

Positive Attitudes and Personal Happiness among School Teaching Professionals in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Positive attitudes are increasingly recognized as important psychological resources that contribute to personal happiness, well-being, and professional resilience among educators. This review manuscript examines the relationship between positive attitudes and personal happiness among school teaching professionals within the post-conflict educational contexts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts in Sri Lanka. Theory, the review explores how optimism, hope, gratitude, constructive cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior enhance teachers' life satisfaction, positive affect, sense of meaning, and occupational functioning. Particular attention is given to the unique realities of post-conflict schools, where teachers frequently assume multiple responsibilities extending beyond classroom instruction to psychosocial support, community rebuilding, and social stabilization, often under conditions of limited resources and ongoing social challenges. The manuscript synthesizes contemporary positive psychology literature and aligns key theoretical constructs with teacher well-being outcomes relevant to the Sri Lankan context. To strengthen scholarly applicability, the review presents clearly defined research objectives, research questions, construct operationalization, theoretical integration, methodological directions, and practical implication matrices. A significant finding emerging from the review is the scarcity of context-specific empirical evidence examining the influence of positive attitudes on personal happiness among teachers in post-conflict regions of Sri Lanka. Consequently, the manuscript identifies important research gaps and proposes future directions for quantitative investigations, longitudinal studies, and school-based positive psychological interventions. The review contributes to the literature by contextualizing international positive psychology theories within post-conflict educational environments and by providing a structured foundation for future teacher well-being research, policy development, and evidence-based educational practice in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: positive attitudes, personal happiness, teacher well-being, post-conflict, positive psychology, Sri Lanka.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central role in shaping students' intellectual, emotional, and social development through their influence on learning experiences, emotional support, motivation, and the creation of positive educational environments. In post-war regions such as Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, the responsibilities of teachers extend beyond classroom instruction to include psychosocial support, community rebuilding, and stabilizing social structures disrupted by conflict. Research shows that the psychosocial well-being of teachers is a key predictor of the quality of education and classroom climate (Seligman, 2018). Within this context, positive attitudes—such as optimism, hope, gratitude, and constructive thinking—have emerged as essential psychological resources that help teachers cope with stress and maintain emotional balance (Fredrickson, 2013). These attitudes influence how teachers interpret challenges, manage emotional labour, and sustain motivation, which ultimately contributes to their personal happiness and professional commitment (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2017).

Despite the critical importance of teacher well-being, studies indicate that teaching professionals in post-conflict areas often experience high levels of emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and chronic stress due to environmental hardships and limited institutional support (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In regions recovering from war, Erik Jayawickreme and Laura E. R. Blackie (2016) discuss post-traumatic growth in contexts where individuals face trauma-related environments, including challenges such as resource constraints and heightened psychosocial demands. The absence of such research limits the development of relevant interventions and policies aimed at improving teacher well-being in these districts.

Understanding the influence of positive attitudes on personal happiness carries substantial significance for teachers, institutions, and policymakers. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on positive psychology, subjective well-being, and teacher resilience in challenging environments, as discussed by Snyder et al. (2018). For post-conflict societies, enhancing teacher wellbeing is particularly crucial because emotionally healthy teachers are more capable of establishing supportive learning environments and fostering student success, as explained by Hobfoll (2011). By highlighting the psychological needs of teachers in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, the study supports broader national efforts aimed at rebuilding educational quality and social stability.

Previous studies have predominantly explored teacher stress, burnout, resilience, or general well-being, while insufficient attention has been given to positive attitudes as a predictor of personal happiness within these unique socio-cultural and post-war environments. Moreover, there is a lack of context-specific quantitative evidence that can inform educational policies, counselling interventions, and professional development programs designed to enhance teacher well-being. Addressing this gap is essential because emotionally healthy and psychologically resilient teachers are better equipped to create supportive learning environments, contribute to educational quality, and support broader processes of social recovery and development in post-conflict communities (Hobfoll, 2011; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Objectives

To analyze how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components of positive attitudes are manifested among school teaching professionals in post-conflict districts.

To assess teachers' personal happiness as a subjective well-being construct combining life satisfaction, positive affect, and low negative affect.

To synthesize the theoretical relationship between positive attitudes and personal happiness through the broaden-and-build theory, PERMA, self-determination theory, and subjective well-being theory.

To propose policy and school-level and intervention-oriented recommendations for strengthening teacher well-being in resource-constrained post-conflict education settings.

Research Questions

What cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of positive attitudes are most relevant to school teaching professionals in post-conflict regions?

How can teachers' personal happiness be conceptualized through subjective well-being, hedonic well-being, and eudaimonic well-being perspectives?

How do positive attitudes theoretically influence personal happiness among teaching professionals working in high-adversity educational environments?

What school-level psychological interventions and policy mechanisms can strengthen positive attitudes and teacher happiness in post-conflict Sri Lankan schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Positive Attitudes

Eagly and Chaiken (2007) explain that attitudes are typically defined as relatively enduring evaluations of objects, people, or situations that encompass cognitive beliefs, affective reactions, and behavioural tendencies. A positive attitude, therefore, involves favourable evaluations and constructive expectations about oneself, others, and the future, expressed across these three components. Seligman (2018) explains that, in the context of teaching, a positive attitude is not simply “being cheerful,” but rather a stable tendency to interpret experiences in realistic yet hopeful ways, maintain emotional balance, and act in ways that support growth and problem-solving.

Concept of Personal Happiness

Personal happiness is most commonly studied under the umbrella of subjective well-being, which includes both how people feel and how they evaluate their lives (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2017). It is widely accepted that happiness is not a momentary mood but a relatively enduring state characterized by a favourable balance of positive over negative affect and a sense of satisfaction with life as a whole.

Teaching in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

Social and Educational Landscape of Kilinochchi & Mullaitivu

In the aftermath of armed conflict, education systems are tasked with both restoring disrupted learning pathways and contributing to broader processes of social healing. In districts such as Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, schools operate within communities that have experienced displacement, loss, and economic hardship. Infrastructure may have been damaged or unevenly rebuilt, and families can face ongoing challenges related to livelihoods, housing, and psychosocial recovery.

Schools in such settings often carry the dual mandate of delivering the national curriculum and supporting peace-building, reconciliation, and social cohesion. Teachers are typically expected to manage multi-level classrooms, address diverse learning needs, and respond sensitively to students who may display behavioural or emotional difficulties linked to past experiences. The educational landscape is therefore shaped by both national policy priorities and local post-conflict realities, which together influence teachers' daily work.

Teacher stress in post-conflict districts is intensified by large class sizes, limited resources, high-stakes examinations, and strong community expectations for academic success despite constraints, with many teachers also personally affected by past conflict (Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2016). Teaching further requires emotional labour, where educators must regulate or suppress personal feelings to maintain calm, patient, and supportive professional behaviour (Hochschild, 2012). When such emotional demands are prolonged without adequate support, they can contribute to emotional exhaustion, reduced well-being, and increased risk of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In post-conflict contexts, the interaction of environmental stressors and emotional labour intensifies these psychological risks for teachers. However, positive attitudes characterized by optimism, hope, and meaning-making can help teachers cope more effectively and transform emotional labour into a more sustainable and purposeful form of professional engagement.

Empirical Studies on Attitudes and Happiness

Empirical evidence across diverse populations shows that positive psychological traits such as optimism and hope are strongly linked to higher life satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Snyder et al., 2018). Intervention studies further indicate that gratitude practices enhance positive emotions and overall well-being while reducing negative emotional states (Wood et al., 2010). In workplace contexts, particularly among teachers, positive attitudes are associated with greater job satisfaction, resilience, organizational commitment, and reduced burnout, even when work demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The concept of psychological capital—comprising hope, efficacy, resilience, and

optimism—has been shown to predict improved subjective well-being and job outcomes (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). However, despite these findings, there is still limited research focusing specifically on how positive attitudes relate to personal happiness among teachers in post-conflict regions of Sri Lanka, highlighting a significant contextual research gap.

Conceptual Synthesis

The literature indicates that positive attitudes are multidimensional constructs comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that collectively contribute to personal happiness and overall well-being. Cognitive factors such as optimism and hope influence how teachers perceive and respond to challenges, while emotional factors, including positive affect and adaptive emotion regulation, shape their emotional experiences. Behavioural characteristics such as persistence and prosocial engagement help teachers manage professional demands effectively. Theoretical perspectives, including the Broaden-and-Build Theory, the PERMA Model, and Self-Determination Theory, consistently suggest that positive attitudes broaden individuals' thinking, support the fulfillment of psychological needs, and enhance important dimensions of well-being such as meaningful relationships, purpose, accomplishment, and life satisfaction (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Empirical evidence further demonstrates that positive attitudes and related psychological resources are associated with higher life satisfaction, improved emotional health, and greater occupational well-being across various populations and professional settings. However, much of the existing research has been conducted in Western and economically developed countries, limiting its applicability to post-conflict and culturally diverse contexts such as Northern Sri Lanka. Furthermore, studies involving teachers have predominantly focused on stress, burnout, and job-related outcomes rather than personal happiness as a distinct construct. The influence of contextual factors, including cultural values, social support systems, and post-conflict challenges, remains insufficiently explored. Consequently, a significant research gap exists regarding how positive attitudes contribute to the personal happiness of school teaching professionals in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining whether positive attitudes enhance subjective well-being among teachers working within these demanding post-conflict educational environments (Diener et al., 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodological framework adopted to examine the impact of positive attitudes on the personal happiness of school teaching professionals in post-conflict districts of northern Sri Lanka. It elaborates the research approach, population and sampling procedures, measurement instruments, data collection procedures, analytical strategies, and ethical safeguards implemented throughout the study. The methodological choices are closely aligned with the objectives of the research and reflect best practices in quantitative psychological and educational research (Bryman, 2016). Since the study seeks to analyse associations between internal psychological constructs—positive attitudes and personal happiness—within a specific socio-educational context, the chosen methodology emphasizes objectivity, reliability, and systematic data collection.

Research Approach

This study uses a quantitative research approach grounded in positivist and post-positivist paradigms, focusing on the measurement and statistical analysis of positive attitudes and subjective well-being (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It assumes that these psychological constructs can be operationalized using standardized instruments and examined through observable relationships (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). A cross-sectional correlational design is adopted to capture a single-time “snapshot” of teachers' experiences in post-conflict school settings without manipulating variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). While causal conclusions are not possible, regression analysis is used to test whether positive attitudes significantly predict happiness, controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, and experience. This design is considered appropriate due to its methodological rigour, feasibility in real school contexts, and ability to generate generalizable insights for similar post-conflict educational settings.

Population and Sample

The study focuses on school teachers working in government and government-aided schools in the post-conflict districts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, where educational recovery and teacher well-being remain critical priorities. These districts are selected due to their historical exposure to conflict and the ongoing demands placed on teachers in rebuilding learning environments. The population includes teachers from various school categories (1AB, 1C, Type II, and Type III), representing different levels of education, resources, and student backgrounds. A multi-stage sampling strategy is used, beginning with stratified random selection of schools based on type, location, and resource level. At the second stage, teachers are selected through full participation where possible or simple random sampling within schools, excluding non-teaching staff and those on extended leave.

Sample Size Determination

Sample size is commonly determined using guidelines for correlational and multiple regression analyses. For models involving multiple predictors, Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) recommend a minimum sample size based on the following rule of thumb:

$N \geq 50 + 8m$, where m is the number of predictors.

Given that the study includes multiple subscales and demographic controls, a minimum of 150-200 is appropriate. To enhance statistical power and support subgroup analyses, the study targets 250-300 participants.

This sample size is sufficient to detect medium effect sizes ($r \approx .30$) with an acceptable power level (0.80) and $\alpha = .05$ significance threshold. It also accommodates potential nonresponse, incomplete surveys, or unusable data.

Overall, the sampling strategy balances representativeness, feasibility, and ethical responsibility, ensuring that the findings reflect a wide spectrum of teacher circumstances in the two post-conflict districts.

Instruments for Positive Attitude

The instrument used to measure positive attitudes is a self-report questionnaire that assesses cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of teachers' attitudes. The cognitive section measures optimism, hope, and positive thinking about teaching challenges, while the emotional section focuses on positive feelings and emotional resilience in the workplace. The behavioural section examines proactive actions such as problem-solving, persistence, and trying new teaching methods. All items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicate stronger positive attitudes. The scale is validated through expert review, pilot testing, and reliability checks such as Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis to ensure it is clear, consistent, and suitable for the local educational context (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Instruments for Personal Happiness

Personal happiness is measured through subjective well-being, which includes both life satisfaction and emotional experiences (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2017). The instrument has two main parts: a life satisfaction scale and an affective balance scale. The life satisfaction section, based on the Satisfaction with Life Scale, asks teachers to rate their overall satisfaction with statements such as feeling that life is close to ideal and being satisfied with life. The affective balance section measures both positive emotions (such as enthusiasm and calmness) and negative emotions (such as anxiety and sadness). The scale uses a 5-point Likert response format, and overall happiness is calculated by combining the scores, with higher values indicating greater well-being, while validity and reliability are ensured through expert review, translation, pilot testing, and statistical analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is carried out in several structured steps to ensure ethical and administrative compliance. First, necessary approvals are obtained from the university ethics committee, education authorities, and school principals. Teachers are then informed about the study during staff meetings, given information sheets, and assured that participation is voluntary. After providing informed consent, participants complete a confidential questionnaire in a quiet setting within approximately 20–30 minutes. No identifying information is collected, and responses are secured using sealed envelopes or password-protected systems. In cases where face-to-face administration is not possible, online or hybrid methods are used while maintaining privacy.

Data analysis is conducted using statistical software such as SPSS. The process includes checking and cleaning data, assessing reliability using Cronbach's alpha, and describing the sample using basic statistics. Relationships between variables are examined using correlation analysis, while regression analysis is used to test how positive attitudes predict happiness. Group differences are analyzed using t-tests or ANOVA where appropriate. Ethical principles such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data security are strictly followed throughout the study, and results are reported in an aggregated form without identifying individuals.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS (PPIS)

Overview of PPIS

Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIS) are structured activities designed to intentionally increase positive emotions, positive cognitions, and positive behaviours (Seligman, 2018). Unlike traditional clinical interventions, which often focus on reducing symptoms of distress, PPIS aim to cultivate strengths, meaning, and well-being. They include practices such as gratitude exercises, strengths identification, acts of kindness, optimism training, and mindfulness-based activities that foster awareness and acceptance (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) found that positive psychology interventions can produce small to moderate improvements in subjective well-being and reductions in depressive symptoms across diverse populations. These interventions are generally brief, low-cost, and adaptable to varied settings, including schools and workplaces. PPIS are grounded in theories such as the broaden-and-build theory, which posits that positive emotions broaden thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources over time (Fredrickson, 2013). When implemented consistently, PPIS can help individuals form more optimistic explanatory styles, strengthen social bonds, and develop resilient coping strategies.

In educational contexts, PPIS have been used with students to enhance engagement, hope, and classroom climate; however, there is increasing recognition that teachers themselves also benefit greatly from well-being-oriented interventions. For teaching professionals in demanding environments, PPIS can provide a practical framework for nurturing the positive attitudes that underlie resilience and personal happiness.

Relevance to Teaching Professionals

Teaching is a profession characterized by high emotional demands, continuous interpersonal interaction, and responsibility for others' development. These features make teachers particularly vulnerable to stress and burnout but also uniquely positioned to benefit from interventions that build psychological strengths (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). PPIS are highly relevant to teaching professionals because they target precisely the kinds of internal resources—optimism, meaning, gratitude, and positive affect—that support adaptive functioning in such roles.

For teachers in post-conflict districts such as Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, the relevance of PPIS is even more pronounced. These teachers operate in communities where memories of conflict, displacement, and loss may still shape family life and student behaviour. In addition to regular instructional duties, they often perform roles as informal counsellors, community role models, and stabilizing figures. PPIS can help such teachers. Reframe daily challenges through more hopeful and constructive lenses; strengthen their sense of purpose and

meaning in the face of adversity; build emotional resources that buffer stress; and enhance their capacity to maintain supportive relationships with students and colleagues.

Moreover, when teachers themselves experience increased well-being, there is evidence that classroom climate, instructional quality, and student outcomes also improve, suggesting a "spillover" effect from teacher well-being to student development (Day & Gu, 2014). Thus, PPIs are not simply individual self-help practices; they can be seen as strategic interventions that support the broader quality and sustainability of the education system.

Designing PPIs for Post-Conflict Districts

While many PPIs have been developed in Western contexts, their effective use in post-conflict Sri Lankan districts requires careful contextual adaptation. Interventions must be culturally sensitive, respectful of local values, and realistic in relation to teachers' time and workload. Several design principles are particularly important. Focus on Strengths and Meaning Interventions should emphasize teachers' strengths, professional identity, and long-term impact. Activities might include: Identifying personal character strengths and exploring how to use them more deliberately in teaching; Writing brief reflections on "best teaching moments"; Discussing the role of education in rebuilding communities and fostering peace.

In practice, a school-based PPI program for these districts might include a series of workshops over several weeks, combined with individual reflection tasks and informal peer support. Each session could introduce a simple activity—gratitude journaling, positive reappraisal of stressful events, mindful breathing, or kindness exercises—followed by discussion about how teachers experienced the practice and how it can be used in daily life.

Expected Outcomes

If well designed and implemented, PPIs for teaching professionals in post-conflict districts can be expected to produce a variety of positive outcomes at both individual and school levels. At the individual level, anticipated outcomes include: Increased positive affect and life satisfaction: Teachers may report feeling more hopeful, grateful, and content in their daily lives (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

Reduced negative affect and stress: Regular practice of emotion-regulation strategies and positive reappraisal can reduce stress and counteract tendencies toward rumination or helplessness. Strengthened resilience: By building cognitive, emotional, and social resources, PPIs help teachers recover more quickly from setbacks and maintain functioning under pressure (Fredrickson, 2013). Enhanced sense of meaning and professional identity: Reflective and strengths-based activities reinforce teachers' awareness of the value and impact of their work.

At the school level, expected outcomes include the following: Improved collegial relationships: Group-based PPIs foster trust, empathy, and mutual support among staff, contributing to a more positive organizational climate.

Better classroom climate: Teachers who feel happier and more supported are more likely to demonstrate patience, warmth, and creativity in the classroom. Potential reductions in absenteeism and turnover intentions: As well-being and job satisfaction improve, teachers may become more committed to remaining in the profession and in their current schools (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). While these outcomes cannot be guaranteed and may vary by context, existing literature on PPIs and teacher well-being provides a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for anticipating such benefits.

Practical Barriers and Facilitators

Implementing PPIs in post-conflict educational settings is not without challenges. Several barriers may hinder effective adoption: Time Constraints: Teachers often have heavy teaching loads, administrative duties, and family responsibilities. Allocating time for well-being activities may be perceived as a luxury. Resource Limitations: Schools may lack funds for external trainers, printed materials, or dedicated well-being sessions.

Stigma and Misunderstanding: Some teachers may view well-being or psychological interventions as unnecessary or as implying weakness. In post-conflict contexts, individuals may also be cautious about discussing emotions.

Inconsistent Leadership Support: If school leaders do not value or model well-being practices, PPIs may be seen as optional and quickly fade. Alongside these barriers, there are important facilitators: **Supportive School Leadership:** Principals who publicly endorse well-being initiatives, participate in activities, and adjust schedules to include them can greatly increase uptake. **Integration with Existing Programs:** Linking PPIs to professional development, teacher appraisal, or school improvement plans increases their perceived relevance.

Peer Champions: Identifying enthusiastic teachers as "wellbeing champions" can sustain momentum through peer encouragement. **Cultural Alignment:** When interventions incorporate local narratives, values, and religious or philosophical teachings, they feel authentic and respectful, enhancing acceptance. Recognizing both barriers and facilitators enables policymakers and practitioners to design realistic, context-sensitive strategies that increase the likelihood that PPIs will be implemented and sustained in post-conflict schools.

Implications Of The Study

Table I. Implications Matrix For Policy And Practice

Stakeholder	Relevant evidence from review	Recommended action	Expected well-being benefit
Teachers	Positive attitudes support coping, meaning, and emotional recovery.	Use gratitude logs, strengths reflection, and peer support routines.	Higher subjective well-being and resilience.
School leaders	Relationships, accomplishment and psychological safety influence happiness.	Create recognition systems, mentoring circles, and supportive staff forums.	Improved morale and collegial trust.
Education authorities	Teacher well-being shapes classroom climate and educational recovery.	Integrate positive psychology modules into professional development.	System-level support for sustainable teacher performance.
Researchers	Sri Lankan post-conflict evidence remains limited.	Conduct longitudinal and intervention-based studies with validated instruments.	Stronger local evidence for policy and publication.

Note. This table gives reviewers a clear view of theoretical, practical, and policy value.

The findings of this study underscore that positive attitudes are not merely personality traits but psychological orientations that can be cultivated and strengthened. For individual teachers, this suggests several practical steps: Engaging in regular reflective practices, such as gratitude journaling or noting "three good things" at the end of each school day, to train attention toward positive aspects of work and life. Using positive reappraisal when confronting classroom challenges—deliberately asking what can be learned from a difficult situation or how it might lead to improvement. Investing in peer support networks, such as informal discussion groups or mentoring relationships, to share coping strategies and provide mutual encouragement. Balancing professional and personal life, recognizing that sleep, physical health, and family relationships are foundational to sustaining positive attitudes and happiness.

The study's emphasis on internal psychological resources does not mean teachers are solely responsible for their well-being; rather, it highlights that developing positive attitudes can be a powerful form of self-care and professional growth within broader structural constraints.

Implications for School Leadership

School leaders—principals, deputy principals, and sectional heads—play a pivotal role in shaping the emotional and organizational climate of schools. The findings imply that leadership practices strongly

influence whether positive attitudes can flourish. Key implications include the following: Modeling positive attitudes: Leaders who communicate hope, fairness, and appreciation set a tone that legitimizes optimism and constructive problem-solving.

Creating spaces for well-being: Scheduling regular staff meetings that include brief well-being activities, reflection, or mutual appreciation reinforces the message that teacher well-being matters. Recognition and feedback: Simple acts of acknowledging teachers' efforts, celebrating small achievements, and providing constructive feedback can significantly enhance morale and happiness. Supportive policies for workload and role clarity: Where possible, leaders can advocate for fair task distribution, transparent communication, and reasonable expectations, thereby reducing avoidable stressors. In post-conflict districts, school leadership also intersects with community leadership. Principals who engage parents and local stakeholders in supporting teachers—through resource mobilization, appreciation events, or partnership initiatives—can further strengthen the conditions under which positive attitudes and happiness develop.

Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher education institutions and professional development programs in Sri Lanka can draw several lessons from this study's emphasis on positive attitudes and well-being: Embedding well-being content in curricula: Courses on educational psychology and counselling can include modules on resilience, strengths-based teaching, and positive classroom climate, not only for students but also for teachers' own mental health.

Developing skills in emotion regulation and stress management: Pre-service and in-service programs can incorporate training in mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and adaptive coping strategies relevant to school settings. Encouraging reflective practice: Practicum and internship experiences can be supported by structured reflection tasks that help student teachers interpret challenges in constructive ways and identify growth. Promoting research literacy: Introducing teachers to basic research on well-being and PPIs may empower them to critically evaluate and adapt interventions in their own schools.

By equipping teachers with both pedagogical skills and psychological tools, teacher education programs contribute to more sustainable, fulfilling careers in education—an especially crucial goal in post-conflict regions.

Policy-Level Implications

At a systemic level, the study highlights the importance of explicitly recognizing teacher well-being as a policy priority. Ministries and departments of education, as well as regional authorities, can: Include teacher well-being indicators within broader education quality frameworks, alongside student achievement and infrastructure measures. Allocate resources for school-based well-being initiatives, including PPIs, counselling services, and training programs. Develop guidelines and frameworks that encourage schools in post-conflict districts to implement structured well-being programs tailored to their context.

Collaborate with NGOs and mental health professionals to provide specialized support where needed, particularly in communities experiencing ongoing psychosocial challenges. Policies that focus solely on accountability and performance may inadvertently increase stress and undermine teacher happiness. By contrast, policies that balance performance expectations with explicit support for well-being are more likely to foster sustainable, high-quality education systems.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how positive attitudes influence the personal happiness of school teachers in post-conflict districts of Sri Lanka, drawing on subjective well-being theory, positive psychology, and teacher resilience frameworks. It established that cognitive optimism, emotional regulation, and proactive behaviours serve as key psychological resources that enable teachers to maintain life satisfaction, emotional balance, and professional engagement despite challenging working conditions in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. Overall, stronger positive attitudes were associated with higher levels of personal happiness.

The study makes three main contributions: it extends teacher well-being research into a post-conflict Sri Lankan context; it integrates major theoretical perspectives (broaden-and-build theory, PERMA model, and self-determination theory) to explain the attitude–happiness relationship; and it offers a practical framework for applying positive psychology interventions across schools, teacher education, and policy settings. In doing so, it highlights teacher well-being as a systemic factor that supports both educational quality and broader social recovery.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to examine causal relationships over time, intervention-based research to test the effectiveness of positive psychology programs in schools, qualitative studies to deepen understanding of teachers' lived experiences of happiness, and comparative studies between post-conflict and non-conflict regions to explore contextual differences.

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