

# Finding Meaning in Life for Human Flourishing and Wellbeing: A Mixed Method Research Exploring the Benefits, Possibilities and Challenges of the “On Our Journey” Cards

Amanda Bezzina

Institute for Education, Malta

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

*happiness,  
self-awareness,  
education,  
present-moment  
awareness,  
reflection*

## ABSTRACT

The “On Our Journey” cards are an innovative resource and an accompaniment to live a happy life, helping individuals to identify, express and regulate their feelings, reflect, make healthy choices, validate their values/principles, and calibrate their life compass. The resource presents a process map where one can find meaning in one’s own actions and life and develop positive mental health which may not only change one’s life but create positive energy that will spread to people who play together with the “On Our Journey” cards, creating a sense of wellbeing and peace. The cards were developed by the Happy Life (Relationships are Forever Foundation) in Malta, together with a team of professionals. Through a set of questionnaires answered by participants who attended a three-day workshop training on the use of the “On Our Journey” cards, and a focus group with seven participants, four main themes emerged that explored the possibilities and the challenges of the cards. These are: the search for meaning in life and spirituality, positive mental health, wellbeing, and present-moment awareness. Results highlight the importance of understanding how to use the cards and the importance of being prepared for potentially challenging initial reactions. Mastery of card usage and allowing time to trust in their effectiveness can lead to significant improvements in human flourishing, mental health, well-being, spirituality, self-awareness, and meaning in life. This paper provides a valuable opportunity for educators and professionals to consider integrating the “On Our Journey” cards into their personal lives and professional practices.

## 1. Introduction

“The value of the concept in education is clear. It moves the centre of gravity from knowing to doing, and specifically to doing good” (Stevenson, 2022, p. 7). Education can have an important role in the search for meaning and in leading the individual to reach the stage of human flourishing and to tackle existential questions (Bezzina 2016; Bezzina, 2018; Bezzina, 2022; Bezzina & Falzon, 2022; Fowers et al., 2024; Gilead, 2024; Hagues, 2024; Jarden et al., 2024).

\*Corresponding author's E-mail address: amanda.bezzina.2@ilearn.edu.mt

### Cite this article as:

Bezzina, A. (2024). Finding Meaning in Life for Human Flourishing and Wellbeing: A Mixed Method Research Exploring the Benefits Possibilities and Challenges of the “On Our Journey” Cards. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 7(4): 96-117. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jarss.v7i4.1310>

© The Author(s). 2024 **Open Access.** This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and redistribution in any medium, provided that the original author(s) and source are credited.



Different humanistic and progressive person-centred methodologies in education contribute to the development of competencies by equipping them with the necessary tools to meet the important demands in a variety of contexts (OECD, 2005, 2012, 2018).

## **2. The Friendship Cards and the “On Our Journey” Cards**

An example of a tool aimed to develop holistic competencies through person-centred methodologies, necessary for the effective management of daily demands, and that is being used in the Maltese Education System, is the Friendship Cards. This is a tool developed by the Relationships are Forever Foundation together with a team of professionals. The cards are being used locally and internationally to help students to be emotionally literate and to enhance their wellbeing, conflict management skills and their communication skills. This all leads to human flourishing. From two research studies that we did about the impact of the cards with the students and the impact of the cards within the families, it resulted that the Friendship Cards enhance the socio-emotional learning in an experiential way, enhance emotional expression and conflict management, create a safe space for disclosure and develop positive relationships between members who use them (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2020; Bezzina & Camilleri 2024). Based on several years of feedback, the Friendship Cards have evolved into a new set of cards, named the “On Our Journey” cards. There were designed to help individuals to find meaning in one’s life, by focusing on reflection, emotional literacy, empathy and introspection. The study, presented in this paper, focuses on the impact of these cards. In fact, for the aim of the study, the main research questions that were addressed are:

1. What is the impact of the “On Our Journey” Cards?
2. Which are the challenges for the implementation of the “On Our Journey” Cards?
3. How can the “On Our Journey” Cards contribute to the search for meaning, wellbeing and human flourishing?

## **3. Theoretical Framework – The Search for Meaning**

Because goods and services are plentiful and because simple needs are largely satisfied in modern societies, people today have the luxury of refocusing their attention on the “good life”—a life that is enjoyable, meaningful, engaging, and fulfilling—and using economic and other policies in its service. Such a refocus is justified because there is evidence that as societies become wealthier, they often experience an increase in mental and social problems and a plateau in life satisfaction” (Deiner & Seligman, 2004, p. 2).

The search for meaning in life is one of the research areas in this research study. This research area has proliferated (Hicks et al., 2010; Schlegel et al., 2009) and it was and is still explored by a variety of researchers (Cottingham, 2024; Deiner 2002; Deiner & Ryan, 2008, 2011; Deiner & Seligman, 2004; Donaldson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2024; Kügler, 2024; Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024; Seligman, 1991, 2002, 2011; Witmer, 2013) as well as a variety of famous authors (Camus, 1942; Coelho, 1988; Frankl, 1946; Hesse, 1922; McCarthy, 2006; Salinger, 1951).

Martela and Steger (2016), Martela (2020), and Martela (2024) explained that the meaning in life means coherence, purpose and significance. Coherence refers to one’s life as making sense. Purpose refers to a sense of core goals and life direction. Significance is about having a life worth living. This trichotomy was identified by a number of researchers. Based on these definitions, I tried to explore whether the “On Our Journey” cards are useful for the search in meaning wellbeing and human flourishing.

The presence of meaning is an integral part of positive physical health and positive social science (Donaldson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2011; Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024). Deiner and Ryan (2011) stated that the search for meaning contributes to the wellbeing of the individuals. This is considered as essential because it contributes to one's personal agency which is a central concept in the social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, 2001). "Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant" (Frankl, 2006, p.129). Meaning is also one of the five domains in the PERMA theory of flourishing (Seligman, 2011) conceptualising the main factors for wellbeing. This comprises positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The search for meaning is a component in the wellness index developed by Travis and Ryan (Witmer, 2013). "Spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and social factors that enhance our well-being have been validated. More specifically, a meaningful life, realistic and rational thinking, ... are dimensions for improving the quality of living and extending the length of life" (Witmer, 2013, p. 11). Evidence from literature shows us that the experience of meaning in life is both a human ability and a resource that can affect other aspects of wellbeing like positive affect and life satisfaction (Abu-Raiya et al., 2021; Joshanloo, 2019; Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024; Russo-Netzer et al., 2021; Wolfram, 2022). Frankl (1996) argued that individuals find meaning through the fulfilment of universal values. These can be creative, referring to any behaviour where individuals create something that has a value; experiential, referring to external occurrences which we experience with our senses, or attitudinal, referring to the ability to choose one's own attitudes and to choose one's own way. In the research study presented in this paper, I explored whether the "On Our Journey" cards lead to the main factors for wellbeing, one of which is meaningful life. Since there is no research about the impact of the "On Our Journey" cards and since one of the main aims of the cards is the search for meaning, I wanted to explore whether this is really one of the outcomes and what factors lead to it.

#### **4. Human Flourishing and Wellbeing**

The argument of living a life that has a meaning (Bruni, 2010; OECD, 2012) is closely linked to the argument of wellbeing and human flourishing (Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024). In fact, in different definitions of both concepts, there is the meaning in life (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015; Fowers et al. 2010; Graham & Nikolova, 2005; Frazier et al., 2012; Hansen, 2015; Kiaei & Reio, 2014; Lewis et al., 2014; Mackenzie et al., 2018, 2020; Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024; Passmore & Howell, 2014; Turban & Yan, 2016).

For the aim of the research, I was interested to know about the impact of the cards for human flourishing and wellbeing of the user. Kristjansson (2019) stated that human flourishing is the aim of our existence, and that human flourishing comprises moral and meaningful activities, contemplation and awe. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, individuals nowadays are facing existential challenges. Stevenson (2022) argued:

The challenges that confront 21st century societies are existential. Is the flourishing person someone who finds their highest potential in helping to resolve them? This goes beyond future readiness and even futures literacy. It is a capacity to support future transformation? (p. 7).

In such a context, education plays an important role by assisting the learners or the participants to experience meaning in life, wellbeing and human flourishing (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Martela, 2024; Martela et al., 2024; Steger, 2009). National and global surveys like the World Values Survey and Gallup World Poll are increasingly focusing on well-being and human flourishing (Martela & Sheldon, 2019). The OECD 2030 Learning Framework also prioritizes

these aspects as key educational goals, that can be facilitated through education that builds skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes, and values. Similarly, this is one of the main aims of the “On Our Journey” cards (Relationships are Forever Foundation, 2024). Through my research, I wanted to explore how the “On Our Journey” cards are in line with the OECD 2030 Learning Framework (OECD, 2018).

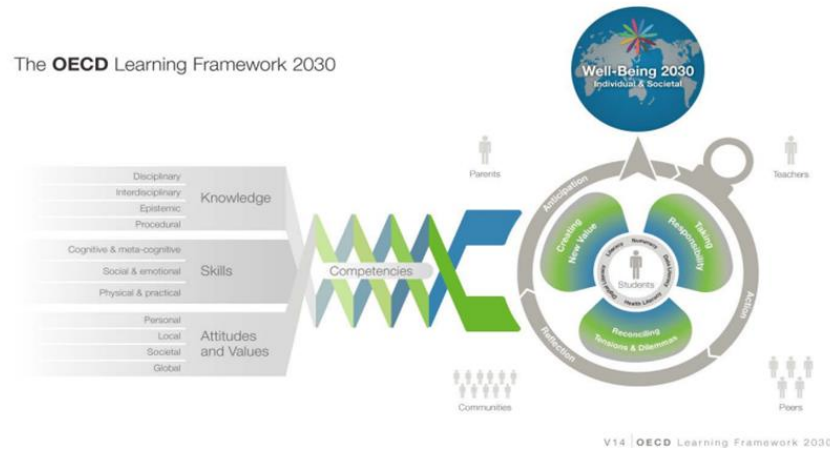


Figure 1. The OECD Learning Framework 2030

Note: Adapted from OECD Learning Framework 2030, by OECD, 2018.

<https://doi.org/10.1787/54ac7020-en>

## 5. The “On Our Journey” Cards

The "On Our Journey" cards (Figure 2) comprise five categories named Feelings, Moving Backward, Moving Forward, Reflections, and Outcomes, to help an individual to find meaning in one's own action, in one's own life and to reflect on one's life. The cards were developed by the Relationships are Forever Foundation in Malta, together with a team of professionals, including lecturers, spiritual leaders and counsellors.

These cards specifically help individuals to live a happy life, identify and regulate their own feelings, validate their own values and principles, calibrate one's own life compass and mainly finding meaning in their life (Relationships are Forever Foundation, 2024). Through a series of cards (Figure 2), the individual first reflects on one's own feelings at that present moment (Feelings – Figure 2). The individual then proceeds to reflect on situations that were experienced, to focus on the actions that could have been avoided (Moving Backward – Figure 2), and to reflect on the actions that helped the person to grow positively (Moving Forward – Figure 2). This is followed by a reflection on the situation to reflect in depth on what happened, and a reflection on the outcomes of the actions performed (Outcomes – Figure 2). Finally, the individual reflects again on one's own feelings (Feelings – Figure 2). Individuals who use the cards attend a three day experiential training to familiarise themselves with the cards, to deal with the theoretical aspect and to discuss possible ways how to use them.



Figure 2. The “On Our Journey” Cards

Note: Adapted from *On Our Journey*, by Relationships are Forever Foundation, 2024.

<https://happylife.org.mt/on-our-journey>

## 6. The Research Study

The research study focuses on the impact of the “On Our Journey” cards on the life of the individuals who use them. Participants who attended the three-day training on the “On Our Journey” cards were invited to fill in a questionnaire about the benefits, possibilities, and challenges of the use of the “On Our Journey” cards. The training includes three and a half hours long sessions spread over a span of three months. This is done to allow the participants to familiarise themselves with the cards and to reflect on their impact. The training was attended by 70 participants (the majority of the which were part of a collaboration agreement with the National Youth Agency Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ) whereas the questionnaire was completed by 40 participants. These participants were recruited through total population sampling. This is because all the participants attending the training were all invited to fill in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was also an invitation for reflection. Throughout the process, the reflection phase is given a lot of importance because it is through reflection that an individual discovers the meaning of different actions, the way actions are tackled, the way experiences affect the wellbeing of the person, and ultimately the way the cards make a difference in one’s own life thus contributing to the meaning of life (Bezzina & Camilleri 2020; Bezzina & Camilleri 2024; Sharp 2001, 2014).

Even though the main aim of the cards is the search for meaning in life and the enhancement of wellbeing, I was interested to know more about the lived experiences of the participants who are using the cards. In addition, participants who filled in the questionnaire were invited to participate in a focus group, to discuss in more depth their experience of the “On Our Journey” cards. As a result, the fourty participants who completed the questionnaire were invited to participate in a focus group.

A mixed method research was used for comprehensive understanding, triangulation, as well as practicality (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) and enhanced validity (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The focus group was held online and there were seven participants who were willing to share their lived experience. The online focus group enhanced convenience, efficiency, accessibility and allowed flexibility in terms of time (Gruber et al., 2008). Nevertheless, they created a limitation in witnessing the non-verbals of the participants (Brown, 2022).

For the selection of participants, participating in the online focus group, I used purposive sampling because it was important that participants involved in the study experienced the use of

the “On Our Journey” cards, so that they could share their lived experience (Bernard 2002; Palinkas et al., 2015). Even though purposive sampling may have created internal bias, thus affecting the reliability and the trustworthiness of the study, it was important for me to include participants who were willing to contribute by sharing their intense feelings and experiences (Bowen et al., 2010; Patwari, 2013).

## **7. Ethical Considerations**

“Researchers need procedures and ethics that can monitor and ensure they remain in the correct and safe areas. What is no less important is critical and reflexive thinking and actions during research” (Hidayat & Mukhlis, 2024, p. 36). In research, ethics helps the researcher and the participants to evaluate arguments on how to act in certain situations (Gabel et al., 2024).

During the entire research process, I adhered to ethical procedures. After obtaining ethical clearance from the Institute for Education (IfE), I informed the research participants about the aim of the study. All participants signed a consent form prior the start of the research. The consent form ensured confidentiality and it informed them that their names will never be revealed and that they could stop their participation at any phase of the research study. The selected participants felt at ease to self-disclose because, through the course, they were already acquainted with the process of reflection and sharing. They were also informed that through the research, they will not be subject to any type of harm. Throughout the entire research, as a researcher, I tried to be reflexive, so that I reflect and act upon my biases, thoughts, and reflections. Walsh (2024) categorized reflexivity into: personal, interpersonal, methodological, and contextual. Reflexivity was held by documenting my reflections and possible biases on a journal, which I revisited throughout the research and during the data analysis.

## **8. Data Analysis**

Mixed method research was used for the intentional mixing of both qualitative and quantitative data to generate new insights and a more comprehensive view of the situation (Fetters, 2020; Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017). Bazeley (2018) argued that this integration leads to purposeful interdependence or mutual illumination. In my research, data derived from the questionnaire and the focus group generated valuable insights on the cards, the process, the benefits, and the challenges. I used Datatab software, which is an online statistical analysis tool, for descriptive analysis of my sample population. Furthermore, to analyse the results, I started reviewing and eliciting the data from the questionnaire. For data collection and analysis, I used Google Forms, which enabled me to have statistical data represented visually through graphs and pie charts. Google Forms is a versatile online tool from Google that allows users to create surveys, quizzes, and forms. Besides the collection of data, Google Forms generated a visual representation of the results, thus helping me in having a summary and a comparison between data. Data analysis on Google Forms involved exporting responses into a spreadsheet, where data cleaning and validation was performed to ensure accuracy. Cross-tabulation and visual representations, such as charts and graphs, helped identify patterns and relationships within the data.

The data gathered from the questionnaire and the focus groups was analysed thematically, by following the method proposed by Braun and Clarke in 2006. The questionnaire included open ended questions. These were answered by participants and presented valuable data. The thematic analysis process commenced with the transcription of the focus group discussions, converting the verbal conversations into written text. Once the transcripts were prepared, an exhaustive reading and re-reading phase of these transcripts and the data from the questionnaire, was held. This meticulous immersive review was crucial for ensuring a deep understanding of the content and context of the discussions. During the reading process, I made detailed notes, capturing initial

impressions and observations. This step was essential for identifying significant points and emerging patterns. I also referred to the reflexive journal, where I documented my thoughts, biases, and reflections throughout the research journey. Following this, the process of coding began. Coding involved systematically identifying and labelling segments of the text that appeared to be of interest or relevance to the research questions. Examples of codes were ‘reflection’, ‘helpful’, ‘context’, ‘discussion’, ‘right environment’, ‘empathy’, ‘communication’, and ‘conflict management’. These segments, or codes, were continuously refined and adjusted as new insights emerged, until a saturation point was reached where no new codes were identified. After saturation point, I categorised the codes into the following themes and sub-themes: Theme 1: Finding meaning in life and enhancing spirituality, Theme 2: Positive mental health, Theme 3: Wellbeing, and Theme 4: Present-moment awareness.

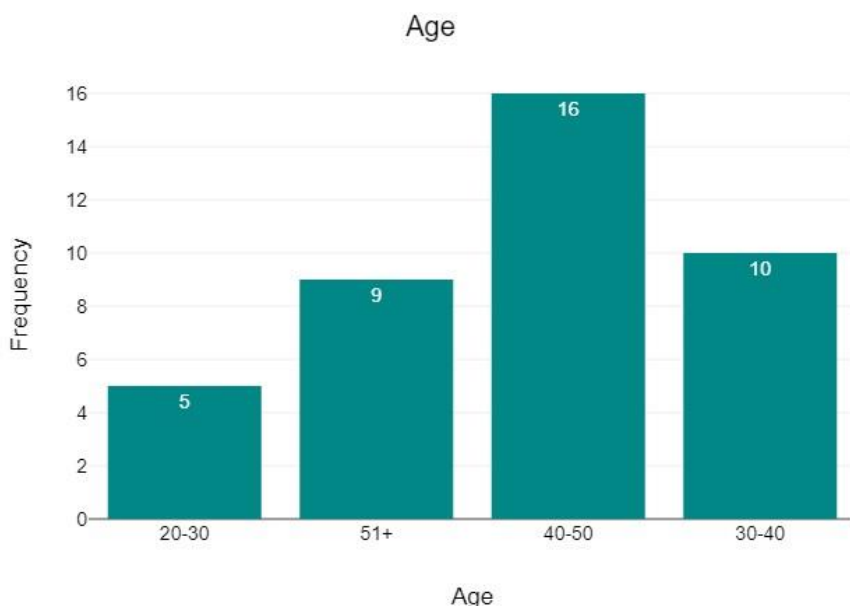
In summary, through my mixed methods research, the quantitative data revealed broad trends and patterns, which I then contextualized and deepened with insights from the qualitative data. By triangulating these data types, I was able to validate findings, investigate complex relationships, and deliver a more nuanced interpretation. Participants in the focus groups could speak in English or Maltese. For those excerpts presented in Maltese, I presented the translation in English.

## 9. Results

Participants who answered the questionnaire varied in age (Figure 3) and in profession (Figure 4). Data revealed that they use the cards for different aims:

Counselling mostly work with emotions and playworkers work with children which at that age still do not know how to express their emotions and I think the cards will help.

The impact of using Journey Cards in the projects and activities mentioned above can be multi-faceted and positive, contributing to various aspects of personal development, community building, and well-being within a residential setting.



*Figure 3. Age range of the participants answering the questionnaire*



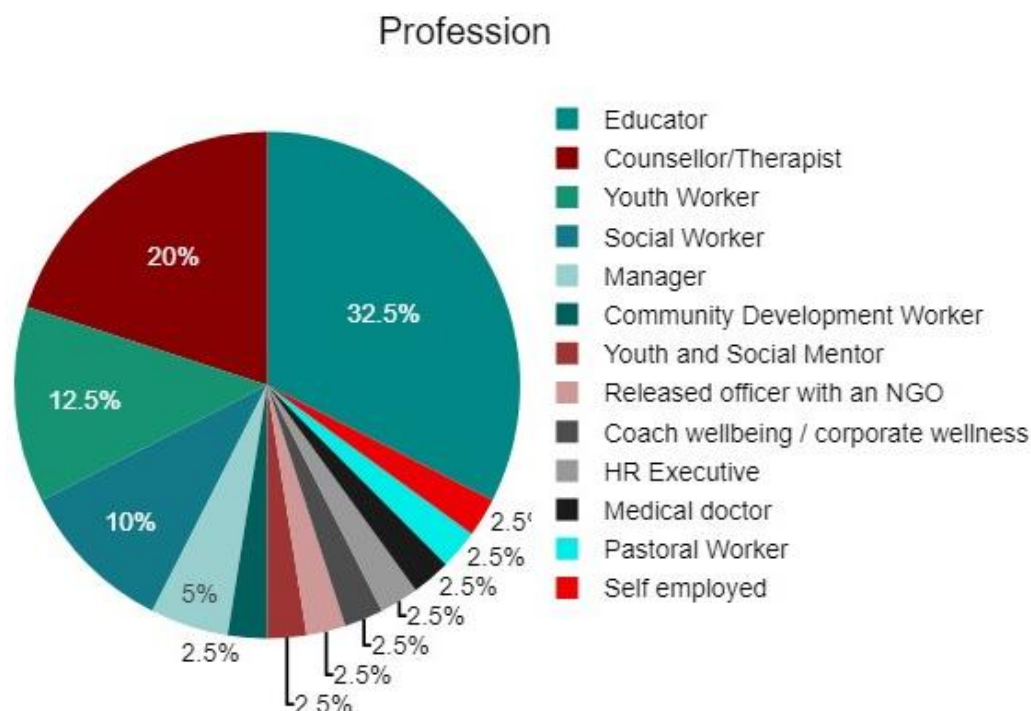


Figure 4. The use of the “On Our Journey” cards by different professionals

The outcomes of the “On Our Journey” cards were related to spirituality, wellbeing, relationship building, and personal as well as social development (Figure 5 and 6, Table 1 and 2).



Figure 5. The varied use of the “On Our Journey” cards



Figure 6. The way the “On Our Journey” cards help to enhance the mental wellbeing of participants



Table 1.

*The way the cards helped the participants*

help me to process an experience in more depth	29	make me feel happy and satisfied	17
help me to manage myself better	12	help me to get in touch with myself	22
help me understand myself more	12	help me to connect with others	24
help me to manage a situation better	24	evaluate outcomes (consequences) and take decisions	25
help in the expression of emotions	30	understand and change behaviour actions	17
develop a state of mindfulness	18	are a waste of time	0
help in reflecting on the present moment	25	help me spiritually	11
enhance two way communication and dialogue	26	help me in my purpose in life	12
build a positive and meaningful relationship with friends, family and self	19	facilitate my relationship with others	20
build a life based on true values and principles	20	help me in my mental health	11
improve my mental wellbeing	17	hinder my relationship with others	2

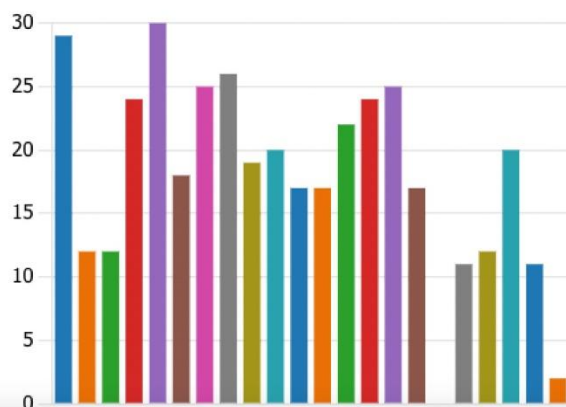
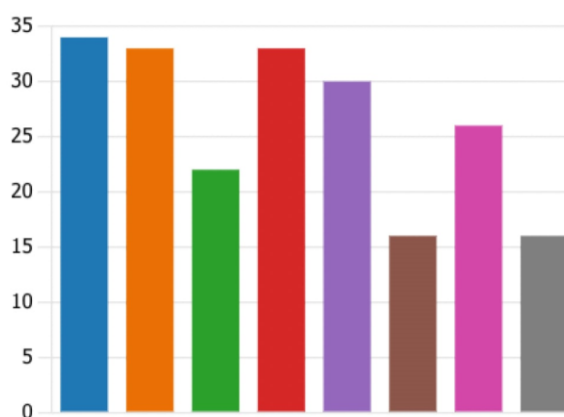


Table 2.

*The way the cards helped others*

self-disclose feelings and thoughts	34
work on inner self	33
work on social self	22
feel comfortable to share experience	33
practice personal and social skills in a safe environment	30
preserve mental health	16
enhance wellbeing in general	26
connect at a spiritual level	16



Participants explained that the cards enhanced spirituality and the search for meaning in life:

help me connect with myself both spiritually and at a human level and develop a deep understanding that these dimensions are somehow connected to each other.

these cards are priceless as they help you find your way in life and reason out things when you get lost.

give me the chance to pause from the fast life we live and reflect on our purpose in life.

the cards help me calibrate my thoughts and help me be grateful for what I have in life. help me think what my purpose and meaning in life is and what are the values that really matter to me.

*Il-cards fihom sekwenza u jien* The cards have a sequence and I used them  
*użajthom fuqi nnifsi u għinuni insib* on myself and they helped me to find  
*sekwenza f'deċiżjoni li kelli. I mean* sequence in a decision that I had to take. I  
*mort il-quddiem u lura, il-quddiem u* mean I went forward and backward,  
*lura... pero inti taf li l-cards ha joħduk* forward and backward... the cards guide  
*a way forward... il-cards ha* you... you have a good structure.  
*jigwidawk... għandek structure li hi*  
*tajba hafna.*

Another major outcome of the cards was the development of positive mental health (Table 1 and 2, Figure 6). Participants who answered the questionnaire and who participated in the focus group explained:

They help me because using the cards can help you express better which is something very difficult with a lot of people.

Help me because they are a sort of a road map to express emotions.

They bring clarity to the thought process.

They provide a structured and visual way for individuals to reflect on their thoughts and emotions, fostering self-awareness and insight.

Help me and others preserve their mental health as it helps them clarify their emotions and actions.

It depends on what is being shared, where and the facilitation of the group who is facilitating the group and how, however in general if one is sensitive and supports the people sharing and is careful in their direction, yes mental health is preserved.

Related to the positive mental health, participants explained the benefit of the cards in terms of present-moment awareness (Table 1 and 2). One of the participants in the focus group said:

*Meta tkun mindful – il- cards jgħinuk tiffoka* When you are mindful- the cards help  
*fuq il-present moment... meta tippratikhom* you to focus on the present moment ...  
*regolarment ha jgħinuk tkun iktar mindful u* when you practice regularly, they will  
*tigi lura fil-preżent.* help you to become mindful and come  
back to the present.

As shown in Figure 7, the cards presented a series of challenges. These were mostly related to the importance of having adequate space, the importance of allowing time to get used to the cards and the importance of having the right open attitude when using them. There was also agreement on the fact that by time, participants may develop this positive attitude and can use the cards more. Participants in the focus group said that:

*Trid tkun taf x'inti tagħmel, trid tkun f'post* You have to know what you are doing,  
*fil-ġabra, trid tkun taf il-klijenti li għandek* you need to be in a safe space where  
*quddiemek, għaliex ma tridx tmur f'postijiet* you can reflect, you need to know the  
*li tagħmel iktar hsara ..., jew tiftaħ ċerta* persons you have in front of you,  
*sitwazzjonijiet u dan ma jkollux support...* because you would not want to go to  
places where you do more harm ..., or

*inti trid tkun bniedem responsabbli.... dan m'intix tilghab... hemm il-feelings fin-nofs.* you open up certain situations and the person has no support, you need to be responsible ... you are not playing... there are the feelings of the person.

There is an initial obstacle for others to see them as purposeful and not childish.

Clients might find the idea as a waste of time until they start using them.

The need to use them often to remember how to proceed with the process. depending on where one is using them one needs to be attentive to what is shared, ensuring the person facilitating knows how to support the one sharing and time and the environment need to be considered when certain issues are raised.

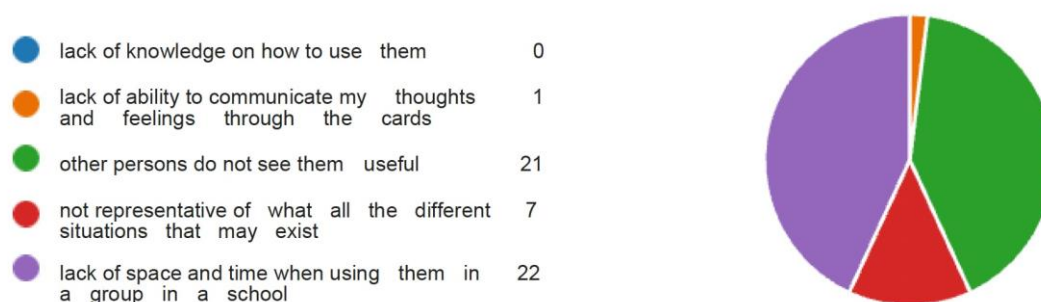


Figure 7. Challenges when using the “On Our Journey” cards

## 10. Data Analysis and Discussion

Through my mixed method research, I integrated quantitative and qualitative findings. I used statistical data from quantitative analysis to confirm patterns or trends while drawing on qualitative insights to provide contextual understanding and depth to those results. In the following section, I will be analysing the results, elicited from my mixed methods research, in terms of the four main emerging themes. Throughout the analysis, I was informed by theory and research that helped me to understand the research findings in more depth.

## 11. Finding Meaning in Life and Enhancing Spirituality

Finding meaning in life and enhancing spirituality was an emerging main theme. Meaning is an important domain in the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Jastrzębski (2022) reported the difficulty in defining spirituality. Nevertheless, for the aim of the paper, I am using the definition presented by Tanyi (2002) which is the individuals' search for meaning and purpose. There were questionnaire respondents who stated that the cards helped them in the search for meaning and purpose (n=12, Table 1) and in their spirituality (n=11 - Table 1, n=16 Table 2). This was confirmed from the responses of the focus groups. It seems that the cards offer a sense of hope and optimism, which generated a sense of meaning and purpose in their life. Hope and optimism are also related to wellbeing as they are two domains included in the EPOCH model of wellbeing (Kern et al., 2016). Keyes (2005) explained that hope is the individual's experience of optimism about the future, the ability to overcome obstacles and to create a fulfilling life. In fact, different respondents in my research confirmed that the different categories of the cards and the processing questions on every card helped them to reflect on the moving backward actions, moving forward actions and the outcomes. In this way, respondents who used the cards for personal use or for the use with other clients, adults or children, reported their sense of optimism for the future, their sense of hope that led to spirituality and the search for meaning in life.

The research study shows that the “On Our Journey” cards help the individual to focus on the real purpose and meaning of their life, to reflect on own’s own life path by reflecting on different possibilities, different bad and good moves, and different ways how to move forward. In line with this, Schippers and Ziegler (2019) argued that:

Modern life has a way of distracting people from their true goals and many people find it hard to define their purpose in life. Especially at younger ages, people are searching for meaning in life, but this has been found to be unrelated to actually finding meaning...Consequently, people may need a more structured way of finding meaning, e.g., *via* an intervention. This process ideally starts with an intervention that entails a combination of reflecting on one's values, passions and goals, best possible self, goal attainment plans, and other positive psychology intervention techniques. (p.1).

Similarly, the “On Our Journey” cards are acting as an intervention to focus on the search for meaning in life and spirituality which are linked together.

## 12. Positive Mental Health

“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community” (World Health Organisation, 2022, p.1). Positive mental health was a central theme that was elicited from my data. There were questionnaire respondents (n=11 Table 1, n=16 Table 2, Figure 6) who agreed that the cards help in the preservation of mental health. Through their answers in the questionnaire and the focus group, they explained that the cards provided the opportunity for sharing of thoughts, for expression of feelings, for self-awareness and for taking action, thus preserving their mental wellbeing.

From the answers, it is evident that sharing of thoughts, views, opinions, and expression of feelings are related to positive mental health. The argument of safety was mentioned by several respondents. The cards seem to create this safe space for self-disclosure, personal reflection, and introspection. One participant in the focus group said:

*Id-disinn jghin hafna ghal self-disclosure. Jekk tara l-karattri li ghandek fuq il-cards huma dettaljati. Ghandek storja. Bniedem jista jidentifika ma' persuna, jew ma' pet jew ma' sitwazzjoni partikulari li hemm fuq il-card. Għallura wiehed flok jitkellem fuq l-esperjenza personali, qisu qed jipprogetta l-emozzjonijiet jew l-esperjenza tiegħu fuq il-card, allura bniedem li hu misthi jew joqghod lura, kapaçi jitkellem iktar.*

The design helps in self-disclosure. If you see the characters on the cards, they are detailed. You have a history. A person can identify with a character, or a pet or a particular situation on the card. So, instead of speaking about a personal experience, a person can project one's own emotions through the card, so a shy person has the capability to speak more.

However, on the other hand, if this safe space is not created, sharing and reflection may negatively affect the mental health of the person. As a result, respondents frequently repeated that the cards need to be used responsibly at the right time and at the right place.

The creation of the safe space and right time was one of the challenges mentioned when using the “On Our Journey” cards” (n=22 Figure 7). This puts emphasis on the necessary training to participants to get to know ways how to facilitate and how to elicit opinions and thoughts through the “On Our Journey” cards. In fact, before using the cards, it is recommended to follow training. Currently, educators who are interested to use the cards are being invited for a 3-day training

course. Since the cards present an experiential process, training and re-training was recommended.

Nevertheless, despite the challenges mentioned (Figure 7), participants agreed about the contribution of the cards to the mental health of the individual (Figure 6) and stressed the fact that the process also provides an opportunity for self-help since it enables them to realise the need to reach out for professional help if required. Referral and self-help are one of the themes tackled and discussed during the 3-day training course. This is also part of the creation of a safe environment, where the participants know their way forward.

Education and a safe environment that encourages communication and reflection can protect mental health. The World Health Organization (2022) noted that protective factors like social and emotional skills, positive interactions, quality education, decent work, safe neighbourhoods, and community cohesion enhance resilience. Study respondents noted that the cards promote these skills and interactions, fostering a supportive community that helps preserve mental health (Table 1 and 2). The cards also create a sense of connectedness and engagement, aligning with the EPOCH model of wellbeing (Kern et al., 2016) and the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

### **13. Wellbeing**

Wellbeing was central in all the discussion about the impact of the “On Our Journey” cards. Nearly all questionnaire respondents agreed that the cards enhance the wellbeing of the individual. One of them said:

The cards include positive messages or themes that can serve as affirmations, positively influencing your mindset and well-being. Utilizing the cards can assist you in setting and visualizing personal goals, providing motivation and direction.

In line with the data elicited from the questionnaire (Table 1 and 2) and in trying to explain why the cards enhance their wellbeing, respondents said that the cards facilitate discussion, give direction, help in becoming aware of the situations and feelings, help to feel better, help to feel in a profound way, teach better ways of dealing with situations, foster positivity and enable the person to understand the values that can help in the understanding of the consequences of the actions (Figure 6). Through the safe space for self expression and the opportunity for problem solving and conflict management, the person reflects on possibilities, behaviours which could move forward or backward. In this way, reflection creates a sense of wellbeing.

This was also a main research finding in our research about the impact of the Friendship Cards used in schools and in families. From focus groups with practitioners, it emerged that similar to the “On Our Journey” cards, the Friendship Cards, developed by the same Foundation with the aim of facilitating emotional literacy and conflict management, provide that adequate space for holistic development, leading to wellbeing (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2020, 2024). Research indicated that both the Friendship Cards and the “On Our Journey” Cards which now form part of a tool kit, that make use of the same methodology, helped individuals to focus on their, or the others’ personal and social competences, like emotional literacy, which facilitate their wellbeing (n=26 Table 2).

Despite having the majority of participants agreeing that the cards contribute to the wellbeing of the individual, there were others who challenged this (Figure 7). Participants explained that one needs to know how to use the cards well and this is why there is the need for the training. However, besides this, if participants find it difficult to reflect and to work on oneself, they need to be guided to empathise, to be emotionally literate and to communicate verbally and non-verbally. Participants further said that individuals who use them need to be attuned and ready to

work on themselves, because otherwise they would not see the relevance of the cards for their own wellbeing. In line with this, and as mentioned earlier, this sheds light on the priority of creating the adequate environment for catharsis.

#### **14. Present-Moment Awareness**

In trying to explain why the “On Our Journey” cards lead to wellbeing, there were respondents who explained that the cards help the individual to stay focused and to reflect on the present moment (n=25 Table 1). Present-moment awareness was explored by different researchers (Hasson, 2024; Jentsch & Hoferichter, 2024). One of the respondents in the focus group explained that in the African country where she is using them, it is the first time where people are stopping to reflect in depth. In addition, there were respondents who said that the cards can encourage mindfulness which is the practice of paying attention on purpose and the present-moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, 2003; Mackenzie et al., 2020; Mettler et al., 2024). In fact, the aim of the cards is that of stopping and reflecting on a particular moment whilst evaluating the purpose of different actions leading to different consequences (Relationships are Forever Foundation, 2024).

There was an agreement in the statements of respondents about the opinion that the cards help in generating present-moment awareness. This helps the individuals who use them to process their feelings, to get to know themselves better and to create a community where catharsis and reflection can take place. In the light of all this, the challenges (adequate time, skill, space and attitude) presented by the respondents (Figure 7) should be taken into consideration so as to provide the best experience.

#### **15. Implications for Policy Makers**

Research on the impact of the “On Our Journey” cards shows that the cards helped to generate positive feelings, manage oneself better, find meaning and purpose in life, develop positive mental health and wellbeing, enhance human flourishing, and focus on the present-moment. As shown in Figure 8, these themes are interconnected and lead to a state of happiness, life focus and holistic health. This can be an inspiration to education stakeholders and policy makers. In Malta, the new National Education Strategy 2024-2030 (Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, 2024) presents three pillars of education, one of which is wellbeing.

The National Education Strategy 2024-2030 recognises the different strands of wellbeing, namely physical, socio-emotional, mental and digital wellbeing. Although these are generally treated separately, they are not independent concepts but closely connected to one another. In fact, the measures being proposed in this strategy are aimed at addressing the general aspect of learners’ wellbeing, taking into consideration the disquieting rates of obesity, higher incidence of mental health issues and the shift towards individualism. (Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation, 2024, p.38).

In this reality presented in the Strategy and keeping in mind the outcomes of the research (Figure 8), the “On Our Journey” cards can be a useful tool that specifically addresses the needs of the society.





Figure 8. The link between the outcomes of the “On Our Journey” cards that lead to happiness, life focus and holistic health

## 16. Limitations

One limitation of the study is the potential sample bias, as participants who completed the course using the cards may have been more motivated or predisposed to believe in the effectiveness of the cards. Additionally, the data collection methods presented some challenges, particularly with online focus groups, where varying levels of participant engagement may have affected the quality of the responses. The generalizability of the findings is also a concern, given the small sample size and geographic constraints, which limit the broader applicability of the results. To address these limitations, future research should adopt more randomized sampling methods and expand the sample size to include a more geographically diverse population, which would strengthen the validity and relevance of the findings. The study's scope is also limited by the relatively small group of participants, which prevented a broader perspective. Therefore, replicating the study with other practitioners or individuals who use the "On Our Journey" cards could provide more comprehensive insights. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of local research on the use of resources and tools for human flourishing, meaning in life, happiness, and wellbeing, which limited comparisons with other findings. Assessing the long-term effects of the cards would also be valuable, as this study focused only on short-term outcomes. Another limitation pertains to my own bias during data collection, as I was researching a tool that I helped develop

with a team of practitioners. To mitigate this, as detailed in the methodology section, I used a reflexive journal to bracket my perceptions and reduce bias.

## 17. Conclusion

The research presented the potential of the "On Our Journey" cards to support holistic growth and transformation. This is aligned with the priorities of the Maltese National Education Strategy (Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation, 2024) and the OECD Learning Framework 2030 (OECD, 2018). For policymakers in different settings, this presents an opportunity to make use of these tools so as to enhance educational outcomes and well-being. This can be done in different ways.

Firstly, integrating the cards into the school curriculum could be a strategic move to promote holistic development, well-being, a focus on personal development, improved mental health, and life skills. By doing so, students can benefit from a structured approach to develop self-awareness and emotional literacy. In addition, it is crucial to equip educators with the necessary skills to use the cards effectively. This could be achieved through professional development programs to learn how to use the cards for their personal and professional life. The cards also have significant potential to enhance mental health support within schools. They can be integrated into counselling sessions and peer support groups, fostering emotional resilience and coping skills among students and educators. Additionally, involving parents and the broader community in understanding the benefits of the cards can extend their impact beyond the classroom.

Beyond the educational setting, the cards can be used by other professionals in various fields, such as counselling, social work, and healthcare. By understanding how to apply the cards effectively, professionals can enhance their interactions and support strategies, ultimately contributing to improved mental health, wellbeing and personal development outcomes.

## References

- Abu-Raiya, H., Sasson, T., & Russo-Netzer, P. (2021). Presence of meaning, search for meaning, religiousness, satisfaction with life and depressive symptoms among a diverse Israeli sample. *International Journal of Psychology*, 56, 276–285. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12709>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2001). 'Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Bazeley P. (2018). *Integrating analyses in mixed methods research*. Sage.
- Bernard, H.R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 3rd Ed. Alta Mira Press.
- Bezzina, A. (2016). *Personal and social development practice at the University of Malta*. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Bezzina, A. (2018). Personal and social development within a European neo-liberal Maltese Education System. In M., Attard Tonna, & J., Madalinska-Michelak, (Eds.). *Teacher education policy and practice – International perspectives and inspirations* (pp.288-314). Foundation for the Development of the Education System.
- Bezzina, A. (2022). "I feel what you are feeling": Neural Processes for Empathy and its Impact on Academic and Holistic Achievement". *Malta Journal of Education*, 3(1): 5-14.

- <https://ife.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Institute-for-Education-Symposium-vol-03-no01-LR-37-66.pdf>
- Bezzina, A., & Camilleri, S. (2020). 'Happy Children' A project that has the aim of developing emotional literacy and conflict resolution skills. A Maltese Case Study. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2020.1774633>
- Bezzina, A. & Camilleri, S. (2024). "I feel the cards are mutually beneficial"- understanding the parent's view on the use of the friendship cards for emotional literacy and conflict management. *Pastoral Care in Education*. 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2024.2304330>
- Bezzina, A., & Falzon, R. (2022). "Teachers Teach Me, You Help Me Grow!": Maltese PSD Methodology toward Emotional Literacy and Wellbeing. In A. Azzopardi, M. Clark & R. Falzon. *Perspectives on Wellbeing: Applications from the Field* (pp. 32-48). Brill. <https://brill.com/display/book/9789004507654/BP000013.xml?language=en>
- Bowen, D. J., Halbert, C. H., Robinson, A., & Boehmer, U. (2010). Gender Diver Recruitment to Research Projects. In J. C. Chrisler & D. R. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of Gender Research in Psychology* 1, 179-190. Springer Science+Business Media.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77. <http://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brown, R. (2022). Online interviews during a pandemic: Benefits, limitations, strategies and the impact on early career researchers. *PsyPAG Quarterly*, (123), 32-36. <https://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/51041/>
- Bruni, L. (2010). The happiness of sociality. Economics and eudaimonia: A necessary encounter. *Rationality and Society*, 22(4), 383-406. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463110374500>
- Camilleri, S. & Bezzina, A. (2021). Learning in a circle- Apparent simplicity. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2021.1938645>
- Camilleri, S. & Bezzina, A. (2022). Adopting the circle pedagogy – relatedness, autonomy and competence, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2022.2148173>
- Camilleri, S., Caruana, A., Falzon, R., & Muscat, M. (2012). The promotion of emotional literacy through PSD: The Maltese experience. *Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development*, 30(1), 19-37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2011.651223>
- Camus, A. (1942). *The Stranger*. Vintage.
- Coelho, P. (1988). *The Alchemist*. HarperOne.
- Cottingham, J. (2024). *The Humane Perspective: Philosophical Reflections on Human Nature, the Search for Meaning, and the Role of Religion*. Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and missed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Hedonia, eudaimonia, and well-being: An introduction. *Journal of happiness studies*, 9, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9018-1>

- Deiner, E. (2002). *Findings on subjective wellbeing and their implications for empowerment*. University of Illinois and the Gallup Organization.
- Deiner, E., & Ryan, K. (2011). National accounts of well-being for public policy. In S.I., Donaldson, M., Csikszentmihalyi & J., Nakamura (Eds.). *Applied Positive Psychology – Improving everyday life, health, schools, work and society* (pp. 15-34). Routledge.
- Deiner, E.D., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5 (1), 1-31. [http://www.psychologicalscience.org/pdf/pspi/pspi5\\_1.pdf](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/pdf/pspi/pspi5_1.pdf)
- Di Fabio, A., & Palazzeschi, L. (2015). Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being: The role of resilience beyond fluid intelligence and personality traits. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, Article 1367. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01367>
- Donaldson, S.I., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Nakamura, J. (Eds.). *Applied Positive Psychology – Improving everyday life, health, schools, work and society* (pp. 15-34). Routledge.
- Fetters M. D. (2020). *The Mixed Methods Research Workbook: Activities For Designing, Implementing, And Publishing Projects*. Sage.
- Fetters M. D., & Molina-Azorin J. F. (2017). The Journal of Mixed Methods Research starts a new decade: The mixed methods research integration trilogy and its dimensions. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11(3), 291–307. <https://doi-org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1177/1558689817714066>
- Fowers, B. J., Mollica, C. O., & Procacci, E. N. (2010). Constitutive and instrumental goal orientations and their relations with eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5, 139–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439761003630045>
- Fowers, B. J., Novak, L. F., Calder, A. J., & Kiknadze, N. C. (2024). Can a theory of human flourishing be formulated? Toward a science of flourishing. *Review of General Psychology*, 28(2), 123-142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680231225223>
- Frankl, V. E. (1946). *Man's Search for Meaning: Gift Edition*. Gift edition. Beacon.
- Frankl, V. E. (1996) (2nd ed.). *Homo patiens. Der leidende Mensch [Suffering humanity]* (pp. 161–242). Huber. (Original work published in 1950).
- Frankl, V.E. (2006). “*Man's Search for Meaning*”. Beacon Press.
- Frazier, L. D., Barreto, M. L., & Newman, F. L. (2012). Self-regulation and eudaimonic well-being across adulthood. *Experimental Aging Research*, 38, 394–410. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0361073X.2012.699367>
- Gabel, F., Schobert, M., & Krüger, M. (2024). Research Ethics and Ethical Research: An Example of Integrating Ethics in R&I Research. *European Journal for Security Research*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41125-023-00096-0>
- Gilead, T. (2024). *A New Education for a New Economy: From Human Capital to Human Flourishing*. Taylor & Francis.
- Graham, C., & Nikolova, M. (2015). Bentham or Aristotle in the development process? An empirical investigation of capabilities and subjective well-being. *World Development*, 68, 163–179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.11.018>
- Gruber, T., Szmigin, I., Reppel, A. E., & Voss, R. (2008). Designing and conducting online interviews to investigate interesting consumer phenomena. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 11(3), 256-274. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/>

- [doi/10.1108/13522750810879002/full/html?casa\\_token=DhEzSQ-Tsv0AAAAA:5g6x4qLyulcca3AwvtKCCGXITnxusBKOap01cbkT1JjEhvzT6ElshU7tLEA4aI-4M\\_wYDPFWIGcVQxkJzJLA2pXhpjp9xVTqnUudfwB6x7-8s-IK-Sc](https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750810879002/full/html?casa_token=DhEzSQ-Tsv0AAAAA:5g6x4qLyulcca3AwvtKCCGXITnxusBKOap01cbkT1JjEhvzT6ElshU7tLEA4aI-4M_wYDPFWIGcVQxkJzJLA2pXhpjp9xVTqnUudfwB6x7-8s-IK-Sc)
- Guthrie, D., Maffly-Kipp, J., Gause, C., Kim, J., Martela, F., & Hicks, J. A. (2024). Interpersonal mattering and the experience of meaning in life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2024.2314289>
- Hagues, R. (2024). Promoting human flourishing through international education: Pursuing a world where all can thrive. *Journal of Research for International Educators*, 3(1). <https://jorie.org/index.php/journal/article/view/17>
- Hansen, K. B. (2015). Exploring compatibility between “subjective well-being” and “sustainable living” in *Scandinavia Social Indicators Research*, 122, 175–187. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0684-9>
- Hasson, G. (2024). *Mindfulness: Be Mindful. Live in the Moment*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Heintzelman, S. J., & King, L. A. (2014a). Life is pretty meaningful. *American Psychologist*, 69, 561–574. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035049>
- Hesse, H. (1922). *Siddhartha*. New Directions.
- Hicks, J. A., Schlegel, R. J., & King, L. A. (2010). Social threats, happiness, and the dynamics of meaning in life judgments. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36, 1305–1317. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210381650>
- Hidayat, M. N., & Mukhlis, I. (2024). The Importance of Ethics in Research in The Field: Systematic Literature Review. *Business and Investment Review*, 2(2), 36-42. <https://doi.org/10.61292/birev.103>
- Jarden, A., Downie, A., Finter, K., & Jarden, R. (2024). Next Level Flourishing in Education: A Case Study of ‘Wholebeing’. In A. Jardon, A. Downie, K. Finter & R. Jarden. *Handbook of Positive School Psychology: Evidence-Based Strategies for Youth Well-Being* (pp. 123-144). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Jentsch, A., & Hoferichter, F. (2024). Life satisfaction, psychological stress, and present-moment attention: a generalizability study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1258896. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1258896>
- Joshanloo, M. (2019). Investigating the relationships between subjective well-being and psychological well-being over two decades. *Emotion*, 19, 183–187. <https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000414>
- Jastrzębski, A. K. (2022). The challenging task of defining spirituality. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 24(2), 113-131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2020.1858734>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. Hyperion.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bpg016>
- Kern, M. L., Benson, L., Steinberg, E. A., & Steinberg, L. (2016). *EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being* [Database record]. APA PsycTests. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t50588-000>



- Keyes, C. L. M. (2005). Mental illness and/or mental health? Investigating axioms of the complete state model of health. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(3), 539–548. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.73.3.539>
- Kiaei, Y. A., & Reio, T. G., Jr. (2014). Goal pursuit and eudaimonic well-being among university students: Metacognition as the mediator. *Behavioral Development Bulletin*, 19, 91–104. <https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2015-20028-011.pdf>
- Kristjansson, K., (2019). *Flourishing as the Aim of Education: A Neo-Aristotelian View*. Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Kügler, P. (2024). Meaning Autonomy and Objective Meaning in Life. *Journal of Human Values*, 30(2), 150-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09716858231185619>
- Lewis, P., Kimiecik, J., Horn, T., Zullig, K. J., & Ward, R. M. (2014). Can becoming my self influence my health? Exploring the effects of a eudaimonic-enhancement process on psychological indicators of well-being and physical activity. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 9, 643–665. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-013-9263-5>
- Mackenzie, E. R., Fegley, S., Stutesman, M., & Mills, J. (2020). Present-moment awareness and the prosocial classroom: Educators' lived experience of mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 11, 2755-2764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01483-7>
- Mackenzie, C. S., Karaoylas, E. C., & Starzyk, K. B. (2018). Lifespan differences in a self determination theory model of eudaimonia: A cross-sectional survey of younger, middle-aged, and older adults. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 19, 2465–2487. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-017-9932-4>
- Martela, F. (2020). *A wonderful life: Insights on finding a meaningful existence*. HarperCollins.
- Martela, F. (2024). *Flourishing as the central aim of education: Steps toward a consensus*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147787852412588>
- Martela, F., & Steger, M. F. (2016). The three meanings of meaning in life: Distinguishing coherence, purpose, and significance. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 11(5), 531-545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137623>
- Martela, F., & Sheldon, K. M. (2019). Clarifying the concept of well-being: Psychological need satisfaction as the common core connecting eudaimonic and subjective well-being. *Review of General Psychology*, 23(4), 458-474. <https://doi.org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1177/1089268019880886>
- Martela, F., Unanue, J., Gómez, M., & Unanue, W. (2024). Reciprocal Relations Between Meaning in Life, Beneficence, and Psychological Needs for Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness: Evidence from a Three-Wave Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 25(3), 29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-024-00741-y>
- McCarthy, C. (2006). *The Road*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Mettler, J., Zito, S., Bastien, L., Bloom, E., & Heath, N. L. (2024). How we teach mindfulness matters: Adolescent development and the importance of informal mindfulness. *Journal of School Psychology*, 105, 101323. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2024.101323>
- Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation. (2024). *Visioning the future by transforming education: National Education Strategy 2024-2030*. <https://education.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NATIONAL-EDUCATION-BOOKLET-DEC-2023-2030.pdf>
- OECD. (2005). *Description and Selection of Competencies*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2012). *Measuring well-being and progress*. OECD Statistics Directorate.



- OECD. (2018). The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030. OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 98, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/54ac7020-en>.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Johnson, R. B. (2006). The validity issue in mixed research. *Research in the Schools*, 13(1), 48-63. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228340166\\_The\\_Validity\\_Issues\\_in\\_Mixed\\_Research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228340166_The_Validity_Issues_in_Mixed_Research)
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Passmore, H.-A., & Howell, A. J. (2014). Nature involvement increases hedonic and eudaimonic well-being: A two-week experimental study. *Ecopsychology*, 6, 148-154. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-41536-003>
- Patwari, R. (2013). *Sampling 01: Introduction* [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cl2uZGGL-U>
- Relationships are Forever Foundation. (2024). *On Our Journey*. <https://happyliife.org/mt/on-our-journey>
- Russo-Netzer, P., Ickson, T., & Zeiger, A. (2021). *The path to a satisfying life among secular and ultra-orthodox individuals: The roles of cultural background, gratitude, and optimism*. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02206-4>
- Salinger, J. D. (1951). *The catcher in the rye*. Little, Brown and Company.
- Schippers, M. C., & Ziegler, N. (2019). Life crafting as a way to find purpose and meaning in life. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2778. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02778>
- Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A., Arndt, J., & King, L. A. (2009). Thine own self: True self-concept accessibility and meaning in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 473-490. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014060>
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1991). *Learned optimism*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfilment*. Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Seligman, M. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 13(4), 333-335. <https://doi-org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466>
- Seligman, M. E. (2019). Positive psychology: A personal history. *Annual review of clinical psychology*, 15(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050718-095653>
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In M. Csikszentmihalyi (Ed.), *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279-298). Springer.
- Sharp, P. (2001). *Nurturing emotional literacy*. David Fulton.
- Sharp, P. (2014). *Nurturing emotional literacy: A practical for teachers, parents and those in the caring professions*. Routledge.

- Steger, M. F. (2009). Meaning in life. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 679–687). Oxford University Press.
- Stevenson, M. (2022). *Education for human flourishing*. Centre for Strategic Education.
- Tanyi, R. A. (2002). Towards clarification of the meaning of spirituality. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 39(5), 500-509. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2002.02315.x>
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*. Sage Publications.
- Turban, D. B., & Yan, W. (2016). Relationship of eudaimonia and hedonia with work outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31, 1006–1020. ISSN: 0268-3946.
- Walsh, R. (2024). *Revisiting reflexivity*. *The Humanistic Psychologist*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/hum0000357>
- Witmer, J.M. (2013). Evolution of wellness. In P.F., Granello, *Wellness counselling* (pp. 11-28). Pearson.
- Wolfram, H.J., (2023). Meaning in life, life role importance, life strain, and life satisfaction. *Curr Psychol* 42, 29905–29917. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-04031-9>
- World Health Organisation. (2022). *Mental Health*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>