



Title: Why Psychological Well-Being of Teachers matters?

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Abstract

Teachers play a significant role in grooming young minds. And when visualized through lens, they are the architects of the nation. Teachers are not merely disseminators of knowledge but can be recognized as the transformer of a raw material into a refined & polished product. They cast an everlasting impact over their students' life; students assimilate within themselves the teachings, values and various attributes of the teacher. Teachers' fraternity together can be the reason for social change; it can bring about positive social mobility among masses. A healthy mind that promotes positivity can do wonders in creating a healthy school environment. The role of teacher in the present milieu has become multidimensional. With the evolution of the education system over time, there has been a radical shift in the role of teachers too. Teachers carry numerous responsibilities apart from teaching. In the hurry to complete the syllabus and meet the deadlines of other academic/non-academic work, their mental health takes a toll. Mental health of the teacher is often ignored, it is an aspect that needs to be addressed and worked upon. To build a strong nation, to accumulate a positive mind set and hence positive growth, there arises an acute need to foster positive psychology among teachers. Psychological well-being is a discriminative and prominent aspect of 'Happiness and Well-Being' which encompasses positive psychology. The paper shall attempt to discover the role of psychological well-being on various professional aspects as identified in previous research works. It shall help teachers and teacher educators to understand 'Why Psychological Well-Being of Teachers matters?' The paper paves way to understand the need of including modules which enhance psychological well-being as a part of pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. It shall give scope to carry out co relational studies of psychological well-being of teachers with different psychological and social factors.

Key Words: Teachers, Positive Psychology, Psychological Well-Being

Introduction:

Teachers are not merely the disseminators of knowledge of a particular subject, who then does the assessments and provides its report. No. Teachers are the architects of a nation, they define the future a nation by nourishing and creating mindful citizens. Good teachers leave an everlasting impression on the minds and hearts of their students. They inspire them to become a worthy member of the society and motivate them to work towards becoming a better version of self with each passing day. (Bhattacharjee, 2021). Society has placed the major social responsibility of nurturing the children on teachers and every school organization builds up pressure on teachers for getting excellent results of their students. In addition to this, academic and non academic work load creates undue stress on teachers. In an attempt to strike balance between multiple roles imposed, it at time affects the well-being of the teacher. Physical well-being can be addressed by paying attention to diet, work-out plan, life style; but Psychological well-being takes more efforts to remain intact.

Investigations made under the study on new university teachers depicts a thorough relation of professional developmental activities carried under intended professional development program with the psychological well-being of teachers. (Gast, Neelen, Deloij, Menten, Mihai, & Grohnert, 2022). Activities to promote and remedies to enhance psychological well-being among teachers must be taken up as a part of teachers' professional development. Studies have shown that there is a strong impact of teacher's well-being on that of students' well-being and in turn students academic achievements. Teachers' burnout when correlated with students stress level was found to be significantly positive. It clearly reflects stressed teachers cannot contribute to stress free learning atmosphere. Its challenging for the teachers of today who are multi-tasking to maintain their mental health. (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). To meet the challenges of teaching in this present milieu, psychological well-being of teachers must be a topic to be investigated and addressed.

What is Psychological Well-Being?

The pursuit of happiness has been the topic of discussion in religious writings, philosophical texts, and proclamations of the intellectuals and psychologists since ages. The pursuit of happiness is only one face of positive psychology. Though positive psychology advocates people to be happy, it also emphasize on apprehending their potentials, achieving their interests, fostering their talents and achieving satisfaction of life. For example, Ed Diener (2000), a famous researcher of well-being, mentioned that the next thing psychology refers "general tonic" for well-being is to improve happiness. One of the best things an individual can adopt to enhance quality of one's life is to help out others improve their intensity of happiness and life satisfaction. This goes true to people of all income levels and psychosocial variations.

Positive psychology is not the earliest effort by psychologists in pursue of studying well-being and good life. From the initial stages of psychology, there has been an interest in studying healthy personality development and optimal states of well-being. For instance, in the beginning of the twentieth century numerous researches about psychological well-being and attributes of the good life incepted first as academic in-depth analyses of clients in psychotherapy. Trials were then made to shift the outcomes of such studies into psychological laboratories for advanced experimental research or real-life situations to aid people improve well-being.

Unfortunately, most of the attempts to transfer these results into the laboratory were almost impossible. In view of these past difficulties, positive psychologists felt a need to change the direction of information flow. Hence, they wished to create an experimental knowledge base in the psychological laboratory and then use those outcomes into real-world field like schools, clinics, and the workplace.

The exploration of history gives important lessons that can aid in studying psychological well-being. The latest theories of life-satisfaction, happiness and well-being are basically deduced from the former ideas of good life and happiness remains almost similar since the time of ancient Greek Philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle and Plato. The oldest approach to well-being and happiness can be paved back to that of *hedonism*. **Hedonism** regards pleasure as the main ingredient of the good life. Basically, hedonism refers the quest of well-being as the quest of one's sensual pleasure and keeping away oneself from pain, suffering and harm of any form. Hedonism emerged as self-defeating and non feasible by most of the civilizations. Because sensual pleasures don't last long and require continuous struggle to protract them, hence hedonism does not bring in everlasting changes in personality and individual growth.

Socrates believed that true happiness can only be achieved through self knowledge and inspection of one's universal soul is true wisdom. Any conclusions based on sensory experiences cannot depict truth as they constantly carry varied response in accordance with external situations. Plato following the footsteps of his teacher Socrates also believed that varying sensory experience cannot be the foundation of true wisdom. True wisdom must descend from constant realm that extends beyond sensory world. The search for wisdom includes a passionate and complex mission that looks underneath superficial looks and challenges predetermined notions. Aristotle, unlike his teacher Plato did not advocated the intuition of everlasting forms in the pursuit of higher truth and well-being. He stressed that universal truth can be found in the intellectual discovery of order in the world. He regarded sense as the vehicle for this search and logic, classification and conceptualisation as its tools. To find the 'golden mean' that exists between the extremes of life was one of the important goals of Aristotle. This is what the state of balance, harmony and equilibrium that helps to lead a life in accordance with the principle of *eudaimonia*. Robinson (1990) expressed eudaimonia as "the condition of flourishing and completeness that constitutes true and enduring joy... Eudaimonia is not merely a set of pleasures or creature comforts or Epicurean delights. It is a life lived in a certain way, where life here refers to life-on-the-whole, not some number of moments together. Progress toward this end calls for the recognition that the better course of action is not the one that invariably satisfies the current desire or even an abiding desire... To be wise is to strive for a condition of moral perfection or virtue by which the golden mean is found and adopted in all of the significant affairs of life." Telfer (1980) writes, "Although Eudaimonia is translated as *happiness*, it can also be translated as *truly fortunate, possessed of true well-being, or flourishing*."

The prominent development in the search for well-being in the beginning of the twentieth century emerged from the works of William James, one of the greatest American philosophers. He was also the founder of American psychology who also authored its first textbook. He worked towards awakening human potential as he believed that only a small fraction from a huge range of cognitive and emotional capacities is used by man

in daily life. His viewpoint influenced Abraham Maslow and formed the basis of humanistic psychology in between 1950s and early 1960s. Another important perspective that was added to the search for well-being in the beginning of twentieth century was the theory of the unconscious, by Freud and his followers. Two of the most influential associates of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung emerged as eminent psychologists gave the world theories of well-being and human flourishing. Adler as per his system, Individual Psychology, emphasized the importance of social feeling, healthy child development and optimal adult functioning. He held positive notion of human capability. His slogan, “any child can learn anything” inspired generations of teachers, social workforce and childcare employees in Europe and United States. Adler’s views deeply influenced Maslow, who studied with him in 1930s. Adlerians worked actively to develop positive social skills in classroom and home environments.

The confluence of the multiple theories of positive psychology and well-being such as Maslow's (1968) notion of self-actualization, Allport's (1961) conceptualisation of maturity, Rogers' (1961) illustration of the fully functioning person, and Jung's (1933) record of individualisation paved way to the theoretical groundwork in creating a multidimensional model of well-being (Ryff, 1989b, 1995). It includes six different components of positive psychological functioning. Self-Acceptance, Positive relations with others, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Purpose in Life, and Personal Growth are those six factors formulated by Ryff after an in-depth review of existing theories and enriched data on positive functioning and components of well-being. (Ryff & Keys, 1995) The numerous theories that evolved to define happiness and well-being over time can be broadly studied as one-dimensional and multi dimensional theories.

1. One Dimensional Theories include

- a) Hedonic perspective
- b) Eudaimonic perspective
- c) Engagement Perspective by Nancy Cantor and Catherine Sanderson based on active participation in life
- d) Authentic Happiness and Well-Being Theory by Seligman, Well-being theory argues that positive emotion, engagement, and meaning are not sufficient to cover the dimensions of a life well-lived. Seligman has added two more dimensions: positive relationships; and positive accomplishments. The acronym for the elements of well-being theory is PERMA (that is Positive emotion; Engagement; Relationships; Meaning, Accomplishment).

2. Multidimensional Theories

- a) Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan 1995
- b) Psychological Well-Being six dimension model by Carol D Ryff
- c) Modes of fulfilment theory by Coan 1974
- d) Quality of life theory by Michael Frisch 2006

Psychological well-being emerged as a form of well-being in addition to subjective well-being from theorists like Deci and Ryan (2000,2001) and Ryff (1989) on the basis of effectual performance and collective human needs. Psychological well-being differs from subjective feelings although they may overlap empirically. Psychological Well-Being is assumed to represent the most favourable human functioning different from subjective well-being which is assumed as people's evaluations of their own lives. (Ed Diener, 2009)

Methodology:

Various articles from web sources like researchgate.net, academia.edu.in, googlescholar, ERIC, APA psychNET, SpringerLink, Elsevier.com, sciencedirect.com, tandfonline.com and search engines like google and Microsoft edge were explored with search terms being psychological well-being, psychological well-being+ teachers, role of teachers psychological well-being.

Findings and Discussion:

Why Psychological Well-Being matters?

The notion of feeling good not only includes the optimistic emotions of happiness and satisfaction, but it also encompasses emotions like interest, engagement, confidence. The perceptiveness of performing psychologically well incorporates the progress of one's potential, having the ability to manage one's life, holding a sense of responsibility, and practising positive relationships. A huge shift in research came in vividly when study of disorder and dysfunction was replaced to focus on well-being and positive psychological health. It also dragged the attention of epidemiologists, social scientists, economists, and policy makers (e.g. Huppert, 2005; Marks & Shah, 2005). This positive concept can be observed in clear terms in the documentation of the World Health Organisation, where health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948). The WHO also defined positive mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2001). (Huppert, 2009). Huppert also included the research which depicts that the performance of happy people in life is better than those who are less happy. It also mentions that people who are happy are highly productive, socially active and also generate better incomes in life. Positivity generates positivity and enhances cognitive abilities and create healthy environment.

There is a general conception supported by most studies which conclude higher educational qualifications as guard against bad mental health. But there are researches which also go against this trend, (Chevalier & Feinstein, 2006) who found that people with high educational qualifications had increased depression, which may be accounted to job stress. It may be due to the role of education, high expectations are associated with people which may remain unaccomplished.

External agencies and incidents do play a role in altering psychological well-being, but it's the attitude of an individual and his own actions that actually has the hold. Yet, deliberate efforts which build positive attitude and actions can play a major role to improve psychological well-being.

Positive psychology adopted in work places can give rise to improvised work performance and productivity (Kour, 2019). At the work front, positive psychology and psychological well-being has been observed through studies at intercession level. Only few studies have stressed on positive psychology practice taken up as culture or experienced positive emotions at individual or collective level. It is necessary to analyze these aspects too because interventions take place in form of activities and actions within workplaces. The radical alteration at employee and organizational level would take place, when positive psychology and Psychological well-being are apparent in form of behavior and attitude of employees, and as culture at entire workplace. This shall not only guarantee higher job satisfaction but an amazing effect will be notable in life satisfaction as well (Saari & Judge, 2004) (Himani Misra, 2021)

Why Psychological Well-Being of Teachers matter?

Teachers' effectiveness plays a prominent role in building up quality of education. A teacher is expected to perform better when they acquire good mental health and are highly motivated to teach enthusiastically and hence can contribute to improve students' learning and create a positive learning environment. The study advocated that by working on teacher effectiveness, teachers' psychological well-being can be cultivated, which shall further help to enrich quality of education. (Zaki, 2018)

Studies depicts that when teachers believe in their expertise, they go through lesser negative emotions (stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout) and higher levels of positive emotions (high confidence, commitment and job satisfaction). Whenever there is an increase in positive emotions, it also boosts teachers' psychological functionality (Zee & Koomen, 2016). As self-efficacy increases, one's attentiveness towards handling the problems develops control (Lazarus, 1984). In this regard, a person's sense of control over incidents can be visualised an important aspect in managing the problems. A person feels better when he believes that he has command over his work (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky, 2006). This can be well supported by selfdetermination theory. Self-determination theory elaborates that an individual's foremost need is awareness of self-sufficiency for psychological well-being. In short, Psychological well-being is about meeting the psychological needs of the individual. These needs are autonomy, proficiency and relevance.

Teachers who fail to have faith in their own competency face hardship in managing their academic or classroom management challenges. Literature has evidence of the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being. It also brings forth that self-efficacy perceived is related to psychological well-being of individuals. Few studies concluded that general self-efficacy as a strong predictor of psychological well-being (eg, Gibbons, 2010; Klainin-Yobas et al., 2016; Nielsen et al., 2009). A positive relationship between general wellbeing and competence belief was identified (Collie, Shapka, Perry and Martin, 2016). In the literature, it was also noted that teachers' self-efficacy showed significant relation to psychological well-being (Bentea, 2017; Jeon et al., 2018; McInerney et al., 2015). From this literature based evidence, general self-efficacy or self-efficacy for performing a task can be assumed to be a determining factor in psychological well-being. From this theoretical and empirical literature mentioned, it can be pointed that teacher self-efficacy beliefs can be related to psychological well-being and self-efficacy can be regarded as a prominent predictor of psychological well-being. Hence, high levels of teachers' self-efficacy can be used as positive

contributor in enhancing student learning. From this study, it was noted that teacher self-efficacy stood as variable that can predict psychological wellbeing of teachers (Cansoy, Parlar, & Turkoglu, 2020). Another study went in congruence with the research mentioned; it also showed significant positive relation of self-efficacy with psychological well-being of teachers. (Grobelny & Narska, 2021). Undoubtedly teachers' self-efficacy contributes in giving their best in the classroom, with the students and for the growth of the school. Teachers with good psychological well-being can extend the best of their services contributing to the growth of their students.

Conclusion:

It was found that teachers' psychological well-being has an immense affect on their institutions and also on their family lives. Variety of roles and responsibilities to be addressed by the teachers demands adjustments to reduce conflict and stress. Role conflict did not show a significant relation with teachers' psychological well-being. (Thakur, Chandrasekaran, & Guddattu, 2018). Another study carried over a group of secondary school teachers resulted in establishing a significant positive relation between spirituality and psychological well-being. It brought into focus that job stress is inversely related to psychological well-being. It also implicates to work on spirituality to reduce stress and improve psychological well-being. (Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019). Further a teacher with better psychological well-being shall contribute in managing stress and reducing its effects on teaching. A cross-sectional study carried out to determine the influence of psychological empowerment on the job performance of teachers, showed a strong positive relation between the two variables wherein psychological well-being was identified as a predictor of job performance. It thus implicated the strong role of psychological well-being of teachers in increasing job performance. (Ahmed & Malik, 2019)

Research has also made it evident that teachers' commitment has a significant relation with their Psychological Well-Being. Greater the sense of loyalty and better the sense of responsibility towards the institution, better will be the psychological well-being of the teachers and vice-versa. (McInerney, Ganotice, Morin, & Marsh, 2014).

A study when carried out to study the relation of mental health and psychological well-being of teachers showed significant relation between the two. More the mental health problems, that is, the weaker mental health, it was observed related to lower psychological well-being. This brings forward psychological well-being as an integral component of human's mental health, teacher in particular. (Zirwatul, R, Ibrahim, Zaleha, & Zalam, 2021)

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