Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher Education: Perception of Mental Health Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj)[1], Dilina Beshiri[2], Kseanela Sotirofski[3]

Abstract

The mastery of teacher competencies is intrinsically linked to the quality of educational service (OECD, 2013). Consequently, the initial preparation of teachers and discourse on the competencies they should possess have long been focal points for educational researchers, predating even the Covid-19 pandemic (Caena, 2014). This discourse has intensified notably in recent times (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021). A mixed methods approach is used in this study. First, a quantitative survey was used to create a descriptive and correlational analysis. Later, semi-structured interviews were utilized as a qualitative method to conduct some in-depth explorations. The quantitative part of study aims to explore the level of preparedness of students in Preschool and Elementary Education programs regarding mental health, the primary methods through which students acquire knowledge, and the relationship between this knowledge and their well-being throughout their teacher education journeys. The study sample comprised students from the Faculty of Education at the University "Aleksandër Moisiu", Durrës, Albania (N=123), 19 of whom were interviewed to identify through qualitative methods the promoting factors and inhibiting factors of well-being and mental health during the study years. Based on the literature, a semi-structured interview instrument was prepared. For the quantitative data collection, two scales were developed for this study: one to gauge students' perceived

93

[1] Faculty of Education, University "Aleksandër Moisiu" – Durrës, Albania, E-mail: kashahuledia@yahoo.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9807-7609
[2] Faculty of Education, University "Aleksandër Moisiu" – Durrës, Albania, E-mail: dilina_b@hotmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8229-4879
[3] Faculty of Education, University "Aleksandër Moisiu" – Durrës, Albania, E-mail: nelasotiri@yahoo.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1036-7696

level of mental health knowledge and another to identify the sources of this knowledge acquisition. Student well-being was assessed using the self-assessment questionnaire CSSWQ (Renshaw, 2020). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 software, while the qualitative data set was processed manually.

According to the students' self-reports, they demonstrated an above-average level of knowledge on mental health, deriving this knowledge from both the university's curriculum and external sources. The study revealed weak positive correlations between mental health knowledge and academic efficacy ($r = .024$, $n = 123$, $p < .008$), but moderate positive correlations with academic satisfaction ($r = .31$, $n = 123$, $p < .001$), school connectedness ($r = .31$, $n = 123$, $p < .001$), college gratitude ($r = .36$, $n = 123$, $p < .001$), and student well-being ($r = .34$, $n = 123$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, this paper engages in discourse analysis to establish concrete recommendations for enhancing the relevant study programs.

Keywords

Teacher preparation, initial education, mental health, student's well-being.

Introduction

Education in Albania is in the phase of important reforms at all levels, both in pre-university education and in higher education. The National Education Strategy (NES) in Albania, one of the most important documents for education policies, has paid special attention to the completion of the 4th objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Ensuring qualified teachers* is considered by policy makers as one of the three national priorities to achieve this objective. In fact, it is known that the quality of education is closely related to the quality of teaching (OECD, 2020). In particular, strategic objectives for the year 2021-2026 are focused on the initial education of teachers. This is also seen in the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY) for education, where we will single out the specific objective A2 which focuses on: "*creating opportunities for quality teacher training...*" (MoESY, 2021, p.8).

There are currently 9 Public Higher Education Institutions in Albania that offer initial education programs, but none of the programs in all these higher education institutions have yet completed the accreditation process. An extensive process of discussions was carried out on the curricula of the teacher training programs that form the same profiles in order to have a unification of the content of the curricula up to the extent of 80%, to guarantee the quality of the programs based on the professional standards of the teacher, but this has not yet been applied in all Universities. In the analysis presented in the NES for university teaching programs, the ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge as well as their integration in pedagogical practices is seen with concern, but also the absence of some important topics not addressed in the initial training of teachers (MoESY, 2021- 2026, p. 41).

In this context, the Faculty of Education at the University of Durrës is making an effort to carefully evaluate the quality of the initial teacher training study programs.

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher Education: Perception of Mental Health Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

The present study represents our attempt to pinpoint issues with the initial preparation of Pre-School Education and Primary Education teachers. We aim to not only identify the gaps in their training and devise strategies to provide them with the essential knowledge and practical skills to effectively navigate the teaching profession but also to determine what more needs to be done to improve their subjective well-being and mental health care both during and after their study years.

Literature review

Well-being is the main substance of educational goals in all educational systems. In the vision of the education strategy, it is stated that the education system in Albania among others aims at:... quality education of all individuals, *contributing to their personal well-being...* (MoESY, 2021-2026, p.8). There are two views on the well-being of the individual. In the *hedonic perspective,* well-being is seen as related to the individual's subjective experience, that is, how satisfied and happy he/she is with the life he/she leads. In the *eudaimonic perspective*, the well-being of the individual is seen as related to his psychological functioning, i.e. how much and how the individual is able to create positive and productive relationships with others, reach his potential and feel self-fulfilled (Ryan and Deci, 2001, in Kashahu and Orzeł Dereń, 2022). The concept of well-being is considered a very complex theoretical concept and with a very high variation in terms of the definition of the term (Kashahu and Orzeł Dereń, 2022). However, in all cases, well-being has been seen to be related to mental health. This is also clearly seen in the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of mental health, in which mental health is defined as: *"a state of Well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community"* (WHO, 2004, p.12).

Teaching is listed as one of the most difficult professions (Kyriacou, 2001; MacIntyre et al., 2019) and with high burnout (Jerrim et al., 2021). One in two teachers have the idea of leaving the profession (Räsänen et al., 2020). Many teachers around the world give up the teaching profession due to facing a heavy workload and a number of stressful factors they face (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2019). This has made universities today in the world to reflect and cultivate in their teacher training programs knowledge, skills and values related to the in-depth knowledge of the profession, the challenges that accompany it, the development of psychological resilience skills, as well as the development of capacity for transformative awareness that are also the bases for the development of social-emotional competence (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019).

Studies in Albania prove that even teachers in Albania face the same stressors as teachers around the world (Kashahu et al., 2020), even twice as much (Cekani, 2015). The data show that the higher the level of stress experienced by teachers, the higher the level of burnout (Cekani, 2015). Female teachers experience the lack of support from the administrators more than men, Meanwhile, men experienced depersonalization more than women (Kashahu et al., 2021). Some of the stressors that have been identified to be related to the increase of teacher stress found by studies in Albania are the inappropriate behavior of students (Cekani, 2015; Karaj, and Rapti, 2013), the high number of students in the class (Cekani, 2015) time

pressure and teacher overload at work (Cekani, 2015; Karaj and Rapti, 2013) relationship with the school principal (Karaj and Rapti, 2013) low status of the teacher (Cekani, 2015; Kashahu et al., 2020), and the non-positive media portrayal of teachers (Kashahu et al., 2020). Teacher stress affects teacher burnout, causing emotional exhaustion, which is related to negative attitudes towards students (Cekani, 2015; Prendi and Karçini, 2018). The factors that influence the job satisfaction, but also the stress of primary education teachers are related to the understanding that the teacher finds in the relationship with parents, colleagues and school leaders, but also their perception of being effective in teaching (Kashahu and Tartari, 2021) that is directly related to their well-being.

A low level of teacher well-being harms not only the teacher in terms of his immediate and further mental health, but also the institution and students, who are affected by his low performance. Although there is a dearth of studies investigating the relationship between teacher mental health and student mental health, researcher Harding and colleagues have found that there is a positive relationship between teacher and student well-being. They studied a sample of 3,217 eighth-grade students in England and Wales and their 1,167 teachers and found that low levels of teacher well-being were associated with poor teacher-student relationships. Likewise, high levels of teacher depressive symptoms were associated with lower well-being and psychological distress for students (Harding et al., 2019).

On the other hand, the well-being of students during university studies is a well-studied issue. However, research mainly focuses on the stress that students experience and the literature lacks studies where student well-being is seen to be related to students' perceptions of their abilities. This trend of studies is related to the fact that students are in a critical phase of their development and in the phase of transition from adolescence to adulthood (Arnett, 2000). This stage of development coincides with the period where mental health problems peak (Grøtan et al., 2019; McGorry et al., 2011). The period of university studies turns out to be busy for students (Grøtan et al., 2019; Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019), who experience more stress than the rest of the population, due to the pressure for academic achievements, especially in the first semester of starting studies (Beick et al., 2010). This can cause some students to have mental health concerns (Cuijpers et al., 2019; Grøtan et al., 2019) and harm their well-being and academic performance (Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019; Grøtan et al., 2019).

However, studies show that engagement in learning processes has a positive relationship with the well-being of students, including variables such as academic efficacy and satisfaction and school connectedness. Levels of student involvement in academic processes are also related to levels of academic performance, which affects not only academic satisfaction and student well-being as a whole (Boulton et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2022). While low levels of academic satisfaction are important predictors of stress, depression and anxiety (Tran et al., 2022). Rubach and colleagues have discovered positive links between teaching quality and increased academic satisfaction, which is associated with higher well-being for students (Rubach et al., 2022), but also with higher academic performance. School connectedness is also an important indicator of academic performance, as students spend a significant amount of their time at university. High levels of school connectedness, in addition to affecting academic performance by improving it, at the same time improves the climate of the academic environment and student well-being (Reynolds et al., 2017).

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

Another factor that affects academic performance, but also the well-being of students, is academic self-efficacy, which can increase over the years. So, first-year students have a different level of academic efficacy, compared to students in the last years, since they improve their academic self-efficacy over the years (Cassidy, 2012). Researchers Grøtan, and colleagues, (2019) found that there is a strong relationship between mental distress, academic self-efficacy, and dropping out of studies due to difficulty in academic progress. Even Honicke, and Broadbent, (2016) have evidenced the impact of academic self-efficacy on academic achievements, where students with high academic performance feel more effective. The researcher Gustems-Carnicer, and his colleagues (2019), think that the study of the well-being of students preparing to become teachers is of particular importance to avoid long-term problems in their lives, as they are becoming ready for a difficult profession.

Koller and Bertel, (2006) argue that insufficient preparation of teacher candidates about their knowledge of mental health poses a problem for teachers in identifying the different types of acute mental health problems faced by students such as stress, anxiety, depression or violence at school. On the other hand, the studies mention the problem of the teachers themselves with their mental health. They note that especially the problems at the beginning of their careers when the teachers faced stress due to the burdens and stress that work brings (pressure to achieve high results with students, problems with students' behavior, communication with angry parents). Teachers themselves testify that they feel unprepared to manage their burnout symptoms (Koller et al., 2004; Koller and Bertel, 2006). The question that arises in this case is: Can someone who has not previously invested in mental health and the cultivation of emotional intelligence and who does not have emotion-regulation ability meet the expectations that time puts forward? How can the teachers become a support for the mental health of the students, when they cannot even protect themselves?

The preparation for a particular competency and the teacher candidate's confidence in mastering that skill serves as a predictor of what he/she will be able to do effectively once he/she practices the profession Brauer (2010). Since there are few studies in the world that measure the perception of teacher candidates on their mental health preparation, and none in Albania, we thought that our study would make a modest contribution in this direction. This study is an attempt to understand the effects of the programs that we offer at the Faculty of Education "Aleksandër Moisiu" University, Durrës regarding the formation of students to respond in the right way to the demands of the time.

Methodology

The choice of the mix methods approach of this study is suitable for education research (Creswell et al., 2003) and in the same time is in accordance with its goals: 1) to reveal the perception that the students of Preschool Education and Primary Education teaching programs have on the level of their preparation on mental health; 2) identify how they have managed to benefit from their knowledge on mental health; 3) to discover the relationship that exists between this knowledge and their well-being while attending teaching programs; 4) to discover the supporting factors and the factors negatively impacting the well-being and mental health of students during the years of their study at Faculty of Education.

The participants and data collection

The sample of this study were the students of the Faculty of Education of the teaching programs of Preschool Education Bachelor, and Elementary Education at the Bachelor and Master level. Since we aimed to measure students' perceptions of their knowledge about mental health, but also the relationship that this knowledge had with their well-being during studies, for the selection of the sample, the criterion was set that the bachelor's level students were in the year third of the second semester of the academic year 2022-23, since these students are at the end of a program and university experience and have created a perception of the knowledge they possess. Part of the sample were the students of the first and second year of the Master's in Elementary Education, but also some students who had finished their studies in the above-mentioned programs, who were invited to be part of the study voluntarily. After explaining the purpose of the study to the students, we created a Google form questionnaire and distributed the link for completion. 123 participants took part in this study, of which 8 men, who made up 6.5% of the sample, and 115 women or 93.5% of the study participants. Of these, 9.8% were students of the Preschool Teacher Education program, BA year 3, 25.2% students of the Primary Teacher Education program, BA year 3rd, 45.5% students of the Primary Teacher Education program, MA year 1st, 12.2% students of the Primary Teacher Education program, MA 2nd year and 6.6% Alumni students. To provide qualitative materials, the research question of the study were answered by 19 students (17 females and 2 males) continuing their studies at both BA and MA levels in both programs were interviewed, among whom 9 students resided in Durrës and 10 students came from other cities.

Study instruments

For the needs of the study, a two-scale questionnaire was created for knowledge about mental health: a) for measuring the level of knowledge about mental health according to the students' perception (5 point likert scale with 5 point likert scale 1-"Strongly disagree" to 5- "Strongly agree") b) and to identify the source of obtaining this knowledge (answer 1-Several topics in one course; 2- "A special topic in one or several courses", 3- "Discussions in the auditorium, but not a specific topic in a course" 4- "Literature that I browsed myself", 5-"Media", 6- "Another way") The questionnaire was piloted before use. To measure the students' well-being, the 16-item CSSWQ self-report questionnaire (Renshaw, 2020) was adapted in Albanian (5 point likert scale, 1-"Strongly disagree" to 5- "Strongly agree"), which measured the subjective well-being of students and consisted of four subscales for the dimensions: 1) academic efficacy (4 items); 2) academic satisfaction (4 items); 3) school connectedness (4 items); and 4) college gratitude (4 items). For collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, three guiding questions were formulated: 1) How would you describe your well-being and mental health during your studies?; 2) What has positively influenced your well-being and mental health during the years of study?; and 3) Which factors do you think have negatively affected your well-being and mental health?

Data analysis

The statistical program SPSS version 22 was used for data processing. First, reliability analyzes were performed for the instruments used. Value for Cronbach's Alpha for

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

scales and subscales are: α=.91 for *Mental health knowledge*; α=.89 for *Ways of gaining knowledge about mental health*; α=.86 for *Academic Satisfaction*; α=.87 for *Academic Efficacy*; α=.82 for *School connectedness*; α=.86 for *College Gratitude*; as well as α=.95 for *Student Wellbeing*). In order to measure the perception that the students of Preschool and Primary Education teaching programs have about the level of their preparation on mental health, descriptive analysis of frequencies, measurement of central tendencies, as well as data reduction technique, specifically principal component analyzes (Turne et al., 1998). In order to find out what are the ways in which they have managed to benefit from their knowledge on mental health, descriptive analyzes were carried out for frequencies as well as regrouping of responses expressed in percentages. For the questionnaire borrowed from the literature, factorial analyzes were performed to validate the factors of the original scale. In order to find out the relationship that exists between these knowledges about mental health and their well-being while attending teaching programs, correlational analyzes were carried out which were interpreted on the basis of correlation coefficients according to Davis (1971). Furthermore, discourse analysis was used to examine qualitative data derived from the transcripts of the interviews (cf. Odrowaz-Coates 2018, 2019). The qualitative processing was based on labelling and coding techniques of students' narratives about their experiences. The pen and paper method was used as the volume of collected data permitted for this solution. Predominant repetitive codes were identified using a bottom-up approach to find key elements contributing to, or hindering their wellbeing.

Strengths and limitations

It is the first time to study the perceptions of teaching program students on their mental health preparation and the main ways students gain knowledge, as well as the relationship that exists between this knowledge and their well-being while attending teaching programs. The instrument for measuring subjective well-being (CSSWQ), which was used in this study, is valid and reliable (Renshaw, 2020). However, the questionnaire for measuring mental health was used for the first time, and the sample of this study is small and was taken only in one institution of higher education, because this was also the purpose of our study. Similarly, the qualitative findings are valid for the time when the study was conducted, but given the changing conditions in the university, the factors influencing the decline in students' well-being and their mental health may also change.

The results and discussion

The level of knowledge about mental health according to the perception of students

The analysis of the central tendency values showed that the perception of the students of the teaching programs of Preschool Education Bachelor, and Primary Education at the Bachelor and Master level for their knowledge on mental health is above average in the total value. The average values, sorted in descending order, show that in terms of general knowledge about mental health *"knowledge about mental health"* (M= 4.11, SD = .832)

students feel better compared to the other aspects taken into consideration as: *"teacher stress factors in the teaching profession"* (M= 3.82, SD = 1.033); *"knowledge about teacher burnout"* (M= 3.59, SD = 1.202); *"asking for help if they realize that they are burnout at work* and *their strategies are not working"* (M= 3.56, SD = 1.151); *"understanding the signs of teacher burnout"* (M= 3.52, SD = 1.097); *"knowledge about strategies to protect themselves from burnout at work"* (M= 3.51, SD = 1.089); "knowledge about high to help a colleague who shows burnout signs at work" (M= 3.51, SD = 1.190). In tab 1. the data are presented sorted according to the questions in the questionnaire completed by the students.

Table 1. Means, standard deviation of students perception of their preparation on mental health

Variable	M	SD
1. I have knowledge about mental health.	4.11	.828
2. I have learned what is teacher burnout.	3.59	1.202
3. I know the stress factors in the teaching profession.	3.82	1.033
4. I know how to understand the signs of teacher burnout.	3.52	1.097
5. I know how to use strategies to protect myself from burnout at work.	3.51	1.089
6. I know where to ask for help if I realize/will realize that I'm burnout at work and my strategies are not working.	3.56	1.151
7. I know how to help a colleague who shows burnout signs at work.	3.51	1.190

Note: M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

What stands out from the ranking of the average values is that there are small differences in the values in terms of student knowledge, for the aspects of mental health considered in this study. It seems that they have better perceptions of knowledge about stress factors and signs of burnout, but values decline regarding knowledge about strategies to cope with burnout for themselves or to help colleagues facing burnout. These indicators can be improved even further if investment is made, especially by increasing the quality of teaching, as there are studies that prove that the quality of teaching increases satisfaction and academic performance (Rubach, et al. 2022). Likewise, more space should be devoted to knowledge of strategies to cope with stress, where the average values are even lower. These perceptions are important because according to Bandura's (1977) theory, an indicator such as confidence in the skills and knowledge that individuals possess is a factor that motivates them to increase their performance in the activities they undertake, but at the same time it is predictive also strong for psychological well-being.

We say this because even though the situation in Albania is stressful for the teacher. They do not have a tendency to leave their jobs, even though they would very much like to do so, because in Albania there are very few other opportunities for an individual with a teacher's education to find himself in the labor market (Kashahu et al., 2020). This means that teachers will continue to work as teachers despite the damage caused by the profession, as there is evidence that teachers who experience high levels of burnout and high levels of stress show serious health problems (Cekani, 2015). On the other hand, the problems of

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),   "Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Dilina Beshiri,   Education: Perception of Mental Health
Kseanela Sotirofski   Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

burnout and the poor mental health of the teacher do not only harm the teacher, but also the students due to the decrease in their performance as teachers (Arenz and Morin, 2016). The problems are also magnified due to strained teacher-student relationships (Harding et al., 2019), which are the starting point of problematic situations between the parties (Prendi and Karçini, 2018). Researchers Arenz and Morin (2016) studied 389 primary education teachers teaching 7899, 4th grade students. They found that teachers' emotional exhaustion had a negative relationship with standardized test scores and students' grades, but also with the satisfaction that children felt in school and with the support that teachers offered them. Additionally, teacher mental health affects student mental health (Harding et al., 2019).

How are gained knowledge about mental health according to students

Descriptive analysis of frequencies highlighted that students have benefited from the knowledge on mental health both from the university program (1-Several topics in one course; 2-A special topic in one or several courses; 3- Discussions in the auditorium) and from sources outside the auditorium (4-Discussions in the auditorium, but not a specific topic in a course; 5-Media; 6- Another way) see Figure 1 and 2. It seems that *"knowledge about mental health"* (27.6%), for *"Signs of teacher burnout"* (26%), and for *"strategies for burnout"* (21.1%), the students gained the highest percentage from reading the literature that they browsed on their own, not as part of the program, although there is no lack of knowledge gained from a topic or several topics that deal with mental health in the program, but also the discussions in the auditorium.

Figure 1. The frequency of the ways of gaining knowledge according to the perception of the students, expressed in percentage (mental health, teacher burnout, stress factors, and signs of teacher burnout)
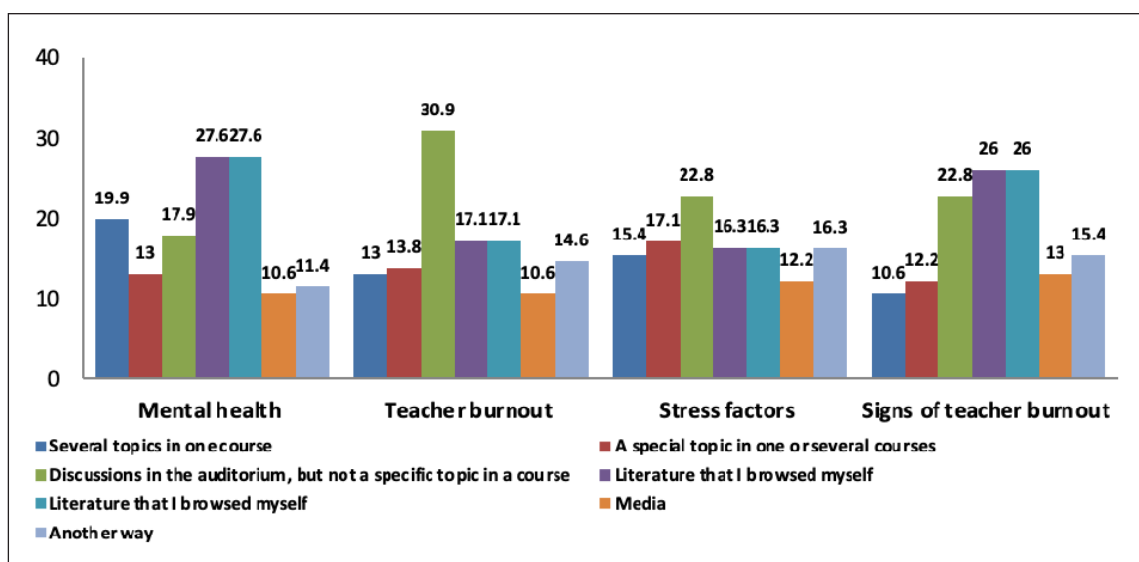
When the topics covered in the classroom are interesting and of practical importance, students also deepen their knowledge with individual work (Ives, and Castillo-Montoya,

2020) and they also look for other sources. While *knowledge on teacher burnout* (30.9 %), stress factors (22.8 %) and signs of teacher burnout (22.8 %), strategies to seek help for oneself (25.2 %), and strategies to help colleagues who show signs of burnout (24.4%), have benefited more from discussions in the auditorium, even though it is not a topic dedicated to this purpose. This prompts us to consider examining even more carefully the scope of the curriculum of teacher study programs which, according to Ralf Tiller, is nothing but the depth and breadth of content accompanied by learning experiences (Orstein and Hunkins, 2003). The aim here is to make the treatment of these topics more deliberate and structured.

Figure 2. The frequency of the ways of gaining knowledge according to the perception of the students, expressed in percentage (strategy for burnout, ask for help for burnout, and help a colleague with signs of burnout)
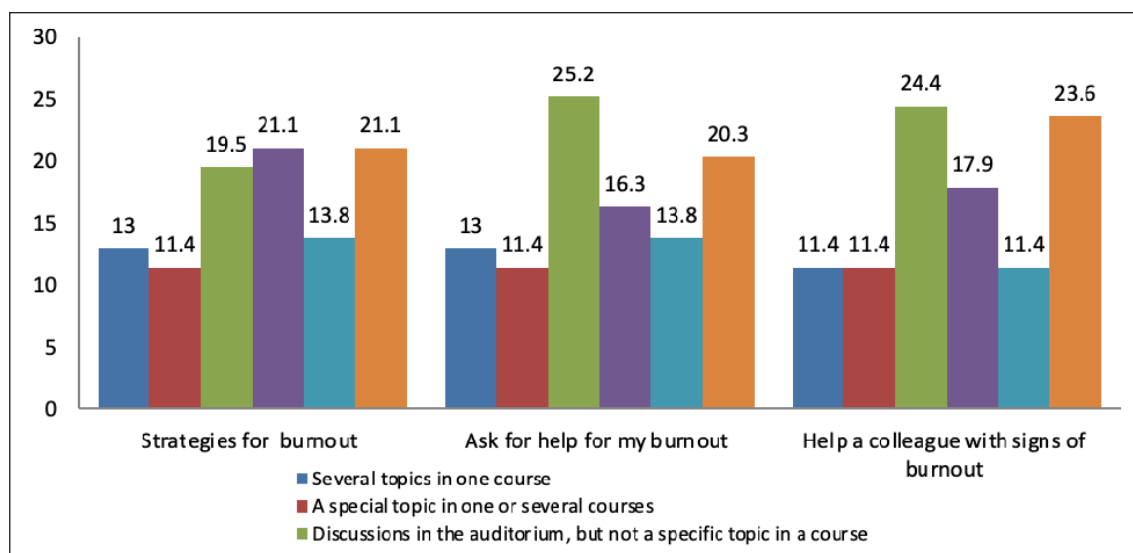
It is noted that the benefit of knowledge through the media is also considerable (ranging from 10.6% to 13.8), which means that lecturers should guide the student in terms of media content. Also, we note that the students of this sample have developed at least 2 pedagogical practices (bachelor students and master's students 3 and 4 practices), which means that for their answers they refer to the contexts they have experienced in school practices. This also explains their higher perceptions of gaining knowledge from "*another way*" aspects such as *"strategies for burnout"* (21.1 %), *"strategies to seek help for themselves"* (20.3 %), and *"strategies to help colleagues who show signs of burnout"* (23.6 %) see Fig.2.

After regrouping the percentage values with two groups: knowledge gained from teaching and discussions in the auditorium and gained from other sources, out of the auditorium, what stands out is that "knowledge about mental health", for which they had reported the values higher in the perception of their abilities, it is proven that the knowledge was obtained almost equally from teaching and discussions in the auditorium 50.4% and from other sources, out of the auditorium 49.6%.

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

Regarding "*knowledge about teacher burnout*" (57.7% teaching and discussions in the auditorium / 42.3% other sources) and "*knowledge about stress factors in the teaching profession*" (55.1% teaching and discussions in the auditorium / 44.9% other sources, out of auditorium) it seems that the study program helped the students more than the alternative resources outside the auditoriums. Interesting are the statements on "*understanding the signs of teacher burnout*" (45.6% teaching and discussions in the auditorium /54.4% other sources, out of auditorium), "*knowledge about strategies to protect themselves from burnout at work*" (43.9% teaching and discussions in the auditorium/ 56.1% other sources, out of auditorium) and "*knowledge about high to help a colleague who shows burnout signs at work* (47.2% teaching program/ 52.8% other sources, out of auditorium) where the average knowledge values were relatively slightly lower for the students' perception of the possession of this knowledge, it is stated that the knowledge is more based on sources outside the classrooms. We think that these benefits are also related in the environments of pedagogical practice. In terms of "*asking for help if they realize that they are burnout at work and their strategies are not working*", knowledge has been acquired almost equally (49.6% teaching and discussions in the auditorium/ 50.4% other sources, out of auditorium). Table 2 shows in detail the percentage values grouped by two categories: teaching and discussions in the auditorium and knowledge acquired in other ways, outside the university.

Table 2. The percentages of the ways of gaining knowledge about mental health according to students

Variable	Gained from teaching and discussions in the auditorium	Gained from other sources, out of auditorium
1. I have knowledge about mental health from ...	50.4	49.6
2. I have learned what teacher burnout is from ...	57.7	42.3
3. I know the stress factors in the teaching profession from...	55.1	44.9
4. I know how to understand the signs of teacher burnout from...	45.6	54.4
5. I know how to use strategies to protect myself from burnout at work by...	43.9	56.1
6. I know where to ask for help if I realize/will realize that I'm burnout from work and my strategies are not working...	49.6	50.4
7. I know how to help a colleague who is showing signs of burnout at work from...	47.2	52.8

It is noticed in almost all the mental health variables taken in the study that students gain knowledge not only in the university, but also outside it. In fact, this is also the purpose of university programs, to create a vision and orientation for new teachers, and on these bases

they will further deepen their knowledge and develop the competencies that a teacher must possess who can cope from the point of view of mental health and unexpected situations such as the case of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The relationship between knowledge about mental health and the well-being of female students during the period of studies.

The study revealed a weak positive relationship between *knowledge about mental health* and *academic efficacy* r = .024, n = 123, p < .008. Moderate positive relationships were also found between *knowledge about mental health* and *academic satisfaction* r = .31, n = 123, p < .001, school connectedness r = .31, n = 123, p < .001, *college gratitude* r = . 036, n = 123, p < .001, and *student's well-being* r = .342, n = 123, p < .001. This means that the more they feel proficient in the knowledge obtained, the higher are the values of the indicators of their subjective well-being as students, such as academic efficacy, academic satisfaction, school connectedness and college gratitude. For more detailed connections between variables, see tab 3.

Table 3. Correlation between students perception of mental health knowledle and same aspects of students' well-being

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Mental health knowledge	1					
2. Academic Satistaction	.310**	1				
3. Academic Efficacy.	.237**	.637**	1			
4. School connectedness	.310**	.834**	.682**	1		
5. College Gratitude	.357**	.753**	.557**	.838**	1	
6. Student Wellbeing	.342**	.912**	.804**	.945**	.888**	1

Note: N= 123
* p<0,05. ** p<0,01.

Well-being is the best prevention to protect students from poor mental health. This is not only because mental health problems affect their personal lives in many ways, but also because university students are the future of the human capital of any country (Cuijpers, et al. 2019). The work with students preparing to become teachers of the faculties of education needs even more attention, because the future teachers will work for the education of the new generation, which is also related to the contribution to the country's human capital, but with an even higher impact. Studies have proven that academic performance has a positive relationship with the subjective well-being of students (Boulton et al. 2019; Reynolds, et al. 2017; Rubach, et al. 2022; Tran, et al. 2022) and with more specific indicators of well-being such as academic satisfaction (Boulton et al. 2019; Rubach, et al. 2022), academic efficacy (Cassidy, 2012) and school connectedness (Gopalan, and Brady, 2020; Reynolds, et al. 2017). Studies prove that college gratitude is also an indicator that improves the mental health and well-being of students in general (Daulay, Assingkily, and Munthe, 2022; Tolcher, Cauble, and Doëns, 2022). While the perception on the performance that students have today, will affect the beginning of his/her work with more

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

complete knowledge and it is known that a well-formed teacher is able to provide quality education for students.

Wellbeing and mental health in students discourses

From the qualitative data processing, it was noticed that all four factors that positively influence students' well-being and mental health during their years of study, such as academic achievements, relationships within the social group (between students), relationships between professors and students, and family, are at the same time factors that may also influence the opposite side (see table 4). In other studies, it has been evidenced that high academic achievements reduce the level of stress (Tran et al., 2022) and have a positive correlation with subjective well-being, as students with higher achievements have higher perceptions of their self-efficacy (Honicke and Broadbent 2016). Conversely, low academic achievements become significant factors for high levels of stress and are associated with anxiety and depression (Tran et al., 2022).

Table 4. Student perception on the factors that have influenced their well-being and mental health.

The factors that support the well-being and mental health of the students	The factors negatively impacting the well-being and mental health of the students
1. **High academic achievements** 　1.1. Result-oriented work towards academic progress. 　1.2. Satisfactory results in midterm and final exams. 　1.3. Enjoyment experienced from group work. 　1.4. Positive and encouraging feedback on course assignments. 　1.5. Experience of feelings of self-fulfillment and success.	1. **Low academic achievements** 　1.1. Unproductive work in academic progress. 　1.2. Poor results in midterm and final exams 　　1.2.1. High levels of stress and anxiety due to low achievements 　1.3. Exam results not meeting expectations 　1.4. Critical and discouraging feedback on course assignments 　1.5. Experience of feeling of failure
2. **Positive relationship with the social group** 　2.1. Warm and friendly communication and mutual respect. 　2.2. Mutual assistance not only for academic matters but also empathy and support in other social aspects it relates to the academic field, but also empathy and support in other social aspects. 　2.3. Cohesion and emotional connection, especially in cases when students share accommodation together.	2. **Stress during exam season (Very high stress especially in Semester I of the first year, but also Semester II)** 　2.1. Experience of feelings of stress and anxiety during exams (even after the first year) 　2.2. Experiencing anxiety when working in groups where students have little acquaintance and have low commitment and expectations for course results.

The factors that support the well-being and mental health of the students	The factors negatively impacting the well-being and mental health of the students
3. Positive relationship with the course professor 3.1. Positive classroom atmosphere where the student's needs are fulfilled 3.2. Interactive teaching where the student feels motivated. 3.3. Experience of satisfaction and self-fulfillment during the learning process. 3.4. Opportunity to correct course assignments after receiving feedback, as a second chance.	**3. Problems with adjusting from high school to University** 3.1. Difficulty in understanding how the study program and assessment system work (during Semester I of the first year) 3.2. Dealing with the new environment (many students in a different group than high school classes). 3.3. Experience of feeling invisible 3.4. Adjusting to voluminous literature compared to high school 4.4. Adjustment to the different demands of professors

4. Family (Support from the family)
4.1. Financial support
4.2. Support for meeting daily needs by saving time and energy
4.3. Emotional support
	4. Tense relationship with the social group
	4.1. Prejudice within the group (diversity and stigmatization).
	   4.1.1. Language (dialects)
	   4.1.2. Background
	   4.1.3. Physical appearance and clothing
	   4.1.4. Cultural differences
	4.2. Experience of feeling excluded

	5. Tense relationship with the course professor 5.1. Stigmatization 5.2. Monotonous teaching and lack of motivation 5.4. Lack of clarity 5.5. Lack of transparency in assessment
	6. Financial problems 6.1. Need to take on any job to afford living expenses (especially when students come from other places of residence) 6.2. Working long hours
	7. Family (Students coming from other places of residence) 7.1. Dealing with daily needs alone 7.2. Feeling of being alone
	8. Accommodation problems (students coming from other places of residence) 8.1. Lack of dormitories for students 8.2. High rents

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher Education: Perception of Mental Health Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

The factors that support the well-being and mental health of the students	The factors negatively impacting the well-being and mental health of the students

	9. Problems with public transportation to reach the university campus
	  9.1. High cost, as the line has separate subscriptions and a low number of subscriptions (not all students can afford to buy them)
	  9.2. Low frequency of buses
	  9.3. Slow movement speed (high time expenditure for short distances)
	  9.4. Overcrowding

Source: Qualitative data from interviews

Similarly, studies show that a positive classroom climate results in stress reduction, increased satisfaction, and motivation, as found in other studies (Rubach 2022). Since this coin has two sides, it is important to understand that academic staff need to increase awareness to create positive climates in the classroom. The classroom climate and how academic staff behave affect the creation of positive emotional states that encourage students' efforts and increase their motivation to seek the desired outcome, also supported by the professor. The researcher Pop (2023) suggests the use of non-formal activities in education as instructional strategies to create free relationships between teachers and students with the aim of motivating them to be active participants through their life experiences.

Positive relationships with both academic staff and amongst students serve as protective factors as much as hindering factors for both well-being and mental health. Therefore, academic staff should be careful to create a positive atmosphere during teaching and the relationships they build with students, but equally important is the management of student interactions with each other. This is especially relevant when defining work groups for projects and joint tasks, aiming for every student not to feel hindered or stressed due to the relationships that may arise in a workgroup, but rather the opposite.

All interlocutors cited their first year of study, particularly the first semester, as a challenging time marked by high levels of stress and anxiety relating to not only their academic performance but also their struggles adjusting to university life and, in the case of students coming from other cities who study in Durrës, their separation from their families. Students report feeling stigmatized because of their background, language barriers, and a host of cultural prejudices that prevented them from actively participating in open discussions in the auditorium or in group project preparation and presentations. They also report difficulties adjusting and in their relationships with other students in the group.

The detachment from family and the assumption of all responsibilities by these students have influenced in most cases an increase in stress and significantly decreased the well-being of students. While for students residing in Durrës, family is mainly reported as a supportive factor. The family is reported to have been influenced as a supportive factor

for the well-being and mental health of all students, even when they did not have sufficient financial support, they felt emotional support from their parents.

Students coming from other cities also report accommodation as a very stressful factor. Since the University currently does not provide affordable dormitories, students coming to study at UAMD also have to deal with high rental prices. To cope with the high expenses, all students share apartments with other students, which they consider to be a challenge in itself. Here's how one of the students expresses it:

> *"I just arrived from Dibra, and I didn't know any friends to share the expenses with, even though my dad managed to find a house through an acquaintance. I had to search and found two girls coincidentally at the university, but I had a lot of problems with them. When it was time to pay the rent, I was very stressed because they were not fair in splitting the expenses. On one hand, the stress of school and exams, and on the other hand, money problems... it felt like I was losing my mind... I talked to my mom all the time and just cried... I failed three exams and was ready to go back home and drop out of school."*
>
> Third year Bachelor's student

Financial problems are seen as a factor that negatively affects the well-being of students and their mental health. They report that the need to cover expenses for studies, transportation, which is also reported as a problem for students from Durrës as well as those coming from other cities, and accommodation, forces them to work long hours and in jobs that do not suit them and do not leave them enough time to study.

> *"I've been working as a nanny for three years in a family where I not only take care of the children but I can't leave work undone. The lady has her own business and at least I combine the hours when I have classes. This keeps me there, but because of this tolerance, I work more than 9 hours a day and even clean their house on weekends. The pay is too little, and I don't have time to eat, wash for myself, or study. I only have the night to read, but when I'm too tired, sleep takes over..."*
>
> First year Master's student

> *"I'm from Durrës and live in the beach area, but from the beach to the university, I need two buses and each has its own subscription. Every month I stress thinking whether I'll find an abonnement or not, because they are limited although we line up often I end up not buying as they run out. I need a lot of money to come to school without an abonnement..."*
>
> Second year Bachelor's student

Because houses in the beach area during the winter period are cheaper than houses in the central part of Durrës, many students coming from other cities are accommodated in the beach area and face problems not only with transportation but also with releasing the apartment during exam periods.

> *"Last year at the end of the year, I went through a stress I can't forget... On one side, I was at school and at work, and on the other side, the exam season had started and the*

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),   "Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Dilina Beshiri,   Education: Perception of Mental Health
Kseanela Sotirofski   Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

landlord demanded that I vacate the house according to the agreement we had made. I stayed at some friends', but I was uncomfortable because I put them in an awkward situation, and I wasn't comfortable myself. I had nowhere to study for exams because the university library is far away and stays open until 4 pm. It wasn't worth taking the school bus that goes like a snail and the expense..."

Third year Bachelor's student

In summary, the first experiences of studying in Durres for many of our interlocutors, future teachers, were like experiencing a culture shock (as described by Odrowaz-Coates (2017) who was using Oberg's classification). Although they were not entering a different country with a distinctly different culture, they found themselves experiencing a profound culture shock. For those who came to Durres from elsewhere this experience was connected to the language used in academia, to the new and unknown social environment and to complete life-changing experiences of being 'far away' from home. To local students, the same applied to a degree, apart from being away from home but the level of expectations, the level of responsibility for their achievements, and the level of what they perceived as sophisticated language felt as if they were entering a different unknown world. These experiences contributed to challenges for their overall well-being.

Conclusions and reccomandations

One of the main findings of the study is the positive relationship between indicators of subjective well-being such *as academic efficacy, academic satisfaction*; *school connectedness* and *college gratitude* and students' perceptions of *the knowledge they possess on some important aspects of mental health*. To increase the subjective well-being of students studying in teaching programs, it is important to work hard for the highest possible achievements so that they feel as capable as possible when they begin their career as a teacher, as it is a difficult profession, where even beginners are expected to perform in the same way as experienced teachers, this is a challenge that not all professions face. Good posture and confidence in their knowledge will give students who are preparing to become teachers more internal balance to realize the teacher's standards.

The study revealed that students preparing to become teachers of preschool education and primary education have an above-average perception of their knowledge on mental health. These perceptions are important because according to Bandura (1977), an indicator such as confidence in the skills in the knowledge that individuals possess motivates them to increase their performance in the activities they undertake, but at the same time this is a strong predictor also for psychological well-being. Likewise, it was found that knowledge is gained by students (the sample of this study) from teaching and discussions in the auditorium and gained from other sources, out of the auditorium, in almost equal proportion. Individual work and the use of alternative resources are of indisputable importance. However, it is appropriate to invest more from the academic staff, in such important knowledge of teacher promotion as their mental health. For this formation, we think that university programs should carry even more weight.

109

Today, special attention is being paid, at least in written documents, to the teacher's commitment towards the *social and emotional needs* of students. Distance or combined learning during and after the covid-19 pandemic created increased stress for both teachers and students. This effect still continues due to the creation of various gaps that the students have created. The created situation has increased even more the society's expectations for the knowledge, skills and habits that teachers must possess, to respond to the social and emotional needs of students in addition to academic progress, while the concern that teachers receive little knowledge in their initial and ongoing education to meet these demands is a long-standing concern (Graham, Phelps, Maddison et al., 2011; Koller et al., 2004; Koller, and Bertel, 2006; Morris , 2002).

On the other hand, studies show that teachers have insufficient knowledge about mental health and therefore are unable to support the mental health of their students (Mazzer, and Rickwood, 2015; Atkins, and Rodger, 2016; Reinke et al., 2011). Their insufficient knowledge about teacher competence in mental health proves to be a barrier in terms of cooperation with mental health professionals in schools. This finding refers to a study conducted in Norway, which used a mixed method design to study the issue as deeply as possible, studying it both qualitatively and quantitatively. Moreover, in this study it was found that even though teachers value themselves as the first professionals who can identify students' mental health problems, they feel that they lack the knowledge and skills to do their job properly. students in this regard (Mazzer, and Rickwood, 2015).

The professional standards drawn up by the Institute of Education Development for teachers of preschool education (IED, 2017) and primary education (IED, 2016) list, among others, some indicators for the skills that the teacher must possess to support the growth and development of the student for achieve the well-being of students. Specifically, Standard 1 (Implementation of the code of ethics) defines: *the teacher creates a positive environment that conveys the basic values of democracy* (IED, 2017, p.7). In Standard 7 (Acceptance and respect for diversity) in its description it is stated: *The preschool education teacher affects the quality development of all relationships within the classroom.....* (IED, 2017, p. 17). Yes, in this standard it is defined as follows: *the teacher identifies children who have a low self-esteem* (IED, 2017, p.17). While in Standard 9 (Physical Environment) the teacher is required to*: use classroom management techniques and positive discipline that promote self-control and self-discipline* (IED, 2017, p.21). This indicator description is the same as Standard 3 (Creating an inclusive environment) for the primary teacher. While in Standard 4 (Acceptance and respect of diversity) for the primary education teacher, the following are defined: *4.2.6 is an intensive observer of students' relationships and actions in lessons and in extracurricular activities; 4.2.7 tactfully intervenes in a relationship between children when he sees that the situation is deteriorating; 4.2.8 promotes the development of an atmosphere both social and rich in ethical values* (IED, 2016, p.13). Of course, taking care of the student's well-being is very important, but only a teacher who owns his own well-being can do this. However, in the current standards, there is not a single line about the teacher's awareness of his mental health, even though we think this should be a professional obligation.

The experience with the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted once again, and very strongly, the importance of people's health and especially mental health (Rajic et al. 2024). We

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

realized that we may face similar situations again. This means that the teacher of the future must be much better prepared to be, first, very strong himself. For this we need, as Podolsky and his colleagues (2016) point out, a very strong preparation of educators, which would influence not only to increase the quality of teaching, but also to avoid the thought of leaving the profession by the teacher.

Based on the discussion above, at the institutional level, we would recommend the establishment of a center for psychosocial support for students, as all interviewed students reported experiencing high levels of stress, especially in the first semester of the first year, but also continuing thereafter. Special attention should be given to students coming from other cities who experience added stress due to separation from family and financial problems, accommodation issues, transportation, and adaptation to the university environment. On the other hand, academic staff should raise awareness of the important role they play both as educators and in the academic achievements of students, as well as direct influencers on the quality of students' lives due to their contribution to improving the classroom atmosphere and managing relationships in the auditorium. Furthermore, there is an evident need for the University to collaborate more intensively with both the central government and local authorities to facilitate the construction of dormitories for students coming from other cities and to find a solution to improve transportation conditions for all students, although these indicators are not directly related to the programs, they directly influence the quality of well-being and mental health of students.

In this way, in the institutional level is also recommended the revision of the psycho-pedagogical course programs in all higher education institutions that offer teaching programs, using the curriculum map in order that the knowledge that should be offered to mental health of teaching students, to be systematized and organized deliberately and with attention to both the mental health of the teacher and the student. Likewise, since students use the media to a considerable extent, as was also found in our study, it should be seen as a priority orientation on media content that teaching students need, to be formed in terms of mental health. Pedagogical practice should be seen as "*a golden opportunity*" to understand, apply and analyze reflectively together with the mentor teacher and the leading pedagogue, the entire knowledge base that the students of the mental health teaching programs receive. In particular, simulation situations should be observed and created for strategies to cope with stress and burnout for themselves and to help colleagues, but also students who experience psychological problems. But also on scientific data we prove the connection of well-being with the academic performance of students, and not only. For example, short intervention programs for university students for college gratitude, which are easily applicable and not high-cost, have been very effective for increasing the well-being of students (Tolcher et al., 2022).

The study identifies the need for further qualitative studies. First to understand in depth how the curriculum is preparing students to be ready to maintain themselves in terms of mental health. Second, to understand the effects of pedagogical practice regarding the fusion of theoretical knowledge with the practical skills that our students must possess in caring for their own and students' mental health. Thirdly, to understand how we can further increase the well-being of our students during their studies, so that their journey towards the teaching profession becomes not only a valuable but also an interesting experience and

transforms our students into refined human beings. The question we pose here for future teachers is the same question that Professor Gert Biesta also posed, who says: *"How to become educationally wise?"* (Biesta, 2012, p.8).

At the national level, we suggest that the time has come to update the teacher's standards, both for the pre-school teacher and for the primary education teacher, making not only a copy and paste of the standards of other countries in Europe. We think that reflecting and learning from the experience of the distance learning period, as well as recommending that the standards be based on the problems faced by Albanian schools, reflecting on the research findings of Albanian researchers. We suggest adding to the teachers' standards the skills on recognition and self-management of mental health by the teacher as a professional obligation and not only to set standards on how the teacher will support the students. The aforementioned discussions and scientific evidence in Albania speak of teachers who, even in a difficult situation with their health, continue to provide educational services. The job is not only to conduct a mental health screening and remove from the system those who do not meet the criteria of satisfactory mental health to be a teacher, but to prevent the degradation of the education workforce by educating generations of new educators with care for well-being of himself and the students. Prevention is much better and less expensive in social terms, even in economic terms. And who better to do this than the Faculties of Education?

References

112

Allan C. Orstein, and Francis P. Hunkins (2003). *Kurrikula bazat, parimet dhe problemet*. Botim i ISP, Tiranë

Arens, A. K., and Morin, A. J. S. (2016). Relations between teachers' emotional exhaustion and students' educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 108*(6), 800–813. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000105

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American psychologist*, *55*(5), 469.

Atkins, M. A., and Rodger, S. (2016). Pre-service teacher education for mental health and inclusion in schools. *Exceptionality Education International*, *26*(2).

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological review*, *84*(2), 191.

Bewick, B., Koutsopoulou, G., Miles, J., Slaa, E., and Barkham, M. (2010). Changes in undergraduate students' psychological well being as they progress through university. *Studies in higher education*, *35*(6), 633-645.

Biesta, G. (2012). The future of teacher education: Evidence, competence or wisdom?. *Research on Steiner Education, Volume 3* (1), 8-21

Boulton, C. A., Hughes, E., Kent, C., Smith, J. R., and Williams, H. T. (2019). Student engagement and wellbeing over time at a higher education institution. *PloS one*, *14*(11), e0225770.

Brauer, J. (2010). Teacher creativity and teacher professional competency. *Teacher/Mentor*, *1*, 22.

Caena, F. (2014). Teacher Competence Frameworks in Europe: policy as discourse and policy as practice. *European Journal of Education*, *49*(3), 311-331.

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

Carver-Thomas, D., and Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). The trouble with teacher turnover: How teacher attrition affects students and schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *27*(36).

Cassidy, S. (2012). Exploring individual differences as determining factors in student academic achievement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *37*(7), 793-810.

Cekani, E. (2016). *Problematika të profesionit të mësuesit në Shqipëri*. Disertacion http:// www.doktoratura. unitir.edu.al/wp-content/ uploads/2017/01/Doktorat-Ermioni- CEKANI-per-print-Ok.pdf

Creswell, J. W., Clark, V. L. P., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed. *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research, 209.*

Cuijpers, P., Auerbach, R. P., Benjet, C., Bruffaerts, R., Ebert, D., Karyotaki, E., and Kessler, R. C. (2019). The world health organization world mental health international college student initiative: an overview. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, *28*(2), e1761.

Daulay, N., Assingkily, M. S., and Munthe, A. K. (2022). The relationship between gratitude and well-being: The moderating effect of religiosity on university freshmen during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psikohumaniora: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, *7*(1), 51-64.

Davies, J.A. (1971). *Elementary Survey Analysis.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Donahue-Keegan, D., Villegas-Reimers, E., and Cressey, J. M. (2019). Integrating social-emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching in teacher education preparation programs. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *46*(4), 150-168.

Gopalan, M., and Brady, S. T. (2020). College students' sense of belonging: A national perspective. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(2), 134-137.

Graham, A., Phelps, R., Maddison, C., and Fitzgerald, R. (2011). Supporting children's mental health in schools: Teacher views. *Teachers and Teaching*, *17*(4), 479-496.

Grøtan, K., Sund, E. R., and Bjerkeset, O. (2019). Mental health, academic self-efficacy and study

Gustems-Carnicer, J., Calderón, C., and Calderón-Garrido, D. (2019). Stress, coping strategies and academic achievement in teacher education students. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *42*(3), 375-390.

Harding, S., Morris, R., Gunnell, D., Ford, T., Hollingworth, W., Tilling, K., ... and Kidger, J. (2019). Is teachers' mental health and wellbeing associated with students' mental health and wellbeing?. *Journal of affective disorders*, 242, 180-187

Honicke, T., and Broadbent, J. (2016). The influence of academic self-efficacy on academic performance: A systematic review. *Educational Research Review, 17*, 63–84.

IED (2017). Professional standards of the general formation of preschool teachers, Tirana

IED (2016). Professional standards of general formation and subject formation of primary education teachers, Tirana

Ives, J., and Castillo-Montoya, M. (2020). First-generation college students as academic learners: A systematic review. *Review of Educational Research*, *90*(2), 139-178.

Jerrim, J., Sims, S., Taylor, H., and Allen, R. (2021). Has the mental health and wellbeing of teachers in England changed over time? New evidence from three datasets. *Oxford Review of Education*, *47*(6), 805-825

Karaj, S., and Rapti, E. (2013). Teacher job stress in Albania: Examining the role of students' classroom disruptive behavior and other factors in the school context. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, *54*, 14.

Kashahu, L., and Tartari, E. (2021). Factors of stress and job satisfaction of teachers during online teaching under covid-19 quarantine conditions and their digital competence. *Studime Sociale*, *15*(2), 5-18.

Kashahu, L., and Orzeł-Dereń, K. (2022). The concept of child well-being: Parenting and school. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development*, *9*(6).

113

Kashahu, L., Petani, R., & Ntalla, M. (2021). Relationship between teacher's burnout, occupational stress, coping, gender and age. *Journal of educational and social research*, *11*(4), 275.

Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L., Zenelaga-Shehu, B. and Sotirofski., K (2020). *Contemporary problems in teacher's work in Albania* In Monograph Miko-Giedyk, J., Carroll, J., Kashahu, Xhelilaj, L., Zenelaga-Shehu, B. and Sotirofski., K. (2020) Problems in Teachers Work – in Poland, the United Kingdom and Albania, Impuls: Kraków, Poland

Koller, J. R., and Bertel, J. M. (2006). Responding to today's mental health needs of children, familes and schools: revisiting the preservice training and preparation of school-based personnel. *Education and treatment of children*, 197-217.

Koller, J. R., Osterlind, S. J., Paris, K., and Weston, K. J. (2004). Differences between novice and expert teachers' undergraduate preparation and ratings of importance in the area of children's mental health. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, *6*(2), 40-45.

Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 27 – 35.

MacIntyre, P., Ross, J., Talbot, K., Mercer, S., Gregersen, T., and Banga, C. A. (2019). Stressors, personality and wellbeing among language teachers. *System, 82*, 26-38.

Mazzer, K. R., and Rickwood, D. J. (2015). Teachers' role breadth and perceived efficacy in supporting student mental health. *Advances in school mental health promotion*, *8*(1), 29-41.

MoESY, (2021). National Education Strategy 2021-2026, Tirana

Morris, E. F. (2002). A study of the mental health knowledge and attitudes of preservice and inservice elementary school teachers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation in Koller, J. R., and Bertel, J. M. (2006). Responding to today's mental health needs of children, familes and schools: revisiting the preservice training and preparation of school-based personnel. *Education and treatment of children*, 197-217.

Odrowaz-Coates A. (2018). Soft power of language in social inclusion and exclusion and the unintended research outcomes. Language, Discourse and Society, 6, 15–30.

Odrowaz-Coates A. (2019). Socio-educational Factors and the Soft Power of Language: The Deluge of English in Poland and Portugal. Rowman & Littlefield.

Odrowaz-Coates A. (2017). An ethnographic study about women – The female researcher's perspective. In U. Markowska-Manista & J. Pilarska (Eds.), An introspective approach to women's intercultural fieldwork (pp. 9–48).

OECD (2013). *PISA 2012 Results.VolumeIV,WhatMakesSchoolsSuccessfources,Policies and Practices* (Paris,OECDPublishing).

OECD. 2020. TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals. Paris: OECD. https://www.oecd.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., and Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators. *Learning Policy Institute*.

Pop, C. F. (2023). Promoting the well-being in the educational environment through the use of non-formal activities. *In This book is the outcome of the ESA RN 10 Mid-term Conference: Sociology of Education: Wellbeing and Resilience in the Times of Crisis that took place in Warsaw within the framework of EU-funded EDUCATORE project. (p. 81).*

Prendi, V., and Karçini, S. (2018, June). Albanian education system problems. In *Book of Proceedings* (p. 312).

Rajić, V., Višnjić-Jevtić, A., Odrowaz-Coates, A., Bradt, L., & Simut, C. (2024). Navigating Crises: Examining the Impact on Students in Four European Countries. Journal of Education for Life, 38(1), 24–36. https://doi.org/10.33308/26674874.2024381661

Ledia Kashahu (Xhelilaj),
Dilina Beshiri,
Kseanela Sotirofski

"Discourses of Students in Initial Teacher
Education: Perception of Mental Health
Knowledge and Its Impacts on Their Well-being"

Räsänen, K., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., Soini, T., and Väisänen, P. (2020). Why leave the teaching profession? A longitudinal approach to the prevalence and persistence of teacher turnover intentions. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*, 837-859.

Reinke, W. M., Stormont, M., Herman, K. C., Puri, R., and Goel, N. (2011). Supporting children's mental health in schools: Teacher perceptions of needs, roles, and barriers. *School psychology quarterly*, *26*(1), 1.

Renshaw, T. L. (2020). College student subjective wellbeing questionnaire (CSSWQ): Measure and user guide. Open Science Framework. https://osf.io/jydf4/

Reynolds, K. J., Lee, E., Turner, I., Bromhead, D., and Subasic, E. (2017). How does school climate impact academic achievement? An examination of social identity processes. *School Psychology International*, *38*(1), 78-97.

Rubach, C., Von Keyserlingk, L., Simpkins, S. D., and Eccles, J. S. (2022, February). Does Instructional Quality Impact Male and Female University Students Differently? Focusing on Academic Stress, Academic Satisfaction, and Mental Health Impairment. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 7, p. 2). Frontiers

Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52,* 141-166 in Kashahu, L., and Orzeł-Dereń, K. (2022). The concept of child well-being: Parenting and school. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development*, *9*(6).

Tolcher, K., Cauble, M., and Downs, A. (2022). Evaluating the effects of gratitude interventions on college student well-being. *Journal of American College Health*, 1-5.

Tran, N. T., Franzen, J., Jermann, F., Rudaz, S., Bondolfi, G., and Ghisletta, P. (2022). Psychological distress and well-being among students of health disciplines in Geneva, Switzerland: The importance of academic satisfaction in the context of academic year-end and COVID-19 stress on their learning experience. *Plos one*, *17*(4), e0266612.

Turner, S. M., Eisele, W. L., Benz, R. J., and Holdener, D. J. (1998). *Travel time data collection handbook* (No. FHWA-PL-98-035). United States. Federal Highway Administration.

UNESCO and UNICEF. (2021). *Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia*. Regional Synthesis Report https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379539

World Health Organization. (2004). *Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence, practice: Summary report*. World Health Organization.

115

Acknowledgments