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# What Makes Public School Teachers Happy in the New Normal?

## An Exploratory Sequential Study

Jimmy Rey Cabardo

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### Abstract

Teacher happiness is a critical component of effective teaching. When teachers are happy, it often translates into more effective and engaging teaching. This exploratory sequential research primarily aimed to explore the characteristics and sources of happiness of public-school teachers in the new normal and eventually develop a public-school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal. In gathering qualitative data, ten public school teachers underwent in-depth interviews while 302 public school teachers responded the initial survey questionnaire to determine the factor structures that significantly characterize the happiness of public-school teachers in the new normal through exploratory factor analysis utilizing the VARIMAX orthogonal rotation method with Kaiser normalization. Results revealed four significant themes generating 60 items for the preliminary questionnaire characterizing the happiness of public-school teachers in the new normal. After dimension reduction, the 60 items are distributed into six constructs which are all found valid and reliable. The teachers' happiness scale captures the factor structures and sources of happiness of teachers in the new normal. The happiness scale in the new normal may help DepEd officials, school heads, teachers, and the community partners identify factors that enhance teacher well-being, leading to improved morale, job satisfaction, and overall school performance.

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### Introduction

Teacher happiness is a critical component of effective teaching. When teachers are happy in their profession, it often translates into more effective and engaging teaching. Happy teachers tend to be more motivated, passionate, and energetic, which can inspire their students to become more enthusiastic about learning. Moreover, happy teachers are more likely to create a positive classroom atmosphere, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional well-being among their students (Duckworth et al., 2009). This, in turn, can lead to improved academic performance and overall satisfaction among both teachers and students (Chen & Cheng, 2022). In the world ranking of happiness based on a three-year-average 2020-2022, Philippines ranked 76 out of 137 participating countries which Finland, Denmark, and Iceland were on the top list. Above Philippines in the World Happiness Ranking among Southeast Asian countries were Singapore in 25, Malaysia in 55, Thailand in 60, and Vietnam in 65 spots (Helliwell et al., 2023). However, prior to pandemic, that is on a three-year-average 2017-2019,

Philippines ranked 52 out of 153 countries with Singapore in the 31st spot, the only country above Philippines in the Southeast Asian region (Helliwell et al., 2020). When it comes to the teaching profession in Indonesia, Aziz et al. (2020) identified six important dimensions of happiness. These include satisfaction, career, colleagues, perception, salary, and leaders. Mardhatillah and Rahman (2020) stressed that happiness of teachers before pandemic is influenced by their resilience and spirituality, however, during pandemic, there are other factors contributory to teachers' happiness. The study of Nadeem et al. (2022), on the other hand revealed that the general happiness score of teachers is above average which exhibit most of the teachers are happy with no significant relation between happiness level of teachers on the basis of demographic characteristics. This means that the happiness of teachers is not confined nor restricted within the ambit of their demographic characteristics.

In the Philippines, the 2012 Press Release of the Department of Education featured that four of ten happiest Pinoys are teachers. In fact, former secretary Armin Luistro mentioned that the said search brings home the point that happiness can be found while in the service of others. This means that in spite of the struggles, there are still many reasons to be happy. Moreover, the study of Magtubo and Dela Cerna (2023), revealed that there are seven constructs for teachers' happiness as follows: personal happiness, work and life balance, student achievement, self-control and self-resilience, commitment and enjoyment, provision and motivation, and negative stimulus. As stressed by Catanghal et al. (2017) disclosed that mono-grade teachers had higher teaching performance than multi-grade teachers. In the level of happiness teachers teaching in mono-grade had higher happiness level than multi-grade teachers. The happiness of teachers is not only beneficial for them personally but also plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality of education and the well-being of students in the classroom.

While there are several studies discussing about the happiness of teachers, the studies that describes the dimensions of happiness among public school teachers in the new normal are very limited to almost none particularly within the region. Thus, the researcher is eager to find out the characteristics and sources of happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and eventually develop a public school teachers happiness scale in the new normal to bridge the existing knowledge gap. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following research questions: (1) What are the characteristics and sources of happiness of public school teachers in the new normal?; (2) What are the factor structures that significantly characterize the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal?; and (3) What are the validity and reliability results of the developed public school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal?

## **Method**

Exploratory sequential mixed methods was used to carry out this study. This involved the conduct of interviews to five (5) teachers in the elementary and another five (5) teachers in the secondary schools to explore the characteristics and sources of happiness of public school teachers in the new normal. Then the significant statements that were collected from the interview transcripts served as an initial survey questionnaire. However, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis of Creswell and Creswell (2018). The initial survey questionnaire underwent validity testing as well as pilot testing to find out the reliability of the instrument before its administration. Then, the survey questionnaire was administered to gather the quantitative responses of the

identified 250 teacher-respondents on what makes public school teachers in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur happy in the new normal. This followed the conduct of exploratory factor analysis utilizing VARIMAX orthogonal rotation method with Kaiser normalization wherein the rotated component matrix was set at 25 iterations and, any factor loadings lower than the required +0.40 were eliminated from the scale to determine the factor structures that significantly characterize the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal. The finalized survey questionnaire underwent evaluation in terms of its validity such as content and construct validity as well as reliability testing by computing the Cronbach's alpha to determine the psychometric strength of the developed survey questionnaire. The study was conducted to identified locale from April to November 2024.

## Results

### Characteristics and Sources of Happiness of Public School Teachers in the New Normal

During the interview of the selected public elementary and high school teachers in public schools regarding the characteristics and sources of happiness of public school teachers in the new normal, four (4) emerging themes were generated from the validated interview transcripts. These themes were as follows: (1) student success and fulfillment as a teacher; (2) personal and spiritual fulfillment; (3) work-life balance and job satisfaction; and (4) financial stability and rewards.

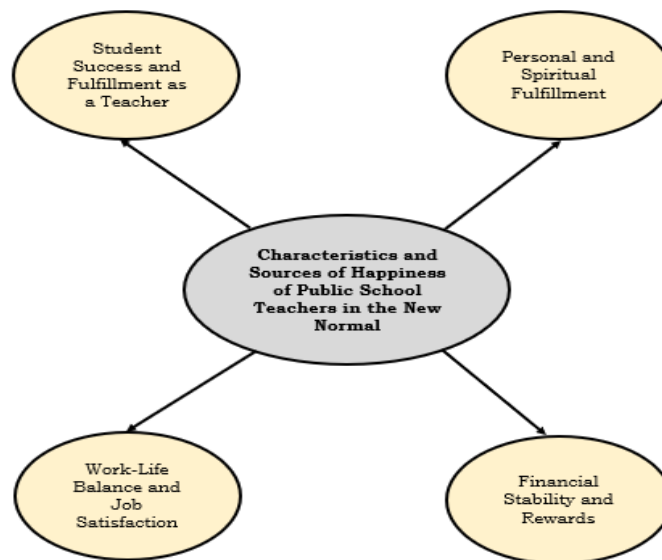


Figure 1. Emerging Themes Generated from the Validated Interview Transcripts on the Characteristics and Sources of Happiness of Public School Teachers in the New Normal

#### Student Success and Fulfillment as a Teacher

The fulfillment of teaching often comes from seeing students thrive. Teachers invest not only their time but also their emotions and energy in nurturing the potential of each student, and the reward is when students succeed academically and personally. As shared by various teachers in public schools during the interview, the success stories shared by former students or their achievements during school bring immense satisfaction to educators,

reaffirming the impact of their work. They continued by saying that their job as educators is not just about imparting knowledge, but also shaping character, behavior, and life outcomes, guiding students to a future full of promise and opportunity.

For them, teaching becomes more meaningful when they witness their students' genuine curiosity and engagement in the learning process. Whether it is through winning competitions, receiving awards, or excelling in class, every achievement serves as validation of the teacher's role in molding the learners. By helping students build a strong moral foundation, educators play an essential role in shaping their character and guiding them toward responsible adulthood. Teachers, therefore, often find joy not just in academic success, but in the holistic development of their students. Here are some of the verbatim responses shared by public school teachers during the interview:

“One of the happiest moments in me as a teacher is when we are sharing when my colleague the success stories of our common students and hearing their achievements. It seems to me that their achievements are the validation of our commitment, dedication, and hard work as teachers.” ~ Teacher Dianne

“Seeing my students achieve in any given academic field makes me happy. As a teacher, your competence and dedication in teaching the students can only be verified by their success and achievements especially when they are receiving honors and awards.” ~ Teacher Diego

“I think that my happiness as a teacher is primarily defined by the achievements of my students whether in the form of diplomas, career milestones, or personal growth. Seeing them succeed in life allows me to experience fulfillment in my career as a teacher especially when you are acknowledged by your students as part of their success.” ~ Teacher Catherine

The significance of student success also extends beyond the classroom. Teachers contribute to their students' lives by preparing them for the real world, hoping they achieve better futures than what they had before. The impact that a teacher has on students often reflects in the relationships they build (Mileo, 2024). Students' smiles, loyalty, and sincere gratitude highlight the personal connections that make teaching a rewarding career. In fact, Huot et al. (2024) exemplified that these bonds are a testament to the lasting influence a teacher has on their students, demonstrating that teaching is not merely a profession but a vital part of shaping lives. Also, Magtubo and Dela Cerna (2023) stated that seeing students succeed and fulfill their potential brings teachers a profound sense of purpose and accomplishment, reinforcing the value of their efforts. This sense of contribution enhances their happiness and motivates them to continue making a positive impact.

### **Personal and Spiritual Fulfillment**

Another significant theme that emerged during the analysis of the validated interview transcripts is personal and spiritual fulfillment. For them, teaching is often driven by a deep sense of passion and purpose, which for many educators includes a spiritual component. A teacher may find fulfillment through the presence of God in their work, seeing their profession as a calling or mission. The daily challenges and triumphs in teaching are often

balanced by faith, whether it is prayer, gratitude, or a sense of spiritual connectedness. In this way, many teachers believe that their success in the classroom is not only their own but a manifestation of divine grace.

In addition to the spiritual dimension, many teachers experience personal fulfillment through the intrinsic joy of teaching. Working with young people often brings energy, positivity, and a sense of renewal, reminding teachers of their purpose. Teachers who view teaching as their vocation – rather than just a job – approach their profession with a sense of giving, and sharing their knowledge, talents, and time. The opportunity to positively influence students, build character, and inspire lifelong learning adds to their satisfaction. Here are some of the verbatim responses shared by public school teachers during the interview:

“As a Christian, I believed that teaching is not only a job but a vocation that is God-given. God gave you the talent to nurture and nourish every learner, and by doing this, you feel happy because you know that God gifted you to give to others. Happiness is innate especially when you see God in every learner, an opportunity to do good daily for my students.” ~ Teacher Mark

“To be happy means being happy with my relationship with my family, friends, relatives, and my God. As a teacher, happiness is our choice – a God-given choice and freedom to us, hence, we can choose to be happy always in spite of all the hardships and struggles in life” ~ Teacher Liza

“As a teacher, I can really say that happiness is within the school working and learning together with the students. When you know how to channel your energy and always understand your purpose in life when you are teaching your students, you will always find happiness with it.” ~ Teacher Marites

The narratives of the teachers corroborated with the statement made by Ortan et al. (2021) that personal fulfillment involves achieving a sense of purpose and satisfaction in one’s personal goals, relationships, and overall life trajectory. For teachers, this means finding meaning in their vocation, feeling valued in their roles, and maintaining a work-life balance that supports their individual aspirations. Further, Li et al. (2022) argued that when teachers are personally fulfilled, they experience heightened motivation, resilience, and a positive outlook, which directly impacts their performance and interactions with students and colleagues. This fulfillment, as stressed by Pressley and Garside (2023) also enables the nurses to navigate challenges with confidence, as their internal sense of achievement and contentment serves as a stabilizing force, thereby lessening the turnover intention.

### **Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction**

For many teachers, striking a balance between professional and personal life is key to their happiness. Teaching, while demanding, offers the opportunity for a flexible and manageable workload. Many educators value the ability to align their professional responsibilities with their roles as spouses, parents, and individuals with personal interests. Achieving this balance not only enhances job satisfaction but also promotes long-term career sustainability. Being able to successfully juggle multiple roles brings a sense of accomplishment and contentment.

Job satisfaction among teachers is also closely linked to their sense of purpose and pride in their profession. Teaching is often viewed as one of the noblest careers, and the dedication required to perform it well leads to a deep sense of professional pride. Teachers committed to their profession take joy in shaping young minds and feel privileged to contribute to society through education. This sense of pride is further enhanced by recognition of their hard work and the opportunity for career advancement. Here are some of the verbatim responses shared by public school teachers during the interview:

“I think part of the DepEd is already a source of happiness for me because there are many applicants yet God never forgets you – in His perfect time. Aside from that, teaching in a public school is a sustainable job especially when you pursue advanced studies and be promoted to higher positions. Moreover, you have some time for holidays, weekends, and even summer and Christmas vacations – a balance profession.” ~ Teacher Michelle

“There is pride in teaching profession, and becoming proud enables you to feel happiness in it. Aside from that, you are always having the chance to be recognized for your hard work through career advancement and progression.” ~ Teacher Cielo

“I have been teaching for several decades, and I cannot think shifting to other jobs because teaching for me is a balanced job – both professional and personal. You have chance for career advancement and progression while you also have opportunities to be with the family especially during summer and Christmas vacations because teachers are paid (proportional vacation pay) in spite of being not in school, and you have service credits to be used when there are some health emergencies.” ~ Teacher Jacky

This theme was supported by Suttles (2024) that when teachers can set boundaries between work and home, they are better equipped to manage stress, maintain physical and mental health, and engage meaningfully in their personal relationships. Also, Baluyos et al. (2019) and Ortan et al. (2021) disclosed that when teachers feel valued, supported, and fairly compensated, they develop a stronger connection to their work and the institution they serve. Factors such as positive workplace relationships, professional growth opportunities, and recognition for their contributions amplify this satisfaction. Ertürk (2022) revealed that the combination of work-life balance and job satisfaction creates a powerful synergy that impacts teachers' happiness holistically. Shan et al. (2022) mentioned that teachers who are both satisfied in their jobs and capable of managing their personal lives tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, creativity, and enthusiasm.

### **Financial Stability and Rewards**

While the rewards of teaching often go beyond monetary compensation, financial stability is nonetheless an important factor for many teachers. Receiving a regular salary, bonuses, and other financial incentives provides security and peace of mind, allowing teachers to focus on their profession without the stress of financial instability. This sense of stability extends beyond personal satisfaction, as it enables teachers to support their families and fulfill their financial obligations.

In addition to regular compensation, salary increases and bonuses are key motivators. Teachers appreciate financial recognition for their hard work, and the ability to provide for their family's needs adds to their overall satisfaction. Knowing that their profession can offer financial rewards encourages teachers to remain dedicated to their work, while also helping them contribute to the happiness of their loved ones. Financial security is closely tied to job satisfaction and emotional well-being. Here are some of the verbatim responses shared by public school teachers during the interview:

“Teaching in the public schools may not be comparable with the salaries in teaching abroad, yet you can say that there are already improvements in terms of the salary and benefits of public-school teachers giving you security and peace of mind. I always believed that financial security will always equate happiness.” ~ Teacher Michael

“With teaching, you really have the capability helping your family and loved ones. You can share some of your salary and benefits to them which in turn give you a feeling of fulfillment since you were able to help your family. Happiness is about seeing others in your family and your loved ones happy with your efforts and your hard works.” ~ Teacher Ashley

“Teaching really helps me in my financial obligations for my children especially in paying their tuition and miscellaneous fees in college. It's difficult yet you always have a source in case that you need something for the studies of your children or in other emergencies. At times, the salary and benefits of teachers now is somewhat in the advantage unlike before that it cannot really raise a family of five.” ~ Teacher Adrian

Results of the study supported the claims made by Howell (2013), and Helliwell et al. (2020) that when individuals are financially stable and are able to manage their money ultimately, then they can be better and can transpire happiness in the workplace. Financial stability and compensation satisfaction, as highlighted by Bahilot et al. (20204) provides teachers with a sense of security, reducing stress and enabling them to focus more on their profession, which enhances their overall happiness. Additionally, Ndiango et al. (2024) mentioned that receiving rewards for their efforts fosters appreciation and recognition, boosting their morale and job satisfaction. Finally, Magtubo and Dela Cerna (2023) disclosed that aside from other dimensions of happiness, financial stability is a cornerstone of teachers' happiness as it provides security and peace of mind, allowing them to focus on their professional and personal lives without the constant stress of financial uncertainty.

### **Factor Structures Characterizing the Happiness of Public School Teachers in the New Normal**

After the conduct of qualitative data gathering and analysis, the researcher was able to craft a preliminary survey questionnaire composed of 60 items, that is, 60 significant statements coming from the validated interview transcripts. These significant statements are transformed into survey-like statements to gather the perception of the respondents with regards to the specific statement. There were 302 public school teachers from elementary and secondary schools who answered this preliminary questionnaire on the happiness in the new normal. After

gathering and collating the results of their responses, quantitative data analysis followed through exploratory factor analysis. Before analyzing the results, two important assumptions are discussed to ensure the factorability of the results of responses. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was computed to measure the suitability of data for factor analysis by testing the adequacy of the sample size (Shrestha, 2021). Hair et al. (2010) and Kaiser and Rice (29174) mentioned that the recommended KMO value is 0.60 and above. For this study, the computed KMO value was 0.873, suggesting a commendable sample size.

Moreover, Bartlett's test of sphericity tested the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix signifying that the items are distinct and unsuitable for structure detection (Reddy & Kulshrestha, 2019; Shrestha, 2021). Based on the results, Bartlett's test of sphericity is highly significant at  $p < 0.0001$  showing that the correlation matrix has significant correlations to at least some variables with test values of 13276.476 and associated degree of significance of less than 0.0001. Hence, the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix is rejected. Therefore, the variables are not orthogonal, and the significant value  $< 0.05$  indicates that factor analysis is sensible for the data set.

Table 1. Constructs Characterizing the Happiness of Teachers in the New Normal through Exploratory Factor Analysis

| As a public school teacher, I am happy...                                    | Factor Loadings |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                              | 1               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <b>Indicator 1: Passion, Relationship and Life Fulfillment in Teaching</b>   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I have the chance to listen to the stories of my students.          | 0.769           |   |   |   |   |   |
| because I love working with young people, I also feel the energy among them. | 0.764           |   |   |   |   |   |
| because I have the chance to build my students' character and behavior.      | 0.743           |   |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I can see the happiness in the faces of my parents and siblings.    | 0.742           |   |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I am working with supportive, productive, and dedicated colleagues. | 0.727           |   |   |   |   |   |
| because I can provide and sustain the daily needs of my family.              | 0.724           |   |   |   |   |   |
| since I can feel the sincerity and loyalty of my students towards me.        | 0.692           |   |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I can feel a positive workplace atmosphere.                         | 0.685           |   |   |   |   |   |
| because I always take pride in the teaching profession.                      | 0.660           |   |   |   |   |   |
| because teaching the students is my passion and vocation in life.            | 0.656           |   |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I have the chance to share my knowledge                             | 0.642           |   |   |   |   |   |

| As a public school teacher, I am happy...                                                | Factor Loadings |       |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                          | 1               | 2     | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| with my students.                                                                        |                 |       |   |   |   |   |
| because teaching is always about sharing one's blessings of talents, time, and treasure. | 0.610           |       |   |   |   |   |
| since happiness is an innate feeling in me.                                              | 0.584           |       |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I can pay my financial debts.                                                   | 0.584           |       |   |   |   |   |
| because I have a very flexible and workable teaching workload.                           | 0.541           |       |   |   |   |   |
| because I am committed and dedicated to my teaching profession.                          | 0.498           |       |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I think about the positive future of my students.                               | 0.496           |       |   |   |   |   |
| thinking that I am in the profession that is the noblest one.                            | 0.491           |       |   |   |   |   |
| because I know that teaching is a way to thank God for all the days' blessings.          | 0.490           |       |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I can catch the interest and attention of my learners during class discussion.  | 0.442           |       |   |   |   |   |
| because I can find joy, excitement, and happiness whenever I am teaching.                | 0.432           |       |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Indicator 2: Faith and the Joy of Making a Difference in Teaching</b>                 |                 |       |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I see smiles and happiness in the faces of my students.                         |                 | 0.794 |   |   |   |   |
| because I am happy with my relationship with my family, friends, relatives, and my God.  |                 | 0.793 |   |   |   |   |
| because I know God never leaves me even when I am at the lowest point in my life.        |                 | 0.755 |   |   |   |   |
| because I always feel the presence of God whenever I am teaching my students.            |                 | 0.736 |   |   |   |   |
| since God never fails me whenever I pray for blessings and graces.                       |                 | 0.713 |   |   |   |   |
| because I see an opportunity to do good daily for my students.                           |                 | 0.712 |   |   |   |   |
| because I know I can touch the lives of my students.                                     |                 | 0.704 |   |   |   |   |
| whenever I can bring my students to their winning moments during competitions.           |                 | 0.531 |   |   |   |   |
| because I can radiate my feelings to others, and I can bring peace among them.           |                 | 0.525 |   |   |   |   |

| As a public school teacher, I am happy...                                                        | Factor Loadings |       |       |       |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|---|---|
|                                                                                                  | 1               | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5 | 6 |
| to see my students, learn despite my struggles teaching them.                                    |                 | 0.447 |       |       |   |   |
| to see my students, receive honors and awards.                                                   |                 | 0.426 |       |       |   |   |
| because I am always positive in my life, especially in my profession.                            |                 | 0.425 |       |       |   |   |
| <b>Indicator 3: Work-Life Balance, and Positive Work Environment in Teaching</b>                 |                 |       |       |       |   |   |
| because I can see my chance to get promoted in the future.                                       |                 |       | 0.682 |       |   |   |
| because I can balance my work as a teacher, my job as a wife and a parent, and my personal life. |                 |       | 0.645 |       |   |   |
| because I am satisfied and contented with the current salary and remuneration of a teacher.      |                 |       | 0.566 |       |   |   |
| since I am happy working with my supportive and kind colleagues.                                 |                 |       | 0.529 |       |   |   |
| whenever I am working with my colleagues who are also happy.                                     |                 |       | 0.481 |       |   |   |
| whenever I see interest in learning and curiosity in exploring among my students.                |                 |       | 0.468 |       |   |   |
| because I am looking forward to the days to unwind, and relax with my family and friends.        |                 |       | 0.463 |       |   |   |
| <b>Indicator 4: Teaching as a Mission of Service and Personal Growth</b>                         |                 |       |       |       |   |   |
| to see my students, achieve in their lives by receiving their diplomas and degrees.              |                 |       |       | 0.686 |   |   |
| to witness the success of my siblings and/or children with my struggles and hardships.           |                 |       |       | 0.670 |   |   |
| whenever I can provide technical assistance to my fellow teachers.                               |                 |       |       | 0.662 |   |   |
| to see my students, have better lives and careers compared to before.                            |                 |       |       | 0.650 |   |   |
| because being employed in any government agency has the security of tenure.                      |                 |       |       | 0.642 |   |   |
| because teaching can be a financially rewarding profession.                                      |                 |       |       | 0.635 |   |   |
| whenever I receive technical assistance from my school head.                                     |                 |       |       | 0.595 |   |   |
| because I know that teaching the students well is a                                              |                 |       |       | 0.487 |   |   |

| As a public school teacher, I am happy...                                                               | Factor Loadings |        |       |       |       |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                                                                                         | 1               | 2      | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     |
| mission given to me by God.                                                                             |                 |        |       |       |       |       |
| since teaching allows me to become a better person by helping my students become better ones.           |                 |        |       | 0.405 |       |       |
| <b>Indicator 5: Career Longevity and the Joy of Mentorship in Teaching</b>                              |                 |        |       |       |       |       |
| helping novice teachers with the routines and duties of the profession.                                 |                 |        |       |       | 0.771 |       |
| talking with my fellow teachers about the success stories of our common students.                       |                 |        |       |       | 0.762 |       |
| achieving 30 years and more in my teaching experience.                                                  |                 |        |       |       | 0.681 |       |
| to see my students successful in their lives.                                                           |                 |        |       |       | 0.658 |       |
| since I felt fulfilled and satisfied with my current teaching position.                                 |                 |        |       |       | 0.637 |       |
| because seeing children and young ones enables me to feel energetic, youthful, and positively spirited. |                 |        |       |       | 0.411 |       |
| <b>Indicator 6: Sources of Fulfillment and Motivation in a Teaching Career</b>                          |                 |        |       |       |       |       |
| whenever I receive my bonuses and other fringe benefits as a teacher.                                   |                 |        |       |       |       | 0.811 |
| whenever there are additional increases in the salaries of teachers.                                    |                 |        |       |       |       | 0.807 |
| seeing my family happy whenever I gave them some part of my salary.                                     |                 |        |       |       |       | 0.715 |
| when I receive my salary every 15 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> day of the month.                  |                 |        |       |       |       | 0.585 |
| when my previous students visited me and brought the good news about their current lives.               |                 |        |       |       |       | 0.509 |
| Number of Items                                                                                         | 21              | 12     | 7     | 9     | 6     | 5     |
| Eigenvalue                                                                                              | 10.061          | 7.302  | 4.220 | 4.109 | 4.093 | 3.249 |
| % Variance                                                                                              | 16.769          | 12.169 | 7.033 | 6.849 | 6.821 | 5.415 |
| <b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.873</b>                                    |                 |        |       |       |       |       |
| <b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity <math>\chi^2 = 13276.476</math>, df = 1770, p-value = &lt;0.0001</b>   |                 |        |       |       |       |       |

After conducting various tests for the assumptions of factorability of the data sets, the maximum likelihood

estimation method using orthogonal Varimax rotation was used, which converged at 7 iterations. The factorability model was set to six factors with eigenvalues greater than one. Factor loadings of absolute value 0.4 or higher were considered significant, and items with lower factor loadings were discarded (Chan & Idris, 2017). Likewise, Fabrigar et al. (1999) mentioned that a construct should at least contain four to six items per indicator, while Fabrigar and Wegener (2012) and Izquierdo et al. (2014) preferred to have more items per factor structure. With this, all 60 items were having good factor loadings that loaded with six significant factors describing the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal. Measures like eigenvalue and variance explained were also utilized to establish the appropriateness of the items concerning the constructs they belong.

The first factor was most important because it explained 16.769 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and has the highest eigenvalue of 10.061. Upon inspection of the 21 items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all items described passion for teaching, nurturing students, positive relationships and spiritual fulfillment. Aside from this, it also depicted the programs and activities that need to be implemented for empowered school leaders. These are items 30, 35, 34, 32, 38, 31, 33, 37, 39, 28, 29, 27, 25, 36, 40, 24, 49, 50, 44, 48, and 45. Hence this factor was called Passion, Relationship and Life Fulfillment in Teaching. Teachers who are deeply passionate about their work often experience intrinsic joy from seeing their students grow and succeed. This passion, as highlighted by Altun (2017) fosters meaningful relationships with both students and colleagues, creating a sense of belonging and community. As they witness the positive impact of their efforts, teachers feel a deep sense of life fulfillment, knowing they are shaping future generations despite the challenges of shifting to digital or hybrid learning environments enabling to impact positively the teaching and learning as it provides them joy in their job as teachers (Pottinger, 2024).

Similarly, the second factor explained 12.169 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public-school teachers in the new normal and has an eigenvalue of 7.302. Upon inspection of the 12 items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all of the items described spiritual guidance, emotional fulfillment, sense of purpose, and spreading joy and positivity. These are items 22, 21, 19, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 26, 3, 4, and 15. Hence this factor was called Faith and the Joy of Making a Difference in Teaching. The study of Omidire et al. (2021) revealed that joy enables teachers to teach better and provide better learning experiences to the students. In fact, they disclosed the significant impact of technology in bringing about joy and happiness in the workplace. Moreover, Nathan (2023) stressed that faith of teachers provide better effects in their teaching as it positively enables them to experience happiness as a result of their spiritual outlook in life, hence they can better see the inherent value and dignity of each student when they are teaching. Finally, May (2024) highlighted the motivational drive of being happy in the workplace which consequently results to becoming more productive, empathetic, and impactful in their jobs.

Moreover, the third factor explained 7.033 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and has an eigenvalue of 4.220. Upon inspection of the seven items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all/majority of the items described career growth, work-life balance, financial satisfaction and supportive workplace. These are items 42, 13, 41, 46, 43, 14, and 47. Hence this factor was called Work-Life Balance, and Positive Work Environment in Teaching. This factor construct highlighted the work of Ertürk (2022) that the holistic happiness of teachers is generally associated with their work-life balance and satisfaction in their

profession. As stressed by Ortan et al. (2021), when teachers feel valued, supported, and fairly compensated, they develop a stronger connection to their work and the institution they serve. As emphasized by Radu (2023), this allow them to feel being supported, appreciated and recognized enabling them to experienced positive workplace relationships, chances for professional growth, and recognition of their contributions that amplifies their happiness.

Furthermore, the fourth factor explained 6.849 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and has an eigenvalue of 4.109. Upon inspection of the nine items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all of the items described student achievement, family success, professional collaboration, divine purpose, and professional growth through service. These are items 54, 56, 52, 55, 57, 53, 51, 58, and 59. Hence this factor was called Teaching as a Mission of Service and Personal Growth. Rahm and Heise (2019) explained that teachers' happiness is directly affected by their subjective well-being, and thus what they see of their profession would deeply impact how they see their job as teachers. Ekşi et al. (2020) mentioned that when teachers viewed their job transcendentally, they would be happier in their teaching career enabling them to perform better and become more productive.

In addition, the fifth factor explained 6.821 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and has an eigenvalue of 4.093. Upon inspection of the six items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all of the items described mentorship and support, collegial pride, emotional success, and career milestone. These are items 11, 9, 10, 1, 12, and 60. Hence this factor was called Career Longevity and the Joy of Mentorship in Teaching. With respect to the generated factor construct, Chen et al. (2022) determined professional identity, job competence, professional motivation, professional prospects, perceived fairness, job achievements as significant determinants of university teachers' job happiness. They argued that these variables are significant indicators of happiness of teachers which in turn maximizes their performance and productivity. Moreover, Floody (2021) added that teachers have successful and happy stories when it comes to mentoring their colleagues especially the novice teachers. Veliz and Mainsbridge (2024), on the other hand concentrated their findings on the significance of career longevity on the wellbeing of teachers. They stressed various factors affecting the wellbeing of teachers, in return their happiness in their profession.

Finally, the sixth factor explained 5.415 percent of the total variance in the happiness of public school teachers in the new normal and has an eigenvalue of 3.249. Upon inspection of the five items that loaded on this factor, it was found that all of the items described financial gratification, emotional satisfaction, and professional fulfillment. These are items 7, 6, 8, 5, and 2. Hence this factor was called Sources of Fulfillment and Motivation in a Teaching Career. The final factor structure of teachers' happiness disclosed similar findings with Brinia et al. (2021) that satisfaction and financial gains enable teachers to work with greater efficiency as they feel satisfied and happy with their current situation. In fact, Istiqomah (2024) argued that happiness as a psychological condition allow teachers to have positive work behavior. He stressed the significant impact of motivation and fulfillment as drivers of teachers' happiness. This findings are similar to that of Perry (2022) the feeling of fulfillment, self-worth and sense of community are what makes teachers feel happy in their workplace. As emphasized by Chunyan and Ying (2024) proactive personality enables teachers to experienced enjoyment in teaching, thereby minimizing

the sense of burnout in the workplace. This means that as teachers are motivated and fulfilled, they will be driven to happiness which in turn, drive them to better work performance.

### **Validity and Reliability Results of the Public School Teachers' Happiness Scale in the New Normal**

The third objective of this study is to determine the validity and reliability of the finalized public school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal. During the finalization of the survey instrument, the researcher chose three experts in the field and evaluated the content and construct validity of the instrument using the validation sheet. The focus of the evaluation includes the: clarity of directions and items, presentation and organization of items, suitability of items, adequateness of items per indicator, attainment of purpose, objectivity, and scale and evaluation rating scale.

Table 2. Validity Results of the Public School Teachers' Happiness Scale in the New Normal

| <b>Indicators of Validity</b>             | <b>Rater 1</b> | <b>Rater 2</b> | <b>Rater 3</b> | <b>Mean</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. Clarity of Directions and Items        | 5              | 5              | 5              | <b>5.00</b> |
| 2. Presentation and Organization of Items | 4              | 4              | 4              | <b>4.00</b> |
| 3. Suitability of Items                   | 5              | 4              | 4              | <b>4.67</b> |
| 4. Adequateness of Items per Indicator    | 5              | 4              | 4              | <b>4.67</b> |
| 5. Attainment of Purpose                  | 5              | 4              | 5              | <b>4.67</b> |
| 6. Objectivity                            | 5              | 4              | 5              | <b>5.00</b> |
| 7. Scale and Evaluation Rating Scale      | 5              | 5              | 5              | <b>5.00</b> |
| <b>Overall</b>                            | <b>4.86</b>    | <b>4.57</b>    | <b>4.71</b>    | <b>4.71</b> |

Table 2 shows that the overall mean rating for the validity of the survey instrument is 4.71, denoting a very good validity. This means that the public school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal is very valid when measuring the extent of happiness of public school teachers in the new normal. This implies that the public school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal would measure what is intended for the instrument to measure. Further inspection of the table revealed that all the validity indicators showed a very good level of validity, as shown in the very high ratings the raters gave.

Results of the study conformed with the findings disclosed by Yusoff et al. (2021) that getting the survey instrument's validity allows to determine relevant and representative items of the construct of interest under investigation. In addition, Elangovan and Sundaravel (2021) mentioned the significance of validating the research instrument in order to know how far the survey instrument can measure what it is intended for, thus survey instrument with high validity ensures that it accurately measures what it is intended to measure, leading to meaningful results.

Moreover, Aithal and Aithal (2020) highlighted the significance of determining the validity of the survey instrument since the different types of validity allows the researcher to determine what the instrument is intended to measure. Therefore, when the survey questionnaire is valid, it means that it can measure the variable it is

intended to measure. Also, Ranganathan et al. (2024) emphasized accuracy in the measurement as the main focus of validity. This means that a valid survey instrument will allow to tell how well the results of the tool represent the true findings among the participants of the study as well as similar individuals not participating in the study.

The reliability results of the finalized public school teachers' happiness scale in the new normal using internal consistency through the computed value of Cronbach's alpha are shown in Table 3. As disclosed in the table, the overall reliability level of the survey instrument was 0.984, denoting an excellent level of reliability. Likewise, all the factor structures of the finalized gender-sensitive teaching tool showed gained very high to excellent reliability. As such, excellent reliability were found in the following indicators: *Passion, Relationship and Life Fulfillment in Teaching, Faith and the Joy of Making a Difference in Teaching, Career Longevity and the Joy of Mentorship in Teaching, Teaching as a Mission of Service and Personal Growth, and Sources of Fulfillment and Motivation in a Teaching Career* with a Cronbach Alpha values of 0.939, 0.933, 0.932, 0.928, and 0.922, while very high reliability was found *Work-Life Balance, and Positive Work Environment in Teaching* with Cronbach Alpha values of 0.866.

Table 3. Reliability Results of the Public School Teachers' Happiness Scale in the New Normal

| <b>Factor Structures of Public School Teachers' Happiness</b> | <b>Reliability</b> | <b>Interpretation</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Passion, Relationship and Life Fulfillment in Teaching        | 0.939              | Excellent             |
| Faith and the Joy of Making a Difference in Teaching          | 0.933              | Excellent             |
| Work-Life Balance, and Positive Work Environment in Teaching  | 0.866              | Very High             |
| Teaching as a Mission of Service and Personal Growth          | 0.928              | Excellent             |
| Career Longevity and the Joy of Mentorship in Teaching        | 0.932              | Excellent             |
| Sources of Fulfillment and Motivation in a Teaching Career    | 0.922              | Excellent             |
| <b>Overall Reliability</b>                                    | <b>0.984</b>       | <b>Excellent</b>      |

Results of the study corroborated with the statement made by Ranganathan et al. (2024) that getting the reliability of the survey instrument primarily measuring its precision and consistency of the measurement. This means that higher reliability suggests that it can give similar results when used repeatedly under stable conditions. As mentioned by Tourangeau (2020), a highly reliable instrument will yields reproducible data, meaning it can be trusted to show actual changes over time. On the other hand, Azraii et al. (2021) argued that differences in results between repeated measurements on the same individual under similar conditions using a research instrument could indicate a lack of reliability.

## Conclusion

In light of the foregoing findings of the study. The following conclusions were generated:

1. The characteristics and sources of happiness of Public school teachers in the new normal generated from the interview transcripts were as follows: (1) student success and fulfillment as a teacher; (2) personal and spiritual fulfillment; (3) work-life balance and job satisfaction; and (4) financial stability and rewards
2. The factor structures that significantly characterize the happiness of public school teachers in the new

normal are the following (1) Passion, Relationship and Life Fulfillment in Teaching; (2) Faith and the Joy of Making a Difference in Teaching; (3) Work-Life Balance, and Positive Work Environment in Teaching; (4) Teaching as a Mission of Service and Personal Growth; (5) : Career Longevity and the Joy of Mentorship in Teaching; and (as) Sources of Fulfillment and Motivation in a Teaching Career.

3. Both validity and reliability results of the Happiness Tool was found to be excellent.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the foregoing findings and results of the study, the following are recommended:

1. DepEd officials may integrate the findings into policy development and decision-making processes. As such, they may craft policies that support a positive work environment, enhance professional development, and provide necessary resources that address the evolving needs of teachers in this period of change.
2. School heads may design school-based programs and management practices that foster a supportive and motivating environment for teachers. Implementing strategies that align with what contributes to teachers' happiness, such as improving work-life balance, ensuring access to mental health resources, and fostering a collaborative work culture, can lead to more engaged and productive teaching staff. By promoting a school atmosphere that recognizes and addresses the factors influencing teacher happiness, school leaders can enhance overall teacher performance and student outcomes.
3. By actively seeking out opportunities for professional growth, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and engaging in self-care practices, teachers may enhance their well-being and job satisfaction. Additionally, they may consider participating in discussions and initiatives that aim to improve workplace conditions, thereby playing an active role in shaping a supportive and positive work environment.
4. Future researchers may explore the long-term impacts of the factors identified as contributing to public school teachers' happiness in the new normal. Investigating the interplay between these factors and teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall school effectiveness would provide valuable insights for policy-making and educational practice. Additionally, they may expand the scope of the study to include comparative analyses across different regions or education levels, offering a broader understanding of the elements that influence teacher happiness in varying contexts.

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