

All the Bright Places: PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment) Models on Students

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Abstract

Well-being in the concept of positive psychology is referred to as *flourishing* or *PERMA*, which consists of five pillars: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship/Positive, Meaning, and Accomplishment/Achievement. By possessing these five pillars of PERMA, individuals tend to live a happier, more meaningful, and more beneficial life, develop positive relationships with others, and cultivate a positive mindset that fosters positive emotions while reducing negative ones. As a result, individuals are more likely to feel satisfied, happy, and able to live their lives to the fullest. This study aims to obtain a fit model between Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship/Positive, Meaning, and Accomplishment/Achievement and to examine the correlations among the PERMA constructs. The research employed a quantitative method by conducting model testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The subjects were 325 male and female university students. The measurement instruments used in this study were the Dispositional Positive Emotion Scale (DPES) to measure positive emotions, the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure meaning in life, the Life Engagement Test (LET) to assess engagement, the Positive Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) to measure positive relationships, and the Achievement Goal Questionnaire Revised (AGQR) to measure the achievement construct. The results indicate that the PERMA model (positive emotion with engagement, meaning, and accomplishment) fits, meaning that the modified model shows no differences between the model and the data. Thus, the theorized model fits the research data. These findings show that increasing mental health literacy plays an important role in encouraging healthy behavior and strengthening family resilience. Therefore, the implications of this study can serve as a foundation for developing more targeted educational programs and public policies to build healthy and resilient families.

Keywords: engagement, meaning, accomplishment, positive emotion, positive relationship.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the new normal enacted by the government, the COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet. The government urged the public to keep obeying the health protocol by wearing masks, keeping social distancing, and living a healthy lifestyle to maintain their physical and mental health. Within uncertainty, mental health has become a trending topic on various platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Professionals and even the influencers showed their concerns regarding mental health by creating relevant content (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Umucu & Lee, 2020). They are attempting to educate the public regarding the

importance of maintaining mental health to achieve happiness and a sense of well-being (Carr et al., 2024; Höltege et al., 2023). According to Elfida et al., (2021), an individual's ultimate happiness and sense of well-being is known as "flourishing" or "PERMA" (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship/Positive, Meaning, and Accomplishment/Achievement). For an individual, PERMA is a bridge to attain the ultimate happiness and sense of well-being indicating the optimum development of the well-established functions (Baourda et al., 2024; Benoit & Gabola, 2021). The following are the core elements of PERMA.





Figure 1. The Five Building Blocks of PERMA (Seligman, 2018)

An individual will "flourish" or achieve the ultimate sense of well-being through the five building blocks, have a good and balanced emotional quality, have a positive relationship with other people, live a meaningful life, have a good cause for other people, and have an autonomy or independence in accomplishments (Fowers et al., 2024)

According to Seligman (2018), some people have positive affect throughout their lives. People with high positive affect are comfortable most time; good things provide them with pleasure and joy. However, many people barely have a positive affect. Most of the time, they feel uncomfortable or even debilitated. Nevertheless, it is alterable. Emotion or positive affect is amenable to change (Seligman et al., 2005). According to the experts, positive emotion significantly affects the well-being of an individual (Adler, A & Seligman, 2023). Frederickson distinguished positive emotion from positive affect, in which positive emotion can be accessed willingly, involves long-lasting feelings, mostly is objectless and flows freely, presents in the form of emotions and physical sensations, and comprises gestures and mood; positive emotion facilitates an individual's behavior of interacting with their surroundings (Fredrickson, 2021). Therefore, students need to possess positive emotions in responding to the challenges or problems during their thesis writing effectively and efficiently.

Based on Frederickson's broaden-and-build theory, positive emotion broadens an individual's temporary ability to think, act, and develop their enduring resources. Through experiences of positive emotion, an individual can transform themselves to be more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthier. Positive emotion is fuel for a self-sustaining system. Particularly, it generates an upward spiral path leading to optimum functionality and emotional

well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). There are many examples of positive emotions among university students, such as being happy to be around the campus, having expectations for success, and being proud of an academic result. Positive emotion can initiate joy, happiness, and satisfaction. It is generated through the learning process and enjoyable tasks, such as making videos, field studies, and other strategies relevant to the characteristics of the students. Focus and concentration on a task is called "engagement" (Goh et al., 2022).

Engagement refers to an action by an individual with a full intention and focus on a task resulting in absolute joy and happiness (Romaní Rivera et al., 2024). In an academic setting, high concentration, happiness, and interest in learning activities result in engagement. The pleasant atmosphere and challenging tasks stimulate students to experience the flow. When students do their tasks, by using all their concentration and abilities, they will experience the flow and achieve a sense of high engagement (Wong & Roy, 2017). Students learning methods can affect the flow. It may vary depending on their characteristics and interests. Moreover, engagement in university can manifest in students' motivation to go to campus to participate in lectures, extracurriculars, organization, or interaction with fellow students, lecturers, and employees (Wang et al., 2023). The precious feeling of having a satisfactory relationship with others is the foundation of a positive relationship (Van Zyl et al., 2024).

According to Sin & Lyubomirsky (2009), students with intensive mutual attachment have high self-esteem, happiness, and a sense of well-being. Additionally, Shavaisi et al., (2024) stated that students engaging in social activities and having positive relationships tend to live happier than students with zero mutual attachment. A good relationship indicates the happiness of an individual (Goh et al., 2022). An individual should accommodate a maximum benefit and loss with others to create a balanced relationship and satisfaction through communication and mutual respect, and ultimate goodwill (Mayer & Gonot-Schoupinsky, 2024).

Students consider themselves to have a positive relationship when they feel cared for, loved, appreciated, and considered important by their peers, lecturers, and employees (Ryan et al., 2019). Moreover, (Sørensen et al., 2019) described that this positive relationship is a harmonious cooperation between all the elements during the activities on campus. Students engaging in positive relationships with various elements of the campus have found their meaning in life (Proyer et al., 2015). A meaningful life comprises a sense of worth, satisfaction, and logical purpose (Mitsea et al., 2024). Furthermore, Mayer & Gonot-Schoupinsky, (2024) described that the meaning of life is an individual's life purpose.

Adler & Seligman (2023) explained that meaningfulness is part of a better life dedicated to a bigger cause that affects an individual and their surroundings. For students, meaningfulness is created by mutual support, cooperation, and engagement in a bigger scope (Sørensen et

al., 2019). In other words, meaningfulness is an appreciation in searching for valuable or important things as the basis to achieve the goals on campus. The indicators of meaningfulness comprise the reason to still go to campus, complete tasks seriously, contribute to campus activities, and maintain a good GPA (Lianov, 2024). In achieving their academic goals, students significantly contribute to their life satisfaction. In achieving a goal, it is crucial to observe the expectations (Goh et al., 2022). Students can exercise, study, and prepare the materials to perform well in the test. According to (Keng et al., 2011), well-preparedness significantly contributes to lower anxiety, optimum performance, and good results.

Based on the description above, students having the five foundations of PERMA will have better happiness, a sense of well-being, and health. They will do their tasks with positive emotions and will develop a better self. Physical and mental health is also affected by positive emotions, positive relationships, meaningfulness, enthusiasm, and success (Van Zyl et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach, and the subjects consisted of 325 students from across Indonesia. The subjects completed the PERMA questionnaires (Butler & Kern, 2016). The correlations between the constructs can be observed through the fit model of the five constructs. A total of 325 subjects were given the researcher's adapted PERMA measurement instruments, namely the Dispositional Positive Emotion Scale (DPES) to measure positive emotions, the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure meaning in life, the Life Engagement Test (LET) to measure engagement, the Positive Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) to assess positive relationships, and the Achievement Goal Questionnaire Revised (AGQR) to measure the achievement construct. These instruments were used to determine whether the model of the three constructs fits and to examine the correlation model among the measured constructs. The measurement instruments used in this study

to assess the PERMA model included: a) Positive Emotion, measured using the Dispositional Positive Emotion Scale (DPES) by (Shiota et al., 2006). This scale consists of seven aspects joy, contentment, pride, love, compassion, amusement, and awe—with a total of 38 items, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7. b) Meaning in Life, measured using the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger et al., (2006). The MLQ assesses the presence of meaning in life (the subjective feeling that one's life is meaningful) and the search for meaning in life (an individual's motivation and orientation to find meaning). It consists of 10 items using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7. c) Engagement, measured using the Life Engagement Test (LET) by Scheier et al., (2006). This instrument measures life engagement, defined as the extent to which a person is involved in activities that are meaningful to them. It consists of 6 items using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. d) Positive Relationship, measured using the Positive Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) developed by (Mitskidou et al., 2021). It consists of 35 items with response options ranging from 1 to 5. e) Achievement, measured using the Achievement Goal Questionnaire Revised (AGQR) developed by Kohoulat et al., (2016) This questionnaire contains 15 items with response options ranging from 1 to 5.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) is an analytical technique that allows for the simultaneous testing of a series of relationships. The relationships are built between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent variables. Each variable can take the form of an indicator or a construct built from several indicators. SEM is an integrated approach between two analyses, namely indicator analysis and path analysis. (Afthanorhan et al., 2020) stated that 'structural equation models are well recognized as the most important statistical method to serve the above purpose and can be applied to many fields'. SEM uses indicator methods to present data for achieving research objectives and can apply many models to achieve research goals and problem statements. There are five constructs used in this research: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship / Positive, Meaning, dan Accomplishment / Achievement.

RESEARCH RESULTS
Table 1. PERMA Model Fit

Model	χ^2 (sig)	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA Confident Interval 90%			SRMR
						Lower	Upper	P-value	
2 Factor Unmodified	280.684 (0.000)	70	0,880	0,844	0,096	0,085	0,108	0,000	0,064
2 Factor Modified	108.762 (0.000)	61	0,973	0,959	0,049	0,034	0,064	0,521	0,039

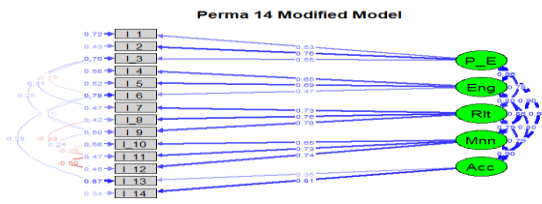


Figure 2. Modified PERMA Models

Based on the unmodified model, the results showed $\chi^2 = 280.684$ ($p < 0.05$), $df = 70$, $CFI = 0.880$, $TLI = 0.844$, $RMSEA = 0.096$ (lower = 0.085, Upper = 0.108, $p < 0.05$),

$SRMR = 0.064$. The fir model test results indicated the differences between the model and the data. In other words, the model did not fit the data. After the modification of the model by using the partial correlation, the results showed $\chi^2 = 108.762$ ($p < 0.05$), $df = 61$, $CFI = 0.973$, $TLI = 0.959$, $RMSEA = 0.049$ (lower = 0.034, Upper = 0.064, $p \geq 0.05$), $SRMR = 0.039$. It means that the modified model showed no difference between the modal and the data. Thus, the theorized model fitted the data. The results can be seen in table "Modified". The table shows that the factor loadings have values between 0.355 to 0.804.

Table 2. Unmodified PERMA Models

Dimension	Item	Estimate	Std.Err	Z-value	P-value	Note
Positive Emotion	I1	0,522	0,055	9,469	0,000	P
	I2	0,745	0,051	14,659	0,000	P
	I3	0,552	0,055	10,128	0,000	P
Engagement	I4	0,625	0,055	11,465	0,000	P
	I5	0,682	0,054	12,669	0,000	P
	I6	0,463	0,057	8,109	0,000	P
Relationship	I7	0,708	0,051	13,762	0,000	P
	I8	0,703	0,052	13,626	0,000	P
	I9	0,715	0,051	13,928	0,000	P
Meaning	I10	0,613	0,053	11,537	0,000	P
	I11	0,623	0,053	11,776	0,000	P
	I12	0,667	0,052	12,810	0,000	P
Accomplishment	I13	0,359	0,059	6,118	0,000	P
	I14	0,804	0,052	15,318	0,000	P

In the table above, the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) can be seen, which show the validity of the indicators (items) for each dimension of the PERMA construct: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment. All items have significant loadings ($p <$

0.001), indicating that all indicators are statistically valid. The dimensions with the highest loadings are as follows: Positive Emotion: I2 (0.745) as the strongest item. Engagement: I5 (0.682) as the strongest item. Relationship: I9 (0.715) as the strongest item. Meaning: I12 (0.667) as the strongest item. Accomplishment: I14 (0.804) as a very strong item.

Table 3. Modified PERMA Models

Dimension	Item	Estimate	Std.Err	Z-value	P-value	Note
Positive Emotion	I1	0,529	0,054	9,716	0,000	P
	I2	0,751	0,050	14,909	0,000	P
	I3	0,545	0,054	10,106	0,000	P
Engagement	I4	0,645	0,054	11,969	0,000	P
	I5	0,689	0,053	12,918	0,000	P
	I6	0,462	0,056	8,271	0,000	P
Relationship	I7	0,724	0,052	14,042	0,000	P
	I8	0,754	0,051	14,880	0,000	P
	I9	0,705	0,052	13,515	0,000	P

Meaning	I10	0,644	0,054	11,913	0,000	P
	I11	0,717	0,055	13,012	0,000	P
	I12	0,734	0,053	13,953	0,000	P
Accomplishment	I13	0,355	0,058	6,132	0,000	P
	I14	0,804	0,051	15,686	0,000	P

Based on the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) after the perma model was modified, each row shows the strength of the relationship (loading factor) between the item and the perma dimension, indicating that all perma items are valid ($p < 0.001$). The model has been modified and all factor loadings have increased. Item i13 has a loading score of 0.355, which is still statistically significant but shows a low contribution. Then the correlation results between constructs can be seen in table 4 below;

Table 4. Inter-factor Correlation

	Positive Emotion	Engagement	Relationship	Meaning	Accomplishment
Positive Emotion	1,000				
Engagement	0.960***	1,000			
Relationship	0.784***	0.800***	1,000		
Meaning	0.900***	0.863***	0.790***	1,000	
Accomplishment	0.900***	0.802***	0.790***	0.900***	1,000

Note. *** = $p < 0.001$, ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$

Based on the results of the correlation table, it can be concluded that all correlations fall within the range of 0.784 to 0.960, indicating that the five PERMA dimensions are strongly interrelated. The correlation between positive emotion and engagement is 0.960, which is an almost perfect relationship, meaning that individuals who experience positive emotions also tend to show high engagement. Meanwhile, the correlation between meaning and accomplishment is 0.900, as well as the correlations between positive emotion and meaning (0.900) and between Positive Emotion and accomplishment (0.900), indicating strong relationships. The correlation between relationship and meaning is 0.790, and between relationship and accomplishment is also 0.790, which likewise indicates strong correlations. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the five PERMA dimensions are strongly and significantly correlated, and there are no negative or weak correlations.

DISCUSSION

According to Fredrickson & Joiner, (2002), an individual needs to develop positive emotions by altering their state of conscience and opening their mind. As scholars, students should be open to change and the latest developments to improve their skills, networking, environment, knowledge, and lifestyles. Adaptable students will achieve happiness through engagement.

Wang et al., (2023) described that engagement is an individual's dedicated and committed participation in an activity. It unites their activities and makes them find peace, focus, and joy in doing their tasks. Accordingly, (Adler, A & Seligman, 2023) explained that engagement is a situation

where an individual is invested in an activity and committed to it in the best possible way. Moreover, (Romaní Rivera et al., 2024) defined engagement as a positive and meaningful thing and also a motivation marked with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high energy, resilience, struggle, and sturdiness. Dedication is characterized by self-worth, enthusiasm, inspiration, value, and challenge. Additionally, absorption is characterized by a full concentration on a task.

By engaging in an activity, an individual will attain happiness, satisfaction, and peace. Positive emotion emerges due to interpersonal relationships. A good and harmonious relationship provides a happier and more peaceful life. A relationship is a social interaction between individuals leading to happiness (Mayer & Gonot-Schoupinsky, 2024). Therefore, it is vital to engage in a mutual attachment to connect with other people (Mitsea et al., 2024). Accordingly, (Van Zyl et al., 2024) explained that a positive relationship between an individual with their parents, siblings, peers, and colleagues will positively contribute to the support of the individual during a difficult time and thus create a meaningful life.

According to Goh et al., (2022), meaning refers to how an individual lives a meaningful life, in which all their actions or behaviors are motivated by their purpose in life. Goh, et al. (2021) also stated that generally, an individual's experience of life meaning is seen as the basis notion that an individual can achieve happiness and a sense of well-being in life. Therefore, to find the meaning, it takes a judgement process and particular skills to find the meaning of life. For example, an individual who is invested in helping others through community service certainly must be attracted to all

the activities so that they can do their best for others. Therefore, life becomes more meaningful for themselves and others. They are satisfied with achieving their purposes.

The sense of well-being will flourish more if an individual thrives better and achieves their life purpose (Shavaishi et al., 2024). They will be happy and satisfied once they achieve their goals. Additionally, (Wang et al., 2023) stated that the main motivation to achieve goals is improving performance for the best result and satisfaction. By giving their best, an individual will be more confident, happy, and have a high sense of well-being (Romaní Rivera et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide important implications for efforts to strengthen family resilience in Indonesia. The finding that mental health literacy has a significant relationship with health behavior indicates that increasing families' knowledge, understanding, and awareness of mental health issues can encourage them to adopt healthy behaviors more consistently. Therefore, mental health education-based interventions need to be developed and expanded by government institutions, educational organizations, and public health practitioners to enhance families' capacity to maintain both their physical and psychological well-being. In addition, the model fit obtained through SEM indicates that the relationship between mental health literacy and health behavior is stable and can serve as a foundation for designing more targeted and data-based family resilience programs. Public policy implementation can also be strengthened through the expansion of counseling programs, family consultation services, and accessible information media so that families are able to build adaptive, resilient, and empowered internal support systems. Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that strengthening mental health literacy not only benefits individuals but also serves as a crucial foundation for building healthy, resilient, and prosperous families.

Based on the results of the study, several suggestions can be considered for future research. First, subsequent studies are expected to expand the number and diversity of participants, for example by involving students from different educational levels or other community groups, so that the PERMA model can be tested in a broader context. Second, the use of mixed methods can be considered to gain a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences related to positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and achievement. Third, future research may also include additional variables such as personality factors, social support, or academic stress to examine their additional contributions to the PERMA model. Furthermore, developing and revalidating the instruments across different cultural groups will strengthen the validity and reliability of PERMA measurements. Thus, future studies may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of psychological well-being among students as well as the wider population.

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