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Anand: A Proposed Positive Psychology Intervention-Based Program for Secondary Education Students in India to Reduce Youth Suicidal Rate

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Abstract

The following essay proposes establishing a positive psychology-based intervention program, Anand, for secondary education students in India. Named for the Hindi word for "happiness", this program seeks to aid Indian youth, who struggle to cope with the rigor and competitiveness of academia within the Indian education system. The nature of the Indian education system prompts a variety of mental health struggles for the youth, which may lead to suicidal ideation in response to their psychological distress. This intervention aims to enhance their coping mechanisms with academic stress and enables them to boost their mental well-being despite the pressures of their educational and personal lives. This program would be tailored within the academic curriculum and be taught along with the primary subjects in a classroom setting. The core components of this mission would be the classic concepts of positive psychology such as the PERMA model (Positivity, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment), character strengths, boosting self-esteem and positive self-image, learned hopefulness, and manifestation through intention. The program would be divided into chunks, each focusing on a different concept for students to learn. Students would be encouraged to complete exercises within the curriculum to breed familiarity with positive psychology. The entire purpose is to help the youth flourish through personal and professional challenges and build resilience against triggers of stress and anxiety in their academic journey. This essay refers to the successful implementation of positive psychology interventions in educational settings, which have elicited the desired results in the past. The establishment of these interventions incorporated within the basic academic curriculum can boost the overall emotional and mental well-being, improving their capabilities in dealing with academia-induced stress and in turn, reducing the youth suicide rate.

Introduction: The Role of the Indian Education System in Youth Suicide

The population age group of 18–30-year-old individuals accounted for 34.5% of the total number of suicides in India, with a significant percentage of the group belonging to the student population. Nearly thirteen thousand students died by suicide in 2022 (Singh, 2022). The highest occurrence of suicides is seen in the young and productive population of the nation, with consistent trends over the past years. The majority of suicide trends are among adolescents, and the possible causes and motives behind them, and establish that India had the highest suicide rate in 2021, a large portion of suicides were attributed to the adolescent population (Senapati et al., 2024). Ranging from the years of ten-nineteen, individuals are constantly experiencing physical, emotional, mental, and cognitive changes in their lifestyles. The attempt to figure out their place in society enables vulnerability to mental health distress, increasing their proneness to anxiety, depression, and other forms of psychological distress. The additional burden of societal and familial pressure, increase in personal and professional responsibilities and the discovery of their true self and purpose play a considerable role in the development of their well-being. The authors point out that the lack of adolescents' experience in these matters and their inability in facing the challenges of life brings forth the onset of mental health disorders in an early age. These include poor academic performance in scholastic environments, increased parental and societal pressure for life success, and navigation through developing social/personal relationships (Ponnudurai, 2015). There are divided analyses on the

biopsychosocial models behind the motives of suicide for Indian youth, with a significant emphasis on the psychological factors that contribute to this public health crisis (Gupta & Basera, 2023). Due to the magnitude of their life changes and developments, youth can experience hopelessness, low self-esteem, neuroticism, worthlessness and other negative self-imaging thoughts that impact their well-being. Perhaps the most pressing reason behind this is the highly competitive nature of the education system in India, which is designed to prepare students for academic rigor and challenge their accrued knowledge.

A country flushing in constant development, India is the home to one sixth of the world's population, with consistent fluctuations in government, economy, education, lifestyle and other structural components of a nation. The educational structure of India is widely diverse in each sector of secondary and higher education, implementing a variety of rigorous examinations and assignments to reinforce inculcated knowledge. The infrastructure is divided into pre-primary, primary, elementary, lower and higher secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate education levels (Patel, 2013). Each level consists of designed examinations to assess whether the student is prepared for the next level. The two most essential examinations given crucial importance and value are the All-India Secondary School Examinations (Grade 10) and the Higher Secondary Examination (Grade 12). In addition to these, students within Grade 12 must prepare for college entrance exams based on their chosen career path for their undergraduate journey. Career tracks in undergraduate education, such as engineering, medicine, arts, commerce, business, law, and many other concentrations, have their unique entrance exam for applicants, with the highest standards placed for a student to merely pass (George, 2023). These exams are woven into the highly selective admissions process for applicants, influenced by the growing student population and developing government policies and technological advancements. Millions of students compete for a limited number of "seats" or spots within the top-most prestigious institutions of India (George, 2023). Coaching centers that tutor students for the entrance exams also demonstrate high rates of selectivity. The high levels of competition in education have significant implications for the youth and the education system's success. The top prestigious institutions of India, such as the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), have lower acceptance rates than Ivy League schools. The admissions process into IIT is dependent on the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE), for which over a million students enroll to compete for fewer than ten thousand spots (Choudhary et al., 2023). Other factors also contribute to the intensity of the Indian educational structure, such as rising costs of the coaching institutions, change in exam formats, lack of career guidance, increasing population, and, most importantly, the inequality of the infrastructure, which inhibits students from lower-income families from accessing costly educational resources in order to further their career (Kaleem, 2022).

The combination of intense academic pressure, overpopulation and the lack of proper accommodation for every student brings forth a plethora of mental health disorders, which manifest in the developing minds of the youth. According to a research study being performed to assess mental health disorder prevalence in adolescents (Sakthivel et al., 2021), it was discovered that 44.4% of adolescents enrolled in higher education were diagnosed with depression. About 40-90% of that population demonstrated a comorbidity with other disorders related to conduct, personality, anxiety, and even substance abuse. Depression and anxiety were more prevalent than stress in general. Participants scored high on the mild to severe scale, caused by peer pressure, poor and average academic performance, and relationships with peers (Sakthivel et al., 2021)

Schools and educational settings play a crucial role in the development of young students and adolescents, since they are where they spend most of their time either socializing or learning. The lack of proper mental health resources and guidance only exacerbates this health crisis for youth, disabling them from accessing any psychological support. Singh (2020) provides a numerical outlook on the proportion of psychiatrists to students, which estimates a rough ratio of 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 students in

a given city of India. The constant academic pressure leads to a general decline in academic pursuit for Indian adolescents, who may perform poorly due to a lack of interest. These factors also lead to the contribution of the exceedingly high suicide rate in the youth population, reporting 381 deaths on a daily basis in population age of 15-29 years in 2019 (Singh, 2020). Psychologists take a step further to declare that the small portion of the population that does not report mental health distress also does not express happiness and satisfaction with their lives in general. A cluster of Indian students were chosen for questionnaires measuring depression, anxiety, well-being and happiness, whose results reported high prevalence for the mental health disorders for most of the students. However, the ones who scored low for depression and anxiety did not score high on mental well-being and happiness (Park et al. 2023). These findings suggest that the mere absence of mental health disorders does not secure general life satisfaction and positivity for the young. In addition, the general stigmatization of mental health illnesses in India only worsens the condition for people in general, boosting the prevalence of these illnesses and barricading any outreach for psychological help (Venkatesh et al. 2015). These findings and analyses demonstrate a vital need for strong psychological interventions and support systems to help Indian youth cope with their struggles and provide them emotional and cognitive support for their struggles. All these factors play a crucial role in the growing problem of increasing psychological crises among young people, which may lead to greater motivation in self-harm and suicidal ideation within underdeveloped minds.

Development of Positive Psychology Concepts/Components

The analysis of the Indian Secondary Education system and its implications, along with the exploration of physical, emotional and cognitive changes experienced by the youth, establishes the critical need for more psychological interventions and resources to mitigate this issue. Due to the rigidity and long-lasting structure of the education system in India, it seems feasible to implement such interventions incorporated within the educational curriculum to accommodate the large population and inculcate psychological strength. The strongest psychological intervention to build resilience within the cognitive bandwidth of the youth may be based on the principles of positive psychology and its conceptual framework. Building the infrastructure of a curriculum using the blocks of positive psychology can teach the young self-promotion of mental well-being and positive self-image, conjuring a solid barricade against developmental and academic challenges.

The development of positive psychology began with the idea to help humans reach the highest level of optimal functioning and stretch the malleability of their psychological resilience. The purpose is to value subjective experiences and boost emotions that elevate positive well-being, such as contentment and acceptance of the past, happiness in the present, and hope and optimism for the future (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). These subjective experiences, with the pairing of these emotions and feelings, can enhance individual positive traits such as forgiveness, perseverance, positivity, love, courage and interpersonal skill. These enable the constant flow of one's well-being and act as shields against mental health stress or disorders. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) emphasize the importance of analyzing these traits and exercising them in biological, cognitive, cultural, interpersonal, social and global life structures to achieve the highest level of optimal functioning and well-being.

Laying upon this ground of these particular components, Seligman (2011) further explored the theory of well-being and constructed the PERMA Model that constitutes the five main components of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. Experiencing positive emotions such as joy, pleasure, happiness and satisfaction helps individuals focus on optimism and enables them to view their lives through a constructively optimistic lens. The purpose of engagement is to connect with experiences and activities and reap the pleasure from performing said activities, which in turn helps one find the flow of pleasure and creativity. Humans learn and thrive from their relationships in life; therefore it is important that they connect with others who enhance their positive experiences and happiness. In order to understand their true purpose, they

must also discover the meaning of their identity along with the significant events of their lives to understand their occurrence and impact. Lastly, achieving a sense of accomplishment in any area of life provides a sense of fulfillment and importance, boosting self-esteem and positive self-image. These five major blocks of the PERMA model stand to measure and elevate one's well-being along with authentic happiness and the ability to flourish through all life occurrences. The principles of positive psychology were based upon the psychotherapeutic theory developed by Carl Rogers (1957) who believed that the most efficient response from a therapist to a client is one of unconditional positive regard and empathy. Rogers (1957) consistently emphasizes the importance of providing positive regard to clients in therapy, focusing on their positive qualities and reflecting with genuine empathy. Building upon the concept of positive regard, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014) cultivated the idea of positive psychology to steer the direction away from pessimistic outcomes and emotions in life. The idea is to reduce the focus on events, emotions or thoughts that contribute to one's psychological imbalance and increase the attention on the opposite.

Constructing a theory prior to the PERMA model, Seligman (2002) conjured the three paths to happiness: the pleasant life (finding pleasurable activities to experience joy), good life (knowing one's strengths) and the meaningful life (finding a purpose higher than oneself). Each model shifts the psychological paradigm from illness, depression, victimization and pathology to happiness, fulfillment, strengths, and positive qualities. Park et al. (2004) emphasize exploring one's character strengths, as it allows one to experience awareness of one's positive traits and qualities and encourages them to apply them in all areas of living to experience authentic happiness and fulfillment.

Before the constitution of positive psychology, several concepts and exercises related to the field had been explored, to achieve the same goal of positive well-being. Csikszentmihalyi (1990), also considered one of the founding fathers of Positive Psychology along with Seligman, highlighted the importance of discovering the "flow" of one's life, in which one engages in activities or exercises to experience joy and peace. The characteristics of being in a "flow" allow the individual to concentrate entirely on the activity with effortless enjoyment and reap its intrinsically rewarding benefits. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also highlights that being in the 'flow" combines the awareness and the enjoyment of the action, which may decrease conscious rumination and thinking for the individual. Experiencing a sense of control over the task increases a sensation of achievement, boosting self-worth and self-esteem. Kabat-Zinn (1990) discusses the benefits of mindfulness, in which one pays non-judgmental attention to the present moment and becomes aware of it, rather than providing a reaction to it. He (1990) argues that focusing on the present moment eliminates stress and depression about the past or future, allowing the individual to bring attention to what they are currently facing. The theory of mindfulness exists to demonstrate that the present moment is all that human beings have at all times, emphasizing that the past and the future only exists in the minds that do not give attention to the present moment. Kabat-Zinn (1990) then proceeds to explain mindfulness techniques on how to use the present moment to bring calmness in the mind and establish a deeper connection with the body to alleviate depression, anxiety, and stress.

Deviating from his original work on "learned helplessness" (Maier & Seligman, 1993), Seligman reversed the path and explored the art of learning optimism (Seligman, 2006) to counteract negative and stressful experiences. With this flipped approach, Seligman (2006) argues that harboring pessimism is what allows the mind to be infected with psychological illnesses and their profound manifestation. Learning optimism can enable one to adopt a positive outlook on life and reduce psychological distress by boosting one's motivation to succeed in all areas of life. This was further embellished by Tomasulo (2020) who proposed the concept of "learned hopefulness" and posed that hope is also a learned trait, like optimism, to serve as a barricade against psychological distress. Tomasulo (2020) teaches that hope is the emotion that arises from a negative experience. Therefore, if one is experiencing undesirable circumstances in one's life, the attitude of hope can elevate well-

being and resilience, providing psychological strength to face such circumstances. Practicing another principle like gratitude can increase happiness and well-being, by expressing gratitude and appreciation for people and experiences (Seligman, 2011). Such exercises of being thankful are proven to shift the mindset of an individual towards positive thoughts and emotions. Further research suggests that even acts of kindness (Passmore & Oades, 2021) can achieve the same goals as all other positive psychology concepts, elevating well-being and mental health wellness. These constructs all achieve a common goal of achieving uninterrupted flourishing of positive experiences, a healthy psychological mindset and authentic happiness.

Analysis and Effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions

The theory of positive psychological concepts and its structure contains substantial quality in its conceptualization and application. The implementation of these concepts exists for individuals to apply for themselves and proactively participate in reducing mental distress. Furthermore, young people with developing mindsets must inculcate the teachings of positive psychology within educational environments to learn the promotion of positive well-being from an early age. Seligman et al. (2009) argue that positive interventions should be taught in school settings to increase creative thinking, life satisfaction and protection from mental health disorders. Since children and young adolescents spend so much time in such environments, it is implied that the constitution of these interventions within these environments will significantly impact their growth and flow into other areas of their lives. Seligman's (2009) research team devoted ample time to developing programs such as the Penn Resiliency Program to be instituted within the academic curriculum of secondary education for prevention of early onset depression in young people. The application of PRP in a randomized controlled study exhibited multiple findings for positive psychologists and encouraged further establishment of such programs permanently in education (Brunwasser et al. 2008). The PRP studies include a massive diverse array of adolescents aged 8-15 years from multiple nations such as United States, Australia, China, Portugal and the United Kingdom. In the analysis of the experimental groups compared to the control groups, researchers discovered that PRP reduces and prevents clinical levels of depression, anxiety, behavioral problems and hopelessness and increases social skills, engagement and positive emotion (Brunwasser et al. 2008). Perhaps the biggest takeaway from the analysis is that PRP is conducive and effective for individuals of different ethnic and racial backgrounds along with different geographic locations.

The Positive Psychology Program (Seligman et al. 2009) is a similar study implemented to achieve PRP's goals. The experiment assigned a random group of 347 students who were enrolled in Grade 9 to Language Art classes that may or may not encompass the positive psychology curriculum. The experimental group of students, who received the curriculum, filled out questionnaires with their parents and teachers, regarding their enjoyment in school, social skills, behavioral problems, and students' strengths. The entire purpose was to help students identify their own character strengths and propagate them to apply those strengths daily. The composition of the curriculum consisted of 80-minute sessions that occurred 20-25 times over the year, encompassing self-discovery and discussion of character strengths and skills for students and guidance on how to apply them in their own lives. More specifically, students would be assigned various exercises such as writing down three good things that happened in a day, taking the character strength test and applying them in different scenarios and learning new social skills. The experiment concluded that the experimental group of the Positive Psychology Curriculum showed increased enjoyment and engagement of the school material and overall empathy cooperation, and self-control.

The results of these studies corroborate with the outcomes of similarly performed experiments that incorporated the principles of positive psychology in achieving general contentment and satisfaction. In some studies, the other goal is to prevent the manifestation of mental health disorders in early-developing mindsets before

they leave a psychological scar and continue into the mature stage of adulthood. Rombouts et al. (2022) conjecture the effects of Happy Lessons (HL), a school program designed to reduce depressive symptoms, and hypothesized that the 12–14-year-old recipients of HL will report higher in life satisfaction and well-being compared to those who do not receive HL. After the lessons, students would be provided with individual consultation to refresh on any listed activities and provide personal support for their issues or questions. The researchers were confident that the application of this program would help students feel as if they are being supported and acknowledged, already mitigating the pressure of figuring themselves out and their lives. The concept would be to encourage students to set their futuristic goals in a positive framework and experience optimism about them. Another fundamental principle of the proposed program would be that it is not inefficient for those students who do not experience mental health disorders. Nevertheless, should they ever encounter them, these teachings can prevent them from becoming victims of these disorders (Rombouts et al. 2022).

Perhaps one of the pioneering studies performed to prove the effectiveness of these interventions established in education is "The Hummingbird Project" (Platt et al. 2020), which applied these concepts in two different experimental groups, one based in secondary education and the other based in a university. In eight weekly sessions, this positive psychology intervention implemented questionnaires to measure the placement of students' happiness, hope, motivation, and academic tenacity. The course of this project encompassed the education of both populations about the approach of positive psychology and its concepts, such as happiness, well-being, grit, reduction of stigma, mindfulness, character strengths, and resilience. The results demonstrated that even though the project's lifespan was short, it managed to reduce depression and anxiety within both populations by comparing their mental health questionnaires before and after the experiment. Despite the project's limitations, the authors (2020) demonstrated the powerful potency of such interventions on the youth and how they can create even larger positive effects with more resources and support. The project was deemed responsible for the flourishing of many individuals and even received great praise for its efficacy and beneficial impact on multiple youngsters.

Some positive psychology interventions focus on specific concepts of the subject and apply the exercises related to those concepts. Kern et al. (2015) investigated the effects of applying the PERMA model of well-being in high school students, to measure and increase psychological resilience and happiness. With the deep analysis and exploration of each integrant of the model, the researchers attempted to perform a factor analysis of the model associated with the student's mental and physical health, satisfaction, hope, vitality, gratitude, stressful life events, and somatic symptoms, including the ill-being factors of depression and anxiety in the cross-sectional association. Questionnaires were handed out to the students, assessing the intensity of each factor, with high rankings in stressful life events and low rankings on vitality, hope, and gratitude. The students were then taught each PERMA model component and were encouraged to look for the positive factors in each, enhancing their internal strengths and relationships with others. The findings were congruent with the hypothesis of the PERMA model benefitting one's psychological mindset, as the students reported higher rankings in the other factors of well-being after the application. In the conclusion, Kern et al. (2015) heavily emphasizes the undiscovered potential of promoting student well-being.

Several studies demonstrate how well-being responds to practices and acts of gratitude, which can change the underlying pathways of poor mental health, changing their trajectory towards a cognitively benefitting pathway (Diniz et al., 2023). Ducasse et al. (2019) discovered that the reinforcement of gratitude journaling reduced suicidal ideation among in-hospital patients who attempted to end their lives. An experiment with gratitude-based interventions demonstrated that the people on the receiving end of it exhibited elevated positive moods and exuded more prosocial behaviors (Tong et al. 2021). Applying the Penn State Worry Questionnaire, Heckendorf et al. (2019) unearthed low scores on worry for

those who underwent gratitude interventions and they even reported low psychological pain and distress.

Nature-based mindfulness interventions (NBI) have also been proven to achieve similar results, using the calmness of natural surroundings to connect with nature and increase positive affect. The purpose of these interventions is to bring individuals into the present moment and eliminate ruminative negative thinking, emotional reactivity and improve immune functioning against anxiety, depression, and stress. Collecting a sample of university-based students, Djernis et al. (2023) implemented a five-day residential mindfulness program based in a natural environment to oversee self-regulation against moderate to severe stress. The four key components that were measured were attitudes of mindfulness, physical and psychological balance, connection, and supportive conditions. The study yielded positive results, displaying beneficial effects on positive emotions, meta-awareness and calmness, enhancing self-regulation.

The emphasis on eliciting kindness and compassion from young individuals reinforces positive behavior and attitude. Shillington et al. (2021) assert that performing deliberate acts of kindness, known as the DAKS intervention, boosts resilience, positive affect, and in addition to decreasing social interaction anxiety. An experimental and control group of undergraduate and graduate students were chosen for this intervention to measure the levels of these variables post-intervention. Unsurprisingly, the results support the hypothesis, with a significant difference in levels of resilience before and after the intervention. Even after a three-month post-measure, the levels of resilience, positive affect and mood stayed consistently high, demonstrating the long-lasting effects of the DAKS intervention (Shillington et al., 2021).

Baourda et al. (2024) explain the influence optimism and hope within young individuals acts as a strong buffer against mental health illnesses. This was proven by their "Feel Good-Think Positive" intervention for young elementary children, which occurs over multiple sessions with various exercises. The intervention led to a significant increase in the children's levels of optimism and self-esteem and a substantial decrease in anxiety. The Baourda et al. (2024) study, along with the others, positively establishes the efficacy of positive psychology interventions.

Positive Psychology in India

Due to the novelty of this branch in psychology, the expansion of its efficacy in other nations is limited and requires further establishment through more studies. Nevertheless, the concept is not wholly unknown in India, as psychologists and behavioral scientists are beginning to unearth methods to promote overall well-being for the youth. The basic principles of positive psychology are often rooted in India's spiritual background and religious teachings (Shukla, 2016), where individuals achieve liberation from pain through prayer, yoga, and meditation. These concepts exist to help them attain pure bliss through spiritual practices and teachings. However, the translation of these concepts into didactic lessons, which aim to elevate well-being through psychological interventions, is recently blooming in the Indian education system's curriculum.

Khanna & Singh (2019) attempted to replicate the teachings and concepts of positive psychology and apply its interventions in a group of 372 Indian adolescents from two different schools, their ages ranging from 3-11 years and 56% of the youngsters being male and 44% female. Though the educational settings were similar, the students belonged to various demographic and cultural groups of India to institute a diverse sample. Measures of well-being, happiness, depressive symptoms and affect were taken before and after the interventions, which took place each week. The results reported that the students who received the gratitude and signature strength-based interventions scored higher in well-being, happiness and life satisfaction in the post-measures. A second study was conducted to shift the focus on the evaluation of character strengths playing a role in well-being of Indian adolescents (Khanna et al., 2021). The similar kind of pre-tests and post-tests were applied for a population of 121 Indian students, aged 11-13 years, with half exposed to the experimental intervention treatment and the other half belonging to the control treatment in randomized allocation. Classroom teachers were thoroughly trained in

the “Strengths Gym” curriculum, which they delivered over 12 weeks in two 30-minute sessions per week to the intervention group. Each session would correspond to a single character strength, encouraging the students to identify with it and nurture it. At the termination of the experiments, it was shown that individuals in the intervention group scored much higher on happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction compared to the control group in the post-test measure. The general conclusion stated that the realization and utilization of character strengths play a major role in subjective well-being (Khanna et al. 2021).

The development of positive psychology interventions within Indian school settings continues with Chhajer & Hira's (2024) nature-based mindfulness intervention for the Indian youth. Ranging from the ages of 17-20, 180 participants were chosen from an Indian secondary school. They were randomly assigned to a positive psychology intervention (PPI) group, a mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) group and a control group. Pre-test and post-test measures were recorded, measuring levels of gratitude, sense of self-connected in nature, resilience, awareness, positive and negative emotions, and perceived levels of stress. The PPI and occurred outdoors in natural surroundings for five days, one hour each day. Participants of the PPI group were assigned activities associated with Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model. Students would express gratitude for three things in their life, imagine a dream vacation, and recall a moment of joy to experience positive emotion. The MBI group was led through mindful activities such as walking, breath awareness meditation, mindful movement, body relaxation and mindful art exercises. When analyzing the post-test measures, it was discovered that the PPI and MBI groups demonstrated a significant improvement in almost all components of well-being, further validating the effectiveness of these interventions. Chhajer & Hira (2024) emphasize implementing programs involving these interventions in Indian secondary education for student well-being.

The Purpose of the Present Study

The review of these studies (Khanna & Singh 2021, Chhajer & Hira 2024) prove the effectiveness of positive psychology-based methods in school-based naturalistic settings. However, the studies that applied positive psychology concepts were all singular experiments, in which researchers implemented a method for a given time to measure well-being components. Once the studies terminated, there was no indication of continuing the interventions, especially for the ones based in classroom settings. The studies clearly state the desperate need for more psychological interventions based in youth settings to eliminate the rising levels of mental health distress (Khanna & Singh, 2021, Chhajer & Hira, 2024). There is no evidence of a program encompassing positive psychology values and is administered regularly for the youth. Although the application of the strategies demonstrates success for a singular time approach, no research reveals the implementation of these strategies on a cyclical basis, where the effectiveness is measured over a significant length of time and depth of application. The idea is to draw upon the successes of these interventions and establish a curriculum, which encompasses the lessons of these experiments and aims to apply them on a regular basis. Regularly applying these interventions can expand the vision for positive psychology implementation.

The Purpose and Aim of Anand

Based in Indian classroom settings as a learned life skill, Anand is a program designed to institute positive psychology interventions systematically for school-attending adolescents. It is an idea to promote mental well-being and resilience against developmental changes and pressures of life and prepare the youth for further challenges. The goal of Anand is to instill positive psychology teachings within the rigorous academic environment to develop coping skills within the Indian youth. This will help them build a strong barrier against psychological distress and reduce pre-existing symptoms of anxiety and depression induced by surrounding academic pressure. Through Anand, students can be exposed to various positive psychology concepts and practices, reaping the benefits of each one for long-lasting positive mental well-being. The structure of Anand would be a program that is implemented in elementary and secondary

schools of India, between the primary subjects for an hour every day. Anand will encompass most of the concepts of positive psychology, which will be synthesized into different interventions for a block of time allotted within the hour each day. Each intervention will initially explain the positive psychology concept followed by specific exercises for the remaining curriculum. These interventions will include the PERMA model, character strengths, mindfulness, gratitude, optimism, hope, happiness and kindness. These interventions will be inspired from the previously orchestrated studies (Seligman 2009, Chhajer & Hira 2024, Barouda et al., 2024, Heckendorf et al., 2019, Tong et al., 2021, Shillington et al., 2021) that have yielded results supporting the aim of higher well-being. The hypothesis is that the daily application of these concepts and their practices will increase positive affect within students and help them face academic pressure with less distress. Along with academic challenges, it is the hope that Anand will benefit other aspects of their daily lives, helping them maintain psychological stability for all types of challenges they may experience in their journey. These challenges may be related to social, personal and physical domains of their lives, which can gain indirect benefits from this school-based positive psychology program. Another theoretical guess is that this program will enhance their performance in studies and help them concentrate better in their academic subjects. On a larger scale, Anand may serve as an effective solution for decreasing youth suicidal rate or mental health distress.

The Pre-Treatment Protocol of Anand

The tailoring of Anand into the academic curriculum will require teachers to be properly trained in its effective administration, most likely to take place before the beginning of the school year. The implementation of the program can begin with a single lower and higher secondary education school based in a metropolitan city, before expanding or altering on the basis of the results. For its initiate experimental study, Indian students of Grade 9 in a lower secondary education school, age range from 13-14 years, can be randomly assigned into an experimental and a control group. These students must supply informed consent of their own along with their parents to enroll in the program. The consent forms will be worded in the same manner for both groups, where they are aware of the program along with its purpose. Once the school year commences, the initial days of the program will incorporate teaching these very concepts of positive psychology to the experimental group of students before initiating their interventions on a daily basis. The control group would receive the standard education protocol for the academic year, where they can use their extended hour to catch up with their academics. At the beginning of the school year, teachers who will be guiding students through Anand will supply questionnaires to both groups of students to measure various components of wellbeing. Levels of happiness will be measured with the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) and levels of hope with the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997). The students' placement on scales of gratitude, life satisfaction, and academic motivation can be measured by the Gratitude Questionnaire (McCullough et al., 2002), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), and the Students' Motivation Scale (Bin Dayel et al., 2018). Along with aspects of well-being, their levels of depression, anxiety, and stress will be measured with the Depression Scale for Children (Faulstich et al., 1986) and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 Questionnaire (Spitzer et al., 2007). In the duration of the program, the experimental students will also be provided with journals to log in their positive psychology exercises and the thoughts and feelings associated with them. In order to validate the findings of the pre-post measures, the experimental students can sign a consent form, informing that the researchers are allowed to access their journals and surveys at the end of the academic year for data collection purposes. The same questionnaires will be supplied at the end of the school year to both groups, measuring changes in the pre-post measures for the experimental group and comparing them to the control group's questionnaires.

The Program Structure /Procedures of Anand

Anand's theoretical structure is built to take place within one hour of each school day by extending the length of time students stay in school. While

the experimental group would receive the program interventions on a daily basis, the control group would be assigned breaks during that time to catch up with homework and follow-up questions with teachers about their academics. For one portioned 20 minutes of the hour, the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) will be applied for the experimental group, with each component applied on separate days of the curriculum. The implementation of the PERMA model will be very similar to Chhajer & Hira (2024)'s experimental design. After a thorough analysis and explanation of the model, students will complete the PERMA Profiler Questionnaire (Butler & Kern, 2016) to measure where they see themselves in each PERMA component. After the initial questionnaire, students will be guided to do exercises and discussions regarding each component on separate days for the rest of the year. In order to experience Positive Emotion, students will be asked to write down a favorite moment of their lives, when they were truly the happiest. They will also be asked to imagine a moment or a dream that brings immense joy and pleasure to them. Lastly, teachers will guide them to write down three things in their life, which are good and bring them true happiness. Teachers can either ask students to share their answers or break into groups to share with one another, for the purpose of re-creating and reinforcing those feelings of joy. For engagement on a separate day, teachers will provide students with physical fun activities such as arts or crafts or even playing games to engage their minds and help them pay more attention. They can log their feelings about these activities in their journals, exploring the sensation of being in the "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The next day will incorporate the exploration of Relationships, where students' participation will heavily rely on their communication with each other and engage by actively interacting and listening. Once they communicate with one another about their experiences or about their personal selves, they will be asked to express kind words to one another and identify their strengths for each other. The purpose is to solidify the students' relationships with their peers and create harmony within a classroom setting. Along with this, they will write a letter of gratitude to a person in their lives who mean very much to them. On another day, Meaning will be explored by discussing challenges students face and the effects those challenges orchestrate on their lives. They will be asked to express these challenges and their feelings that arise at the thoughts of them. For this exercise, Rombouts et al.'s (2022) experimental design can be a source of inspiration in which teachers will guide students in creating solutions for their challenges and developing strength to face them. The presence of the teachers will also create a sense of support and acknowledgment for the students' issues and they can even offer individual consultation outside classroom time to help them cope better. Through this, students can feel supported for their dilemmas alongside each other and even develop new ideas on strengthening their resilience against them. Lastly, they will understand the significance of Accomplishment, in which the teachers will guide them on focusing on the success of their challenges rather than the failures and setbacks. The students will be asked to imagine the success of their hard work and savor the feeling before constructing plans and ideas on how to get there. Rather than dwelling on the hardships of the journey, the goal will be to focus on the sensation of reaching the successful end. The application of each PERMA construct with these activities will be administered on separate days on repetition. At the end of the academic year, the PERMA-Profiler (Butler & Kern 2016) will be administered again for pre-post test measures.

Seligman's (2002) theory of character strengths will be explored every day for the other 20 minutes of the hour. The beginning of this intervention will be commenced with the VIA Survey of Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) in order for the students to discover their personal strengths and become aware of their own strong virtues. Since there are 24 different character strengths (Park et al., 2004), each day will explore a different character strength, having a discussion about it and then doing activities to exercise it. The school days will circulate on each character strength, with a different exercise on a day of a repeated character strength. Teachers can assign optional homework for students to practice character strengths outside the classroom and log it into their journals. Similar to Seligman et al. (2009),

students will be initiated to comprehend each character strength and be encouraged to identify which strengths they resonate with the most. This will involve a discussion, with students breaking into groups and deliberating on the strength of the day along with providing examples on how they have utilized that strength in different scenarios. This may also strengthen the social bond between classmates and enhance communication skills.

The fixed administration of the PERMA model and character strengths will occur on a daily basis of the curriculum. The exploration of one PERMA variable and one character strength along with their exercises will utilize 40 minutes of the given hour of the program each day. The remaining 20 minutes will be utilized by gratitude, mindfulness, hope, kindness, optimism, and happiness exercises, alternating on different days of the curriculum. For gratitude exercises, students will write down a number of aspects of their life they are grateful and aspects they desire to harbor (Heckendorf et al., 2019, Tong et al., 2021). The choice to share about current or desired thankful aspects may be optional but they will be encouraged to voice it out, in order to feel a true sense of gratefulness. The gratitude exercises will also incorporate visualization exercises, where the youngsters imagine the achievement of their goals with passionate feeling and practice manifestation of their desires. Teachers can make daily gratitude journaling an option for the students, demonstrating their well-being benefits. Mindfulness exercises will mostly incorporate deep breathing exercises and meditation, where students will be guided with calming music or soothing sounds to quieten their minds. The teachers will lower the tone of their voices and guide the students to bring their focus onto the present rather than the rumination of the past or the worry of the future. The mindfulness exercises will alternate between meditative activities or deep breathing and act as stress relievers for the students in the midst of the academic curriculum (Maykel & Bray, 2020).

For optimism, the method utilized by Barouda et al. (2024) will be replicated, in which students will be initially asked to define optimism in their own words and describe some of the challenges or pressures they face. Teachers will then introduce the concept of positive thinking, educating the scholars on approaching their challenges and goals with a sense of optimism and positivity. Students will imagine the opposite side of a negative side, enhancing their creative thinking to perceive difficult situations in diversely optimistic lenses. They will be requested to write down positive statements in their journals about themselves and their journeys and flip negative statements that they encounter generally. In this exercise, teachers must emphasize the importance of taking positive action as well, encouraging scholars to apply their positive thinking in reality-based undesirable situations. The aim of this is to eliminate negative thoughts and ideas in their heads and teach them to embrace life with an optimistic brain and attitude. The intervention of hope has a similar beginning of describing challenges and tough goals from the students. Once they do, teachers will ask them to list out constructive paths and solutions on achieving those goals and even secondary options to pursue if the primary solutions hypothetically fail, helping them understand that every situation has a solution. With this approach, they can learn constructive life planning with a hopeful attitude to battle challenges.

The interventions of happiness and kindness will encompass activities for students to engage with the class and one another. For happiness, teachers can help the students take a mental break by showing humorous pictures, videos and cartoons to elevate the classroom's positive emotion. For kindness, students will be asked to express kind statements about themselves and each other, with occasional gift giving and positive letter writing for one another. They will also be encouraged to perform three random acts of kindness outside the classroom and log them into their journals, detailing feelings associated with them (Shillington et al. 2021).

Due to the necessity of school students being placed in classroom settings, it may not be feasible to incorporate nature-based positive psychology interventions in the daily curriculum of Anand. Yet it is possible to apply them in the form of optional retreats circulating on the weekends hosted by the teachers. These will be applied in a natural environment, created to

induce a sense a peace and calm for individuals. Similar to Chhajer & Hira (2024) these interventions will guide to mindful activities based in nature such as body relaxation, walking, breathing, using natural elements to create art. They will also include focusing on nature-based sounds, movement and visual surroundings and how they affect emotion, physical senses and awareness. Along with these interventions, the exploration of the students' "flow" is difficult for the same reasons. Due to financial and timing issues, the institution of creative activities to achieve "flow" may not be possible for the daily routine. Yet it is possible to educate the students about the concept of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and encourage them to engage in the art of discovering it through creative activities they enjoy. Educators of extracurricular activities in Indian school settings can teach the students about the benefits of "flow" and how it can enhance their creativity and their ability to engage with a variety of activities.

Theoretical Application of Anand

As described by Patel (2013), the focus on multiple primary subjects decreases as one escalates higher on the education scale, therefore, the amount of time children spend in school for lower and higher secondary education slightly decreases. This suggests that it is possible to tailor this program within the secondary education academic curriculum on a daily basis, by extending the length of a school by an hour. The administration of these interventions can take place either in the same hour or allotted into time slots placed in between the primary subjects on a school day. The same principles would be applied for the control group, whether their one hour of getting caught up with schoolwork would occur in a continuous frame of time or divided into chunks during the day. The tentative schedule of Anand's program structure on a school week is demonstrated in the table below:

Days of the Week	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
PPI for 1st 20 minutes (PERMA)	Positive Emotion	Engagement	Relationships	Meaning	Accomplishment
PPI for 2ND 20 minutes (Character strengths)	Character strength exploration	Character strength exploration	Character strength exploration	Character strength exploration	Character strength exploration
PPI for 3rd 20 minutes (Various)	Kindness	Gratitude	Optimism/Hope	Happiness	Mindfulness

Data Collection and Analysis

The very same questionnaires, which were administered in the beginning of the year, will be supplied again to students of both groups at the end of the school year to measure pre-post changes. The end questionnaires of the experimental group will be compared to their beginning questionnaires to assess whether the program implemented any positive changes in feelings due to the program's application. They will also be compared to the before-after questionnaires of the control group for similar purposes. The control group stands to be the component of comparison for the experimental study. The goal will be to analyze whether the program supported the hypothesis of increasing levels of happiness, gratitude, hope, life satisfaction and decreasing overall anxiety and depression. The journals of the experimental students, who consented to having their journals studied by the researchers, will be analyzed in the post test measures to validate whether the exercises brought an elevation in psychological health. The experimental students will also be provided with a survey about Anand, measuring how the students' felt about the program and whether they found it beneficial and worthy of permanent institution. The results can lay the

foundation of deciding whether the program is applicable for further expansion or changes for higher effectiveness.

Strengths and Limitations of Anand

Perhaps the strongest aspect of this program is its application in a real world setting with a desired population group to assess the effectiveness of the principles. Anand seeks to relieve students from the pressures of academic pursuits and take a mental break from their overwhelming studies. The key aspect of Anand is that it will be implemented in a school-based setting alongside their education to immunize students against the pressure of academic competition and success. The daily implementation of the program will further instill positive psychology principles that will benefit them in future professional pursuits along with personal developments. The initial experiment of the program will encourage microscopic analysis to determine the factors that do or do not work in the program. The malleability of the program is its rock-solid strength, allowing various factors to change the program curriculum in regards to the possible best outcomes for the students.

Despite the strong argument of the beneficial effects Anand promises to have on the youth, the existence of its limitations cannot be ignored. The extension of daily school time by an hour can be heavily contested and challenged for funding purposes and the fear of academic burnout for the students. Yet the decrease in school time for lower and higher secondary education students suggests the possibility of extension along with the argument of the program's crucial need for youth to battle psychological illnesses. The effective application of the program depends on the suppliers, the teachers who primarily have the responsibility of teaching the academic subject material to the students. The added-on responsibility of supplying the program effectively may interrupt their academic curriculum. Nonetheless, it is possible to achieve this through proper training of positive psychology principles for the educators beforehand. Another considered possibility is to bring in positive psychology experts or counselors, who are well-versed with the subject and encompass determination to teach students positive psychology with vigor and excitement. Another limitation is the efficacy of the program solely relies upon the answers provided by students, who may or may not accurately describe their feelings or answer the questionnaires truthfully. However, the questionnaires provided are accredited for psychological benefits and the students will be encouraged to answer with honesty in order to receive emotional support they require and help them feel understood by their educators and peers.

Conclusion

The structure and institution of Anand within Indian based academic settings for young adolescents seems to have promising effects on their mental health and well-being. The analysis of positive psychology components and their interventions serves as a template for the program's application and its foreseeable outcome for the youth population. The research on the mental health of Indian youth and the effects placed by the academic pressure crucially emphasizes the importance of psychological interventions to help them battle psychological distress. Factors such as the rigorous competition, toughness of the education curriculum, lack of mental health resources and overpopulation all contribute to the exacerbation of mental well-being of Indian adolescents and youth. The rising number of youth-based suicides in this nation constitute a public health crisis, as more and more individuals choose the path of self-harm in the face of developing challenges along with academic pressure. The early manifestation of psychological pain can have catastrophic events into their stage of adulthood, laying the foundation of unhealthy psychological mindsets which are unprepared to face further challenges. It is utmost important to implement a feasible, low-of-cost positive psychology interventions that encompass a uniform application for the youth of India. The incorporation of the PERMA model, character strengths, hope, optimism, gratitude, mindfulness, happiness and kindness can effectively boost mental well-being for adolescents. There can be a significant improvement in classroom management, overall self-esteem, hope, mental strength and a reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms. The particular aspect of Anand that sets it apart from other classroom-based interventions is that

it incorporates the exercises from effectively proven interventions into a daily curriculum within the academic routine. Along with learning the necessary academic subjects for the students' examinations, Anand can teach students psychological resilience and techniques on facing challenges in their life. The placing of the program with the academic environment is a feasible manner to measure the effectiveness along with the teaching of psychological survival skills. With the correct training and structural application, Anand can be the source of psychological support Indian youth need in this era.

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