ENHANCING COLLEGE STUDENTS' WELLBEING THROUGH A WEB BASED INTERVENTION MODULE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

by

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Abstract

The central objective of this thesis was to design and test the effectiveness of a skills-based intervention for college students' that can be delivered using Internet. The thesis initially laid the foundations of the work by evaluating researches on positive psychology and internet based well-being promotion interventions. A literature review of researches in Indian context which can potentially be categorized as well-being promotion studies have been carried out to identify the skills. These skills were hypothesized to be related to college students' well-being and academic achievement. The skills were found to be practiced by the students' through certain techniques that helped them optimize to their fullest capacities. The whole study was a longitudinal one consisting of two phases. The first phase formed the preliminary phase where the selected constructs or skills related to well-being enhancement were tested through a simple web-based module. The program has been named *Student Well-being Enhancement Program* (acronym SWBEP*)* and was open to students of age group 18 to 30 years. The content of the step wise text based web-program was kept as simple as possible. Student participants recruited themselves to the self directed, text-oriented, semi-automated, online skill-based tasks and exercises. For the pilot study, student participants (n=212; Mean age=26.57 years) completed online version of standardized self report inventories twice. The constructs namely time management; stress management; purpose in life; emotional intelligence and self management were chosen initially for the pilot study. The inventories with the least number of items amongst contemporary measures such as time management and stress management subscales of Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP); Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence scale (WLEIS); Wong's Perceived Personal Meaning Scale-Criterion Measure (PPMS) and Brief Self-

Report Scale for Self Management (BSRS) were chosen for measuring skills. The recruited participants completed online tasks and exercises for each of the five constructs. The sessions also consisted of some general and specific online questions. Participants were supposed to provide response to these specially constructed questions. A pre-test–post-test research design was utilized for the preliminary trial and the final data thus collected was analysed by paired sample statistics. Results revealed that except purpose in life all the remaining sessions were significantly improved post intervention. In the second phase, the results obtained in preliminary study were further re-validated. A more sophisticated *Randomized Control Trial* (RCT) was utilized to check the efficacy of the incorporated skills. The participants (Effective n=177; Experimental n=75; Placebo n= 56 and Control n=46) were randomly directed to any of the three groups. The groups were either experimental, control or a placebo whereby the experimental group followed a similar orientation but with only four sessions. One of the sessions that didn't work was dropped and the order of the session was also shuffled for the experimental group. In the placebo group, there were four sessions comprising of exercises that were supposed to elevate well-being. Control group hasn't had any intervention to follow and the participants randomly allocated to control group only filled the online questionnaires at both the times. Results reveal that the skill enhancing intervention has potent effect of participants in experimental group while the other two groups remain unaffected. The congruent result in this phase revalidates the assumptions and choice of the constructs for enhancing college students' well being in an Indian milieu. In addition to this, attrition, adherence and other significant issues in both the phases have also been addressed.

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