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Well-being Index of Elementary School Parents and Students' Perspectives in Batu Pahat, Johor

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Abstract

Students' lives can be quite stressful as a lot of pressure and stress may affect their well-being at school. The purpose of this study was to create and test the tools that could measure elementary school well-being based on four components: environment, social, achievement, and health, which were recreated by following both cognitive and affective aspects. Two schools in the district of Batu Pahat, Johor, were chosen as sampling sites by providing the printed questionnaire to be answered by students in grades five and six as well as their parents. In this study, reliability analysis, descriptive information, and mean analysis were tested to measure the reliability and the elementary school well-being index. The mean data were drafted to observe the precision between students and parents. The results showed that parents' perceptions of their children's well-being were precise but slightly higher than what their children felt at school. Besides, the results showed that the students did well in the social element with a mean value of 4.450, followed by health, environment, and achievement with a mean score of 4.152, 4.006, and 3.900, respectively. The outcomes of the study might help educational institutions, government officials, and policymakers to teach good values and raise awareness about student attitudes toward their studies.

1. Introduction

Well-being is a concept that is commonly and extensively used, yet it is hardly explicitly understood. It is commonly used to describe how people are doing or feeling in a certain location, culture, or society. It is also associated with happiness, wealth, or health in public debate and mainstream media (Waldegrave & Cameron, 2010). Among all categories of groups, students are found to have different experiences across multiple life domains in their schools, prompting the creation of a domain-specific well-being index.

Previous international studies had discovered that students had a high rate of psychological diseases and mental illnesses, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Aqeel et al., 2021; Faisal et al., 2022; Fu et al., 2021;

Wathelet et al., 2020). Psychological diseases and mental illnesses may also come from a student's low level of well-being at school. Because of this condition, schools in Malaysia are given the responsibility of improving the well-being of students. The measurement of the wellbeing index will be effective if both cognitive and affective aspects are considered. Well-being, according to Opdenakker & Van Damme (2000), is a cognitive output, whereas accomplishment or achievement is an affective output. However, student well-being is also used as an effective outcome since the school's or students' well-being becomes an input to the school's performance, eventually boosting students' academic accomplishment.

As stated by European Education Area, well-being is a condition in which students may reach their full potential, study, and explore indicatively. In addition, a prosperous student can also form and develop positive interactions with others and have a sense of engagement in their school. According to Kelly (2007), there are multiple strategies for determining whether students are performing well or not. He explains that many categories should be examined more thoroughly besides identifying whether students are happy at their school or not. The research should investigate whether the school is doing well for its students and society in general, and should follow both cognitive and affective aspects.

2. Literature Review

WHO established The European Network of Health Promoting Schools (ENHPS) in 1992, and 37 European nations joined ENHPS in 1997. Simultaneously, ENHPS hosted a conference that established 10 principles for enhancing student health in schools, including democracy, equity, empowerment and competent acts, school environment, curriculum, teacher training, achievement measurement, cooperation, community, and resilience (Burgher et al., 1999). Following the WHO initiative, Western Pacific countries have agreed to accept the School Health Improvement Framework, which consists of six components: school health policy, school physical environment, social environment, community relations, personal health skills, and health services (St Leger, 1999). In short, by following both cognitive and affective aspects the framework can be reduced to four components: environment, social, achievement, and health.

A variety of disciplines are used in the subject of qualities of environmental experience at school, and its effects on student well-being. Creating a dynamic environment such as clean, comfortable, calm, and safe is crucial to meet the needs of students. It is to encourage them to improve the existing talents, passions, and knowledge while also actively develop new ones. According to Hannah (2013) and Isa et al. (2019), adopting a clean and comfortable classroom environment in the school is the best practice to promote positive learning development. Not only that, Gilavand & Jamshidnezhad (2016) also said that noise, insufficient light, overcrowded classes, and improper classroom arrangement are examples of variables that make students uncomfortable and will subsequently distract students in class. Previous research regarding adapting learning environments and student well-being measurement were conducted by Helou et al., (2019), Wasson et al., (2016), and Zandvliet et al., 2019).

Social relationships with others at school also have an impact on student well-being. At school age, relationships and social interaction are much more important to children and adolescents than other factors. Chu et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationships between social support and well-being in children and adolescents and found a strongly associated relationship between social support and well-being as a result. This finding was supported by Tennant et al. (2015) who stated that teacher support had positive correlation to the social–emotional well-being. Not only the relationship with the teacher, the relationship among peers in the school also reliably predicted the health and well-being outcomes. Furthermore, Kern et al. (2015) and Littlecott et al. (2018) also measured student well-being in schools by including supporting staff relations as input.

The past studies constantly focused on students' views of the school's goal orientation, their description of practices and experiences to be successful, the achievement of personal progress, and how these impact students' goal pursuit, self-perceptions, and overall well-being (Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; Seligman, 2012; Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013). According to Seligman, (2012) and Dweck et al., (2014), students with the right mindsets will promote long-term learning and then achieve happiness and well-being. If the students have their own goals and can pursue them, they will face fewer difficulties while at school if they follow the guidelines set by the school.

Health issues can also influence the students' experience at school since they affect student attendance, involvement, and motivation at school (Lum et al., 2017). Hung et al., (2020) also added that poor overall illness and mental health have a detrimental impact on academic achievements and general well-being. Many previous articles summarize the current trends in student well-being, followed by an outline of the possible explanations of the situations. This built a strong need why student well-being research need to be conducted very often. It explains why schools, colleges and universities have begun to prioritize student well-being as an institutional priority.

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3. Purpose of The Study

The main objective of this study was to create and test the tools that could measure the Elementary School Well-being using four components which included environment, social, achievement, and health. Apart from taking opinions from the perspective of the students themselves, this study also took the opinions of their parents. This was because the condition of a student could also be seen by those who were close to the students or third parties. It was also to identify if their parents were having conversations with their children or not. Based on the previous studies, there were four hypotheses in this study:
H1: environment has a higher impact on student well-being.
H2: social relationships have higher impact on student well-being.
H3: achievement has a higher impact on student well-being.
H4: health has a higher impact on student well-being.

4. Conceptual Framework and Research Design

The tool was built based on four categories: (1) environment, (2) social, (3) achievement, and (4) health as independent variables while the dependent variable was the Elementary School Well-being Index depicted in Figure 1. The framework was established based on past research which consisted of Independent Variables (IVs) and dependent variable (DV). For demographic profile and independent variable, the number of questions is provided in Table 1.

Figure 1 *Conceptual framework*

5. Methodology

Table 1 *Sample size*

Section	Questions or Items	Number of Questions
A	Demographic Profile	3
B (Independent Variables)	Environment	5
	Social	5
	Achievement	5
	Health	5

5.1 Data Collection and Participations

The data was collected by providing the printed questionnaire to be answered by students in grades five and six as well as their parents. Two different schools were chosen to measure the index for comparison purposes. The school selection was done based on the students' current achievement levels. Both schools were found to have good annual achievement records. The questionnaire served as the study instrument and researchers' observation checklist. On the part of the students, this survey had 120 respondents from school A and 80 respondents from school B while on the part of the parents, this survey had 14 respondents from school A and 20 respondents from school B as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 *Demographic*

		School A		School B	
Variables	Items	N	%	N	%
		Students			
Gender	Male	50	41.7	47	58.8
	Female	70	58.3	33	41.3
Race	Malay	119	99.2	80	100
	Chinese	0	0	0	0
	Indian	0	0	0	0

	Others	1	0.8	0	0
		Parent			
Gender	Male	1	7.1	47	58.8
	Female	13	92.9	33	41.3
Race	Malay	14	100	80	100
	Chinese	0	0	0	0
	Indian	0	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	0	0

5.2 Data Analysis and Measures

The questionnaire used in this study included both positive and negative words. However, before analyzing the data, the negative items were changed into positive items to obtain fairer and more accurate results. The value was measured using a five-point likert scale: (1) as strongly disagree, (2) as slightly disagree, (3) as moderate, (4) as slightly agree, and (5) as strongly agree. A statistical tool known as Statistical Package for Statistic (SPSS) version 26 was employed in this research study to execute crucial tests such as reliability analysis, descriptive information, and mean analysis. The data was measured using a mean scale interpreted as low, medium, and high degree, as shown in Table 3. The mean data were then drafted using Origin-PRO software to determine whether the precision between students and parents was accurate or not. The results of data accuracy between parents and students were observed in the graph by observing the proximity or closeness between the two data sets. The precision helped to conclude that parents did have conversations with their children about how well their children were doing at school.

Table 3 *Mean value interpretation*

Value	Interpretation
3.34 – 5.00	High
1.67 – 3.33	Medium
0.00 – 1.66	Low

6. Results and Discussions

Cronbach's Alpha values for independent variables were more than 0.7. Cronbach Alpha values greater than 0.7, according to Sekaran (2009), indicated highly strong reliability. Consequently, all the items in the questionnaire were trustworthy and appropriate for obtaining complete data. The results of the Cronbach Alpha test showed that the independent variables of students at school A, students at school B, parents at school A, and parents at school B were 0.768, 0.720, 0.720 and 0.797, respectively.

The high mean score indicated a high impact on student well-being. The mean score was proportional to the impact of student well-being. In the other word, the higher the mean score, the stronger was the impact of student well-being of school A and school B. According to Figure 2, average group of participants from the group of parents in school B shows the highest mean score with the score of 4.223. It was slightly higher than other groups which were students in school B, students in school A and parents in school a with the mean scores of 4.072, 4.054 and 4.1534, respectively. The data showed that their parents perceived that their children did well at school more than what their children perceived about school since the mean score data from both group of parents were slightly higher than mean score of their children. Besides, although all mean scores did not differ much due to the two schools that were in the same district with the same culture, the data showed that students from school B were doing better than students from school A.

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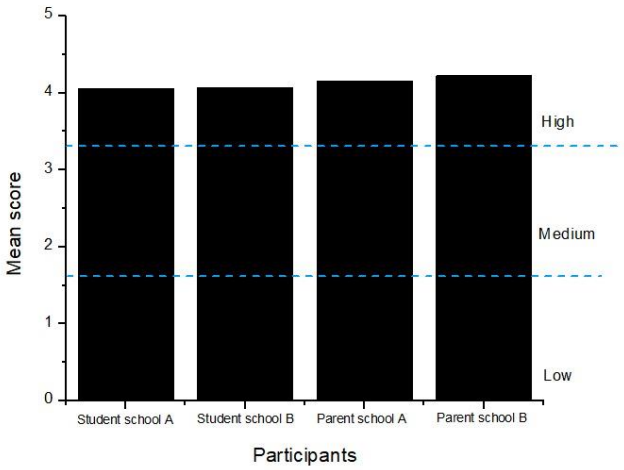

Figure 2 *Total mean score of participants*

Figure 3 shows the total mean score for independent variable where each element consists of environment, social, achievement, and health indicated as items a, b, c, and d, respectively. Each group is scaled separately as shown in Figure 2 (b) and the total of all groups is as shown in Figure 2 (a) to analyze and identify the element of the independent variable that is more dominant. It showed that the students did well in social element with the mean value of 4.450, followed by health, environment, and achievement with the mean scores of 4.152, 4.006 and 3.900, respectively.

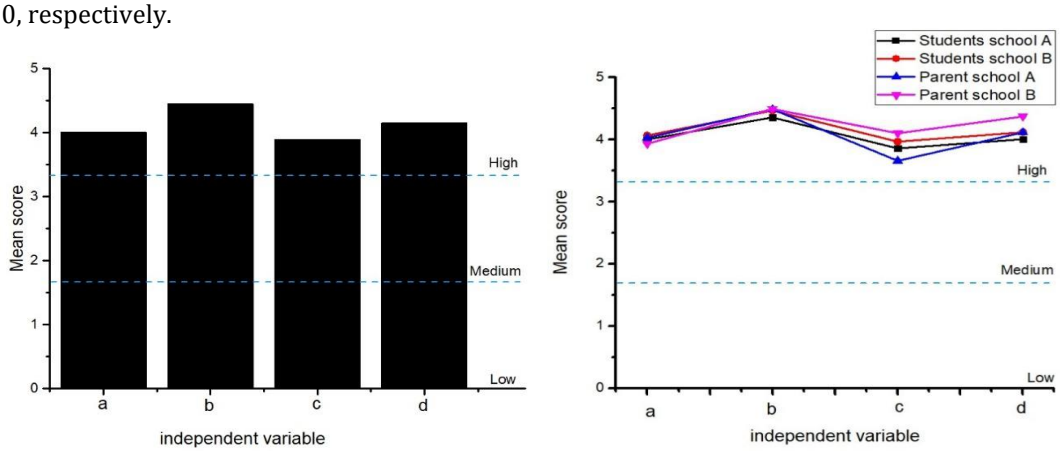

Figure 3 *Total mean score for independent variable: (a) Sum up total for all group, (b) Scaled separately for each group*

Figure 4 shows the pattern of overall mean scores for every item in each element including environment, social, achievement, and health indicated as items a, b, c, and d, respectively. The graph in Figure 2(a) indicates the mean score for the element of environment. An average group of participants agreed that the school was safe for children with the highest mean score for item a4. All groups of participants except for parents in school B contributed towards the highest score for item a5. However, item a3 showed the lowest mean score. The perception of parents in school A and students in school B fell towards a moderate level. Items for a1 and a5 had high precision data among all groups as indicated by the closeness of data.

The graph in Figure 2(b) indicates the mean score for social element. An average group of participants agreed that the teacher was kind to the students or their children with high precision data among all groups. An average group of parents at school A had the highest confidence level that the teachers were motivated to teach in class than other groups. The data for item b3 showed that students in school B had better relationship with their friends than students in school A.

The graph In Figure 2I Indicates the mean score for achievement element. An average group of parents at school B had the highest confidence level that their children were doing well in their studies. This was due to the highest mean score for all items in achievement element except for item c5. However, it contradicted with the results from their children which showed the lowest mean score for all items in achievement element except for item c2. The most precise data among all the items in achievement element was item c4. The graph in Figure 2(d) indicates the mean score for health element. According to the graph, an average group of parents at school B also got the highest mean score for items d1, d2, and d3 which indicated that their children were calm and

energetic when entering the school and did not easily become sick. The overall mean scores for School A and School B for students and their parents' perceptions are shown in Table 4.

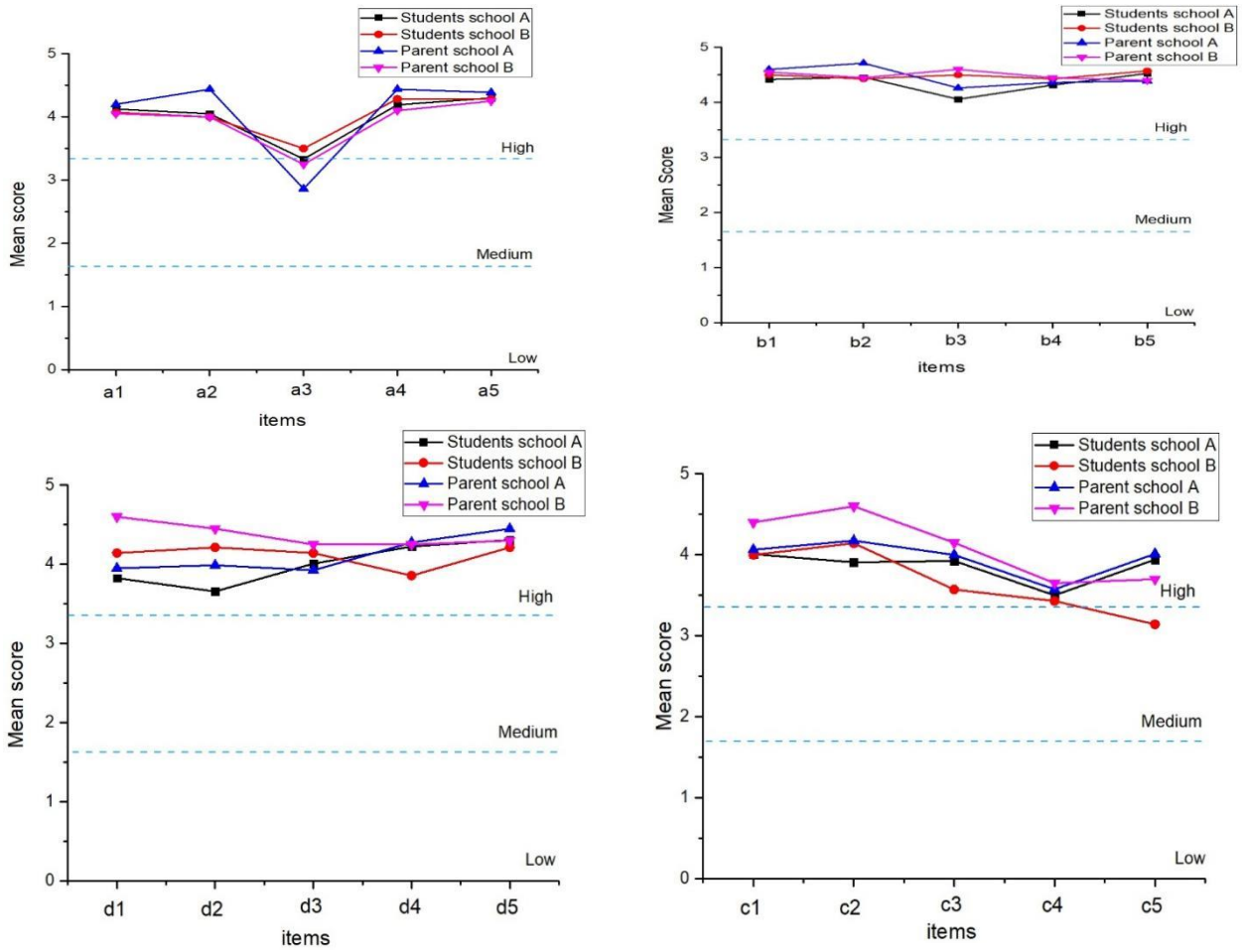

Figure 4 *Impact on student well-being for every item in each element: (a) environment, (b) social, (c) achievement, and (d) health*

Table 4 *Mean score of School A and School B for student and parent perception*

Elements	Label	Items		Mean (School A)		Mean (School B)	
		Students	Parents	Students	Parents	Students	Parents
Environment	a1	My school environment is clean	My child's school is clean	4.125	4.071	4.200	4.050
	a2	My classroom condition is comfortable to study	My child's classroom condition is comfortable to study	4.050	4.000	4.438	4.000
	a3	My school environment is calm and quiet	My child's school environment is calm and quiet	3.333	3.500	2.863	3.250
	a4	I feel safe at school	My child feels safe at school	4.192	4.286	4.438	4.100
	a5	The school environment makes me happy	My child feels happy with the school environment	4.30	4.286	4.388	4.250
Social	b1	Teachers are always kind to me	Teachers are always kind to my child	4.417	4.500	4.600	4.550
	b2	Teachers are motivated teaching in class	Teachers are motivated to teach in class	4.458	4.429	4.713	4.450
	b3	I don't have any problem with my peer	My child doesn't have any problem with his/her peer	4.058	4.500	4.263	4.60
	b4	School administration ease my affair	School administration ease my affair	4.317	4.429	4.363	4.450
	b5	Supporting staff in my school are friendly	Supporting staff in my child's school is friendly	4.525	4.571	4.388	4.400

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Achievement	c1	I am fully prepared to take the tests and exams.	My children are fully prepared to take the tests and exams.	4.008	4.000	4.063	4.400
	c2	I will finish my homework on time	My children will finish his/her homework on time.	3.908	4.143	4.175	4.6
	c3	My teacher's lesson topic was simple for me to grasp	Teacher's lesson topic was simple for my child to grasp	3.925	3.571	4.000	4.15
	c4	I will study without being told	My child will study without being told	3.500	3.429	3.575	3.65
	c5	I can help my friend with their study	My child can help their friend with study	3.942	3.143	4.013	3.7
Health	d1	I feel calm when I enter the school	My child feels calm when entering the school	3.825	4.143	3.950	4.6
	d2	I feel energetic when I'm at school	My child feels energetic when I'm at school	3.658	4.214	3.988	4.45
	d3	I don't get sick easily	My child doesn't get sick easily	4.008	4.143	3.925	1.75
	d4	My school provides early treatment facilities	My child's school provides early treatment facilities	4.225	3.857	4.275	4.25
	d5	I was exposed to personal health care at school	My child was exposed to personal health care at school	4.308	4.214	4.450	4.3

All the hypotheses are accepted in this research as shown in the summary findings table as shown in table 5. Hence, it can be concluded that the elementary school well-being index based on students' and parents' perspectives is high. The students in elementary school are found to do very well in their social relationships as the most dominant factor that has affected the well-being index.

Table 5 *Status of research hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Status
H1: environment has a higher impact on student well-being	Accepted
H2: H2: social relationships have higher impact on student well-being.	Accepted
H3: achievement has a higher impact on student well-being.	Accepted
H4: health has a higher impact on student well-being.	Accepted

7. Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, the educational institutions, government officials, and policy makers should focus more on student academic achievement by establishing good values and raising student awareness of their attitude towards their studies. The results show that the students are under pressure in following the academic guidelines prepared by the academic administration, such as studying, finishing homework, and preparing to take tests and exams. All schools, without a doubt, have a goal orientation to ensure that a person who graduates from the school has the academic and moral achievement. However, academic achievement pressure from schools can increase stress and anxiety among students. It is crucial for the students to enjoy their school life and not feel too much pressure while achieving the school's goals. To achieve academic success, students must first ensure that they have the right goal and mindset. Students who that already have their own goal to achieve success will have a stronger mind to adapt to the guidelines set by the school, which will indirectly have an impact on student well-being. Besides, the study also concludes that parents' perceptions of their children's well-being are precise but slightly higher than what their children feel at school. The precision of data between parents and their children suggest that parents are having a conversation with their children about how well their children do at school. The school day activities with children demonstrate that parents are interested to know what is going on in their children's lives. This passion helps to improve the children's mental health, happiness, and well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

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