Chapter 1
The Role of Positive Psychology in Promoting Student Well–Being

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ABSTRACT

The well-being of students is a topic of paramount importance in the field of education and psychology. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to focus not only on academic achievement but also on the emotional and psychological well-being of students (Leow et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022). Over the course of the past decade, the impetus for preventive interventions to respond to mental health problems has been reinforced by epidemiological research that showed excessive levels of mental health conditions among children and youth (Samji et al., 2022). Positive psychology, a relatively new branch of psychology, offers a valuable framework for understanding and promoting the well-being of students. This chapter will summarize key findings and concepts, focusing on the following

five areas: 1) the role of positive psychology, 2) theories in positive psychology, 3) understanding student's well-being, 4) two case studies on positive education at a British (UK) university in Malaysia, and 5) positive psychology intervention to promote student's well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern educational landscape, students face numerous challenges, including academic stress, social pressures, and mental health concerns (Leow et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022; Othman & Lo, 2023). The conventional approach to education often emphasizes academic outcomes to the detriment of students' holistic well-being and academic success (Lo et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2019). Positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000), provides a promising paradigm shift to understand the conditions that contribute to the optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions. It focuses on strengths, `Psychology' movement have begun to identify factors that contribute to children's and adolescents' subjective well-being (Seligman et al., 2009). Specifically, factors such as positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2016), gratitude (Loi & Ng, 2021), hope (Murphy, 2023), goal setting (Thorsteinsen & Vittersø, 2018) and character strengths (Duan & Ho, 2018) have been increasingly associated with student's well-being. This chapter seeks to explore how positive psychology principles and interventions can be applied in educational settings to enhance the well-being of students. We provide an overview of positive psychology, to introduce the fundamental concepts and principles of positive psychology, highlighting its relevance to student's well-being by looking at the historical background and key studies in the field of positive psychology. This study will also focus on the significance of students' well-being in the context of academic achievement, personal development, and overall life satisfaction.

Understanding Student's Well-Being

Now that we have the pandemic behind us, there is a growing emphasis on the psychological well-being of students. Psychological well-being covers both hedonic well-being, characterized by feelings of happiness, and eudaimonic well-being, defined by a profound sense of purpose, meaning, or life satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Recent strides in psychological research have delineated two distinctive yet interwoven paradigms, referred to as hedonism and eudaimonism (Martela, 2023). Hedonism posits that well-being primarily embraces the pursuit of pleasure and happiness (Ryan et al., 2008), intimating that happiness emanates from the cumulative accrual of positive experiences and the judicious minimization of negative

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