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## **DETERMINANTS OF PERCEIVING HAPPINESS AMONG GENERATION Z IN CAN THO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined in great detail the importance of comprehending how Generation Z perceives happiness, it included a hypothesis structure to support the outlined variables affecting post-millennials' perceptions of their happiness. To foster diverse responses and achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research's optimal outcomes, 30 individuals were invited to participate in an open interview regarding their perceptions of happiness. Respondents were randomly chosen from a broad spectrum of ages from 12 to 26 years old. Additionally, a Google Forms survey was distributed among 300 responders to gather diverse viewpoints, enhancing the reliability of the hypotheses. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software, utilizing different methods such as Cronbach's alpha, Descriptive Statistics, One-way ANOVA, and EFA to examine the gathered information thoroughly. The conclusive findings offered robust support for the factors influencing the perception of happiness among Generation Z. A comprehensive analysis was conducted to unravel how individuals within this demographic crafted their perspectives, determining the key factors that impact their happiness perceiving. The insights highlighted enriched and advanced knowledge of happiness and well-being concepts. They also offer suggestions for how post-millennials might reconsider their perspectives and assess their satisfaction levels. Finally, this study aids the targeted individuals in elevating their ability to perceive happiness.

**Keywords:** perceived happiness, well-being, generation Z, post-millennials, perspective, satisfaction

**Art as Self-Actualization for Experiential Well-being (ASEW):**  
*Potential Art Engagement to Search for the “Self” among Thai Youth*

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**ABSTRACT**

Knowing who you are is vital, but it will be even more critical at the turning point in life—transitioning from teen to adult. In general, in Thailand, the assessments of students’ self-actualizations have been done within the academic counselling class by filling in questionnaires or tests and talking with a school counselor. This proposed empirical study suggests alternatives to experimentally extending the self-actualization assessment from verbal or written to visual. Creating together while exploring the arts allows a different approach, drives creative expression, and searches for deeper reflection on the interconnections between artwork and “Self” as the main theme of experiential well-being towards a 21<sup>st</sup> century creative learning module.

The engagement in *Art as Self-Actualization for Experiential Wellbeing* (ASEW) is a visual art communication class project – the integration of creating visual art (painting, digital photography, or photo collages), composing written artform (free-style poetry), conceptualizing the key message (artist statement), and presenting the arts (onsite exhibition in class). Sixty Thai high school students will be recruited to participate in the project.

The aim of this ASEW study is not to replace the traditional aptitude assessments, but to work hand-in-hand with them. The ultimate goal of ASEW is to reflect the deeper dimension of the actual “Self” on favorability, ambition and motivation via visual art, free-style poetry as well as public presentation – reflecting visual, written and verbal communication skills simultaneously. Therefore, the results of ASEW can be used to generalize the findings among interviews, tests, and artworks to profoundly reflect the correlation between a student’s personality—strengths, weaknesses, motivation, etc.—and their real potentials, especially their choices of majors in the higher education.

**Theme:** arts, definitions and meaning of happiness and well-being, ideas of happiness and well-being, positive psychology: the science of happiness, the psychology of well-being and happiness, theoretical concepts of happiness and well-being

**Keywords:** art and wellbeing, positive psychology, school and health psychology, self-actualization

## **Preparing Happy Teachers; a Review of the Literature**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the past twenty years teacher happiness and wellbeing have been an increasingly studied topic of research. Researchers and teacher educators are examining the struggle to rebound from the global COVID-19 pandemic and face new realities in schools. Witnessing less students choosing to become teachers (Fuller, 2023), the increase of mental health concerns of current university students (Abrams, 2022), classroom teachers leaving the profession (Barnum, 2023), combined with teachers experiencing burnout and dissatisfaction at record rates (Kush et.al, 2022), teacher educators are seeking to research and make sense of this phenomenon. This review of the literature focuses on studies in the past five years that have examined topics of teacher happiness seeking to understand the implications. Definitions of key terms, themes, and gaps in the research are presented in the hopes of inspiring the next generation of teacher educators towards considering happiness and wellbeing when preparing teachers.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education; Happiness and Preservice Teachers; University Students; Teacher Wellbeing; Happy Teachers; Subjective Wellbeing

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Happy Teachers are Worth Studying

Our own personal experiences in schools, as well as in research, demonstrate that happy teachers positively impact their students both in terms of affect and academics (Becker et al., 2014; Braun et al., 2020; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Additionally, as a society, the wellbeing of the individuals that dedicate their lives to the next generation should be of importance to everyone. When teachers are happy we all benefit, when teachers are struggling, schools and our children also struggle (McCallum & Price, 2010; Roffey, 2012). By many measures, teachers today are not happy. Conceptualizing the wellbeing and happiness of teachers is a task worth researching, implementing and supporting. Yet, unpacking this issue is not as evident as it may appear.

The purpose of this paper is to provide researchers with a starting point in the review of recently published literature highlighting key terms and potential gaps in the research. Four branches of research studies examined in this paper include; the happiness of university students preparing to become teachers as individuals, the happiness of university students preparing to become teachers as a collective, the happiness of teachers as individuals, and the happiness of teachers in schools as a collective. Studies published in the past five years were examined, and in cases where research was limited, older studies were also included.

### 1.2 Happiness Research

In the preparation of this article, it became clear that many researchers are engaged in the topic of teacher happiness and wellbeing yet approach their studies from a wide range of disciplines and traditions. Researchers around the world have differed in their consideration of the ‘what’ the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ when approaching their research questions. These differences provide a rich tapestry of ways to encounter the same problem and can aid researchers in uncovering how best to answer their own research questions.

There are many terms used to describe this phenomenon such as happiness, subjective happiness, wellbeing, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, hope, resilience, and meaningful work to name but a few. However, none of which mean exactly the same thing. This leads to distinct differences in the “what” is studied and the respective literature review that would guide these studies. The potential downfall of a more siloed approach is that researchers may be unaware of similar patterns or findings in research that is outside of their typical purview.

The question of “how” to conduct study is a deeply divided discussion. Some researchers utilize surveys. Common surveys and scales include; Authentic Happiness Inventory (Sigala, 2019), Cantril Ladder (De Neve & Layard, 2023), The Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (Su et al., 2014); PERMA QUESTIONNAIRE (Seligman, 2018); PANAS Questionnaire (Watson et al., 1988) and Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985) just to name the most commonly utilized scales. Fewer researchers utilize qualitative methods such as interviews,

focus groups, classroom observations and open ended responses. Some researchers discounted the use of surveys questioning the validity of objective scales to measure happiness (Yakushko & Blodgett, 2021). Others have expressed concerns that happiness is culture bound and cannot be generalized across cultures (Ahmed, 2010). Some critique the westernization of happiness that alienates minoritized communities and ignores issues of social justice and power dynamics (Karnovsky et al., 2022; Yakushko, 2018; Yakushko & Blodgett, 2021). Pulling from collectivist traditions can help western researchers gain insight into collectivist traditions and measure happiness in ways that are culturally relevant (Joshnloo et al., 2021). The way that happiness is researched is wide open for debate.

The ‘why’ behind happiness studies challenges researchers to move from past patterns of measuring problems and negative outcomes to focus on examining the strengths and wellbeing of teachers and prospective teachers. Bjorkland et al. (2021) argue that while research measuring stress, burnout, and attrition is vital, it does not answer the question concerning the happiness of teachers. They note, “teachers who do not feel stress are not necessarily experiencing well-being—rather, they are simply experiencing the absence of bad feelings. ...” (para. 2). Positive psychology and happiness research in particular provides the theoretical framework to work differently. It requires a shift of attention and focus, requiring researchers to measure aspects that might have never been measured and thinking in ways that may seem counterintuitive to the status quo.

### 1.3 Current Context

The need for this research is evidenced by the current global educational context and fuels many researchers in their work. By many measures, we are experiencing a global education crisis. Professors, teachers, administrators, and students are struggling to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and face new realities in education. Schools are understaffed as teachers have left the profession in record numbers (Barnum, 2023). Remaining teachers are experiencing increased responsibilities, burnout, and dissatisfaction with higher levels of anxiety and depression (Kush et.al, 2022). Instead of support, teachers are faced with more violent children as well as hostile parents and school boards dictating books, curriculum, and programs used in the classroom (Walker, 2022). Steiner et al. (2022) report that “twice as many teachers and principals reported experiencing frequent job-related stress as the general population of working adults in January 2022” (p.5). These individual realities are coupled with school-wide pressures. Public schools are also faced with increasing demands from high stakes testing and accountability measures while children are coming to school with significant learning loss (Jerrim & Sims, 2022). School shootings in the United States continue to represent a threat to the safety and security of children and teachers (Fox, 2024). Schools, teachers, and administrators are struggling.

At the university level, there are similar patterns of disruption. Fewer college-age students are considering a teaching profession. For example, in just Pennsylvania, USA alone, there has been a more than 60% decline in teaching certificates awarded over the past ten years (Fuller, 2023). Those university students that are choosing to become a teacher are a part of the college-

age demographic that are experiencing a mental health crisis at record numbers (Abrams, 2022). Teacher educators often find themselves at the vertex of these issues. They are witnessing their own departments declining in enrollment, diminished tenured faculty positions, increased workloads and other university pressures. They also see the daily struggles of their college-age students in terms of their mental health, academics in the university classrooms, and experiences in their field placements in K-12 schools. As many education department faculty members were also former classroom teachers, they are well aware of the challenges in K-12 schools and often worry for the future of public education. Struggling with the realities of education, both in K-12 and in higher education, many professors are leaving universities at record rates (Flaherty, 2022). The challenges in K-12 schools are mirrored in the challenges faced by the education departments of universities. To say that the teaching profession as a whole is unwell is an understatement. We are at a breaking point (Farley & Chamberlain, 2021).

When focusing on these realities one could not be blamed to come to a rather bleak conclusion. How might teacher educators make sense of the current situation while simultaneously seeking to dream for a better future? Positive psychology, happiness, and wellbeing research in particular, is one approach.

## 2 Definition of Terms

Terms of happiness and wellbeing are presented through the lens of teachers and preservice teachers. Each respective term has a rich history and key research studies that have examined preservice teachers and classroom teachers. While not close to exhaustive, important strands of recent research are identified in the hopes to aid researchers in their own work.

**Burnout** (Kyriacou, 2001) is the feelings of negative emotions and exhaustion attributed to work. Researchers have examined burnout and engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006), connections to workload (OECD, 2020), the impact of mindfulness (Abenavoli et al., 2013; Flook et al., 2013), and individual perspectives (van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021).

**Efficacy** (Bandura & Walters, 1977) is the belief that one has the ability to influence outcomes. Multiple studies examined teacher efficacy in relationship to happiness, school climate (Donohoo, 2017; Zakariya, 2020), overall wellbeing (Friedman & Kass, 2002; Ortan et al., 2021; Zee, & Koomem, 2016), and job satisfaction (Burić & Moè, 2020; Caprara et al., 2006)

**Emotional Intelligence** (Mayer & Salovey 1997) can be defined as having the awareness and the ability to identify emotions and to regulate them. It is significant to teacher's wellbeing (Vesely-Maillefer & Saklofske, 2018; Yin et al., 2019). It is predictive of subjective happiness and life satisfaction (Hidalgo-Fuentes et al., 2023). It was also researched in reference to preservice teachers (Ivanec, 2020; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020; Turner & Stough, 2020; Vignjević et al., 2020).

**Eudaimonic Wellbeing** (Deci & Ryan, 2008) or **Objective Wellbeing** considers wellbeing as a process that involves living well. Carlisle, et al. (2009) describe it as 'happiness-plus-meaningfulness'

**Hedonic Wellbeing** (Deci & Ryan, 2008) or **Subjective Wellbeing** (SWB) has been explained as the way that people feel about their lives. It typically includes three components; a positive

mood, the absence of a negative mood, and satisfaction in life (Carlisle et al., 2009). It was found to be the greatest predictor of teacher stress (Carroll et al., 2022) and influenced by a positive school climate and support from school leaders (Granziera et al., 2021)

**Job Satisfaction** (Burić & Moè, 2020; Spector, 2022; Wartenberg et al., 2023) can be divided into four areas; nature of work, social aspects, contextual factors, and rewards. Toropova et al. (2021) found that teacher workload, teacher cooperation and teacher perceptions of student discipline in school were also factors most closely related to teacher job satisfaction.

**Life Satisfaction** (Luque-Reca et al., 2022.) is the way that a person views their life overall. Many surveys include questions that ask simple questions concerning an individual's satisfaction with their life. Cantril Ladder questions are one such example. It has been found to be a better predictor of important life choices than other happiness measures (Benjamin et al., 2012; Frijters & Krekel, 2021).

**Meaningful Work** (Baumeister & Vohs, 2005) is finding meaning in work and can contribute to increased life satisfaction and happiness. Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006) suggest a 'Best Self Exercise' where teachers can reflect and dream for their future.

**Mindfulness** is a term to describe a range of practices and beliefs to assist individuals to become present in the moment. This was found to be effective in reducing stress (Emerson et al., 2017), increasing a positive school climate (DiCarlo et al., 2020), influencing teacher effectiveness (Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018), and leading to happiness and self-compassion (Campos et al., 2016).

**Mindset** (Dweck, 2015) is a way of conceptualizing how a person makes sense of the world. A growth mindset was found to positively impact teacher wellness (Nalipay et al., 2021).

**Positive Education** is defined as education "for both traditional skills and for happiness" (Seligman et al., 2009; Seligman, 2011). Arguís-Rey (2021) provides a detailed list of programs that schools can utilize to implement positive education.

**Resilience** is the ability to withstand adversity (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2021; Seligman et al., 2009) Modules for preservice teachers called BRiTE (Building Resilience in Teacher Education) were found to promote resilience in preservice teachers (Mansfield et al. 2016) as was the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program (Jennings et al. 2017).

### 3 Review of the Literature

This article reviews four branches of research studies that examine; the happiness of university students preparing to become teachers as individuals, the happiness of university students preparing to become teachers as a collective, the happiness of teachers as individuals, and the happiness of teachers in schools as a collective. Studies published in the past five years were examined, and in cases where research was limited, older studies were also included.

### 3.1.1 Themes in the Happiness of University Students Preparing to Become Teachers (Individual Level)

Research that examines the happiness of preservice teachers at the individual level can be divided into two themes; the motivation for college-age students to become teachers and the internal emotional resources, emotional intelligence in particular, of preservice teachers.

#### 3.1.2 Decision to Become a Teacher

The reasons behind one's decision to become a teacher are complex and also found to contribute positively to wellbeing and happiness (Kaya & Çenesiz, 2020; Gülbahar et al., 2023; Ivanec, 2020; Mairitsch et al., 2021; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017). There are multiple factors and influences at play when making the career choice of teaching, some of which can be identified and measured using the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT)-Choice model (Ivanec, 2020). The most important motivation behind college-age students deciding to become teachers were found to be intrinsic and the altruistic value that they believed teaching had on society (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017). In examining motivation to become a teacher, intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation was a better predictor of life-satisfaction and wellbeing (Kaya & Çenesiz, 2020). Researchers found that life satisfaction was linked positively towards the love of the profession and negatively towards the fear that they felt about their future self as teacher (Gülbahar et al., 2023). Helping preservice teachers to develop a sense of intrinsic purpose in their decision to become a teacher can function as a protective factor in their wellbeing (Mairitsch et al., 2021). However, taken too far, teachers that developed a self-sacrificing martyr view that embraces the "doing it for the kids" philosophy were more vulnerable to higher levels of burnout (Gray, 2022). Developing a healthy philosophy and motivation for teaching is a vital component in the wellbeing of educators.

Preservice teachers also noted that the perception of the teaching profession, both positive and negative, impacted their own outlooks. The reactions of peers, parents, and teachers in the field impacted how they viewed their own decision to become a teacher and were contributing factors in their wellbeing (Mairitsch et al., 2021). Preservice teachers described noticing a declining status of teachers in society as a whole (Mairitsch et al., 2021). Thus, the implied status of teachers at a broader level impacted the wellbeing of preservice teachers at their individual level.

#### 3.1.3 Internal Emotional Resources

The emotions of preservice teachers are an important consideration for teacher educators (Chen, 2020; Frenzel et al., 2016; Ivanec, 2020; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020; Turner & Stough, 2020; Vignjević et al., 2020). Ivanec (2020) found that pre-service teachers with higher levels of emotional competence also felt higher levels of satisfaction in their decision to become a teacher. Nalipay et al. (2021) found that the emotional mindset of preservice teachers was pivotal in

creating positive emotions and those teachers that viewed emotions as changeable were better positioned towards happiness. Self-Efficacy was frequently researched and attributed to creating the emotional dispositions needed to find happiness and success in teaching (Chesnut, & Burley, 2015; García-Lázaro et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2022). Tied to efficacy, the self-confidence of preservice teachers caused not only confidence in teaching abilities, but also more effective classroom management and higher levels of satisfaction (Dos Santos, 2021). As college students become teachers, the desire to be viewed as a competent teacher impacts self-esteem and then predicts levels of happiness (Hwang et al., 2015). Competence also impacts the commitment to persist in teaching (Wang et al., 2021). Other positive emotions such as joy and enjoyment were linked to preservice teachers being able to persist in their teaching placements (Audrin & Hascoët 2024). Grit and hope were found to be predictors of happiness (Vela et al., 2023). Emotional resources of preservice teachers are predictors of success in the field, persistence in teaching, and in the happiness and wellbeing of future teachers.

Emotions during daily teaching and also during the entirety of teacher education programs were found to fluctuate (Chen, 2020). Practicum experiences, while vital in the development of teachers, can be a very stressful experience for students (Mairitsch et al., 2021). Reality shock, a term used to describe the feelings when preservice teachers encounter teaching experiences that differ either from what they imagined, or from what they were taught in their university classes, can contribute to a whole range of negative emotion (Kim & Cho, 2014). Ji et al. (2022) found that the levels of positive emotions changed during their practicum experiences with preservice teachers noting that school climate, leadership and school reforms contributed to increased negative emotions towards the end of the experience. Similarly, as preservice teachers neared graduation, their levels of satisfaction and wellbeing declined as students noted difficulties with work-life balance (Squires et al., 2022). It seems that in these studies, as preservice teachers neared the end of their university experiences, their negative emotions and dissatisfaction increased.

Preservice teachers able to adapt to these changes in emotions were more inclined to experience happiness and success. Mérida-López et al. (2022) found that the regulation of emotions was the most important predictor of happiness. Some studies have used tools such as the Teacher Emotions Scales (TES) as a tool which can be used to measure and identify emotions experienced during teaching (Frenzel et al., 2016). Encouraging preservice teachers to stop and consider their emotions as well as to journal concerning their emotions was a useful tool in uncovering these emotions (Frenzel et al., 2016). Preservice teachers with resilience were found to have higher levels of happiness (García-Martínez et al., 2022; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2021; Seligman et al., 2009). Martínez, et al. (2022) found that resilience was an important mediator between psychological traits and wellbeing.

In addition to emotions while teaching, preservice teachers also expressed a pressure to appear perfect and hide their needs for mental health services from faculty and department staff (Ressler et al., 2022). Students shared that “the idea of being under surveillance in all sorts of ways in order to measure students’ professional dispositions exacerbated this pressure to appear perfect” (p.6). Preservice teachers need opportunities to discuss the whole range of emotions that

they experience during both their practicum and teacher education program without fear of judgement. They may need assistance from professors, field experience supervisors or a therapist to process these emotions.

### 3.1.4 Themes in the Happiness of University Students Preparing To Become Teachers (Collective Level)

Research that examines the happiness of preservice teachers at the collective level can be divided into two themes; Curriculum and Relationships and Belonging.

### 3.1.5 Curriculum

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, teacher educators asked themselves, “to what extent does our teacher education curriculum prepare prospective teachers to face...VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) processes that impact education? (Hadar et al., 2020, p.2). Authors suggest that the Covid-19 epidemic was a window into how underprepared future teachers are to face other challenges in the future. They, along with other researchers, suggest additions to teacher preparation curriculum to include elements such as mindfulness training for preservice teachers, finding that it promoted wellbeing (Cochran & Peters, 2023; Hwang et al., 2019) and improved classroom management (Beuchel et al., 2022). Others suggest resilience initiatives (García-Martínez et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2019; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2021; Seligman et al., 2009). Modules for preservice teachers called Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) were found to promote resilience in preservice teachers (Mansfield et al. 2016). The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program was also found to be a useful tool to build resilience (Jennings et al. 2017). Emotional Intelligence and professional identity were key elements in career satisfaction and several studies encouraged teacher education programs to include modules that support emotional intelligence (Gong & Wang, 2023; Peláez-Fernández, 2021; Valente, 2022). In the past five years of research, these curricular additions represented most of the total research that addressed teacher education curriculum.

While most research encouraged teacher educators to add modules or trainings to the curriculum, few spoke to reductions, realignments, or reconceptualization of the curriculum. The workload and difficulties in time management were identified as contributing factors in student stress (Gülbahar et al., 2023; Squires et al., 2022). Ressler, et al. (2022) was one of the few studies that encouraged a holistic reexamination of the entire teacher education program. Ressler et al. (2022) reported that preservice teachers found that their teacher education program was a contributing cause to students stress and anxiety. Students reported feeling guilty choosing self-care when faced with their workloads. Faculty, instead of supporting students, often exasperated the symptoms of students’ preexisting mental health concerns. Additionally, gatekeeping structures in the department were viewed “as punitive and anxiety-inducing” (Ressler et al, 2022,

p.12) causing additional emotional stress. Teacher educators were encouraged to reexamine their programs to best support students during this critical time in their lives.

### 3.1.6 Relationships and Belonging

Belonging in teacher education programs was found to be important in the happiness and wellbeing of students (Allen et al., 2021; Bjorklund et al, 2021). Belonging in a range of relationships across the program also contributed to higher levels of self-efficacy (Bjorklund et al., 2020). Relationships with faculty members were found to be a salient aspect that increased belonging (Sulis et al., 2021; Slaten et al, 2018). For preservice teachers that struggle with their mental health, professors were described as unaware of student struggles, or at times contributing to their stress and anxiety (Ressler et al, 2022). Researchers encouraged teacher educators to have frequent check-ins with students to build relationships and allow professors to be seen as a resource and ally. This practice, along with professors encouraging frequent journaling opportunities, can “normalize the process of reflecting about wellbeing and of advocating pastoral support from mentors, professors, and academic supervisors” (Sulis et al., 2021, p. 9). Thus, students belong not only when they have positive feelings, but they also belong when they might be struggling. Students are then free to express their authentic feelings of self-doubt and anxiety without fear of negative consequences (Ressler et al., 2022).

## 3.2 Themes in the Happiness of Teachers (Individual Level)

The vast majority of studies researched the ways that individual teachers thought about their happiness. White (2021) identified three ways to consider the happiness of teachers through “professional identity (who teachers are), professional practice (what teachers do), and efficacy (how teachers know they are having an impact)” (p.167-168). These categories have informed the organization of this section. Research that examined how individual teachers experienced wellbeing and happiness is divided into three sections; Teachers as Human, Teachers as Professionals, and Teachers as Reflective Agents. There are not always clear boundaries between these categories and the ways they overlap and influence one another is not always clearly evident (Bardach et al., 2022).

### 3.2.1 Teachers as Human

Most studies approached happiness and teachers by focusing on the ways that psychological characteristics and other internal processes impact individual teachers (Berger et al., 2022). Four popular frameworks have been utilized with teachers include PsyCAP, PERMA, PROSPER, and the Healthy Minds Framework. Psychological Capital also known as PsyCAP model (Luthans et al., 2015) which identifies four elements; Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism. PsyCAP linked to teacher job satisfaction (Viseu et al., 2016). Another common model is called PERMA (Falecki & Mann, 2021; Forgeard et al., 2011; Seligman 2011). PERMA views wellbeing

through five domains: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The PROSPER Framework (Noble & McGrath, 2015) proposes seven paths to wellbeing: Positivity, Relationships, Outcomes, Strengths, Purpose, Engagement, and Resilience. Lastly, the Healthy Minds Framework also named The Plasticity of Well-being Framework (Dahl et al., 2020) takes into account four dimensions of wellbeing; awareness, connection, insight, and purpose. Focus is placed on the teach-ability of wellbeing rather than a static construction. All of these frameworks have aligned surveys and can be used to measure happiness and wellbeing.

Some researchers have examined subparts of these frameworks. Emotional intelligence was found to be a significant predictor of happy teachers (Peláez-Fernández, 2021). Studies also linked mindfulness as a tool that to help teachers pay attention to emotions, regulate emotions, and reduce stress (de Carvalho et al., 2021). Resilience was another factor that was found to contribute to teacher wellbeing. Dispositional happiness and self-esteem were also linked (Benevene et al., 2019). Teachers who employed positive coping strategies were found to have a higher level of wellbeing (MacIntyre et al., 2020). The research provides a range of emotions that positively contribute to the wellbeing of teachers.

### 3.2.2 Teachers as Professionals

Studies examined how teachers at the individual level functioned and were impacted by their professional roles at school. Findings suggest that when teachers were happy in their school context, this positively impacted their health (Benevene et al., 2019). Toropova, et al. (2021) found that teacher workload, teacher cooperation, and teacher perceptions of student discipline in school were the factors most closely related to teacher job satisfaction. Other external processes and factors such as the climate of the school was a significant factor impacting a teachers job performance (Selamat et al., 2013). Manasia, et al. (2022) found that job resources such as autonomy, value of teaching profession, feedback, professional and social positive relationships, and job variety, have a greater influence on the happiness of teachers than their own individual personal emotional resources.

Further studies examine the connection between student academic performance and teacher happiness (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Kun and Gadanez (2022) found that teachers that experienced workplace well-being and happiness also felt hope and optimism adding that “This implies that the success of others is as important for teachers as their own individual success in producing workplace happiness.” (p.187). The idea is summarized by McCallum and Price (2010) in their article *Well teachers, well students*.

### 3.2.3 Teachers as Reflective Agents

The ways that teachers reflect on their efficacy, job, and life overall were found to impact their happiness. Multiple studies examined teacher efficacy in relationship to school climate (Bardach

et al., 2022; Donohoo, 2017; Zakariya, 2020), overall wellbeing (Friedman & Kass, 2002; Ortan et al., 2021; Zee, & Koomem, 2016), and job satisfaction (Burić & Moè, 2020; Caprara et al., 2006). Job satisfaction was closely linked to relationships at school including students, colleagues and parents (Burić & Moè, 2020; Spector, 2022; Wartenberg et al, 2023). The ways that teachers conceptualize job satisfaction can be divided into four areas; nature of work, social aspects, contextual factors, and rewards. Toropova, et al. (2021), found that job satisfaction was connected to teacher workload, teacher cooperation, and teacher perceptions of student discipline. It has been found that life satisfaction was a better predictor of important life choices than other happiness measures (Benjamin et al., 2012; Frijters & Krekel, 2021).

### 3.3 Themes in the Happiness of Teachers in Schools (Collective Level)

Research that examines the happiness of teachers in schools at the collective level can be divided into three themes; Interconnected Nature of Happiness, Connected to Job Resources, and Connected to Leadership.

#### 3.3.1 Interconnected Nature of Happiness

Teacher happiness is contagious and impacts the entire school ecosystem (Glazzard & Rose, 2020; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Zakariya, 2020). One cannot sacrifice the needs of teachers and assume that the health of the school will be maintained (McCallum & Price, 2010; Roffey, 2012). It is actually the opposite, teachers that viewed themselves as martyrs self-sacrificing their own wellbeing with the hopes that they would be able to “do it for the kids” were found to have higher levels of burnout (Gray, 2022). In comparison, Lavy and Bocker (2018) found a connection between teachers who believed that their work had meaning, which was connected to positive teacher–student relationships, and resulted in job satisfaction.

The reciprocal relationship between teacher happiness and relationships with students was examined by multiple studies (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Roffey, 2012; Spilt et al., 2011). Moskowitz and Dewaele (2021) found that when students perceived their teachers as happy, not only did they have a more positive attitude towards their teachers, but they felt more positive about the content of the class. These individual relationships multiplied and impact the school climate (Ross et al., 2012; Zakariya, 2020). Likewise, teachers and students were found to identify similar desires and suggestions in how to best create a peaceful and happy school (Calp, 2020). The wellness of teachers impacts students and vice versa.

Workplace relationships with colleagues were also key to teacher happiness (Le Cornu, 2013; Steiner et al., 2022). Furthermore, De Stasio et al. (2020) found that an individual’s compassion and subjective happiness alone were not sufficient to provide a positive job fit, instead peer relationships and proactive strategies were most beneficial.

### 3.3.2 Connected to Job Resources

Teachers have more stress and levels of burnout compared to other labor categories and issues of workplace health and wellbeing are often ignored (OECD, 2020). In many studies, the workplace was a significant contributing factor of stress and burnout (Carroll et al., 2022; Manasia et al., 2020; Rajendran et al., 2020). The happiness of teachers was positively linked to the job resources they experienced in schools such as autonomy, value of the teaching profession, feedback, professional and social positive relationships, and job variety (Manasia et al., 2020). Teachers reported unattainable workloads and managing student disruptive behavior as the leading negative impact on teacher happiness (Rajendran et al., 2020). In fact, the negative experiences with workload were the most predictive factor contributing to stress and burnout, not the emotional resources of individual teachers (Carroll et al., 2022). Carroll et al. (2022) further conclude, “Given the frequency with which workload is identified as a major stressor, paired with the low variance between-schools, this may suggest that workload issues are a systemic problem and need to be addressed at a policy level within education departments and jurisdictions” (p. 463). Job resources are a vital element to consider when seeking to understand the happiness and wellbeing of teachers.

### 3.3.3 Connected to Leadership

The happiness of teachers was connected to the school leadership (Cansoy, 2018; Toropova et al., 2021). The leadership styles of building administration impacted teachers. Leadership styles described as transformational, instructional, and visionary influenced the happiness of teachers in the building (Dursun & Bilgivar, 2022). Leadership also impacted teacher’s views of job satisfaction (Cansoy, 2018). School environments where leaders trusted teachers and gave them the authority to make decisions were found to positively impact teacher wellbeing (Yusoff, 2020). School leaders who modeled mindfulness were also found to positively impact teachers. Klap, et al. (2021) examined the impact of mindfulness training on school leaders and found a positive impact on stress levels and school leaders’ abilities to speak kindly to one’s self. The impact of one leader in a building cannot be underestimated.

## 4 gaps in the research

Four gaps in the literature were identified; Teacher Educators, Systemic Changes in Teacher Education and Schools, Center Labor Conditions in Schools and the Occupational Health of Teachers, and Happiness as a Tool Causing Harm.

### 4.1 Teacher Educators

Higher education has changed dramatically in the past ten years (UNESCO, 2023). Since then, there have been several international studies that have examined the happiness of college professors, a few have looked into professors in the American context, and even fewer that have

examined professors of education in particular (Reilly, 2020). In many of the proposed models and recommendations for preservice teacher support, assumptions are made that teacher educators are equipped to lead meaningful discussions or instruction on wellness. Likewise they assume professors have the time and emotional health to be a support for struggling students. This supposition should be questioned, as mental health concerns for faculty members are also increasing (Johnson & Lester, 2022). While professors are found to be vital to the belonging and even the mental health of their students, the lack of research and support for faculty members is a glaring omission.

## 4.2 Systemic Changes in Teacher Education and Schools

More work has been done on the internal characteristics and processes of individual teachers while neglecting the systematic, structural influences that may underlie these processes (Berger et al., 2022). In other words, it is like seeking to examine the patient while ignoring that they continue to live in the same polluted environment that may be the cause of the sickness. This is true for higher education and also for K-12 schools.

In higher education, there are few studies that have examined how teacher educators have made systematic changes to their own university teacher preparation programs. Additionally, research that provides teacher educators with frameworks of best practice in how to implement the theoretical underpinnings of happiness research is lacking (Falecki & Mann, 2021). In essence, unanswered questions include those that examine the praxis of teacher education programs. These questions may include:

1. What are professors of education doing in their classrooms to model and promote the same practices that they expect their preservice teachers to employ when they become teachers?
2. How might this impact curriculum planning, policies, structures for field experience, services, relationship building and activities in the department?
3. How can these changes be viewed holistically rather than just adding one more assignment to a class?

Research suggests that preservice teachers struggle with workloads and time pressures during teacher education programs (Mairitsch et al., 2021), yet there are few studies that examine what has been done to remedy this reality.

In school settings, school-wide happiness and wellness initiatives, while found to be effective (de Carvalho et al., 2021; García-Martínez et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2019; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2021; Seligman et al., 2009), should be more fully examined through the lens of not adding more new initiatives but finding ways to streamline and reduce workloads. Individual teachers may view these initiatives differently (Falecki & Mann, 2021). As one teacher noted, “They offer things like wellness programs and mindfulness activities . . . those things are not helpful. . . . They were adding things to my plate just to check a box.” (Steiner et al, 2022). Teachers should be a part of planning the implementation, designing the research, and providing their voice not only to identify struggles but to guide such efforts.

Studies that examine how universities and schools negotiate systematic changes for wellness would be a valuable contribution to the field.

#### 4.3 Center Labor Conditions in Schools and the Occupational Health of Teachers

Individual practices such as gratitude, mindfulness, and joy impact happiness, however, a teacher's experience with their own happiness and wellbeing is not solely rooted in the individual (De Stasio et al., 2020). Trainings and even school wide initiatives have value, yet they are insufficient to account for the totality of the issue. The reality that teachers are leaving the field at record numbers, and college age students are decreasingly deciding to become teachers, should highlight that the problem cannot surely reside at the individual level. This is a public health concern. As Farley and Chamberlain (2021) suggest, more research should examine the impact of educational policy, the working conditions of teachers, and their wellbeing. Studies that utilize labor conditions and the occupational health of teachers would provide a useful lens in understanding factors that contribute to the wellbeing and happiness of teachers.

#### 4.4 Happiness as a Tool Causing Harm

The critiques of happiness studies, especially those in relationship to teachers, provide insights into how happiness studies can be used to mask issues such as structural racism, inequality, and abuses of power (Karnovsky et al., 2022; Yakushko, 2018; Yakushko & Blodgett, 2021). The continuous focus on the positive emotional resources of individual teachers, and the recommendations to provide additional trainings or skills sets to handle these emotions, can be used to shift the onus to the individual level, neglecting the structural and collective obligations (Yakushko & Blodgett, 2021). It can create a culture of toxic positivity where teachers feel unable to voice critiques or negative emotions (Karnovsky et al., 2022). Unveiling the power structures that undergird this work may prove to be useful in challenging the status quo. This questioning could be applied to K-12 schools as well as teacher preparation programs in higher education. Seeking to question the motivation for wellness initiatives asking questions like:

1. Who is benefiting from this initiative?
2. How might the focus on positivity lead to the "exploitation of human capital?" (Karnovsky et al., 2022, pg.19).

Studies that critically examine how happiness and wellness work to maintain unethical treatment of teachers or preservice teachers would be beneficial.

### 5 Conclusion

In reviewing research from the past five years concerning the happiness of preservice teachers and classroom teachers there are definitive common themes. First, in both preservice teachers and classroom teachers, there were more articles that looked solely at the individual, more specifically to the individual's emotional resources. While of course this is a vital aspect of this topic, researchers should consider both the individual and the collective influences on happiness

and teacher wellbeing (van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). The impact of belonging and positive relationships on teacher happiness was evident at every level. University classrooms and school classrooms are places of collective energy. In this way, the happiness of teachers is tied to the happiness of children (Glazzard & Rose, 2020; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Zakariya, 2020). As a society we cannot say that we care for the wellbeing of children and then neglect the wellbeing of those that teach them. Likewise, we cannot say that we care about the happiness of university students and neglect their professors. The happiness of the individual is tied up in the happiness of the collective.

Secondly, teaching is a profession where emotions are a part of the daily experience of teachers. Open and honest conversations surrounding emotions involved in teaching seems to be a beneficial stance for school leaders and teacher educators to employ. While encouraging efficacy and confidence, leaders need to cautiously seek to not silence critique and the expression of negative emotions. Toxic positivity is not the same as happiness nor is it useful. Helping teachers to develop resilience and the ability to regulate emotions seem to positively impact happiness. Trainings and techniques that support mindfulness, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence are promising. Continuing to tack on programs and trainings to an already full plate without examining the whole system only adds to increased workload and counteracts the intent. The premise of positive psychology and happiness studies is that these ideas are not just an added element, they are the whole element.

Lastly, intuitions like higher education and schools, need to listen and believe teachers. They are sending us a message. When they tell school leaders and professors that their workloads are unmanageable, they should listen. The expectations in schools and education departments in higher education may not be aligned to what teachers need today. Leaders need to take the responsibility to make sense of these issues in their own contexts.

Positive psychology and happiness studies open possibilities for teacher educators and school leaders. Conceptualizing what it means to be a teacher today may involve what Farley and Chamberlain (2021) describe as “new narratives around teaching – ones that highlight the joys of being in the classroom rather than the challenges” (p. 305). Positive psychology and happiness studies can help articulate these new narratives. This approach involves paying attention to belonging, making positive changes in the job resources of teachers, and supporting the wellbeing of teachers.

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## **EVALUATING KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF GREEN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADOPTION IN CAN THO CITY**

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### **Abstract**

With increasingly rapid urbanization and population explosion in recent years, air pollution has become an urgent problem for authorities. And transportation is researched as the industry with the greatest negative impact on the current air condition. Currently, there are many studies focusing on air pollution and minimizing its effects on humans. This is being done by the government and businesses in promoting sustainable development criteria and supporting policies for green products. The goal of this study is to bring sustainable development methods closer to people through the KAP model, specifically in this study is to evaluate people's knowledge, attitude and practice of Green public transportation Adoption. The research team collected data through 250 online surveys and 30 in-depth interviews with student and staff groups, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. From there, the results of people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices about applying green public transportation are presented through a Likert scale assessment model, using Cronbach' Alpha, One -way ANOVA, Independent Sample T-Test to process data in SPSS and Google Forms software. Research results show that people have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors towards Green Public Transport. Green public transport has a positive impact on people's quality of life and improves their health. Furthermore, there is a correlation between knowledge, attitudes, practices and behavioral influences. The research results will benefit readers and research experts on Green Transportation Methods. On the other hand, the research also contributes as a source of information and foundational research documents for future sustainable development research projects. However, the research also has certain limitations in terms of resources and scale, which may not be able to be properly evaluated on a larger scale. The research team encourages future research to expand the scale to larger cities and longer study periods.

**Keywords:** KPA, traffic, green public transportation, air pollution, environment, sustainability

## **Leveraging nature, activity, and social ties for mental wellness in modern society**

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### Abstract

Ancient civilizations had an abundant amount of "resources" that were built into their day-to-day lifestyles, making mental illness and distress either non-existent or at least rare (Ilardi, 2009). Since most modern lifestyles are so far removed from the natural way our species lived for millennia, the lifestyle itself might be part of what causes distress and disorder (Nesse, 2015).

The modern population faces health challenges: overeating, malnutrition, inactivity, insufficient sunlight, poor sleep, and isolation, which together worsen physical health and impact depression rates and treatment (Hidaka, 2012). It can be beneficial to reflect on traditional Eastern cultures and philosophies that have wisdom and practices that, if applied broadly, could reduce mental distress and addictive behaviours in our societies. For example, *Ikigai*, a Japanese concept of living, has ten rules, which include staying active, reconnecting with nature, surrounding oneself with peers and exercising daily.

Activities that connect one to nature, such as forest bathing (*shirin-yoku*), are associated with improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, physical activity, sleep (Jimenez et al., 2021), and mental health, specifically for individuals with depressive symptoms (Furuyashiki et al., 2019). Additionally, natural selection has shaped the human body to thrive on far greater physical activity than what is typical in today's society. Often neglected in mental healthcare, exercise promotes mental health and ensures brain functioning; it reduces anxiety, depression, and negative mood and improves self-esteem and cognitive functioning (Deslandes et al., 2009). Since humans are hard-wired for social connectedness, intimate social bonds and interactions are vital to thrive in modern society (Pinker, 2015). The quality and quantity of social relationships have been linked to mental health, morbidity and mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

This paper proposes that connection to nature, exercising and maintaining positive social interaction are the "resources" from hunter-gatherers' lifestyles (and traditional Eastern cultural practices) that could improve mental health, nurture happiness and increase longevity in modern society. Future research directions and implications for enhancing societal well-being are touched on.

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## SOCIAL WORKERS' HAPPINESS IN THEIR WORKPLACE

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Given the emotionally and physically taxing nature of social work, it is imperative to consider the wellbeing and job satisfaction of social workers to maintain the provision of high-quality services. This study demonstrates the relationship between social workers' subjective wellbeing and professional lives and links it to eight wellness dimensions.

**Aim:** The objective of this research was to comprehend how social workers view their level of happiness at work.

**Method:** In this qualitative study, exploratory and descriptive research designs were deemed appropriate, together with an interpretivist paradigm. Non-probability purposive sampling was employed. The participants (11 frontline social workers and 12 supervisors) were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule and provided rich and valuable data exploring social workers' happiness at work.

**Results:** The decline in South African social workers' morale and working conditions was highlighted by the participants in this study, with little support from their supervisors or agencies.

**Conclusions:** The participants acknowledged that there is a spillover regarding work-life balance from the work domain to the family domain and vice versa, which highlights the importance of maintaining boundaries that impact their general wellbeing and ongoing self-care

**KEYWORDS:** Workplace 1; happiness 2; eight wellness dimensions 3

## 6 INTRODUCTION

Understanding social workers' subjective well-being from a work-life perspective was the goal of this study. Maintaining the quality of service delivery depends on social workers' well-being, and their contentment in their line of work demands quick attention. This study demonstrates the relationship between social workers' subjective wellbeing in their personal and professional lives and the eight dimensions of wellness, or, to put it another way, their holistic wellbeing. The study's conceptual approach integrates the eight elements of wellness—emotional, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual, and environmental—with work-life balance and subjective wellbeing (Bredell, 2022).

High caseloads and unfavorable work settings affect social workers, and not much research has been done to determine how providing adequate support could alter the circumstances. Improving working conditions and recognizing social work as a profession deserving of respect may have a direct impact on job satisfaction and shape how social workers view their roles in their personal and professional lives. Research has shown that workers' "happiness in the moment" at work is a good indicator of their temporary well-being (Diener, 2000:34). It seems that social workers' personal and professional lives intersect and that a healthy balance between the two is necessary for positive subjective wellbeing or happiness.

## 7 METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach was utilised in this study. To fully grasp the extent of the issue, it is essential to investigate the daily experiences of frontline managers and social workers. The interpretivist paradigm and the exploratory and descriptive research methodologies were judged adequate for this qualitative investigation. It made it possible to establish fresh perspectives on understudied topics, go in-depth with the examination of some concerns (the work-life perspective and social workers' subjective wellbeing), and link the data to the eight dimensions of wellness (Bredell, 2022). To summarise, qualitative research focuses on people's experiences and explores the meaning that the participants provide to the phenomenon in question.

The term "subjective" describes how people describe their feelings. This entails paying attention to what they have to say. Happiness is referred to as "wellbeing," but in a more specific context. Subjective wellbeing can generally be defined as "how people evaluate their lives" (Diener & Scollen, 2003:404) which relates to Seligman's (2011) flourishing concept. It is evident from the literature that subjective wellbeing is linked to the positive psychology theory (Diener & Scollen, 2003; Peng et al., 2011; Seligman, 2011). Work-family balance means "satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2000:751).

The term "work-life" seems to be more comprehensive and is therefore used in this study.

Therefore, positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) was the theoretical point of departure strengthened by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions by Fredrickson (2004), which means that subjective wellbeing broadens our vision and builds more effective use of available

resources (Veenhoven, 2008). The boundary and border theories also serve as a theoretical framework for this research as it was used to study role conflicts in the work-family domains. This study draws on Diener's (1984; 2000) theory, which illuminates the "positive affect" and "negative affect" as experienced by the respondents, which in turn are linked to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions by Fredrickson (2004) and the flourishing concept by Seligman (2011).

### 7.1 Research questions and objectives

The following research questions were formulated:

- How do social workers perceive their work-life balance?
- How do social workers reflect on their subjective wellbeing?

The objectives were:

To examine the nature of social work in the South African context.

To conceptualise a work-life perspective of social work within the South African context.

To describe and analyse the dimensions of social workers' subjective wellbeing based on a work-life perspective.

To empirically investigate how social workers perceive their work-life balance and their subjective wellbeing.

To draw conclusions and make recommendations to social workers, their managers, and policy formulators regarding the work-life and wellbeing of social workers.

### 7.2 Data collection

Purposive sampling was applied in this research. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were chosen from a professional network and participated in their personal capacity. 11 frontline social workers and 12 managers/supervisors were interviewed with the social workers having at least 18 months' work experience and the supervisors, having 2 years. The participants were interviewed by the researcher using semi-structured open-ended questions.

### 7.3 Findings

The following aspects were identified by participants to play a significant role in their happiness in the workplace.

#### 7.3.1 Safety

Social work is known to be a demanding and sometimes dangerous working environment. When social workers feel unsafe in their work environment, it means that it is the basic need to feel safe that is not being met, which impacts the emotional dimension of wellness (Bredell, 2022). If this is being handled as a priority by the employer, social workers feel respected and cared for by the organisation.

### **7.3.2 The availability of resources**

Lack of resources describes the dangers and caliber of services provided to customers when there are insufficient resources to complete the task at hand. This experience is connected to the occupational dimension of wellness that negatively affects social workers, and employers are not permitted to expect their staff to complete tasks without effective and suitable resources (Bredell, 2022).

### **7.3.3 To be recognized in the profession**

Participants voiced the belief—which is consistent with the literature—that the social work profession is not given the credit and acknowledgment it merits. Improving working conditions and giving social work the respect it deserves as a profession could have a good effect on social workers' job satisfaction and lower staff turnover. Subjective wellbeing, which encompasses feeling content in one's career and work surroundings, is correlated with job satisfaction (Bredell, 2022).

### **7.3.4 Emotional support and supervision**

By modeling emotional support, this should be the proper technique to help social workers reflect on their experiences and develop and maintain emotional resilience, all while adhering to the goals and objectives of supervision. This has much to do with positive psychology and the idea of choosing and taking responsibility for one's happiness. This pertains to the social aspect of wellbeing since it discusses the support network, which in this case is supportive supervision. It also refers to the environmental dimension being pleasant and conducive to support the social workers' wellbeing. Findings reiterate the necessity for adequate supervisory support, which was also shared and indicated by the participants. They articulated that supervision, especially guidance and support in supervision, was very important to them (Bredell, 2022). Emotional resilience for social workers is significant, but it's critical to understand that resilience is a skill that must be developed and is essential for handling demands and change. Proper and supportive supervision is crucial.

### **7.3.5 Organisational commitment**

Organisational conditions can hinder social workers from flourishing and developing (Pullen-Sansfaçon *et al.*, 2012). This impression is predicated on the degree of assistance that the employee feels they are receiving and the belief that the company cares about their wellbeing.

### **7.3.6 Balance between work and life**

Findings showed that as long as there is a successful work-life balance, social workers' wellbeing is preserved. It further indicated that experiences, both good and bad, can transfer from one domain to another and that not all social workers have yet perfected this kind of equilibrium. This is consistent with research showing that job and family life can have positive and negative effects on one another and that there needs to be a balance between the two (Bredell, 2022).

### **7.3.7 Development opportunities, decision making and communication**

Examining social workers' productivity without taking the time and money to create and implement personal performance goals is pointless. This process can significantly be linked with job satisfaction as they will feel supported. It is further linked to Seligman's (2011) flourishing concept and strengthened by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004). Unfortunately, the other side is also true, in that not all social workers feel that they get the opportunity to grow and flourish, as shared by some of the participants. The idea is that employees can exercise their freedom to decide which work option would work the best for them and their situation, which was clearly illustrated by some of the participants. They also seem to need clear and positive communication in the workplace.

### **7.3.8 Caseload**

In South Africa, there is a severe social worker deficit. Social workers in the field face heavier caseloads due to a shortage of workers to meet the demands of the populace. Significantly, social workers' stress and frustration are correlated with high caseloads, but was indicated by the participants to warrant the need for supportive supervision and guidance.

### **7.3.9 Colleague support and teamwork**

The participant narratives emphasized the benefits of collegial support in a team environment and how it made them feel appreciated. The importance of having a supporting professional network and working as a team were emphasized. This is relevant to the study because it affects social workers' job satisfaction, which is correlated with the occupational dimension of wellness.

### **7.3.10 Respect and acknowledgement of boundaries**

It also means that in order to create a balance between the two domains, social workers must develop, maintain, and modify their own boundaries (Clark, 2000; Wepfer et al., 2018) and that it should be respected by the employee. It is further suggested that when these two domains are in balance, it enhances the job satisfaction of social workers.

### **7.3.11 Job satisfaction**

These aspects are closely related to subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction from the angle of work-life balance. These statements clarify the dimensions of occupational, emotional, and social wellness that are related to a positive work experience, job satisfaction and happiness in the workplace.

## **3. Self-care**

Although self-care is mainly the social workers' responsibility, the participants in this study concurred that self-care ought to be something one loves doing, that brings them joy and happiness, and that improves their overall wellbeing. The aspects identified by the participants point to the 8 dimensions of wellness which impacts on the overall wellbeing of individuals (see Figure 1 the eight dimensions of wellness, Swarbrick, 2006).

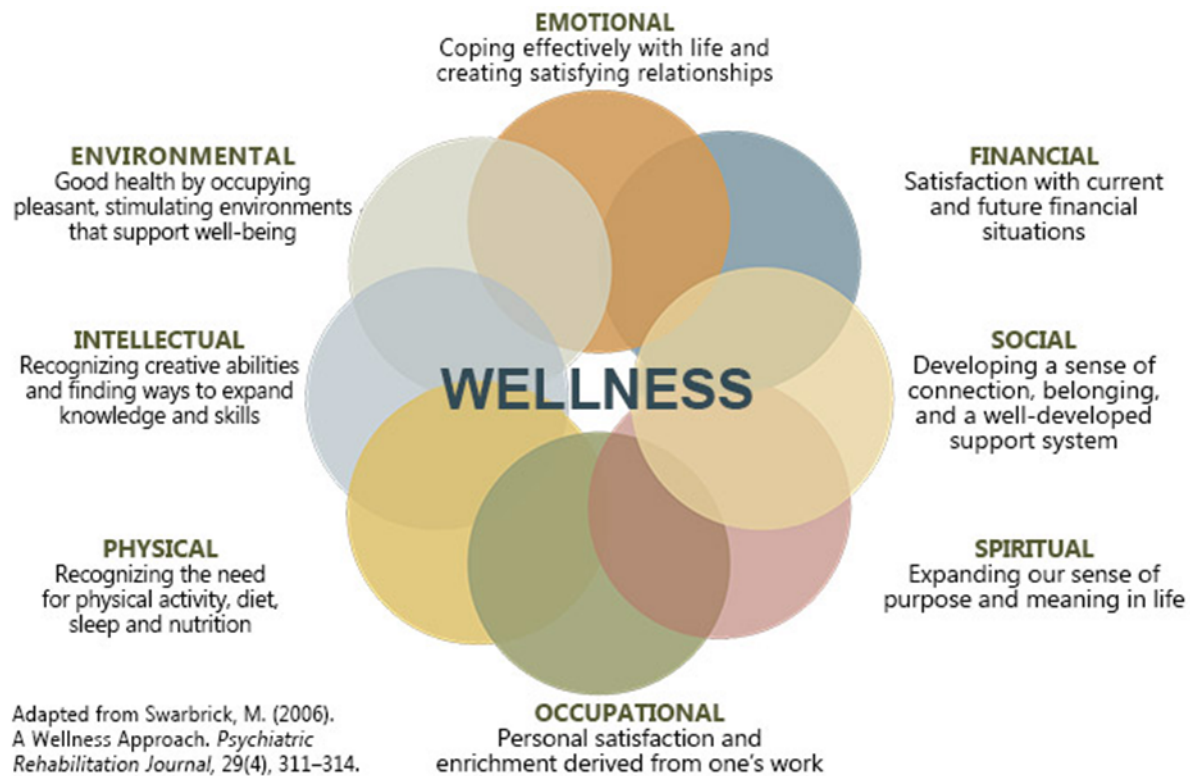


Figure 1: The eight dimensions of wellness (Swarbrick, 2006)

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3.1 Supervision:

- that a supervisor should not have more than 10 supervisees,
- that supervision's main functions should be split equally between the administrative, supportive, and educational components and
- lastly that young frontline social workers are offered more supervision time and guidance, especially during their first two years of employment
- attention must be paid to all aspects of social work, as well as the importance of boundaries, work-life balance, and self-care.

### 3.2 Work-life balance/perspective:

- Social workers need to take the responsibility for flourishing at work. Social workers will have to enforce the boundaries that they set in place, to survive the demanding social worker profession.

### **3.3 Organisations:**

- a proper orientation programme should be followed;
- a detailed description of the role and job requirements must be provided,
- and resources should be provided for the job to be done
- management needs to buy in on the concept of self-care programmes, wellness days, and flexible working hours to show their appreciation and support to the workforce.

### **3.4 Subjective wellbeing:**

- Although the responsibility for self-care lies with the social workers,
- Time should be allocated during supervision sessions to address the frontline social workers' skills, boundaries, needs, and personality attributes to combat the high turnover of social workers, as well as to ensure healthy social workers rendering services effectively to their clients.

### **3.5 Wellness programmes and orientation for frontline social workers (in the first two years of employment):**

- should be registered with the South African Council for Service Professions, in the same way as courses are registered for Continuing Professional Development points, for example, 15 points for professional development and 5 points towards self-care and wellbeing.

## **9 Conclusion**

In light of the social work profession's current skills shortages in South Africa, social work was designated as a scarce skill in 2008. Social work is a demanding and stressful profession and therefore a challenge to keep social workers in the profession. In South Africa, the profession is known to have a high turnover of social workers. To exacerbate the situation organisations are overextended and experiencing a lack of funding to provide for sufficient resources to render an effective service to the clients.

Frontline social workers experience very stressful situations on a day-to-day basis. Factors contributing to social workers being happy in the workplace were pointed out as sufficient emotional support and supervision, provision of resources, recognition, and opportunities for development and decision-making within the workplace. There seems to be a spillover from work to family life and vice versa. There is a given balance between work and life.

Organisational commitment regarding available and reliable resources on the one hand and supportive working conditions such as flexible working hours on the other, positively impacts the happiness of employees. If supportive working conditions are in place, it seems to convey to the employees that the organisation cares about them and they then experience a feeling of belonging, which enhances their happiness in the workplace. The social worker participants admitted to feeling stressed and overworked, but also highlighted the value of adequate supervisory support. With regard to work-life balance, the participants echoed that there is a spillover from the work to

the family domain and vice versa, which underlines the importance of adhering to boundaries and maintaining self-care that affect their overall well-being and workers' contentment/job satisfaction at work.

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## **Playing with 3-D and Design to Boost Happiness**

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### **Abstract**

Children used to create art with paper and crayons or LEGOS. Research shows that artistic expression can boost happiness. However, these days, children tend to be digital natives, meaning that they are less likely to do offscreen art, thus losing the potential happiness boosting benefits of artistic expression. Therefore, learning 3-D techniques is a more natural way to express themselves playfully and emotionally in contemporary society. 3-D design has potential to increase happiness, particularly for younger generations and if it is done in fun and playful ways. 3-D play can easily be taught to people of any age; having some basic 3-D skills will likely boost self-efficacy which has been demonstrated to increase happiness. There are five stages of 3-D play that have potential to boost happiness. First comes modelling, shaping, and designing 3-D images. There is scientific evidence demonstrating that creativity is good for happiness. Second, comes adding colors to the image. There is also evidence that colors boost mood. Third people can collaborate to combine their images together for creating something grander than they would be able to do alone. Research supports that when people are involved in something greater than themselves it can increase happiness. This has the potential to create a party-like atmosphere, build relationships and belongingness, all related to positive happiness. Next step is animating the 3-D images. Seeing their work move can release dopamine which can help them feel happier. Finally, people can use augmented reality (AR) to place their 3-D creative images into the real world. Using AR has potential to add a piece of one's imagination into the real world and possibly even changing a bleak reality to something more aesthetically pleasing which is likely to increase happiness on multiple levels. Implications for teaching, policy, and society are touched on.

**Keywords:** animation; artistic expression; augmented reality; 3-D design; happiness

## **VIETNAMESE PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON HAPPY SCHOOL: BUILD A 3P PLUS MODEL BASED ON THE UNESCO 3P MODEL**

Ngan Nguyen Thi Thanh, FPT University, Vietnam

### **Abstract**

The research delves further into the realm of understanding and endeavors to construct a specialized 3P Plus model tailored to the distinctive needs of young individuals in Vietnam, drawing inspiration from Unesco's established 3P model. To enrich the study with diverse perspectives, in-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of students from a private school, supplementing the data collection process within the community. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software, an array of techniques, including Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Independent Sample T-test and EFA were applied to evaluate and analyze the collected data. The outcomes of this research have contributed nuanced elements to the 3P model, evolving it into a dynamic 3P Plus operating model designed to resonate with the experiences and aspirations of the youth. This study fills a critical void in educational research by focalizing the 'Happy School' concept within the specific context of Vietnamese private university students—an understudied demographic in this particular domain. The discoveries made led to the development of a tailored 3P framework, uniquely crafted to align with the intricacies of Vietnamese private universities and the well-being of their students. The empirical insights derived not only enhance our understanding of the components of school well-being but also present a model capable of influencing educational practices and policies geared towards fostering the well-being of students within the private higher education sector in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Private University, Happy School, 3P, 3P Plus, People, Process, Place

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