



HAPPY TEACHERS, HEALTHY CLASSROOMS: FOSTERING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALS THROUGH HAPPINESS QUOTIENT

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Abstract:

Teachers play a vital role in shaping students' learning experiences, yet they often face high levels of occupational stress due to workload, administrative responsibilities, and performance expectations. This study investigates the mental health and Happiness Quotient (HQ) of teaching professionals, examining how happiness influences teacher effectiveness and classroom outcomes. A mixed-method survey was conducted with 50 in-service school teachers and 50 trainee teachers from SSC, CBSE, ICSE, and IB schools in Pune. The survey explored stress levels, causes of stress, coping strategies, awareness of HQ, and perceptions regarding institutional support. Findings revealed that teachers experience significant stress, have limited awareness of their own HQ, and rely primarily on individual coping strategies. All respondents agreed that teacher happiness enhances professional performance and positively affects student outcomes. The study highlights the urgent need for school-based mental health and HQ programs and recommends structured interventions such as counseling, wellness workshops, and professional development on emotional intelligence and work-life balance.

Keywords: Teacher stress, Mental health, Happiness Quotient, Teacher well-being, School interventions

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Introduction:

Teachers are central to the educational process, serving not only as knowledge facilitators but also as mentors, role models, and emotional anchors for students. As the **Kothari Education Commission (1964–66)** observed, “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms,” highlighting the critical role of teachers in shaping both students and society.

Teaching has increasingly been recognized as a demanding profession, with educators managing diverse learner needs, adapting to changing curricula, meeting performance expectations, and handling administrative tasks. These demands often lead to **stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout**, which can negatively affect both teachers' well-being and classroom outcomes.

The concept of **Happiness Quotient (HQ)** has emerged as an important framework for understanding

teacher well-being. HQ encompasses emotional balance, life satisfaction, resilience, and a sense of purpose. Research indicates that “*happy teachers teach better*,” demonstrating the direct link between teacher well-being and effective teaching. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** reinforces this view by emphasizing teacher empowerment, supportive work environments, and holistic professional development. While most studies focus on in-service teachers, **trainee teachers** also face stress related to academic pressure and professional preparedness. This study addresses the mental health and Happiness Quotient of both groups, investigating stress levels, coping mechanisms, HQ awareness, and perceptions of institutional support, thereby highlighting the need for school-based programs to promote teacher well-being and foster **healthy, effective learning environments**.

The concept of **Happiness Quotient (HQ)**, encompassing emotional well-being, life satisfaction, and resilience, has emerged as a protective factor that enables teachers to manage stress and maintain motivation. As the Dalai Lama reminds us, “*Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions,*” highlighting the role of individual well-being in fostering positive professional and classroom outcomes.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the **mental health status, stress levels, and major causes of stress** among in-service and trainee teachers.
2. To explore the **coping strategies** adopted by teachers and the **institutional measures** provided to support teacher well-being.
3. To assess teachers’ **awareness and understanding of Happiness Quotient (HQ)** and ways to enhance it.
4. To examine teachers’ perceptions of the **relationship between happiness and teaching effectiveness** and the need for school-based programs.
5. To gather teachers’ **suggestions for activities** to reduce stress and enhance happiness in schools.

Assumptions:

1. Teaching professionals experience significant **occupational stress**, primarily due to workload, administrative tasks, and role-related pressures.
2. Teachers have limited awareness of **Happiness Quotient**, yet higher happiness positively influences teaching effectiveness and professional performance.
3. Structured **school-based interventions** and coping strategies can improve teachers’ mental health, HQ, and classroom engagement.

Review of Related Literature:

Teachers face high levels of stress, often due to workload, administrative responsibilities, and

classroom challenges (Kyriacou, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998). Prolonged stress affects job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and student outcomes. Positive psychology emphasizes **well-being, happiness, and resilience**, showing that teachers with higher Happiness Quotient are more effective and motivated (Seligman, 2011; OECD, 2019). Indian policy frameworks, including the **Kothari Commission** and **NEP 2020**, highlight the importance of teacher empowerment, well-being, and supportive work environments. However, empirical research in India, particularly on trainee teachers’ HQ, remains limited, necessitating school-based interventions to support teacher mental health and happiness.

Need of the study:

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students’ learning, attitudes, and overall development. However, the modern teaching profession has become increasingly demanding, with educators facing high workload, administrative responsibilities, and performance pressures. Prolonged stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and reduced professional effectiveness, directly impacting classroom climate and student outcomes.

While there is growing awareness of teacher stress globally, Indian research on teachers’ mental health and Happiness Quotient (HQ) remains limited, especially concerning trainee teachers who face academic and professional challenges. Additionally, most schools in India lack structured programs or institutional support to address teacher well-being, even as teachers are expected to attend to students’ mental health.

Given the emphasis of NEP 2020 on teacher empowerment, holistic well-being, and supportive school environments, this study is significant for several reasons:

1. It provides empirical insights into the stress levels and mental health of both in-service and trainee teachers in Indian schools.
2. It explores teachers' awareness and understanding of Happiness Quotient, an emerging framework for professional and personal well-being.
3. It identifies the need for structured, school-based interventions to reduce stress, enhance happiness, and improve teaching effectiveness.
4. It informs policymakers, teacher education institutions, and school administrators about practical strategies to foster teacher well-being and create healthy, positive learning environments.

This study is, therefore, essential for promoting teacher happiness, sustaining professional motivation, and ultimately improving the quality of education in Indian schools.

Current Status of Stress and Happiness of School Teachers:

Globally and in India, school teachers are experiencing elevated levels of occupational stress and challenges to their psychological well-being. Research indicates that stress among teachers has become a pervasive concern, significantly affecting their professional performance and overall health. For example, a study on teacher burnout found that 70% of teachers experienced emotional exhaustion and 65% reported reduced personal accomplishment, highlighting widespread psychological strain in the profession.

In the Indian context, research with larger teacher samples reveals that energy management and stress are key determinants of psychological well-being, indicating that effective stress mitigation strategies can improve teachers' mental health. Additionally, a study in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu, found that a substantial 74.3% of private school teachers reported high levels of perceived stress, underscoring the heavy psychological burden faced by educators.

Another Indian study assessing mental health among teachers in a rural area of Andhra Pradesh reported notable levels of anxiety (61%), depression (28%), and stress (24%) among educators, indicating that mental health challenges are prevalent across diverse school settings. While these figures primarily focus on negative indicators, they also signal an urgent need to support teacher happiness and resilience.

Despite these high stress levels, systematic data on teachers' Happiness Quotient (HQ) remains limited in Indian research. Global findings suggest that teacher well-being is closely linked to professional support, workload management, and work-life balance. For example, international surveys show that a significant proportion of teachers report poor work conditions and stress, which can undermine their motivation and sense of fulfillment.

Overall, current evidence highlights that stress among school teachers is widespread and has profound implications for psychological well-being, yet structured programs to enhance teacher happiness and HQ are scarce. This underscores the need for targeted interventions at both school and policy levels to support teacher well-being and create more positive, sustainable educational environments.

Conceptual Framework:

Teacher stress arises from workload, administrative pressure, performance expectations, and student-related challenges, which can negatively impact mental health, leading to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and reduced motivation. **Happiness Quotient (HQ) factors**—emotional well-being, positive mindset, work-life balance, and sense of purpose—serve as protective factors. Individual coping strategies (meditation, exercise, hobbies, peer support) and institutional interventions (counseling, wellness workshops, professional development) can mitigate stress, enhance HQ, and lead to improved teaching

performance, positive classroom climate, and long-term professional sustainability.

Methodology:

The study employed a **mixed-method design**, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. A **self-developed survey questionnaire** with both closed-ended and open-ended items was used to collect data from **50 in-service teachers** across SSC, CBSE, ICSE, and IB schools and **50 trainee teachers** from the Department of Education, MIT World Peace University in Pune.

The survey addressed:

- Presence and causes of stress among teachers
- Individual coping mechanisms and institutional support
- Awareness and understanding of Happiness Quotient
- Perceptions of the link between teacher happiness and professional performance
- Suggestions for activities to enhance happiness and reduce stress

Data were analysed using **descriptive statistics** and **thematic analysis** for qualitative responses.

Validity:

The questionnaire was reviewed by education and psychology experts and piloted to ensure clarity and relevance.

Limitations:

The study was limited to **Pune schools** and relied on **self-reported responses**, which may be subject to bias. The sample size was relatively small, limiting generalizability. Standardized scales were not used for HQ measurement.

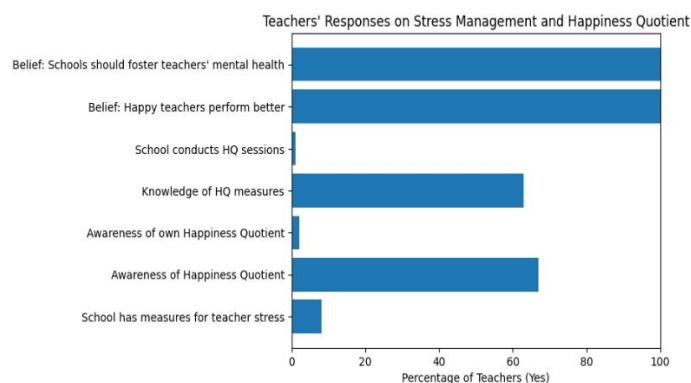
Data Analysis Tools:

The data collected through the mixed-method survey were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Responses to closed-ended questions were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, and were

presented through graphical representations including bar graphs and pie charts for clarity and easy interpretation.

Responses to open-ended questions were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. Teachers' responses were carefully reviewed, coded, and grouped into common themes related to stressors, coping mechanisms, institutional support, and happiness-enhancing activities. This qualitative analysis helped capture teachers' perceptions, experiences, and suggestions in depth, complementing the quantitative findings.

Data Analysis



Graph 1: Teachers' Perceptions and Awareness Regarding Stress and Happiness Quotient

This graph summarizes teachers' perceptions, awareness, and institutional support related to stress and Happiness Quotient:

- It clearly shows very low institutional support for teacher mental health and HQ sessions.
- It highlights a strong belief (100%) that happy teachers perform better and that schools should promote teacher well-being.
- It also reveals a gap between awareness of HQ and knowledge of one's own HQ.

Data Interpretation:

The analysis of survey data reveals a high prevalence of stress and a significant lack of institutional support for teachers' mental health. While a majority of teachers demonstrated awareness of the concept of

Happiness Quotient (67%), an overwhelming 98% were unaware of their own Happiness Quotient, indicating a gap between conceptual understanding and personal assessment. The findings further show that 92% of teachers reported the absence of school-level measures to address teacher stress, and 99% stated that their schools do not conduct sessions related to teachers' Happiness Quotient. Despite this, teachers displayed a strong consensus regarding the importance of well-being, with 100% of respondents agreeing that happy teachers perform better and that schools should implement programs to foster teachers' mental health. The graphical representations clearly highlight the contrast between teachers' high perceived need for happiness-oriented interventions and the minimal institutional mechanisms currently in place, underscoring an urgent requirement for structured mental health and Happiness Quotient initiatives within schools.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

1. Causes of Stress among Teachers

The findings of the study reveal that teachers experience stress due to multiple professional and institutional factors. The **common causes of stress** reported by teachers include excessive academic workload, time constraints, pressure to complete syllabus targets, administrative and non-teaching duties, classroom management challenges, student behavioral issues, and high performance expectations from school management and parents. Lack of institutional support and inadequate mechanisms to address teachers' mental health further contribute to stress, leading to emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction.

2. Coping Strategies Adopted by Teachers

In the absence of structured institutional support, teachers predominantly rely on **individual coping mechanisms** to manage stress. Common activities used for stress management include meditation,

yoga, physical exercise, listening to music, reading, engaging in hobbies, spending time with family and friends, prayer and mindfulness practices, and peer interaction. Some teachers also reported using positive self-reflection and time management techniques to cope with professional pressures.

3. Preferred Activities to Reduce Stress and Enhance Happiness

Teachers expressed a strong preference for participatory and wellness-oriented activities to reduce stress and increase happiness. Commonly suggested activities include yoga and meditation sessions, mindfulness training, recreational and sports activities, art and music therapy, professional counseling, motivational talks, peer interaction sessions, nature-based activities, and workshops on emotional well-being and work-life balance.

The findings indicate a high prevalence of stress among school teachers and a substantial lack of institutional support for teacher well-being. Although 67% of teachers reported awareness of the concept of Happiness Quotient (HQ), nearly all respondents (98%) were unaware of their own HQ levels, reflecting limited practical engagement with happiness assessment. Institutional initiatives addressing teacher stress were largely absent, with 92% of teachers reporting no school-level stress management measures and 99% indicating the absence of HQ-related sessions. Despite these gaps, teachers demonstrated strong positive perceptions regarding the role of happiness in professional effectiveness. All respondents (100%) agreed that happy teachers perform better and that schools should implement structured programs to promote teachers' mental health and happiness. The results highlight a clear disparity between teachers' perceived need for mental health and happiness-focused interventions and the minimal mechanisms currently available within schools. These findings underscore the urgent need for systematic, school-

based initiatives to foster teachers' mental well-being and Happiness Quotient, in alignment with the holistic vision of teacher empowerment advocated by the National Education Policy 2020.

Findings:

Teachers across all boards reported **high stress levels**, primarily due to excessive workload and administrative pressure.

- Most teachers rely on **individual coping strategies**; institutional support is limited.
- Awareness of **Happiness Quotient is low**, with few teachers knowing their own HQ or measures to enhance it.
- All respondents agreed that **teacher happiness improves professional effectiveness** and positively impacts students.
- 90% of teachers responded positively to the study, 7% were neutral, and 3% negative.

Recommendations:

1. Schools should implement **structured mental health and HQ programs**, including stress management and wellness workshops.
2. Establish **counseling and emotional support systems** for teachers.
3. Include **emotional intelligence, happiness, and work-life balance modules** in professional development programs.
4. Review **administrative practices** to reduce workload and role-related stress.
5. Integrate **mental health and happiness education** into pre-service teacher training and policy frameworks.

Conclusion:

Teachers' mental health and Happiness Quotient are

critical for effective teaching and positive classroom environments. High stress levels, lack of institutional support, and limited awareness of HQ highlight the need for **structured school-based interventions**. By promoting teacher well-being through counseling, wellness programs, and professional development, schools can create **healthy classrooms, foster student engagement, and support sustainable educational outcomes**, aligning with the vision of NEP 2020.

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