**Common Elements that Contribute to Well-Being Priorities: A Literature Review**

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**Introduction**

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people evaluate their lives and is defined as an individual’s overall state of subjective wellness (Diener, 1984). It is a broad concept commonly divided into two components (Busseri & Sadava, 2011; Diener, 1984; Eid & Larsen, 2008). Affective well-being (AWB) reflects the presence of pleasant affect (e.g., feelings of happiness) and the absence of unpleasant affect (e.g., depressed mood). Cognitive well-being (CWB) refers to the cognitive overall evaluation of life satisfaction (i.e., global life satisfaction) as well as of specific life domains (e.g., job satisfaction or marital satisfaction) (Diener, Inglehart, & Tay, 2013). Domain-specific levels of SWB can be aggregated to obtain an overall SWB score (e.g., Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004) and allow the assessment of possible bottom-up influences of specific domains on overall SWB (e.g., does a bad experience in a particular life domain affect the overall sense of wellbeing?) (Bucker et al., 2018). Well-being is often referred to as psychological well-being constructs, consisting of depression, perceived stress, self-esteem, and perceived physical health (Wintre et al., 2011).

Well-being is an abstract, multidimensional construct that cannot be defined by a single measure. Therefore, several models have been created to communicate what specific elements influence well-being and the method in which they influence well-being. To develop Ohio University’s subjective well-being model, the literature was reviewed for subjective well-being models and their various elements were noted for comparison. Five models were explored that encompassed the true subjective nature of well-being with specific elements for enhancing an individual’s well-being: PERMA, DRAMMA, Ryff, Gallup, and the University of Minnesota’s wellbeing model.

**Review of Models**

**PERMA Model of Psychological Well-Being and Happiness**

Martin Seligman (2011) developed the PERMA (abbreviation of core elements) model encompassing five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. Positive emotions are more than expressing positivity through physical characteristics, rather they are allowing optimism to remain the driving force of the individual’s outlook on life. Engagement refers to an individual’s experience of enjoyment when consumed by a positive activity or hobby. Individuals need only to experience meaningful activities and hobbies to enhance their well-being. On the other hand, the element of relationships focuses on the importance of specifically engaging with other individuals to enhance well-being. Meaning focuses on the importance of knowing why you are here or understanding you have a greater impact. Knowing one’s purpose can help individuals create focus when progressing forward. Accomplishments are also important for progressing forward. Having a sense of accomplishment brings about feelings of fulfillment and allow the individual to continue to flourish.

**DRAMMA Model of Leisure and Subjective Well-Being**

The DRAMMA model suggests leisure is a core ingredient for well-being that instigates the following psychological mechanisms: detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation (Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Detachment-recovery refers to the understanding that individuals need time away from work to recover physiologically and psychologically from work stressors and during that time of recovery the individual is returned to a mental baseline. Autonomy is viewed as a requisite of leisure in most leisure studies (Newman, Diener, Tay, 2014). Autonomy in this model refers to the individual’s perception of control and freedom in relation to participating in leisure activities. Building onto autonomy is its direct mechanism, mastery. Mastery refers to the condition of being challenged and enhancing the skills necessary to accomplish a task. Unlike the PERMA model, meaning refers more to the quality of the experience, rather than the individual’s purpose. It is important for individuals to select leisure activities that promote or increase their life value. Affiliation in this context refers to our relationships with others. Affiliation is accomplished when an individual connects with others by relating or caring for them—it is understood this affiliation is mutually beneficial.

**Ryff Model of Psychological Well-Being**

The Ryff model, first developed and named after Carol Ryff, is another model focusing on subjective well-being (Ryff, 1989). The Ryff model was developed with the understanding that well-being refers to a philosophical response to an individual’s life and cannot be determined biologically. The Ryff model is broken into six categories: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy. In Ryff’s model, individuals who possess self-acceptance can accept both good and bad aspects in their life, but ultimately have a positive attitude about themselves. Personal growth refers to the direction of energy—individuals possessing strong personal growth understand they are changing over time and consistently improve upon themselves throughout life. Having a lack of purpose, according to the Ryff model, suggests the individual has few or no goals, lack a sense of direction or forward motion, and do not see a meaning to their life. Positive relations with others are closely related to the previous two models, in that it places emphasis on the importance of connecting with other people whether through shared experiences or empathy. Environmental mastery defines the idea of being prepared to improve or change our surrounding contexts. Individuals with high environmental mastery can make effective use of their surrounding contexts, determined by their circumstances. Autonomy is defined similarly to the DRAMMA model in that individuals can regulate their life by their own personal standards as opposed to submitting to the standards of others.

**Gallup Five Essential Elements of Well-Being**

Gallup developed the Five Essential Elements of Well-being through a comprehensive assessment tool that asked individuals what their best possible future would look like and compiled the answers to create the five elements: career, social, financial, physical and community (Rath & Harter, 2010). In this model, career well-being refers to your overall satisfaction with what you are doing. Social well-being takes the place of relationships, affiliation, and positive relations with others from the previous models. Gallup emphasizes the miniscule tasks that increase these elements are typically taken for granted (exercising, saving for retirement, engaging with friends outside of work) and thus should be the focus for improving in these elements—small, daily tasks that add up.

**University of Minnesota Wellbeing Model**

The University of Minnesota developed a well-being model that identifies six elements that make up well-being: health, relationships, security, purpose, community, and environment (Kreitzer, 2016). The university utilizes a 13-question quiz for individuals to gauge their well-being as it relates to these elements. Subcategories considered include diet and nutrition, physical activity and fitness, sleep, thoughts and emotions, spiritual health, relationships, relationship with money, life purpose, community well-being, home environment and relationship with nature.

Through an analysis of these models, Ohio University sought to identify the core common elements that cut across the various frameworks rather than subscribe to a particular one. The result is an Ohio University subjective well-being model that comprehends these five models and proposes a focus on the following common elements to support well-being: Purpose, Resilience, Relationships and Achievement. This literature review serves to present important findings under each common element and the mechanisms in which they affect well-being.

**Common Elements**

**Purpose**

To gain a better understanding of current research on purpose, we scanned existing publications. To do this, we searched ‘purpose’ and ‘higher education’ using JSTOR and google scholar. In addition, all publications in Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing were scanned for potential alignment. We looked at specific sources to dig deeper into existing publications. What follows is a review of our findings, a discussion of gaps, and recommendations based on a review of more than 20 articles. For the sake of this inquiry, purpose is defined as recognizing the meaning of what one does and value of how it impacts others.

***Key Findings***

* Hu & Kuh (2002) noted that practitioners “must identify and better understand how student and institutional characteristics interact to encourage or discourage student engagement in educational purposeful activities in college” (p. 556)
* Moran (2001) states that these four propositions allow for an individual to **find their purpose in life, “values and beliefs, level of involvement in social gatherings and physical/ mental health and well-being."** (p. 273)
* Lund et al. (2019) stated that “purpose is defined as a longstanding aim that is personally meaningful but also involves a desire to contribute to the world beyond the self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Research suggests that purpose is a key developmental task (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009; Damon, 2009) as well as a major contributor to thriving (Damon et al., 2003; Bundick, Yeager, King, & Damon, 2010). Purpose is associated with **positive outcomes including achievement, hope, life satisfaction, gratitude, compassion, and identity development** (Bronk et al., 2009; Bronk, 2011; Damon et al., 2003; Malin, Liauw, & Damon, 2017). Adolescence and young adulthood represent critical periods in purpose cultivation (Damon, 2009)” (p.361). In addition, they summarized that amongst youth, **a clear purpose may promote academic engagement and motivation in the face of academic pressures**. Their study suggests a relationship amongst purpose and grit, namely **college students with higher levels of purpose also possess higher levels of grit** (p. 364), although the sample was limited to mostly first-years, white, female, and privileged students.
* Student affairs professionals should be aware of their own values, beliefs and purpose in life as well as being able to invest time with their students to engage in a healthy mentorship relationship and by investing quality time with them. (Moran, 2001, p. 275)
* Bronk (2011) wrote that having a **purpose in life is both a critical source of motivation** and it might also be an important **component of healthy identity formation** (p. 31).
  + “*Identity* describes personally meaningful aims and beliefs as they pertain to a consistent sense of who one is and who one hopes to become.” (p. 31)
  + “*Purpose* describes an enduring, personally meaningful commitment to what one hopes to accomplish or work toward in life. Although more specific definitions of *purpose* have varied in the past, there appears to be a growing consensus among researchers that a purpose represents a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond the self.” (p. 31), or what one hopes to accomplish in life
  + “Although purpose and identity are distinguishable constructs, Erikson suggested they work in tandem” (p. 33)
  + Findings: (a) purpose helped foster identity formation; (b) identity formation reinforced purposeful commitments; (c) purpose and identity as overlapping constructs. “**These findings suggest that one way that purpose may contribute to positive developmental outcome**s such as happiness, resiliency, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, positive affect, and life satisfaction **is through its role as an identity-related resource**.” (pp. 40-41)
  + “the study proposed a model where purpose and identity not only reinforce one another but are also closely aligned.” (p. 41)
* Student attrition, according to Tinto (1993) is influenced by a number of factors, including students’ own goals, intentions, commitments, and purpose
* Sharma and Yukhymenko-Lescroart (2018) found that those **students with a strong sense of purpose had stronger degree commitment**, but further research is needed to see if this is also associated with actual degree attainment
* Social contexts and intersecting social identities influence self-narratives students create regarding their purpose (Vaccaro, Kimball, Newman, Moore, & Troiano, 2018). Vaccaro et al. further wrote:
  + “Purpose, in this context, is viewed as goal oriented and directed outward, often toward the future” (p.37)
  + Purpose is associated with a number of factors related to “optimal development”
  + “A different qualitative study with college students showed that **purpose development was inherently tied to positive identity development, relationships, and decision-making processes** (Wlkener & Bowsher, 2012)” (p. 38)
  + “Other studies have shown that merely **encouraging college students to talk about purpose can lead to educational benefits**. In an intervention study, researchers found that college students who were given regular opportunities to discuss purpose had fewer illness-related health center visits than did peers who did not participate in such dialogues (Harrist, Carlozzi, McGovern & Harrist, 2007)” (p. 38)
  + “For our participants, purpose was an ongoing process of assessing interests, clarifying passions, following dreams, and taking small and large steps to develop and accomplish life goals” (p. 41)
* **Developing purpose in college = finding a vocation**
* It seems you cannot talk about purpose or well-being for very long before you also talk about character traits and grit.

***Gaps in Literature***

A challenge in looking at the literature on purpose, is that the varied authors have even more varied interests in the topic, with sample populations conceiving of ‘purpose’ for vastly different ends. A ‘purpose’ for students to identify during a one-time event versus the self-actualization and self-knowledge to understand part- or all of one’s aims in life. It will be crucial to define what purpose means for this initiative, even if it has multiple meanings based on context, in order to operationalize it for staff, students and all stakeholders.

***Recommendations***

We identified very little literature discussing or examining how student affairs professionals or co-curricular programming intersect with Purpose.  Future research should examine well-being in the context of student affairs professionals and programming, especially in a co-curricular nature to better gauge the full scope of the student experience on campus. Ohio University should more specifically define purpose, not only for researching consistent best practices, but to enact it as a concrete part of well-being at Ohio University, so students and staff can clearly define their purpose.

**Resilience**

Resilience is defined as believing in oneself and managing adversity by making good choices and effectively utilizing surrounding opportunities. We searched higher education literature and social science literature on what resilience looks like for college students and what experiences undergraduate students can have to enhance resilience. Key terms used in the search to represent the concept of “resilience” were resilience, tenacity, perseverance, stress, and development.  In searching for resilience literature for college students, there were many branches and populations that could have been specified such as students with disabilities, international students, and students across a variety of specific majors.

***Key Findings***

* According to Harms, Brady, Wood, and Silard (2018), resilience can have two different modes of meaning, as a trait and as a response mechanism to difficult situations or trauma. Various factors can have an impact on one’s ability to strengthen resiliency or make one feel resilient, including individual factors, social factors, and community factors.
* Resilience can be measured or studied as a process and looking at patterns to determine resilience. First, one can look at **how well someone functions after facing adverse conditions**, whether there was a relatively quick recovery to normal activity, and development in the face of adversity.
* **“Individuals who never experience challenges may experience high well-being on a regular basis, but they may also be more likely to fall apart when they finally do face adversity”** (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010)
* Research on college students suggests that there is a negative association between stressful life events and indicators of well-being or satisfaction with their life, similar to resilience. An example of this might be for a group of undergraduates**,** stress is negative in relation to well-being, but then self-compassion could come from that stressor which would be a positive predictor of well-being (Ceary, Donahue, and Shaffer, 2019)

***Gaps in Literature***

Resiliency is a component of well-being in that it connects individuals to positive and healthful coping mechanisms to stressors they may experience within their life. While there is research amongst undergraduate student populations, it relies mostly within the realm of measuring resiliency interventions.  As generational changes influence how society views and addresses issues, the next step in research is looking at how interventions can address the needs of different generations (i.e. millennials vs. Gen Z). Likely technology plays a role in how communication may be impacted, which may also present additional challenges related to coping, as well as new spaces where adversity can be prevalent.

***Recommendations***

Based on the literature, there are clear connections between college student mental health and resiliency. Ohio University and future research should continue to explore what specific programs can be offered through an on-campus health facility or even off campus partnership, to help address the catalysts that need to be counteracted with resiliency. Resiliency is ideally a skill used to counteract stressors, which would be helpful for students to have a better understanding of how they define and identify stressors in their own personal lives. There is also indication that behaviors that occur as the result of stress are the reverse of resiliency, specifically in binge drinking, self-harm, and engaging in risky behaviors. By also incorporating resiliency work within alcohol education and prevention work may also help students identify more healthful coping mechanisms.

It would also be recommended that resiliency in the undergraduate student population be looked at through a variety of lens depending on identity. As specific populations may experience adversity in more specialized ways, their resiliency may be higher or stronger than students within more privileged identities.

**Relationships**

Relationships are defined as belonging to a greater community through social engagement. We searched the social science literature for research on the relationship between undergraduate students’ well-being and their relationships with other people.  Key terms used in the searches to represent the concept of “wellbeing” were well-being, happiness, and student success.  Key terms used in the searches to represent the concept of “relationships” were relations, peers, friends, family, loneliness, community, and social.  We focused on literature published after 2009 and reported on studies from North America.  Additionally, we looked for results that intersected with student lives outside the classroom and not exclusively about student relationships with instructors or peers in the classroom setting.

Most of our results came from the higher education literature but applicable research was also located in other social science disciplines such as psychology and communication.  Additional supportive research was in the health sciences’ literature.  This research discusses the general impact of human relationships on mortality, brain functions, and physical mental health and typically is not exclusive to undergraduate college-age students.  The following provides a summary of our findings, gaps, and recommendations as it relates to subjective well-being and the common element, “relationships.”

***Key Findings***

* “With the exception of overall college friendships (which likely include a wide variety of peers), **satisfaction with roommate(s)** has the strongest association of any satisfaction measure for [college sense of belonging, positive emotional well-being, and negative emotional well-being]” and possibly plays a critical role in shaping a student’s college adjustment period**.** “**Relationship satisfaction with the resident assistant**also significantly predicts college belonging.” (Bowman, Jarratt, Jang, & Bono, 2018)
* Improvements in well-being and belonging were also attributed to time spent exercising. Bowman et al. considers the experience of **exercising on campus** brings about the potential for social interaction with peers and the college environment through on-campus facilities.
* Students reported higher college belonging when they **visited their professor once**. However, **visiting more than once is associated with more negative well-being**. Mayhew, Rockenbach Bowman, Seifert, Wolniak, Pascarella, et al. (2016) argue this could be due to the nature of the visit. One visit may reflect a voluntary or proactive action by the student, while more than one visit to a professor could indicate low academic performance and thus reveal the possibility for negative well-being outcomes.
* Mayhew et al. (2016) suggest **living on campus strengthens social engagement**, which leads to greater college retention.
* Burke, Ruppel, and Dinsmore (2016) reviewed the relationship between parent and student during the transition to college. Their results indicate that “expressions of openness and assurances with a parent seem to be the most beneficial to students’ well-being.” In conjunction with openness and assurances, students who were under greater stress experienced more loneliness. Students should practice**relational maintenance with a parent** to encourage consistent communication to combat loneliness.
* Henry (2012) reviewed the impact of new technologies and social media on college students’ social and psychosocial well-being and their sense of community. The findings revealed the intended use of technologies and social media affected the outcomes related to well-being and community. Students who **used technologies and social media in a more social nature (talking on the phone, instant messaging, etc.) saw more positive psychosocial well-being and sense of community outcomes**. Additionally, motivation for use of technologies and social media matter. Students motivated to use technology in a more social manner (meeting new people, keeping up with friends, etc.) saw a more positive outcome for psychosocial well-being and sense of community.
* While preference for online social integration (POSI) does not predict poor well-being, its effect on loneliness may increase the likelihood for poor well-being outcomes. Chen (2019) emphasizes in their study of communication anxiety the causal relationship between online social integration and loneliness. While well-being outcomes are not directly affected by POSI, it can be a predictor of loneliness, which influences an individuals’ well-being. Thus, it can be understood that **a preference for online social integration has the potential to bring about loneliness**, it does not directly affect well-being—it is only once loneliness is present that well-being may be affected.
* Flett, Khan, and Su (2019) summarize interventions designed to increase levels of mattering in a college or university setting. They encourage university employees to demonstrate student mattering by viewing their practices through the student’s eye during each interaction. In addition to creating an atmosphere where students believe they matter, the atmosphere and practice must be sustained. This is heavily due to **increased feelings of depression when a sense of mattering is lost**.  Another intervention strategy is educating and encouraging students to **engage in self-socialization skills** like seeking out volunteer opportunities or anything that places a dependency on the individual—this has been known to increase sense of mattering (Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981). Growing evidence **supports the success of** **peer-mentoring programs on a students’ sense of mattering** and reciprocal benefits for mentor as well.
* Structural opportunities for engagement, like athletic teams, professional or social organizations, have been shown to positively affect connectedness on campus (Armstrong & Oomen-Early, 2009). Armstrong and Oomen-Early demonstrated this effect in their research on depressive symptomatology for athletes versus non-athletes. Results concluded **collegiate athletes are protected from depressive symptomatology due to the positive influence of social network and team support** that is fostered when you are a part of a collegiate team. Further, their research concluded individuals with**low social connectedness reported more psychological distress, including depression**; this effect on psychological distress could attribute to poor well-being.
* Cultural adaptability shows an influence in international students’ well-being in United States university settings. Liu (2019) reviewed the research surrounding cross-cultural communication and discovered a study that suggests international students’ psychological well-being was enhanced through their cultural adaptability because of the increase in intercultural communication.
* Weak ties— “relationships involving less frequent contact, low emotional intensity, and limited intimacy” —have been shown to have positive affect on well-being (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2014). The positive effects of these interactions are not restricted to the classroom. In fact, students who reported **more daily interactions with weak ties were happier and experienced greater feelings of belonging**. An increase in weak tie interactions only serves to enhance this result. Increasing weak tie interactions had an even greater effect on students during days where they experienced less interaction overall. These results were not limited to extroverts.
* In Wilcox and Nordstokke’s (2019) research on predictors of student satisfaction with life, academic self-efficacy, and achievement in first year students, they found evidence that suggests students possessing **higher life satisfaction and higher well-being were correlated with higher GPA**. Overall, they concluded self-reported academic achievement could be predicted by well-being and anxiety.
* Taylor (2010) reviewed quality versus quantity as it relates to relationships. Findings suggest “**having a single confidante**—a person with whom you can be authentic and trust not to exploit your secrets or vulnerabilities—**is more important to happiness than having a large social network**.”

***Gaps in Literature***

We identified very little literature discussing or examining how student affairs or co-curricular programming intersect with student relationship building.  We also did not identify work discussing the impacts of relationships students may have with university staff outside of residence life.

***Recommendations***

Future research should focus on a wider variety of relationships that exist on a university campus. Current research focuses on the teacher/student, peer/peer, and resident assistant/student relationship, but less often articulates relationships with university staff. Areas of focus should include common touch points university staff have with students: counseling, advising, student affairs professionals, university police, student employee supervisors, and student organizations.

**Achievement**

In the literature “achievement” was defined as academic achievement or academic success/performance and often measure by GPA.  Academic achievement can be measured with a wide range of indicators (Steinmayr et al., 2014). To ensure comparability across studies, we restricted the present meta-analysis to achievement measures with a criterion-oriented reference standard such as grades or academic achievement tests and excluded measures with an individual reference standard such as performance compared to other students in class. (Bucker et al., 2018). Academic achievement is one performance outcome of instruction and is an important factor for shaping a person’s outlook on life (Steinmayr et al., 2015). It is associated with **lower stress** (Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005), **higher self-concept** (Guay Marsh, & Boivin, 2003), **higher self-efficacy** (Zajacova et al., 2005), and **positive health behavior** and **health** (Eide, Showalter, & Goldhaber, 2010; Sigfúsdóttir, Kristjánsson, & Allegrante, 2007). Academic achievement is **essential for mastering several central developmental goals across the life span**, especially during the school years and young adulthood (Heckhausen, Wrosch, & Schulz, 2010). Engagement with educational goals is related to more positive developmental outcomes in terms of both SWB and educational attainments (Heckhausen & Chang, 2009) (Bucker et al., 2018).

***Key Findings***

**Relation between Well-being and Achievement.**

* There are a few cross-sectional studies that suggest an association between SWB and academic achievement (e.g., Crede, Wirthwein, McElvany, & Steinmayr, 2015; Kirkcaldy, Furnham, & Siefen, 2004; Suldo, Shaffer, & Riley, 2008). Some results indicate that higher academic functioning leads to higher SWB and lower levels of psychopathology (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008) and that students’ grade point average (GPA) positively predicts changes in life satisfaction (Steinmayr et al., 2015). However, in other cases, SWB and academic achievement were not statistically significantly correlated (e.g., Huebner, 1991; Huebner & Alderman, 1993). In sum, single studies provide mixed evidence on the relationship between SWB and academic achievement. (Bucker et al., 2018)
* High subjective well-being and high academic achievement are both values that are desirable within our western society. However, no existing meta-analysis investigated if and how these two often reported indicators of societal prosperity are related to each other. SWB and academic achievement could be associated because (a) academic achievement has a causal effect on SWB, (b) SWB has a causal effect on academic achievement, or (c) both SWB and academic achievement are influenced by common third variables.  (Bucker et al., 2018)

***Academic Achievement has a Causal Effect on Well-being.***

* The first mechanism is consistent with self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000), which posits that three innate psychological needs (competence, relatedness and autonomy) are essential for intrinsic motivation, personality growth, social development, and personal well-being. Academic achievement may therefore lead to SWB through **fulfilling the need for competence** (e.g., Neubauer, Lerche, & Voss, 2017). (Bucker et al., 2018).
* A 1-year prospective study was done with students accepted into the School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The study finds that the personality traits, emotional intelligence and previous academic performance were associated factors of psychological health during a less stressful period. Early identification of medical students who are vulnerable to stressful environment by medical schools might help them to improve their psychological well-being during medical training. In summary, a range of evidence has consistently supported the favorable relationships between previous academic performance, emotional intelligence and personality with various areas of individual performance, which include job performance, mental health, academic success, career success, positive personal qualities and well-being either in the medical context or outside the medical context.  Many studies have shown that the personality traits predict individuals’ performance in various non-medical occupation settings with regard to cognitive ability, mental health, job performance, well-being, career success and personal qualities.[19-30]  (Yusoff, 2013)
* Arroyo & Zigler (1995) found some African Americans minimize their relationships with their communities; adolescents are criticized by their peers but are not fully accepted by White Americans. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) used the term racelessness to refer to the behaviors and experiences of these high-achieving students. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) and Fordham (1988) associated this form of racial disidentification with negative psychological consequences. These researchers argued that African American adolescents' attempts at success and social mobility often distance them from their community and result in feelings of cultural alienation, depression, and anxiety. **Racelessness may therefore explain the heightened prevalence of loneliness and psychological pain among academically successful African Americans** that has been documented in the empirical literature (Irvine, 1986; Spurlock, 1985; Tyler & Pargament, 1981). On the other hand, several studies have characterized high-achieving African American adolescents as self-confident, industrious, adaptive in their social environments, and toughminded (Allen, 1985; Comer, 1988; Evans & Quarterman, 1983; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Foster & Seltzer, 1986; Lee, 1984, 1985; Sewell, Farley, Manni, & Hunt, 1982). (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995)
* Adoption of those behaviors and attitudes defined as raceless are also presumed to be significantly related to African American students' psychological experiences. The present data provide partial support for these assumptions. Analyses of the patterns of correlations between the RS and measures of depression and anxiety showed that among African American students, **racelessness was positively related to introspective depression**. Specifically, those African Americans who reported higher RS scores also expressed greater concerns about losing the approval of others. Among European American participants, no significant associations between responses to the RS and measures of depression were found. Thus, it appears that the behaviors associated with racelessness are predictive of African American students' psychological states, but not those of European Americans. (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995)

***Well-being has a Causal Effect on Academic Achievement****.*

* The second mechanism is consistent with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001) which posits that **the experience of positive emotions broadens one’s awareness and allows building new skills and resources, which may ultimately lead to enhanced academic achievement**. Indeed, positive emotions are associated with better **self-regulated learning, higher motivation, and better examination grades** (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014) and have a positive effect on memory and attention processes (Fiedler & Beier, 2014). Moreover, experiencing positive emotions is associated with adopting goals oriented towards approach and mastery rather than goals oriented towards avoidance (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Pursuing mastery-oriented goals is in turn associated with positive outcomes (see Anderman & Wolters, 2006, for a review). Mastery-oriented students persist longer at academic tasks, are more engaged with their work, use more effective cognitive processing strategies, use less self-handicapping, and continue to engage with tasks in the future when possible (Tuominen-Soini, Salmela-Aro, & Niemivirta, 2008). Moreover, some studies indicate that negative emotionality is negatively related to school achievement (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002). However, this finding could not be replicated with different measures of affect and emotionality (e.g., Supplee, Shaw, Hailstones, & Hartman, 2004). (Bucker et al., 2018).
* Wintre et al. (2011) discuss the relation between achievement and well-being in an opposite direction, which means well-being is used to predict academic achievement (GPA) among first-year undergrad students in Canadian universities. While often used as an outcome variable, **adjustment can also be used as a predictor of academic achievement** (Wintre and Bowers 2007; Wintre and Yaffe 2000).  During the transition to university, students must learn to cope with a new work and interpersonal environment that imposes many intellectual, social and instrumental demands. These new demands may then contribute to students’ stress (Vaez and Laflamme 2008).  The belief that students with higher self-esteem attain higher grades originates from the perception that individuals with higher self-esteem are persistent in the face of failure and have greater aspirations than those with lower self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 2003).  The results show that **perceived stress, a component of psychological well-being, is a significant predictor of academic success (GPA)**. (Wintre et al., 2011)
* Previous research has demonstrated that first-generation college students (i.e., students whose parents did not attend college) feel guilty about their educational achievements when their family members do not have similar access to higher education. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between college students’ mental well-being and family achievement guilt, in other words, the feelings of guilt that arise when students have more educational success than their parents or siblings, which may lead to minimizing academic successes. As hypothesized, among all college students, family achievement guilt significantly predicted more depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem. Additionally, as expected, **at higher levels of family achievement guilt, first-generation college students reported significantly more depressive symptoms than non-first-generation college students** (Covarrubias, 2014).
* Covarrubias (2014) finds that **family achievement guilt is associated with decreased mental well-being among all students**, it especially highlights that high levels of guilt relate to more depressive symptoms for students whose parents have not been to college. As their findings show, these family-specific components of guilt may play a particularly significant role in the well-being of first-generation college students. Previous studies demonstrating that first-generation college students are more likely to prioritize family ties more than non-first-generation college students helps explain our findings (Freeberg and Stein 1996; Gaines et al. 1997; Ramirez et al. 2004; Stephens et al. 2012). First-generation college students who prioritize family closeness and harmony may feel that their academic achievements are disrupting typical family patterns of regular interaction and interdependence. Additionally, first-generation college students may not be following cultural norms of getting a job and beginning a family of their own, which may conflict with family expectations. Furthermore, families of first-generation college students may be more likely to be suffering hardships of poverty and family dysfunction that may be difficult for students to separate from physically and emotionally. Future studies may need to expand the measure of family achievement guilt to tap into these distinct constructs (Covarrubias, 2014).
* The current study investigated the additional impact of psychosocial factors (i.e., performance obstacles and facilitators) as well as psychological well-being (i.e., burnout and engagement) on success (i.e., academic performance). More specifically, the purpose was to show that, instead of directly affecting future performance, obstacles and facilitators exert an indirect effect via well-being. Salanova et al. (2008) assumed that, instead of directly influencing performance, obstacles and facilitators have an indirect effect, namely through student well-being (i.e., burnout and engagement). Evidence for such an indirect effect derives from the study of Cotton et al. (2002) that found that **high study demands in combination with low control plus poor social support decreased students’ well-being, and subsequently resulted in poor academic performance**. (Salanova et al., 2008)

***Third factor influencing both Well-being and Achievement.***

* Finally, the two variables may also be correlated because they are influenced by a common third variable. In the case of SWB and academic achievement, potential confounding variables are intelligence and socioeconomic status. Intelligence and socioeconomic status are not only positively related to academic achievement (e.g., Deary, Strand, Smith, & Fernandes, 2007; Leeson, Ciarrochi, & Heaven, 2008; Sirin, 2005), but also to SWB. Metanalytic results show a small positive relation between general mental ability and life satisfaction (Gonzalez-Mulé, Carter, & Mount, 2017) and a small to medium positive relation between socioeconomic status and life satisfaction (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2000). However, empirical studies indicate that SWB and academic achievement are associated even after controlling for these variables (e.g., Crede et al., 2015; Ng, Huebner, & Hills, 2015). When investigating the relationship between academic achievement, intellectual giftedness, and SWB in adults, Pollet and Schnell (2017) found that **being intellectually gifted was associated with lower well-being compared to high academic achievers (without intellectual giftedness)**. (Bucker et al., 2018).
* A brief intervention aimed at buttressing college freshmen’s sense of social belonging in school was tested in a randomized controlled trial. The intervention aimed to **lessen psychological perceptions of threat on campus by framing social adversity as common and transient**. It used subtle attitude-change strategies to lead participants to self-generate the intervention message. The intervention was expected to be particularly beneficial to African American students (N = 49), a stereotyped and socially marginalized group in academics, and less so to European-American students (N = 43). over the 3-year observation period the intervention raised African Americans’ grade-point average (GPA) relative to multiple control groups and halved the minority achievement gap. The intervention improved African Americans’ self-reported health and well-being and reduced their reported number of doctor visits 3 years postintervention. (Walton and Cohen, 2011)
* More recently, researchers (Freeman et al., 2011) have started to also focus on mental health among students in Canadian schools and underscored ways in which mental health can determine academic performance and social outcomes among students.

***Summary***

In sum, although different studies make different assumptions about the causal direction and the underlying mechanisms of the association between academic achievement and SWB, they agree that such an association should exist and that it should be positive. The strength of this association, however, is less clear and may in fact vary as a function of various moderator variables. In the largest study on this question to date, Kirkcaldy et al. (2004) examined data from 30 countries to determine correlates of SWB and academic achievement in youth at the national level. They found that countries with high performance in the PISA survey (academic achievement in terms of scientific, mathematical and reading literacy) also had the highest average SWB scores and the strongest association between SWB and reading achievement (r = 0.63) within the country. However, a limitation of the study is that economic or social indicators such as high income or small family size were not statistically controlled. Other studies failed to replicate the strong correlation found by Kirkcaldy and colleagues. For example, in a study of adolescents in the UK, Cheng and Furnham (2002) found a smaller but still statistically significant association between school grades and happiness (r = 0.25), PA (r = 0.29), and NA (r = \_0.29), controlling for age and gender (Bucker et al., 2018).

**Connection Between Elements**

Throughout much of the research, these four elements are commonly found in subjective well-being literature interacting with one another to accomplish a specific goal (Bronk, 2011; Lund et al., 2019; Moran, 2001; Wintre et al., 2011). These four elements work harmoniously, one leaning on the other to enhance the individual. For example, an individual who has **identified a purpose in life**, will typically go through difficult periods while working to accomplish that purpose. During these times, the individual must **build up their resiliency** to overcome the difficulties they face. **Strong relationships** with friends, family, and others can help mediate the negative feelings of the situation by bringing about new perspectives or resources to employ to overcome those difficulties (Tan & Tay, 2020). Even while the individual’s purpose may not be fulfilled by this point, each obstacle overcame is **an achievement**.

This literature review provides a foundation for Ohio University’s subjective well-being model and insights to support future research and the work of practitioners.

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