, uh, or what you can do."
	Physical health		The physical state of the body ((no) pain, (no) suffering, functionality)	"It relates to physical health, like um, being healthy, being mobile, being able to do the things you want to do, to functional ability."
	Well-being	Awareness	(No) awareness of the concept itself	"Speaking of generational and stuff, I don't, I find it difficult to relate to the concept of wellbeing and even less so with the other word, wellness."
		Conceptualization	Abstract thoughts referring to the construct of well-being	"I think I perceive wellbeing in general as just being an absence of like major problems or major complications, major stressors, which is then accompanied also by feeling good about it. So it's not only there's nothing wrong, but it was so I feel good about this."
Working Conditions	Working conditions		General working conditions	"My employer should be the primary body that is responsible for my professional wellbeing, because they create the circumstances for my work to take place. If my work impacts my wellbeing, it's because of the conditions of it and my interactions with it. My employers should create infrastructures or create structures through which my personal wellbeing, as it interacts with my job are in good balance."

Code Group	Code	Subcode	Definition	Quotes/Examples
		Staff	Assistants, colleagues, sharing tasks, professional connections	"Colleagues are a bit big support mechanism, I guess, for, for most part, but sometimes there's also conflict and then it's a big stressor and there's not a good well-being thing."
		Workload	Time given for tasks at hand	"If your schedule is completely filled up you don't really have lots of time for even contemplating and brainstorming about what you could do better, you know, what you might even need."

Appendix E

Informed Consent

Informed Consent, interview study within the project
"The reciprocal link between students and teachers well-being"

March 2022

I, _____,

hereby consent to be a participant in the current research performed by

Xx Xx , student at the University of Groningen, contact: XX @rug.nl

I have agreed to take part in the study "The reciprocal link between students and teachers well-being" and I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I understand that my data will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. I have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, and I also have the right to request that my responses will not be used. The researcher is responsible for the safe storage of the data.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The data will be used to achieve the study's goal, hence, to gain an explicit picture of the state of the art of students' and teachers' well-being at the University of Groningen.
Participation in this study should help advance our understanding of how students and teachers effectively cope with their university studies and the role of the learning environment in this regard.
2. I shall be asked to explain how I personally experience well-being at the university, what I think can enhance the very same, and what the university as an institution already does and could do beyond that to improve well-being.
3. The current interview study will last approximately 30-45 minutes. At the end of the study, the researcher will explain to me in more detail what the research was about.
4. The data will be treated confidentially and my anonymity will be ensured. Hence, my responses cannot be identifiable and linked back to me as an individual.
5. The researcher will answer any questions I might have regarding this study, now or later, in the course of the study.
6. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure that nothing that I say gets lost during the process.
7. I will be given the opportunity to read through my interview summary and decide whether I want particular parts not to be considered within the analysis. Apart from that, the researcher has the right to publish the study's findings.

Date: Signature researcher:

Date: Signature participant:

Contact: Laura Ballato
l.ballato@rug.nl
University of Groningen