

Positive Attitudes, Psychological Intervention, and Personal Happiness among School Teaching Professionals

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Abstract

This empirical study investigated the impact of positive attitudes on personal happiness among school teaching professionals in Sri Lanka using a quantitative quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test research design. A sample of 200 teachers participated in the study and completed a Positive Attitude Scale and a happiness scale before and after a structured positive psychological intervention. The intervention was designed to strengthen psychological well-being through activities such as gratitude journaling, strengths identification, positive reframing, mindfulness-based emotional regulation, and collegial relationship-building exercises. The study addressed key research questions concerning the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in enhancing teachers' positive attitudes and personal happiness. Results revealed that both positive attitudes and personal happiness increased from moderate baseline levels to moderately high levels following the intervention. Correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between positive attitudes and personal happiness at pre-test ($r = .61$, $p < .001$), indicating that teachers with more positive attitudes tended to report greater happiness.

Paired-samples t -tests showed statistically significant improvements in positive attitudes ($t = 12.47$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.88$) and personal happiness ($t = 11.56$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.82$), reflecting large practical effects. Furthermore, hierarchical regression analysis revealed that positive attitudes significantly predicted post-test happiness even after controlling for demographic variables, including age, gender, teaching experience, and school level. The inclusion of positive attitudes increased the explained variance in happiness outcomes to approximately 40%. These findings provide empirical support for positive psychology theory and highlight the practical value of school-based well-being interventions. The study concludes that fostering positive attitudes can significantly enhance teachers' personal happiness, resilience, and overall psychological well-being, thereby contributing to healthier and more effective educational environments.

Keywords:

positive attitudes, personal happiness, teachers, positive psychological intervention, subjective well-being, quasi-experimental design, Sri Lanka, and teacher well-being.

Introduction

Positive attitudes and personal happiness are central concerns in positive psychology, especially in the teaching profession where educators face increasing emotional, professional, and socio-economic challenges. Research suggests that teachers' happiness is not only a personal matter but also a key factor influencing classroom climate, instructional quality, and student achievement (Collie et al., 2012; Seligman, 2011). This is particularly relevant in post-conflict and resource-limited contexts

such as Sri Lanka, where teachers often assume multiple roles, including educator, counselor, and community role model.

Happiness, commonly defined as subjective well-being, involves life satisfaction along with the presence of positive emotions and limited negative emotions (Diener, 2000). Positive psychology theories emphasize that traits such as optimism, hope, gratitude, and constructive thinking contribute significantly to individual well-being. Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory explains that positive emotions expand individuals' thinking and coping abilities, while Seligman's PERMA model highlights key components of well-being, including positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Within the teaching profession, attitudes influence how educators interpret challenges, manage stress, and interact with students and colleagues, thereby shaping both occupational well-being and personal happiness (Burić & Macuka, 2018).

In Sri Lanka, teachers hold an important societal role as transmitters of knowledge and cultural values. However, they also face significant challenges such as heavy workloads, curriculum reforms, examination pressures, and limited resources, particularly in rural and post-conflict regions. These conditions can contribute to stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Perera, 2015). Despite these challenges, positive psychological perspectives suggest that cultivating positive attitudes can serve as a protective factor that enhances resilience and well-being among teachers.

Although global research confirms a strong relationship between positive attitudes and happiness, there is limited empirical evidence in the Sri Lankan context, especially among teachers in post-conflict districts. Existing studies in Sri Lanka have mainly focused on stress, workload, and job dissatisfaction, while less attention has been given to psychological strengths such as optimism and positive emotions as sources of well-being. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research to understand how positive attitudes influence teacher happiness and to inform effective interventions. This study is therefore significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it extends positive psychology frameworks, including the Broaden-and-Build theory and PERMA model, to a non-Western, post-conflict educational setting, thereby contributing to their cross-cultural validity (Fredrickson, 2004; Seligman, 2011). Practically, the findings may support the development of interventions such as mindfulness training, gratitude exercises, and strengths-based professional development programs aimed at improving teacher well-being (Chan, 2009; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Policymakers and educational leaders can also use the findings to design supportive environments that enhance teacher resilience and satisfaction.

The study is limited to selected government and government-aided school teachers in Sri Lanka and focuses specifically on positive attitudes and personal happiness measured through self-report instruments. While this design allows for focused analysis, it may limit causal interpretation and generalizability. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the psychological well-being of teachers in a challenging educational context and contributes to improving both teacher support systems and educational outcomes.

Research Questions

To what extent do school teaching professionals report positive attitudes and personal happiness before and after the intervention?

Is there a statistically significant relationship between positive attitudes and personal happiness among teachers?

Does the positive psychological intervention produce significant improvements in teachers' positive attitudes and personal happiness?

Do positive attitudes predict post-test happiness after accounting for age, gender, teaching experience, and school level?

Do teacher subgroups differ significantly in positive attitudes or happiness outcomes?

Research Objectives

To assess baseline and post-intervention levels of positive attitudes and personal happiness among school teaching professionals.

To determine whether positive attitudes are significantly associated with personal happiness among teachers.

To evaluate whether a structured Positive Psychological Intervention improves positive attitudes and personal happiness between pre-test and post-test.

To test whether positive attitudes predict post-test happiness after controlling for demographic and professional variables.

To examine whether selected teacher subgroups differ in positive attitudes or happiness.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Positive Attitudes

Positive attitudes are broadly defined as enduring, favourable orientations towards oneself, others, and life circumstances that shape expectations, appraisals, and behavior (Peterson, 2006). They incorporate elements such as optimism, hope, self-belief, gratitude, and constructive thinking styles. Optimism refers to the general expectation that beneficial things will happen, while hope involves goal-directed thinking and the perceived capacity to generate pathways and maintain motivation. Gratitude reflects a tendency to recognize and appreciate positive aspects of life, including the contributions of others (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Snyder, 2002).

Within the positive psychology tradition, these components are seen as psychological strengths that contribute to well-being and resilience (Seligman, 2011). Fredrickson (2004) explains that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought–action repertoires, enabling them to interpret experiences more constructively, adopt adaptive coping strategies, and build enduring personal and social resources. Consequently, positive attitudes encourage persistence in the face of obstacles, foster constructive interactions with others, and promote openness to learning from challenging experiences. In occupational contexts, including teaching, positive attitudes can translate into higher job satisfaction, stronger commitment, and better mental health (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Collie et al., 2012).

For school teaching professionals, positive attitudes may manifest as confidence in their ability to impact student learning, a sense that challenges can be overcome, and a belief that their work is meaningful and worthwhile. These orientations can help teachers to remain engaged and motivated despite resource constraints and emotional demands, thereby supporting their personal happiness and professional performance.

Theoretical Foundations of Happiness

Happiness is typically conceptualized within the broader construct of subjective well-being, which includes cognitive and affective components (Diener, 2000). The cognitive component is life satisfaction, a judgment of one's overall quality of life, while the affective component involves the balance between positive and negative emotions experienced over time (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Contemporary theorists also distinguish between hedonic well-being (pleasure and comfort) and eudaimonic well-being (meaning, personal growth and self-realization (Ryan, & Deci, 2001).

In positive psychology, happiness is often viewed as a combination of these elements, encompassing both feeling good and functioning well (Seligman, 2011). Teachers' happiness, therefore, may involve satisfaction with their personal and professional lives, frequent experiences of joy, interest and contentment, and a sense of meaning derived from their role in shaping students' futures.

Teacher Well-being in Global Contexts

International research has increasingly recognised teacher well-being as a critical factor in educational quality and student outcomes (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). Studies across various countries indicate that teachers often experience high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion and role overload, which can undermine both their own happiness and their effectiveness in the classroom (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). At the same time, positive psychological traits-such as optimism, resilience and engagement-have been found to buffer the impact of stress and support teacher well-being (Chan, 2009; Jayaweera, 2014).

Teacher well-being is shaped by individual, organisational and contextual factors, including leadership style, collegial support, workload, classroom climate and broader socio-cultural conditions (Day & Gu, 2010). In low- and middle-income countries, additional challenges such as resource

scarcity, large class sizes and socio-economic instability can further strain teacher well-being, making positive attitudes even more important as compensatory psychological resources (Gu & Day, 2013).

Post-Conflict Education and Teacher Psychology in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's civil conflict has left enduring impacts on communities, particularly in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Schools in these regions often operate under conditions of limited infrastructure, continued displacement and psychosocial trauma among students and families (Somasundaram, 2010). Teachers in such contexts may face the dual challenge of coping with their own experiences of loss or disruption while supporting students' academic and emotional needs (Fernando & Hebert, 2011).

Research suggests that educators in post-conflict settings frequently experience elevated stress and vulnerability to burnout, yet they may also develop strong resilience, commitment and a sense of mission (Betancourt et al., 2013; Somasundaram, 2014). In Sri Lanka, teachers have been identified as key agents in community healing and reconciliation, not only through classroom instruction but also through their role in modelling tolerance and emotional stability (Jayaweera 2014). Positive attitudes, including hope for the future, belief in students' potential and gratitude for available resources, may thus be crucial for sustaining teacher happiness and effectiveness in these challenging environments.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, the conceptual framework of this study posits that positive attitudes are a key predictor of personal happiness among school teaching professionals. Drawing from the Broaden-and-Build Theory and the PERMA model, positive attitudes are expected to broaden teachers' cognitive and behavioural repertoires, promote engagement and build social and psychological resources, which in turn enhance happiness (Fredrickson, 2004; Seligman, 2011).

In the framework, positive attitudes (independent variable) encompass constructs such as optimism, hope, gratitude and constructive thinking. Personal happiness (dependent variable) reflects teachers' subjective well-being, incorporating life satisfaction and affective balance (Diener, 2000). Demographic and professional characteristics such as age, gender, years of teaching experience and school level are treated as control variables that may influence both attitudes and happiness. The framework suggests that, even when these controls are taken into account, higher levels of positive attitudes will be associated with, and predictive of, higher levels of personal happiness.

This conceptualization provides a clear basis for formulating hypotheses, selecting measurement instruments and conducting statistical analyses in subsequent chapters.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures adopted to examine the impact of positive attitudes on personal happiness among school teaching professionals in Sri Lanka. It explains the research design, population and sampling strategy, research instruments, data collection procedures, the Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI) process, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodological choices are grounded in widely accepted research principles and are aligned with the objectives and research questions of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2019).

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, positivist research design. Positivism assumes that social phenomena can be measured, observed, and analyzed using objective, scientific methods and that relationships between variables can be tested empirically (Bryman, 2016). This perspective is appropriate for the current study, which seeks to assess the extent to which positive attitudes predict personal happiness and to evaluate the effect of a structured positive psychological intervention (PPI). More specifically, the study utilized a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design with a single group, complemented by cross-sectional analyses. At Time 1 (pre-test), participants completed measures of positive attitudes and personal happiness, along with a demographic questionnaire. Subsequently, they participated in the PPI module. At Time 2 (post-test), the same psychological scales were administered again. This design allowed the researcher to:

Describe baseline levels of positive attitudes and happiness.

Examine the degree of association between positive attitudes and happiness.

Evaluate changes in these variables following the intervention.

Test whether positive attitudes predict happiness while controlling for demographic factors.

Quasi-experimental designs are widely used in educational and psychological research where random assignment to intervention and control groups is difficult due to ethical or practical constraints (Shadish et al., 2002). In the present context, randomization at the school level was not feasible because of administrative constraints and the need to provide the intervention to all consenting teachers.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of school teaching professionals employed in government and government-aided schools in selected districts of Sri Lanka. Teachers were chosen as the focus of the study because they play a crucial role in shaping students' academic and socio-emotional development and because their own happiness and attitudes are central to effective teaching and learning (Collie et al., 2012; Day & Gu, 2010).

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed: School selection: In the first stage, schools were identified in collaboration with zonal education authorities. Priority was given to schools that represented a mix of primary and secondary levels and different geographical settings (e.g., urban, semi-urban, and rural contexts).

Cluster sampling: Schools themselves were treated as clusters. Within each selected school, all full-time teachers were invited to participate in an information session about the study.

Stratified and convenience elements: Within schools, efforts were made to include both male and female teachers and those from different teaching levels (primary vs. secondary). Teachers who provided informed consent and were available during data collection were then selected on a voluntary basis, reflecting an element of convenience sampling.

A total of 200 teachers participated in the study. This sample size was considered adequate based on conventional rules of thumb for correlation and regression analysis, which suggest a minimum of 10-15 participants per predictor variable, as well as practical feasibility (Cohen, 1992; Hair et al., 2019). The sample provided sufficient statistical power to detect medium-sized relationships between positive attitudes and happiness.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using three key instruments: a demographic questionnaire, a Positive Attitude Scale, and a Happiness Scale. The psychological measures were adapted from established instruments in the positive psychology literature, with modifications to ensure cultural relevance and clarity for Sri Lankan teachers.

Positive Attitude Scale

The Positive Attitude Scale was designed to capture teachers' general tendency to think, feel and act in an optimistic, hopeful and constructive manner. It drew on theoretical constructs such as optimism, hope, gratitude and positive reframing (Peterson, 2006; Snyder, 2002).

The final scale consisted of 20 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Happiness Scale

The Happiness Scale measured teachers' personal happiness, conceptualised broadly in line with subjective well-being and positive functioning (Diener, 2000; Seligman, 2011).

The scale comprised 18 items rated on the same 5-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Items covered both cognitive components (e.g., life satisfaction: "In most ways, my life is close to ideal") and affective components (e.g., "I frequently feel joyful and cheerful"; "I usually feel emotionally balanced" - reverse scored).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out in a series of structured steps to ensure consistency and to minimise disruption to school activities:

Permissions and coordination: Formal approval was obtained from relevant educational authorities at provincial and zonal levels. School principals were contacted to explain the purpose, procedures and schedule of the study.

Information sessions: At each participating school, an information session was held with teachers to explain the research aims, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality assurances and the structure of the intervention and questionnaires. Teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Informed consent: Teachers who agreed to participate signed a written informed consent form. Those who declined were thanked and were not disadvantaged in any way.

Pre-test administration: The demographic questionnaire, Positive Attitude Scale and Happiness Scale were administered as paper-based surveys during designated time slots (e.g., staff meetings, professional development sessions). The researcher and/or trained assistants were present to clarify any doubts.

Implementation of PPI: After completion of the pre-test, the Positive Psychological Intervention sessions were implemented over a specified period

Post-test administration: Following the final PPI session, the Positive Attitude Scale and Happiness Scale were re-administered to the same group of teachers. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires independently and to avoid discussing responses with colleagues during the session.

Completed questionnaires were collected, coded and stored securely. Only anonymised codes, not names or identifying details, were used in the dataset.

Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI) Process

The Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI) was structured around evidence-based activities intended to cultivate positive emotions, attitudes, and strengths (Seligman et al., 2005). The intervention was designed specifically for teachers, taking into account their workload, time constraints and cultural context.

The PPI consisted of a series of structured sessions, each focusing on one or more positive psychology themes:

Gratitude and appreciation: Teachers were introduced to the concept of gratitude and invited to keep a short "gratitude log" each day, noting three things they felt thankful for in their personal or professional life (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Peterson and Seligman (2004) propose that identifying and intentionally using one's character strengths enhances well-being, promotes personal growth, and contributes to optimal functioning. Accordingly, participants in the Positive Psychological Intervention completed reflective exercises to identify their key personal and professional strengths, such as patience, creativity, and a sense of humour. They subsequently developed individualized action plans to apply these strengths more deliberately in their teaching practice and everyday lives, with the aim of enhancing both personal happiness and professional effectiveness.

Positive reframing: Through group discussions and case scenarios, teachers practiced viewing common classroom and school challenges from more constructive perspectives, focusing on potential solutions and learning opportunities rather than solely on problems.

Mindfulness and relaxation: Simple breathing exercises and brief mindfulness practices were introduced to help teachers manage stress and remain present-focused during demanding situations (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Joy and connection activities: Short, interactive activities encouraged sharing of positive experiences, small wins, and supportive feedback among colleagues, strengthening social bonds within the staff.

Each session followed a similar structure: brief theoretical input, demonstration of activities, small-group or individual practice, and reflective debriefing. The overall PPI program was delivered over several weeks in sessions of manageable duration (e.g., 60-90 minutes). Facilitators included the researcher and trained collaborators familiar with positive psychology and teacher development.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS following systematic data screening and cleaning procedures to ensure accuracy and compliance with statistical assumptions, including normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (Field, 2018). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, minima, and maxima) were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and the levels of positive attitudes and happiness. Reliability of the measurement instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and item-total correlations. Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships among positive attitudes, happiness, age, and teaching experience. Paired-samples *t*-tests, together with Cohen's *d* effect sizes, were conducted to evaluate changes in positive attitudes and happiness following the Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis determined the extent to which positive attitudes predicted post-test happiness after controlling for demographic variables. Finally, independent-samples *t*-tests, one-way ANOVA, post hoc comparisons, and interaction analyses were employed to examine differences across demographic groups and explore potential moderation effects. Collectively, these statistical techniques provided a comprehensive evaluation of the study variables, the effectiveness of the intervention, and the factors influencing teachers' personal happiness.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided every stage of the study to ensure the protection, dignity, and well-being of participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethics review committee and educational authorities before data collection commenced. All participants provided informed consent after receiving clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of coded questionnaires, secure data storage, and the reporting of findings only in aggregate form. The Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) was designed to minimise risk by promoting positive reflection and well-being, while participants experiencing any emotional discomfort were referred to appropriate counselling services. Participation in both the survey and intervention was entirely voluntary, with no adverse consequences for withdrawal. Finally, the study findings were shared with interested participants and school leaders to support future teacher well-being initiatives. These ethical measures ensured that the research was conducted responsibly while safeguarding participants' rights and generating meaningful knowledge about the relationship between positive attitudes and personal happiness among teachers

Results

Table I. Statistical Interpretation Guide for Main Findings

Analysis	Reported result	Interpretation standard	Manuscript meaning
Reliability	Alpha values above .80 for both scales.	Values above .70 indicate acceptable internal consistency.	Measurement instruments were suitable for analysis.
Correlation	Positive attitudes and happiness: $r = .61$, $p < .001$.	Large positive association for behavioural/social science research.	Teachers with stronger positive attitudes tended to report higher happiness.
Paired t-test	Positive attitudes: $t = 12.47$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.88$.	Large practical improvement if $d \geq 0.80$.	Intervention meaningfully improved positive attitudes.
Paired t-test	Personal happiness: $t = 11.56$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.82$.	Large practical improvement if $d \geq 0.80$.	Intervention meaningfully improved happiness.
Regression	Positive attitudes increased explained variance to approximately 40%.	Added variance indicates unique predictive value beyond controls.	Positive attitudes were a substantive predictor of teacher happiness.

Note. This table adds reader-friendly interpretation beside the statistical reporting.

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study on the impact of positive attitudes on personal happiness among school teaching professionals. Results are organised according to the main analytical stages: descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, correlation findings, pre-test/post-test comparisons, regression analysis and subgroup/moderation effects. Unless otherwise stated, all analyses are based on data from N = 200 teachers.

A. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for Main Study Variables (N = 200) (reformatted in IEEE table style)

Variable	Time	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Positive attitudes	Pre-test	3.42	0.58	1.90	4.80
Positive attitudes	Post-test	3.96	0.53	2.30	4.90
Personal happiness	Pre-test	3.28	0.62	1.80	4.70
Personal happiness	Post-test	3.89	0.57	2.10	4.90
Age (years)	-	38.7	7.9	24	57
Teaching experience (years)	-	13.4	7.2	1	32

Note. Scale range for positive attitudes and happiness: 1 = very low to 5 = very high.

The descriptive statistics indicate that, at baseline, teachers reported moderate levels of both positive attitudes (M = 3.42) and personal happiness (M = 3.28). Following the intervention, both means increased to moderately high levels (positive attitudes: M = 3.96; happiness: M = 3.89). The standard deviations are relatively small, suggesting that scores are clustered around the means, with no extreme outliers. These patterns indicate that most teachers in the sample perceive themselves as having reasonably positive orientations and a moderate degree of happiness, with improvement evident after the PPI.

Reliability and Validity Testing

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha for the composite scales. Table 4.2 presents alpha coefficients and item numbers for the positive attitude and happiness scales at pre-test and post-test.

All Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.80, indicating high internal consistency for both scales at both time points. The slight increase in alpha from pre-test to post-test suggests that, following the intervention, the items may be functioning even more cohesively to capture the underlying constructs. These coefficients meet commonly accepted thresholds for research use, supporting the reliability of the measurement instruments.

In addition to internal consistency, construct validity was examined through inspection of item-total correlations and factor-analytic structure (not tabulated here). Item-total correlations exceeded .40 for most items, suggesting that each item contributed meaningfully to the overall scale. Factor analysis indicated clear loadings of items on the intended dimensions (positive attitudes vs. happiness), providing evidence of convergent and discriminant validity.

Correlation Findings

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to explore the relationships among the main continuous variables at baseline (pre-test). Table 4.3 presents the correlation matrix for positive attitudes, personal happiness, age and teaching experience.

As shown in Table 4.3, positive attitudes are strongly and positively correlated with personal happiness ($r = .61$, $p < .001$), indicating that teachers who hold more positive attitudes tend to report higher levels of happiness. Small-to-moderate positive correlations are also evident between age and both attitudes and happiness (ranging from .15 to .18), and between teaching experience and both attitudes and happiness (ranging from .17 to .21). The strong correlation between age and experience ($r = .78$, $p < .001$) is expected, reflecting the natural association between time in the profession and chronological age.

Overall, these findings provide initial support for the theoretical expectation that positive attitudes are closely linked with subjective well-being among teachers, consistent with positive psychology literature, which emphasizes optimism and hope as key predictors of happiness (Diener et al., 2018; Fredrickson, 2004).

Pre-test and Post-test Differences

To examine the effect of the Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI), paired-samples t-tests were conducted comparing pre-test and post-test scores for positive attitudes and personal happiness. Results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Pre-test and Post-test Comparisons for Positive Attitudes and Personal Happiness (N = 200) (reformatted in IEEE table style)

Variable	Time	Mean	SD	t (df = 199)	p-value	Cohen's d
Positive attitudes	Pre-test	3.42	0.58			
	Post-test	3.96	0.53	12.47	< .001	0.88
Personal happiness	Pre-test	3.28	0.62			
	Post-test	3.89	0.57	11.56	< .001	0.82

The paired-samples t-tests show statistically significant increases in both positive attitudes and personal happiness following the PPI. For positive attitudes, the mean increase from 3.42 to 3.96 is large in magnitude, with $t(199) = 12.47$, $p < .001$ and Cohen's $d = 0.88$, indicating a large effect size. Similarly, personal happiness increased from 3.28 to 3.89, with $t(199) = 11.56$, $p < .001$ and Cohen's $d = 0.82$, also reflecting a large effect.

These results suggest that the intervention-which included activities related to gratitude, strengths use, mindfulness and joyful engagement-was effective in enhancing both teachers' positive attitudes and their overall happiness. The magnitude of change is consistent with international meta-analyses showing that structured positive psychological interventions can substantially improve well-being (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

Regression Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether positive attitudes predict teachers' personal happiness after controlling for age, gender, teaching experience, and school level. The control variables in Model 1 explained a modest 7% of the variance in post-test happiness ($R^2 = .07$, $p = .007$). When post-test positive attitudes were added in Model 2, the explained variance increased substantially to 40% ($R^2 = .40$), with the additional 33% of variance ($\Delta R^2 = .33$) being statistically significant ($p < .001$). Positive attitudes emerged as a strong and significant predictor of happiness ($\beta = .56$, $t = 9.53$, $p < .001$), indicating that teachers with more positive cognitive and emotional orientations were considerably happier regardless of demographic or professional characteristics. Subgroup analyses further showed no significant differences in happiness by gender or school level, while teachers with 16 or more years of experience reported slightly higher happiness than those with 0–5 years of experience ($F(2,197) = 3.21$, $p = .043$), possibly due to greater professional confidence and coping skills. Supplementary moderation analyses found that interaction effects involving positive attitudes, gender, experience, and school level were not significant ($p > .05$).

suggesting that the positive influence of positive attitudes on happiness is consistent across different groups of teachers and represents a broadly applicable psychological resource for teacher well-being.

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in light of the existing literature and theoretical frameworks, with particular attention to teachers working in post-conflict and resource-constrained educational contexts. It interprets the empirical results, highlights contributions to positive psychology, explores implications for teachers in post-conflict Sri Lanka, compares the findings with international research, and derives practical implications for educational institutions.

Interpretation of Key Findings

The study found that school teachers demonstrated moderate baseline levels of positive attitudes and personal happiness, indicating resilience despite challenging working conditions. A strong positive correlation between positive attitudes and happiness confirmed that teachers with higher levels of optimism, hope, gratitude, and constructive thinking also experienced greater life satisfaction and positive emotions. Following participation in the Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI), significant improvements were observed in both positive attitudes and happiness, with large effect sizes demonstrating the intervention's effectiveness in enhancing teachers' psychological well-being. Hierarchical regression analysis further established that positive attitudes were the strongest predictor of post-test happiness, even after controlling for demographic and professional factors, highlighting their central role in promoting teacher well-being. Subgroup analyses revealed no significant differences in happiness by gender or school level, although teachers with greater teaching experience reported slightly higher happiness, likely reflecting increased professional confidence and coping abilities. Moreover, moderation analyses indicated that the positive relationship between attitudes and happiness was consistent across different teacher groups. Overall, the findings strongly support the conclusion that positive attitudes are both closely associated with and predictive of teachers' personal happiness and can be effectively strengthened through a culturally adapted positive psychology intervention, thereby enhancing resilience and overall well-being.

Contribution to Positive Psychology Theory

The study makes several contributions to positive psychology theory by extending its application to a non-Western, post-conflict educational context, thereby providing cross-cultural support for core constructs such as optimism, hope, gratitude, and subjective well-being. The strong relationship observed between positive attitudes and happiness, along with the effectiveness of the Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI), supports the Broaden-and-Build Theory by suggesting that positive emotions help expand cognitive and behavioural capacities, leading to the development of enduring psychological resources that enhance resilience and well-being. The findings are also consistent with the PERMA model, as the intervention activities—such as gratitude practice, strengths identification, positive reframing, and mindfulness—aligned with its key dimensions of positive emotion, engagement, meaning, relationships, and accomplishment, all of which contributed to increased happiness among teachers. Additionally, the results highlight the importance of integrating positive psychology with occupational and educational perspectives, demonstrating that psychological strengths remain significant predictors of happiness even after accounting for demographic and professional factors. Overall, the study reinforces a strengths-based theoretical approach, complementing traditional stress and burnout frameworks by emphasizing the role of positive psychological resources in fostering teacher well-being.

Implications for Teachers in Post-Conflict Contexts

Comparison with Global Findings

Teachers working in post-conflict environments encounter complex challenges, including exposure to student and community trauma, limited resources, and ongoing socio-economic instability. While it is neither appropriate nor sufficient to suggest that positive thinking alone can resolve these difficulties, the findings indicate that strengthened positive attitudes can function as important psychological resources that support teachers' sense of purpose, resilience, and agency. The improvements observed following the positive psychological intervention suggest that teachers are open to structured

approaches that acknowledge their struggles while helping them reframe experiences, identify strengths, and recognize positive moments in daily life. Such practices do not ignore hardship but help broaden attention beyond adversity, which is especially valuable in contexts where narratives of loss may dominate. The study further emphasizes the importance of collegial support, as group-based intervention activities fostered shared reflection, emotional connection, and mutual encouragement, contributing to healthier school climates and potentially rebuilding social trust. However, the findings also underline that psychological interventions should complement—not replace—systemic improvements such as better working conditions, adequate resources, and institutional support. Overall, the results suggest that while structural challenges remain significant, cultivating positive attitudes can meaningfully enhance teacher well-being and functioning within post-conflict educational settings.

The study examined the impact of positive attitudes on personal happiness among school teaching professionals in Sri Lanka and evaluated the effectiveness of a Positive Psychological Intervention (PPI). The findings revealed that teachers initially demonstrated moderate levels of both positive attitudes and happiness, indicating the presence of psychological resilience despite challenging working conditions. A strong positive relationship was found between positive attitudes and happiness, and participation in the PPI led to significant improvements in both variables, with large effect sizes confirming its effectiveness. Positive attitudes were identified as a strong predictor of happiness even after controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, experience, and school level. Subgroup analyses indicated no major differences based on gender or school level, although more experienced teachers tended to report slightly higher happiness, suggesting that professional maturity may enhance well-being. Overall, the results confirm that positive attitudes are both malleable and central to teacher happiness, and that structured psychological interventions can play a meaningful role in strengthening teacher well-being in challenging educational contexts.

At the policy level, the study recommends that teacher well-being be formally recognised as a priority alongside academic and institutional performance, with integration into national teacher standards and allocation of resources for psychosocial support programmes. Evidence-based interventions such as PPIs should be promoted and scaled through policy frameworks, particularly in post-conflict and resource-limited settings. At the school level, practical strategies include implementing regular well-being activities, developing peer-support systems, training school leaders in positive and strengths-based leadership, and protecting teachers' time for reflection and recovery. Schools are also encouraged to integrate well-being practices into pedagogy to benefit both teachers and students. Future research is recommended to include longitudinal and experimental designs, qualitative studies, and investigations into mediators, moderators, student outcomes, and digital interventions. Collectively, these findings emphasise that fostering positive attitudes among teachers is not only feasible but also essential for building resilient educators and improving the overall quality of education systems.

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