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# Investigating the Effect of Occupational Well-Being on Job Boredom among Iraqi Physical Education Teachers: The Mediating Role of Motivational Beliefs

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of occupational well-being on job boredom among physical education teachers in Iraq, with the mediating role of motivational beliefs. This research is descriptive-correlational in nature and applied in purpose. The statistical population consisted of all physical education teachers in Iraq, totaling 25,642 individuals. Given the geographical dispersion of physical education teachers across the country, a sample of 384 teachers was selected using a multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data collection tools included the Occupational Well-Being Questionnaire by Salanova et al. (2015), the Job Boredom Questionnaire by Falman et al. (2013), and the Motivational Beliefs Questionnaire by Wang, Khoo, and Su (2010). Face and content validity of the questionnaires were confirmed by the academic supervisor, and their reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.95, 0.92, and 0.91 for occupational well-being, job boredom, and motivational beliefs, respectively. Data were analyzed using correlation coefficients, multiple regression analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM). All statistical analyses were conducted using PLS and SPSS software. The findings indicated that occupational well-being significantly affects the motivational beliefs of Iraqi physical education teachers, explaining 26.01% of the variance in motivational beliefs. Furthermore, motivational beliefs had a significant negative effect on job boredom, accounting for 18.31% of its variance. Additionally, occupational well-being showed a significant negative impact on job boredom, explaining 12.04% of the variance in job boredom.

**Keywords:** Occupational Well-Being, Job Boredom, Career Plateau, Iraqi Physical Education Teachers

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, growing attention has been paid to the occupational well-being of educators, particularly as it pertains to physical education (PE) teachers. Teaching is widely acknowledged as an emotionally and physically demanding profession, but PE teachers face additional stressors due to the dynamic, high-energy, and physically involved nature of their work. These stressors, if left unaddressed, can lead to adverse outcomes such as job boredom, disengagement, and decreased professional efficacy. Within this framework, occupational well-being is not merely an absence of distress, but a multidimensional construct encompassing job satisfaction, emotional vitality, work engagement, and a sense of purpose in one's professional role (Leka & Houdmont, 2020; Shultz, 2008). Consequently, examining the predictors and consequences of occupational well-being is essential to improving both teacher performance and student outcomes.

Occupational well-being is increasingly viewed as a central component of overall teacher effectiveness. The concept includes various psychological and contextual factors, such as autonomy, professional development opportunities, social support, and emotional regulation (Abkhiz & Mikaeli Manie, 2020; Collie et al., 2015). High levels of well-being contribute to teacher engagement and reduce the likelihood of professional burnout, emotional exhaustion, and attrition. For instance, research by (Chan et al., 2023) highlights the link between supportive teacher-student interactions and greater levels of occupational well-being, particularly among secondary school educators. Similarly, (Duong et al., 2023) found that leadership quality and institutional climate significantly influence teachers' psychological resilience and perceived well-being during crisis periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

PE teachers in particular face unique challenges that can influence their occupational well-being. Their professional tasks require constant physical activity, high social interaction, and adaptability to different environments. These demands often result in role overload and emotional fatigue, thereby increasing vulnerability to job boredom, which refers to a state of psychological disengagement, lack of stimulation, and diminished interest in work-related tasks (Harju et al., 2018; Moradi & Esmacili, 2020). Job boredom not only undermines teachers' enthusiasm but also impairs their cognitive functioning and reduces the quality of instruction delivered to students. (Abdoli & Zarei, 2024) showed that teachers experiencing persistent job boredom

are more likely to report reduced job satisfaction and a higher intention to leave their profession. As such, preventing and mitigating job boredom is a strategic priority in improving educational quality and institutional sustainability.

The phenomenon of job boredom has recently garnered scholarly interest in relation to motivational processes. It is theorized that when teachers' motivational beliefs—such as their sense of competence, intrinsic interest in teaching, and perceived task value—are undermined, their engagement diminishes and boredom sets in (Abedi et al., 2023; Rezaei & Norouzi, 2020). These beliefs serve as a psychological buffer against monotony and emotional fatigue. For instance, (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023) emphasized the role of self-efficacy and motivation in sustaining job satisfaction and reducing stress among teachers. Similarly, (Hoy et al., 2019) posits that teachers with strong motivational orientations are more resilient in the face of professional adversity. Thus, motivational beliefs may not only influence occupational well-being directly but also mediate its effect on job boredom.

Understanding the mediating role of motivational beliefs is particularly important in contexts like Iraq, where educators often work in under-resourced environments marked by political instability, administrative challenges, and lack of systemic support. In such settings, psychological constructs such as motivational beliefs may serve as internal resources that help teachers maintain professional purpose and emotional stability. (Soleimani & Rafiei, 2017) demonstrated that motivation mediates the relationship between occupational well-being and job performance among Iranian educators, while (Mattern & Bauer, 2022) emphasized the value of self-regulation as a mechanism for enhancing occupational well-being. Building on this body of literature, this study seeks to determine whether motivational beliefs can serve a similar mediating function for PE teachers in Iraq.

Theoretical perspectives support the possibility of such mediation. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model proposed by (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022), job resources such as perceived autonomy, support, and motivation help mitigate the adverse effects of job demands, including emotional exhaustion and boredom. In this model, occupational well-being emerges as an outcome of balanced job demands and resources, and motivational beliefs are considered key personal resources that reinforce well-being. When teachers have strong motivational beliefs, they are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful and

manageable, thus experiencing less boredom and disengagement. Research by (Parker & Hyett, 2011) also supports this notion by identifying well-being as a protective factor that sustains professional engagement even under challenging conditions.

Another dimension to consider is the relationship between individual characteristics and organizational context. (Karimianpour et al., 2022) found that job stagnation is influenced by personal traits such as resilience and locus of control, which in turn affect occupational well-being. Similarly, (Monjezi et al., 2023) employed structural equation modeling to show that psychological capital affects work engagement through the mediating role of well-being. These studies suggest that both individual and contextual variables play a role in shaping motivational orientations and subsequent job experiences.

In addition, educational leadership and classroom management are also essential in this equation. (Rostamzadeh et al., 2024) identified a positive correlation between transformational leadership and occupational well-being, mediated by technological literacy and classroom dynamics. Likewise, (Sepehvand et al., 2024) compared different educational strategies and found that those aligned with self-determination theory were more effective in promoting teacher well-being. In these models, motivation plays a crucial mediating role, emphasizing the need to strengthen motivational beliefs through institutional strategies such as professional development and participatory decision-making.

The empirical evidence also extends to the psychological and emotional dimensions of teaching. (Sahranavard Mafi & Ranjbar Nowshari, 2023) demonstrated the mediating role of organizational commitment in the link between psychological capital and well-being among teachers. Meanwhile, (Yazdi & Moradi, 2017) explored the negative effect of burnout on teaching quality and the protective role of occupational well-being. These findings highlight that while burnout and boredom are distinct constructs, they share similar antecedents and consequences, with motivational beliefs acting as a potential moderator or mediator in both processes.

Furthermore, cultural context matters when examining psychological constructs like well-being and motivation. (Alonso et al., 2019) emphasized the relevance of job crafting—either individually or collaboratively—in enhancing Spanish teachers' well-being, underscoring the importance of cultural adaptation of psychological strategies. Similarly, (Mohammadi & Karimi, 2018)

explored how organizational support systems influence well-being in physical education settings, offering insights relevant to the Iraqi context where institutional support may be limited or inconsistent.

Given the above considerations, this study aims to fill a critical gap by examining the effect of occupational well-being on job boredom among Iraqi PE teachers, with a specific focus on the mediating role of motivational beliefs.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was a descriptive-correlational investigation based on structural equation modeling (SEM), and in terms of purpose, it is categorized as applied research. The statistical population included all physical education teachers in Iraq, totaling 25,642 individuals. Given the geographic distribution of physical education teachers throughout Iraq, a sample of 384 teachers was selected through a multi-stage cluster random sampling method. Specifically, the cities of Samarra in the north, Baghdad in the center, Basra in the south, Al-Anbar in the west, and Baqubah in the east were selected. From these regions, 384 physical education teachers were chosen via multi-stage cluster sampling, and they completed the questionnaires either in printed or electronic form.

### 2.2. Measures

**Occupational Well-Being Questionnaire:** This questionnaire consists of 17 items and is designed to assess components of occupational well-being, including autonomy style, autonomy in scheduling, and autonomy criteria. The instrument uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Job Boredom Questionnaire:** Developed by Fahlman et al. (2013), this is the first comprehensive scale measuring the state of boredom. It contains 29 items and comprises five subscales. The total score, ranging from 29 to 203, provides an estimated level of psychological boredom experienced by the respondents. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of psychological boredom.

**Motivational Beliefs Questionnaire:** To measure intrinsic motivation among employees, the Intrinsic Motivation Questionnaire developed by Wang et al. (2010) was employed. This scale includes seven items related to motivation and is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The minimum

score is 7, and the maximum is 45. Higher scores reflect greater intrinsic motivation toward work.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

For data analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, multiple regression analysis, and structural equation modeling were used. All statistical analyses were performed using PLS and SPSS software.

## 3. Findings and Results

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables*

Statistics / Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Occupational Well-Being	57.62	5.86	31	71
Job Boredom	98.41	8.11	42	128
Motivational Beliefs	25.77	3.93	16	28

The relationships between the study variables in each hypothesis were tested using a causal structure via Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. The relationships between the main variables of the study are presented below. The t-

The demographic characteristics of the sample comprised 384 Iraqi physical education teachers. In terms of age, 20% (n = 78) were between 20 and 30 years old, 33% (n = 127) were between 31 and 40, 24% (n = 92) were between 41 and 50, and 23% (n = 87) were in the 51 to 60 age range. Regarding gender, the majority of participants were male (n = 216), while females constituted 168 of the sample. As for educational qualifications, 165 teachers (42%) held a bachelor's degree, 192 teachers (50%) had a master's degree, and 27 individuals (8%) held a doctoral degree.

statistics were used to assess the significance of the relationships.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Occupational well-being affects the motivational beliefs of Iraqi physical education teachers.

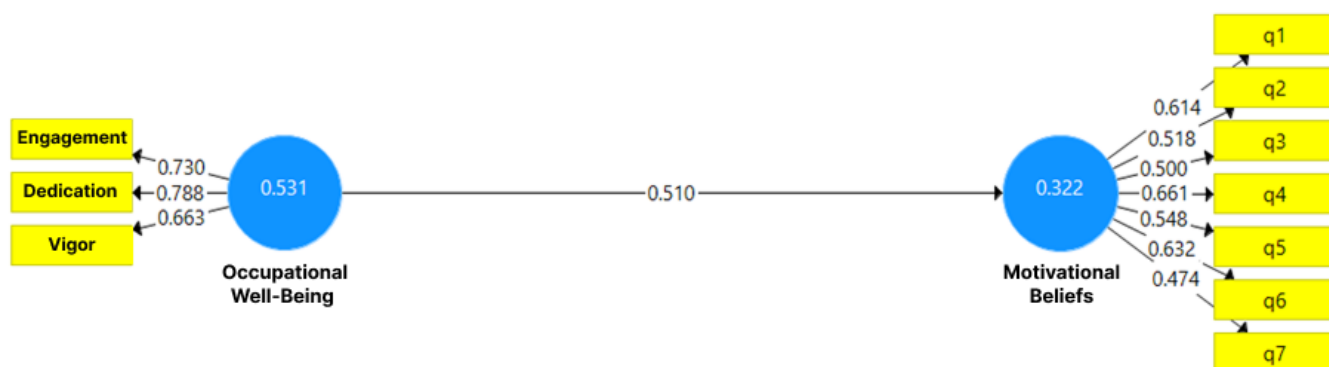
**Table 2**

*Path Coefficients for Hypothesis 1*

Path	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Significance Level (p-value)
Motivational Beliefs $\leftarrow$ Well-Being	0.510	13.668	0.000

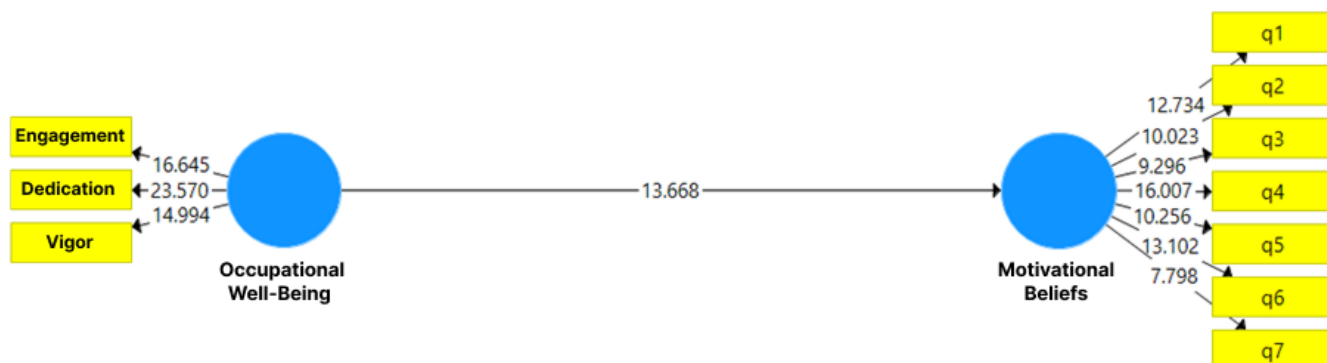
**Figure 1**

*Model for First Hypothesis with Factor Loadings*



**Figure 2**

*Model for First Hypothesis Significance Values*



The path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.510$ ) indicates that occupational well-being has a positive and significant effect on motivational beliefs. The t-value of 13.668 exceeds the critical value of 1.96, indicating statistical significance. The p-value = 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) confirms the hypothesis.

Additionally, the  $R^2$  value equals 26.01%, indicating that 26.01% of the variance in motivational beliefs is explained by occupational well-being.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Occupational well-being affects job boredom among Iraqi physical education teachers.

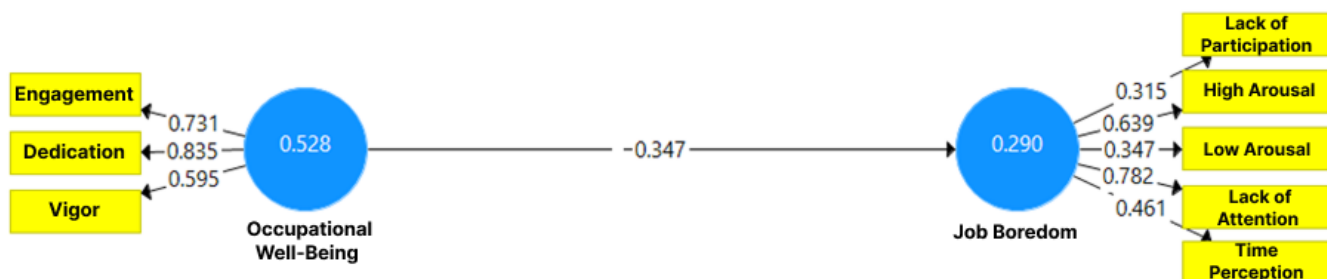
**Table 3**

*Path Coefficients for Hypothesis 2*

Path	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Significance Level (p-value)
Job Boredom $\leftarrow$ Well-Being	-0.347	8.179	0.000

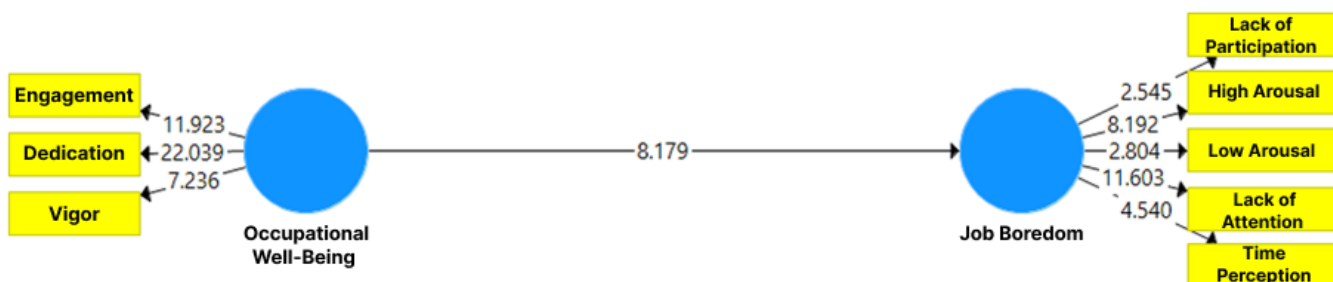
**Figure 3**

*Model for Second Hypothesis with Factor Loadings*



**Figure 4**

*Model for Second Hypothesis Significance Values*





The path coefficient ( $\beta = -0.347$ ) indicates that occupational well-being has a significant negative effect on job boredom. The  $t$ -value = 8.179 is greater than 1.96, confirming the significance of the relationship. The  $p$ -value = 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) supports the hypothesis. Moreover, the  $R^2$  value equals 12.04%, suggesting that occupational well-being explains 12.04% of the variance in job boredom.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Motivational beliefs mediate the causal relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom among Iraqi physical education teachers.

To test the mediating role of motivational beliefs in the causal relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom, the Sobel test was used. For this, the  $t$ -values of the structural equations were calculated.

As shown, the  $t$ -values are 2.711, 6.777, and 13.305, which all exceed the threshold of  $\pm 1.96$ , indicating that motivational beliefs play a mediating role in the relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom among Iraqi physical education teachers.

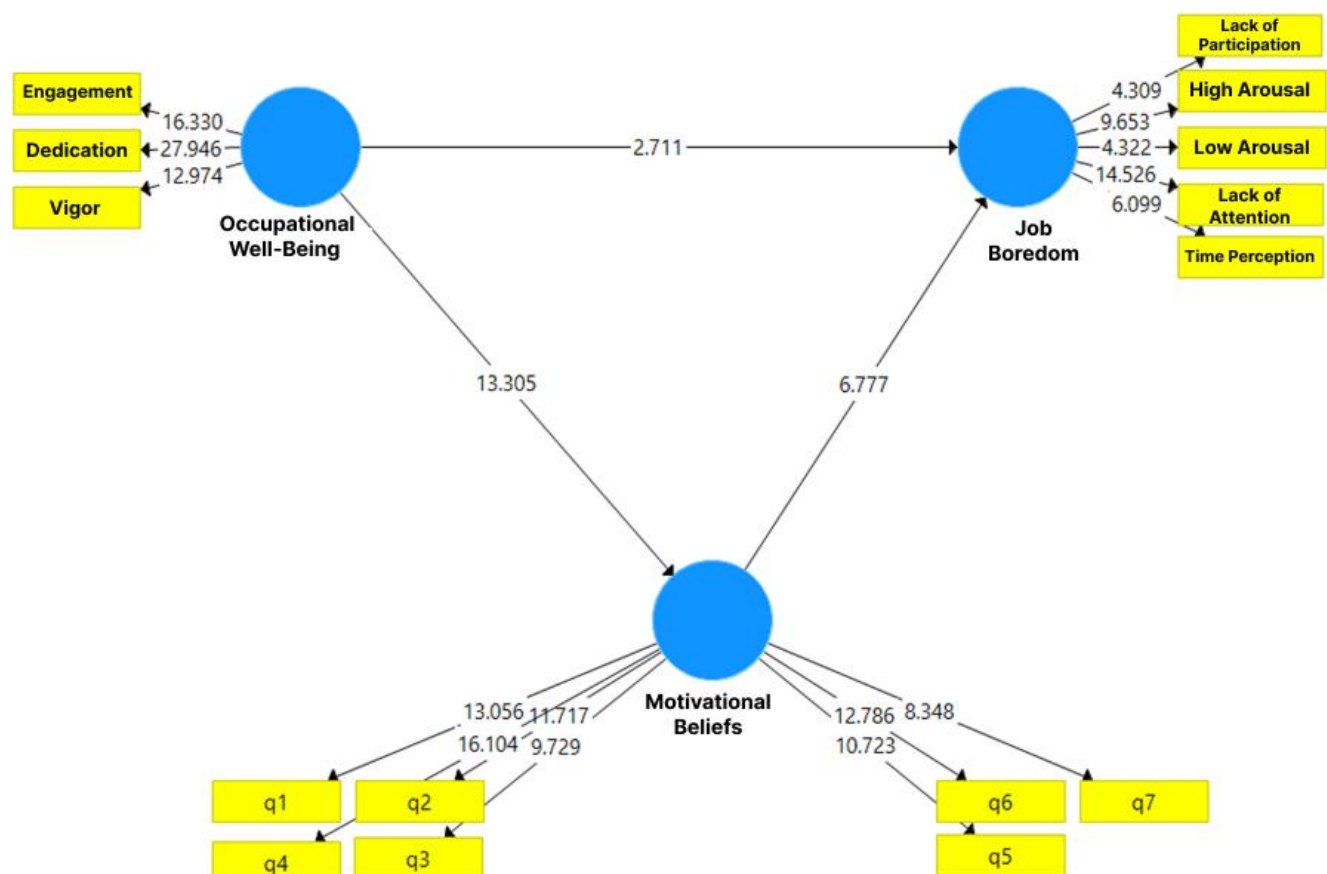
**Table 4**

*Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects Between Constructs*

From Construct	To Construct	Direct Effect (c) (sig)	Direct Effect (c') (sig)	Indirect Effect (b) (sig)	Total Effect (sig)
Occupational Well-Being	Job Boredom	0.132 (0.030)	0.008 (0.005)	0.003 (0.010)	0.140 (0.030)

**Figure 5**

*Model for Third Hypothesis*



Based on the data in the table above, the direct path coefficient between occupational well-being and job boredom ( $\beta = 0.13$ ) is significant. However, after including

the mediating variable (motivational beliefs), the direct effect ( $c'$ ) decreased and lost its significance. Additionally, the indirect effect between these two variables became

significant ( $\beta = 0.003$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that motivational beliefs mediate the causal relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom among Iraqi physical education teachers.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study provide empirical support for the proposed model that links occupational well-being to job boredom among Iraqi physical education teachers, with motivational beliefs playing a mediating role. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between occupational well-being and motivational beliefs, a significant negative relationship between motivational beliefs and job boredom, and a direct negative relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom. Additionally, the Sobel test confirmed that motivational beliefs significantly mediate the relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom. These findings offer valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying emotional disengagement in educational settings, particularly in the context of physical education teaching in Iraq.

The first hypothesis of the study, which posited a positive and significant relationship between occupational well-being and motivational beliefs, was confirmed by the data. Teachers who reported higher levels of occupational well-being also demonstrated stronger motivational beliefs. This finding aligns with previous literature emphasizing the role of well-being in enhancing psychological resources such as motivation, autonomy, and self-determination (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022; Sepehvand et al., 2024). The study by (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023) also supports this conclusion, suggesting that teachers who feel psychologically and emotionally supported are more likely to hold positive beliefs about their abilities, goals, and the value of their professional tasks. Similarly, (Mattern & Bauer, 2022) showed that self-regulated cognitive processes, which are closely tied to motivation, are strengthened when occupational well-being is high. In the context of physical education teachers, whose work often involves physical demands and dynamic environments, a high level of well-being appears to act as a psychological buffer that fosters motivational engagement and resilience.

The second hypothesis explored the direct negative relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom. The analysis showed that teachers with higher occupational well-being were significantly less likely to

report experiencing job boredom. This inverse relationship is supported by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job resources such as emotional vitality and autonomy reduce the impact of job demands like monotony and emotional exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022). In accordance with this theory, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of (Harju et al., 2018), who observed that higher levels of well-being were associated with decreased levels of boredom, particularly in emotionally labor-intensive roles. (Abkhiz & Mikaeli Manie, 2020) similarly emphasized that psychological well-being, particularly in the form of emotional engagement and satisfaction, plays a crucial role in buffering educators against the adverse effects of routine and stagnation. In PE contexts, where tasks may become repetitive or undervalued, occupational well-being appears to serve as a critical factor in preserving enthusiasm and attention.

The third hypothesis focused on the mediating role of motivational beliefs in the relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom. The findings confirmed that motivational beliefs partially mediate this relationship. That is, occupational well-being positively influences motivational beliefs, which in turn negatively influence job boredom. This finding is significant as it offers a more nuanced understanding of how psychological constructs interact to shape teachers' experiences. Prior research by (Rezaei & Norouzi, 2020) and (Abedi et al., 2023) supports this pathway, illustrating that motivational beliefs, such as perceived competence and intrinsic interest, serve as internal resources that help educators sustain engagement even in challenging environments. The theoretical contribution of this study is in line with the framework provided by (Parker & Hyett, 2011), which conceptualizes well-being not only as a static state but as an active agent in cultivating motivation, productivity, and satisfaction. The mediating role observed also echoes the findings of (Soleimani & Rafiei, 2017) and (Seyed Alitabar et al., 2022), who found that motivational constructs act as bridges between psychological factors and behavioral outcomes in educational settings.

These findings hold particular relevance in the Iraqi educational context, where institutional support systems are often weak or inconsistent due to systemic and sociopolitical challenges. The observed mediation effect of motivational beliefs suggests that even in under-resourced environments, fostering intrinsic motivation through targeted interventions may mitigate the negative outcomes associated with poor occupational well-being. The results corroborate the work of

(Mohammadi & Karimi, 2018), who demonstrated that perceived organizational support enhances well-being and decreases the likelihood of burnout among physical education teachers. Moreover, the finding is consistent with (Monjezi et al., 2023), who used structural equation modeling to demonstrate that psychological capital influences work engagement through the mediating role of well-being. In this study, motivational beliefs emerge as a parallel mediator with equally powerful implications.

Another important consideration involves the alignment between the current findings and cultural-contextual research. For example, (Alonso et al., 2019) found that collaborative job crafting and individualized approaches in Spanish educational settings improved teachers' psychological engagement and well-being. These parallels suggest that while cultural factors undoubtedly shape the educational experience, core psychological constructs such as motivation and well-being retain a degree of universality in their effects. Furthermore, (Rostamzadeh et al., 2024) highlighted the interplay between transformational leadership, technological literacy, and occupational well-being, reinforcing the need for system-wide interventions that consider both personal and organizational variables.

The relationship between occupational well-being and job boredom also finds indirect support in the literature addressing broader emotional and mental health outcomes. (Kidger et al., 2022) emphasized the role of depressive symptoms and stress in shaping teachers' classroom behavior and well-being. If left unaddressed, these psychological states may evolve into chronic boredom or emotional detachment. In this respect, the buffering role of motivational beliefs becomes even more vital. The work of (Leka & Houdmont, 2020) in occupational health psychology provides further evidence that psychological constructs such as motivation and engagement act as protective factors against burnout, dissatisfaction, and other forms of workplace malaise.

The findings also underscore the practical relevance of psychological capital and self-regulation as drivers of professional sustainability. (Sahranavard Mafi & Ranjbar Nowshari, 2023) found that psychological capital positively affects well-being and is further enhanced by organizational commitment. Similarly, (Yazdi & Moradi, 2017) observed that occupational well-being reduces job burnout, thus indirectly preserving teaching quality. In the current study, motivational beliefs performed a comparable function, suggesting that strengthening internal beliefs can enhance resilience, mitigate boredom, and promote a sense of

purpose. The research also echoes the work of (Duong et al., 2023), who emphasized that occupational well-being must be cultivated through a holistic framework that includes psychological, organizational, and contextual components.

Lastly, the mediating role of motivational beliefs in reducing job boredom suggests a targeted intervention point for policymakers and school administrators. By focusing on strengthening these beliefs—through professional development, mentoring, autonomy-supportive leadership, and resource allocation—educational institutions can enhance teacher engagement and effectiveness. The findings of (Collie et al., 2015) and (Hoy et al., 2019) support this approach, as both studies found that teachers' sense of efficacy and value alignment significantly influenced their emotional and cognitive engagement with teaching.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research design prevents causal inference. Although structural equation modeling can suggest directional relationships, longitudinal data would be required to confirm causality between occupational well-being, motivational beliefs, and job boredom. Second, the study relies exclusively on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or inaccurate recall. Third, the sample was limited to physical education teachers in Iraq, which limits the generalizability of the findings to teachers in other disciplines or cultural contexts. Moreover, the effects of organizational and institutional variables such as leadership styles, curriculum demands, and resource availability were not directly measured but could have confounding effects.

Future research should consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better establish causal relationships among the key variables. Investigating how motivational beliefs evolve over time in response to changes in occupational well-being would provide valuable insights. Additionally, future studies should explore the moderating roles of contextual factors such as school leadership, peer support, and professional development opportunities. Comparative studies across disciplines, educational levels, and countries could also enrich our understanding of how occupational well-being and motivation interact in different teaching environments. Finally, integrating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups may reveal deeper insights into the lived experiences of teachers coping with boredom and disengagement.

To translate these findings into practice, educational leaders should prioritize the enhancement of occupational well-being by creating supportive, inclusive, and engaging



work environments. Initiatives that build intrinsic motivation—such as autonomy-supportive teaching policies, goal-setting workshops, and recognition programs—could mitigate job boredom and enhance job satisfaction. Professional development programs should be designed to strengthen teachers' motivational beliefs and self-efficacy. Additionally, school systems should implement regular well-being assessments and provide psychological resources to support teachers' emotional resilience and engagement. These steps are essential to ensuring a sustainable and thriving educational workforce.

### Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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