



Review Article

Identification of curriculum objectives of brain-based education and positive education

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Abstract

Introduction: Positive psychology aims to identify factors that increase mental health and well-being. Positive education uses positive psychology to enhance learners' health, well-being, happiness, and flourishing. Identifying positive education goals and integrating them with brain-based learning and using them in educational and rehabilitation centers will increase learners' health, well-being, and growing.

Materials and Methods: This qualitative research is done by documentary method and systematic review and analyzed by content analysis technique. The research community includes published and digital resources associated with positive education, positive psychology, and brain-based learning. The findings were collected through purposive sampling using note-taking tools, with the keyword of Positive Psychology, Positive Education, and Brain-based learning by using books and valid scientific sites like Elsevier, PubMed, Google Scholar, and Science Direct from 2000 to 2021. The data were analyzed using inductive content analysis and its validity was calculated by the Content Validity Ratio.

Results: The obtained goals included five main categories of purposefulness, morality, identity, increasing skills and emotions, and sixteen subcategories.

Conclusion: The results showed that the use of these goals, considering the effect of positive education in preventing and treating emotional problems, increasing mental health, reducing depression and suicide, achieving academic progress and learning, increasing coping with stress, self-efficacy and hope, improves well-being and reduces mental difficulties.

Keywords: Brain-based learning, Curriculum, Positive education, Positive psychology

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Introduction

Education is one of the great and important organizations in every country that closely relates to social, cultural, and economic development and individual growth. One of its general goals is to ensure the learners' physical and mental health. On the other hand, psychology aims to help people's mental health.

The field of positive psychology, which has expanded greatly in the last two decades, as a new approach in psychology, identifies factors that increase health (1) and understands and describes happiness, well-being, individual prosperity, and their affecting factors. Positive education is the term used to describe the application of positive psychology in schools.

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Positive education links academic achievement skills with well-being skills to "develop well-being skills, flourishing and optimal performance in children, adolescents and students" (2). Positive education is a dramatically growing field of study in schools (3), and its goal is to create strengths, abilities, well-being, and resilience in educational communities (4). Positive psychology is strongly related to the school environment to help students and staffs and develop the high psychological well-being (mental health). Researchers have shown positive psychology reduces absenteeism, suspension, and bullying and improves psychological well-being (5). It also enhances academic progress (6) and increases teenagers' positive emotions (7). According to Sikzent Mihali, one of the pioneers in positive psychology, this field tries to be useful for everyone. He claims that until recently, psychology was only related to "fear, emotions and negative diseases" and dealt with the pathological aspects of humans. In contrast, positive psychology emphasizes people's strengths and not their weaknesses. This means that positivist education can be useful not only in pathology-focused institutions but also in schools and religious institutions with normal children (8).

Positive education programs combine academic education with positive psychological interventions to promote well-being, reduce mental illness (9), and positively affect students, teachers, and others in the educational community (10). Positive education shows how to live and improves life satisfaction (11). It also reduces suicide (12) and depression and increases happiness (13), which leads to students' success and coping with stress (14,15). Positive education applies the findings of positive psychology researchers in education. It shows the best ways to reduce or even prevent depression and anxiety, increase pleasure engagement in school, and improve curiosity and love of learning. It offers social skills such as empathy, cooperation, courage, and self-control, all correlated with academic progress. Positive education causes public well-being and helps the students' health (7,16,17).

The rapid growth of technology, the employment of mothers, and the small number of children in families have created many emotional problems for children and students. So, the mental health of students and the community are predisposed to serious risk,

which leads to an increase in students' depression (18), addiction, despair, and sometimes suicide in schools. Our country is one of the developing countries, and the statistics indicate the increasing prevalence of substance addiction (19).

The study on positive education and positive thinking shows its great effect in preventing and treating students' emotional problems, increasing their mental health, and reducing depression and substance abuse. Therefore, there is a need for positive education and a positive education curriculum in all educational centers. The strongest case for positive education is the worldwide concern about what is being called a mental health crisis. Before the corona epidemic, at least one out of four people reported symptoms of mental illness (20).

Determining the goals is the first vital point in the curriculum planning process. The plans are the main elements of the curriculum, and the programs are designed and then implemented according to the goals. All work, including determining the content, teaching method, implementation, and evaluation, is formed and implemented to achieve the goals. Therefore, the plans are the basis of curriculum planning and the core of all the duties and tasks of curriculum planners (21).

This research aims to identify the objectives of a positive education curriculum emphasizing brain-based learning. Brain-based learning means using different techniques and providing conditions, experiences, and strategies compatible with brain learning to achieve optimal understanding (22). Research has shown that the right and left hemispheres of the brain have different functions. As the logical half, the left brain is responsible for reasoning, problem-solving, and language. As the intuitive and creative half of the brain, the right brain is involved in ideas instead of words (23). The right hemisphere detects negative emotions faster, while the left hemisphere detects positive ones. Based on the evidence, when a person experiences positive emotions, the left hemisphere is more active (24). Also, brain research shows that the brain hemispheres do not work separately, and learning, as the highest function of the brain, involves the activity of the whole brain; however, the educational systems target the left hemisphere of the brain, the learning content should be able to stimulate both the left and right hemispheres (25). One of the ideal goals of the curriculum and education of

the Islamic Republic is to cultivate a perfect human being. An excellent human being has developed all dimensions of their being and is not one-dimensional. The positive education curriculum will pay attention to the right hemisphere in the curriculum and help the individual's overall development. Nowadays, due to the volume of books, students and teachers emphasize the concepts of textbooks and their cognitive content. Many necessary skills have received less attention, especially skills related to a cheerful life, happy life, enthusiasm, and interest in learning and general mental and emotional well-being of students. Therefore, according to the mentioned issues, this research aimed to identify brain-based and positive education curriculum objectives.

Materials and Methods

The current research is practical in terms of its purpose, and in terms of the research paradigm, it is qualitative. The document study and systematic review method were used in the present study. Its components are positive education, brain training, findings in neuroscience related to the brain, teaching, and learning. The sampling method was purposive. This research data results from searching published sources and reliable scientific sites such as Elsevier, PubMed, GoogleScholar, Science Direct, and Magiran through keywords of positive psychology, positive education, and brain-centered education from 2000 to 2021.

The inclusion criteria for articles include studies on positive psychology, positive education, and brain-centered education and indexing articles in reliable scientific databases. The exclusion criteria include papers presented in unreliable journals and conferences and non-authoritative articles. Among the documents, the total number of articles obtained was 85, and 32 articles were selected by excluding duplicate and overlapping articles in the databases and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected through chip sampling. Inductive content analysis was used to analyze the information obtained to answer the research question according to the type of question. In inductive content analysis, the researcher avoids using predetermined classes and allows the classes and their names to emerge from the data. In this method, instead of starting the data collection by relying on the assumptions that came out of a theory, the starting point is based on the research question

and goal. Therefore, the researcher is completely immersed in the data to gain insight (26). According to this point of view, the data analysis started by repeatedly reading the text to engage in them and find a general understanding. Then the texts were read word by word, and the codes were extracted. This process continued continuously, from removing the regulations to naming them. After that, the codes were classified based on their differences or similarities.

The unit of analysis in this research was thematic, and data analysis and coding were done using inductive content analysis. First, the data was studied, and initial coding was done; then, similar codes were categorized and named under a single category. In the next stages of the research, these categories were compared, and some that were closer were placed under a more general category.

In this research, the criterion of believability has been used to check validity. The acceptability of research constructs for reality makers is called believability; in other words, Flick believes that substantiating the text with acceptable quotations is the criterion of believability (27). In this way, the categories were given to people outside the scope of the research to confirm, and reliability criteria were also used in this research for reliability. Therefore, the researcher has used the following strategies to control the reliability of the research implementation procedure:

First, sources related to the topic were searched, and raw data were collected. Then, through summarizing, the basic concepts were extracted from the related raw data in the tables. After that, the concepts were coded and categorized in new tables. Then the obtained categories were named, and the main categories were received. Then, according to the research questions, the categories were replaced separately in the respective tables. At each stage, the actions taken were evaluated by the supervisor and consultant, and revisions were made until the final results were obtained. To determine the content validity of the obtained results, the opinions of fifteen experts in psychology and curriculum planning were used, using the Lawshe Consensus Coefficient (CVR) (28). According to this method, the experts were asked to classify each of the questions based on the three-part Likert spectrum of "it is necessary", "it is useful but not necessary," and "it is not necessary". Then

the content validity ratio was calculated based on the following relationship (29).

$$CVR = \frac{ne - n/2}{n/2}$$

In this regard, "ne" is the number of experts who found the issue necessary and "n" is the

total number of group members. The minimum acceptable CVR value for each item is determined in the following table according to the number of experts who evaluated the questions (Table 1).

Table 1. The minimum acceptable CVR value based on the number of experts

Number of persons	CVR value	Number of persons	CVR value	Number of persons	CVR value	Number of persons	CVR value
5	0.99	9	0.78	13	0.54	25	0.37
6	0.99	10	0.62	14	0.51	30	0.33
7	0.99	11	0.59	15	0.49	35	0.31
8	0.75	12	0.56	20	0.42	40	0.29

According to the sample size (15 people) the components with an agreement coefficient higher than 0.49 were selected and those lower than 0.49 were excluded. The criteria of experts considered for the research were: academic resume, work experience, interest in the field of research, an expert in one of the main variables of curriculum planning, positive psychology, and brain-based education.

Results

In response to the research question in identifying the goals of the brain-centered positivist education curriculum, the study of available published and digital sources was used to extract sentences related to the question. After coding and categorizing, the main goals of positivist education were determined.

Table 2. Findings extracted from the coding process (objectives of positive brain-centered education)

Co-categorized themes code	Replaced themes or concepts	
278) Achievable goals	Achievable goals	Goal selection
281) Attainable goals		
240) The anxiety of unattainable goals		
273) Suitability of medium difficulty goals	Goals with medium difficulty	
267) Choosing goals of medium difficulty level by highly hopeful people		
243) Not too difficult goals		
265) Renunciation of the negative goal	Important and great goals	
280) Important goals		
282) Choosing worthwhile goals		
287) Choosing important goals		
285) Relationship of positive emotions with hope		
235) Communication of reaching valuable goals and happiness	Goal selection by the individual (goal setting)	
247) The relationship between goal setting by individual and hope		
573) Giving the right to choose increases internal motivation		
257) The effect of setting goals on hope		
254) Goal determination is a part of the process of hope	The opportunity to choose a goal (goal determination)	
743) Using students' suggestions for curriculum development increases meaning		
784) Participating in decision-making causes mental and emotional development		
275) Attention to individual differences in choosing goals	Participating in decision-making	
	Attention to individual differences	

276) Choosing a set of goals with different levels			
338) The effect of clear goals and increasing hope in children	Obvious and clarity of goals		
574) The relationship between having a clear goal and increasing internal motivation			
851) Obvious and clarity of goals			
21) Focus on the attribute of foresight	Foresight of the future		
89) Foresight of the future			
17) Being sensitive to beauty	Paying attention to the beauty		
92) Praise of beauty			
330) The effect of art on improving the ability to find a way and succeed	Attention to art		Aesthetic goals
192) The relationship between the use of art and happiness			
567) Increasing internal motivation by using art			
192) The relationship between the use of art and happiness			
654) The effect of art on the fluidity			
23) Focus on high talent	Paying attention to capabilities (talents)		
43) Moving towards the development of talents			
157) The relationship between paying attention to strengths and increasing well-being			
222) Relationship between friendship and happiness			
327) Attention to human ability to increase hope			
1) Focus on positive points			
31) Using approaches based on strengths	Teaching social skills		
40) Being sociable			
103) Relationship between positive emotion and social skills			
211) The relationship between being sociable and the happiness	Logical thinking skills		
595) Ability to teach logical thinking skills			
545) The effectiveness of the logical aspect of the mind in determining the goal	Paying attention to values		Traditions and values
706) The purpose of giving meaning to life based on values			
759) Gaining meaning through maintaining values			
128) Attention to values			
129) Value-based learning	Tradition and culture		
760) Gaining meaning through preserving traditions			
764) Gaining meaning through tradition assimilation			
765) Gaining meaning through cultural assimilation	Paying attention to the spiritual aspects		Spirituality
22) Attention to spirituality			
97) Spirituality			
724) Spirituality and religion cause mental health and self-efficacy			
726) Spirituality and religion cause inner peace			
727) Spirituality and religion cause strength to deal with death			

730) Spirituality and religion cause love		
729) Spirituality and religion cause hope		
732) Spirituality and religion cause love and optimism		
733) Spirituality and religion cause meaning in life		
734) More spirituality causes less depression		
98) Faith	Being a believer	
427) Faith, positive emotion related to the future		
440) Faith is a positive emotion related to the future		
168) The connection between happiness and meaning in life	Paying attention to the meaning of life	
201) The connection of happiness and having meaning		
675) Looking for the meaning of human		
698) Having a cognitive and motivational component of meaning		
700) Knowing your place in life is a cognitive component of meaning		
754) The connection of meaning and purpose in life with well-being		
5) Promoting meaning and virtue		
91) Meaningful		
53) Positive adjective of gratitude	Pay attention to the attribute of gratitude	Gratitude
348) Gratitude is kindness		
349) Generosity is gratitude		
352) The relationship between gratitude and happiness		
353) The relationship between gratitude and satisfaction		
355) The connection of gratitude with a sense of surprise		
354) The connection of gratitude with hope		
54) Positive adjective to thank	To be grateful	
94) Gratitude		
121) Increased tolerance	Patience	
459) Relationship between positive mood and tolerance		
29) Attention to patience		
27) Attention to altruism	Altruism	
102) Relationship of positive emotion with friendship		
763) Gaining meaning through altruism		
74) Altruism		
19) Focus on the attribute of forgiveness	Forgiveness	Forgiveness
39) Forgiveness		
416) Ability of forgiveness training	Forgiveness	
845) Forgiveness causes positive attitude		
469) People with positive mood become more creative	Positive mood	
470) Accepting people with a positive mood		
471) Making people productive with a positive mood		
30) Paying attention to work ethics		

8) Hope for the future	Having hope
95) Hope	
181) Communication of happiness and hope	
9) Optimism about the future	
234) The connection of happiness and a hopeful look to the future	Positive emotions
428) Belief of positive emotion related to the future	
441) Belief of positive emotion related to the future	
105) Relationship between positive emotion and optimism	
313) Cultivating positive emotions to increase hope	
494) Creating and expanding social resources with positive excitement	
693) Teaching positive emotions	
116) The goal of positive education is flexibility	Flexibility
692) Flexibility can be taught	
836) Relation between health and flexibility	

After the initial coding, related codes were grouped, and alternative concepts were considered. Then these categories were compared, and some that were closer were placed under a more general category. Finally, the main classes were abstracted. The main classes of goals include: paying attention to morality, social norms, purposefulness, emotions, and increasing skills. Attention to ethics includes subclasses: positive attitude, altruism, forgiveness, flexibility, and gratitude. Social norms include the subclasses of traditions, values, and spirituality; increasing skills include the subclasses of social skills, attention to abilities, aesthetics, and logical thinking; and emotions include the subclasses of positive emotion, flexibility, and hope, purposefulness, which consists of the subclasses of goal setting and future (Figure 1).

Discussion

In this research, we identified the goals of the brain-centered positive education curriculum. The results obtained in connection with the purposes of the brain-centered positive curriculum include five main classes and sixteen different subclasses. Although goals can be organized in Bloom's three cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional domains, the dominant aspect of the goals is in the emotional domain. The first category of the curriculum above plans is the purposeful one, which includes the categories of goal setting by the general (goal selection) and foresight. One of the

most important things that learners must deal with is choosing goals. They must learn to determine their goals. By choosing plans, they know the power of self-learning and self-management (self-management), which can have long-term benefits for them. Teachers can help students develop a purpose by providing a meaningful rationale for why a particular learning activity is important and by providing opportunities for students to choose learning activities. This type of participation raises students' psychological need for independence (30). Gaining insight is based on selecting a point of support and goal, which differs for each person, but educators must have the necessary knowledge in this field (31). Samadieh et al. found that mastery goals and performance-approach goals have significant indirect effects on academic achievement with mediating role of positive emotions (32). Foresight is related to the choice of plans. Learners should be able to predict the future and choose their goals accordingly (33). Foresight is a cognitive and rational orientation to the personal future. It is a form of practical reasoning and self-control that helps people to achieve their distant and long-term goals. Forward-thinking people consider the consequences of their decisions and actions in a calculated and far-sighted manner, successfully resisting impulses and other spur-of-the-moment choices. They make flexibility and moderation in their profession and establish a balance between their wishes and desires and what they get in the end (34).

The second layer of the positive brain-centered education curriculum was social norms, which include the layers of spirituality, traditions, and values. Spirituality and religion are related to improving the quality of life, increasing mental health and self-efficacy, inner peace, the power to deal with death, hope, forgiveness, love, affection, and optimism (35). Spirituality improves personal morale in self-learning, increases personal growth initiatives (35), and reduces depression (36). Spirituality is not only in the brain-centered positive curriculum but also part of the goals of the national curriculum, and all plans should be in its path. Another category is paying attention to values and traditions. Paying attention to values in education has a long history (37). Paulo Freire's activities in educating the oppressed, to liberate them from political or social oppression, and Maria Montessori's method, are examples of values-based education (38). According to Seligman, one of how the positive education program can appear in school is through value-based learning (39). Riedle mentions identification with traditions and values as one of the goals of positivist education (38). Blasi considers the recognition of tradition and social values in the context of positive experiences and their consequences related to moral learning for coexistence (40). Sue et al. state the need to recognize social norms in education and the expanded communication and coexistence with people from different cultures while recognizing differences strengthens students' valuing (41). In any society, preserving good values and traditions and transferring them to community members is one of education's goals. This component has also been paid attention to in the positive brain-centered curriculum.

The next level of the goals of the mentioned curriculum is to pay attention to morals, including positive creation, altruism, forgiveness, tolerance, and gratitude. Shapiro and Carlson give an example in the field of ethics in the program of positive psychology that if an educator wants to make an effort in the field of mindfulness, they must first apply appropriate ethical standards such as proper temperament and responsibility in teaching so that students will be familiar with morals in academic life and its examples (42). A positive mood leads to more attention, creativity, and overall worried thinking. When people are in a bad mood, they think about this question: What's wrong here? But when they are in a good mood, they pay

attention to their capabilities and strengths (43). A positive mood will increase friendship and better social connections, social vitality, and as a result, improve mental health of society. Therefore, the presence of this component, in addition to increasing the mental health of learners and the community, will also play an effective role in their education and creativity. The next category is altruism. Altruism is loving people. In their research, Rai and Fiske have considered good ethics in developing social communication and the necessity of teaching morals. They admit from psychology that morality is an innate characteristic that leads a person to goodness and creation and appropriate mood (44). Altruism refers to acts that are done for humanitarian purposes or charitable purposes. The existence of Takfiri currents in today's society doubles the importance of this component in communities. In the religion of Islam, altruism is also highly recommended. God is the kindest of a kind and encourages humans to be kind. "They spend when they are in need, and they suppress their anger, and they forgive people's mistakes, and God loves the righteous" (Surah Al-Imran, verse 134). Another goal in this category is pardon and forgiveness. Forgiveness causes physical and mental health and adaptability (1), reduction of suffering and self-healing, emotional and physical progress (45), and reduction of anger, anxiety, and depression (34). Forgiveness can be taught (46). Just as gratitude for past positives reinforces positive memories, forgiveness neutralizes past bitterness and increases individual satisfaction. Another category is patience. Patience plays an important role in success in today's life. People will have difficulties and hardships in life and need patience and tolerance to go through these stages. Teaching patience will help children to face problems and be patient. According to the research of Walter Michel (43), tolerant and patient children have better grades and academic performance in schools. Teaching tolerance to children and other members of society is necessary for better education and success in the future. Another category is gratitude, which causes happiness in life (43), stronger relationship with others (47), positive thinking and reduction of depression (14), more connection with nature and reduction of envy (48), satisfaction with life and satisfaction with school experiences (30). Appreciation makes children live happier, more satisfied, and stronger social relationships. When people are

appreciated, they enjoy the positive events in their lives, and when they appreciate others, they establish strong relationships with them and increase friendships. In the Qur'an, besides being thankful (49), God has introduced himself in more than 70 verses, referring to gratitude and appreciation from God and humans and ordering this action with various titles.

The next class of goals is to increase skills, which includes the categories of social skills, attention to abilities, aesthetics, and logical thinking. The movement of positive psychology was born to focus on the capabilities of people. One of the topics of the first publication of the positive psychology journal was the field of positive abilities (50). If a person can identify the potential capabilities of their existence and provide the possibility of emergence and realization, they will achieve self-realization. In other words, they achieve their existential perfection and secure themselves against the stresses of the social and psychological environment (34). Humans are different in terms of intelligence and other abilities. In today's classrooms, instead of focusing on individual differences and strengthening abilities, the same content and goals for learning are considered for all learners. Therefore, paying attention to individual differences and striving to strengthen learners' abilities is necessary. Aesthetic learning means connecting thought and feeling. Thoughts and feelings are expressed through art. Art is important because it paves the way for deep thinking and understanding. Not all children can become great artists, but they can develop a sense of aesthetics and know the value of art. The aesthetic sense revolves around a personal and intimate conversation that conveys a shared meaning that is greatly satisfying, reliable, and impactful (51). Eisner states that artistic activities have cognitive results and consequences that prepare students according to the needs of the present century. Art helps children understand relationships, pay attention to the nuances of various ways to solve problems, change their goals, make decisions without predetermined rules, and use imagination (23). By using art and aesthetics in the curriculum, in addition to the left part of the brain, the right hemisphere is also given importance and makes one-dimensional learners grow. Another category of this category is logical thinking. Logical thinking is the highest level of thinking. John Dewey knows logical thinking and active, continuous, and accurate

thinking of any belief or knowledge in the shadow of the reasons that confirm it and its results (52). Considering the characteristics of the present age, i.e., the explosion of information and providing information through various media, it is necessary to teach this skill more than in the past. Therefore, to understand reality, students should analyze the information logically and examine different points of view and topics to distinguish facts from rumors.

Emotions are also one of the classes of the positive education and training curriculum, including positive emotion, flexibility, and hope. Positive emotion is the first component or element in positive psychology and the first component of the theory of genuine happiness (43). Research also shows that people in positive emotional states learn faster than negative or neutral emotional states and improve their intellectual performance (50). Emotions provide more opportunities for people, and most of these opportunities have yet to be experienced. In this approach, experiencing unpredictable opportunities can increase learning (53). Positive emotion causes a pleasant emotional experience, and this keeps the mind open for rational thinking; on the contrary, with negative emotions, the mind cannot solve problems and causes the reproduction of unpleasant feelings; therefore, positive emotions not only affect the psychological well-being and happiness of students but also have a positive effect on the academic progress. Flexibility is another category of this class. Flexible people adapt to new situations easily. They prefer novelty and variety in activities. They enjoy mental stimulation, and this characteristic of them makes them achieve new experiences. They also deal with the opinions of others. They will find new friends and have a better life in pluralistic and diverse societies than people who are less flexible, making them happier and more successful. By studying the lives of successful people throughout history, we also find out that these people were flexible and tried new ways in the face of failures. Another category is hope. According to Snyder, hope is a process through which people set their goals, create the necessary motivation to implement them, and maintain them along the way. Hope causes peace (54), reaching the goal (55), activity motivation (56), personal and social development, academic achievement, occupational success (57), high academic enthusiasm, and progress in school (58). According to Snyder (59), hope is a learned

concept. With the education of hope, students are more motivated to work and, as a result, their development and progress in education.

Considering the effect of positive education in preventing and improving students' emotional problems (45), increasing their mental health (5), reducing depression (60), reducing suicide (61), academic progress (5,60), dealing with stress (15), increasing self-efficacy and hope (35), providing appropriate educational content based on the goals of positive education and training in all courses and educational and therapeutic institutions, especially welfare rehabilitation centers, prisoner support organization, learners helped by the Imdad committee, can increase welfare and learning, and reduce psychological problems.

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Conclusion

The findings of the present research identified the goals of positive education and training with the integration of brain-based education. The goals achieved included five main categories of purposefulness, morality, identity, increasing skills, emotions, and sixteen subcategories. According to the results, using these goals will improve physical and mental health, self-efficacy, and academic achievement.

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