

Effectiveness of Positive Affirmations in Reducing Stress and Enhancing Psychological Well-Being among School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out if school teachers may benefit from using positive affirmations to lower their stress levels and improve their mental health. Workload, job expectations, administrative tasks, classroom management, and interpersonal challenges are all factors that may add up to a stressful work environment and have a poor impact on a teacher's mental health. Reinforcing positive self-perceptions, coping with negative ideas, and adapting more effectively in stressful circumstances are all possible outcomes of using positive affirmations as a positive psychological intervention. The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a positive affirmation intervention on the stress and mental health of 132 educators. To measure the intervention's efficacy, a pre- and post-test strategy was used. Using valid standardised instruments, we measured stress and psychological wellness, and we analysed the results using descriptive and inferential statistics as needed. The purpose of this research is to find out whether school instructors may enhance their mental health and decrease their stress levels by regularly practicing positive affirmations. Teachers' mental health and resilience in the face of professional stress may be improved with the help of easy-to-implement, inexpensive positive psychological therapies; this is the hope of the study's authors.

Keywords: Positive Affirmations, Stress, Psychological Well-Being, School Teachers, Positive Psychology Intervention, Teacher Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

An major factor that impacts the health and performance of upper secondary school teachers is stress. Factors such as demographics, work environment, and job expectations contribute to this kind of stress. Gender, marital status, and age all have a role in how much stress teachers experience. There seems to be no correlation between stress levels and professional credentials or years of experience [1]. The lack of autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for innovation in the classroom is a major source of stress for teachers. Working outside of one's subject area and dealing with students' demands on one's time are additional factors. Role ambiguity, role conflict, excessive group pressure, and bad peer interactions are all sources of stress. Teachers' mental health takes a hit from work stress, which shows up as lethargy and depression. Intense

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work stress, defined as high expectations with limited room for adjustment, exacerbates the symptoms [2].

Stress in the classroom may negatively impact teachers' health and way of life. Emotional tiredness, cynicism, and a diminished feeling of personal achievement are symptoms of burnout, which is defined as prolonged exposure to stress in the teaching profession. Mental health concerns like anxiety and depression may manifest physically as headaches, exhaustion, and sleep disturbances. Teachers may be less invested in their work and more likely to quit if they experience high levels of stress. It is concerning that some educators may be resorting to unhealthy ways of handling stress, such as excessive eating or drinking.

Student perceptions of teacher care and school happiness are inversely related to teachers' stress levels, indicating that teachers' mental health has a direct bearing on students' experiences³. High levels of stress may lead to emotional weariness and depersonalisation, symptoms that are typical among secondary school teachers who experience burnout [3].

Having a high sense of coherence (SOC) may help with work strain, stress perception, and mood. Likewise, stress might be lessened in a school setting if peers also report high SOC. Teachers may experience less stress if school systems are improved, for example, by enhancing the organisational environment and providing sufficient resources [4].

The job stress of upper secondary school teachers is affected by personal, organisational and role variables. Such stress impacts teachers' psychological well-being and has ramifications for student results. A solid feeling of coherence and encouraging school settings are protective variables that might mitigate these impacts. If we are serious about enhancing educator happiness and student achievement, we must address these issues through systemic interventions like the Self-Affirmation Technique.

By fostering a more optimistic view of oneself and one's life, self-affirmation practices can alleviate stress at work and in everyday life. One way to combat negative self-talk, increase confidence, and strengthen resilience in the face of adversity is to repeat positive statements about oneself^{11,12}. As a result, researchers ran a pilot study to see how well the Self-Affirmation Technique reduced stress and improved teachers' quality of life [5].

Self Affirmation Theory and Stress Reduction

Self-affirmation theory states that people want a good, moral, and adaptable self-image and “self-integrity”. Self-threats prompt defensive information processing. According to Steele's self-affirmation hypothesis, individuals are driven to protect their global sense of self-worth, and self-affirmation in one domain (e.g., remembering previous acts of kindness) should diminish the need to be defensive when threatened in another domain (e.g., work stress)[6]. Thus, if a domain is essential to one's self-image and one can be “affirmed” in it, this should buffer the self-threat and reduce physiological and psychological reactions.

Self-resources can reduce the physiological and psychological effects of laboratory-induced and naturally occurring stressors. One study [7] found a significant negative correlation between perceived self-resources and cardiovascular reactivity to a laboratory stressor, and another found that self-affirmation reduced Trier Social Stress Task cortisol response. Participants with greater dispositional self-resources (e.g., trait self-esteem and optimism) who

self-affirmed fundamental values reported the least psychological stress, in addition to physiological reaction, according to Creswell et al.

Only one laboratory research has studied how an experimental self-affirmation manipulation affects stress responses to a daily stressor (academic stress before an exam). Undergraduates in the control condition had a cumulative rise in urine epinephrine (a measure of sympathetic nervous system activity) before exams, but the self-affirmation group did not[8]. Morgan & Harrise broadened the emphasis on daily stresses to study how self-affirmation affects higher education professionals' anxiety during organisational downsizing. Due to critiques of previous self-affirming approaches and a lack of empirically similar controls, Morgan & Harris devised a self-affirming implementation aim that reduced short- and long-term anxiety.

Self Affirming Implementation Intentions

Value scales are typical experimental self-affirming manipulations. Participants must choose their most significant values (e.g., aesthetic, social) from a collection of statements reflecting self-worth categories. This strategy may help induce self-affirmation, but it has been critiqued since researchers struggle to offer core value statements that are relevant to vast, varied groups. An alternate method is to have individuals write extensively about their own values[9]. Another study found that this strategy worked well with small samples but was too time-consuming for bigger samples[10].

Napper, Harris, and Epton believe value-based approaches are long and complex, making it difficult to create equal non-self-affirming control tasks in experimental self-affirmation investigations. The activity needs verbal fluency, therefore low-literate/educated people have challenges. To address these difficulties, Armitage, Harris, and Arden designed and evaluated a briefer, standardised self-affirmation manipulation employing implementation intents.

Implementation intents are explicit if-then plans that prompt individuals to recall important experiences and take appropriate action. To change health habits, implementation intentions have worked[11]. Implementation intents assume that important environmental events raise salience and automatically generate relevant behavioural responses. Studies have demonstrated that implementation goals may strongly influence long-term behaviour. Armitage et al. created a brief manipulation in which participants were instructed to write an if-then plan to self-affirm by writing a statement (stem + answer). The stem for the 'theself-affirmingimplementation intention' (S-AII) was adapted from Harris et al.: 'If I feel threatened or anxious, then I will...' The critical situation was 'feeling threatened or anxious', and appropriate self-affirming responses were 'thinking about the things I value about myself' and 'remembering things that I have succeeded in'. Morgan & Harris recently revised the S-AII to establish the work-related self-affirming implementation intention (WS-AII) and a non-self-affirming task as an active control to attain "control equivalence". Anxiety and depression were assessed pre- and post-intervention/control task in UK further education college organisational downsize survivors three weeks later[12]. Job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and self-esteem were assessed. Differences between WS-AII and control were statistically significant. Workers with work-related self-affirming implementation objectives saw immediate anxiety reduction. Three weeks later, job-related anxiety decreased. WS-AIIs did not affect depression, job satisfaction, or self-esteem. Self-efficacy was much greater in the WS-AII condition.

Objective

The purpose of this research was to examine whether or not school teachers may benefit from using positive affirmations as a means to alleviate stress and improve their mental health. Specifically, we want to:

- To evaluate the stress levels and mental health of educators prior to an affirmation intervention.
- Researching the efficacy of positive affirmations in reducing stress levels in educators.
- To determine whether or if positive affirmations are useful for enhancing educators' mental health.

Hypothesis

- H_{01} : After participating in the positive affirmation intervention, school teachers' stress levels will not have changed much from their pre-intervention levels.
- H_{02} : Positive affirmation intervention will not significantly improve school teachers' psychological well-being scores compared to pre- and post-intervention scores.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Good mental health is linked to self-confidence and mental well-being. Singer and Ryff (1998) say happiness is part of well-being and expresses one's existence. Psychologically healthy people are optimistic about themselves and others. Individuals who regulate their own actions are always looking for suitable circumstances. They have defined life objectives and want to reach their potential[13].

Middle-aged people have a higher feeling of well-being than old and young adults, according to studies. These psychological well-beings comprise cognitive evaluations (life satisfaction) and emotional reactions (pleasant emotions). This includes thoughts, feelings, actions, and decisions that reflect an individual's mood. Psychological well-being, according to Ryff (1989), is how much control individuals feel over their lives and activities. Psychological well-being is measured by eudemonic metrics that emphasise meaning, optimal functioning, and quality of life. To be healthy, your attitude and emotions must fit your underlying ideals or a person's personality[14].

Acceptance of self, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery of the environment, purpose in life, and personal growth are included in Carol Ryff's Psychological Well Being model. Inspired by numerous psychological theories, it has six aspects that improve well-being.

Teacher mental health is essential for personal and professional success. When choosing a vocation, people should get career guidance and undertake psychological exams such as aptitude tests, occupation attitude assessments, interest assessments, and IQ tests[15].

To avoid professional incompatibility and mental health issues, following assessments should be considered before choosing a vocation. Individuals should seek assistance investigating professional options if their first pick fails. For persons who want to teach yet have poor mental

health, changing occupations may be difficult after some time and length of service. Psychological therapies may improve mental health in such instances.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTERVENTIONS (PPIS)

Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) defined Positive Psychology treatments (PPIs) as treatments that promote positive emotions, beliefs, and behaviours. They say performance improvement strategies include two main parts: First, they strive to promote pleasant feelings and ideas to prolong happy, then they try to extend these benefits. Sensory awareness, social connection, gratitude, and mental restructuring may boost PPI happiness. The following techniques and traits are called Positive Psychology Interventions[16].

Psychology has traditionally focused on treating mental diseases, problems, and suffering. This attitude has changed due to positive psychology's focus on strengths, well-being, and life satisfaction in recent decades. Positive psychology promotes positive emotions, strengths, and life satisfaction via positive psychological interventions, or PPIs.

Positive psychology therapies include several methods to boost positivity, strength, and resilience. Focusing on strengths and positive emotions may help individuals live more meaningful and fulfilled lives, according to these treatments. Also included are appreciation exercises, mindfulness, acts of kindness, and character trait identification [17].

Empirical research underpins positive psychology therapies. Numerous research have shown that these approaches boost happiness. Research shows that gratitude programs, in which individuals consistently focus on the positive parts of their lives and feel good about them, improve mood, life satisfaction, and health. A popular PPI, mindfulness meditation, reduces stress and improves emotion regulation[18].

A. Types of Positive Psychology Interventions

- Journaling gratitude: study suggests that persons who do so are happier and more fulfilled.
- Mindfulness Meditation: Mindfulness reduces stress, anxiety, and improves well-being by keeping people present.
- Acts of kindness: Small or large, acts of compassion may boost life satisfaction.
- Character Strengths: Identifying and using one's character strengths daily increases happiness and personal progress.

The Positive Impact of PPIs

Positive psychology therapies have tremendous life effects. They boost happiness, resilience, and life management by tackling life's challenges. PPI reinforces positive feelings and strengths to help people develop and find purpose in life. These treatments may also improve psychological health and quality of life in education, health care, and the workplace[19].

Positive psychology therapies might promote happiness and a fulfilling life. PPIs focus on strengths, virtues, and positive emotions to improve mental health and happiness. These initiatives have been shown to work and can improve people's lives, which leads to improved

living circumstances and more stable communities. As Positive Psychology grows, it promotes the idea that anybody may achieve pleasure and well-being[20].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Design

This quantitative intervention-based study examined how positive affirmations affect school teachers' stress and mental health. The intervention's effects on psychological factors were measured using pre- and post-tests. Positive affirmation was the intervention while stress and psychological well-being were the dependent variables[21].

Participants

The survey comprised 132 25–35-year-old instructors. Participants were 82 (62.12%) men and 50 (37.88%) women. Positive affirmations were tested on school teachers to decrease stress and promote mental health. Participants were informed of the research's goal and process and participated voluntarily. Their comments were kept secret and anonymous throughout the study[22].

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	62.12%
	Female	50	37.88%
	Total	132	100.00%
Age	25–35 years	132	100.00%

Interpretation: According to Table 1, 82 (62.12%) of the 132 school instructors were male and 50 (37.88%) were female. All contestants were 25–35.

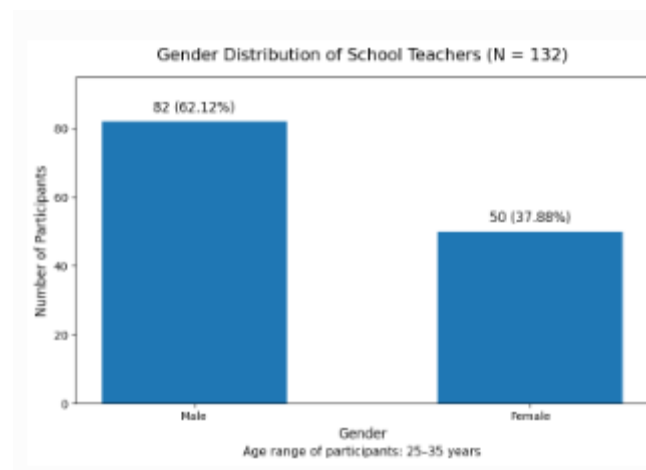


Figure 1. Study Teacher Gender Distribution (N = 132)

Variables of the Study

- Intervention Variable: Affirmations positive.
- Dependent Variables: Stress

Psychological Well-Being

Positive affirmations are repeated to boost self-esteem and adaptability to stress. Stress measures teachers' perceptions of personal and professional stress, whereas psychological well-being measures positive psychological functioning and mental health[23].

Research Instruments

Both pre- and post-intervention assessments of participants' stress and psychological health were based on standardised measures. Teachers' reported stress levels were calculated using the stress measure, and their general psychological health was assessed using the psychological well-being measure [24].

We used the same measures both before and after the positive affirmation intervention to make sure our measurements were consistent and to see whether anything had changed.

Positive Affirmation Intervention

Positive self-affirmations were the intervention. The goal was to have the participants concentrate on positive self-statements related to self-esteem, emotional resilience, coping skills, professional competency, and self-confidence.

The intervention included a set of positive affirmations on the capacity to face difficulties, maintain composure under pressure, identify one's own strengths, and maintain an optimistic outlook on one's professional duties.

Motivating educators to think more positively and constructively was a primary goal of the intervention. The goal of having teachers routinely reflect on and repeat these phrases was to help them cope better with occupational stress and have a more positive self-perception.

Procedure

There were three main parts to the study: an evaluation before the intervention, an intervention using positive affirmations, and an evaluation after the intervention.

The first step was to collect baseline scores from all participants using the chosen stress and psychological well-being assessments. As planned, the positive affirmation intervention was given to participants after the pre-test evaluation.

Educators were guided in the proper use of affirmations and urged to include them into their daily routines. Before and after the intervention, participants took the same tests to gauge their stress and mental health[25].

To determine if the positive affirmation intervention led to a decrease in stress and an increase in psychological well-being, the pre- and post-test scores were compared [26].

Statistical Analysis

Using suitable descriptive and inferential statistical methods, the gathered data were arranged, coded, and analysed. The average and standard deviation of the individuals' stress and psychological well-being scores were provided by [27].

Based on the data assumptions, an appropriate paired-samples statistical test was used to compare pre- and post-test scores in order to establish the intervention's success. At the

standard 0.05 threshold, statistical significance was examined. Additionally, effect-size estimates may be used to indicate the practical extent of changes linked to the intervention.

Ethical Considerations

Everyone who took part in the research did so voluntarily. The research's goals and the participants' roles were explained to them in a briefing. All responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The data that was acquired was only used for research reasons [28].

RESULTS

In order to determine if positive affirmations are useful in lowering stress and promoting psychological well-being, 132 school teachers were studied. Standard deviations and means were used to characterise the post-test and pre-test results. To find out whether the improvements that were seen after the positive affirmation intervention were statistically significant, a paired-samples t-test was used.

A. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

A grand number of 132 classroom educators were part in the research. The participants' ages ranged from twenty-five to thirty-five. Out of the total, 82 were men and 50 were women.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	62.12
	Female	50	37.88
	Total	132	100.00
Age	25–35 years	132	100.00

There were 62.12% men and 37.88% females among the participants, according to the demographic distribution. The age range of the participants was 25–35.

Effect of Positive Affirmations on Stress

School instructors' pre- and post-intervention stress levels were compared to find out how well the positive affirmation intervention worked to alleviate teachers' stress.

Table 3. Teachers' Stress Levels Before and After an Exam

Assessment	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-test Stress	132	28.00	5.56
Post-test Stress	132	20.05	7.12

After the intervention, the average stress score decreased from 28.00 on the pretest to 20.05 on the posttest. Following the positive affirmation intervention, there was a significant decrease in perceived stress, with a mean drop of around 7.95 points.

After the session, participants' stress levels dropped by around 28.4 percent on average.

Effect of Positive Affirmations on Psychological Well-Being

We also compared the participants' psychological well-being ratings before and after the positive affirmation intervention.

Table 4. Assessment Before and After Scores for Mental Health

Assessment	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-test Psychological Well-Being	132	65.92	9.29
Post-test Psychological Well-Being	132	77.97	11.88

After the intervention, the average score of psychological well-being rose from 65.92 to 77.97. On average, this is a gain of 12.06 points.

An improvement in psychological well-being was linked to the positive affirmation intervention, as shown by the roughly 18.3% percentage rise.

Hypothesis Testing

To assess the significance of the changes between the pre- and post-test scores, paired-samples t-tests were administered.

Table 5. Paired-Samples t-Test Results

Variable	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Change	t-value	p-value	Result
Stress	28.00	20.05	-7.95	21.16	< .001	Significant
Psychological Well-Being	65.92	77.97	+12.06	16.76	< .001	Significant

A statistically significant difference was seen between the stress ratings before and after the test ($t(131) = 21.16$, $p < .05$). Consequently, we may say that the null hypothesis, which stated that the stress ratings before and after the exam would not change significantly, is false.

Likewise, there was a statistically significant difference ($t(131) = 16.76$, $p < .001$) in the psychological well-being ratings before and after the exam. This meant that we could also reject the null hypothesis for mental health.

School instructors who took part in the study reported much lower stress levels and better psychological health as a consequence of using positive affirmations.

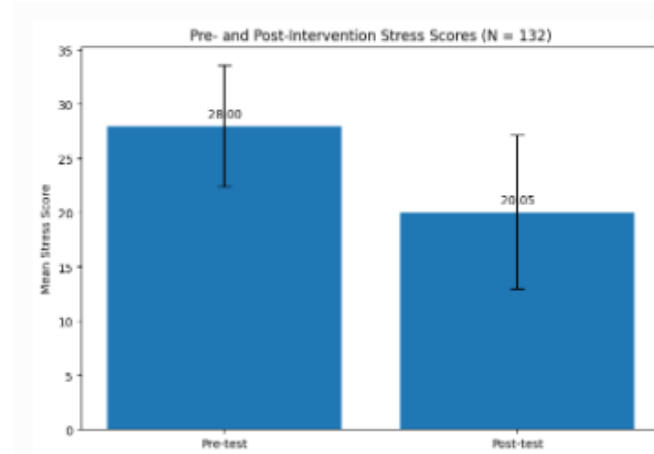


Figure 2. School Teachers Mean Stress Scores Pre-Test and Post-Test.

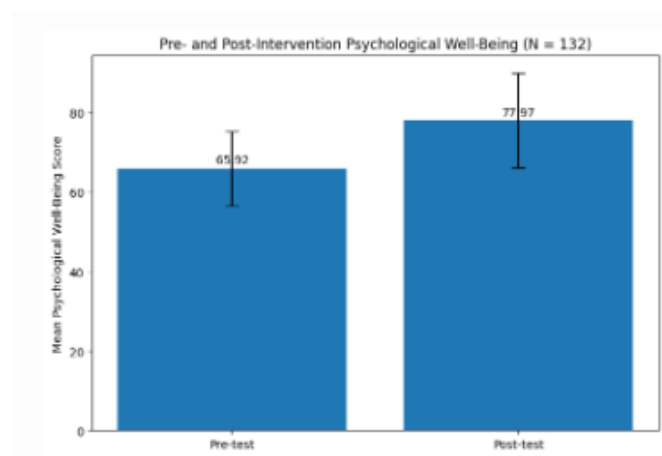


Figure 3. Results of a Pre- and Post-Test on Teachers' Mental Health

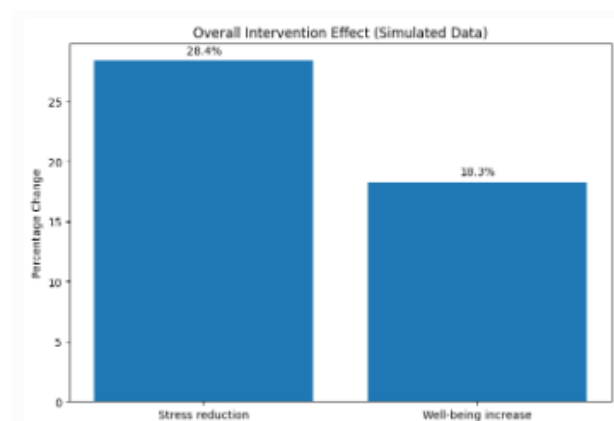


Figure 4. Reduction in Stress and Improvement in Mental Health as a Percentage After Treatment.

DISCUSSION

This research looked at how well school instructors fared when they used positive affirmations to alleviate stress and boost their mental health. The psychological outcomes showed a significant improvement after the intervention, according to the data. Following the

intervention, the average stress score decreased from 28.00 on the pretest to 20.05 on the posttest. The opposite was true for mental health, which rose from 65.92 to 77.97 on average.

Regular use of positive affirmations may help instructors behave more adaptively to stressful events at work, as shown by the statistically significant decrease in stress. Class management, workload, administrative duties, interpersonal interactions, and performance requirements are just a few of the difficulties that teachers face. As a basic cognitive tactic, positive affirmations may help instructors feel more competent and less affected by negative or scary ideas.

These findings are in line with self-affirmation theory, which proposes that when individuals face psychologically dangerous circumstances, it might help to affirm their own significant values and good qualities of themselves in order to maintain self-integrity. According to Sherman (2013), people's self-resources and worldviews may be enhanced by self-affirmation, which in turn can mitigate the psychological effects of stressful events.

Furthermore, the results are in agreement with Creswell et al. (2005), who demonstrated that stating one's values might mitigate the negative effects of stress on one's mind and body. Results showed that those whose actions were consistent with their values had reduced cortisol levels associated with stress.

The considerable increase in mental health among educators is particularly noteworthy. Teachers who take care of their mental health may be better able to handle the stresses of the job, participate in meaningful work with their students, feel confident in themselves, and control their emotions. Hence, the rise in scores after the intervention implies that there could be other advantages to using positive affirmations than just reducing stress.

The results also line up with what Morgan and Atkin (2016) found in their study with individual teachers. Short work-related self-affirmation interventions increased outcomes connected to anxiety, positive teaching emotions, self-efficacy, and emotion regulation in their research of primary school teachers.

Taken together, the results of this study provide evidence that instructors could benefit from using positive affirmations as a simple and readily available psychological intervention. Implementing such activities into teachers' everyday routines may be done with few resources and might even help with larger institutional measures aimed at improving teachers' well-being.

Organisational solutions should be in place to address issues such as toxic work environments, excessive workload, role conflict, and insufficient resources; positive affirmations should not be considered a substitute for these. Their primary benefit is that they provide educators another tool for dealing with psychological stress in the classroom. This tool has the potential to assist educators deal with the inevitable pressures of the job in a more positive manner.

A. Major Findings

- An equal number of 132 school instructors, ranging in age from 25 to 35, were included in the study. There were 50 girls (37.88%) and 82 men (62.12%).
- School instructors reported a significant decrease in their stress levels, going from 28.00 (SD = 5.56) before the exam to 20.05 (SD = 7.12) after the test.

- A considerable improvement was seen after the positive affirmation intervention, as it was linked to an average decrease in stress scores of around 28.4 percent.
- Statistical significance was found in the pre- and post-test stress ratings, with a t-value of 21.16 and a p-value less than .001. This meant that stress was not a null hypothesis.
- Compared to the pre-test, the post-test mean psychological well-being score increased from 65.92 (SD = 9.29) to 77.97 (SD = 11.88).
- A about 18.3% improvement in mental health was a consequence of the positive affirmation intervention.
- The results of the psychological well-being exam before and after the intervention showed a statistically significant change ($t(131) = 16.76, p < .001$). As a result, we also rejected the second null hypothesis.

According to the findings, the school instructors who took part in the positive affirmation program reported less stress and higher levels of psychological wellness.

In light of these results, it seems that positive affirmations may be an effective and easy way to help educators deal with the stress that comes with their jobs.

Limitations of the study

Although the results are encouraging, they should be viewed in light of the limitations of the current investigation. There was a small sample size ($n=132$) of school instructors (25–35 years old) in this research. So, we can't say anything about how this will work in other classrooms or with other age groups.

Second, participants' reports of their own stress and psychological health were crucial to the results. Such assessments may be impacted by the participants' perspectives, reaction styles, and social desirability.

Third, the study neglected to include other variables that impact teachers' stress and mental health, such as workload, pay, years of experience, school climate, administrative backing, family obligations, and job satisfaction, instead focusing only on positive affirmations.

The absence of a distinct control group is another significant restriction. While comparing results from before and after an intervention may provide light on what changed, a randomised control group would give us more proof that the improvements we saw were the result of positive affirmations and not some other outside influence.

Lastly, results were evaluated throughout a brief intervention time. In order to determine if the benefits of regular affirmation practice, such as reduced stress and improved psychological health, persist when the practice is stopped, long-term follow-up is required.

In order to give better evidence of the impact of positive affirmations among school teachers, future study should include bigger and more diverse samples, randomised control groups, longer follow-up timeframes, and additional occupational and psychological characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The present research surveyed 132 school teachers, ranging in age from 25 to 35, to determine if and how positive affirmations helped them deal with stress and improve their mental health. After participating in the positive affirmation intervention, participants reported much better psychological health and a significant reduction in overall stress.

According to the data, there was a statistically significant change in how people rated their stress and psychological health between the two assessments. The result was the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results raise the possibility that using positive affirmations on a daily basis is a helpful psychological strategy for assisting educators in managing stress and enhancing their mental health.

Affirmations that are positive are simple, cheap, and easy to include into your daily routine. Wellness programs for educators, seminars on stress management, and other programs grounded on positive psychology could benefit from the addition of systematic affirmation techniques. Teachers' mental health and, by extension, the classroom climate, could benefit from such treatments.

To find out whether positive affirmations have long-term beneficial impacts, future research might include bigger and more varied samples of educators, participants of varying ages and school kinds, control groups, and lengthier follow-up times.

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