An integrated module of school students' academic attainment and life satisfaction by connecting soft skills and emotions

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Abstract

Soft skills have emerged as significant elements in students' academic success and personal pleasure, yet their place in the classroom remains up for discussion. Examining the interplay between cognitive abilities, emotional states associated with success, motivation, and self-control, and extracurricular activities, the authors find a positive correlation between academic performance and overall happiness. The research included data from 603 students in grades five through twelve. Soft skills were found to be In contrast, we found only a direct correlation between life happiness and the presence of soft skills and accomplishment feelings. Both "soft" talents and "hard" skills were positively correlated with extracurricular involvement. These findings are the first to highlight the significance of nonacademic elements like soft skills and extracurricular activities in a model of students' academic success and happiness.

Keywords: Integrated model, extracurricular activities, self-regulated learning and hard" skills
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Introduction

The National Research Council all agree on the importance of soft skills to an individual's happiness and success. They have not been properly incorporated into other learning paradigms, however, and their value in the classroom is still up for question. Together with achievement extracurricular activities, wellbeing. Taking students' life happiness into account allows us to see them as whole people rather than simply pupils, which in turn improves our ability to teach them and care for them (Suldo et al., 2006; Weber et al., 2016). Despite the fact that academic accomplishment is a common measure of success in school and has a significant impact on people's professional lives (Spinath, 2012), research has found only a small correlation between it and students' happiness (Ng et al., 2015; Suldo et al., 2006). In other words, it may be helpful for educators, school psychologists, and policymakers to view academic success and life satisfaction as a whole in order to better understand how soft skills, learning-related variables, and activities all work together to favour them.

The integrated perspective of school students' academic attainment and life satisfaction by connecting soft skills and emotions is a multifaceted approach that recognizes the importance of not only academic success but also the emotional and interpersonal development of students. This approach focuses on the interconnectedness of various factors that contribute to a student's overall well-being and success. Here's an outline of

key points related to this integrated perspective:

1. **Academic Attainment:**

- Acknowledge the traditional emphasis on academic achievement as an important aspect of a student's education.

2. **Soft Skills Development:**

- Highlight the significance of soft skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, and adaptability.
- Explain how soft skills are essential for success in both academic and real-life scenarios.

3. **Emotional Intelligence:**

- Introduce the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) and its role in students' lives.
- Discuss how EQ helps students manage stress, build relationships, and make informed decisions.

4. **Connection Between Soft Skills and Emotions:**

- Emphasize the link between soft skills and emotional intelligence.
- Explain how self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills are intertwined with soft skills development.

5. ***Life Satisfaction:****

- Define life satisfaction as a holistic measure of well-being that extends beyond academics.
- Showcase research findings that correlate emotional well-being, soft skills, and life satisfaction.

6. **Benefits of Integration:**

- Highlight the advantages of integrating academic, soft skills, and emotional development.
- Discuss how this integration prepares students for challenges in the real world and promotes resilience.

7. **Practical Strategies:**

- Offer practical strategies for educators and parents to foster soft skills and emotional intelligence in students.
- Provide examples of classroom activities, programs, and initiatives that support this integration.

8. **Challenges and Solutions:**

- Acknowledge potential challenges in implementing this integrated approach.
- Propose solutions and best practices for overcoming these challenges.

9**. **Case Studies and Success Stories:****

- Share real-life case studies and success stories of schools or programs that have successfully integrated soft skills and emotional development into their curriculum.

10. ****Future Outlook:****

- Discuss the potential long-term benefits for students who have received this integrated education.
- Explore how this approach can contribute to a more balanced and fulfilled adult life.

11. ****Call to Action:****

- Encourage educators, parents, policymakers, and researchers to collaborate in further developing and implementing this integrated perspective.
- Advocate for a more holistic and student-centered approach to education.

In conclusion, the integrated perspective of school students' academic attainment and life satisfaction through the connection of soft skills and emotions recognizes the multidimensional nature of education. It promotes the idea that academic success is just one facet of a student's overall well-being and future success, and that nurturing emotional intelligence and soft skills is equally vital.

The emotions that are directly related to learning activities and outcomes are called accomplishment emotions (Pekrun, 2006), and they have lately gained a lot of attention. They have a significant impact on students' motivation, SRL, and academic performance (Mega et al., 2014; Pekrun et al., 2002, 2007), making them an integral part of students' school lives. The control-value hypothesis (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2007) posits that students who are experiencing positive success emotions are more likely to engage in metacognitive thinking, employ innovative learning techniques, and be more motivated to study. Negative feelings, on the other hand, would be counterproductive since they would lead students to adopt inflexible, inefficient study methods and dampen their drive and

curiosity about their coursework. Consequently, it is believed that achievement emotions affect academic performance both directly and indirectly However, a student's achievement feelings are also connected to their health and happiness. According to several studies, including those by Diener (2012), Heffner (2016), Karatzias et al. (2002), Hagenauer (2018), and King and dela Rosa (2019), accomplishment feelings show a positive correlation with happiness.

Recent recommendations have suggested that the intraindividual model should take into account all of the elements affecting the individual's trajectory during growth). Personal skills, which we will refer to as soft skills from here on out, were included by the writers among cognitive ability, SRL, motivation, and emotions.

Soft skills

The ability to control one's own emotions, actions, and thoughts is a soft skill (Park et al., 2004; Robles, 2012). When it comes to getting hired, advancing in one's career, and producing original work, soft skills are crucial (see, for example, Deming (2017), Heckman and Kautz (2012), the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2016)). Because of this, several international organisations have been researching the topic of fostering these individuals from a young age (European Commission, 2016; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012; Heckman, 2011; MIUR, 2018) and how to do it effectively. The multiple soft skill frameworks offered in the literature are not always apparent (see Bhagra& Sharma, 2018), and it is unclear what role they play in education. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has developed a three-part framework of soft skills that accounts for the evolving nature of both education and the economy in the twenty-first century (WEF, 2016). This basic idea has been recently applied to academic achievement (Feraco et al., 2021) and has important practical implications. Here, we zero down on the six WEF model "qualities": skills in initiative (the propensity to proactively take action) and leadership (the capacity to inspire others to work towards a common goal) Curiosity (the desire to learn and discover that drives people to explore and acquire new skills) Adaptability (the capacity to constructively regulate psycho-behavioral functioning in response to new, or uncertain, circumstances)

Extracurricular activities

Students' participation in ECA was investigated to see if it was associated with improved soft skills (Feraco et al., 2021), which is in high demand throughout the world (European Commission, 2016; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Most students' life would be incomplete without some form of organised extracurricular activity (ECA) (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). It allows students to test their limits, meet new people, make connections, discover who they are, acquire knowledge, and grow in other ways, including the development of "soft skills" have some leeway in deciding whether or not to participate in ECA and that schools could include ECA for ECA's potential impact on students' academic progress and well-being.

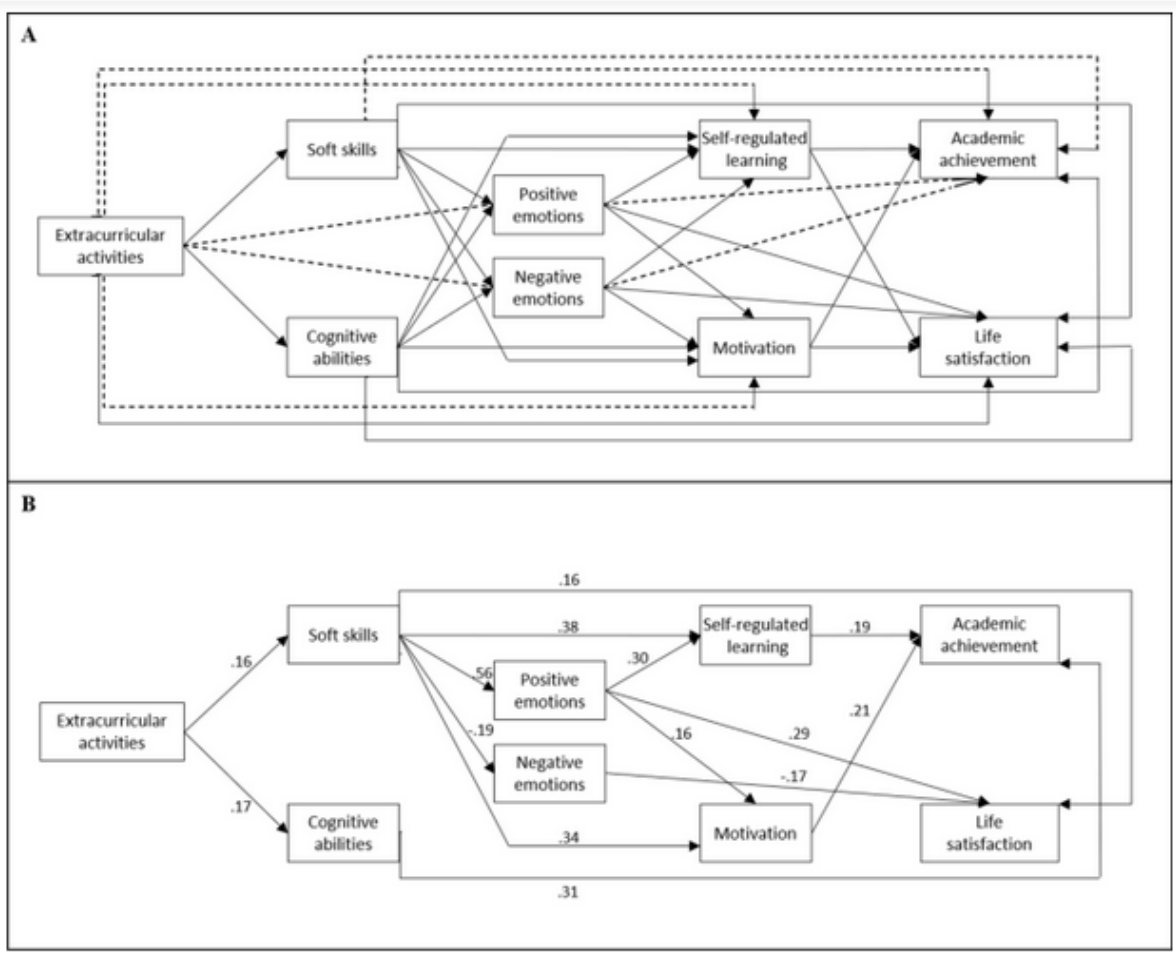

Figure. 1: Adapted from: A unified theory of school students' academic performance and well-being. Connections between affective competencies, extracurricular engagement, self-directed study, and academic success

Path analysis

Two entire path analysis models were estimated and compared, with the only difference being the priors supplied for the model's eight effects (see Figures 1 and 2 for a visual depiction of the model). Each model underwent four sets of 10,000 iterations, for a grand total of 40,000 iterations. Direct relationships between soft skills, PA, NA, and ECA and academic accomplishment; direct relationships between ECA and motivation, SRL, PA, and NA; and direct relationships between PA and NA and ECA. We use a strongly centred on the estimate from the preceding section for each of these eight relations in the first model (m1) (e.g., N[.19,.05] on the correlation academic accomplishment). Priors for the same associations were centred on 0 in m2, suggesting a different hypothesis (e.g., N[.00,.05] on the relationship between soft competence and academic accomplishment), which is why m2 is different from m1. The other precedents in Table 1 were also identical. Using this method, we were able to contrast the presence of an effect, as suggested by the literature (m1), with the absence of such an effect (m2). The Laplace approximation and the broadly applied information criteria (WAIC; Watanabe, 2010) were used to evaluate the two models. Since m2 performed better (WAIC = 24.74; logBF = 33.92), the impact for the eight relations is probably zero or close to zero. The degree to which the various priors of the two models overlap with the data under consideration is graphically depicted in Figure 2. The results of the Bayesian fit indices for m2 show that m2 provides a good explanation for the data.

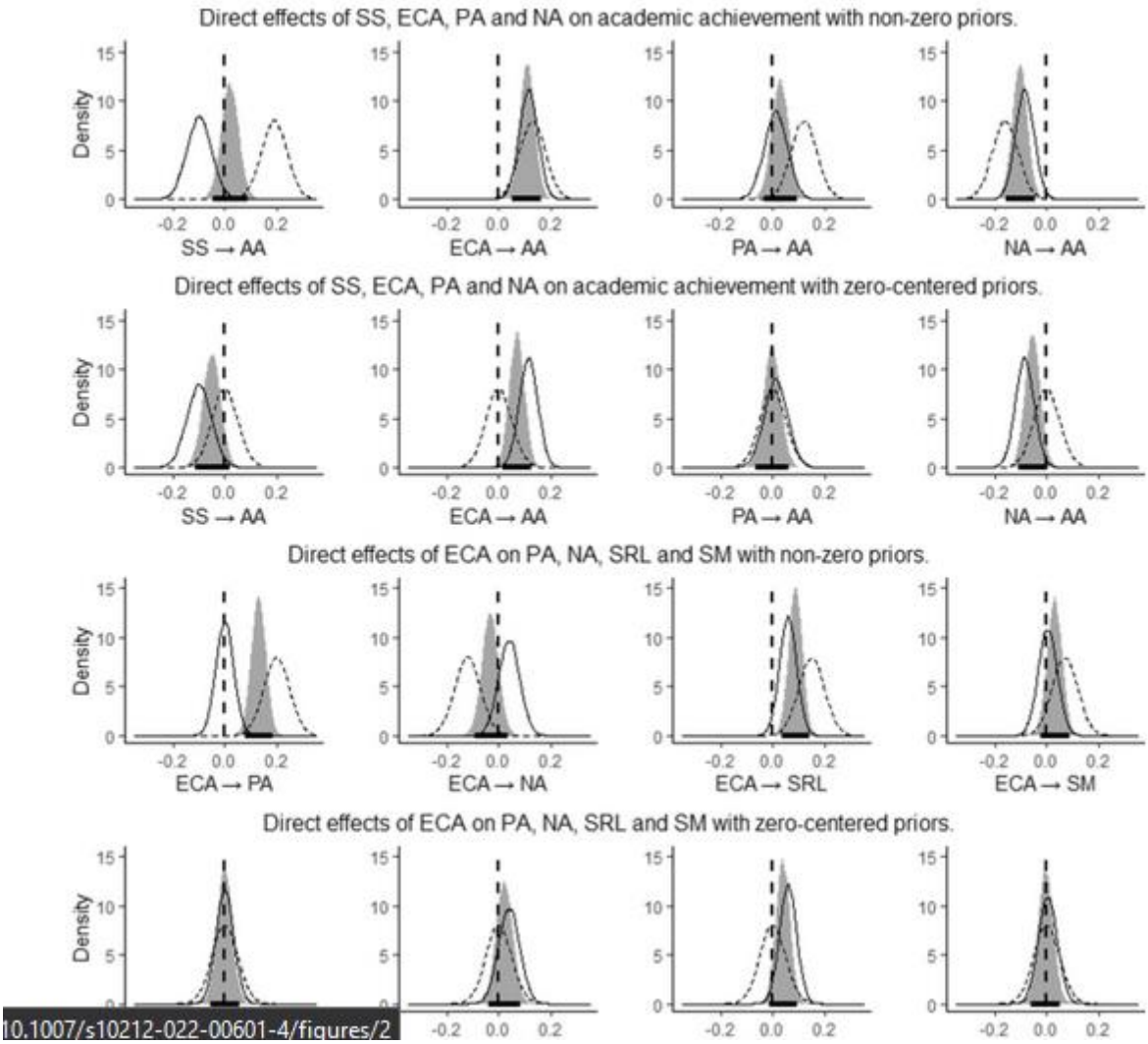

Figure. 2: Adapted from: A unified theory of school students' academic performance and well-being. Connecting the dots between soft skills, extracurriculars, SEL, grit, and feelings.

Conclusions

The value of developing students' soft skills is further reinforced by our research. Researchers discovered a link between these abilities and not just SRL but also motivation, feelings of accomplishment, and overall happiness. Thus, students' well-being and academic success benefit from the development of soft skills, but SRL and motivation are not significantly linked to either (their significance is restricted to the classroom). Although our findings were cross-sectional and, so, cannot establish any causal link, ECA did emerge as a viable practical technique to increase students' soft skills and cognitive ability. In order to better understand the true impact of each component influencing school students' academic progress and happiness, our findings suggest it is vital to examine of learning.

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