

Enhancing Essay Writing Skills through Positive Psychology: A PERMA-Based Intervention among Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating the PERMA model of positive psychology to enhance Sinhala essay-writing skills among secondary school students in Sri Lanka. Despite the central role of essay writing in language assessment, persistent low achievement levels indicate limitations in conventional, cognitively focused pedagogical approaches that overlook learners' emotional and motivational dimensions. Addressing this gap, the study adopts a mixed-methods design with a quasi-experimental intervention component. A sample of 100 students and 20 teachers from 10 schools in the Sri Jayawardenepura educational zone was selected using proportional sampling. In addition, an action research intervention was conducted with a Grade 8 class over eight weeks, incorporating structured activities aligned with the five PERMA elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings reveal a statistically significant improvement in students' essay writing performance following the intervention, with mean scores increasing from 13.04 to 16.48 ($p < 0.001$). Qualitative evidence further indicates enhanced student motivation, reduced writing anxiety, improved organizational skills, and greater engagement in the writing process. The integration of PERMA elements, particularly positive emotional support, collaborative learning, and immediate feedback, was found to play a critical role in fostering both cognitive and affective development. The study contributes to the emerging field of positive psychology in language education by demonstrating the applicability of the PERMA framework within a mother-tongue learning context. It offers practical implications for curriculum design and pedagogical innovation, emphasizing the importance of addressing learners' well-being to improve academic performance. The findings suggest that incorporating psychologically informed teaching strategies can significantly enhance writing proficiency in secondary education settings.

Keywords: PERMA model, positive psychology, Sinhala essay writing, writing skills, secondary education, student motivation

INTRODUCTION

Global Problem

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex and cognitively demanding language skills, requiring the integration of linguistic competence, critical thinking, and creativity. Despite its central role in language education, students across diverse educational contexts continue to demonstrate low proficiency in writing, particularly in extended forms such as essays. Research in second and first language education indicates that traditional writing instruction often emphasizes grammatical accuracy and structural conventions while neglecting affective and motivational dimensions that significantly influence learner performance (Graham & Perin, 2007; MacIntyre, 2019). Recent developments in educational psychology highlight that students' emotional states, engagement levels, and sense of purpose play a critical role in shaping learning outcomes, especially in creative and expressive tasks such as writing (Seligman, 2011; Fredrickson, 2001). By integrating creativity and innovation into teaching and learning, educators can help students develop valuable skills often overlooked in traditional educational environments while enhancing their academic achievement (Wedikandage,

2024). Consequently, there is a growing international shift toward integrating positive psychology frameworks into language pedagogy to enhance both academic achievement and learner well-being.

Local Problem

Within the Sri Lankan educational context, Sinhala essay writing is a key component of the secondary school curriculum and a major determinant of performance in the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) examination. However, national evaluation reports consistently reveal that students obtain comparatively low marks in essay writing, particularly in areas such as organization, creativity, and language accuracy (Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka, 2017). Evidence from recent examination analyses (2019–2023) further indicates that a substantial proportion of students fail to achieve satisfactory performance on essay-related questions.

Previous local studies attribute this issue to several factors, including overreliance on teacher-centred instructional methods, lack of student motivation, limited reading habits, and high levels of writing anxiety (Dhammika, 2021; Mahanama et al., 2018; Renuka, 2020). Moreover, classroom practices often prioritize rote learning and examination-oriented preparation, (Wedikandage, 2024) which may inhibit students' creative expression and engagement with writing tasks. These conditions suggest that the persistent underachievement in Sinhala essay writing is not solely a cognitive issue but is also closely linked to learners' emotional and psychological experiences.

Literature Gap

Although international research has increasingly demonstrated the effectiveness of positive psychology frameworks, particularly the PERMA model, in enhancing language learning outcomes, their application remains limited in mother-tongue education contexts. Studies conducted in global settings have shown that fostering positive emotions, engagement, and meaningful learning experiences can significantly improve students' language performance and motivation (MacIntyre, 2019; Nguyen, 2024; Jun, 2024).

However, in the Sri Lankan context, existing research on Sinhala language education has predominantly focused on grammatical competence, curriculum development, and overall achievement, with minimal attention to integrating psychological well-being frameworks into writing instruction. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical studies that systematically examine how the PERMA model can be operationalized as a pedagogical intervention to address writing difficulties. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research that bridges cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning.

Research Aim

In response to this gap, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of integrating the PERMA model of positive psychology into Sinhala essay writing instruction at the secondary school level. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (1) identify the challenges faced by students in essay writing,
- (2) examine the underlying causes of these challenges,
- (3) design and implement a PERMA-based instructional intervention, and
- (4) evaluate its impact on students' writing performance and attitudes.

Contribution

This study makes several important contributions to the field of language education. First, it extends the application of the PERMA model to a mother-tongue learning context, which remains underexplored in existing literature. Second, it provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of integrating positive psychology principles into writing pedagogy through a mixed-methods approach. Third, the study offers a practical instructional framework that educators can adopt to enhance both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of

writing. Finally, it contributes to ongoing discussions on holistic education by demonstrating that students' well-being is a critical factor in improving academic performance, particularly in creative language tasks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Skills and Challenges in Language Education

Writing is a cognitively demanding process that requires the coordination of linguistic knowledge, idea generation, organization, and revision. Empirical research consistently identifies writing, particularly essay writing, as one of the most challenging skills for students across educational contexts (Graham & Perin, 2007). Difficulties commonly reported include limited vocabulary, weak organization, lack of coherence, and poor grammatical accuracy.

Beyond cognitive constraints, recent scholarship emphasizes that writing performance is significantly influenced by affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-efficacy. Students who perceive writing as stressful or burdensome tend to demonstrate lower engagement and reduced performance (MacIntyre, 2019). This has led to increased recognition that effective writing instruction must address both cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning.

In the Sri Lankan context, similar patterns are evident. National examination reports and local studies indicate that students struggle particularly with idea development, logical structuring, and creative expression in Sinhala essay writing. These challenges are often exacerbated by exam-oriented teaching practices and limited opportunities for meaningful writing engagement.

Limitations of Traditional Writing Pedagogy

Traditional approaches to writing instruction in many educational systems, including Sri Lanka, tend to emphasise grammatical correctness, memorisation of model essays, and rigid structural formats. While such approaches may support surface-level accuracy, they often fail to develop higher-order writing skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and self-expression.

Research suggests that teacher-centred pedagogies can reduce student autonomy and intrinsic motivation, leading to disengagement from writing tasks (Graham & Perin, 2007). Local studies further highlight that excessive focus on examinations and lack of interactive learning environments contribute to students' negative attitudes toward writing (Dhammika, 2021; Mahanama et al., 2018).

Moreover, these approaches rarely address students' emotional experiences, such as fear of failure or writing anxiety, which have been identified as key barriers to effective writing. As a result, there is a growing consensus that traditional pedagogical models are insufficient to address persistent underachievement in writing.

Positive Psychology in Education

Positive psychology has emerged as a significant paradigm in education, shifting the focus from deficits to strengths and well-being. Seligman's (2011) Theory of Well-being introduces the PERMA model, which conceptualizes well-being through five elements: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These elements are closely linked to improved motivation, resilience, and academic performance.

Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory further explains how positive emotions enhance cognitive flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, which are essential for effective writing. In educational settings, fostering positive emotional experiences has been shown to increase students' willingness to participate and sustain effort in complex tasks.

In the context of language learning, positive psychology has been increasingly applied to understand how emotional and psychological factors influence language acquisition and performance (MacIntyre, 2019). These

perspectives suggest that integrating well-being frameworks into teaching practices can create more supportive and productive learning environments.

Application of the PERMA Model in Language Learning

The education system should adopt the Individualised Education Program (IEP) model, which is individualised and regularly reviews students' skills to guide career development. (Kinkini, 2026) Recent international studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the PERMA model in enhancing language learning outcomes. Research conducted in diverse contexts indicates that incorporating PERMA elements into instructional design can improve student engagement, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall academic performance (Jun, 2024; Nguyen, 2024).

For example, fostering positive emotions through supportive classroom environments has been found to reduce writing anxiety and increase creativity. Engagement, often associated with the concept of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), enables students to become deeply involved in writing tasks. Relationships, particularly through collaborative learning and peer feedback, facilitate knowledge construction and skill development. Meaning enhances intrinsic motivation by connecting learning tasks to real-life contexts, while accomplishment reinforces self-efficacy through goal achievement and feedback.

Despite these promising findings, most existing studies focus on second- or foreign-language learning contexts and often incorporate digital tools alongside psychological frameworks. There remains limited research on how the PERMA model can be systematically applied to mother-tongue writing instruction, particularly in developing countries.

Theoretical Integration: Cognitive and Social Perspectives

The integration of cognitive and social constructivist theories provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding writing development. Piaget’s theory of cognitive development highlights the importance of abstract thinking and logical reasoning, which are essential for secondary-level essay writing. Students in the formal operational stage are capable of forming hypotheses, analysing, and engaging in creative thinking skills necessary for effective writing.

Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory further emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning. Concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding suggest that collaborative learning and guided support can significantly enhance students’ writing abilities. Peer interaction and teacher feedback function as mechanisms for bridging the gap between current and potential performance levels.

When combined with positive psychology, these theories suggest that writing development is not solely a cognitive process but also a socially and emotionally mediated activity. This integrated perspective supports the use of frameworks such as PERMA to enhance both the process and outcomes of writing.

Author(s)	Context	Focus	Key Findings	Limitation
Graham & Perin (2007)	Global	Writing instruction	Effective strategies improve writing performance	Limited focus on emotional factors
MacIntyre (2019)	Language learning	Positive psychology	Emotions strongly influence language outcomes	Mostly L2 contexts
Jun (2024)	China	PERMA in education	PERMA improves engagement and achievement	Technology-integrated context
Nguyen (2024)	Vietnam	Digital PERMA +	Increased motivation and participation	Not focused on essay writing

Mahanama et al. (2018)	Sri Lanka	Writing achievement	Traditional methods limit performance	No psychological framework
Dhammika (2021)	Sri Lanka	Learning barriers	Low motivation and interest affect writing	Lacks intervention-based evidence
Renuka (2020)	Sri Lanka	Language skills	Aesthetic activities improve learning	No structured theoretical model

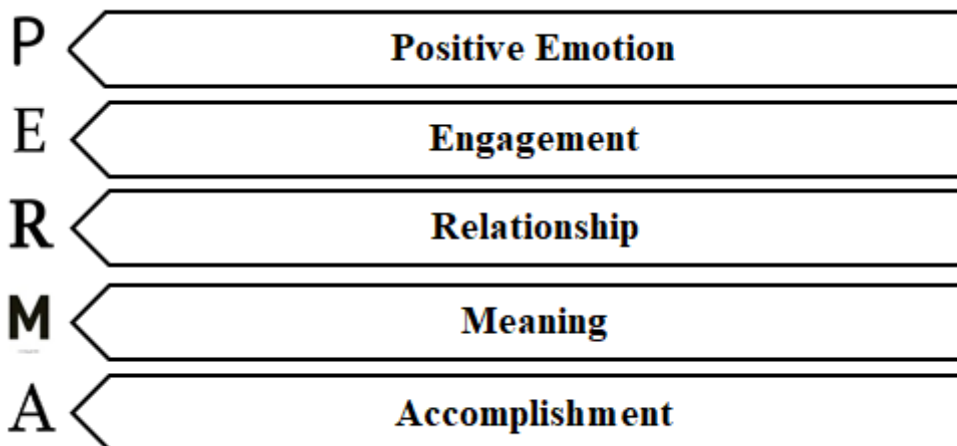
Research Gap

The review of existing literature indicates that, while substantial research has been conducted on writing instruction and language learning, three critical gaps remain: limited integration of cognitive and emotional approaches in writing pedagogy; and a Lack of application of the PERMA model in mother-tongue education contexts. Insufficient empirical evidence from Sri Lanka on psychologically informed writing interventions

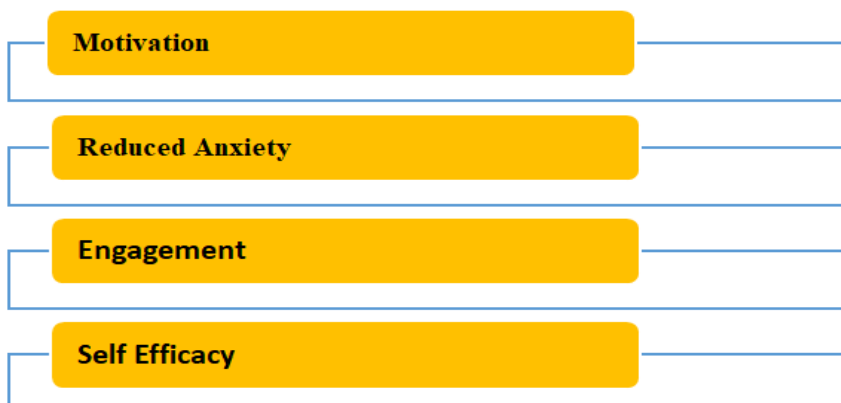
Addressing these gaps, the present study investigates how the PERMA framework can be systematically applied to enhance Sinhala essay writing skills, thereby contributing to both theoretical understanding and pedagogical practice.

Conceptual Framework

Perma Model



Mediating Mechanisms



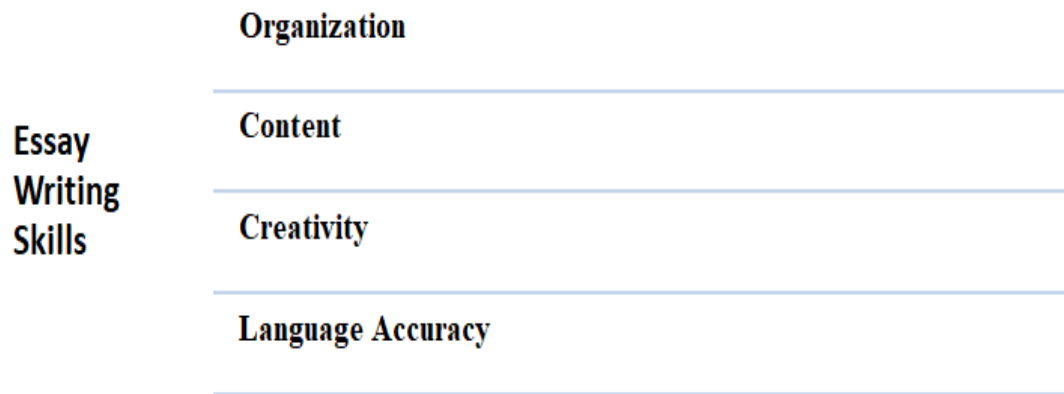


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study: Integration of the PERMA Model to Enhance Sinhala Essay Writing Skills

The conceptual framework integrates principles from positive psychology and constructivist learning theories. The PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) is positioned as the primary independent variable influencing students' writing performance through key psychological mechanisms, including motivation, engagement, anxiety reduction, and self-efficacy. Drawing on Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions are expected to enhance cognitive flexibility and creativity, while Vygotsky's social constructivism supports the role of collaborative relationships in skill development. These mediating processes collectively contribute to improvements in essay writing skills, conceptualized in terms of organization, content development, creativity, and linguistic accuracy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design with a quasi-experimental intervention component embedded within an action research framework. The design integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the PERMA-based instructional intervention's effectiveness.

The quantitative component utilized a pre-test–post-test single-group design to measure changes in students' essay writing performance following the intervention. The qualitative component involved classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews to capture students' experiences, behavioural changes, and perceptions of the intervention. This methodological triangulation enhances the validity and depth of the findings.

While the study focuses on a specific action research intervention group, it acknowledges that the absence of a fully randomized control group is a methodological limitation, which future studies should address to further validate the causal impact of the PERMA model.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised secondary school students and Sinhala language teachers within the Sri Jayawardenepura Educational Zone in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka.

A multi-stage sampling strategy was employed:

Survey Sample:

Ten schools were selected using proportional allocation across four educational divisions. From these schools, 100 students (10 from each school) and 20 teachers were selected.

Intervention Sample (Action Research):

A purposive sample of 26 Grade 8 students from a single classroom was selected for the intervention phase. This group was chosen for its accessibility and the feasibility of implementing continuous classroom-based activities throughout the intervention period.

While the intervention sample size is relatively small, it is appropriate for action research and allows for in-depth analysis of pedagogical impact.

Intervention Procedure

The intervention was conducted over a period of eight weeks and was designed based on the five elements of the PERMA model:

- Positive Emotions: Activities such as mindfulness, music, and creative prompts
- Engagement: Use of concept mapping and interactive writing tasks
- Relationships: Peer collaboration and feedback sessions
- Meaning: Linking essay topics to real-life experiences
- Accomplishment: Immediate feedback through rubrics and reinforcement strategies

Each session followed a structured sequence: pre-writing activities, guided writing, peer interaction, and feedback. The intervention aimed to transform the writing process into a psychologically supportive and engaging experience.

Research Instruments

Multiple instruments were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data:

Quantitative Instruments

- Pre-test and post-test:

Standardized essay writing tasks were administered before and after the intervention to assess improvement in writing skills.

- Structured Questionnaires:

Separate questionnaires for students and teachers were used to gather data on attitudes, challenges, and perceptions related to essay writing.

Qualitative Instruments

- Semi-structured interview guides
- Classroom observation protocols
- Researcher reflective journals
- Student writing samples

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the rigour of the study:

- **Content Validity:**

All instruments were reviewed by subject experts in language education and educational psychology to ensure alignment with research objectives.

- **Construct Validity:**

- Questionnaire items were developed based on established constructs such as motivation, anxiety, and engagement.

- **Reliability:**

Internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient above the acceptable threshold ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), indicating satisfactory reliability.

To mitigate potential social desirability bias in self-reported data from interviews and questionnaires, the study employed data triangulation by cross-referencing student feedback with objective classroom observations and standardized pre- and post-test scores.

- **Triangulation:**

The use of multiple data sources (tests, interviews, observations) enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out in two phases:

1. Baseline Phase:

Questionnaires and pre-tests were administered to establish students' initial writing performance and attitudes.

2. Intervention Phase:

The PERMA-based instructional program was implemented over eight weeks. Continuous observations and reflective notes were maintained.

3. Post-Intervention Phase:

Post-tests and follow-up interviews were conducted to assess changes in performance and perceptions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics:

- Mean and standard deviation were calculated to summarize performance
- A paired-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis:

- Data from interviews, observations, and reflective journals were coded

- Patterns were categorized into themes such as:
- Reduced writing anxiety
- Increased engagement
- Improved confidence
- Enhanced collaboration

These themes were used to support and explain the quantitative findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards:

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants
- Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured
- Participation was voluntary
- Data were used solely for research purposes

Special care was taken to ensure that no participant experienced psychological or academic harm during the intervention.

RESULTS / FINDINGS

Overview

This section presents the results of the study in three stages:

- (1) baseline findings on students' essay writing challenges,
- (2) quantitative evaluation of the intervention, and
- (3) qualitative insights explaining observed changes.

The findings are then interpreted in relation to existing literature and the study's conceptual framework.

Baseline Findings: Challenges in Essay Writing

Student Perspectives

Analysis of questionnaire data revealed that a substantial proportion of students perceived essay writing as difficult and unsuccessful. Approximately 58% of students reported low levels of success, while only a small percentage reported high confidence in their writing ability.

The most frequently reported challenges included:

- Difficulty in organizing ideas logically
- Limited vocabulary and grammatical control
- Time management issues

- Lack of clear structure in essays

These findings indicate that students struggle not only with linguistic competence but also with higher-order writing processes such as planning and organization.

Teacher Perspectives

Teacher responses further reinforced these findings. A majority of teachers categorized students' essay writing performance as weak or unsatisfactory, with very few identifying students as highly competent.

This convergence between student and teacher perceptions suggests a systemic issue within current instructional practices. Importantly, the data indicate that traditional teaching approaches have not been effective in fostering either writing proficiency or student confidence.

Interpretation

These baseline findings align with previous research highlighting that writing difficulties are multidimensional, involving both cognitive and affective barriers (Graham & Perin, 2007; MacIntyre, 2019). The high levels of anxiety and low motivation reported by students suggest that emotional factors play a significant role in limiting writing performance, supporting the need for psychologically informed interventions.

Quantitative Findings: Effectiveness of the PERMA Intervention

Pre-test and Post-test Comparison

The effectiveness of the PERMA-based intervention was evaluated by comparing pre-test and post-test scores.

- Pre-test mean score: 13.04
- Post-test mean score: 16.48

This indicates a clear improvement in students' essay writing performance following the intervention.

A paired-sample t-test confirmed that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the observed improvement was not due to chance.

Interpretation

The quantitative findings provide strong evidence that integrating PERMA-based strategies into writing instruction can significantly enhance students' performance. The increase in mean scores reflects improvements in key writing components, including organization, content development, and overall coherence.

These results are consistent with international studies demonstrating that positive psychology interventions can improve academic outcomes by enhancing student engagement and motivation (Jun, 2024; Nguyen, 2024).

Qualitative Findings: Behavioural and Psychological Changes

Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and reflective journals revealed several key themes that explain the quantitative improvements.

Theme 1: Reduction of Writing Anxiety

Students initially described essay writing as stressful and intimidating. Following the intervention, many reported feeling more relaxed and confident.

This shift can be attributed to activities designed to foster positive emotions, such as mindfulness exercises and supportive classroom interactions. These findings support Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, which suggests that positive emotions expand cognitive capacity and reduce psychological barriers.

Theme 2: Increased Engagement and Participation

Students demonstrated higher levels of participation and sustained attention during writing tasks. The use of interactive strategies such as concept mapping and collaborative activities enabled students to become more actively involved in the writing process. This reflects the engagement (E) component of the PERMA model and aligns with the concept of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), where learners become fully immersed in a task.

Theme 3: Improvement in Organization and Structure

A notable improvement was observed in students' ability to organize essays into clear sections (introduction, body, conclusion). By the end of the intervention, a majority of students were able to produce more structured and coherent essays within the given time constraints. This suggests that combining cognitive scaffolding with emotional support enhances both procedural and conceptual aspects of writing.

Theme 4: Development of Collaborative Learning Practices

The introduction of peer evaluation and group work fostered a more supportive learning environment. Students actively shared ideas, provided feedback, and learned from each other. This finding reflects the relationships (R) component of PERMA and is consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the role of interaction in learning.

Theme 5: Enhanced Motivation and Sense of Achievement

Students reported increased motivation to write, particularly when tasks were meaningful and connected to real-life experiences. The use of immediate feedback and recognition (e.g., rewards, rubrics) contributed to a stronger sense of accomplishment.

This aligns with the meaning (M) and accomplishment (A) components of PERMA, highlighting the importance of purpose and recognition in sustaining learning.

Integrated Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that integrating the PERMA model into essay-writing instruction yields both cognitive and affective benefits. From a theoretical perspective, the results support the argument that writing development is not solely a linguistic process but also a psychologically mediated activity. The improvement in writing performance can be explained by the interaction among key mediating factors identified in the conceptual framework: motivation, engagement, anxiety reduction, and self-efficacy.

The findings extend the existing literature by demonstrating that positive psychology frameworks, previously applied mainly in second-language contexts, are equally effective in mother-tongue education settings. This is a significant contribution, particularly in contexts such as Sri Lanka, where writing instruction has traditionally focused on the technical aspects of language.

Furthermore, the study provides empirical support for integrating PERMA elements into classroom practice. For example:

- Positive emotions reduce cognitive barriers
- Engagement enhances task involvement
- Relationships support collaborative learning

- Meaning increases intrinsic motivation
- Accomplishment strengthens self-efficacy

Together, these elements create a holistic learning environment that promotes both well-being **and academic achievement**.

Implications

Pedagogical Implications

The findings suggest that language teachers should move beyond traditional, grammar-focused instruction and adopt more holistic approaches that integrate emotional and motivational support.

Curriculum Implications

Curriculum designers should incorporate positive psychology principles into language syllabi to enhance student engagement and performance.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to the growing body of research linking positive psychology with language education, particularly in under-researched mother-tongue contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the effectiveness of integrating the PERMA model of positive psychology into Sinhala essay writing instruction at the secondary school level. The findings provide compelling evidence that a psychologically informed pedagogical approach can significantly enhance students' writing performance and their engagement, motivation, and confidence.

The results demonstrate that the PERMA-based intervention led to a statistically significant improvement in students' essay writing skills, particularly in areas such as organization, content development, and overall coherence. More importantly, the qualitative findings revealed meaningful shifts in students' attitudes toward writing, including reduced anxiety, increased participation, and a greater sense of purpose and achievement. These outcomes indicate that addressing the emotional and motivational dimensions of learning is essential for improving performance in complex language tasks.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of literature that integrates positive psychology with language education. By applying the PERMA framework in a mother-tongue learning context, the study extends existing research that has largely focused on second- or foreign-language settings. The findings support the view that writing development is a multidimensional process influenced by cognitive, social, and emotional factors, and that effective instruction must address all these dimensions simultaneously.

In practical terms, the study offers a replicable instructional model for teachers and curriculum developers. Incorporating strategies that promote positive emotions, active engagement, collaborative learning, meaningful task design, and recognition of achievement can transform writing instruction into a more effective and student-centred process. This has important implications for improving language education in examination-oriented systems, where traditional approaches often fail to foster creativity and intrinsic motivation.

One limitation of the present study is that the intervention was conducted within a limited geographical and educational context, involving students from a single educational zone and a relatively small intervention sample. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to students from different socio-cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Future research should therefore include larger and more diverse samples drawn from multiple educational zones, school categories, and cultural contexts across Sri Lanka. Such an expansion would enable researchers to examine whether the effectiveness of PERMA-based instructional

strategies varies across contextual and demographic differences. Comparative studies involving urban and rural schools, as well as cross-cultural educational settings, would further strengthen the external validity and broader applicability of the findings. Additionally, the eight-week duration of the intervention may not be sufficient to evaluate the long-term sustainability of the PERMA-based approach on writing proficiency and emotional well-being. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track the enduring impact of positive psychology strategies over an extended academic period. Future research should employ larger, more diverse samples and experimental designs to validate and extend these findings. Further studies could also explore the long-term impact of PERMA-based instruction and its applicability across different subjects and educational levels.

In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative potential of integrating positive psychology into language education. By demonstrating that students' well-being is closely linked to academic success, it underscores the need for a shift from purely cognitive teaching models toward more holistic, learner-centred approaches. The PERMA framework provides a valuable foundation for such transformation, offering both theoretical insight and practical guidance for enhancing writing proficiency in contemporary educational contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is highly recommended that the Ministry of Education and curriculum developers integrate positive psychology principles into mainstream language instruction. Professional development programs should be organized to train teachers in PERMA-based pedagogical techniques, providing them with the tools to support both academic achievement and student well-being. Moreover, future research should explore the application of this framework in other subject areas beyond Sinhala essay writing to determine its broader educational effectiveness.

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