Assessment of Teachers and Students Needs for the Implementation of the PERMA Model in Physical Education Curriculum

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Abstract:
In this study, we present the needs of teachers and students for the implementation of the PERMA model in the physical education curriculum. The aim of the study was to identify the PERMA model and the possibility of its application in physical education curricula. A research approach was utilized where the researchers provided an overview of the PERMA model and the needs of teachers and students for its implementation, and concluded the study by proposing some strategies that may help facilitate the application of the PERMA model in the physical education curriculum, along with various potential challenges that may hinder its implementation. The study shows that applying the PERMA model in the physical education curriculum will enhance student engagement and help them build positive relationships. Additionally, it integrates meaningful activities into the curriculum and promotes a sense of achievement and success among students, which will ultimately lead to a balance between enjoyment and seriousness in students' learning, ensuring they feel valued, accomplished, and a sense of belonging, resulting in the development of strong and influential personalities capable of facing future challenges.
Keywords: Teachers needs, Students needs, PERMA model, Physical education curriculum.

Introduction:

Abraham Maslow (1962) was an American psychologist who developed a hierarchical framework of needs to explain human motivation. He proposed a theory suggesting that people have a number of basic needs that must be met before moving up the hierarchy to fulfill more social and emotional needs and achieve self-actualization, the latter being a precursor to the PERMA model. Abraham Maslow is considered one of the early pioneers who provided a description of well-being (Kendra Cherry, 2023). He served as the president of the American Psychological Association in 1998, where one of his presidential initiatives was to promote positive psychology as a field of scientific study.

In 1998, Dr. Martin Seligman was the president of the American Psychological Association, and his most significant presidential initiatives were to shift the focus from mental illness and pathology to studying what is good and positive in life. From this point in time, research attention on positive psychology interventions and theories that help make life worth living increased, along with ways to define, measure, and cultivate well-being (Rusk and Waters, 2015).

In 2011, Martin Seligman introduced the PERMA model, which aims to achieve individual well-being and happiness through five key elements:

1. Positive emotions (P).
2. Engagement (E).
3. Relationships (R).
4. Meaning (M).
5. Achievement (A).

However, happiness and well-being are not limited to these five elements; they also encompass other important domains such as sleep, nutrition, and physical activity (Melissa Madeson, 2017).

There is a wealth of research and evidence confirming the beneficial effects of physical activity on mental health, addressing aspects such as self-esteem, depression, mood, and quality of life. (Biddle Stuart, 2016) In addition, physical activity enhances an individual's mental health and quality of life by reducing stress and anxiety, lowering the risk of depression, improving sleep quality, and providing numerous other benefits. Consequently, physical activity and exercise are associated with well-being and psychological happiness. (JesúsGranero-Jiménez et al, 2022)

The ways and forms in which community members engage in physical activity are diverse, having been adapted to suit various ages, interests, and fitness levels. Among the most important of these forms is school-based physical activity, which aims to develop students' motor, health, social, and emotional skills. Students are the primary target group across all educational stages (from kindergarten to secondary education), under the supervision of specialized teachers holding degrees in physical education and sports.

To enhance the well-being of students and teachers and improve quality of life, the researcher believes it is essential to implement the PERMA model in the physical education curriculum. This model is considered a flexible framework that can be used in various settings and circumstances, with many schools around the world beginning to adopt the PERMA model and embrace the principles of positive psychology.

Before the PERMA model can be effectively implemented in the physical education curriculum, several preliminary studies must be conducted to ensure the model's effectiveness and sustainability in the educational environment. Assessing the needs for implementing the PERMA model is the first step the researcher takes in this regard.

Based on the above, the current study is an attempt by the researcher to gain an overview of the PERMA model and identify the needs of both teachers and students for its application in the physical education curriculum. Additionally, it proposes some strategies for implementing the model and identifies potential challenges, aiming to generate a set of ideas and findings that assist relevant authorities in designing and developing physical education curricula to meet the needs of teachers and students for applying the PERMA model, thereby improving their levels of happiness and well-being.

Overview of the PERMA Model

The PERMA model was designed by American psychologist and educator Martin Seligman. It represents the five essential elements of well-being and happiness. Seligman recognized that individuals naturally seek happiness and continuously strive for well-being, which led him to develop this model. (CFI, year of publication unknown)

Below is a brief description of each of the core elements of the PERMA model:

1- Positive Emotion:

Positive emotions are more than just happiness and have an impact that goes beyond simply putting smiles on faces. Positive emotions include hope, interest, joy, pride, amusement, gratitude, love, and compassion. They are a key indicator of an individual's well-being and can be cultivated or learned to enhance well-being. (Fredrickson, 2001)

Positive emotions help teachers perform better at work and assist students in their studies. Increasing positive emotions enables individuals to improve and develop their cognitive, psychological, social, and physical aspects, which in turn leads to overall happiness and well-being. (Melissa Madeson, 2017)

Enhancing and increasing positive emotions can involve various methods such as positive thinking, spending time with friends and family, helping others, or engaging in physical exercise.

2- Engagement:

According to Seligman, engagement is the immersion in an activity by utilizing your skills and strengths to do everything you can for that activity. This aligns with the concept of flow, which involves a loss of self-awareness and complete absorption in the activity, meaning fully focusing on the present moment. (Melissa Madeson, 2017)

Engagement and the feeling of flow can be experienced in a variety of activities such as work, reading books, fixing a bike, participating in physical and sports activities, and other pursuits.

Engagement helps teachers and students focus on the present, in addition to fostering mindfulness and full awareness both physically and mentally, which leads to increased productivity at work.

3- Relationships:

Relationships in the PERMA model refer to all the connections an individual has, from relationships with colleagues and supervisors to those with friends and family. All these relationships have a direct impact on an individual's well-being. (Vivienne Dutton, 2022)

Building positive relationships with individuals and fostering cooperation and mutual support is essential for achieving well-being and success. The key to successful relationships is a balanced give-and-take among team members; relationships where giving or taking is one-sided are considered risky. Therefore, individuals must be aware of healthy and harmful relationships.

4- Meaning:

Martin Seligman defines a meaningful life as one in which an individual belongs or uses their strengths to serve something much greater than themselves or strives to achieve their personal and communal goals, thereby enhancing well-being, happiness, and building trust. (PPN, year of publication unknown)

For an individual's life to be meaningful, they must feel that the work or activities they engage in align with their traditions, values, and beliefs.

5- Achievement:

Martin Seligman defines achievement as mastery or competence, which is the feeling of success and pride resulting from accomplishing goals and reaching them, mastering endeavors, and gaining self-support, ultimately achieving well-being and happiness. (Melissa Madeson, 2017)

Individuals strive for achievement in a wide range of areas such as work or job, hobbies, sports, and other fields, as setting goals and working to achieve them makes individuals feel more confident, optimistic, and hopeful for the future, in addition to motivating them to work harder and inspiring others to achieve their goals.

The pursuit of enhancing well-being and achieving happiness in various domains requires a deep understanding of these five elements of the PERMA model.

Teachers' Needs for Implementing the PERMA Model:

1- Professional Training:

Darling-Hammond defined professional training for teachers as a continuous, long-term process that involves systematic and scheduled experiences to enhance growth and development in the profession. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined it as a set of activities that develop the teacher's skills, knowledge, experience, and other characteristics. (Guest user, 2024)

Education and teaching directorates should seek the assistance of professional trainers in the field of positive psychology and well-being to teach physical education teachers the knowledge, principles, and fundamentals related to the PERMA model. Additionally, it is important to focus on both scientific theoretical and practical applied aspects without neglecting one over the other, as this ensures the development of the necessary skills and competencies for teachers to implement the PERMA model.

2- Educational Resources:

Educational resources are represented by human, financial, and material resources that contribute to the educational process. These resources form the foundation upon which educational systems are created, function, and develop, subsequently contributing to the establishment of an education system. (Alaa Abdel-Baqi, 2023, 185) Implementing the PERMA model requires the careful design of educational resources that ensure the successful application of the model in physical education classes. Educational resources should be designed by following these steps:

- Define the objectives of the educational resources, which should be attainable and related to the curriculum.
- Educational resources should be suitable and accommodate the students' levels.
- Provide diverse content that guarantees achieving the objectives.

Educational resources are designed in the form of books and articles containing educational activities that include:
- Entertaining activities for students that promote various values such as interest, joy, and love.
- Activities that require student engagement and utilize all their skills and strengths.
- Group activities that enhance relationships and communication among students.
- Meaningful activities that enable students to discover the significance in what they learn.
- Activities that foster a sense of achievement, success, and pride as a result of achieving and reaching goals.
Finally, the content must be adapted and educational resources updated regularly to meet learning needs and requirements.

3- Administrative Support:
(Krishnan & Mary, 2012, 184) defined administrative support as a fundamental factor in assisting employees, teachers, and students by increasing attention to them, which contributes to achieving the institution's goals, implemented through specific administrative procedures.
Administrative support is a key element in enhancing the application of the PERMA model in physical education classes. It refers to the measures provided by school management to support the effective implementation of the PERMA model, which includes making several strategic decisions, providing human and material resources, motivating teachers and students, and monitoring and evaluating performance.
The importance of administrative support lies in:
- Planning by setting educational goals within the application of the PERMA model and working to achieve them.
- Distributing responsibilities among each member of the educational staff to ensure the successful implementation of the model.
- Providing educational resources that facilitate the implementation process of the model.
- Motivating teachers and students and making them more driven and committed to applying the model.
The administration should also work to provide training programs for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge on how to effectively apply the PERMA model, conduct performance evaluations for teachers and students, provide them with feedback, and make the necessary adjustments to enhance the execution of the PERMA model.

4- Program Development:
Developing programs in the school environment to implement the PERMA model requires several comprehensive and organized steps, which include:
- Collecting data and information through surveys and questionnaires for students and teachers, and utilizing available data to identify areas of well-being and happiness that need improvement.
- Careful and precise planning while considering time, available resources, and the roles of teachers and students during physical education classes.
- Training teachers on how to effectively implement the programs to ensure success.
- Setting clear goals for each element of the PERMA model and determining how to measure the achievement of these goals.
- Designing and innovating physical and sports activities that are suitable for each element of the PERMA model.
- Collecting data after program implementation to evaluate the program's impact on students' well-being and happiness.
- Evaluation, feedback, and program development over time to ensure ongoing benefits.

Student Needs

1- A Safe Learning Environment:
Creating a safe learning environment is a fundamental element for the successful implementation of the PERMA model in schools. The goal of a safe educational environment is to create a positive learning experience for all students, achieved by promoting the following elements:
- Enhancing students' sense of physical and psychological safety.

- Fostering positive relationships between students and teachers, as well as among the students themselves.
- Promoting behaviors of acceptance and respect.
- Encouraging students to express their opinions without fear of criticism.
- Enhancing collaboration among students.
- Supporting and encouraging activities that foster a sense of belonging.
To build this safe educational environment, the efforts of all members of the school community must come together.

2- Understanding the Model:
Understanding the PERMA model is one of the essential and vital elements for its application in the educational environment. This element focuses on helping students gain a deep understanding of the five components of the PERMA model. The importance of this element lies in helping students recognize what makes them feel happy, satisfied, and achieve well-being, as well as assisting them in making decisions that enhance their well-being, in addition to improving focus and overall academic performance in school.
Some steps that help students understand the PERMA model include:
- Providing materials and books that explain the model and its importance.
- Organizing workshops with practical examples that allow students to understand the model and how to apply it.
- Relying on educational activities aimed at enhancing students' understanding of the model.
- Allocating time in class to discuss real-life cases of students' experiences with each component of the PERMA model.
- Using assessment tools to understand the extent of students' comprehension of each component of the model and to track their progress, supported by feedback.

3- Emotional Support:
Kob defined it as a set of information that the individual believes they have someone who cares for, takes care of, loves, and values them, as well as their belonging to a community that provides mutual responsibility. (Abd Al-Salam, 2005, 9) Emotional support in the context of education is considered one of the key elements to enhance student well-being. It aims to develop relationships and connections between students and teachers, contributing to the creation of a positive learning environment. It also helps alleviate student pressure and overcome stress and anxiety, in addition to increasing the ability to take initiative and participate in educational activities, thus contributing to improving students' academic performance. Emotional support for students may take the form of:
- Active listening and responses that express empathy and understanding.
- Encouraging and motivating students by offering them encouraging words, thereby enhancing their self-confidence.
- Assisting students in making decisions related to their academic lives by providing advice and guidance.
- Providing a comfortable environment for students to express their feelings and thoughts.

4- Goal Setting:
If a student wants to achieve the best benefits from engaging in physical and sports activities, they must recognize the goal they aim to achieve. Indeed, this student cannot make beneficial decisions regarding physical and sports activities without clear directions that outline the purpose of the practice. (Osama, 2007, 230) Goals are clear and achievable expectations regarding what students wish to attain. They are divided into two main types: short-term goals and long-term goals, which contribute to achieving students' well-being and happiness. The goal-setting process has clear importance and impact on students, as it helps in:
- Motivating students and increasing their drive.
- Enhancing students' focus and discipline while reducing distractions.
- Preparing a clear action plan that students can follow.
- Determining appropriate learning strategies to achieve these goals.
- Boosting students' self-confidence.

- Providing students with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.
- Improving students' academic performance and results.
In order to define students' goals and make them clear and achievable, one should rely on the SMART goals model.
The following are the criteria for setting SMART goals: (Simon Bell, year of publication unknown)
- Specific (S): The student's goal must be clear and specific.
- Measurable (M): There should be a way to determine the student's progress toward the goal.
- Achievable (A): The goal must be attainable by the student and realistic.
- Relevant (R): The goal should be important to the student and align with their values and future plans.
- Time-bound (T): There must be a specific timeframe for achieving the goal.

Proposed strategies for implementing the PERMA model in physical education and sports curriculum:
A number of researchers have developed their own theoretical models of well-being and happiness, as well as methods for measuring and applying them. The subjective well-being (SWB) model by Diener (1984) is considered the foundational model of well-being, where researchers have attempted to build new models of well-being based on the SWB model. Among the most important of these models are the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) model by Ryff (1989) and the PERMA model by Seligman (2011) within the framework of the theory of flourishing (Bashan &Barzwan, 2020, 169-170).
Human well-being is linked to providing suitable conditions that enable individuals to flourish, achieved through the application of effective strategies as follows:

1. Enhancing activities and programs that promote feelings of enjoyment by:
  - Organizing recreational events such as parties, school trips, and sports competitions.
  - Organizing activities like visual and musical arts that help enhance students' creative side.
  - Relying on interactive educational games that combine learning with fun.

2. Promoting engagement and relationships among students:
  - Organizing students into workgroups to develop their teamwork skills and enhance cooperation.
  - Establishing school clubs for students based on their interests in various hobbies, allowing for improved interaction among them.
  - Organizing social events to strengthen relationships between students.

3- Integrating meaningful content and activities into the curriculum by:
- Enhancing student involvement in volunteer activities that address community needs, which gives them a sense of responsibility and belonging.
- Incorporating topics and undertaking projects related to the community or global challenges within the curricula, thereby strengthening their critical thinking capabilities and problem-solving skills.
- Promoting cultural experiences that help introduce students to the diversity of cultures and their histories.

4- Encouraging students to achieve accomplishments and recognizing them:
- Relying on a rewards system by establishing a program to acknowledge effort and achievement, such as organizing trips for outstanding students and awarding them monthly prizes, certificates, or public praise.
- Working on setting and defining individual goals for each student based on their abilities and capacities, along with providing support, guidance, and assistance in creating plans to achieve these goals.
- Sharing previous success stories with students and positive role models from within the school or community to enhance students' motivation for achievement.

Potential challenges to implementing the PERMA model in physical education and sports curricula:
- Some educational systems are characterized by rigidity in curricula and programs, making it difficult to integrate emotional and social growth aspects into these curricula.
- The family's living standards can affect students' access to well-being through physical and sports activities.

- There is a lack of adequate training and preparation for teachers to apply the PERMA model in classrooms.
- There is a possibility of facing social and cultural resistance to the idea of integrating well-being and happiness into the physical education and sports curriculum.
- The pressure from the examination system does not help focus on activities that enhance psychological well-being.
- The varying psychological and social needs of students can be significantly different, making it challenging to meet them within a unified model.
- Some schools and educational institutions lack the basic resources to conduct physical and sports activity sessions, such as sports facilities or equipment and materials.
- Large class sizes hinder the ability to provide effective individual support to students.
- There is a noticeable lack of time allocated for extracurricular activities such as physical and sports activities.

Conclusion:
The physical education and sports curriculum is considered an essential part of the educational system in general, as it contributes to the development of physical fitness and mental health for students, and enhances the spirit of cooperation and positive competition among them through the practice of various exercises and sports activities.

Enhancing student well-being requires a comprehensive approach that integrates multiple strategies, represented in this study by the PERMA model, which aims to stimulate feelings of enjoyment and engagement, build relationships, incorporate meaningful activities, and encourage achievements.

Teachers and those responsible for the educational curriculum must face challenges and contribute to meeting the needs of the PERMA model by creating an environment that includes directed sports activities, thereby enhancing student engagement and helping them build positive relationships. Meaningful activities can also be integrated into the curriculum by organizing sports competitions aimed at serving the community and promoting human values. Through a system of rewards and continuous recognition, teachers can enhance students' feelings of accomplishment and success.

In conclusion, creating a supportive and motivating school environment by applying the PERMA model in the physical education and sports curriculum will lead to achieving a balance between enjoyment and seriousness in students' learning, ensuring they feel valued, accomplished, and a sense of belonging, which will contribute to the formation of strong and influential personalities capable of facing future challenges.

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