

Early Adulthood Perspective of a Well-Lived Life: A Basis for Self-Help Plan

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ABSTRACT

The concept of a well-lived life among individuals in early adulthood mainly focus on how they navigate life transitions and achieve personal success. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, semi-structured interview was used with twelve Filipino young adults aged 25 to 35 years old. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: Empowered Purpose, highlighting resilience and coping strategies; Building Bonds, emphasizing the importance of relationships and support; Art of Balance, addressing work-life harmony; and Behind the Persona, which explores the challenges and uncertainties faced by young adults. Findings suggest that a well-lived life is intricately tied to personal values, social connections, and the ability to adapt to life's complexities. The study contributes to understanding how young adults perceive fulfillment and success amid contemporary societal pressures, offering insights for practices in education, mental health, and social policy. The LIFE self-help plan is devised to help young adults engage in mindfulness and self-compassion practices in realizing a healthy concept of a well-lived life.

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Introduction

The concept of well-being has been a subject of extensive research and philosophical discourse. Well-being is about what makes life good and fulfilling. It is fundamental to the human experience. This includes exploring the mental and emotional aspects of well-being, such as happiness, resilience, and purpose; examining how social factors like relationships and community influence well-being; investigating the relationship between economic indicators and measures of well-being; and health scientists studying the link between physical health and overall well-being.

There are conceptions of wellbeing that focus on contentment, and simple living. This idea posits that wellbeing is about appreciating and valuing what is presently gained, rather

than being on an endless pursuit of greater affluence. This idea is often attached to simple living, having only enough to meet one's basic needs and less emphasis on abundance and greater material wealth (Oishi et al., 2013; Brown & Kasser, 2014). Defining the concept of a well-lived life is very nuanced, and depends on a multitude of factors that occur both internally and externally of the individual. Personality traits, societal structure, culture, attachment style, and even trauma can shape the way an individual perceives a life well-lived. It is this nuance that offers greater credence to the idea that a well-lived life can be defined in many ways (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Kashdan & McKnight, 2013).

Well-being is a complex construct that covers physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of an individual's life (Kiefer, 2008). Recent research has identified numerous distinct components of well-being, ranging from basic need fulfillment to more abstract concepts such as purpose, personal growth, and positive relationships (Pincus, 2023). This suggests that well-being is fundamentally rooted in the successful fulfillment of these various human needs, emphasizing the importance of holistic approaches to understanding and promoting well-being. Relevant to well-being is the concept of eudaimonia, which emphasizes the pursuit of meaning, purpose, and personal growth as central to a well-lived life (Osin et al., 2023). According to research, it is a predictor of high levels of purposeful life engagement in later adulthood can have significant health benefits, including extended longevity, reduced risk for disease, and improved physiological regulation (Kim et al., 2019; Ryff, 2023).

There is a notable variability in the patterns of purpose and personal growth across the lifespan. For younger adults, well-being often emphasizes exploration and achievement as they navigate identity formation, career establishment, and relationship building; their sense of well-being may be closely tied to goal attainment, future planning, and novel experiences (Ryff, 1989). Additionally, forming strong social bonds and feeling a sense of belonging are crucial during this stage, making social connectedness a significant component of their well-being. Financial stability and independence also emerge as important markers of success. In contrast, middle-aged adults may shift their priorities toward family responsibilities, career advancement, and societal contributions. At this stage, the search for meaning and purpose becomes more central, with well-being increasingly associated with fulfillment and making a difference (Ryff et al., 2016). Managing multiple roles can present challenges, so effective navigation of these demands is vital for maintaining well-being. For older adults, the focus often turns to maintaining good physical health and emotional well-being. A strong social

support network and meaningful relationships become crucial for fostering well-being in later life (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). As individuals reflect on their lives, well-being may be linked to acceptance, wisdom, and a sense of peace. However, these trends are generalizations. Individual experiences and perspectives on well-being can vary greatly within and across age groups, with cultural background also playing a significant role in shaping these views.

Adulthood is a period of formative functioning characterized by significant changes in identity formation, career establishment, and relationship building. Additionally, shifting societal norms have led to traditional markers of adulthood, such as marriage and homeownership, being achieved later or redefined altogether, prompting young adults to reconsider what constitutes success and fulfillment (Youth Perspectives, 2021). Furthermore, as digital natives, young adults are heavily influenced by technology and social media, which present both opportunities and obstacles for their pursuit of a meaningful life (Kurton, 2024, Ndubisi & Natarajan, 2018). During this exploratory period, young adults may resort to some ideals in shaping their perspectives in life. An emphasis on social comparison is a pattern of social engagement that some young adult individuals used in measuring their worth, achievements, and sense of fulfillment and often within their age group. In this stage, they are working to create a more secure sense of self, and in the process look towards validation from peers in the form of career or financial advancement (Johnson & Blomfield Neira, 2015).

This paper examined the personal views of selected young adults about a well-lived life. These objectives aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals manage this developmental stage, with a focus on how they define a well-lived life and to recommend a self-help plan based on the findings.

Method

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological approach to explore the concept of a well-lived life among selected young adults. This aims to capture each participant's unique perspective and personal experiences, allowing them to be recognized as experts in their own lives while researchers acted as collaborative interpreters of knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, meeting the inclusion criteria of being in early adulthood (25-35 years old) and focusing on their belief and experiences

about the concept of a well-lived life. To protect privacy and confidentiality in line with research ethics, all participant identities were anonymized. Interviews were conducted online to accommodate their individual preferences and availability prior the interview session.

A semi-structured interview guide was provided to explore the concept of a well-lived life among the early adult participants. This approach is effective for building rapport and gaining meaningful insights. The interview questions focus on how individuals in early adulthood perceive and define a well-lived life. The instrument consists of rapport building questions; experiences and views of a well-lived life concept; and debriefing questions. The personal reflections of the participants were highlighted.

Prior to data collection, informed consent forms were disseminated to each participant. They were also informed about the confidentiality measures in place and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Interviews were scheduled at a convenient time for the participants. The interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide, but interviewers remained flexible, allowing the conversation to flow naturally and probing deeper into areas of interest as they arose. Each interview session was conducted through teleconference and approximately lasted thirty minutes to an hour.

Thematic analysis (TA) was used as the primary analytical method. This method allows for a detailed, nuanced account of the data, which is essential for understanding the concept of a well-lived life among selected early adult individuals (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, the data analysis entails the following steps: 1) the researchers adopt a phenomenological attitude and immerse themselves in the data in order to allow oneself to be present to the lived experience of the participants; 2) reading multiple times the entire data transcripts in order to make sense of the phenomenon under study; 3) making exploratory notes or codes for initial meaning units; 4) transforming notes into emergent themes with reflection of the data; and 5) constructing the interrelationship of central themes from supporting data extracts. This approach relies on discovering the participants' meaning-making at a given life instance.

Process of obtaining informed consent; confidentiality of sensitive information through safekeeping the transcribed data within study period was practiced. Abiding ethical research process, a debriefing session for each participant is conducted.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The researchers identified four themes depicting the perspective of the study participants about the concept of a well-lived life.

THEME 1: Empowered Purpose: Resilience and Overcoming Life's Challenges

Early adulthood often involves significant life transitions that require individuals to demonstrate resilience and adaptability in the face of various difficulties. These challenges prompt individuals to reflect on their core values and long-term goals. By aligning their actions with a clear sense of purpose, many individuals show a remarkable ability to overcome adversity. Resilience, which arises from a combination of internal strengths and external support, serves as a crucial factor in managing stress and maintaining progress. Additionally, coping strategies rooted in faith or spiritual guidance often provide hope and clarity, reinforcing trust in their ability to thrive despite life's challenges. This reflects the capacity to harness personal strengths and external resources to persist, adapt, and ultimately shape one's journey toward a well-lived life.

The concept of a well-lived life is deeply personal. It is tied to having a strong foundation of values, a clear sense of direction, and a positive mindset. One of the participants shared her perspective on the importance of establishing guiding principles early in life, stating: *"I think because of a good foundation of values, setting of goals, and priority."* (R1)

This insight reflects the belief that nurturing core values and aligning them with one's priorities allows individuals to navigate life more effectively, setting themselves up for long-term fulfillment and success. Intentional goal-setting and maintaining focus on what truly matters, contributes to a sense of accomplishment and a well-lived life. Another participant supported this idea, expressing her belief that she has already achieved a well-lived life, despite facing challenges along the way: *"Yes, in my opinion, I already have a well-lived life. There are still challenges, but I've learned to face them with a positive outlook."* (R9)

Moreover, dealing with the ups and downs of life can lead to a range of emotional experiences. Some individuals face significant challenges but find ways to persevere. One participant spoke about someone she knows, stating: *"There are still many things missing in*

one's life, but we are still living. A person's life is stable because, despite many challenges, they do not give up on life and has never even thought of surrendering. Always does our best to enjoy life." (R4)

Said response underscores the resilience of this individual, who continues to live fully despite feeling that there are many gaps in her life. She highlights that the person's quality of life stems from a strong determination to confront challenges without giving up, demonstrating a commitment to making the most out of every situation. When asked why a person might have a well-lived life, another participant stated: *"Life isn't perfect, but I think when we say a well-lived life, it includes how you manage to recover or bounce back from the challenges that life gives you, which of course makes you stronger and wiser." (R2)*

Additionally, a well-lived life is often deeply intertwined with one's relationship with God, which serves as a source of strength, hope, and purpose. Participants frequently express how their faith provides them with a foundation for navigating life's challenges and fosters a sense of connection to something greater than themselves. One participant conveyed the significance of maintaining a strong spiritual relationship, saying: *"I believe that a well-lived life involves having a close relationship with God. It's like having someone to turn to during tough times, and that connection helps me stay grounded." (R11)*

The idea that faith can offer comfort and guidance, particularly in moments of uncertainty. For many individuals, prayer and reflection become vital practices that nurture their spirituality and reinforce their resilience. Another participant shared her view on the role of faith in her life: *"For me, a well-lived life is rooted in my relationship with God. It's about trusting Him to guide me through challenges, and that trust gives me the strength to keep going, even when things get tough." (R12)* The transformative power of faith, emphasizing that a strong relationship with God can inspire individuals to face adversity with courage and determination. This reliance on spiritual guidance often leads to a deeper sense of purpose, allowing individuals to align their actions with their core beliefs and values.

In summary, participants emphasize that overcoming obstacles fosters personal growth and encourages a positive mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities rather than setbacks. They place emphasis on the significance of establishing guiding principles early in life, which allows individuals to align their actions with their core values, enhancing their sense of direction and fulfillment.

THEME 2: Building Bonds: Cultivating One's Sense of Belonging

Relationships are at the core of every person's life. As social beings, we are designed to cultivate relationships and seek a sense of belonging. These relationships provide safety, security, and a source of resilience to weather life's toughest challenges. This sense of belonging is linked to all desirable indicators of a well-lived life. The strength of relationships corresponds with feelings of fulfillment. It is also associated with affluence or abundance, meaning that quality relationships are equated with wealth and are considered one of the most valuable resources in life.

Commonly shared view of relationships especially with family lead to feelings of happiness and pride. They experience fulfillment in sharing their children's achievements and milestones. *".. When my children graduated, I felt success, joy, and family happiness. During those times, I felt like I had achieved my dreams for them."* (R10)

In addition, the health and wellbeing of the family unit is also a form of achievement in and of itself and is a main priority for a lot of the participants. As a participant expressed what's important to them, *"A healthy family."* (R12)

For some, the love that comes from family, is primarily what defines a well-lived life. It is even equated to a sense of peace or a secure sense of self. Furthermore, this focus on belongingness extends beyond the family unit, where the capacity to help others is also seen as indicative of a life well-lived. As a participant shared, *"For me, a well-lived life is one that has love for family, peace within oneself, and where you have helped others."* (R9)

When conceptualizing a well-lived life, the perspective can shift to being self-evaluative. One can look to possessions, resources, and other tangible things to define a well-lived life. However, for some, memories can be very valuable possessions, and usually the memories that hold the most significance are the ones they have with family. A life well-lived is one who has an abundance of these memories, even if these are ordinary day-to-day memories. They can often evoke deep feelings from participants that helps them conceptualize a life well-lived

"... during a family vacation where we spent quality time together, exploring new places, making memories. we laughed, told stories, and really enjoyed being together without usual distractions." (R11)

The bonds that are built between loved one's are seen not only as a source of fulfillment, peace, and happiness, but as an anchor through difficult times. Participants see the value of the strength of these bonds and how they can sustain them through tough times and even encourage them to meet their potential and their goals.

"I have a wealthy friend from high school who, despite beginning her career late, has always had her family's backing." (R7)

Additionally, some view that the relational environment and security cultivated during one's upbringing is crucial to creating the space to allow a person to lead a life well-lived, as one participant expressed, *"... grew up in a healthy family where all of your feelings and emotions were acknowledged." (R4)*

The importance of these bonds also extends to the participants' experience of their spirituality. The connection that they have to a higher power, the bonds cultivated through upholding spiritual values, and living a life in accordance to their spiritual belief is conceptualized as indicative of a life well-lived. The participants' experience of believing in a higher being as a support, a confidant, and an omniscient guide. This is also associated with happiness, contentment, and fulfillment.

"Yes, I have a deep sense of fulfillment because I am guided and protected by God who gives strength and direction. Also, my family is always there providing support, love and motivation." (R11)

In summary, forming meaningful attachments for young adults is central to their concept of happiness and success. Participants in this study consistently emphasized the importance of family bonds, sharing how milestones such as their children's achievements brought immense joy and a sense of accomplishment. The health and well-being of the family unit emerged as a primary goal, with familial love often equated to inner peace and a secure sense of self. Beyond family, the ability to help others was also regarded as a hallmark of a life well-lived. Strong relational bonds were viewed as vital anchors during difficult times, providing emotional support and encouragement. Additionally, participants' spiritual connections, particularly their relationship with a higher power, were deeply intertwined with their sense of fulfillment and resilience, offering guidance, strength, and profound contentment.

THEME 3: Art of Balance: Achieving Harmony Between Work and Life

Managing adulthood often involves striving for financial security and balancing life responsibilities. Participants highlight the importance of achieving financial stability, which includes being able to provide for oneself and one's family without the constant pressure of bills and basic necessities. A well-lived life, as some participants suggest, involves not just the acquisition of material wealth but also the ability to manage responsibilities in a way that contributes to a sense of security and peace of mind. One participant expressed this view, stating: *"I think a fulfilling life is one where you can acquire all your desires and necessities without the constant worry about providing food for your family or handling increasing bills."* (R8)

This underscores the belief that achieving financial independence and stability allows individuals to focus on their long-term goals and aspirations without being weighed down by daily financial stress. For many, this balance between wealth and responsibility fosters a sense of contentment and security. Another participant highlighted the significance of mental stability and self-respect in addition to financial security:

"... Financially and mentally stable, know oneself, has high self-respect, and prioritizes peace of mind..." (R4)

For many participants, a well-lived life is less about material success and more about achieving a sense of contentment and inner peace. The pursuit of happiness is often rooted in simplicity, with a focus on finding fulfillment in everyday experiences rather than in the accumulation of wealth. One participant shared her perspective: *"A well-lived life is one that brings happiness and contentment, even in the simplest of things."* (R6)

Such a response highlights the idea that fulfillment can be found in the everyday moments of life, where simplicity and contentment are valued over material possessions. Happiness, according to this view, comes from appreciating what one has rather than constantly seeking more. Another participant emphasized that while money is necessary, true happiness stems from contentment with life:

"It's not just about money. Although yes, you need money because it can buy things that make you happy, I think it's also about being happy and content with your life." (R3)

This points to the balance between material wealth and emotional well-being, where financial success is seen as a means to support happiness but not as the sole determinant of a well-lived life. For these individuals, contentment arises from a deeper connection to inner peace and fulfillment.

However, it is important to consider that participants may feel more able to be receptive to experiencing peace, contentment, and fulfillment, when they have enough resources to attain a sense of freedom, freedom to explore, take risks, and have time to pause and re-orient themselves, if needed. On the surface it may be expressed as financial stability, but underneath it may be having access to the freedom to choose and having enough resources to cope with negative consequences. As a participant expressed firmly, *"I am not in that kind of life. Money is what makes the world go round. If you don't have money or you're short of it, others treat you like a slave. There is no freedom."* (R5)

Young adult participants strive for financial security and balancing life responsibilities. While material wealth is desired, managing responsibilities contributes to a sense of security and peace of mind. Contentment and inner peace, rather than material success, are valued as essential for a well-lived life. Happiness is found in simplicity and everyday experiences, not just in wealth accumulation. Participants believe that a fulfilling life involves acquiring desires and necessities without worrying about financial burdens. Ultimately, a well-rounded life involves finding happiness and contentment in the simplest things, prioritizing mental wellness and self-awareness alongside financial security.

Overall, the consensus among participants was that a life well-lived is one where financial stability and contentment coexist with inner peace and the ability to find joy in life's simpler moments.

THEME 4: Behind the Persona: Challenges and Uncertainties of Living

Dealing with adulthood is not without its struggles, as many individuals face external pressures and internal obstacles that disrupt their pursuit of personal fulfillment. These challenges often arise from societal expectations, which place immense pressure on individuals to meet certain standards of success, leaving little room for self-reflection or growth. As a result, some individuals may feel lost, lacking a clear sense of purpose or

direction in their lives. This sense of disconnection from one's goals or passions can make it difficult to find joy or meaning in daily experiences.

Personal struggles also contribute to this sense of unfulfillment. When individuals focus excessively on the negative aspects of their lives, they may fail to appreciate the positive things happening around them, leading to a distorted perception of their overall well-being. These internal battles often intensify feelings of dissatisfaction and prevent individuals from recognizing their potential for growth and happiness.

One participant reflected on how a lack of purpose or direction can negatively affect a person's life, stating: *"Some people maybe they are lost. They didn't know what they want to do; they lack purpose in life. Having no purpose to do something. There is no direction."* (R2)

This insight highlights the importance of having a clear sense of purpose in maintaining a fulfilling life. Without it, individuals may struggle to find meaning in their actions, leading to a life that feels aimless and unsatisfying. Similarly, another participant shared her thoughts on how negativity can hold people back from living a well-lived life: *"I think it's because they focus too much on negative things. It's like they don't have time to appreciate the good things happening around them."* (R3)

The societal pressure to succeed and conform to external expectations can also be a significant barrier to living a fulfilling life. One participant shared her observation of others who are unhappy with their lives due to external pressures:

"Yes, a lot. I think it's because they are too affected by pressure. They don't have time for themselves or they are not really happy with their work." (R3)

This perspective reflects the reality that many people prioritize meeting societal standards over their own well-being, leading to burnout and unhappiness. The lack of balance between work and personal life often leaves little time for self-care or pursuing activities that bring joy and fulfillment.

In summary, finding purpose and focusing on positivity are crucial for living a well-lived life. Societal pressures to succeed and conform can also obstruct fulfillment, as individuals prioritize external expectations over personal well-being. The lack of balance between work and personal life often leaves little time for joy and fulfillment. Participants

stress that internal and external challenges can disrupt fulfillment and purpose, citing negative thinking, societal pressure, and personal obstacles as key barriers. However, addressing these challenges can lead to a more fulfilling life by focusing on positivity and reevaluating societal norms. By doing so, individuals can reclaim purpose and move towards greater satisfaction and meaning in life.

Discussion

The study findings highlight the critical role of resilience and adaptability in navigating the complexities of early adulthood. As young adult individuals face significant life transitions, they are often compelled to reflect on their core values and long-term goals. This reflection fosters a sense of purpose that enables many to overcome adversity. Resilience, characterized by a combination of internal strengths and external support, emerges as a vital factor in managing stress and maintaining progress. Research supports the idea that resilience is not merely an individual trait but can be cultivated through supportive relationships and coping strategies. A study by Farchi and Peled-Avram (2025) emphasizes that resilience is a dynamic process influenced by various factors, including social support systems and personal coping mechanisms. This perspective aligns with participants' experiences, where faith or spiritual guidance often serves as a source of hope and clarity, reinforcing their trust in their ability to thrive despite challenges.

Participants in this study also frequently expressed that overcoming obstacle is viewed not just as a challenge but as an opportunity for growth. This mindset is essential for fostering resilience; as noted by Dweck (2006), individuals with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges and persist in the face of setbacks. One participant articulated this sentiment, stating that her positive outlook has helped her navigate life's difficulties, highlighting the notion that resilience is closely tied to one's mindset. Moreover, the concept of a well-lived life is deeply personal yet often rooted in strong values, clear direction, and a positive mindset. Participants emphasized the importance of establishing guiding principles early in life. Research by Schwartz (2012) supports this idea, indicating that individuals with well-defined values tend to experience greater life satisfaction and fulfillment. The participant's reflection on her foundational values highlights how nurturing core beliefs allows individuals to navigate life more effectively.

The role of spirituality in fostering resilience was also prominent among participants. Many expressed that their relationship with a higher being provides strength during challenging times, relative to the findings from Dolcos et al. (2021), conclude that spiritual practices can enhance coping mechanisms and overall well-being. Participants noted faith helps them to stay grounded, underscoring how spiritual connections can offer comfort and guidance.

The fundamental role that relationships play in shaping an individual's experience of a well-lived life was also emphasized. As social beings, humans are inherently designed to cultivate connections, and these relationships provide safety, security, and resilience during life's challenges. The participants in this study consistently highlighted how their relationships, particularly with family, contribute significantly to their happiness and sense of fulfillment. This aligns with research indicating that strong social ties are associated with greater well-being and life satisfaction (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

Participants expressed those achievements within the family, such as children's accomplishments, evoke profound feelings of joy and accomplishment. This reflects findings by Ryff (1989), who posits that personal growth and positive relationships are key components of psychological well-being. Moreover, the health and well-being of the family unit emerged as a primary goal for many participants. The emphasis on familial love as a defining aspect of a well-lived life resonates with the idea that strong family bonds contribute to a secure sense of self and inner peace (Walsh, 2016). Participants also recognized that helping others is indicative of a fulfilling life.

The study findings also underscore the intricate relationship between financial stability and personal fulfillment in adulthood. The study emphasized that managing life responsibilities while striving for financial security is essential for achieving a well-lived life. Many articulated that financial independence allows them to provide for themselves and their families without the constant burden of financial stress. This aligns with research indicating that financial stability contributes significantly to overall well-being and reduces anxiety related to daily living expenses (Ryu & Fan, 2023). Moreover, participants highlighted that true stability encompasses not only financial success but also mental well-being and self-respect. This is supported by studies showing that mental health is crucial for maintaining a

balanced life, as individuals who feel secure in their financial situation are more likely to experience higher levels of life satisfaction (Kim, 2018).

One of the highlighted findings pertains to attaining work and life balance. A study found that it is rarely achieved due to high work pressure and family responsibilities' negative impact on physical and psychological well-being (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2021). The study participants contentment with material possessions and immeasurable ones were seen as protective factors from the said problem. Societal factors were primarily seen as the negative influences in perceiving a well-lived life. Interestingly, many participants expressed that a well-lived life is less about material wealth and more about achieving inner peace and contentment. This reflects findings by Kasser (2002), which argue that prioritizing intrinsic goals such as personal growth and relationships leads to greater fulfillment than the pursuit of extrinsic goals like wealth. However, participants also recognized that feeling financially secure provides a sense of freedom to explore, take risks, and reorient oneself when necessary. This reflects the broader understanding that while financial resources are necessary for basic needs, they also play a role in enabling individuals to pursue their passions and interests (Helliwell et al., 2020).

The study also addressed the existing struggle of individuals in the adulthood phase, particularly the external pressures and internal obstacles that hinder their pursuit of personal fulfillment. Participants in this study articulated how societal expectations impose significant pressure to conform to certain standards of success, often leaving little room for self-reflection or personal growth. This aligns with findings from Schmitt et al. (2017), which suggest that societal norms can create a sense of inadequacy among individuals, leading them to feel lost or disconnected from their goals and passions. Research by Seligman (2011) supports this notion, indicating that individuals who have a defined purpose are more likely to experience greater life satisfaction and resilience in the face of challenges.

Moreover, personal struggles often exacerbate feelings of unfulfillment. Participants highlighted how focusing on negative aspects of life can distort their perceptions of well-being. This finding resonates with the study of Van Beveren et al. (2023), suggesting that negative emotions narrow an individual's thought-action capability, hence, limiting opportunities for growth and happiness. Further, the societal pressure to succeed also emerged as a significant barrier to personal fulfillment, (Dejonckheere et al., 2022), which

translates to prioritizing extrinsic goals such as wealth and social status over intrinsic goals eventually lead to decreased well-being and increased feelings of dissatisfaction.

Conclusion

The findings show that young adults' idea of a well-lived life is mainly shaped by resilience, meaningful relationships, and finding balance. This study presents a holistic approach grounded in values, relationships, balance, and spiritual connection in understanding the meaning attached to adulthood well-lived life. In general, a well-lived life is not defined by the absence of difficulties, but by the capacity to navigate uncertainties with optimism, self-awareness, and a strong support system.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to support early adults as they deal with life transitions and be given a self-help guide in realizing a well-lived life and achieve a balance between personal happiness and external challenges. Participants reflected on the significance of belonging and relationships, suggesting that local communities, universities, and workplaces should encourage the development of meaningful connections for early adults. Participants also stressed the importance of work-life balance for overall well-being, recommending flexible work policies to help employees align professional responsibilities with personal needs.

The researchers developed the LIFE self-help plan to guide young adult individuals in exploring the complex meaning of a well-lived life. This aims to serve as a reminder that life is about 1) leaning onto connections and have meaningful relationships with family, friends, and community for a shared purpose; 2) investing in self-discovery to understand the different paths and embrace opportunities for personal growth; 3) find balance by striving for a sustainable work and personal life transcending into self-care, stress management and activities that bring genuine joy; and 4) embrace resilience by bouncing back from challenges and setbacks for learning and growth. As a self-paced practice, participants will have the opportunity to reconnect with themselves and gain greater awareness of their current life transition. The reflective process encourages mindful examination of their personal journey, gaining insight into their growth, challenges and aspirations. In general, this self-help plan supports a deeper self-understanding and intentional living.

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