



# The Importance of Subjective Well-Being and Character Strength for Equality Education at the Prison

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## ABSTRACT

*The phenomena that occur in prisoners are very complex such as loss of life satisfaction, hope, and independence, and they have limitations in social interaction. In addition, other phenomena often occur in prisoners, namely the dropping out of school because they have to undergo a period of detention (Kintamani, 2012). While in the socialization institution, they still get the right to enjoy proper education through equality education. As citizens learning equality education, they can also not be separated from the problems that prisoners often experience. Seeing this phenomenon, the author assumes that learning about citizens is important for subjective well-being and character strength. When citizens learn to have subjective well-being and character strength, they can have life productivity (Holder, 2012). This article is discussed using the literature review method by conceptualizing the grand theory and the results of previous research on subjective well-being and the strength of character combined in the learning process of equality education in social institutions. The purpose of this paper is to support research literature exploration of subjective well-being and exploration of character education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Implementing education in Prisons is an effort to fulfill the rights and obligations in fostering prisoners to get the guidance, education, and teaching, furthermore, as an effort to fulfill one's right to get an education. Besides education as a factor that has a significant relationship with subjective well-being based on the [Badan Pusat Statistik \(2017\)](#), research shows that the higher the level of education determines life satisfaction, the more important education is for prisoners to guarantee one's right to education. In addition, in organizing coaching for prisoners, it is also possible to internalize the strength of character, with the aim that after leaving the detention period, prisoners have character strength that can be applied to everyday life.

Prisoners' subjective well-being and character strength are likely obtained through the Education process. Although, in this case, education is certainly not always related to schooling or formal education, there are also other educational pathways, such as non-formal education, in which education programs have equality in Packages A, B, and C. Education equality is also implemented in prisons to accommodate inmates who dropped out of school because he was undergoing a period of detention because of a criminal case ([Kintamani, 2012](#)). In implementing equality education terms, students generally use the term citizen learning.

Learning citizens who become prisoners are in a fairly problematic situation. Some studies say negative emotions are substantial issues that represent the conditions of prisoners in prisons. For example, [Wooldredge \(1999\)](#) states that prisoner experience and psychological well-being are perceived by insecurity, stress, depression, anger, low self-esteem, loss of life expectancy, and loneliness during detention.

In addition, in the learning process, citizens learn to get experience that leads to subjective well-being, which can provide life satisfaction and happiness for students. Therefore, subjective well-being is important for learning citizens who become prisoners because those who are mentally healthy feel happy and prosperous in following all activities in the educational environment, making it possible to follow learning more effectively and make a positive contribution to the school. Furthermore, people with subjective well-being will likely not feel sick because they remain emotionally positive ([Holder, 2012](#)). The current literature on the importance of well-being levels ([Leidenfrost et al., 2016](#)) states that higher subjective well-being in prisoners can increase resilience, lower emotional stress, better psychological conditions, and better adaptation in detention. For this reason, non-formal education units inequality education programs in prisons should implement the principle of well-being in each learning activity; so far, services regarding mental health, and behavior disorders, only exist in counseling institutions.

In addition to emotional well-being issues, in this case, the author assumes that the learning population is important to have character strength. Implicitly the character strength of the learning citizens who become prisoners means building behavioral traits or patterns that are based or related to positive moral dimensions, not negative ones, which are supported by [Park, Peterson, & Seligman \(2004\)](#), who directly link one of the criteria. The main characteristic of "character strength" is that these characters contribute greatly to realizing the full potential and aspirations of someone in building a good life, which benefits themselves and others. With the strength of character in learning, learning citizens who become prisoners will indirectly gain and strengthen the character they already have and those introduced by educators through learning.

### ***Literature review.***

#### ***Approach and concept of subjective well-being***

Regarding theoretical and research approaches, Before the emergence of Subjective Well-being, many theories of happiness emerged from Aristotle's thinking. For example, in the bottom-up theory, pleasant feelings and happy moments primarily influence subjective well-being. That is, the more someone gets something fun, the more happiness will be closer to having. This feeling is derived from one's life experience, [Compton & Hoffman \(2012\)](#). At the same time, another approach is the top-down theory which explains that subjective well-being tends to evaluate by interpreting one's positive experience. These interpretations arise from individuals related to self-perception, trust, and personality traits. Besides that, in the concept of well-being, there are two common approaches commonly used hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic approach provides a momentary sensation of pleasure, while the eudaimonia approach comes from delaying satisfaction for long-term happiness ([Holder, 2012](#)).

Literature that discusses the field of subjective well-being [Ed Diener et al., 2002](#); [Skevington & Böhnke, \(2018\)](#) argues that subjective well-being consists of scientific analysis of how people evaluate their lives - both at this time and for a longer period such as last year, and key concepts about the experience, emotional reactions to circumstances. Subjective well-being is concerned with evaluating their lives' cognitive and affective aspects, including happiness, peace, satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

Popular dimensions in subjective well-being According to ([Diener, 2002](#)), dimensions of life satisfaction as cognitive and happiness as affective. Life satisfaction evaluations are carried out when a person is conscious and evaluates their satisfaction with life as a whole or an assessment of specific aspects of life, such as life satisfaction, satisfaction of interest, and satisfaction with relationships ([Diener & Oishi, 2005](#)). The affective component in subjective well-being is an individual reaction to life events that include pleasant and unpleasant emotions. According to [Graham & Crown \(2014\)](#), overall subjective well-being is influenced by various aspects of an individual's life, including health status, economic status, amount of education, environmental quality, social contact, community participation and

government, and personal security, social goals in religion. That way, subjective well-being can be obtained from various domains, both self-fulfilling and those with a relationship with the social environment.

### ***The Importance of Subjective Well-being***

Many people talk about happiness and well-being because it will lead to sociability, health, and self-recognition. On the other hand, according to ([Bonniwell, 2012](#)), well-being will increase one's creativity and different thoughts; besides that, it will be better in work that is multitasking, systematic and has full attention. So someone with subjective well-being that is good at work will have unique differences and can complete various tasks systematically and directed. Several key findings emerged that well-being programs were highly valued and positively impacted someone.

There is also literature discussed by ([Holder, 2012](#)) concerning well-being in which discussing happiness in children and adults describes some important points of positive subjective well-being for someone. The main points in the discussion are well-being, including finding health, increasing creativity, increasing productive careers, better social relations, high expectations, and resilience and posttraumatic growth. So someone who has positive subjective well-being can make it possible to increase productivity in life.

### ***The Concept of Character Strength***

Discussion about the character of ([Lopez \(2009\)](#)) defines character as a series of positive traits in various cultures and throughout history that are important for a good life. An understanding that character strength greatly influences one's personality is the core of positive psychology. Strength of character is a psychological aspect of the process and the mechanics determining virtue. For example, wisdom policies can be obtained through strengths such as creativity, curiosity, love of learning, open-mindedness, and the "a big picture" perspective in life. In addition, character strengths are part of personality traits that place moral values ([Lopez, 2009](#)).

Character is a series of positive traits that appear in various cultures and throughout history, which are important for a good life. Meanwhile, according to Aristotle, the character develops over time as one acquires habits from parents and community, first through reward and punishment ([Hartman E. 2013](#)). For example, Plato examines that to know good is to do good ([Licona, 2012](#)).

There is a classification of VIA identifying 24 character strengths organized into six virtues, namely: (1) Wisdom and Knowledge; this virtue combines the strengths associated with the acquisition and use of knowledge; (2) Courage, an emotional power that involves training the will to achieve goals in the face of opposition both externally and internally; (3) Humanity, Love, interpersonal power related to "tendencies and protection" in others; (4) Justice, the strength of the public interest that underlies healthy community life; (5) Temperance, the power to protect oneself from actions that are beyond the limit; and (6) Transcendence, the power to establish connections in the wider world.

### ***Equivalent education in prison***

Anyone proven to have violated the law may get sanctions as a form of responsibility for the violations committed. One of the sanctions given to lawbreakers is by fostering in a penitentiary. One of the services provided to prisoners is education, where the process is carried out to guarantee the right of someone to get a proper education. Prison education can be conducted through non-formal education channels, namely "equality education program" or Paket A equivalent to SD / MI, Paket B equivalent to SLTP / MI, and Paket C equivalent to SLTA / MAN. Equality education is designed for people who have special conditions, such as economic factors (underprivileged), geographical (inland), social (unemployment, street children, and criminals), or other factors ([Kintamani, 2012](#)). When serving a sentence, there are not infrequently prisoners who are cut off from school for limitations. For this reason, disconnected prisoners from school are included in inequality education.

## **METHODS**

The discussion of this paper uses the review literature method of various grand theories, the concept of subjective well-being, and strength of character to review the importance of subjective well-being and character education for citizens learning equality education in prisons.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Subjective well-being of citizens studying in prison*

The life of prisoners who are serving their sentences has many limitations both physically, socially, and psychologically. So that it is interesting for some researchers to examine prisoner life phenomena and their psychological health, as has been done by [Yuk \(2017\)](#) and [Wooldredge \(1999\)](#) regarding the conditions of subjective well-being in prisoners. If you look specifically at these limitations in the form of lack of life satisfaction, happiness, and lack of independence, emotions of anger and depression often occur in the lives of prisoners. These conditions can also occur in those who are learning citizens of equality education because they are in the correctional environment. However, on another view, even if someone is in the worst condition, such as subjective well-being, it still has a positive side that can be raised.

Subjective well-being is a study of positive psychology that continues to grow. In positive psychology, studies always discuss and answer humans' strengths and potentials rather than their weaknesses. One opinion ([Bonniwell, 2012](#)) is that "Psychology has more than not emphasized the shortcoming of individuals rather than their potential" it is often done in the older psychology practice, using diagnostics and treatment. This opinion is supported by Beatrice Bright & Shane Lopez ([Compton, 2005](#)) that positive psychology must counteract the practice of psychology that is now used because it is too focused on using treatments, diagnostics, and policy decisions.

Referring to positive psychology, those who become citizens of learning in prisons should have subjective well-being. When a person has subjective well-being, likely, he will not feel sick because emotionally, they will remain positive ([Holder, 2012](#)). Prisoners who undergo detention experience many negative emotions and temperaments; this needs to be minimized by generating positive emotions (happiness) by giving prisoners positive activities and valuable experiences so that prisoners are not easily upset and can improve themselves ([Wooldredge, 1999](#)). So, in this case, the activity as a citizen learns equality education as a positive activity to be carried out to provide happiness to inmates.

The research conducted (by [Leontopoulou & Triliva, 2012](#)), life satisfaction is one of the dimensions that exist in sub-subjective well-being, which is highly correlated with character strength (quality, hope, love, zest, gratitude, curiosity). Then it means that someone with life satisfaction as a dimension of subjective well-being is very likely to have character strength. Thus to develop subjective well-being in students can make efforts to fulfill in all respects, including the school situation/climate, the emotional state of students, and other demographic factors that influence subjective well-being.

### *Build Character Strength in the Learning Citizenship*

Several studies on the strength of character and its relationship with positive psychology have been carried out by researchers in ([Duan & Bu, 2017](#)). the strength of character has a strong meaning in reducing negative emotions and promoting well-being. Furthermore, other studies suggest that character strength can increase happiness and reduce depressive symptoms ([Duan & Bu, 2017](#)); character strength is positively and significantly related to General Life Satisfaction; positively and significantly related to College Satisfaction; For this reason, there are two interrelated relationships between character strength and subjective well-being, both of which are important in the condition of a citizen learning equality education in prison with many limitations.

Research conducted ([Duan, W, 2017](#)) regarding character strength-based interventions that can effectively improve first-year students' mental health. Strategy is a whole plan that directs the learning experience, such as subjects, courses, or modules. It includes ways planned by learning developers to help students achieve learning goals. Thus, the strategy of strengthening character in learning in schools is a way of preparing and making teaching materials by integrating character values in teaching materials and learning activities.

It is just that there are limitations to character values that are integrated into the implementation of learning educational institutions in general due to two factors. First is the absence of individual character education subjects. It has caused the available teaching material (material) not to be fully developed in certain subjects, so the citizens of learning do not comprehensively digest knowledge of character education. Second, the difficulty of teachers in understanding the strategies for developing

teaching materials that integrate character values into each learning activity is only made using lectures and their explanations to experience character values directly through learning activities (Yaumi, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

The life lived by learning citizens who become prisoners is not easy; they must face various challenges and problems that are quite problematic in their subjective well-being. For this reason, subjective well-being is important for citizens to learn as a strength in carrying out activities, such as high self-esteem, optimism, and creativity. In addition, as a learning citizen with subjective well-being, it can be used to build a classification of strength.

A character is a permanent form of behavior where the formation involves a standard of values built by the relatively subjective environment or an excellent value that is absolute. At the same time, a person's strength can be built through their thoughts, feelings, and behavior. A person's personality will be greatly influenced by the strength of character, where the manifestation of a person's virtue lies in the strength of his character. In this case, the learning citizens can internalize the value of the strength of the rust to be used as strength in living life.

Both of them certainly cannot be separated from the process that educators built to create a learning atmosphere, climate, and methods that prioritize subjective well-being interests of citizens learning equality education in social institutions. With this aim, the problems related to the loss of life satisfaction, happiness, and life expectancy can be minimized. Furthermore, it is also important to realize an educational process that instills the strength of character in the learning citizens; in this case, they are prisoners.

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