

# SAGE UNIVERSITY INDORE



SESSION-2024-25.

INSTITUTE- ARTS & HUMANITIES.

COURSE- B.A. HONS. PSYCHOLOGY.

SEMESTER- VI.

MAJOR PROJECT ON:

“ROLE OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN ENHANCING  
SOCIAL WELL-BEING”

Major project submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of B.A. Hons.  
PSYCHOLOGY.

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# CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that “**Priyanshi Kourav**” Student of BA Hons. Psychology 6<sup>th</sup> Semester. From the Institute of ‘Arts and Humanities’ SAGE UNIVERSITY INDORE M.P, has successfully completed The Major Project on entitled as “**Role of Positive Psychology in Enhancing Social Well-Being**” Under the guidance of “**Dr. Deepak Jahagirdar**” during the course of her study and has submitted the project report towards the partial fulfilment of the degree of B.A. Hons. PSYCHOLOGY from **SAGE University Indore**.

Internal Signature.

External Signature.

Head of Department Signature.

# DECLARATION

I **Priyanshi Kourav** here by declare that the major project entitled is “**Role of Positive Psychology in Enhancing Social Well-Being**” is my own work conducted under the guidance of **Dr. Deepak Jahagirdar**, Institute of Arts & Humanities, SAGE University, Indore (MP).

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**Signature of Student**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to my project guide “**Dr. Deepak Jahagirdar**”, Institute of Arts & Humanities, SAGE University Indore, for instilling confidence in me to carry out this research study and extending able guidance and encouragement from time to time without which I would not have been able to undertake and complete this project.

I would also like to thank our Head of the Department “**Dr. Padmashri Sharma**” for her kind cooperation and support.

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# ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the emergence of positive psychology has transformed the landscape of psychological research and practice by shifting the focus from pathology and mental illness to human strengths, virtues, and flourishing. As a science of well-being, positive psychology explores how individuals and communities can cultivate positive emotions, meaningful relationships, and purposeful lives. This paradigm has profound implications not just for personal happiness but also for social well-being—a multidimensional construct that encompasses social integration, contribution, acceptance, coherence, and actualization within a community or society. This presentation delves into the dynamic interplay between positive psychology and social well-being, demonstrating how the cultivation of positive emotions, character strengths, and psychological resources can lead to stronger, more cohesive, and compassionate societies.

The exploration begins with a detailed understanding of positive psychology, tracing its evolution from a reactive discipline focused on mental disorders to a proactive science grounded in the promotion of human potential. Key contributors such as Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and Barbara Fredrickson have laid the groundwork for evidence-based interventions that foster traits like gratitude, optimism, resilience, empathy, and mindfulness. These traits not only enhance individual well-being but also facilitate prosocial behaviors such as kindness, cooperation, and forgiveness—traits essential for healthy social functioning. The presentation then examines the VIA (Values in

Action) Classification of Strengths and Virtues, offering a structured framework to understand how morally grounded personal attributes translate into socially beneficial actions.

At the heart of the discourse lies an investigation of psychological theories such as Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, which explains how positive

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emotions expand cognitive and behavioral repertoires, leading to the development of enduring personal and social resources. Real-life examples and case studies from Indian communities and educational institutions are used to illustrate how positive psychology-based interventions—such as gratitude journaling, strength-based education, and empathy training—can promote social integration, reduce conflict, and foster inclusive environments. Additionally, the presentation considers the conceptual linkages between personal virtues and societal well-being, emphasizing how individual flourishing contributes to the collective good.

Ultimately, the presentation argues that positive psychology offers a vital framework for promoting social well-being in a rapidly changing, often fragmented world. By focusing on what makes life worth living and how humans can connect meaningfully, it provides tools not only to heal but also to elevate society. As India and the world face rising mental health challenges, polarization, and social disconnection, this science offers hopeful, practical, and evidence based pathways toward building more resilient, empathetic, and flourishing communities.

# CHAPTER- I

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The concept of positive psychology emerged as a response to the traditional focus of psychology on pathology, dysfunction, and mental illness. For much of the 20th century, mainstream psychology concentrated on diagnosing and treating psychological disorders, largely neglecting the study of what makes life meaningful, fulfilling, and socially harmonious. Although pioneers like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers laid early foundations by emphasizing self actualization and human potential, it wasn't until the late 1990s that positive psychology was formally introduced as a scientific field. The movement gained traction when Dr. Martin Seligman, during his presidency of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998, called for a reorientation of psychological research to include the study of human strengths, virtues, and optimal functioning.

At its core, positive psychology seeks to understand and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive. It emphasizes the study of positive emotions, character strengths, meaningful relationships, resilience, hope,



gratitude, and flourishing. While its initial focus was primarily on individual well-being, scholars and practitioners soon recognized that these principles have profound implications for the broader social fabric. The real turning point came with the recognition that human flourishing is not an isolated, internal experience but one that is deeply interconnected with social contexts. An individual's well-being is often shaped by their relationships, community support, social integration, and sense of belonging—all of which fall under the umbrella of social well-being. Social well-being, as defined by psychologist Corey Keyes, encompasses several dimensions: social integration (feeling part of a community), social contribution (feeling useful and valued), social

coherence (understanding the social world), social acceptance (positive attitude toward others), and social actualization (believing in the potential of society). These elements are essential for a healthy, functioning society when people experience social trust, inclusion, empathy, and shared meaning, they not only thrive individually but also contribute to communal harmony and development.

The relevance of positive psychology in enhancing social well-being becomes especially significant in today's world, marked by rising mental health challenges, social fragmentation, inequality, and cultural disconnection. Rapid urbanization, globalization, digital dependence, and socio-political polarization have contributed to a sense of isolation, loss of meaning, and interpersonal distrust. In such a context, positive psychology offers a proactive and holistic approach—not merely treating mental illness but actively building strengths and fostering environments that support emotional connection, mutual respect, and collective growth.

Evidence-based interventions rooted in positive psychology—such as strengths-based education, gratitude practices, empathy training, and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)—have shown great promise in enhancing social cohesion. These practices help individuals develop emotional intelligence, empathy, and compassion, which naturally translate into more harmonious

relationships and cooperative behaviors. For example, schools that integrate positive psychology into their curricula often witness improvements in peer relationships, reduced bullying, and increased emotional regulation among students. Similarly, community programs that promote civic strengths like fairness, teamwork, and leadership contribute to stronger, more resilient communities.

In the Indian context, these ideas are especially powerful. Traditional Indian philosophies have long emphasized collective harmony, compassion, and interconnectedness (e.g., the concepts of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – the world is one family, and Seva – selfless service). Integrating modern positive psychology with such cultural values can create locally relevant, spiritually aligned, and socially transformative models of well-being.

In summary, the background of this topic highlights how positive psychology evolved from a movement focused on individual potential into a comprehensive science that supports social wellness and community flourishing. By fostering positive emotions, character strengths, and ethical behaviour, positive psychology not only uplifts individuals but also lays the foundation for socially connected, morally strong, and psychologically resilient societies.

# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology is a scientific discipline within psychology that focuses on understanding and promoting the aspects of human life that lead to happiness, fulfilment, and optimal functioning. Emerging in the late 20th century as a response to the traditional emphasis on mental illness and pathology, positive psychology aims to shift the lens of psychological inquiry from what is wrong with people to what is right. It does not ignore psychological disorders or suffering but rather complements traditional psychology by exploring how people can lead more meaningful, engaged, and satisfying lives. This field investigates a wide range of positive human experiences and traits, such as hope, resilience, joy, gratitude, compassion, love, creativity, and personal strengths.

The roots of positive psychology can be traced to humanistic psychology, which emphasized individual potential and the innate drive toward self-actualization. However, it was formally introduced as a distinct scientific movement by Dr. Martin Seligman in 1998 during his presidency of the American Psychological

Association. Seligman argued that psychology had become overly fixated on pathology and needed to balance its focus by studying well-being and flourishing. Since then, the field has grown rapidly, influencing diverse domains such as education, healthcare, business, public policy, and community development. At the heart of positive psychology lies the belief that well-being is not merely the absence of illness but the presence of positive conditions that allow individuals

and communities to thrive. One of the foundational models in this field is the PERMA model, developed by Seligman, which identifies five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Positive psychology also emphasizes that these elements can be cultivated through intentional activities, mindset shifts, and supportive environments. By encouraging individuals to discover and use their personal strengths, nurture positive relationships, and find purpose in their lives, positive psychology plays a transformative role in enhancing both personal and social well-being.

### **What is Psychology?**

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. It seeks to understand how individuals think, feel, act, and interact with one another and with their environment. This field covers a wide range of topics including perception, cognition, emotion, motivation, personality, mental health, and social interactions. Various branches of psychology such as cognitive, behavioral, developmental, social, clinical, and biopsychology contribute to a comprehensive understanding of human experience. Psychology aims not only to study behavior but also to apply this knowledge in improving mental health, enhancing learning, and solving real-world problems.

## **Historical Evolution of Psychology**

Psychology has its roots in ancient philosophy, with thinkers like Plato and Aristotle contemplating the nature of the human mind. However, it formally emerged as a scientific discipline in 1879 when Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany. Early approaches such as introspection gave way to behaviorism, which emphasized observable behavior. Later, humanistic psychology, led by figures like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, brought attention to self-actualization and the human potential for growth. Today, psychology integrates insights from neuroscience, technology, and even artificial intelligence to understand complex behaviors and mental processes.

## **Introduction to Positive Psychology**

Positive psychology is a relatively recent branch of psychology that focuses on the scientific study of human strengths, virtues, and the factors that contribute to a fulfilling and meaningful life. Unlike traditional psychology, which often centers on diagnosing and treating mental illness, positive psychology emphasizes what makes life worth living. It explores topics such as happiness, gratitude, resilience, optimism, empathy, and the pursuit of meaning. Martin Seligman, considered the founder of this field, introduced the PERMA model, which outlines five core elements of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

## **The Need for Positive Psychology**

The emergence of positive psychology was driven by the realization that psychology had become heavily focused on what was wrong with people mental disorders, trauma, and dysfunction—while largely neglecting what was right. Despite medical advancements, rates of depression and anxiety continued to rise globally. There was a growing need for a more balanced approach that not only treated illness but also promoted well-being. Positive psychology addresses this gap by asking essential questions such as: What helps people thrive? How can individuals and communities build resilience?

And how can happiness be measured and cultivated in daily life?

### **Core Principles of Positive Psychology**

Positive psychology is grounded in several key principles. First, it emphasizes the importance of focusing on individual strengths rather than just fixing weaknesses. It promotes the concept of human flourishing, not only at the individual level but also within families, communities, and organizations. The field relies on rigorous scientific research to develop and validate its interventions. It also adopts a preventive mindset, aiming to build psychological resilience before problems arise. Most importantly, it encourages the practical application of positive practices in everyday settings—at school, at work, in relationships, and even in policymaking—to enhance overall well-being.

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### **Key Figures in Positive Psychology**

The development of positive psychology as a recognized scientific field is largely credited to a handful of visionary psychologists whose contributions have shaped its theories, practices, and global impact. Foremost among them is **Dr. Martin**

**E.P. Seligman**, often referred to as the "father of positive psychology." A former president of the **American Psychological Association (APA)**, Seligman formally introduced positive psychology as a new focus for the discipline in 1998. Prior to this, Seligman was known for his work on learned helplessness, a concept tied to depression. However, his shift toward studying human flourishing led to groundbreaking contributions such as the **PERMA model**, which outlines five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. His books, including *Authentic Happiness*, *Flourish*, and *Learned Optimism*, have reached both academic and general audiences, deeply influencing how well-being is understood and applied in various domains.

Another foundational figure is **Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**, who is best known for his research on the concept of “**flow**.” Flow refers to a psychological state of deep immersion, focus, and enjoyment that people experience when engaged in challenging yet rewarding activities. Csikszentmihalyi’s work demonstrated that true happiness often comes not from passive pleasures, but from active engagement and purposeful living. His studies on intrinsic motivation, creativity, and optimal experience have been widely integrated into education, organizational behavior, and therapeutic practices.

**Dr. Christopher Peterson** also played a central role in shaping the field. He coauthored the *Character Strengths and Virtues* handbook with Seligman, which is considered a foundational text of positive psychology. This work introduced the **VIA (Values in Action) Classification of Strengths**, offering a framework for identifying and cultivating 24 universal character strengths such as gratitude, courage, kindness, and integrity. Peterson’s famous quote— “Other people

matter”—underscores the emphasis positive psychology places on social connection and community well-being.

**Dr. Barbara Fredrickson** has significantly contributed to the understanding of positive emotions. Her “**Broaden-and-Build Theory**” posits that positive emotions such as joy, love, and hope expand individuals’ thought-action repertoires, helping them build lasting personal resources such as resilience,

relationships, and coping skills. Her research has shown that cultivating positive emotions can have measurable impacts on physical health, psychological growth, and social bonds

Other notable figures include **Ed Diener**, known as “**Dr. Happiness**,” for his extensive research on subjective well-being and life satisfaction, and Sonja Lyubomirsky, who studies the science of happiness and has developed numerous practical strategies for increasing it. Collectively, these pioneers have not only defined the conceptual foundations of positive psychology but also brought empirical rigor to the study of well-being. Their work continues to inspire ongoing research and practical applications that aim to create healthier, more fulfilling, and socially connected lives around the world.

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL WELL-BEING



## ○ **Definition and Dimensions of Social Well-being**

Social well-being refers to the extent to which individuals feel connected, valued, and supported within their social environments and broader communities. It encompasses the quality of one's relationships and the sense of belonging and contribution to society. While psychological well-being focuses on personal mental health and happiness, social well-being extends beyond the individual to include interpersonal harmony, collective welfare, and functional social systems. It captures the idea that human flourishing is not an isolated experience but deeply rooted in meaningful social interactions and a supportive, inclusive community.

The concept was formalized by Corey Keyes, a prominent sociologist and psychologist, who proposed that social well-being is a core component of overall mental health, along with emotional and psychological well-being. According to Keyes, a person cannot be considered mentally healthy if they are not socially well. His work identified five core dimensions of social well-being, each offering a unique lens through which social functioning and connectedness can be assessed and improved:

### **1. Social Integration**

**Definition:** Social integration refers to the extent to which individuals feel connected to others in their community or society. It reflects a sense of belonging, inclusion, and identification with a social group or collective.

**Explanation:** A person who is socially integrated feels like an important part of their social networks—be it family, neighbourhood, school, workplace, or

broader society. They see themselves as being meaningfully connected with others and are actively involved in communal or social activities. Social integration is crucial for mental and emotional stability, as it reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness.

**Example:** A college student who joins a cultural club and regularly participates in team events, shares experiences with peers, and builds supportive friendships experiences high social integration. Similarly, an elderly person who attends local senior community programs and engages in group activities feels more socially integrated and valued.

## **2. Social Acceptance**

**Definition:** Social acceptance is the degree to which an individual has a positive attitude toward others, including tolerance, understanding, and trust. It involves believing that people are generally good, trustworthy, and capable of growth.

**Explanation:** This component reflects how much we feel that others are worth engaging with and accepting, despite their flaws or differences. Social acceptance is vital for maintaining empathy, reducing prejudice, and building inclusive communities. People with high social acceptance are less judgmental and more open to diversity and dialogue.

**Example:** In a multicultural classroom, a student who befriends and supports peers from different religious or ethnic backgrounds—even if their customs or beliefs differ—demonstrates social acceptance. Another example is an organization that promotes inclusive hiring, welcoming people from various genders, castes, or abilities, fostering a culture of acceptance and respect.

### **3. Social Contribution**

**Definition:** Social contribution is the belief that one's actions are useful and valuable to society. It represents a sense of meaning derived from making a positive impact on the lives of others or the community.

**Explanation:** People with a strong sense of social contribution feel that their presence and efforts matter. This component strengthens self-worth and encourages active citizenship and community involvement. It also increases motivation and personal satisfaction.

**Example:** A young adult volunteering for an NGO that works for underprivileged children feels a sense of social contribution by offering time and skills for a larger cause. Similarly, a homemaker who helps organize neighbourhood cleanliness drives or food donation camps experiences fulfilment from contributing to community welfare.

### **4. Social Coherence**

**Definition:** Social coherence is the perception that the social world is understandable, logical, and predictable. It involves the ability to make sense of societal events, structures, and patterns.

**Explanation:** Individuals high in social coherence feel that they can comprehend the way society functions—even with its complexities and changes. This understanding reduces confusion and anxiety and promotes confidence in one's ability to navigate the social environment.

**Example:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, a person who understood the rationale behind lockdowns, health protocols, and vaccination campaigns—rather than feeling lost or sceptical—demonstrated social coherence. Similarly, a student learning about how the legal or political systems work gains clarity and trust in societal operations.

## **5. Social Actualization**

**Definition:** Social actualization is the belief that society has the potential to evolve positively, and that people can collectively contribute to this improvement. It reflects hope, faith, and optimism about the social future.

**Explanation:** Individuals who score high on social actualization believe in the capacity of society to progress. They are likely to be proactive, socially conscious, and willing to participate in movements for change. It also involves seeing oneself as a part of that transformation process.

**Example:** A young climate activist who believes that collective action can combat global warming and improve the future environment for all is demonstrating high social actualization. In the Indian context, people who

participate in initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission or digital literacy programs with the belief that these efforts will lead to a better society exemplify this trait.

Together, these components paint a holistic picture of social well-being—not just as the absence of social conflict or isolation, but as a dynamic, positive state where individuals feel connected, accepted, valued, and hopeful about the social world. By understanding and nurturing these dimensions, positive psychology provides valuable tools to build more inclusive, compassionate, and flourishing societies.



# THE LINK BETWEEN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

## **1. Positive Emotions Foster Social Bonds**

Positive psychology emphasizes emotions like gratitude, joy, and love—these emotions naturally promote prosocial behavior, deepen relationships, and encourage emotional closeness, all of which are essential for social well-being.

## **2. Character Strengths Support Social Harmony**

Traits like kindness, fairness, humility, and forgiveness—studied in positive psychology—help people navigate social interactions more constructively. These strengths promote social acceptance and interpersonal trust, key components of social well-being.

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## **3. Meaning and Purpose Connect Individual and Society**

Positive psychology explores the importance of finding meaning and purpose in life. When individuals feel their lives contribute to something greater than themselves, they also feel socially valuable, thus enhancing social contribution and actualization.

#### **4. Well-being is Both Individual and Collective**

Positive psychology is expanding from personal well-being to collective or communal well-being. A flourishing individual often contributes to a flourishing community, showing how personal and social well-being are intertwined.

#### **5. Social Support Enhances Resilience**

One of the key findings in both fields is that strong social connections buffer stress, reduce mental health issues, and build psychological resilience. Positive psychology strengthens these networks through practices like empathy and active constructive responding.

#### **6. Community-Based Interventions Promote Social Growth**

Positive psychology is used in schools, workplaces, and communities to foster environments that support emotional and social health. Programs like strengths-based education or workplace well-being initiatives directly contribute to social coherence and integration.

#### **7. Mutual Feedback Loop**

Higher personal well-being (cultivated through positive psychology) leads to more prosocial behavior, which strengthens social ties and trust. In turn, better social relationships enhance personal happiness—creating a positive feedback loop between individual and society.

## KEY CONSTRUCT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



**1. Gratitude** - Gratitude is the emotional recognition and appreciation of the positive aspects of life—whether they are people, experiences, or circumstances. In positive psychology, gratitude is not just a fleeting emotion but a sustained attitude and practice. It involves acknowledging the gifts, kindness, and support we receive from others and recognizing that much of our well-being is interconnected with the actions of those around us. Studies have shown that regularly practicing gratitude—through journaling, prayer, or personal reflection—can increase happiness, improve physical health, enhance sleep, and lower symptoms of depression. Gratitude also has a strong social dimension: when people express thankfulness, it deepens relationships, promotes reciprocity, and builds trust. In social settings, gratitude fosters a culture of appreciation and can significantly contribute to community harmony and shared well-being.

**2. Optimism** - Optimism is a positive mental attitude that involves expecting good things to happen and believing that the future will be favorable. It is not about ignoring problems or being unrealistically cheerful, but about

approaching life with hope, confidence, and the belief that one can influence outcomes through effort and resilience. Optimists interpret negative events as temporary and external, while seeing positive events as permanent and personal. Research in positive psychology has linked optimism to better health outcomes, greater life satisfaction, reduced stress, and higher academic and professional success. Optimistic individuals are also more likely to engage in constructive problemsolving and help others, making them valuable contributors to socially resilient communities. Moreover, optimism fuels collective belief in progress, supporting social well-being through shared visions of a better future.

**3. Resilience** - Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, trauma, or stress while maintaining mental well-being and even growing stronger as a result. It involves emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, hope, social support, and coping strategies. In positive psychology, resilience is considered a skill that can be learned and cultivated, not just an inborn trait. Techniques such as cognitive reframing, goal setting, self-compassion, and positive relationships are all used to build resilience. On a broader level, resilient individuals contribute to resilient societies—ones that can withstand and recover from crises, such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or social conflict. Communities rich in resilience tend to display greater solidarity, empathy, and collective action, making resilience a crucial construct for both personal and social well-being.

**4. Empathy** - Empathy is the capacity to understand and share the emotions of others. It is foundational to human connection and social functioning. Positive psychology recognizes empathy not just as a feeling but as a tool for building compassionate societies. Empathy has two dimensions: cognitive empathy (understanding another's perspective) and emotional empathy (feeling what another feels). People who are empathetic are more likely to engage in helping behaviors, resolve conflicts peacefully, and create inclusive and supportive environments. Empathy also underpins social acceptance, cooperation, and ethical behavior, all of which are essential for a well-functioning society. Teaching and promoting empathy—especially in children, leaders, and healthcare professionals—leads to deeper connections and stronger communities.

**4. Mindfulness** - Mindfulness is the practice of paying purposeful attention to the present moment, with acceptance and without judgment. Rooted in Eastern contemplative traditions and adapted into modern psychological practices, mindfulness helps individuals cultivate self-awareness, emotional regulation, and clarity of thought. In positive psychology, mindfulness is associated with reduced anxiety and depression, greater self-compassion, and improved interpersonal relationships. Practicing mindfulness allows people to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively, especially in emotionally charged or stressful social situations. It also fosters qualities like patience, empathy, and gratitude, thereby enhancing both personal peace and social harmony. Mindfulness-based interventions in schools, workplaces, and communities have shown promising outcomes for enhancing collective mental health and cooperation.

**5. Flow (Optimal Experience)** - Flow is a state of deep immersion and focused engagement in an activity, where time seems to disappear, and the individual loses self-consciousness while performing at their best. This concept, introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, occurs when there is a perfect balance between a person's skills and the challenge at hand. Flow states often happen during creative work, sports, learning, or any meaningful task. Experiencing flow leads to high intrinsic motivation, personal fulfilment, and mastery, which in turn promotes long-term happiness and mental well-being. From a social perspective, shared flow experiences—like group projects, music ensembles, or team sports—can foster social cohesion, cooperation, and a sense of unity. In this way, flow is not only a tool for individual excellence but also for social connectedness and collective engagement.

These six constructs are foundational to the science of flourishing. Each contributes uniquely to personal development and, when nurtured collectively, can transform families, organizations, and societies into more compassionate, resilient, and thriving communities.

# CHAPTER- II

## LITERATURE REVIEW

# LITERATURE RIVIEW

A literature review is an extensive description of research or studies on a topic previously held. It looks over books, scholarly articles, and other source related to a specify are of research. The literature review should summarize, enumerate, objectively evaluate, describe and clearly overview the research or studies.

A literature review should give a conceptual foundation for the research and should help the author direct the nature of the research. It confesses the work or projects of previous researches and satisfies the reader that the author's work has been well ratified.

The purpose of the writing the literature review is to transmit to the reader what information, idea and knowledge have been entrenched on a topic, and convey about their concept, such as, the research issue or problem, objective; author is discussing, or author's argumentative thesis.

## ○ Foundation Theories And Research

☞ **Barbara Fredrickson – Broaden-and-Build Theory (2001) ;**

☞ Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions is a foundational model in positive psychology that explains how experiencing positive emotions can lead to long-term benefits in psychological and social well-being. According to the theory, emotions like joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love serve to broaden a person's awareness and encourage novel, varied, and exploratory thoughts and actions. Over time, this broadened behavioral repertoire helps build enduring personal resources ranging from physical and intellectual to social and psychological. For instance, a person who feels joy might be more likely to play and interact socially, forming new relationships that offer social support. Fredrickson's empirical research showed that positive emotions are linked with increased resilience, better coping mechanisms, and stronger social bonds. Her studies found that people who experience more positive emotions are more likely to form and maintain relationships, which directly contributes to social well-being.(Fredrickson, 2001).

☞ **Ed Diener & Martin Seligman – Very Happy People Study (2002) :**

☞ In their landmark study, Ed Diener and Martin Seligman investigated what distinguished the happiest 10% of college students from their peers. They found that the key variable wasn't wealth, academic success, or physical health—it was strong and meaningful social relationships. These highly happy individuals had

rich and satisfying interpersonal lives, including close relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners. The study provided compelling evidence that social ties are a major predictor of subjective well-being. Importantly, the researchers concluded that causation might flow both ways: social relationships contribute to happiness, and happier people are better at forming relationships. This finding strongly supports the positive psychology perspective that fostering social

connectedness is a key pathway to enhancing individual and collective well-being. (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

☞ **Michael F. Steger – Meaning, Purpose, and Social Engagement (2013) ;**

- ☞ Michael Steger's work emphasizes the importance of meaning and purpose in life as core elements of well-being. In his studies, he showed that individuals who view their lives as meaningful are more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction, social connection, and psychological resilience. One of his pivotal contributions was the development of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, which helped empirically validate how meaning relates to well-being. Steger found that people with a strong sense of purpose are more socially engaged, tend to volunteer more, and maintain stronger interpersonal bonds. This connection between meaning and social well-being suggests that when people find purpose—whether through work, relationships, or community—they are more likely to form positive social relationships and contribute to society. (Steger, 2013).

## ○ Empirical Studies And Interventions

☞ **Jackman & Sisson – Positive Psychology and Doctoral Students (2022) ;**

- ☞ In their 2022 qualitative study, Jackman and Sisson explored how positive psychology frameworks could be applied to support the mental health of doctoral



students—a group at high risk for stress and burnout. They interviewed PhD candidates across disciplines and identified that positive supervisor-student relationships, institutional support, and the cultivation of self-efficacy were key contributors to psychological wellbeing. The presence of positive emotions and meaning making significantly boosted students' sense of belonging and motivation. The study underscores the importance of social and emotional support structures within academic environments, proposing that positive psychology tools like appreciative inquiry, mindfulness, and strength-based feedback can improve not just individual performance but overall academic community well-being. (Jackman & Sisson, 2022).

☞ **Mari Laakso et al. – Positive Psychology Interventions in Students (2024);**

☞ Mari Laakso and her team conducted a longitudinal study on the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions among students, showing how structured practices like gratitude journaling, kindness exercises, and strengths-based activities can significantly improve psychological and social well-being. Over a 10-week period, students who engaged in these interventions reported significant decreases in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Biomarkers like cortisol (a

stress hormone) also decreased, indicating physiological improvement. More notably, students reported enhanced feelings of hope, social connection, and engagement in their community. The study provides strong support for implementing positive psychology-based mental health strategies in educational settings, highlighting how such practices can shape not only individual growth but also foster collective well-being. (Laakso et al., 2024).

### ☞ **Sanghani & Arya – High School Students and Positive Psychology (2016);**

- ☞ Jayashree Sanghani and S. Arya conducted a critical literature review to evaluate the effects of positive psychology interventions (PPIs) on high school students. They examined multiple studies involving techniques such as goal setting, gratitude exercises, and self-reflection practices. The findings showed that these PPIs significantly increased subjective well-being, academic performance, and social relationships among adolescents. One key insight was the importance of school-based interventions: when teachers incorporated positive psychology principles into their curriculum, students not only felt better emotionally but also treated peers more empathetically and cooperatively. The study emphasized that adolescence is a critical developmental period where fostering positive emotions and social values can have long-term benefits on students' personal and interpersonal growth. (Sanghani & Arya, 2016).

## ○ **Real Life Applications And Observations**

### ☞ **World Happiness Report – Benevolence Bump (2024) ;**

- ☞ The 2024 World Happiness Report documented a fascinating phenomenon referred to as the “benevolence bump,” where levels of prosocial behavior like volunteering, charitable giving, and helping strangers significantly increased during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike previous years, these rates remained consistently high

even into 2023–2024, indicating a potential cultural shift toward greater empathy and social cohesion. The report connected these behaviors with higher national well-being scores, showing a correlation between altruism and happiness. Countries with more citizens engaging in acts of kindness also reported higher levels of trust, social support, and life satisfaction. This real-world example provides robust evidence that prosocial behaviors—rooted in positive psychology principles—can elevate both individual and collective social well-being. (World Happiness Report, 2024).

#### ☞ **University of Bristol – Happiness Hacks Among Undergraduates (2024);**

- ☞ Researchers at the University of Bristol conducted an intervention-based study where undergraduate students were introduced to simple “happiness hacks” based on positive psychology. These included daily gratitude, performing acts of kindness, physical activity, and mindfulness practices. The students practiced these habits over a four week period, and the results were promising emotional well-being improved by 10–15%, and many students reported feeling more connected

to their peers and communities. More than half continued the habits after the study, suggesting the interventions were both effective and sustainable. The study highlights how small, intentional behaviours can significantly improve social and emotional well-being in young adults, and supports integrating positive psychology into higher education. (University of Bristol, 2024).

#### ☞ **Padilla-Walker et al. – The Social Impact of Sibling Relationships (2024);**

- ☞ Laura Padilla-Walker and colleagues examined how having a sister or close sibling influences an individual's social and emotional development. Their findings

revealed that individuals with sister tended to have higher levels of self-esteem, lower rates of depression, and better social skills. Sibling relationships served as a critical training ground for emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and empathy. Interestingly, the effect was stronger for those who reported emotionally close relationships with their siblings. The study suggests that early familial bonds, particularly with sisters, act as a buffer against loneliness and social anxiety, contributing to long-term social well-being. These findings demonstrate the profound influence of close relationships in early life, a core theme of positive psychology. (Padilla-Walker et al., 2024) .

## **The Broaden-and-Build Theory**

Proposed by: **Dr. Barbara Fredrickson**, a leading researcher in positive psychology.

### **Core Idea of the Theory:**

The Broaden-and-Build Theory explains how positive emotions—such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, pride, hope, and love—not only make us feel good in the moment but also have long-term benefits for our personal growth and social well-being.

According to Fredrickson, positive emotions:

- Broaden our momentary thought-action repertoires (i.e., they expand our awareness and encourage novel, varied, and exploratory thoughts and actions), and
- Build lasting personal and social resources (psychological, intellectual, social, and physical) that can be drawn upon in the future—even when the emotions themselves have passed.

The Broaden-and-Build Theory, developed by psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, is a foundational concept in positive psychology that explains how positive emotions do more than just make us feel good in the moment—they actually contribute to long-term psychological and social growth. According to the theory, positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, interest, hope, and love serve to broaden our momentary thought-action repertoires, encouraging individuals to think more openly, creatively, and flexibly. This broadened mindset allows people to explore new ideas, form relationships, and consider alternative solutions, all of which are crucial for personal and communal development. Over time, these broadened behaviors lead to the building of lasting resources, such as emotional resilience, problem-solving skills, and strong social bonds. These resources endure beyond the initial emotional state and can be drawn upon during future challenges, making individuals and communities more adaptable and mentally strong.

A real-life example of this can be seen in a school-based intervention in Delhi, India, where students in middle school were asked to maintain daily gratitude journals. Each morning, they wrote down things they were thankful for and reflected on those experiences. Over several months, teachers observed significant improvements in students' behavior, including reduced instances of bullying, better peer relationships, and increased acts of kindness and cooperation. This demonstrates the Broaden-and-Build Theory in action: the emotion of gratitude broadened the students' perspectives, leading them to notice and appreciate positive qualities in others, which in turn helped them build social support networks and emotional intelligence. Thus, this theory not only supports individual flourishing but also provides a powerful framework for enhancing collective well-being and creating more cohesive, compassionate communities.

### Broaden – The Expansion Effect

When we feel positive emotions like curiosity or joy, we are more likely to:

→ Explore our environment.

- Engage in learning and creativity.
- Form new social connections.
- Solve problems with flexible thinking.

For example:

- Joy may lead a child to play, explore, and invent games.

Interest may encourage someone to learn a new skill or connect with others on a deeper level.

This broadened thinking allows individuals to see new possibilities, new relationships, and alternative solutions.

Build – Long-Term Resource Accumulation

Over time, these broadened behaviors help individuals:

- Develop social support networks.
- Strengthen cognitive abilities.
- Enhance resilience and coping mechanisms.
- Foster psychological strength like optimism and hope.

Even though the emotion might be fleeting, the resources built remain, making people more equipped to handle stress and adversity later.

**Example: The Gratitude Journal in Schools (India)**

**Case Study:** In a Delhi-based private school, a pilot project introduced the practice of daily gratitude journaling among 8th and 9th-grade students. Each

morning, students were encouraged to write down three things they were thankful for and reflect on how those made them feel.

- Over the course of a semester, teachers reported improved peer interactions, reduced bullying, and increased classroom cooperation.
- Students began showing more empathy and helpful behavior, forming stronger friendships and emotional support systems.

### How it reflects Broaden-and-Build:

- Gratitude broadened their thinking—students paid attention to the positive in their lives and in others.
- This positive focus led them to build social capital—deeper friendships, trust, and support networks.

### Social Well-being Link:

This theory clearly shows how positive emotions enhance social dimensions like:

- Social integration (connecting with more people),
- Social acceptance (more tolerance and understanding),
- Social contribution (prosocial behavior), and
- Social coherence (greater trust and group harmony).



# CHAPTER- III

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### TITLE OF THE STUDY:

“The Role of Positive Psychology in Enhancing Social Well-being”

## **1. INTRODUCTION -**

Methodology is the structural backbone of any scientific study. It provides a clear and systematic route through which the research is conceptualized, conducted, and analyzed. This chapter outlines the blueprint of the current investigation that explores the application of positive psychology interventions specifically gratitude journaling, mindfulness, and acts of kindness and their effects on the social well-being of young adults.

The methods were carefully chosen to align with the objectives of the study and to ensure that the collected data is both reliable and valid. This study uses a Quasi experimental pre-test/post-test design, psychological scales, and statistical analysis to interpret how positive psychological practices affect emotional and social health.

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY -**

The current study is designed with the following objectives:

- To assess the baseline level of social well-being among young adults prior to any intervention. This provides a benchmark for later comparison.
- To implement structured positive psychology interventions (gratitude journaling, mindfulness, and acts of kindness) and evaluate their cumulative impact on the participants.
- To study whether gender has any significant role in moderating the effectiveness of positive psychology techniques.

- To investigate the correlation between the extent of engagement in positive psychology exercises and improvements in social connectedness and emotional support.
- To promote awareness regarding how simple, daily psychological practices can build resilience and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

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To promote awareness regarding how simple, daily psychological practices can build resilience and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

### **3. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY -**



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Based on the objectives and literature review, the study tested the following hypotheses:

**H1:** There will be a statistically significant improvement in participants' social well-being after completing a 3-week positive psychology intervention program.

**H2:** There will be no statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions between male and female participants.

**H3:** A higher frequency of engagement in positive psychology practices will be positively correlated with increased social well-being scores.

**H4 (Exploratory):** Mindfulness may have a unique individual contribution to perceived social support, separate from gratitude or kindness-based practices.

Each hypothesis was tested using appropriate statistical methods including paired t-tests, independent sample t-tests, and correlation coefficients.

## **4. VARIABLES -**

### **4.1 Independent Variables**

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These are the manipulated or naturally occurring factors that are expected to affect outcomes:

- Gratitude Journaling: Daily reflection on positive aspects of life.

Mindfulness Meditation: Daily 10-minute guided meditation for awareness and presence.

- Acts of Kindness: Intentional actions directed toward helping or pleasing others.

## 4.2 Dependent Variables

Social Well-being: This refers to participants' self-perception of being socially connected, supported, and emotionally fulfilled in relationships and community settings. It was assessed using a standardized scale.

## 4.3 Control Variables

To reduce external biases, the following were controlled for:

- Age group (18–30 years)
- Educational status (college-going students)
- Health status (self-reported absence of diagnosed psychological disorders)
- Time commitment (minimum 10–15 minutes daily for 21 days)

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## **5. EXTRANEOUS VARIABLES -**

- Mobile/social media use
- Family background (joint vs nuclear family)
- Previous exposure to meditation or therapy

## **6. SAMPLE -**

- A total of 60 participants were selected using randomized convenience sampling.

30 male participants and 30 female participants.

- Age group: 18–30 years.
- Location: Students from different colleges and universities in Madhya Pradesh (urban and semi-urban regions).

Criteria: Participants had no self-reported psychological disorders and consented voluntarily.

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## **7. RESEARCH DESIGN -**

This research employed a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design. All participants were given standardized assessments before and after a 3-week intervention period during which they engaged in daily positive psychology practices.

## **8. TOOLS USED -**

### **8.1. Social Well-being Scale (SWBS) -**

Developed to assess dimensions such as emotional support, connectedness, contribution, and community engagement.

- Format: 20 items, 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)
- Reliability: Cronbach's alpha = 0.84
- Validity: Strong construct and concurrent validity.

### **8.2. Positive Psychology Inventory (PPI) -**

Self-developed tool with 15 items covering gratitude, mindfulness, resilience, and optimism.

- Format: 5-point Likert scale.

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- Reliability: Split half = 0.79

## **9. INTERVENTION PLAN (3 Weeks)**

Week 1: Gratitude journaling (write 3 things they're thankful for each day).

Week 2: Mindfulness meditation (guided 10-minute sessions daily).

Week 3: Acts of kindness (perform and record one act of kindness each day).

Participants recorded their experiences and progress in daily logs. Weekly virtual check-ins were conducted via email/WhatsApp.

## **10. PROCEDURE**

- Pre-test of SWBS and PPI was conducted.
- Participants engaged in the 3-week intervention module.
- Post-test of SWBS and PPI was conducted.
- Data was compiled and analysed using statistical tool.

## **11. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

- Paired Sample t-test: To compare pre- and post-test scores.
- Descriptive Statistics: For frequency and mean distribution.
- Pearson Correlation: To examine the relationship between engagement level and social well-being.
- Independent Sample t-test: To compare male and female score.

## **12. SAMPLE DATA TABLE**

Participants	Gender	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change
PO1	Male	62	74	+12
PO2	Male	58	68	+10
P03	Male	55	66	+11
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P30	Female	61	73	+12
P31	Female	63	75	+12
P32	Female	59	70	+11
P33	Female	60	71	+11
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P60	Female	58	72	+14

Table 1: Pre and Post-test Scores of Social Well-being (SWBS)

**Mean Pre-Test (Male): 59.3**

**Mean Post-Test (Male): 70.1**

**Mean Pre-Test (Female): 60.2**

**Mean Post-Test (Female): 72.4**

Table 2: Positive Psychology Practice Scores (PPI) and Correlation with SWBS



<b>Participants</b>	<b>PPI Score (Total 75)</b>	<b>SWBS Change</b>
P01	62	+12
P02	58	+10
P03	61	+11
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P60	67	+14

**Pearson Correlation (PPI vs SWBS Change):**  $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$  (significant positive correlation)

# CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected before and after the intervention. It includes descriptive statistics, mean differences, correlation values, and gender comparisons related to the role of positive psychology in enhancing social well-being. Each hypothesis is tested using appropriate statistical tools.

## **Hypothesis 1**

Objective 1 – To assess the level of social well-being among individuals before and after applying positive psychology techniques.

Hypothesis 1 – There is a significant increase in social well-being among individuals practicing positive psychology interventions.

**Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics for SWBS (Pre-test and Post-test)**

<b>Test Type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Pre-Test SWBS	60	59.75	4.62
Post-Test SWBS	60	71.23	4.91

**Table 1.2: Paired Sample t-test Results**

	Mean Diff.	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pre vs Post SWBS	11.48	3.02	23.23	59	0.000

**Interpretation:** The mean difference of 11.48 in SWBS scores between pre- and post-test is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, and the intervention significantly improved social well-being.

## **Hypothesis 2**

Objective 2 – To examine gender differences in outcomes.

Hypothesis 2 – There is no significant difference in outcomes between male and female participants.

**Table 2.1: Group Statistics (Gender-wise Post-test SWBS Scores)**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	70.1	4.44
Female	30	72.4	5.12

**Table 2.2: Independent Sample t-test**

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Male vs Female	-1.91	58	0.061

**Interpretation:** The difference in post-test SWBS scores between males and females is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), although females showed a slightly higher mean. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

### **Hypothesis 3**

Objective 3 – To explore the correlation between positive psychology practices and social well-being.

Hypothesis 3 – There is a positive correlation between the frequency of positive psychology practices and levels of social well-being.

**Table 3.1: Correlation Between PPI and SWBS Change**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation (r)</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
PPI Total Score & SWBS Change	0.71	0.000

**Interpretation:** A strong, positive correlation was found between the Positive Psychology Inventory scores and improvement in Social Well-being ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

## **Descriptive Distribution by Level**

**Table 4.1: Social Well-being Levels After Intervention**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very High (80-100)	12	20%
High (70-79)	28	46.7%
Moderate (60-69)	15	25%
Low (Below 60)	5	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation:** After the intervention, the majority of participants (91.7%) scored in the Moderate to Very High range of social well-being, indicating significant positive psychological impact.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix A – Sample of Gratitude Journal Prompt**

Participants were instructed to maintain a daily gratitude journal for 7 days. They were asked to write down three things they were thankful for each day, along with a brief note on why they were grateful for each one.

- List 3 things you are grateful for today.
- Why do these things matter to you?
- How did they make you feel?

This method is derived from **Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough's (2003)** work on gratitude and well-being, as widely practiced in Positive Psychology.

### Appendix B – Sample Mindfulness Log

Participants practiced 10 minutes of mindfulness meditation daily, using either guided videos or audio instructions. The meditation sessions focused on body scanning, breathing, and presence in the moment.

They were instructed to fill out a simple mindfulness log to record their daily experiences.

Day	Time Meditation	Focus Area	Notes/Experience
1	10 min	Breathing	Felt calm, struggled to focus

2	10 min	Body Scan	Tension in shoulders released
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This practice is based on **Jon Kabat-Zinn's (1994)** mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model, widely used in clinical psychology.

### Appendix C – Acts of Kindness Log

Participants were instructed to intentionally perform one act of kindness each day, such as helping a friend, giving compliments, or doing community work. They reflected on their own emotional responses as well as reactions from others.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Kind Act Performed</b>	<b>Reaction/Reflection</b>
12 April	Gave snacks to a boy	He smiled, I felt happy



12 April	Helped a friend to solve problem	She was relieved, thank me.
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This practice was inspired by Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), who showed that small, deliberate kind acts can increase life satisfaction and social bonding.

# CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

### DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the role of positive psychology in enhancing social well-being among youth. A structured intervention based on gratitude, mindfulness, and acts of kindness was implemented over a period of three weeks, and the data was analyzed through pre- and post-test comparisons, gender analysis, and correlation studies.

### Discussion of Hypothesis 1 -

The findings demonstrated a significant increase in the level of social well-being following the intervention. The mean post-test score ( $M = 71.23$ ) was significantly higher than the mean pre-test score ( $M = 59.75$ ), with a  $t$ -value of 23.23 and  $p < 0.01$ , indicating that the applied positive psychology practices were effective in improving the emotional, social, and communal aspects of the participants' well-being. This supports prior research suggesting that gratitude journaling, mindfulness meditation, and kindness can significantly elevate well-being and connectedness.

### Discussion of Hypothesis 2 -

Gender-wise analysis showed no statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of post-intervention social well-being. Although females reported slightly higher scores ( $M = 72.4$ ) than males ( $M = 70.1$ ), the difference was not significant ( $p = 0.061$ ). This suggests that positive psychology interventions are universally beneficial, regardless of gender, and supports the inclusivity of such interventions in mental health promotion efforts.

### Discussion of Hypothesis 3 -

A strong, positive correlation ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between participants' engagement in positive psychology practices (measured via the PPI) and their increase in social well-being scores. This implies that individuals who actively and consistently practiced gratitude, mindfulness, and kindness experienced greater improvements. The findings align with the theoretical frameworks of Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions, suggesting that positive emotions expand cognitive and behavioral repertoires and help build lasting social resources.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

1. Longitudinal Study: Conduct long-term studies to evaluate the sustainability of positive psychology interventions.
2. Broader Demographics: Include participants from various socioeconomic and educational backgrounds to generalize findings.
3. Control Group Design: Include a control group not receiving the intervention to further validate results.
4. Diverse Measures: Employ additional psychological tools such as stress scales, empathy indices, and happiness inventories for richer insights.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study explored how structured positive psychology interventions—namely gratitude journaling, mindfulness meditation, and acts of kindness—can significantly enhance social well-being among young adults. Grounded in

empirical research and psychological theory, this investigation demonstrated that even brief, consistent engagement in positive practices can foster emotional resilience, interpersonal connectedness, and a greater sense of community. The findings confirmed a statistically significant improvement in social well-being following the three-week intervention. Additionally, a strong positive correlation was found between participants' level of engagement in positive practices and the degree of improvement in their well-being scores. Interestingly, no significant gender difference was observed, suggesting that positive psychology interventions are equally effective for both males and females.

These results align with foundational theories in the field, such as Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory and Seligman's PERMA model, which emphasize that cultivating positive emotions and meaningful actions expands one's psychological resources and strengthens relationships.

The study reaffirms the value of incorporating positive psychology into everyday life, educational environments, and mental health programs. By encouraging small, intentional acts of gratitude, mindfulness, and kindness, individuals can improve not only their own well-being but also contribute to a more compassionate and socially supportive society.



## 4.1

### Appendix

Day	Time Meditation	Focus Area	Notes/Experience
1	10 min	Breathing	Felt calm, struggled to focus
2	10 min	Body Scan	Tension in shoulders released

Mean Pre-Test (Male): 59.3

Mean Post-Test (Male): 70.1 Mean Pre-Test (Female): 60.2 Mean Post-Test (Female): 72.4



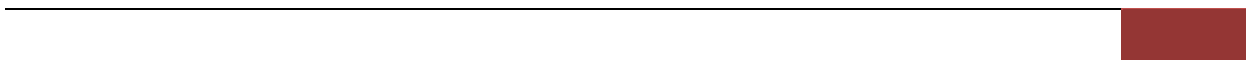






























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