

GROWTH MINDSET, GRIT, AND GRATITUDE: FACTORS AFFECTING EMERGING ADULTS' WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

The prolonged period of adulthood gave rise to the new stage of emerging adulthood. During this stage, well-being is one of the critical tasks to lead a flourishing life. Research on emerging adulthood has focused mainly on the adverse effects of this period. However, little attention is paid to their well-being. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the influencing role of a growth mindset, grit, and gratitude on achieving well-being and design a promotion model to improve well-being. In the present study, a mixed-methods approach was implemented through survey and focus group discussion. In the initial phase, a survey with three hundred (300) participants in Cebu City within the age of 18 to 29 years old was conducted, and data were collected and analyzed using multiple regression in SPSS. Findings revealed a high score in Growth Mindset, average Grit, and Gratitude, while overall Well-being appeared to be a low score. Besides, findings in the current study revealed that the Growth Mindset does not influence Well-being, while Grit and Gratitude appear to affect the research participants' overall well-being positively. In the focus group discussion of 9 research participants, different themes emerged: personal, career, financial, social, health, and spiritual. Examining these emergent themes of adults' well-being in Cebu City yields the opportunity to comprehensively understand how their well-being is experienced. Based on the results, a promotion model of well-being is proposed providing valuable insights on how to achieve well-being during emerging adulthood.

Keywords: growth mindset, grit, gratitude, well-being, emerging adults, promotion model

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, young people have seemed to be steering away from once considered universal markers of adulthood (Arnett, 2014). This upheaval drive global economic shifts, technological advancements, and societal pressures place higher demands on young people than the previous generations have faced. As a result, they often experience constraints that can make their life run out of track. In such a situation, taking responsibility for one's well-being is one of the essential tasks that one must achieve to navigate adulthood successfully (Bonnie & Sepúlveda, 2014). Today, becoming an adult takes longer, and young people who are not keeping up with the pace have a hard time catching up. So, what will it take to flourish in this stage?

One theory that prompted research during this critical development is the widely known emerging adulthood theory, with age focus on 18 to 25 years old and sometimes extends until age 29 (Arnett, 2014). This theory postulates that many emerging adults are at the crossroads of their lives, pulling clear from the struggles of adolescence while facing adulthood's responsibilities (Arnett et al., 2014). Studies related to emerging adulthood have revealed that young people likely engage in risky and reckless behavior associated with unprotected and casual sex (Garcia et al., 2012), alcohol and substance abuse (Delucchi et al., 2007; Sheidow et al., 2012), smoking (Riggs et al., 2007) and criminal activities (Haffejee et al., 2013) during this stage. In the Philippine context, a national study conducted in 2013 by Raymundo et al. (as cited in Puyat et al., 2005) revealed that over 90% of young people regard smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, and using illicit drugs as detrimental to their health. However, it does not deter them from continually experimenting with these risky behaviors; instead, they even engage in higher-risk activities. To some extent, research on emerging adulthood has focused mainly on the adverse effects in their developmental trajectories, but little attention is paid to their well-being (Liu et al., 2017).

This study focuses on the importance of well-being as a key to optimal development across the lifespan. On the many conditions that appear to contribute to the emerging adults' well-being, this study identified the more essential factors during these utmost volitional years: (1) growth mindset,

(2) grit, and (3) gratitude. The absence of a growth mindset, grit, and gratitude significantly affects young people in accomplishing their well-being during this stage, which tends to dictate whether they can ultimately succeed in life (Schleider & Weisz, 2016; Vainio & Daukantaite, 2015; Wood et al., 2010).

Surprisingly, there is relatively scarce research in the Philippines on emerging adults' well-being, which has left room for further study. Therefore, the current study investigates the influencing role of a growth mindset, grit, and gratitude on achieving young people's well-being within the Filipino context. This study's findings also aim to address today's young people's well-being needs by designing a new promotion model on achieving well-being during emerging adulthood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Well-being

One theory that pioneered the positive model of well-being is the PERMA theory of well-being. Seligman (2018) argued that well-being is the foundation of a flourishing life, and the central theoretical premise behind his theory is to help people find ways of making their life better. This new approach to well-being in the perspective of positive psychology has redirected the focus of human experience to something that involves the attainment of a fulfilling, happy, and meaningful life. Seligman's well-being theory allows the creation of meaning and achieving quality life from various routes to enable flourishing. Furthermore, the term PERMA is an acronym that makes up five essential elements of well-being.

Positive Emotions

The first element and the cornerstone of the well-being theory is a positive emotion, which involves the optimistic and constructive view of one's past, present, and future (Seligman, 2007).

Engagement

It involves engaging in a state of flow or becoming absorbed in activities where time and self-consciousness seem to cease. Like positive emotion, engagement is assessed only subjectively (Seligman, 2007).

Relationships

Individuals authentically connected with others tend to be generally happier in life. Hence, maintaining healthy positive relationships can give one support during trying times (Seligman, 2007).

Meaning

This fourth element is essential to attain a sense of well-being, which comes from serving something higher than oneself. Various societal institutions enable a sense of meaning, such as religion, family, work organizations, the community, social causes, and among others (Seligman, 2007).

Achievement

Accomplishments in life can push an individual to thrive and flourish as having realistic goals and meeting those goals can give a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment (Seligman, 2007).

Growth Mindset

Dweck (2017) propounded that the difference between success and failure is as simple as having a different perspective on intelligence. The mindset theory states that there are two kinds of mindsets, the fixed mindset and the growth mindset. People with a fixed mindset believe that

intelligence is static, so they remain on what they think they can do well rather than risk and fail. Hence, they usually plateau early in their life and achieve less than their full potential because they refuse to acknowledge areas in their life that they need to improve. On the contrary, people who manifest a growth mindset believe that their intelligence can grow and develop. As a result, people who develop a growth mindset tend to have higher achievement levels in life (Bower, 2018). Studies found fixed mindset to be associated with more mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and aggression (Schleider et al., 2015). It is because fixed mindset individuals are unable to control unwanted events happening in their life. A comparative study also found a different pattern of results concerning the positive association between a growth mindset and a positive mental outlook (Passmore et al., 2018). Hence, considerable studies have highlighted the importance of the growth mindset intervention in reducing mental health problems.

Grit

In the psychological examination of grit, Duckworth (2016) argued that four key characteristics make young people advance to become gritty. First, gritty people need to find interest in enjoying whatever they are doing to stay committed to their passion for their goal. Second, they can strive and practice every day to become better than before until they have mastered their craft. Third, gritty people understand their purpose and the reason why they do the things that they do. Finally, hope is a critical element of perseverance to continue to strive even in the face of setbacks. Comparative studies of grit found that it was positively related to satisfaction with life and psychological well-being (Salles et al., 2014; Suzuki et al., 2015; Reed & Jeremiah, 2017). On these grounds, the present study supports the idea that grit can significantly impact well-being and gritty people tend to have positive attitudes and expectations about themselves, the world, and their lives.

Gratitude

Emmons (2013) postulated people with grateful dispositions accept all the sorrows and the negativity of life. Grateful people do not linger in the past; instead, they only recall the valuable lessons of those difficult times to get a better perspective of the present. Hence, gratitude can help emerging adults cope with hard times. Emmons further notes that gratitude can be experienced as both a trait and a state wherein gratefulness is experiencing gratitude as a state, but somehow can be fleeting and may not be relied on to last over a long period. It was also found that practicing gratitude can lead to lower stress and depression and higher levels of social support. Likewise, people who feel grateful more often are also happier and perform better because they think about the world more positively and have better friendships because they offer help and receive more help in return.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This present study asserts that growth mindset, grit, and gratitude are related concepts that influence a person's well-being. Moreover, this study's principal objective is to examine the factors that propel young people to attain a flourishing transition towards adulthood. Firstly, the current study aims to identify emerging adults' level growth mindset, grit, gratitude, and well-being. Secondly, it determines if there is a significant relationship between the three constructs (growth mindset, grit, and gratitude) to well-being. Thirdly, to identify which among growth mindset, grit, and gratitude affects emerging adults' well-being. Finally, based on the statistical results supported by focused group findings, a promotional model of well-being is designed for emerging adulthood.

METHODS

The mixed-methods approach through triangulation design was applied in this study. In phase one, purposive, convenient sampling was conducted to randomly selected participants from the urban barangays in Cebu City, Philippines. Participants were recruited through referrals and on-site data collection. There were 300 emerging adult participants (118 males, 182 females) in the study. They

were selected based on the following criteria: (1) must be age 18 to 29 years old; (2) must be working; (3) must at least finish secondary senior high school; (4) unmarried; (5) must be supporting oneself, and (6) must have no child.

Participants received an informed consent document, and those who responded positively to the consent were able to proceed to the study; only those with complete survey responses were included. The data collection instruments utilized in this study were divided into five parts: (1) profile of the participants, (2) growth mindset scale, (3) grit scale, (4) gratitude scale, and (5) the PERMA well-being scale. These scales demonstrate an acceptable model fit, internal, and cross-time consistency, with evidence for content, convergent, and divergent validity.

In phase two, a focus group interview was conducted to capture young people's real-life data going through emerging adulthood. Furthermore, 9 participated in the focus group discussion, and they were randomly selected based on the survey participants. The outcomes during the focus group were used only to supplement the study. Survey data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analysis in SPSS. Subsequently, thematic analysis was utilized to the focus group data in the coding and identifying emergent themes. Lastly, the integration and presentation of the survey result and focus group findings.

Ethical Considerations

The dignity and well-being of the participants must always be protected. Hence, the study sought approval from the institutional review board and upheld the three fundamental principles of beneficence, respect for persons, and justice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The details of the test findings of the four scale variables in this study, namely, growth mindset, grit, gratitude, and well-being, are shown in Table 1. Furthermore, each variable's score was transformed into a percentile range for uniformity in the interpretation.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables ($N = 300$)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	%ile Rank	Interpretation
Growth Mindset	3.056	1.149	61 st	High
Grit	3.461	0.553	52 nd	Average
Gratitude	5.408	1.153	44 th	Average
Well-being	7.524	1.417	38 th	Low

Percentile Range: 1-20 (Very Low); 21-40 (Low); 41-60 (Average); 61-79 (High); 80-99 (Very High)

The current study results reveal that the participants' level of a growth mindset is high; the grit level is average; gratitude is also average. On the contrary, the well-being level is relatively low, explaining why overall well-being is part of many young people's developmental struggles.

Level of Growth Mindset

The participants' level of a growth mindset is high on the scale, falling in the 61st percentile with $M = 3.056$ and $SD = 1.149$. Key findings emerge that participants have a slightly high belief that their intelligence and abilities can be developed. In other words, participants in this study have a mixed mindset, partly fixed and partly growth. A similar pattern of results was obtained in the FGD, implying that aspects of their life they believe can change and some aspects that they have no control over, such as going through emerging adulthood. Similarly, one participant said: *"After I graduated from college, I realize that I am no longer a teenager the moment I had my first job. It was a 360-degree paradigm shift; it was a whole new world from the school setting to a work setting. Becoming a manager in a fast-food at a young age is tough. And imagine working with a position that requires full maturity, a sense of responsibility, and work ethics put into just 19-year-old handling and expected to run the whole store. With no experience in management, from sales to people, products, and other accounting works, it was hard for me. The workload and the*

responsibility I handle is my turning point to realize that I was no longer a teenager with a happy-go-lucky life.” Most people are a mix of both fixed to growth mindsets (Dweck, 2017). Despite that, emerging adulthood is a change period that presents many new challenges and more significant responsibilities to young people, requiring leaving old ways and acquiring a new set of skills that test their flexibility.

Level of Grit

The participants’ grit level is average, with $M = 3.461$ and $SD = 0.553$, placed in the 52nd percentile. From the results, the emerging adult participants tend to be persistent in their goals with an enduring passion for pushing through pain and frustration at a general level. Comparative studies have shown that individuals adopting grit persist even when faced with setbacks, which are likely to succeed and engage positively in personal and professional contexts (Suzuki et al., 2015; Reed & Jeremiah, 2017). Furthermore, obtaining an average grit level would also indicate that participants exhibited effort and persistence in daily life challenges but sometimes may also slack off due to these challenges’ demands. For example, one participant said: *“There will always be pause buttons and even breakdowns. I even decided to stop and resign just to end the heavy baggage that I am feeling. After my second job, I realize that it was the same thing. All jobs require a sense of responsibility and maturity, which I was not ready to adapt back to my first job. Then I realized many things. I realized that I should not quit when it gets hard because it will be the same thing when I want to go next, and I created this motto in my life that no matter how hard life is, I must keep going. That’s the time that I started to grow and prosper in my work right now.”*

Level of Gratitude

The participants’ level of gratitude is average on the scale, with $M = 5.408$ and $SD = 1.153$, falling in the 44th percentile. On a general level, the sample participants acknowledge the goodness in their lives. Emmons (2013) alluded that grateful people often experience more goodness in life and remain composed despite life’s failures. Consequently, this means that grateful people tend to

interpret negative or even neutral situations in a more positive light. A similar pattern of results in FGD shows from their following statements: *“Be positive always.”* (P4); *“Do not let yourself be affected by what other people are telling about you.”* (P1); and *“I learned that hard work would pay off.”* (P9). Participants talked about the importance of having a positive view of life, being flexible despite life’s setbacks, and hopeful about the future.

Level of Well-being

The participants’ overall well-being level is low, with $M = 7.524$ and $SD = 1.417$, placed in the 38th percentile. When comparing the results from prior studies of emerging adulthood, it must be pointed out that emerging adulthood is a critical stage in this life course. Wood and colleagues (2017) state that emerging adulthood is a period of increased independence; however, there is a decrease in social support in family, friends, school, and even work. The comparative study also reported that this increase in independence also increases one’s choice, resulting in tremendous success in achieving well-being, yet this increase in freedom often results in poor choices that can harm well-being (Maggs & Schulenberg, 2002; Schulenberg et al., 2004).

Furthermore, these findings are following the results in the FGD highlights emerging adults’ experiences during this stage: *“And the hardest part was, trying to be independent and proving yourself career-wise.”* (P2); *“It was the moment I received my first salary on my part-time work, but then I had to pay for bills immediately. I realized that I was no longer a teenager, and I must earn money while studying, so I should no longer demand to my parents but instead work for it. I also struggle on knowing what my purpose is and knowing if what I am doing in my life right now is still the right thing for me to do.”* (P1). This concludes that attaining well-being during emerging adulthood may be challenging, especially with this modern time’s demands. The challenges presented in the FGD pose a potential impact on the emerging adults’ overall well-being.

Correlation Analysis

In this section, Pearson's correlation was calculated to test the relationship between the independent variables and the criterion. The findings of the correlations are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable

		Well-being
Growth Mindset	Pearson Correlation	.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.231
Grit	Pearson Correlation	.207**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	.21**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

***. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).*

The correlation analysis shows that only grit and gratitude are statistically correlated to well-being (criterion). At the same time, there is no statistically significant relationship between the criterion and the Growth Mindset. Although the correlation's strength is slightly weak, many psychological studies also demonstrate relatively moderate correlation strength and still yield practically significant results (Funder & Ozer, 2019; Lovakov & Agadullina, 2017).

Multiple Regression Analysis

In this section, multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the influence of multiple independent variables on well-being. The findings of the multiple regression are summarized and presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Regression analysis explanation of Well-being based on the independent variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
		B	Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	4.840	.573	
	Growth Mindset	-.042	.074	-.034
	Grit	.458	.150	.179**

	Gratitude	.226	.073	.184**
2	(Constant)	4.840	.573	
	Grit	.439	.146	.172**
	Gratitude	.215	.070	.175**

** $p < .01$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.64$ for Model 1 and Adjusted $R^2 = 0.66$ for Model 2

Initially, the researcher tried to verify the speculation if and to what extent the three independent variables, namely growth mindset, grit, and gratitude, explain well-being. Surprisingly, the results in Model 1 considered the growth mindset to be the only independent variable that is not a significant factor for the criterion well-being. For this reason, the new regression model will no longer contain the growth mindset variable and arrive at a new multiple regression Model 2.

Table 4: Significance of Independent variables

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	43.963	2	21.683	11.562	.000 ^b
	Residual	556.992	297	1.875		
	Total	600.358	299			

a. Independent Variables: (Constant), Grit, Gratitude

b. Dependent Variable: Well-being

Table 4 indicates that only grit and gratitude positively influence well-being (criterion) in the regression, with grit having the highest regression coefficient at .439, followed by gratitude at .215. In Model 2, the partial correlations are $r = .172$ and $.175$, indicating that independent variables significantly influence the degree of well-being. Thus, the above results suggest that grit and gratitude (independent variables) potentially cause well-being changes (criterion) among the study sample participants.

To further verify the relationship between the two significant variables (grit and gratitude) to the criterion in Model 2, the F is 11.562 for the variance generated by the regression analysis then computed for the critical value of F as 2.996, at the significance level of .05 with 2 degrees of freedom at the numerator and 297 for the denominator. The p -value corresponding to the F -statistic is lower than .05, which reveals that grit and gratitude ($F_{1,297} = 11.562$, $p < .05$) are statistically

significant indicators of overall well-being. In this sense, the F value is comparable to the alternative hypothesis that means there is a significant influence of multiple regression in Model 2 that occurs over the dependent variable. The findings suggest Model 2 has explained better the overall well-being with grit and gratitude to have a statistically significant contribution. Hence, participants with an increased level of grit and gratitude experience an increased level of Well-being.

Considerable studies reveal that harnessing grit and gratitude can help achieve a better quality of life and experience more positive emotions (Wood et al., 2010; Salles et al., 2014). However, results show that a growth mindset does not influence well-being among the participants in the study. This casts a new light on the growth mindset from a Filipino cultural perspective. According to Carson-Arenas (2014), Filipinos prefer a simple life and are known for being contented to meet each day's needs as they arise. They express an attitude of satisfaction once one's basic needs are met, commonly known as a Filipino cultural feature of subsistence that is closely observed as present-oriented or living on an everyday basis. From this standpoint, the subsistence mindset has inversely manifested the Filipinos' capacity to endure difficult times and get by even on so little resources. It is how many Filipinos managed to maintain their well-being by doing what is available that enables them to carry on through the harshest economic and social circumstances bravely.

Subsequently, grit and gratitude are the critical factors in the study findings that significantly add more flourishing to emerging adults in their transition to becoming full-fledged adults. The applicability of these results can be shown on Filipinos' flexibility to adjust and adapt to any circumstances that enable them to remain unfazed by uncertainty and never be overly disturbed or disoriented by any unplanned and unanticipated changes. It is also important to note that the Filipinos' indomitable spirit strengthens their capacity to survive and remain grateful even in the most trying times (Dy, 2004). For this reason, many young Filipinos can draw upon the cultural strengths of one's ethnicity to empower this shared sense of grit and gratitude together within the

context of family or in the community. This will also eventually lead to a more flourishing life among Filipino emerging adults on an individual level and a more flourishing society.

Proposed Model of Well-Being

Based on the salient findings of the study, the new promotion model of well-being was designed. The proposed model of well-being does not overthrow the existing models; instead, it extends and supports the core concept that well-being through effective implementation of well-being programs into more specific cohorts of emerging adults. Hence, the model framework draws its inspirations from existing theories, empirical studies, surveys, real-life experiences, and conditions captured during the FGD.

As shown in Figure 1, the 3G Model of Well-being makes up three essential qualities in achieving higher well-being, which includes: (1) Growth Mindset; (2) Grit; and (3) Gratitude. This promotion model of positive change comprises of inner and outer parts. The inside part of the framework contains six themes that appear to be challenging during this critical stage: personal, career, financial, social, health, and spiritual.

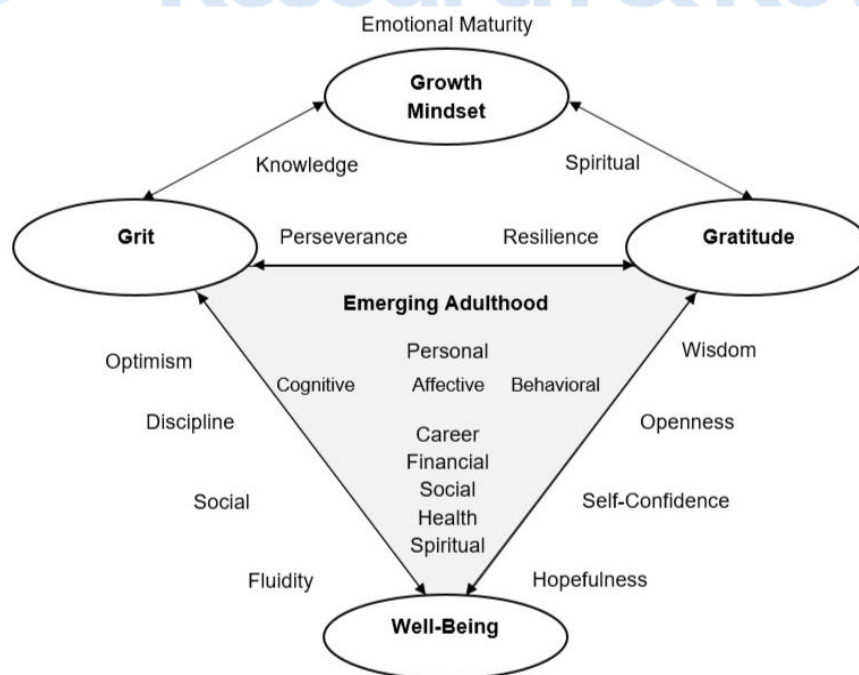


Figure 1. 3G model of well-being: a model of positive change in emerging adulthood

One of the themes that emerged as part of their challenge of this period is the personal domain. It relates to any challenges individual experiences that pertain to self; about how they think, act, and feel during the emerging adulthood stage. This domain further divides into three sub-categories, namely cognitive, behavioral, and affective. The cognitive aspect describes any conscious intellectual activity involving mental processes, while the behavioral aspect relates to reactions and responses. Finally, the affective part involves challenges that are related to moods, feelings, and attitudes.

The second theme that emerging adults consider challenging is the career domain, which relates to challenges within the limits of work or profession. The third theme many emerging adults also have difficulty with is the financial domain comprising their finances or financial situation. This domain is one of most concern during the FGD, where emerging adults expressed their frustration between wanting to save and wanting to spend. Furthermore, the fourth domain is the social aspect, wherein challenges that often occur under this domain involve family, friends, work, school, and community. The fifth is the health domain focusing on maintaining a healthy body away from illnesses or injuries. Lastly, emerging adults' desire to elevate their spirituality through seeking to connect with a higher power is under the spiritual domain.

Surprising findings in the FGD show in the thematic analysis that growth mindset traits mostly overlapped from grit and gratitude. The strengths that the growth mindset shares with grit are knowledge and perseverance, while spiritual and resilience are the character strengths that the growth mindset shares with gratitude. There is mainly one strength or ability unique to the growth mindset, which is emotional maturity. On the other hand, these abilities such as optimism, discipline, fluidity, and social are unique to grit, while wisdom, openness, hopefulness, self-confidence are the unique strengths of gratitude that lead to overall well-being. Some emerging

adults still seem to be struggling but practicing a growth mindset, grit, and gratitude may outshine life's many challenges.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that grit and gratitude are significant factors that influence well-being, with grit having the highest predictive significance. It implies that the increase of grit and gratitude causes an increase in overall well-being in the regression model. On the other hand, results found no correlation between overall well-being and growth mindset. Nonetheless, there is a significant and positive correlation between well-being and the constructs of grit and gratitude. The findings suggest that as the overall well-being increases, grit increases, gratitude also increases, and vice versa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, to conduct a further study comparing the levels of growth mindset, grit, gratitude, and well-being in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, and work experience. Likewise, examine the relationship of independent variables on the specific dimensions of well-being (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement). In school, to promote project-based learning resulting in goal-oriented achievement. At work, engaging emerging adults in fun and positive activities such as quarterly rest and recreation for individual and organizational wellness. Finally, community and local governments implement programs that involve adequate health services, financial literacy, public safety, and parks or areas for recreation to enhance community equity.

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