

Research on the development and evaluation of happiness-oriented education programs at Vietnamese universities

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of holistic development and well-being among students. Consequently, educational institutions worldwide have begun exploring innovative approaches to promote happiness and well-being in their academic environments. This abstract focuses specifically on the initiatives undertaken by Vietnamese universities to integrate happiness-oriented education programs into their curriculum. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather comprehensive data on the development and effectiveness of these programs. Moreover, the research aims to provide practical recommendations for improving the design and implementation of these programs, ensuring their sustainability and impact on student well-being. The study's significance lies in its potential to inform educational policymakers, university administrators, and educators about the value of integrating happiness-oriented education programs into the higher education system. By nurturing students' well-being, these programs can potentially enhance their overall learning experience, academic performance, and future life satisfaction.

Keywords: happiness-oriented education, well-being, program evaluation

1. Introduction

Traditional education models have often focused solely on academic achievement, neglecting the emotional and psychological aspects of students' lives. As a response to this, educational institutions have started exploring innovative approaches to promote happiness and well-being within their academic environments. This introduction focuses on the development and evaluation of happiness-oriented education programs at Vietnamese universities. Vietnam, like many other countries, is witnessing an increased interest in incorporating happiness and well-being into the educational sphere. Vietnamese universities, known for their dedication to student welfare and innovative pedagogy, have taken up the challenge of integrating happiness-oriented education programs into their curriculum. These programs aim to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives, both during their university years and beyond. The development of happiness-oriented education programs involves a multidimensional approach. It encompasses various aspects, including positive psychology, mindfulness practices, character development, interpersonal skills, and personal growth. By incorporating these elements into the curriculum, universities strive to create a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters the overall well-being of their students. However, the mere implementation of such programs is not sufficient. It is crucial to evaluate their effectiveness and impact on student well-being and academic outcomes. Evaluation allows universities to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these programs, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions regarding their continued development and sustainability. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of happiness-oriented education programs in the Vietnamese university context. By conducting a comprehensive evaluation, it seeks to explore the key components of these programs, the challenges encountered during their implementation, and their impact on student well-being and academic performance. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative data will be collected through interviews and observations to gain insights into students' experiences, perceptions, and the overall program delivery. Quantitative data will be obtained through surveys to measure variables such as subjective well-being, academic achievement, and student engagement, provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, university administrators, and educators in Vietnam and beyond. By shedding light on the benefits and limitations of happiness-oriented education programs, the study aims to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and inform the development of effective strategies to enhance student well-being and academic success. The development and evaluation of happiness-oriented education programs at Vietnamese universities are of increasing importance in today's educational landscape. By prioritizing student well-being and incorporating elements of positive psychology and personal growth into the curriculum, these programs have the potential to transform the educational experience and contribute to students' long-term happiness and success. Through rigorous evaluation, universities can continuously improve these programs and ensure they effectively meet the needs of their students, ultimately creating a positive and thriving educational environment.

2. Literature review

Positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman (2012), emphasizes the cultivation of positive emotions, character strengths, and meaningful engagement. The PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) provides a conceptual framework for

designing interventions that promote happiness and well-being. Other frameworks, such as self-determination theory and social emotional learning, also inform the design and implementation of these programs. Scouting is a program that operates based on the idea of voluntary, non-political educational movement for young people across the world without division of origin, race or creed, in accordance with the purpose, principles and method. The purpose of the Scouting program is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials. As the largest youth movement branded as "Creating a Better World", Scouting contributes to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society (WOSM, 2017). It contributes to the empowerment of individual for the holistic development as active global citizens.

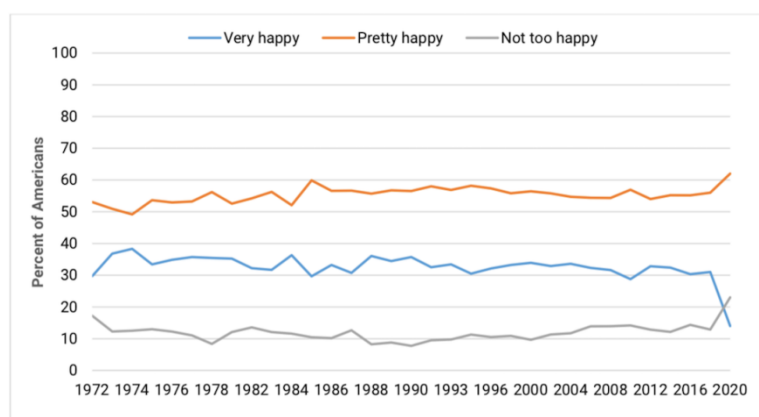
3. Research Methodology

Reviewing program documents, curriculum materials, lesson plans, and program evaluations can provide additional information on the design, content, and outcomes of happiness-oriented education programs. This method allows researchers to analyze program artifacts, policies, and guidelines to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's development and implementation.

4. Research result and discussion

Interviews were carried out from May 21-29, 2020, with a sample of adults aged 18 and above representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The participants were randomly selected from AmeriSpeak, and a total of 2,279 individuals completed the survey, with 2,047 responding online and 232 via telephone. The interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish, based on the preferred language of the respondents.

Figure 1. Happiness reaches lowest point in decades
Source : COVID Response Tracking Study 2020



The study examines the comparison between Americans' current perspectives and emotional well-being with nearly 50 years of public opinion data from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is an ongoing project conducted by NORC since 1972. This historical context provides insights into the distinct effects of the pandemic on public sentiment. The study reveals that there is a record-low

percentage of people reporting being very happy (14%), while simultaneously observing a record-high percentage of individuals expressing satisfaction with their family's financial situation (80%).

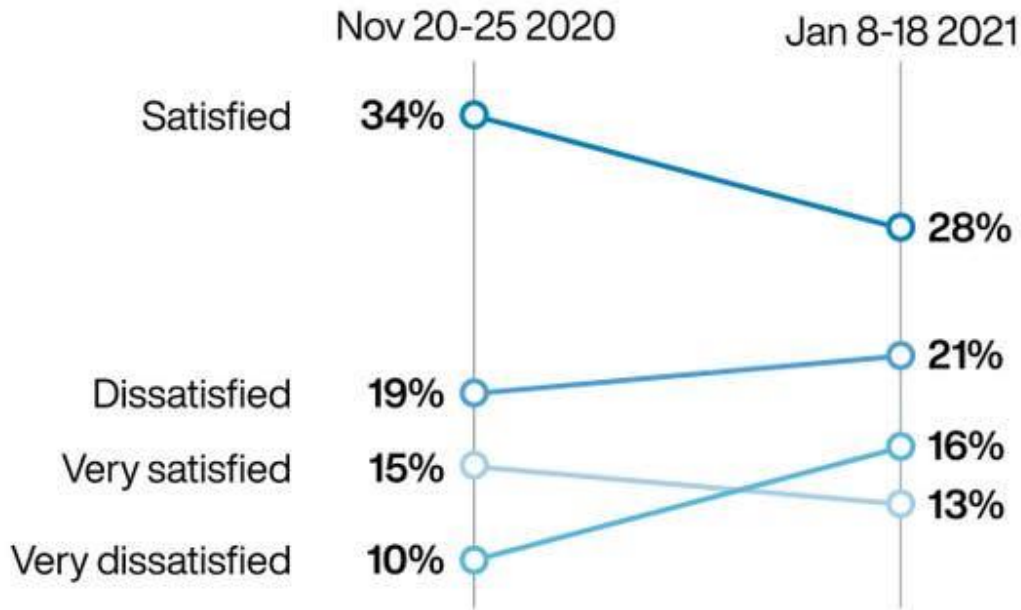


Figure 2. Student Covid-19 survey academic experience
 Source: ONS Student Covid insight survey in England

Happiness schools often emphasize creating a positive learning environment, encouraging creativity, fostering independent thinking, and developing life skills for students. The curriculum of happiness-oriented education typically includes activities such as social skills training, promoting positive thinking, personalized assessment and support for students. Happiness education provides students not only with academic knowledge but also helps them develop emotional intelligence, build positive relationships with others, enhance self-confidence, and find joy in daily life. Additionally, happiness education guides students to explore the meaning of life, develop their own beliefs and values. The significance of happiness-oriented education lies not only in providing knowledge but also in helping students become proud individuals who are capable of facing challenges and making positive contributions to society.

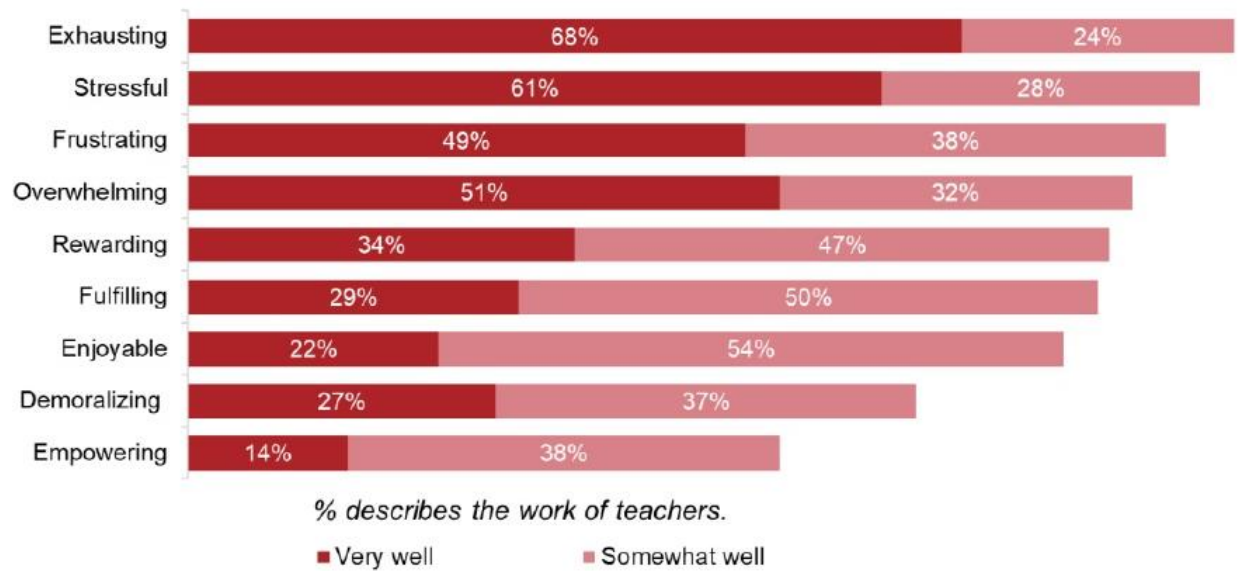


Figure 3. How teachers describe their jobs
Source : Voices from classroom (2022)

A recent extensive survey conducted during the summer among teachers in California reaffirms a trend that has emerged over the past two years of the pandemic: a significant number of teachers describe their work as "stressful" and "exhausting." Furthermore, the survey reveals that nearly twice as many teachers as before believing that the conditions of their job have deteriorated. In the overall context, teachers face a significant amount of pressure, fatigue, and stress, which have a profound impact on their emotional well-being. Instead of experiencing positive emotions, they often find themselves overwhelmed by negative emotions. When negative emotions take control, teachers are more prone to losing their composure and lacking clarity in handling pedagogical situations. In addition to receiving formal training in pedagogical skills, teachers also need to cultivate positive emotions so that they can promptly respond to real-life situations based on their foundational skills. Theory serves as a foundation, but no pedagogical situation is exactly the same as what is depicted in books.

5. Recommendation

Encourage collaboration among universities, educators, researchers, and relevant stakeholders to share best practices, resources, and experiences in developing happiness-oriented education programs. Establishing a network or platform for knowledge exchange can foster innovation and collective learning. Conduct a thorough needs assessment to understand the specific well-being challenges and priorities of Vietnamese university students. This assessment should involve students, faculty, and staff to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the unique context and requirements of the target population. Integrate happiness-oriented education programs into the core curriculum rather than treating them as isolated initiatives. By incorporating well-being principles and practices into various disciplines, universities can provide a holistic and sustainable approach to student development. Provide professional development opportunities for faculty members to enhance their understanding of happiness-oriented education and equip them with the necessary skills to effectively incorporate well-being principles into their teaching practices. This may

include workshops, training programs, and faculty mentoring. Involve students in the development and evaluation of happiness-oriented education programs. Seek their input on program design, activities, and resources to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Encourage student-led initiatives and peer support networks to promote a sense of ownership and engagement. Implement a comprehensive evaluation framework that includes both qualitative and quantitative measures. Assess various outcomes such as subjective well-being, academic performance, engagement, social connections, and personal growth. Use validated assessment tools and conduct longitudinal studies to capture long-term impacts. Use evaluation findings to inform program improvements and adjustments. Regularly review and update program content, delivery methods, and assessment strategies based on feedback from students, faculty, and evaluation results. Embrace a culture of continuous improvement to ensure program relevance and effectiveness. Develop strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of happiness-oriented education programs. Explore partnerships with external organizations, secure funding sources, and establish institutional support structures to foster program continuity and expansion. Foster collaboration with employers to align happiness-oriented education programs with the skills and competencies sought in the job market. Engage employers in curriculum design, internship opportunities, and career development initiatives to enhance the relevance and outcomes of the programs. Share research findings, best practices, and success stories to promote knowledge dissemination and inspire other universities and educational institutions to adopt happiness-oriented education programs. Publish research articles, organize conferences, and engage in national and international networks to contribute to the broader field of well-being in education. By implementing these recommendations, Vietnamese universities can effectively develop and evaluate happiness-oriented education programs that prioritize student well-being and contribute to their overall academic and personal success. These programs have the potential to create a positive educational environment that nurtures students' happiness and equips them with the skills and mindset needed for a fulfilling and meaningful life.

6. Conclusion

The development and evaluation of happiness-oriented education programs at Vietnamese universities have gained significant importance in recent years. By prioritizing student well-being and incorporating principles of positive psychology and personal growth into the curriculum, these programs aim to create a nurturing and supportive environment that enhances students' overall academic performance and life satisfaction. Through collaborative efforts among universities, educators, researchers, and relevant stakeholders, the development of these programs can benefit from shared knowledge and experiences. Conducting a thorough needs assessment enables universities to tailor the programs to address the specific well-being challenges and priorities of Vietnamese university students effectively. Integration of happiness-oriented education programs into the core curriculum ensures their sustainability and long-term impact. Faculty training and support are crucial in equipping educators with the necessary skills to effectively incorporate well-being principles into their teaching practices. Involving students in the development and evaluation process fosters a sense of ownership and engagement, enhancing program relevance and effectiveness. Comprehensive evaluation, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative measures, provides valuable insights into the impact of happiness-oriented education programs. Regularly reviewing and updating program content based on evaluation findings ensures continuous improvement and program effectiveness. To sustain these programs, collaboration with employers and external organizations is essential. Aligning program outcomes with the skills and competencies sought in the job market enhances students' prospects and career readiness. Dissemination of

research findings and success stories contributes to the broader field of well-being in education and inspires other institutions to adopt similar initiatives. By implementing these recommendations, Vietnamese universities can create a positive and thriving educational environment that prioritizes student well-being. Happiness-oriented education programs have the potential to transform the educational experience, leading to improved academic performance, enhanced personal growth, and increased life satisfaction among students.

7. Conflict of interests

None

8. Acknowledgement

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