



## Exploring the Psychological Well-being of Primary School Teachers' Through a Multidimensional Perspective: Utilizing Ryff's Six Factor Model

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### ABSTRACT

Teacher psychological well-being has been recognized an important focus in education, particularly as responsibilities have continued to expand and become increasingly demanding. However, much of the existing research has been mainly focusing on negative outcomes, such as stress and burnout, resulting in a limited understanding of well-being. In this study, the psychological well-being of primary school teachers using is explored using Ryff's Six Factor Model of psychological well-being. Within this model, well-being is explained through six dimensions: positive relationships, self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth. A conceptual approach has been adopted, and existing research on teachers' psychological well-being has been revised and synthesized. It is discussed how Ryff's six dimensions can be utilized to provide a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences, not only in terms of challenges but also in terms of growth and fulfilment. This study highlights the importance of viewing psychological well-being as both the absence of distress and the presence of positive psychological functioning. Overall, a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' psychological well-being is provided in this study. Practical insights are also offered for school leaders and policymakers, through which supportive work environments that promote teachers' psychological well-being and professional growth can be developed.

**Keywords:** Teacher Psychological Well-being, JD-R Model, Ryff's Six Factor Model, Maldives, Multidimensional

### INTRODUCTION

The psychological well-being of teachers has become a significant focus of educational research and policy discussion. With the increasing demands on education systems related to academic performance, accountability, and inclusive education, teachers are expected to manage a wide range of professional responsibilities beyond classroom teaching. These responsibilities often include lesson planning, curriculum implementation, handling administrative work, managing student behaviour, and communicating with students' parents and school leadership. Although teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and overall education outcomes, the increasing pressures they face can significantly impact their psychological well-being. Thus, the psychological well-being of

teachers has become a significant concern for researchers and policymakers committed to enhancing educational quality and teacher retention (Zhou et al., 2024).

Teachers' psychological well-being is closely connected to both personal and institutional educational outcomes. When teachers maintain good psychological health, they are more engaged and motivated at work (Violago & Fabella, 2023). Conversely, poor psychological well-being can lead to reduced job satisfaction and an increased likelihood of leaving the profession (Dreer, 2022). These effects not only impact individual teachers but also have significant consequences for students and educational institutions. Research indicates that teachers' psychological well-being is strongly associated with classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, and student academic engagement (Xue et al., 2024; Dreer, 2022; Salavera et al., 2024). Teachers who feel psychologically supported are more likely to create better learning environments and develop better connections with their students (Collie et al., 2021). Therefore, supporting teachers' psychological well-being is essential not only for teachers themselves but also for the overall effectiveness and sustainability of educational systems.

Recently, there has been an increase in scholarly research on teachers' psychological well-being, as researchers aim to better understand the challenges teachers face. A significant body of literature has focused on identifying occupational stress that impacts teachers' psychological well-being. Commonly reported challenges include heavy workloads, time constraints, emotional exhaustion, and accountability demands (Sohail et al., 2023; Teachers Workload in Relation to Burnout and Work, 2021). Many studies have applied organizational psychology models to understand the impact of workplace conditions on teachers' job experience. The Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) model is often used to study the impact of job demands on stress and burnout (Birchall, 2021; Collie, 2023).

Although current studies have provided valuable insights into teachers' psychological well-being, most have emphasized their negative experiences. The literature is largely concerned with concepts such as stress, burnout, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. These perspectives help researchers understand the challenges that teachers face. However, they conceptualized psychological well-being as the absence of psychological distress rather than the presence of positive psychological health. Consequently, other significant dimensions of teachers' psychological well-being, such as personal growth, self-acceptance, and a sense of purpose, have not been thoroughly studied (Avola et al., 2025). This highlights a gap in understanding teachers' overall psychological well-being. This indicates the necessity of looking beyond challenges and considering more balanced approaches that reflect the multidimensional nature of psychological well-being. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' job experiences.

Ryff's model of psychological well-being is one framework that provides a multidimensional perspective. Originating from the discipline of positive psychology, the model conceptualizes psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct comprising six interconnected dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 2018). These dimensions capture different aspects of positive psychological functioning. They emphasize an individual's capacity for growth, development of meaningful relationships, and living with purpose. Unlike traditional methods that mainly focus on happiness or the lack of distress, Ryff's model focuses on deeper human growth and psychological satisfaction.

Ryff's model provides a significant perspective for understanding how teachers experience

psychological well-being in their professional context. For instance, a sense of purpose in life may be demonstrated by dedication to helping students succeed. Self-acceptance means that they feel confident in who they are and what they can do professionally. Personal development may include opportunities for continuous professional development and lifelong learning. Fostering positive relationships with others focuses on supportive interactions with colleagues, students, parents, and school leadership. Autonomy may involve teachers' capacity to use their own judgment in making decisions regarding teaching. Environmental mastery can help teachers effectively manage classroom duties and school-related responsibilities. Exploring these dimensions allows for deeper and more thorough insight into teachers' psychological well-being, extending beyond traditional stress-based perspectives.

Despite its significance, Ryff's multidimensional framework has not been widely applied in research related to teachers' psychological well-being (Ozturk et al., 2024). Numerous studies continue to address job satisfaction, burnout, and stress, which capture only a limited dimension of teachers' psychological experiences (Cansoy et al., 2020). Hence, there is a clear gap between multidimensional models of psychological well-being and educational research on teachers' lives (Ozturk et al., 2024). Addressing this gap is necessary in the context of primary education, where teachers play an essential role in shaping students' foundational learning experiences while managing a variety of instructional and emotional challenges (Molina et al., 2018).

This conceptual paper addresses this gap by examining the psychological well-being of primary school teachers from a multidimensional perspective, guided by Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being. The primary aim of this paper is to offer a conceptual analysis that highlights the significance of Ryff's framework in understanding the psychological well-being of teachers within educational contexts. It also aims to review the current literature on teachers' psychological well-being by examining the theoretical foundations of Ryff's model of psychological well-being. Furthermore, it explores how Ryff's model's six dimensions can be applied to understand primary school teachers' professional experiences.

This study synthesizes insights from positive psychology and educational research to contribute to the expanding body of literature that aims to move on positive teacher psychological well-being, not just focusing on problems, but also on solutions. A multidimensional approach to psychological well-being provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing teachers' professional experiences and guiding future empirical research in this area. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of teachers' psychological well-being can inform educational policies and school leadership strategies. This can foster supportive work environments that empower teachers to achieve professional excellence in their work.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: First, it examines the concept of psychological well-being and its significance in the teaching profession. It then explores Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-being. Subsequently, it analyzes the relationship between these six dimensions of psychological well-being and primary school teachers' experiences. Finally, it discusses the implications of adopting a multidimensional perspective on teachers' psychological well-being and suggests directions for future studies.

## **2. Conceptualizing Psychological Well-being**

### **2.1 Understanding Psychological Well-being**

Psychological well-being is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct that reflects

individuals' positive psychological functioning, personal growth, and ability to manage life challenges effectively (Xue et al. 2024). Unlike traditional views of mental health that focus primarily on the absence of illness or distress, psychological well-being emphasizes individuals' capacity to experience meaning, fulfilment, and positive functioning in their lives (Emeljanovas et al., 2023). In psychology, psychological well-being is often conceptualized as encompassing aspects such as autonomy, positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life (Bozek et al., 2020). These dimensions highlight individuals' ability to thrive psychologically rather than merely cope with adversity.

Recent literature increasingly emphasizes that psychological well-being should not be solely connected with the absence of stress or psychological difficulties (Emeljanovas et al., 2023). Although stress and burnout are important indicators of occupational strain, well-being involves a broader set of psychological experiences, including life satisfaction, emotional resilience, and a sense of accomplishment. Scholars argue that focusing exclusively on negative outcomes, such as stress and burnout, provides an incomplete understanding of human functioning because individuals may experience low levels of stress yet still lack positive psychological fulfilment (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Consequently, modern research emphasizes the importance of examining well-being from a holistic perspective that integrates both the positive and negative dimensions of psychological functioning (Bardach et al., 2021). This comprehensive approach acknowledges that psychological well-being comprises various positive feelings and states, overall life satisfaction, and one's career (Chen, 2024).

In occupational contexts, psychological well-being refers to employees' ability to function effectively in their professional roles while maintaining a positive mental and emotional state (Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2023). Occupational well-being encompasses factors such as work engagement, job satisfaction, professional fulfilment, and the ability to cope with workplace challenges (Jarden et al., 2023). The interaction between job demands and resources influences employees' well-being, highlighting the importance of the workplace environment in shaping psychological outcomes (Castro Silva et al., 2023). Supportive organizational conditions, including leadership support, autonomy, and opportunities for professional development, have been shown to promote employee well-being and motivation (Jong, 2023).

Psychological well-being is particularly important in the teaching profession because of the complex nature of teachers' work. Teaching requires not only cognitive and instructional competence but also emotional engagement, interpersonal communication, and continuous adaptation to students' diverse needs. Thus, teachers' psychological well-being is closely connected to their professional effectiveness and long-term commitment to the profession (Salavera et al., 2024). A growing body of research suggests that teachers who experience higher levels of psychological well-being tend to demonstrate greater instructional effectiveness, stronger classroom management skills, and more positive interactions with students (Salavera et al., 2024).

## **2.2 Psychological Well-Being in the Teaching Profession**

The teaching profession is widely recognized as intellectually demanding and emotionally intensive. Teachers must simultaneously manage multiple responsibilities, including planning lessons, assessing student progress, addressing behavioral challenges, and responding to institutional expectations. These responsibilities require sustained cognitive effort and emotional regulation, making teaching one of the most demanding professions in modern society (Cervellione et al., 2025).

One of the defining features of teaching is its emotional dimension (Salavera and Urbon, 2024). Teachers frequently interact with students, colleagues, parents, and school administrators, and these interactions often require emotional sensitivity and strong interpersonal skills. Teachers are expected to demonstrate patience, empathy, and support while simultaneously maintaining their authority and classroom control. Emotional labour can contribute to professional fulfilment when teachers experience meaningful connections with students; however, it can also lead to emotional exhaustion when the demands exceed the available resources (Wang et al., 2024).

In addition to emotional demands, teaching involves significant cognitive and organizational responsibilities. Teachers must design instructional strategies, adapt teaching methods for diverse learners, evaluate student progress, and respond to changing curriculum requirements (Goyibova et al., 2025; Martin, 2024). These tasks require continuous learning and professional development, as teachers must remain up to date on evolving educational practices and technologies (Kuo & Tsai, 2023). Therefore, teaching involves both intellectual engagement and professional development.

Teachers' psychological well-being plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of education delivered in the classroom (Salavera et al., 2024). Studies have indicated that teachers who experience higher levels of well-being tend to demonstrate greater enthusiasm for teaching, stronger classroom relationships, and improved instructional practices (Salavera et al., 2024; Dreer, 2023). Conversely, teachers with poor psychological well-being may struggle with motivation and professional engagement and exhibit detrimental behaviours (Dreer, 2023). These challenges can ultimately affect students' learning experiences and their academic outcomes.

Teacher well-being is also closely linked to retention and workforce sustainability (Dreer, 2022). High levels of stress and emotional exhaustion have been identified as key factors contributing to teacher attrition in several countries (Nwoko et al., 2025). Research suggests that improving teachers' psychological well-being can help reduce turnover rates and promote long-term commitment to the profession (Zeng et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to teachers' psychological well-being is essential for educational research and policy development in the Maldives.

### **3. Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-being**

#### **3.1 Overview of Ryff's Psychological Well-being Theory**

One of the prominent frameworks for understanding psychological well-being is Ryff's multidimensional model (Henn et al., 2016). Focusing on positive human functioning, Ryff's model was designed to capture the essential aspects that contribute to personal fulfilment and psychological growth (Anderson et al., 2019). Drawing on theoretical perspectives from humanistic psychology, developmental psychology, and philosophical traditions (Henn et al., 2016), Ryff proposed that well-being extends beyond happiness or life satisfaction and includes deeper dimensions of human flourishing (Dalbudak & Balyan, 2021).

The origins of Ryff's model can be traced to earlier theoretical work that emphasised human potential and self-realisation. Scholars such as Maslow, Rogers, and Erikson have highlighted the importance of personal development, meaningful relationships, and purposeful engagement in life as essential components of psychological well-being (Ryff, 2023). Building on these ideas, Ryff developed a comprehensive framework consisting of six dimensions that represent

the key aspects of positive psychological functioning (Henn et al., 2016).

Ryff's model has been widely applied in research across multiple disciplines, including psychology, organizational behaviour, and health studies (Ryff, 2018). Researchers have used the model to examine how individuals experience psychological well-being in various contexts, including the workplace (Gibson & Hicks, 2018). The model is particularly relevant for occupational research because it captures both personal and interpersonal aspects of well-being that influence professional experience (Ryff, 2018).

### **3.2 The Six Dimensions of Psychological Well-being**

#### **3.2.1 Autonomy**

Autonomy refers to an individual's ability to regulate their behaviour, make independent decisions, and maintain a sense of personal control over their lives (Ullah, 2017). In the context of teaching, autonomy is closely associated with teachers' professional independence in making instructional decisions, selecting teaching methods, and adapting curricula to meet students' needs (Yolcu & Vural, 2021). Teachers who experience higher levels of autonomy often feel empowered and motivated in their professional roles (Wang et al., 2024). However, a lack of autonomy can lead to feelings of disempowerment, reduced job satisfaction, and increased professional burnout (Castro Silva et al., 2023).

#### **3.2.2 Environmental Mastery**

Environmental mastery reflects an individual's ability to manage life circumstances and effectively navigate the surrounding environment (Ullah, 2017). For teachers, environmental mastery involves the ability to organise classroom activities, manage their workload, and handle administrative responsibilities (Gast et al., 2022). Teachers with strong environmental mastery can better adapt to the challenges of the teaching profession and maintain a sense of control over their professional environment (Bapiha & Protsenko, 2024).

#### **3.2.3 Personal Growth**

Personal growth refers to the ongoing development, learning, and self-improvement of individuals (Ullah, 2017). In the teaching profession, personal growth is closely linked to professional development and lifelong learning (Christodoulopoulos, 2025; Said & Abdallah, 2024). Teachers who perceive opportunities for professional growth are more likely to remain engaged and motivated in their careers (Yentur, 2023).

#### **3.2.4 Positive Relations with Others**

Positive relationships are essential for psychological well-being (Ullah, 2017). In teaching, relationships with students, colleagues, parents, and school leaders play a central role in shaping teachers' professional experience (Allotta, 2023). Supportive relationships within schools can enhance teachers' sense of belonging and professional satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2025).

#### **3.2.5 Purpose in Life**

Purpose in life refers to an individual's sense of meaning and direction (Ullah, 2017). Many teachers enter the profession with a strong sense of mission to contribute to students' development and society. This sense of purpose can serve as a powerful motivational factor that sustains teachers' commitment to their work. Educators who maintain a clear sense of

direction and meaningful goals are more resilient when navigating the evolving challenges of the classroom, as this internal compass helps them align their daily tasks with their long-term professional aspirations (Maqsood et al., 2023).

### **3.2.6 Self-Acceptance**

Self-acceptance involves self-evaluation, including awareness and acceptance of one's personal strengths and weaknesses (Ullah, 2017). For teachers, self-acceptance is related to professional confidence and the ability to recognize both strengths and limitations in their teaching practices (Gast et al. 2022).

## **4. Applying Ryff's Model to Primary School Teaching**

### **4.1 Relevance of the Model for Primary School Teachers**

Primary school teachers occupy a unique position within educational systems because they play a foundational role in students' early learning. Teaching young learners requires strong emotional engagement, patience, and adaptability. These responsibilities highlight the importance of understanding teachers' psychological well-being from a multidimensional perspective. Ryff's framework provides a useful lens for examining teachers' well-being, as it captures the personal and interpersonal dimensions of their professional experiences. For example, autonomy reflects teachers' ability to exercise professional judgment, and positive relationships with others highlight the importance of supportive relationships within school communities. Similarly, purpose in life reflects teachers' commitment to shaping students' futures, which is often a central motivation for entering the teaching profession.

### **4.2 Factors Influencing Teachers' Psychological Well-being**

Several workplace factors may influence the six dimensions of teachers' psychological well-being. Workload is a major challenge that affects teachers' well-being (Cann et al., 2024; Wahab et al., 2024). Teachers face heavy responsibilities in lesson planning, assessment, administration, extracurricular activities, and non-teaching tasks, leading to long hours and time pressure (Wahab et al., 2024). Excessive workload undermines Ryff's model dimensions, especially environmental mastery (Gast et al., 2022), autonomy (Castro Silva et al., 2023), and personal growth (Yentur, 2023). It reduces satisfaction (Szabo et al., 2021), increases burnout and stress (Cann et al., 2024), and lowers job engagement (Simone, 2023).

School leadership and support also play critical roles in shaping teachers' psychological well-being across multiple dimensions of Ryff's model. Supportive leadership, characterized by trust-building, collaboration, open communication, and prioritization of teacher needs, enhances teachers' sense of autonomy (Silva et al., 2023; Collie, 2025) self-acceptance (Lemon & Turner, 2024), and positive relations with others (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2025)

Professional autonomy is another important factor influencing teachers' psychological well-being (Birchall, 2021; Erturk, 2023). It aligns with Ryff's autonomy dimension (Ullah, 2017) by allowing professional independence in instructional decisions, teaching methods, and curriculum changes (Yolcu & Vural, 2021).

Teachers with greater flexibility in instructional decision-making often report higher levels of professional satisfaction, empowerment, motivation, and reduced stress (Wang et al., 2024). Autonomy is also linked to well-being (Silva et al., 2023). Autonomy-supportive environments, including leadership practices that foster trust, further buffer against workload demands and

enhance overall well-being (Collie, 2025).

Collegial collaboration within schools strengthens the dimension of positive relations with others in Ryff's model by fostering warm, trusting relationships with colleagues, which provide essential emotional support to teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2025). Collaborative school cultures encourage teachers to share knowledge, support each other, and learn together. This enhances teachers' psychological well-being, reduces stress and burnout, and boosts job satisfaction and engagement (Birchall, 2021; Cann et al., 2024).

Finally, parental and community influences teachers' perception of their role and professional identity (Radovan, 2018). This connects to several dimensions of Ryff's model of psychological well-being, such as purpose in life, positive relationships with others and self-acceptance (Ullah, 2017). Teachers often interact with parents and community members. They act as intermediaries between the regulatory demands and the families. They receive feedback that affects how others see them and their professional identities (Hernandez et al., 2022).

Positive engagement with parents and communities reinforces teachers' sense of purpose by affirming the value of their contributions to students' development and society (Brunzell et al., 2018). Supportive relationships also build trust and a sense of belonging, similar to teamwork (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2025). However, excessive expectations may harm well-being by challenging teachers' role perceptions and adding external pressure (Zhou et al., 2024).

Understanding how these workplace factors are connected to the six dimensions of psychological well-being provides critical insights into creating supportive school environments. This can enhance teachers' job satisfaction and growth (Chaudhry & Chhajer, 2023).

## **5. Proposed Conceptual Framework**

The preceding discussion highlights the importance of examining teachers' psychological well-being from a multidimensional perspective. Although previous research has extensively explored occupational stress, burnout, and job satisfaction among teachers, less attention has been paid to the broader psychological dimensions that contribute to teachers' flourishing in their professional roles (Aboagye et al., 2018; Cefai et al., 2025). Building on the theoretical foundation of Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being, this section proposes a conceptual framework that explains how workplace conditions in schools influence primary school teachers' psychological well-being. The framework integrates insights from educational research, organizational psychology, and positive psychology to demonstrate how environmental factors within teaching contexts shape multiple dimensions of teachers' well-being.

### **5.1 Development of the Conceptual Framework**

The development of the proposed conceptual framework is grounded in the understanding that teachers' psychological well-being does not occur in isolation but is shaped by interconnected contextual, organizational, and relational factors within the school environment (Simone, 2023). Occupational well-being theories, such as the Job Demands-Resources model, highlight how workplace conditions, particularly job demands such as workload and resources such as supportive leadership, significantly influence employees' psychological functioning, engagement and growth (Silva et al., 2023; Simone, 2023). In the teaching profession, empirical evidence consistently identifies workload (Cann et al., 2024; Wahab et al., 2024), leadership practices (Collie, 2025; Lemon & Turner, 2024), collegial relationships (Birchall,

2021; Cann et al., 2024), professional autonomy (Silva et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024), and community expectations (Hernandez et al., 2022) as key factors that either support or weaken teachers' well-being (Cann et al., 2024).

Building directly on the factors outlined in Section 4, the proposed framework conceptualizes these as teaching environment factors that exert influence on teachers' psychological well-being primarily through the six dimensions of Ryff's model (Forster et al., 2022): autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Egbekpalu, 2022). These dimensions function as key mediating constructs, channelling environmental inputs into broader outcomes, such as enhanced engagement, satisfaction, resilience, and reduced burnout (Lu et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2026).

Taken together, supportive configurations of these workplace factors strengthen teachers' experiences across Ryff's six dimensions, fostering psychological flourishing amid professional demands (Gast et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2026). By systematically integrating these elements with Ryff's multidimensional model (Henn et al., 2016), the conceptual framework explains the causal pathways through which school organizational conditions drive teachers' psychological functioning, professional fulfilment, and long-term retention (Birchall, 2021; Cann et al., 2024).

## 5.2 Conceptual Model of Teachers' Psychological Well-being

The proposed conceptual model illustrates the relationships between teaching environment factors, the six dimensions of psychological well-being, and broader teacher well-being. In this model, teaching environment factors represent the external conditions within schools that influence teachers' professional experience. These factors include workload, leadership support, professional autonomy, collegial collaboration, and community expectations.

Environmental factors interact with the six dimensions of Ryff's model of psychological well-being (Egbekpalu, 2022). Each dimension represents a specific aspect of teachers' psychological functioning. Autonomy reflects teachers' independence in professional decision-making, whereas environmental mastery represents their ability to manage classroom responsibilities and professional tasks effectively. Personal growth reflects opportunities for professional learning and development, whereas positive relationships with others highlight support from colleagues, students, and school leaders. Purpose in life reflects teachers' sense of meaning and commitment to education, and self-acceptance represents their confidence and positive professional identity (Forster et al., 2022).

The model proposes that when supportive teaching environments are present, these dimensions of psychological well-being are strengthened, leading to positive outcomes such as increased teacher engagement, professional satisfaction, and resilience (Yu et al., 2026). However, unfavourable working conditions may weaken these dimensions and contribute to reduced teacher well-being (Yu et al., 2026).

The conceptual model is summarized as follows.

Work Environment Factors → Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being → Teacher Well-being Outcomes

Teacher well-being outcomes may include increased motivation, improved instructional effectiveness, stronger classroom relationships, and greater professional commitment. These outcomes ultimately contribute to the overall quality and sustainability of educational systems

(Che et al., 2025).

Although the conceptual model is presented theoretically in this study, it can be empirically tested in future research using quantitative or mixed-method approaches. Researchers can examine the relationships between workplace factors and psychological well-being dimensions using survey instruments or structural equation modelling techniques.

### **5.3 Implications of the Framework**

The proposed conceptual framework offers several important implications for future research on teacher's well-being. First, the framework highlights the importance of examining teachers' well-being from a multidimensional perspective, as outlined in Ryff's model, which encompasses autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Henn et al., 2016). Rather than focusing solely on stress and burnout, the model encourages researchers to explore the broader aspects of psychological functioning, including personal growth and purpose (Dierendonck & Lam, 2022).

Second, the framework provides a structured approach to investigate how workplace conditions influence teachers' well-being. By identifying specific work environment factors such as workload, collegial collaboration, professional autonomy, leadership support, and community expectations, the model allows researchers to examine how workplace conditions contribute to the different dimensions of psychological well-being, consistent with the Job Demands-Resources model (Cann et al., 2024; Castro Silva et al., 2023; Simone, 2023).

Third, the framework can guide empirical research by providing a theoretical basis for developing measurement tools and formulating research hypotheses to test the framework. Future studies should test the proposed relationships between environmental factors and well-being dimensions across different educational contexts using approaches such as structural equation modelling (Lu et al., 2024).

Finally, the framework offers practical implications for educational leadership and policy development in the Maldives. School leaders and policymakers can use this model to identify organizational practices that promote teachers' psychological well-being, such as supportive leadership (Lemon & Turner, 2024; Collie, 2025), collaborative school cultures (Birchall, 2021; Savariz & Magallanes, 2024), and manageable workloads (Wahab et al., 2024; Szabo et al., 2021). By creating environments that foster teachers' well-being through trust-building, autonomy support (Karnopp & Bjorklund, 2025; Yolcu & Vural, 2021), and professional development (Juma, 2024), educational institutions can support both teacher retention and high-quality teaching practices in the long term (Belmes et al., 2025; Che et al., 2025).

In summary, the proposed conceptual framework integrates workplace factors with Ryff's multidimensional model of psychological well-being (Henn et al., 2016) to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' psychological functioning. By emphasizing the role of supportive school environments, this framework contributes to the growing body of research that seeks to promote sustainable and healthy educational systems (Yentur, 2023).

## **6. Implications for Educational Practice and Policy**

The conceptual framework presented in this study highlights the importance of understanding teachers' psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct shaped by both individual and organizational factors. By applying Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being (Henn et al., 2016) to the teaching profession, the framework emphasizes that teachers'

professional fulfilment depends not only on stress reduction but also on fostering positive psychological functioning. These insights have important implications for educational practice and policy, particularly in terms of school leadership, teacher professional development, and broader educational governance. Thus, addressing teachers' psychological well-being requires coordinated efforts across multiple levels of the education system to create supportive working environments that promote teachers' professional growth, autonomy, and sense of purpose.

### **6.1 Implications for School Leadership**

School leadership shapes the organizational climate of teachers (Veletic et al., 2023). Research shows that supportive leadership significantly influences teachers' well-being, motivation, and engagement (Uztemur et al., 2026). Leaders prioritizing teachers' psychological well-being foster trust, collaboration, and respect (Lemon & Turner, 2024), contributing to dimensions of well-being such as positive relationships, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance (Cemaloglu & Coban, 2019).

School leadership must create supportive environments that encourage open communication and shared decision-making. Valued teachers feel a sense of belonging and confidence (Karnopp & Björklund, 2025; Mansfield et al., 2023). Leadership that emphasizes empathy, fairness, and recognition enhances well-being and commitment (Belmes et al., 2025; Uztemur et al., 2026).

Leadership should promote teacher autonomy and collaboration among teachers. Autonomy allows teachers to design strategies and adapt learning, boosting their motivation, satisfaction, and identity (Wang et al., 2025; Weiss et al., 2023). Collaborative cultures encourage knowledge sharing and problem solving (Savariz & Magallanes, 2024). Professional learning communities and planning structures strengthen teacher relationships and purposes (Guhao & Sioting, 2023).

### **6.2 Implications for Teacher Development**

Teacher development initiatives are crucial for teachers' psychological well-being and enhancing their instructional competence and personal growth (Dayagbil & Alda, 2024). Ryff's framework emphasizes continuous learning for well-being; therefore, institutions should prioritize programs that support pedagogical knowledge and personal growth. Effective development should focus on reflective and collaborative learning, peer mentoring, and professional dialogue to build competence and manage challenges (Juma, 2024; Makeleni et al., 2023).

Schools should offer emotional support systems to manage the emotional demands of teaching, especially in primary education (Cervellione et al., 2025; Huynh et al., 2023). Without support, stress can lead to teacher exhaustion. Access to counselling, peer support, and well-being programs helps maintain resilience (Burkett, 2025).

Development initiatives should also strengthen professional identity and promote self-acceptance. Reflective practice and self-assessment foster confidence and align with Ryff's self-acceptance dimension, promoting positive self-evaluation and growth (Bingol & Batik, 2018).

### **6.3 Implications for Educational Policy**

Although school practices are crucial, broader educational policies significantly impact

teachers' psychological well-being. Policymakers must acknowledge that well-being is linked to the working conditions, recognition, and support. Addressing these factors can create a healthier educational system. A key concern is workload, which is a major source of stress. Administrative demands strain teachers' time and energy; therefore, policies should balance responsibilities and reduce unnecessary tasks to enhance satisfaction (Nwoko et al., 2024).

Another policy aspect is the integration of well-being initiatives in schools. While student well-being has been recognized, teacher well-being requires more attention (Cann et al., 2023). National or regional frameworks should include teachers to ensure systematic support for their mental health and fulfilment, such as training programs and support services. Education policies should also promote professional autonomy and respect for teachers' expertise. Involving teachers in curriculum development and decision-making fosters a sense of purpose and ownership (Ngussa & Gabriel, 2017). Empowering teachers in educational reform strengthens their identity and commitment (Liu & Trent, 2023).

In summary, enhancing teachers' well-being requires coordinated efforts in terms of school leadership, development initiatives, and policy frameworks. Supportive environments, growth opportunities, and policies that address workload and well-being collectively improve psychological functioning. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of teachers' well-being (Avola et al., 2025) allows institutions to develop strategies to support teachers and sustain high-quality systems.

## **7. Directions for Future Research**

While this conceptual paper proposes a multidimensional framework for understanding primary school teachers' psychological well-being, several avenues for future research remain. First, empirical studies should be conducted to test the proposed framework. Quantitative research using validated psychological well-being instruments, particularly those based on Ryff's Six-Factor Model, could examine the relationships between teaching environment factors and the different dimensions of teachers' well-being. Such empirical investigations would help determine the strength and direction of these relationships and provide further evidence of the framework's applicability in educational contexts.

Second, future research should explore teacher well-being in diverse cultural and educational settings. Cross-cultural studies can help identify how cultural values, educational policies, and social expectations influence teachers' psychological well-being. It is important to understand these differences because teachers' professional experiences and support systems may vary significantly across countries and educational systems (Jin et al., 2020).

Third, longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into how teachers' psychological well-being evolves over time. Longitudinal studies would enable researchers to examine how professional experiences, career stages, and changing workplace conditions influence the development of well-being throughout teachers' careers.

Finally, comparative research across educational levels, such as primary, secondary, and higher education, may reveal how different teaching contexts influence psychological well-being. Such studies could help identify the specific factors that shape teachers' well-being in different educational settings and contexts.

## **8. Conclusion**

This conceptual paper examines primary school teachers' psychological well-being from a

multidimensional perspective by applying Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-being. This highlights that teacher well-being is a complex construct that extends beyond the absence of stress and burnout. Within modern education systems, teachers face increasing professional demands, including workload pressure, administrative responsibilities, and evolving expectations related to teaching and learning (Jomuad et al., 2021). These challenges necessitate understanding well-being not only in terms of occupational stress but also in terms of broader positive psychological functioning (Collie, 2024; OECD, 2023)

Existing research has largely focused on deficit-oriented approaches, such as stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction (Ozturk et al., 2024), often overlooking the positive resources that enable teachers to thrive (Kern et al., 2014). This study advocates for Ryff's model as a comprehensive framework encompassing autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 2018). Applying the framework reveals how these dimensions align with teachers' professional lives: autonomy in instructional judgment, environmental mastery in managing classroom responsibilities, personal growth via continuous development, positive relationships in school communities, purpose through student contributions, and self-acceptance in one's professional identity.

The proposed conceptual framework posits that teaching environment factors, including workload, leadership, autonomy, collaboration, and community expectations, influence these three dimensions. Unfavorable conditions can lead to teacher dissatisfaction and lower job satisfaction (Admiraal et al., 2023). Educational institutions and policymakers must prioritize supportive environments, with leadership fostering collaboration, autonomy, and development to enhance the well-being of academic staff (Uztemur et al., 2026). This approach sustains effective systems that benefit both teachers and students (Dreer, 2022).

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