

## The relationship between psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness with psychological well-being of elementary school teachers at workplace

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### ABSTRACT

Given the severe psychological stress of teachers in educational settings, it is of particular value to pay attention to improving their psychological well-being and to identify the factors that contribute to the decrease or increase in teachers' psychological well-being. For this reason, the aim of the present study was to investigate the role of predictor variables of psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness in the criterion variable of teachers' psychological well-being. For this reason, 113 people were selected from the statistical population of elementary school teachers in Rasht in the academic year (1402-1403) using the convenience sampling method and responded to the questionnaires of psychological well-being (Reif and Keyes, 1995), psychological resilience (Connor and Davidson, 2003), Oxford Happiness (Hills and Argyle, 2002), and Freiburg Mindfulness (Wallach et al., 2006). The results were analyzed in SPSS22 software using Pearson's correlation coefficient and stepwise regression, and the results showed that the relationship between psychological resilience and psychological well-being ( $r=0.61$ ), the relationship between happiness and psychological well-being ( $r=0.49$ ), and the relationship between mindfulness and psychological well-being ( $r=0.41$ ) was positive and significant ( $p<0.01$ ), and the three variables explained 50% of the variance in the changes in teachers' psychological well-being. Therefore, the psychological well-being of elementary school teachers can be predicted based on psychological resilience, mindfulness, and happiness.

### Introduction

Due to the nature of their job, teachers face many problems, including work pressure, lack of social support, feelings of inefficiency, economic problems, lack of attention to their needs, crowded classes, promotion problems, and role conflicts, which can jeopardize the mental health of teachers (Naemi and Faghihi, 2022). In recent decades, along with the increase in positive psychology, psychological research has attempted to examine the factors that promote psychological well-being and other positive emotions (Satici, 2019). The concept of psychological well-being refers to positive characteristics and the growth of individual capabilities and, in fact, implies mental health (Novak, 2023). One of the most important



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definitions and conceptualizations of well-being is related to Ryff (1989). Which considers psychological well-being to consist of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 2014).

Due to the positive results of high psychological well-being in the areas of mental health, improving positive social interactions, success at work, etc., recent empirical studies have tried to understand the factors affecting psychological well-being in order to identify its stronger predictors (Valibeigi & Abdi, 2022). One of the variables that seems to predict psychological well-being is resilience, which means having flexibility, durability, and strength to withstand failures and problems or is defined as the ability of an individual to cope with adversity or negative situations (Polat et al., 2023). In different situations, a teacher must be ready to adapt to changes, overcome challenges, and have the ability to respond to remain in the teaching profession (Fedewa et al., 2022). Teacher resilience is the ability to cope with stressful factors, develop a teacher's toughness, immunity, and buoyancy, and return to the initial state, which can lead to numerous positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, timely response to problems, teacher effectiveness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, appropriate interpersonal relationships, independence, and a sense of competence and higher emotional intelligence when facing academic challenges and while teaching in all educational fields (Wang, 2021). Various researchers have defined resilience as affecting mental health and quality of work, life, and society (Avila et al., 2017; Gu et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2019; Noori Deh Chenasak et al., 2023; Brown & Beadle, 2023).

From the perspective of psychologists, happiness is of two types: one type is achieved by life conditions such as job, education, comfort and welfare, and generally material and welfare facilities, which is the objective state of happiness (Minkov et al., 2020). And the other type is affected by internal states and personal perception, which is described as subjective happiness or a feeling of happiness (Pagani et al., 2020). Happiness includes three aspects: emotional, social, and psychological (Khodapanah & Tamnaei Far, 2022).

Various studies and surveys indicate that happy people are less likely to report poor mental health and are more successful in their jobs (Burns & Crisp, 2022). Happiness is a necessary condition for good performance of teachers in the classroom, a strong foundation for professional success, and an internal motivation for teachers' professional growth (Zheng, 2023). Happiness is one of the basic concepts and components of people's lives, especially teachers' lives, which is closely related to general health (Khodayarian et al., 2022). However, little attention has been paid to the effects of happiness on cognitive and emotional processes. (Benevene et al., 2019). Research shows that happy people differ from unhappy people in terms of intellectual structure, judgment, and motivation and have higher personal, family, career, academic, and social efficiency (Rashid et al., 2018). Another feature of consciousness and awareness that is much discussed in relation to well-being is mindfulness (Yaghoubi al., 2019). Mindfulness is defined as focusing on the present moment without judgment. In addition, mindfulness allows an individual to focus on internal feelings and experiences and empowers the individual to reframe experiences. Mindfulness-based interventions have had good effects on psychological health indicators (Allipour & Zeqeibi Ghannad, 2017; Liu et al., 2021; Nataraj & Reddy, 2022; Cullbreth et al., 2022; Song et al., 2021). It has been shown that mindfulness in the workplace also leads to job well-being and satisfaction (Song et al., 2021; Ash et al., 2023). Because mindfulness is a variable that has recently entered the realm of organizational positive psychology, there is a need for more research to introduce this variable in promoting mental health indicators, especially in the field of teachers (Hamidi, 2016).

Teachers are under a lot of stress, and the attrition rate for this group is among the highest in the United States (Fedewa et al., 2022). As a result, schools struggle to retain talented teachers. In the United States, up to 25% of new teachers leave the teaching field before their third year, and almost 40% leave the teaching profession within the first 5 years. In the United Kingdom, far more teachers are staying than they are retiring. There is also a shortage of high-quality teachers in China. Most notably, there is evidence that many talented teachers leave teaching early (Song et al., 2021). In Iran, in recent years, teacher burnout has attracted much attention and is on the rise (Javadi et al., 2017). Also, due to the many activities and problems that teachers encounter at school with the principal, parents, and colleagues, and the great effort they put into controlling students' abnormal behaviors, it is necessary to monitor their

psychological well-being, in addition to other measures regarding them, and to identify factors that predict psychological well-being. Because it has been determined that people with higher psychological well-being are more interested in taking on a role in society, create more passionate leisure time for themselves and participate in more public activities, have a more participatory spirit, and mainly have positive emotions and welcome positive evaluations of ongoing events. In contrast, people with lower psychological well-being evaluate conditions and events unfavorably and therefore experience more undesirable emotions such as anxiety, depression, and aggression. Among these competencies, teachers' enjoyment of mental health and psychological well-being is of great importance, and it is necessary to identify characteristics in individuals that are related to psychological well-being (Yaghooti & Arefi, 2022).

According to Gardner (2020), people with high psychological well-being are happier, healthier, and more productive than those with low psychological well-being. It is morally and economically important for organizations to do everything they can to promote psychological well-being and identify the factors associated with it in their members. Researchers believe that studying the psychological well-being of school teachers can help identify factors that can help teachers prevent burnout, cope with stress, and effectively manage their classrooms (Nataraj & Reddy, 2022).

Therefore, since the psychological well-being of teachers is of great importance for performing educational tasks and coping with psychological pressures, and also considering previous research that identified capacities such as resilience, happiness, and mindfulness as predictors of mental health and well-being in other societies, and the researchers' suggestions regarding the need to expand research and reach more definitive reasons, especially in the teacher community, and considering that the three variables of the present study had not been repeated together in previous studies, and in the research background reviews, both in foreign and domestic sources, very few studies had been conducted on elementary teachers, therefore; the present study seeks to answer the question of whether psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness are related to the psychological well-being of elementary teachers at workplace.

## Research Method

The research method is a descriptive correlational type, the statistical population of the research includes all public and non-profit elementary teachers of Rasht Education and Training in the academic year 1402-1403, of which 150 people were selected as a sample using the available method. To determine the sample size, the formula proposed by Tebachnick and Fidell (2007) ( $N=50+8*M$ ) was used. (In this formula, sample = n, number of variables = M), after obtaining consent and explaining the objectives of the research, the questionnaire was provided to them. Then the data were analyzed with SPSS software version 24.

## Tools Used

**Riff Psychological Well-Being Scales (RSPWB) (Short Form):** The short version (18 questions) of the Riff Psychological Well-Being Scale was designed by Ryff (1989) and revised in 2002. This version consists of 6 factors. Questions 9, 12 and 18 measure the independence factor; questions 1, 4 and 6 measure the environmental mastery factor; questions 7, 15 and 17 measure the personal growth factor; questions 3, 11 and 13 measure the positive relationship with others factor; questions 5, 14 and 16 measure the purpose in life factor; and questions 2, 8 and 10 measure the self-acceptance factor. The sum of the scores of these 6 factors is calculated as the total psychological well-being score. This test is a self-assessment tool that is answered on a 6-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (one to six), with a higher score indicating better psychological well-being. Of the total questions, 10 questions are scored directly and 8 questions are scored in reverse order (Khanjani et al., 2014). The correlation of

the short version of the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale with the original scale has fluctuated from 0.7 to 0.89 (Ryff & Singer, 2006).

**Connor and Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (2003):** This questionnaire was developed by Connor and Davidson (2003) to measure the ability to cope with pressure and threat. The minimum score for this test is zero and the maximum is 100. People who score higher than 60 are considered more resilient. In the study Bidgholi & Sadighi Arfaee (2016), the alpha coefficient obtained for the resilience variable was 0.85. And in the study of Razmpush, et al., (2019), Cronbach's alpha method was used to calculate reliability, and the reliability coefficient was 0.89 and the validity by factor analysis was 0.87. In the study of Ebrahimi & Barzegar (2022), the reliability was 0.78.

**Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) Hill and Argyle (2002):** This questionnaire consists of 29 questions and measures 5 components of life satisfaction, self-esteem, subjective well-being, satisfaction, and positive mood. The questionnaire is scored on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being scored as "strongly disagree" and 6 as "strongly agree". In Iran, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and the validity of the scale were investigated by factor analysis and the comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were obtained as 0.91, 0.92, and 0.064, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was also used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire, which was calculated to be 0.84, and the test-retest validity was obtained as 0.82 within two weeks and was significant at the 0.01 level (Mirzaee, 2021). The psychometric properties of the questionnaire have also been examined abroad, and in one study, Cronbach's alpha was obtained as 0.78 (Turkmen et al., 2022).

**Freiburg Mindfulness Questionnaire (Short Form):** The short form of the Freiberg Mindfulness Scale is a 14-question scale that is scored on a Likert scale from 1 (rarely) to 4 (always). The test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.88 in the study by Sauer et al. (2011). It was translated for the first time in Iran by Qasemi Jobaneh et al. (2015). They reported an internal consistency coefficient of 0.92 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.83 for this scale. Its concurrent validity with the self-control and emotion regulation scales was 0.69 and 0.68, respectively. In the study by Qasemi Jobaneh et al. (2015), the reliability of this scale was 0.87.

## Results

**Table 1- Mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness of the study variables.**

Variable	mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
Well-being	83.42	6.67	.33	-.37
Resiliency	80.81	5.47	-.10	0
Happiness	52.78	5.57	.15	-.29
Mindfulness	42.30	5.75	-.94	1.19

Table 1 shows some important descriptive information about the variables of the present study. Skewness and kurtosis in Table 2 show that the values of skewness and kurtosis of the variables are in the range of +2 and -2, therefore it can be said that the data distribution is not outside the range of normal distribution.

**Table 2. Results Pearson correlation coefficients between psychological resilience and psychological well-being.**

Variable	Well-being	Sig.
Resiliency	.61**	.001
Happiness	.49**	.001
Mindfulness	.41**	.001

\*\* $p < .01$

As can be seen in Table 1, the significance value for the correlation coefficient calculated in the relationship between psychological resilience ( $r=0.61$ ,  $p=.001$ ), happiness ( $r=0.49$ ,  $p=.001$ ), and mindfulness ( $r=0.41$ ,  $p=.001$ ) with psychological well-being is greater than the significance level of the table at the 0.01 level. Therefore, these were significant positive relationships between variables.

After examining the relationship between the variables, to further investigate and understand whether the predictor variables are significantly able to predict changes in the dependent variable, stepwise regression was used, but before that, the multicollinearity assumption, which is one of the main assumptions of regression, was made, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3- Results of the correlation coefficient between predictor variables to examine the multicollinearity hypothesis.**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Resiliency	1	.36	.21
2. Happiness	.36	1	.28
3. Mindfulness	.21	.21	1

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient of all three predictor variables together is less than 0.7 and therefore, there is no collinearity problem, therefore, regression analysis can be applied.

**Table 4- Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis.**

Step	Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Sig.
First	Resiliency	.61	.38	67.85	112	.0001
Second	Resiliency Happiness	.70	.49	52.75	112	.0001
Third	Resiliency Happiness Mindfulness	.71	.51	38.54	112	.0001

Table 4 shows that in the first step, psychological resilience entered the equation and was able to explain 38 percent of the changes in psychological well-being ( $R^2=0.38$ ). Given that the significance of the F value related to the first step is smaller than 0.01, it can be said with 99 percent confidence that this predictive contribution is significant ( $F_{112}=67.85$ ,  $p=.0001$ ). In the second step, in addition to psychological resilience, happiness was also added to the equation, and together with psychological resilience, they explained 49 percent of the changes in psychological well-being ( $R^2=0.49$ ). Given that the significance of the F value for the second step is less than 0.01, it can be said with 99% confidence that this predictive contribution is significant ( $F_{112}=52.75$ ,  $p=.0001$ ). In the third step, in addition to psychological resilience and happiness, mindfulness also entered the equation and was able to predict 51% of changes in psychological well-being with the previous two variables ( $R^2=0.51$ ). Given that the significance of the F value for the third step is less than 0.01, it can be said with 99% confidence that this predictive contribution is significant ( $F_{112}=43.95$ ,  $p=.0001$ ). In total, 50% of the changes in psychological well-being scores in the present sample can be explained by psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness ( $R^2=0.41$ ).

**Table 4- Results related to unstandardized and standardized coefficients of each regression model.**

Step	Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
First	Resiliency	.75	.09	.61	8.23	.001
Second	Resiliency	.63	.08	.51	7.28	.001
	Happiness	.41	.08	.34	4.87	.001

Third	Resiliency	.56	.09	.46	6.25	.001
	Happiness	.39	.08	.32	4.64	.001
	Mindfulness	.19	.08	.17	2.38	.01

According to Table 4, the standard coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the first step is 0.61. That is, with an increase in psychological resilience, psychological well-being changes positively by 61 percent. Since the significance of the t value is less than 0.01, this coefficient is significant with 99 percent confidence ( $t=8.23$ ,  $p=.0001$ ). For the second step, the standard coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for resilience is 0.51 and happiness is 0.34, that is, in the second step, in the cooperation of the two variables, resilience was a 51 percent positive predictor and happiness was a 34 percent positive predictor of psychological well-being. Since the significance of the t value is less than 0.01, this coefficient is significant with 99 percent confidence ( $t=7.28$ ;  $t=4.78$ ;  $p=.0001$ ). In the third step, the standard coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of resilience is 0.46; happiness is 0.32 and mindfulness is 0.17. This means that the unique contribution of each variable in predicting psychological well-being in the third step is 46%, 32% and 17%, and the direction of the relationship is positive, meaning that with each increase in resilience, happiness and mindfulness, psychological well-being increases positively by 46%, 32% and 17%, respectively. Since the significance of the t value is smaller than 0.01, this coefficient is significant with 99% confidence ( $t=6.25$ ,  $t=64.74$ ;  $t=2.38$ ,  $p=.0001$ ). It can be said that the predictor variable of resilience had the largest single contribution to explaining the criterion variable of psychological well-being ( $\beta=0.61$ ). The significance of t also shows that this contribution is significant ( $t=8.23$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). It also indicates the appropriateness of this regression model.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Given the need to improve the psychological well-being of elementary school teachers, the present study was designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the predictive role of psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness in explaining changes in the psychological well-being variable. The results showed that psychological resilience, happiness, and mindfulness have the ability to explain changes in psychological well-being. The results of the study showed that the three variables mentioned are able to explain 50% of changes in psychological well-being. The present result is consistent with some of the findings of Perneger et al., (2004); Pidgeon and Keye (2014); Klainin-Yobas et al. (2016); Sampath et al. (2019); Benevene et al. (2019); Idris et al. (2019); Golestaneh and Teymouri (2019); Sepahvand (2019); Hassanzadeh Namin et al. (2019); Hossein Pour Saadatabadi (2019); Elderkin (2020); Soleimani et al. (2023), are in line. In explaining this finding, it can be said that teachers who are more resilient may have better management abilities when facing professional challenges and stresses, such as classroom issues, relationships with parents, or other pressures, which helps their psychological well-being. Also, happiness can help teachers facilitate social interactions, increase personal motivation, and create a sense of commitment to the job, etc., and increase their psychological well-being. Having higher mindfulness also helps teachers choose better and more effective strategies, which improves their psychological well-being through better stress management, focusing on the present moment, and managing emotions. The present study has faced the following limitations in practice: such as; Given that the research sample was selected based on convenience sampling, generalizing the results to all elementary school teachers would be cautious. Also, since the data were collected with self-report questionnaires, the responses may not have been done accurately.

It is suggested that random sampling methods be used in future research so that the findings of the present study are more complete and generalizable to other individuals in the research population. It is suggested that a similar study be conducted separately on junior high and high school teachers. Some of the research results have shown that higher psychological resilience improves the psychological well-

being of teachers. Therefore, establishing in-service courses for educators in the field of resilience with topics and topics such as how to make goals meaningful, challenging assumptions, cognitive flexibility, acceptance, and growth through suffering are among the concepts that can be taught to teachers in such a program.

Another part of the research findings has shown that as teachers' happiness increases, their psychological well-being increases. Thus, providing in-service training to teachers to improve their happiness through topics such as controlling internal factors affecting happiness, increasing the sense of mastery over good and bad events in life, controlling emotions and how to express them appropriately can improve teachers' psychological well-being. The research findings have shown that by increasing mindfulness, teachers' psychological well-being will improve. Therefore, establishing in-service training programs with concepts such as cultivating awareness and attention, paying attention to the present without judgment, meditation and relaxation, mental techniques and methods of inhibition, confidence, and authenticating being instead of being busy can improve teachers' psychological well-being.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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