

Impact of Positive Psychology Education and Interventions on Well-Being: A Study of Students Engaged in Pastoral Care

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Abstract : Positive psychology investigates human strengths and virtues and promotes well-being. Relying on this assumption, positive interventions have been continuously designed to build pleasure and happiness, joy and contentment, engagement and meaning, hope and optimism, satisfaction and gratitude, spirituality, and various other positive measures of well-being. In line with this model of positive psychology and interventions, this study investigated certain measures of well-being in a group of 45 students enrolled in an 18-week positive psychology course and simultaneously engaged in service-oriented interventions that they chose for themselves based on the course content and individual interests. Students' well-being was measured at the beginning and end of the course. The well-being indicators included positive automatic thoughts, optimism and hope, satisfaction with life, and spirituality. A paired-samples *t*-test conducted to evaluate the impact of class content and service-oriented interventions on students' scores of well-being indicators indicated statistically significant increase from pre-class to post-class scores. There were also significant gender differences in post-course well-being scores, with females having higher levels of well-being than males. A two-way between groups analysis of variance indicated a significant interaction effect of age by gender on the post-course well-being scores, with females in the age group of 56-65 having the highest scores of well-being in comparison to the males in the same age group. Regression analyses indicated that positive automatic thought significantly predicted hope and satisfaction with life in the pre-course analysis. In the post-course regression analysis, spiritual transcendence made a significant contribution to optimism, and positive automatic thought made a significant contribution to both hope and satisfaction with life. Finally, a significant test between pre-course and post-course regression coefficients indicated that the regression coefficients at pre-course were significantly different from post-course coefficients, suggesting that the positive psychology course and the interventions were helpful in raising the levels of well-being. The overall results suggest a substantial increase in the participants' well-being scores after engaging in the positive-oriented interventions, implying a need for designing more positive interventions in education to promote well-being.

Keywords : hope, optimism, positive automatic thoughts, satisfaction with life, spirituality, well-being

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