

Concept Paper

The Nexus of Holistic Wellbeing and School Education: A Literature-Informed Theoretical Framework

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Abstract: The concept of wellbeing in education is complex and multifaceted, with inconsistent definitions, philosophical conceptualizations, and research approaches. This paper proposes a theoretical framework for understanding and promoting comprehensive wellbeing in school education, drawing insights from global in general and the Norwegian context in particular. The paper begins by reviewing the literature on wellbeing and wellbeing in educational policies to identify common threads in contemporary understandings and approaches to wellbeing, highlighting important issues in its conceptualization. The analysis shows the need for a holistic understanding of wellbeing, encompassing its multiple dimensions, which should be introduced and advocated in schools. The paper contributes to a more comprehensive and holistic concept of wellbeing that should be an integral part of school education. The discourse highlights the emergence of an alternative, commonly agreed theoretical framework for holistic wellbeing, drawing together different dimensions of wellbeing and interconnectedness and focusing on students' strengths. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the framework for future research and practice. The framework offers a comprehensive and integrative approach to understanding and promoting wellbeing in school education, which can guide the development of interventions and policies that address the multiple factors influencing students' wellbeing. The framework also highlights the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and a systems approach to wellbeing in education, which can promote a holistic and sustainable approach to education that benefits both students and society.

Keywords: holistic wellbeing; school education; happiness; health; students; whole school approach



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1. Introduction

The concept of wellbeing has gained increasing attention in recent years, with its importance emphasized in various contexts, including education. However, the lack of consistency in its definitions, philosophical conceptualizations, and research approaches makes it a complex construct to understand fully. This paper aims to identify common threads in contemporary understandings and approaches to wellbeing in school education, with a particular focus on policy documents in Norway. The conclusions drawn from this study have wider international significance, as schools worldwide are called upon to prioritize students' wellbeing [1]. The paper begins by exploring the various terminologies used as synonyms for wellbeing in education, providing a brief introduction to the term 'wellbeing.' It then presents a concise overview of international and national policy documents, emphasizing the importance of wellbeing as an integral part of students' lives in schools. This leads to a discussion of prominent conceptions of wellbeing in literature, highlighting approaches that aim to enhance students' wellbeing in school education. A holistic, comprehensive, and nuanced conception of wellbeing is proposed as a way of thinking about students' wellbeing in school education, aiming for wellbeing through education and better education through wellbeing. The paper argues that a more comprehensive understanding of wellbeing is essential to promote students' wellbeing in school education.

1.1. *The Elusive Concept of Wellbeing*

The term “wellbeing” has gained widespread popularity, both in academic research and in public discourse, due to its broad range of positive connotations across various contexts and understandings. However, despite its popularity, the concept of wellbeing is often elusive as different people have different views on what it means to be happy, healthy, and prosperous. Ereaud and Whiting [2] describe wellbeing as an elusive concept that acts like a cultural mirage, appearing solid at first glance but disappearing upon closer examination. Grammatically, “wellbeing” is a nominalized noun formed from the adverb “well” and the noun “being”, based on the Italian word “Benessere”, and has been in use in the English language since the 16th century. Although grammatically a noun, “wellbeing” conveys a process, much like the noun “globalization”. The term is commonly written both with and without hyphens, “well-being” and “wellbeing”, respectively. However, the International Journal of Wellbeing (IJW) recommends using “wellbeing” without the hyphen to avoid confusion with the opposite of “ill-being”. Both “well-being” and “wellbeing” refer to the general subject or topic of what makes a life go well for an individual. In this paper, the term “wellbeing” will be used. Konu [3] propose an understanding of wellbeing grounded in Allardr’s Scandinavian-based theory of welfare, where “welfare” stands for “wellbeing” in Nordic languages. Wellbeing is seen to change over time and is judged in terms of basic human needs, including material and non-material needs related to having, loving, and being [4].

Several terms are used synonymously with wellbeing, such as health [1], wellness [5–7], and flourishing [8]. However, the confusion increases when some researchers distinguish between these terms while others use them as synonyms. According to [9], there is a clear distinction between health, wellness, and wellbeing in the literature and research. The WHO definition of health refers to more than just the absence of sickness, and wellness is seen as freedom from illness and contains a lifestyle of prevention. Wellbeing encompasses both wellness and health, including happiness, which is not explicitly referenced in wellness. Kirkland [10] suggests that wellness means living well, while wellbeing means living well and enjoying happiness. In essence, concise and clear definitions of health, wellness, and wellbeing respectively are “to get well”, “live well”, and “enjoy life with happiness”. Wellness and health are important elements of overall wellbeing. Edward Diener, an American psychologist, also known as Dr. Happiness, defines wellbeing synonymously with happiness, stating that it is a self-actualization trend. Diener suggests that positive experiences of happiness, including life satisfaction, are defined by the self. More ideas about the understanding of wellbeing in educational policies and multidisciplinary literature will be examined in detail below.

1.2. *Mapping the Dominant Discourse of Wellbeing in Educational Policies*

Before delving into the concept of wellbeing in education, it is important to acknowledge the significance of utilizing a standard definition to understand the term “wellbeing”. The use of similar words across different policies and official documents without agreeing on their exact definitions causes confusion. Additionally, within the broad educational research field, specialized areas of study also use the term “wellbeing”, but the meanings are not always consistent. The World Health Organization’s [1] constitution states that “health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” This definition implies that health is not only the absence of disease but also a state of wellbeing. According to the WHO, mental health is a state of wellbeing in which individuals realize their abilities, cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community. Wellbeing has become a focus of national and international official policy documents, making it an essential topic for current research and practices. Many countries, including Norway, are increasingly committed to promoting students’ mental, social, physical, and emotional wellbeing in schools. The Norwegian Education Act [11] emphasizes the promotion of health, wellbeing, and learning through a physical and psychological environment, consistent with the WHO’s health definition. The

recent Norwegian curriculum includes wellbeing as “health and life skills” [12]. However, the lack of uniformity in the interpretation of policy by professionals creates a discursive gap in understanding wellbeing within educational research [13].

The WHO Regional Office for Europe, in collaboration with the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC), has been studying young people’s wellbeing and health behavior in 50 countries since 1982. Findings from these studies are used to inform governing powers and improve the lives of young people [14]. Recent HBSC studies show that life satisfaction among young people has declined in most Nordic countries [14,15]. Additionally, the global COVID-19 pandemic has further reduced the quality of life among young people [16]. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has launched a new Study on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) to measure wellbeing in education. The SSES survey represents a shift in focus to non-cognitive aspects of learning. The program emphasizes the psychometric science of personality measurement, which can be classified into five broad domains known as the “Big five model”. However, focusing only on learning and achievement neglects other emotional and moral qualities that students develop in school. According to Hargreaves and Shirley [17], a common pitfall in education is the overemphasis on learning and achievement as the sole priorities. Hargreaves and Shirley mention that this tendency is identified by Dutch professor Gert Biesta as “Learnification”, involves a narrow focus on the impact of all aspects of education on learning outcomes. For instance, when advocating for increased music education, one may feel compelled to demonstrate its positive effect on mathematical achievement. However, schools serve not only to facilitate learning in the traditional sense but also to support children’s holistic development. Schools play a crucial role in nurturing qualities such as awe, wonder, excitement, compassion, empathy, moral outrage, courage, playfulness, commitment, self-respect, self-confidence, and many others. It is important to recognize that young people need to experience these qualities not only to become who they want to be in the future but also for who they are now.

1.3. A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Wellbeing: Insights from Literature

The concept of wellbeing has been widely used across various disciplines including philosophy, psychology, sociology, education, and public health. However, there is a lack of a unified understanding of wellbeing, leading to the existence of multiple conceptions of wellbeing. In this part of the paper, the aim is to explore different conceptions of wellbeing across various disciplines. The study of wellbeing is complex and multidimensional. Exploring conceptions of wellbeing across disciplines is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the concept. This can facilitate the integration of different domains of wellbeing and contribute to a more holistic approach to promoting wellbeing.

Philosophers have conceptualized wellbeing as a state of living well or flourishing, which involves leading a life that is meaningful and fulfilling [18,19]. Psychologists have focused on subjective wellbeing, which is related to an individual’s cognitive and affective experiences, such as positive emotions, life satisfaction, and happiness [20,21]. In sociology, wellbeing has been associated with social connectedness and community engagement [22]. In public health, wellbeing has been understood as a state of physical, mental, and social health [23]. Finally, in education, wellbeing has been defined as a state of optimal development of students’ social, emotional, and cognitive competencies [24]. Although these conceptions of wellbeing are not mutually exclusive, they offer different perspectives on what constitutes wellbeing. Each discipline has its own unique approach to studying wellbeing, and, therefore, it is important to understand these different conceptions when examining wellbeing across various contexts. For instance, a study on the impact of social support on wellbeing may differ in its conceptualization of wellbeing depending on the discipline and the specific measures used. Furthermore, the exploration of wellbeing across different disciplines can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the concept. This holistic approach can facilitate a better integration of the different domains of wellbeing and provide a more nuanced understanding of the determinants of wellbeing. For example,

a study examining the relationship between social support and wellbeing can incorporate both psychological and social dimensions of wellbeing.

Existing literature shows that wellbeing is a multifaceted construct that concerns optimal experience and functioning. Dodge et al. [25] summarized previous attempts to define wellbeing and proposed a new definition as the balance point between an individual's resources and the challenges they face. According to Dodge et al. [25], this definition acknowledges individuals as decision-makers with choices and preferences. They also identify various aspects that contribute to wellbeing, including autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, realization of potential and self-acceptance, ability to fulfil goals, life satisfaction, and positive emotions.

Empirical studies of wellbeing are guided by two distinct paradigms. The first, called hedonism (referring to [26]), Ryan and Deci [19], asserts that wellbeing consists solely of pleasure or happiness. In contrast, eudaimonism holds that wellbeing involves more than just happiness and includes the actualization of human potential. While the hedonic view is prevalent, many philosophers and religious figures have criticized it, instead emphasizing the expression of virtue as the key to true happiness. The eudaimonism paradigm of wellbeing has been rooted in the belief that one's true nature must be fulfilled or realized in order to experience wellbeing. Historically, happiness or hedonic pleasure has been equated with wellbeing. Greek philosopher Aristippus, for instance, taught that the purpose of life is to maximize pleasure and happiness. Hedonic psychology, a field of study that explores what makes experiences and life pleasant or unpleasant, also upholds the notion that wellbeing and hedonism are interchangeable concepts [26]. However, some philosophers, religious leaders, and visionaries have challenged this view and dismissed happiness as the main criterion of wellbeing. For instance, Aristotle regarded hedonic happiness as a crude ideal that enslaves humans to their desires, and instead argued that true happiness is found in virtuous expression or doing what is worthwhile.

Eudaimonic theories suggest that not all desires and outcomes that a person might value would necessarily lead to wellbeing. Personal expressiveness, a concept used to measure eudaimonic wellbeing, is associated with challenge and effort, while hedonic enjoyment is linked with relaxation and happiness. Subjective wellbeing (SWB) is another view of wellbeing. Referring to Diener [27] who focused on subjective wellbeing (SWB), Deci and Ryan [28] explain that SWB is subjective because individuals evaluate themselves based on the extent to which they feel a sense of wellbeing. In this view, maximizing wellbeing is equated with maximizing happiness. However, a second perspective suggests that wellbeing encompasses more than just happiness, and that an individual's reports of happiness or positive emotions and satisfaction may not necessarily indicate psychological wellness. This view is referred to as eudaimonia [29], and it emphasizes living well and fulfilling one's human potential. In education, the concept of eudaimonia has been increasingly emphasized over a hedonic perspective [30]. While schools are concerned with children's emotions, they also encourage them to engage in activities that serve longer-term purposes, rather than solely focusing on pleasure and relaxation. Thus, eudaimonia has become a central theme in education.

Diener et al. [31] examined the relationship between money and happiness, the gender differences in happiness, and how national policies influence wellbeing. They concluded that happy people tend to live longer, and happiness contributes to health and longevity. Meanwhile, Tay et al. [32] viewed subjective wellbeing (SWB) as a concept closely related to happiness. SWB is a subjective measure, but it can be studied and measured to influence policy formation [31,33]. However, the optimal method for measuring SWB is still up for scientific debate. Though some may doubt the validity of numerical measurements of wellbeing, researchers continue to study SWB and its effects using various measures. In order to measure wellbeing on a national scale, it is essential to take into account the shared values and beliefs of the citizens of that nation despite the uniqueness of individual experiences [9]. Several researchers have investigated SWB and its implications using various assessment tools. However, the increasing interest in SWB measurement has

sparked a scientific discussion on the most appropriate method to gauge SWB [32]. Some may question the notion that a person can accurately report their level of wellbeing and that this topic can be quantified [34].

Dodge et al. [25] referred to Bradburn's seminal work on psychological wellbeing (PWB), which marked a shift from psychiatric diagnoses to the study of the psychological reactions of everyday people in their daily lives. Bradburn equated wellbeing with happiness and linked it to the ancient Greek concept of eudaimonia, which is commonly translated as happiness or wellbeing. The pursuit of eudaimonia is believed to be the ultimate goal of human actions. Bradburn argued that PWB occurs when positive affect outweighs negative affect. Ryan and Deci's [35] self-determination theory (SDT) is another framework that has embraced eudaimonia as a central aspect of wellbeing, defining it as self-realization. SDT posits three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and aims to specify how to actualize the self. Ryff and Singer [8,36] have developed a lifespan theory of human flourishing that considers wellbeing as the pursuit of perfection and realization of one's true potential, rather than just the attainment of pleasure. Their multidimensional approach to measuring PWB taps six distinct aspects of human actualization: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness [8,28,36].

1.4. Unraveling the Common Threads in Wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing is widely discussed in various fields; however, there is still no consensus on its precise definition [6]. Across the world, researchers and practitioners have been working to understand and promote wellbeing from various perspectives. This has resulted in the emergence of several common threads in wellbeing, regardless of cultural and societal differences. One of the most fundamental threads in wellbeing is the recognition of its multidimensional nature. Although there is a range of dimensions that characterize wellbeing, they are typically agreed to be multidimensional. The number of dimensions ranges from three to twelve [5], with the majority of authors adhering to the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, which posits that wellbeing is not simply the absence of illness and infirmity. The dimensions of wellbeing are intertwined and operate synergistically, with each dimension being integral to the whole. The eight dimensions most frequently reviewed in major theories are social, physical, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, environmental, and financial [5,6,37–39].

Another common thread in wellbeing from a global perspective is the emphasis on prevention and promotion rather than just treatment. Health and wellbeing promotion is a proactive approach that seeks to create supportive environments, build personal and social resources, and foster positive behaviors that contribute to wellbeing. This approach is especially important in the face of global challenges such as climate change, socioeconomic inequalities, and global health threats. Additionally, the importance of a person-centered approach to wellbeing is emphasized across disciplines and cultures. This means that individuals should be empowered to take an active role in promoting their own wellbeing, with support from health professionals, community leaders, and policymakers. This approach recognizes that each individual has unique needs, preferences, and strengths that should be taken into account in any effort to promote wellbeing. Finally, a common thread in wellbeing from a global perspective is the recognition of the interconnectedness between individual, community, and environmental factors in promoting wellbeing. This is reflected in the ecological model of health promotion, which recognizes the complex interplay between individuals, social systems, and the broader environment in influencing health and wellbeing [40].

Exploring conceptions of wellbeing across disciplines and cultures reveals several common threads that emphasize the multidimensional nature of wellbeing, the importance of prevention and promotion, a person-centered approach, and the interconnectedness between individual, community, and environmental factors. These common threads can serve as a foundation for developing comprehensive and sustainable approaches to promoting wellbeing across the globe.

2. Towards a Comprehensive Framework for Promoting Holistic Wellbeing in School Education

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis both nationally and internationally on the implementation of wellbeing in education. However, the concept of wellbeing is fraught with theoretical inconsistencies that have gone unaddressed, which may lead to unknown and complex territory. Despite these definitional problems, the term “wellbeing” has become ubiquitous in education in recent years and is used and understood in different ways in different contexts. While there have been attempts to examine wellbeing empirically in schools, most of the research focuses on only one or two aspects, and the majority of educational research examines short-term, time-bound programs that target only vulnerable children. These programs are fragmented and appear isolated from a holistic understanding of wellbeing. Thus, there is a need to consider the comprehensive and holistic wellbeing of children as an integral part of their school lives. In the philosophical tradition about the purpose of school as promoting wellbeing [41,42], wellbeing is perceived as the fulfillment of not only biological needs but also the need for self-respect and recognition, as well as successful engagement in activities and relationships that are intrinsically worthwhile. The purpose of school education is to provide “life-building values” that give meaning to life, expanding horizons beyond children’s current interests to encompass what might be relevant to their later life interests [43]. This position reverses current priorities for school curricula, as an education for wellbeing would attend more fully to children’s needs and intrinsically chosen activities, and less to a compulsory academic subject curriculum [4].

An additional issue with current wellbeing practices in schools is the problem-oriented and therapeutic turn that links wellbeing to vulnerable children with social or emotional challenges. In contrast, wellbeing education adopts a strength-based approach and is for all children [4,41], implying that mental health difficulties and social–emotional challenges should be framed differently from wellbeing. The distinct aim of school education is framed as the promotion of comprehensive and holistic wellbeing for all children. The purpose of education is not to provide an alternative to treatment for reducing mental, social, and emotional difficulties but rather to help children learn to stay happy, healthy, and flourishing [44]. A full understanding of wellbeing, with its multiple dimensions, should be introduced and advocated in schools.

Drawing on insights from various disciplines, this paper presents the concept of holistic and comprehensive wellbeing in school education. This framework should be based on the principles of multidimensionality, interconnectedness, and strength oriented. Comprehensive wellbeing can be understood as a multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects of an individual’s life, including physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological, social, environmental, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. The notion of holistic wellbeing generates internal motivation and active participation so that students can learn to manage problems and stress to prevent a crisis. Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing is a conscious, deliberate process that requires individuals to become aware of and make choices for a more satisfying lifestyle.

Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing refers to a process of developing and adapting patterns of behavior that lead to improved health in various dimensions of wellbeing, as well as heightened life satisfaction and happiness (see Figure 1). This approach allows students to maintain a psychological balance that affects not only their physical health but also their social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Instead of focusing solely on problems and dependence, the holistic and comprehensive approach emphasizes personal responsibility and strengths, with a belief in one’s ability to exert personal control in managing their overall needs. This approach is distinct from others due to its focus on students’ interests, skills, strengths, abilities, and potential to achieve personal goals. It considers the goals, preferences, interests, and strengths of the student, which engenders a positive attitude and strengthens internal motivation. Rather than relying on fear to drive change, this approach aims to empower students to manage life crises and stress and direct

their attention towards their holistic and comprehensive wellbeing lifestyle goals. The holistic and comprehensive approach views a child as a whole being, taking into account their physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, psychological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. For example, the spiritual aspect of wellbeing is often overlooked in modern education systems. This may be due to a focus on standardized testing and academic achievement, or a reluctance to address spiritual topics due to their personal or religious nature. This is unfortunate as the spiritual dimension is a crucial component of experiencing overall wellbeing [45]. Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing framework capitalizes on strengths, abilities, and personal aspirations to enable students to fulfill meaningful roles in their learning and development. By adopting this approach, students become self-empowered and self-directed, moving beyond labels and thinking about their wellbeing within and around them.

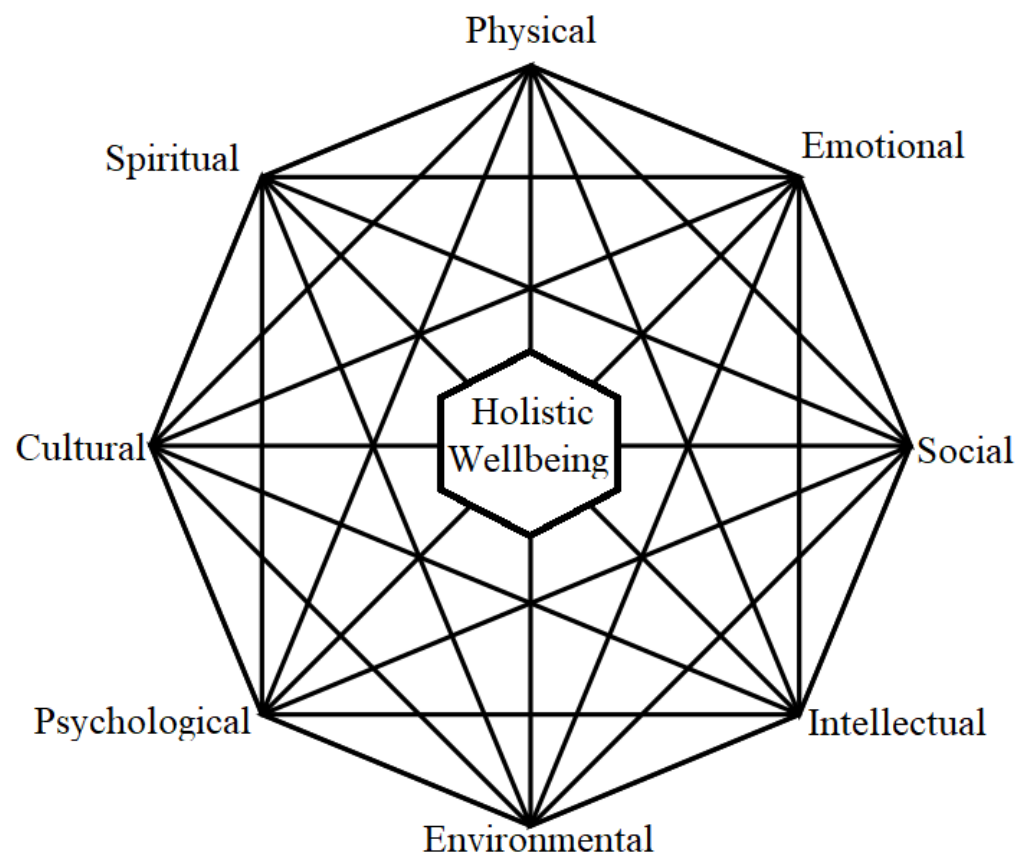


Figure 1. Holistic wellbeing model for school education.

Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing is a process of creating and adapting patterns of behavior that lead to improved health in the wellbeing dimensions and heightened life satisfaction and happiness. This approach takes into consideration the interconnections between the intellectual and social–emotional aspects of learning and emphasizes the importance of meaningful work and academic challenges [4]. The whole school approach [46] includes the consideration of what is learned and how it is taught and learned, and there are many aspects to it. The text highlights one specific aspect of the whole school approach, which is teacher wellbeing. Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing encompasses the wellbeing of everyone, including teachers [47]. This means that teachers’ wellbeing is just as important as students’ wellbeing, and it has a great influence on students’ wellbeing. If teachers experience wellbeing, they are more likely to consider students’ wellbeing as an integral part of their work.

Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing comprises meaningful work and academic challenges, recognizing the interconnectedness of the intellectual and social–emotional

aspects of learning. Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing encompasses more than feeling healthy, happy, mindful, or resilient, and it goes beyond feeling safe and protected from harm. It is a multifaceted social condition that involves inclusion, belonging, peacefulness, and human rights. Effective wellbeing programs and policies should establish the connection between children's psychological states and the ultimate state of the world. Holistic and comprehensive wellbeing entails a nuanced concept of wellbeing that includes meaningful learning and challenges [4]. The significance of holistic and comprehensive wellbeing is that its identified dimensions are framed as facilitating engagement with education and wellbeing as an outcome of education. Biesta [48] identifies three purposes of education: qualification, socialization, and subjectification. Subjectification embodies the German educational thinking known as *Bildung*, which encourages children to explore their individuality, with implications for comprehensive and holistic wellbeing. Biesta's three aims of school education and their interplay provide a nuanced perspective for integrating holistic and comprehensive wellbeing in children's school lives. The proposed framework ought to be founded upon the fundamental principles of multidimensionality, interconnectedness, and strength-oriented approaches. These principles serve as crucial pillars in the design and implementation of this framework. In particular, a multidimensional approach recognizes the multifaceted nature of complex construct of wellbeing emphasizing the need for a holistic perspective. Similarly, interconnectedness acknowledges the interdependence between various components or dimensions of holistic wellbeing and highlights the need for integrated strategies that consider the interactions between these components. Additionally, a strength-oriented approach emphasizes building upon students' strengths rather than solely focusing on problems or weaknesses. By incorporating these guiding principles, the proposed framework stands to enhance the likelihood of success in addressing holistic wellbeing while promoting sustainable solutions that positively impact students, communities, and societies.

Wellbeing through Education and Better Education through Wellbeing

The objectives of education are progressively moving away from the traditional emphasis on academic achievement to a more comprehensive approach that addresses the challenges of the 21st century [49]. It is crucial to acknowledge the significant improvements in schools and services over time. Various support systems, schools, and teachers offer a range of services to students, including counseling, psychological first aid, suicide response and prevention, social and emotional learning, resilience building, relationship building, positive education, and support systems for learning difficulties. Nevertheless, the national and international emphasis on wellbeing stresses the need to make it an essential part of every child's school life in a holistic, enduring, and sustainable manner. Some of the existing structures that focus on social and mental aspects are not novel. Vella-Brodrick et al. [50] suggest interdisciplinary, objective, and technology-supported approaches to expand and complement what already exists. Developing a broader conceptualization of wellbeing by integrating complementary disciplines and theories could lead to an improved understanding and innovative approaches to enhance wellbeing in schools. As Vella-Brodrick et al. [51] note, it is also essential to consider the quality of such programs regarding delivery, relevance, and practical outcomes. According to Vella-Brodrick, wellbeing programs in Australian schools focus on acts of kindness, knowledge and use of strengths, compassion towards self and others, mindfulness, savoring positive experiences, quality connections with others and self, empathy, gratitude journaling, hope, best possible self, meaning and purpose in life, creativity, values, forgiveness, serving others, mindset, learning about the full range of emotions, spotting strengths in self and others, healthy lifestyle practices, making friends, and using wellbeing strategies such as deep breathing, meditation, mindfulness, and emotion regulation.

Integrating wellbeing knowledge and activities into all subjects, as well as offering standalone wellbeing lessons or programs that are an integral part of school education, are both viable approaches to promoting wellbeing. Vella-Brodrick et al. [50] stress that

wellbeing education should be “TREAT” (tangible, relevant, evidence-based, alluring, and transformational) to be effective. The goal is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills learned in class to real-world scenarios, which is a key challenge. Thus, it is essential that applied wellbeing is emphasized. The more engaging and personalized the learning experience, the more students are likely to be interested, practice wellbeing, and apply it in the future. Learning about lifelong wellbeing skills should be enjoyable, and technology can be used to make the internal world more tangible. Vella-Brodrick et al. [50] used the latest technology in wellbeing education, such as the “Bio-Dash Wellbeing Program” and “active constructive responding,” to provide tangible feedback to students that they can use to make decisions about their lives. Real-life examples and research evidence should be incorporated into wellbeing teaching to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Additionally, offering a variety of wellbeing activities and allowing students to explore what works best for them is crucial, as not every strategy will work the same way for everyone. Finally, it is important to make wellbeing alluring to young people by incorporating the latest technology, games, and variety into wellbeing education.

The goal of wellbeing education should be to create lasting change at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, it should promote lasting change for individual students, while at the macro level, it should impact the entire system. Mead and colleagues (2021) advocate for a transdisciplinary model of wellbeing that encompasses various domains, including individual, community, environmental, and physical and socio-contextual factors that are beyond the control of the individual. Their theoretical framework emphasizes the need to assess coherence levels among different measures that contribute to a more holistic understanding of wellbeing. For sustainable results, it is crucial to address wellbeing in school education at the system level. This requires not only rhetoric in international and national policy documents but also practices in schools and classrooms. Ongoing professional support should be provided to teachers and school leaders to improve the implementation of the policy. Maslow’s pyramid [52] provides a useful way to think about wellbeing. The foundation of the pyramid is made up of basic needs such as food and shelter, and successful fulfillment of these needs can lead to personal development. At the top of the pyramid lies happiness and self-actualization, which could be compared to wellbeing. Wellbeing depends not only on physical health and living well but also on enjoying happiness and self-fulfillment. Approaching wellbeing from a holistic perspective, where students can use their strengths to overcome life’s challenges, is beneficial and essential in education.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, this theoretical article has provided insights into the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework for holistic wellbeing in school education. The proposed framework of holistic wellbeing is based on the principles of multidimensionality, interconnectedness, and strength oriented. The article contributes to the ongoing discussion on the importance of wellbeing in school education and provides a foundation for further research and development of wellbeing policies and practices in education. Wellbeing is a term that holds significant relevance and importance across various social science disciplines, particularly in education. With the recent shift in the goals of education and the increased emphasis on wellbeing in policy documents both nationally and internationally, it is essential to examine how wellbeing can be further integrated into education to achieve more robust and sustained effects. While there is a scarcity of educational research considering the holistic and comprehensive conception of wellbeing, this paper calls for more research to address evidence gaps and contradictions. A more holistic field of wellbeing scholarship in education is needed, drawing on different philosophical and empirical conceptualizations of wellbeing. The discussion highlights the important role of school education in promoting wellbeing beyond limited, fragmented mental health difficulties and social–emotional framing. Therefore, it is crucial to examine and develop these ideas through further empirical research in schools, which can provide an opportunity to

understand the purpose of school education in terms of this broader, richer, comprehensive, and holistic conception of wellbeing.

As we continue to develop our understanding of wellbeing and its role in education, we can work towards creating a more comprehensive and holistic approach to education that supports the wellbeing of all students, educators, and communities. As suggested by Diener et al. [31], let us observe, chart, and not rush towards a theoretical framework of holistic wellbeing as an integral part of school education.

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