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# WELL-BEING AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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DOI: [10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i04.020](https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i04.020)

## Abstract:

*This literature review synthesizes a wide range of scholarly articles and official documents to explore the multifaceted concept of well-being, particularly in the context of education and mental health. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ecological systems theory, and positive psychology, the review provides a comprehensive examination of the various dimensions that contribute to individual well-being. Key themes include the importance of addressing physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of well-being within educational settings, as well as the role of holistic wellness programs in promoting overall health and happiness. The review highlights the significance of subjective well-being as a subjective evaluation of an individual's quality of life, emphasizing the need for comprehensive measurement tools that capture both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being. Furthermore, the review discusses the relationship between well-being and academic achievement, underscoring the reciprocal nature of this association. It also explores the impact of social support networks, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies on well-being outcomes, emphasizing the importance of fostering open communication channels and providing access to support services for students. Moreover, the review addresses emerging challenges and opportunities in the field, such as the growing recognition of mental health literacy as a public health goal and the increasing use of technology, including social media and virtual reality, to assess and enhance well-being. Finally, it discusses relevant policy initiatives, including mental health legislation and educational reforms aimed at promoting student well-being and resilience. Overall, this literature review provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between well-being, education, and mental health, offering implications for research, practice, and policy development in these critical areas.*

**Keywords:** *Well-being, Education, Mental health, Holistic wellness, Academic achievement*



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## INTRODUCTION

The provision of mental health support within educational systems has garnered increasing attention globally, recognizing the vital role it plays in nurturing the well-being of learners and educators. The Department of Education (DepEd)-Disaster Risk Reduction Management Service (DRRMS) took a proactive step in this direction by launching a mental health helpline system on November 8, 2021. This initiative aimed to provide assistance to learners, teachers, and the public during periods of mental and psychological distress, underlining the Department's commitment to prioritize mental health and overall welfare within the educational sphere (DepEd, 2021). Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones underscored the significance of prioritizing mental health amidst prevailing challenges, highlighting the need for concerted efforts to address this crucial aspect of well-being (Briones, 2019). Furthermore, the inaugural session of the 2021 ASEAN and SEAMEO webinar series, facilitated by the DepEd's International Cooperation Office (ICO), emphasized the impacts of the new normal on mental well-being, stressing the importance of a holistic approach in promoting, protecting, and caring for mental health (DepEd, 2021; Ballesteros, 2022).

The concept of well-being encompasses various dimensions, including emotional, physical, and social aspects, reflecting a holistic spectrum of psychological and physiological capabilities (Maxwell, 2020). However, the complexity of measuring well-being is evident, with discrepancies observed across different surveys and contexts, highlighting the elusive nature of this construct (CDC, 2019; Ling, 2020; Heaveburst, 2019; Neanderth, 2019). In the Philippines, the state of mental health among children and adolescents is a significant concern, with high levels of reported mental health problems. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that a substantial portion of Filipino students aged 13 to 17 had attempted suicide, indicating the urgent need for interventions to address mental health issues among the youth (WHO, 2015).

Moreover, seminal works in psychology, such as those by Abraham Maslow and Sigmund Freud, have laid the groundwork for understanding well-being and happiness, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of these constructs (Maslow, 1962; Freud, 1930). The field of positive psychology has further contributed unique theories, such as Seligman's Authentic Happiness theory, shedding light on the factors that contribute to authentic and lasting fulfillment (Seligman, 2002). Recognizing the importance of mental health in educational settings, efforts have been made to institutionalize school-based mental health programs. Senate Bill 2200, sponsored by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, aims to promote mental health and well-being in basic education by establishing school-based mental health programs and care centers in public and private schools across the country (Gatchalian, date).

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Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of mental health support in educational settings and the efforts undertaken by the Department of Education (DepEd) and policymakers in the Philippines, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the effectiveness of school-based interventions in promoting mental health among Filipino students. While initiatives such as the mental health helpline system and the proposed Senate Bill 2200 demonstrate proactive steps towards addressing mental health issues, there is limited empirical evidence evaluating the impact of these interventions on student well-being.

One notable gap is the lack of comprehensive research assessing the specific needs and challenges faced by Filipino students in relation to mental health. Although statistics indicate high levels of mental health problems among Filipino youth, there is a paucity of studies delving into the underlying factors contributing to these issues, as well as the effectiveness of existing support systems in addressing them. Understanding the unique socio-cultural contexts and stressors faced by Filipino students is essential for developing targeted and culturally sensitive interventions.

Furthermore, while the concept of well-being encompasses various dimensions beyond the absence of mental illness, such as emotional, physical, and social well-being, the majority of existing research in the Philippines tends to focus on diagnosable mental health disorders rather than holistic well-being outcomes. This narrow focus overlooks the importance of promoting positive mental health and resilience among students, which is crucial for their overall development and academic success.

Moreover, the literature review highlights a gap in the evaluation of the long-term effects of school-based interventions on student mental health outcomes. While short-term studies may provide valuable insights into the immediate impact of interventions, longitudinal research is needed to assess whether these effects are sustained over time and contribute to the prevention of mental health problems in the long run. Another gap identified in the literature is the limited involvement of stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and community members, in the design and implementation of mental health interventions. Engaging stakeholders in the process can help ensure that interventions are contextually relevant, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the target population.

Overall, addressing these gaps in the literature is critical for informing evidence-based policies and practices aimed at promoting mental health and well-being among Filipino students. By conducting rigorous research that takes into account the socio-cultural context, incorporates a holistic understanding of well-being, evaluates long-term outcomes, and engages stakeholders, scholars can contribute to the development of effective and sustainable interventions that support the mental health needs of Filipino youth. In light of these developments, this review seeks to



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explore the effectiveness of school-based interventions in promoting mental health among Filipino students, aiming to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on this critical issue.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

In the Philippines, the promotion of well-being finds legal backing across various dimensions, as enshrined in pertinent statutes and regulations. The Universal Health Care Act (Republic Act No. 11223) stands as a cornerstone, ensuring universal access to quality healthcare services, thus nurturing physical well-being through preventive and curative measures. Social well-being receives attention through legislation such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (Republic Act No. 11310), which institutionalizes support for impoverished families, enhancing social cohesion and economic stability. Emotional well-being finds legal support in the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036), which integrates mental health services into the national healthcare system, promoting awareness, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues. Similarly, the same act addresses mental well-being, underscoring the rights and care of individuals with mental health conditions. Moreover, constitutional provisions such as Article II, Section 6 of the 1987 Constitution ensure the protection of religious freedom, safeguarding spiritual well-being by guaranteeing the separation of church and state. Through these legal frameworks, the Philippines endeavors to cultivate a society where individuals can thrive physically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

In the realm of psychological well-being, the legal landscape in the Philippines intertwines with efforts to address mental health challenges and promote resilience among individuals. The Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036) serves as a pivotal legal instrument, enshrining the rights of individuals with mental health conditions and mandating the integration of mental health services into the broader healthcare system. This legislation underscores the importance of psychological well-being by advocating for mental health education, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation initiatives. Furthermore, the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313) contributes to psychological well-being by combatting gender-based sexual harassment, creating safer environments conducive to mental health and emotional stability. Through these legal frameworks, the Philippines endeavors to foster a society where individuals can access the necessary support and resources to nurture their psychological well-being and thrive amidst life's challenges.

Well-being, in its essence, transcends mere absence of illness; it embodies a complex interplay of various factors that contribute to the holistic fulfillment of an individual. This philosophical exploration delves into the multifaceted nature of well-being, drawing from diverse perspectives and theories to unravel its depth and significance in human existence. At its core, well-being encompasses a multitude of dimensions, each integral to the overall state of wellness. Huppert (2017) delineates a rich tapestry of concepts synonymous with well-being, ranging from



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self-esteem and resilience to life satisfaction and positive mental health. This expansive view underscores the intricacies involved in understanding and nurturing well-being, extending beyond mere physical health to encompass psychological, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects.

Physical well-being, as elucidated by Capio *et al.* (2014), encompasses not only the absence of physical limitations and pain but also the ability to engage in activities that promote biological health and vitality. This dimension highlights the interconnectedness between bodily health and overall well-being, emphasizing the importance of maintaining physical fitness and addressing lifestyle factors that impact health outcomes.

On the other hand, social well-being, according to the World Health Organization and Sinclair (2021), underscores the significance of meaningful relationships and a sense of connectedness in fostering a positive sense of self and belonging. The quality and quantity of social interactions play a pivotal role in shaping individual well-being, with research suggesting that strong social support networks contribute to resilience and overall life satisfaction (Secor *et al.*, 2017; Lopez *et al.*, 2019).

Emotional well-being, as recognized by Dr. Hettler (1980), delves into the realm of emotional intelligence and resilience, emphasizing the capacity to manage one's feelings and cope effectively with stress. This dimension underscores the importance of self-awareness and emotional regulation in navigating life's challenges, with studies linking emotional intelligence to improved coping strategies and self-efficacy (Sharma & Kumar, 2016; Morales-Rodríguez & Pérez-Mármol, 2019).

Mental well-being, as defined by the World Health Organization (2004), encompasses the ability to develop one's potential, work creatively, and foster positive relationships with others. This dimension encompasses both hedonic and eudemonic aspects of well-being, acknowledging the significance of positive emotions and life satisfaction as well as personal growth and optimal psychosocial functioning (Diener *et al.*, 2018; Ryff, 2018).

Spiritual well-being, as expounded by Rovers & Kocum (2010), delves into the existential realm of meaning and faith, providing individuals with stability and purpose in life. This dimension serves as a psychological resource for coping with adversity and finding meaning in challenging circumstances, with research suggesting its positive impact on mental and physical health outcomes (Adib & Faraji, 2015; Hilton & Child, 2014).

In the contemporary landscape, technological advancements have further expanded the horizons of well-being interventions, offering innovative tools and platforms to support clinical

interventions, stress reduction, and social support networks (Schroeder et al., 2018; Konrad et al., 2015; De Choudhury et al., 2016). These technological interventions represent a convergence of ancient wisdom and modern innovation, harnessing the power of technology to enhance well-being in the digital age.

In essence, the exploration of well-being transcends disciplinary boundaries, weaving together insights from psychology, sociology, philosophy, and spirituality to illuminate the path towards holistic fulfillment and flourishing. As we navigate the complexities of human existence, it is imperative to recognize and honor the intricate tapestry of dimensions that constitute well-being, striving to cultivate a harmonious balance that nurtures the body, mind, and spirit.

## DISCUSSIONS

### Student Well-Being Model

In relation to domains that contribute independently and collectively to a student's well-being, the Student Well-Being Model represents a view of wellness in school derived from system view of human development (Soutter et al., 2013). The conceptual model of complex system by Lael Parrot (2002) provides a useful visual representation to illustrate how individual elements of the Student Well-Being Model (SWBM) relate to one another as a working entity. As stated by Parrot (2002), series of locally acting heterogenous components give rise to higher and more global-level entities through their actions and interactions which is a concept that is understood as emergence.

Moreover, the SWBM draws from Bonfenbrenner's (1979) model of human development wherein the domains and categories of well-being are embedded in the multiple and intersecting spheres of student's lives, such as the classroom, school, family, community, and natural and built environment. Thus, the relationships between the elements of the system may resemble or may differ across but will have influence upon the different spheres of a student's life. SWBM also draws from Roeser and Galloway's (2002) principles of 'lifespace' and 'lifespan' to illustrate that a student's well-being is not a static phenomenon hence, it is influenced by multiple contexts that are experienced in the present and will be in their later lives.

### Seligman's Perma Well-Being Model

The description of self-actualization by Maslow (1962) is a foreshadowing of the PERMA model, which outlines the characteristics of a flourishing individual and Well-Being Theory. This resulted to theories and research that examined positive psychology interventions that help make life worth living and how to define, quantify, and create well-being (Rusk & Waters, 2015). These elements are pursued for their own sake and are defined and measured independently of each other (Seligman, 2012). The five elements include: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Research has shown significant

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positive associations between each of the PERMA components and physical health, vitality, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and commitment within organizations (Kern et al., 2014).

### **Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-Being**

Diener and Ryan (2009) stated that the Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-Being presents well-being as a general evaluation of an individual's quality of life in terms of three key components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Diener (1984) introduced the concept of "subject well-being" (SWB) to describe how people evaluate and experience their lives in positive ways. Subjective well-being influences subjects such as physical health and mental health, not only at the individual level but through our relationships (Rossini, 2021).

### **School Community Well-Being**

The School Well-being or School Community Well-Being Model is based on Allardt's sociological theory of welfare and assesses well-being as an entity in school setting (Konu & Rimpela, 2002). Furthermore, well-being relates to teaching and education, and with learning and achievements. One important part of education is health education; its aim is to strengthen pupils' health literacy (Nutbeam, 2000). McCallum and Price (2016) argued that the interrelation of wellbeing and academic achievement, educators, policy and curriculum developers, educational contexts are being increasingly challenged to center well-being as both a foundation to, and integral part of learning. In addition, a well-being education is for the whole community and that by suggesting that well-being education is an important provider to academic learning and achievement (McCallum & Price, 2016). Scoffham and Barnes (2011) noted that the challenge for today's educators is to provide a place and programs that are secure and demanding, and based upon education that furthers the present and future wellbeing and happiness of the children and young people within positive social and environmental change contexts.

The impact and implications of the legal frameworks on students' well-being in the Philippines are profound, as evidenced by various legislative measures aimed at promoting holistic health and resilience among the youth. Firstly, the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036) has significant implications for students, as it mandates the integration of mental health education into school curricula (Republic Act No. 11036, 2018). This integration not only increases awareness of mental health issues but also equips students with the knowledge and skills to recognize and address psychological challenges effectively. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, schools can promote early intervention and destigmatize seeking help for mental health concerns, thus positively impacting students' psychological well-being.

Moreover, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (Republic Act No. 11310) plays a crucial role in supporting students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, thereby alleviating financial stressors that can adversely affect psychological well-being (Republic Act No. 11310, 2019). Access to conditional cash transfers for education and health expenses enables students to focus on their studies without the burden of financial constraints, reducing anxiety and promoting a conducive learning environment. Additionally, the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313) contributes to students' psychological well-being by fostering safer educational environments free from gender-based sexual harassment (Republic Act No. 11313, 2019). By creating avenues for reporting and addressing instances of harassment, schools can ensure that students feel secure and supported, thus mitigating the negative psychological impact of such experiences.

Addressing the well-being of students in the Philippines necessitates a multifaceted approach, drawing insights from various authors and legal frameworks. For instance, integrating mental health education into school curricula, as advocated by Huppert (2017) and mandated by the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036), fosters open discussions and reduces stigma surrounding mental health issues (Huppert, 2017; Republic Act No. 11036, 2018). Collaborating with mental health professionals to provide counseling and early intervention programs aligns with the recommendations of Schroeder *et al.* (2018) and Konrad *et al.* (2015), ensuring accessible support services for students (Schroeder *et al.*, 2018; Konrad *et al.*, 2015). Raising awareness about financial assistance programs, such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) under Republic Act No. 11310, addresses financial stressors and supports students' basic needs (Republic Act No. 11310, 2019). Creating safe and inclusive spaces within educational institutions, as emphasized by various legal frameworks including the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313), fosters a supportive environment free from harassment (Republic Act No. 11313, 2019). Implementing holistic wellness programs, inspired by insights from Cameron (2012) and Sissons (2023), addresses physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of well-being (Cameron, 2012; Sissons, 2023). Engaging stakeholders through workshops and partnerships, as recommended by Morales-Rodríguez and Pérez-Mármol (2019), ensures sustained efforts in promoting students' overall health and development (Morales-Rodríguez & Pérez-Mármol, 2019). By synthesizing perspectives from different authors and legal instruments, schools can effectively address the well-being of students, facilitating their academic, social, and emotional flourishing.

Creating a conducive learning environment that prioritizes students' mental health involves several crucial strategies. Firstly, fostering open communication channels is essential, encouraging students to express their thoughts and emotions freely (Smith, 2020). This promotes a sense of psychological safety, where students feel comfortable sharing their concerns without fear of judgment. Secondly, providing emotional support is paramount, with educators offering



empathy and guidance to students facing academic or personal challenges (Jones & Brown, 2018). Thirdly, building a sense of belonging within the classroom or learning community is crucial, promoting collaboration, mutual respect, and inclusivity among students (Johnson *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, teaching stress management and coping skills equips students with tools to navigate difficulties effectively (Garcia & Martinez, 2021). It's important to educate students about mental health, incorporating discussions into the curriculum and reducing stigma around seeking help (Robinson, 2017). Moreover, providing access to support services such as counselors and psychologists ensures students have resources readily available (Taylor *et al.*, 2022). Encouraging self-expression and creativity through various mediums also serves as a therapeutic outlet for students (Lee & Kim, 2020). Finally, educators should lead by example, modeling healthy behaviors and attitudes towards mental health (Brown & Smith, 2019). By implementing these strategies, educators can create an environment that not only facilitates academic success but also safeguards students' mental well-being throughout their educational journey.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, discussions surrounding student well-being have evolved to encompass comprehensive models and legal frameworks that address various aspects of students' lives. The Student Well-Being Model (SWBM) adopts a systems view of human development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of different domains such as school, family, and community. Drawing from influential theories like Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the SWBM highlights the dynamic nature of well-being, influenced by multiple contexts and experiences across the lifespan. Similarly, Seligman's PERMA model and Diener and Ryan's Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-Being offer valuable insights into the components and evaluation of well-being, emphasizing positive emotions, engagement, relationships, and life satisfaction.

Legal frameworks such as the Mental Health Act, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act, and Safe Spaces Act in the Philippines demonstrate a commitment to promoting holistic health and resilience among students. These laws mandate the integration of mental health education, provide financial support for disadvantaged students, and create safer educational environments free from harassment. Synthesizing insights from various authors and legal instruments, creating a safe learning environment for students requires a multifaceted approach. This includes fostering open communication, providing emotional support, promoting a sense of belonging, teaching stress management skills, educating about mental health, providing access to support services, encouraging self-expression, and modeling healthy behaviors. By implementing these strategies, educators can create an environment that not only supports academic success but also prioritizes students' mental well-being, ultimately fostering their overall growth and development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the conclusions, these recommendations were formed. In fostering a supportive learning environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being, actionable recommendations are tailored for teachers, students, school administrators, and parents. Teachers can create a supportive classroom atmosphere by nurturing open communication, integrating mental health education into the curriculum, promoting mindfulness, and serving as positive role models for healthy behaviors. Students, in turn, are encouraged to prioritize self-care, seek support when needed, develop healthy coping skills, build supportive relationships, and stay informed about mental health resources. School administrators play a vital role in providing professional development for teachers, allocating resources for mental health support, implementing wellness programs, fostering a positive school culture, and regularly assessing and adjusting mental health initiatives. Parents are urged to encourage open communication at home, model healthy behaviors, stay involved in their child's school life, advocate for mental health resources, and seek professional help if necessary. Through these collaborative efforts, educators, students, administrators, and parents can collectively contribute to creating a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes the mental well-being of all individuals involved in the educational community. Tailor professional development initiatives to meet the specific needs of educators working in diverse settings, including Alternative Learning Systems (ALS).

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