

## Psychological Wellbeing of Under graduate Students and its Correlation with Socio-Demographic Variables: A Study of University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

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**Article History**

Received: 18.01.2018

Accepted: 14.02.2018

Published: 28.02.2018



**Abstract:** This study was conducted to examine the psychological wellbeing of undergraduate students; its correlation with socio demographic variables at University of Maiduguri, Borno state, Nigeria. The objective of the study among others includes; determining the state of self-acceptance of undergraduate students, examining purpose in life of undergraduate students etc. Two hypotheses were formulated, viz; Hypothesis One (H01): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Age. Hypothesis Two (H02): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Gender. Data for this study was elucidated through the use of structured questionnaire which has the modified Ryff's Scale for Measuring Psychological Well-Being (SPWB). The questionnaire was administered to 377 undergraduate students but 356 questionnaires were duly filled and returned representing 94% return rate. The respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling technique. The demographic data of respondents and research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistic (frequency distribution and percentage) while inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation) was used to test hypothesis one and two. The result of the study revealed a high level of self-determination of undergraduate's students in the study area; there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and age in the study area and a significant relationship exists between psychological well-being and gender. The two Hypotheses are therefore rejected. It was concluded that self-acceptance has its positive and significant impact on psychological well-being among undergraduate students and high level of self-acceptance contribute to high level of engagement and life satisfaction. The study recommends that university should give their students an opportunity to work collaboratively in small groups and participate in activities designed to enhance the level of sense of self determination of undergraduate students, proper medical checkups is conducted at the commencement of their study and at frequent intervals; and course on mental health studies should be incorporated into the general studies curriculum. Suggestion for further study was also made.

**Keywords:** Psychological-wellbeing, correlation, demographic variables, undergraduate students.

### INTRODUCTION

The wellbeing of university students is an important research endeavor. Experiencing high levels of subjective well-being is considered to be a central criterion of positive mental health [1]. In addition to this, well-being has been found to be only an outcome of favorable life circumstances such as academic success and satisfying relationships, but also a predictor and part cause of these outcomes [2]. Consequently, the well-being of students at university is important for influencing students' later attitudinal and career outcomes, but also outcomes that benefit communities and societies at large.

Psychological well-being is beneficial for adults to live a healthy life, making it an important

aspect of one's life in the college years [3]. College life can frequently be chaotic and full of psychological stress. According to Chao [4], college students' stresses have increased tremendously over the past decade. It is therefore, important to understand factors that impact on university students' psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is defined as a combination of several aspects of positive psychological functioning, which includes self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth [5].

Evidence that suggests that university and college students are vulnerable to mental health

problems has generated increasing public concern in western societies [6]. High rates of depression, anxiety and stress among students all over the world in higher education have been revealed in many previous studies [7-10]. Psychological morbidity among undergraduate students represents a neglected problem and holds major implications for campus health services and mental health policy-making [10, 11, 12].

Undergraduate students need to cope with physiological and psychosocial changes that are connected to the development of an autonomous personal life and additionally they have to cope with the academic and social demands that they encounter in university studies and in their preparation for professional careers. Therefore, the period of undergraduate education is regarded as important for the development of systems and intervention methods that may prevent or reduce mental health problems [13].

The years that someone spends in college are often the most stressful periods; especially the beginning of college and often the transition from childhood to adulthood [14]. Often these stressors can throw students off track, causing a decrease in their psychological well-being [4].

Examination of the relationships between psychological well-being and socio-demographic variables may offer a more complete and bio-psycho-social view of the problems of psychological wellbeing. Understanding these problems offers the opportunity to help educators in developing effective strategies to address problems of psychological well-being dysfunction among undergraduate students while they are still in school

This study proposes to investigate the potential relationship between psychological well-being and socio-demographic variables. Psychological well-being will be measured with the use of Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being to provide information about six dimensions of positive functioning. The study aimed at addressing critical need, namely to assess and address the well-being of undergraduate university students by providing information on the psychological well-being and its socio-demographic correlates.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research setting**

The University of Maiduguri is located in Maiduguri, a city in Borno State in North East Nigeria. The university was created by the federal government in 1975, with the intention of its becoming one of the country's principal higher-education institutions. It enrolls about 25,000 students in its combined programs, which include a college of medicine and faculties of agriculture, arts, dentistry, education, engineering, law, management science, pharmacy, science, social science, and veterinary science. With the encouragement of the

federal government, the university has recently been increasing its research efforts, particularly in the fields of agriculture and conflict resolution, and expanding the university press. The university is the major higher institution of learning in the north-eastern part of the country. It has a serene environment for learning, a very efficient teaching hospital.

The education programmes outline by the Third National Development Plan stressed the establishment of more Universities in the country. Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the University of Maiduguri in 1975, along with six others situated at Kano, Ilorin, Sokoto, Jos, Port-Harcourt and Calabar.

University of Maiduguri is situated in the outskirts of Maiduguri along Bama Road. The University of Maiduguri took off in April in 1976 by inheriting the facilities of the North-East College of Arts and Sciences (NECAS) when the College was taken over by the Federal Government. The North-East College of Arts and Science was established as a post-secondary institution for preparing candidates with secondary education for entry into Degree programmes in Nigerian Universities after two year of Advance(A) Level work. The facilities such as laboratories, lecture theatres, library, office blocks, staff and other supporting services taken over from the NECAS formed the nucleus of the University and made it possible for it to commence degree programmes for the first academic session in three faculties, namely Arts and Education, Social Sciences and Law, and Sciences on 28<sup>th</sup>, October the same year.

Maiduguri, where the university is located, is the capital of Borno State in the north-eastern corner of Nigeria. The contiguity of the state's boundaries with those of three countries, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, has ensured constant trans-border human traffic to Maiduguri for purpose of trade, study and settlement. This international presence, when added to the attraction Maiduguri has for Nigerians, makes the city quite cosmopolitan. The autochthonous and majority population in the city are the Kanuris.

Maiduguri is served by an airport, which places it one hour away from Nigeria's capital, Abuja and two hours away from the commercial centre of Lagos. A network of Federal and State roads place such other Nigerian cities as Kano, Jos, Yola some 5-6 hours away.

The University is residential for both staff and students, although privately off-campus accommodation is increasingly being resorted to as a result of the increase in staff and student population.

Municipal services provided on campus include banks, clinic, post-office, retail outlets,

pharmacy and schools (nursery, primary and secondary). Several recreational facilities exist for the community on campus: sporting arena (with provision for soccer, basketball, etc.), the Senior Staff Club (which also has squash and lawn tennis courts), the "Love Garden"(ideal for picnics, walks). All through the academic year, but particularly at the beginning and at the end of the academic session. Departmental and ethnic-based student associations spice up life on the campus with parties and cultural shows.

Spiritual needs are catered for in three magnificent places of worship; the central mosque, the All Saints Catholic Chapel, and the protestant Chapel of Grace.

### **Research Design**

This study examined the psychological well-being of undergraduate students and its correlation with socio-demographic variables at the University of Maiduguri. The design for the study is a quantitative survey. The study was guided by a number of research question and a hypothesis, which are derived through a thorough review of existing literature in the area of psychological well-being and its correlates. Inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation) was used for the analysis.

Ryff's [15] Scales of Psychological Well-being (SPWB) was used to measure the six dimensions of positive psychological functioning, which are self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. The survey instrument has a short list of demographic questions. Questions like age, gender, marital status, class level are examples of those variables.

### **Hypotheses**

- Hypothesis One ( $H_{01}$ ): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Age.
- Hypothesis Two ( $H_{02}$ ): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Gender.

### **Population of the study**

The target population for the study is the undergraduate students of the University of Maiduguri. Total student enrolment of the school is put at 25,000.

The study looked at students registered to undergo a course of study in any of the twelve faculties of the university. There was no age barriers, sex, and level of study or place of residence in selecting the subjects for the study.

### **Sample size and sampling Technique**

Sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan 1970 (updated in 2012) for determining sample

size. The university has a student population of 25, 000; hence the sample size is three hundred and seventy seven (377) as shown in the table.

A multi stage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The University of Maiduguri has twelve faculties. The stages for the sample selection are as follows:

#### **Stage 1**

Each of the faculty is taken as a cluster. a faculty hhe as an average of six departments..

#### **Stage 2**

At the second step, a simple random sample was used to select three faculties.

#### **Stage 3**

At the third stage, two departments each were selected randomly from the three faculties making six departments in all.

#### **Stage 4**

Fourthly, a proportionate sampling was used to select the respondents for the study. Average of sixty three subjects from each department were selected making a total of 377 respondents as the the sample size of study.

### **Research Instrument**

A questionnaire that contains a demographic data section and Scales of Psychological Well-being (SPWB) adopted from Carol Ryff [15]. The SPWB [15] was chosen based on its applicable features designed to measure the predictor variable, psychological well-being.

The SPWB was used to measure the six dimensions of psychological well-being, which are \*(a)autonomy,(b) environmental mastery (c) personal growth (d) positive relations with others (e)purpose in life and (f) self-acceptance.

The purpose of the SPWB is to help individuals understand their level of each of the six dimensions. The self-administered scale is completed using paper and pencil. The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete from start to finish. Participants respond using a 6-point format, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *moderately disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *slightly agree*, 5 = *moderately agree*, and 6 = *strongly agree*. Responses to negatively scored items (-) are reverse-scored in the final scoring procedures so that high scores indicate high self-ratings on the dimension assessed.

Reliability and validity of the SPWB have been established. Reliability estimates the degree to which the measurements will be consistent when the tool is administered to participants more than once

under similar conditions [16]. Internal consistency reliability coefficients were reported by Ryff and Keyes [17] as being between .83 and .91. Another study tested the psychometric quality of the 14-items version and achieved consistent results. The Cronbach alpha coefficients were reported as being between .77 and .90 for the six scales [18]. A confirmatory factor analysis supported the validity of the SPWB, and the six dimensions included in the SPWB were determined to be a good fit for psychological well-being data at  $p < .001$  [19]. Six studies examined the factorial validity of the multidimensional model of psychological well-being [20, 5, 17, 21, 19, 22]. All studies demonstrated that the theory-based six-factor model was the best fit. In the van Dierendonck *et al.*, [22] study, the goodness of fit was calculated with the use of the chi-square goodness-of-fit-index and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). A value of .08 or less is considered as indicating a relatively good fit for the SRMR [16]. The SRMR in the van Dierendonck [22] study was .06, thus, demonstrating a relatively good fit. The other fit indices were .84 for Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and .94 for Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). These data support acceptable validity of the SPWB [23].

#### Method of Data collection

The SPWB questionnaire was distributed to the students in no special order. The available subjects was used for the study. Representatives of each department was given the questionnaire and return same when it is completed by the students.

The questionnaire also contain questions on demographic variables, viz; age, sex, marital status, level of study, scholarship, etc.

#### Method of Analysis

The Ryff scales of psychological well-being [24] was used to measure multiple facets of psychological well-being. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being is a theoretically grounded instrument that specifically focuses on measuring multiple facets of psychological well-being. The five subscales on the Ryff scale are autonomy, emotional mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. An example of a question from the scale is the following: Most people see me as loving and affectionate. Responses revealed levels of agreement from 1, strongly disagree, to 6, strongly agree, similar to a Likert scale. Also, a short basic list of demographic questions was asked. Questions like age, gender, marital status, and class level are examples of those.

Ryff's [15] Scales of Psychological Well-being (SPWB) was used to determine the psychological well-being of each student. Psychological well-being was examined by using the total score, along with each of the six subscale scores of psychological well-being. Scoring is done by adding up all the responses on each

scale to obtain a summed score for each dimension. The composite score is, then, determined by adding up all the responses on all scales to obtain a summed score. The possible range for each scale is from 14 to 84 points with the composite ranging from 84 to 504 points.

The combination of Descriptive and Correlational Study design was utilized in this study. In order to select the samples, proportional sampling technique was applied to select students from each faculty. In this study, Ryff's [15] psychological Well-Being scale was utilized. It is one of the most widely applied scales to assess psychological well-being. This scale was divided into to six different components [15] which were analyzed independently. The response required is based on six point likert scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Each subscale has 7 items, making a total of 42 items.

The dimensions analyzed were:

- Autonomy - assesses self-determination, independence, and an internal locus of control.
- Environmental mastery - measures one's ability to manipulate and control complex environments.
- Personal growth - measures one's needs to actualize and realize one's potentials.
- Positive relationships - assesses the ability to love, trust, and establish deep relationships with others.
- Purpose in life - measures one's sense of directedness and goals.
- Self-acceptance - assesses positive attitudes held toward the self

Definitions of high and low scoring on each of the six dimensions are described by Ryff and Singer [25]. A high scorer in self-acceptance would possess a positive attitude of self and would accept both good and bad qualities of self. A low scorer in self-acceptance would have a negative attitude toward self, be disappointed with past life events, and wish for different personal qualities that are not troubling to the self. A high scorer in positive relations with others would have trusting and satisfying relationships with others, ability to show empathy and concern for others, and understand that relationships require give and-take. A low scorer on positive relations with others would have few close relationships, have difficulty showing concern for others, and be isolated due to the frustration with interpersonal relationships. A high scorer on personal growth would see self as growing and on a journey to realize his or her true potential and acknowledge continual growth and improvement in self over time. A low scorer on personal growth would feel a sense of personal stagnation, lack interest in life and in personal growth, and find it difficult to change current negative thought patterns.

A high scorer on purpose in life has a sense of direction, looks for and finds meaning in past and

present life, and has beliefs that give purpose to life. A low scorer on purpose in life cannot find meaning or a sense of direction in life, lacks goals, and does not hold beliefs that provide life with meaning. A high scorer on environmental mastery has the ability to manage the environment, take advantage of opportunities, and create an environment that meets personal needs. A low scorer on environmental mastery has difficulty managing daily situations, does not take advantage of opportunities, and feels a lack of control over the world around. A high scorer on the autonomy scale is independent, yet has a choice when dependency is needed; he or she does not give in to social pressure, but determines behaviour based on personal standards instead.

A low scorer on the autonomy scale is focused on the views of others, gives in to social pressure, and is dependent on others to make important decisions.

**RESULTS**

The demographic data of respondents and research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) while inferential statistics (correlation) was used to test hypothesis one and two. Three hundred and seventy-seven (377) copies of questionnaire were administered but three hundred and fifty-six (356) copies were retrieved, making 94% return rate. The results were presented in tables and discussed according to the research objectives, questions and hypotheses.

Hypothesis One (H<sub>01</sub>): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Age (Table-2).

**Table-1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents N =356**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
16-20 years	76	21.3
21-25 years	167	46.9
26-30 years	83	23.3
31-35 years	30	8.4
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	180	50.6
Married	155	43.5
Divorced	21	5.9
<b>Scholarship</b>		
Sponsored by Gov/NGO	87	24.4
Sponsored by parents/Guardian	128	36.0
Self sponsored	141	39.6
<b>Bursary Allowance</b>		
10,000	130	36.5
20,000	61	17.1
40,000	27	7.6
50,000	82	23.0
100,000 and above	56	15.7
<b>Allowance</b>		
Monthly	346	97.2
Yearly	10	2.81
<b>Occupation of sponsored</b>		
Farmer	26	7.3
Civil servant	269	75.6
Businessman	61	17.1
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	209	58.7
Female	147	41.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2017



**Table-2: Relationship between Psychological Well-being and Age**

		Psychological well-being	Age
Psychological well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	0.320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	356	356
Age	Pearson Correlation	0.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	356	142

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Filed Survey 2017

Table-2 shows a significant relationship between psychological well-being and age in the study area. Since the p value (0.000) is less than the alpha (0.05) value ( $p < \alpha$ ) the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and age is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there was a significant

relationship between psychological well-being and age in the study area.

Hypothesis Two ( $H_{02}$ ): There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Gender.

**Table-3: Relationship between Psychological well-being and Gender**

		Psychological well-being	Gender
Psychological well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	0.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.009
	N	356	142
Gender	Pearson Correlation	0.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	356	356

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Filed Survey 2017

Table-3 shows a significant relationship between psychological well-being and gender in the study area. Since the p value (0.009) is less than the alpha (0.05) value ( $p < \alpha$ ) the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and gender is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there was a significant relationship psychological well-being and gender in the study area.

**DISCUSSION**

The first finding revealed a high state of self-acceptance of undergraduate students in the study area .This finding confirms studies by Ceyhan *et al.*, [26]. A study on depression among university students found that depression is, in fact, a widespread problem among students’ .The researchers recommended that programs be offered to help students build coping skills against depression and increase their levels of self-acceptance. The level of self-acceptance has a direct connection with an individual's psychological well-being.

The second finding revealed that subjects feel in charge of the situation in which they live, demands of every well with the people and the community around them, fitting very well with the people and the community around them, good at managing the many responsibilities of their daily lives, feel overwhelmed by responsibilities, not having difficulty arranging life as a

way that is satisfying, been able to build a home and a lifestyle that is much to their likings were how personal growth be measured in undergraduate students in the study area. In line with this finding is study by Cooke *et al.*, [27] which examined the impact of university attendance on psychological well-being. The constructs used to measure psychological well-being were subjective well-being; life functioning; risk; and symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and physical problems. The findings determined that university attendance does have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of students. This study noted that students experienced added stress when attending college, which seems to reinforce the idea that addressing the psychological well-being of counselling students is of particular importance.

The third finding showed achieving targeted goals and objectives were the purpose in life of undergraduate students in the study area. Aligning with this finding is a study by Bonanno, Rennie, & Dekel [28], the study examined the effect of spinal cord injury on psychological well-being found that the perception of loss of physical functioning affected psychological outcomes more than the actual level of injury severity. These findings demonstrated that a sense of purpose and meaning in life was related to an increased sense of well-being [29].

The fourth finding is that there is a significant relationship between undergraduate students with others. In agreement with this is finding in a study by Ryff (1989) conducted pivotal research in the area of psychological well-being. She found that higher levels of the constructs of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance were consistently related to psychological well-being. These six dimensions were found to address the different challenges individuals face in achieving psychological well-being. The study was conducted on 321 men and women, who were divided into three age ranges: young, middle-aged, and older adults. The participants rated themselves on measures of the six proposed constructs as well as on six instruments used in earlier studies. The six instruments used in earlier studies were examples of how constructs were previously used in isolation to measure positive functioning, or psychological well-being. The six instruments used in previous studies rated affect balance, life satisfaction, self-esteem, morale, locus of control, and depression. The results of the Ryff study revealed that four of the new dimensions were not being measured by the old assessment indexes. The four new dimensions were positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. The results of this study provided the foundation for using a multidimensional model of psychological well-being.

The fifth finding is that living life one day at a time and think about the future, having a sense of direction and purpose in life daily activities often seem important to them, having a good sense of what their trying to accomplish in life, enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality were the capacity of undergraduate to manage their lives and surrounding world in the study area. This finding confirms a study by [30]. This study measured psychological well-being with the affective and quality-of-experience scales of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness. The researchers concluded that other psychological constructs could conceivably have greater significance in the understanding of wellness of the whole person. Research in the area of psychological well-being in undergraduate students has demonstrated that psychological well-being is an important aspect when it comes to quality of life for college students [31]. All these studies point to the need not to overlook the assessment of the psychological well-being of graduate students in a counselling program. It seems that, if the psychological well-being of undergraduates is an important area of study, the study of students who are training to become counsellors and, thereby, also become responsible parties to the psychological well-being of others should be of prime importance.

The sixth finding revealed a high level of sense of self determination of undergraduate students in the

study area. Opposing this finding is a study by Ryff [15] in determining an individual's state of psychological well-being. All six dimensions play an important role within positive psychological functioning. In order to address sufficiently the level of psychological well-being in graduate counselling students, this study used Ryff's six-dimension model.

The seventh finding showed that there was a significant relationship between psychological well-being and age in the study area. In agreement with this finding is a study by Ryff and Keyes [17], positive relationship shows age stability. Ryff, Magee, Kling, and Wing [32] indicated an age increment with positive relationship with others. According to this view, well-being is not uniform across different periods of life course.

The eighth finding revealed a significant relationship between psychological well-being and gender. Studies agree with this finding area: Lu [33] discovered gender differences while examining conjugal congruence on role experiences and subjective well-being, whilst Stephens *et al.*, [34] found gender differences in a study examining mental health in Canadian population. Marks [35] also found differences in her Winscons in study, but ascribed these primarily to marital status, which interacts with gender, rather than to gender differences per se. Ek [36] found no marked gender differences in a Finish study on coping flexibility. Gender differences do exist because of biological and psychological differences. The level of satisfaction with life among males and females can differ. When these differences interact with organizational environment or situations they can lead to different outcomes. The differences could be because of comfortable and better personal/family life, good interpersonal relationships (both in workplace and outside), effective communications skills and also certain other factors like more leniency towards female employees, better facilities, lower expectations and ambitions than the male employees. Gender differences in Psychological well-being are important because of the many efforts being made in contemporary society to empower all individuals to achieve self-actualization and utilize their full potential. In a post-feminist context this incorporates the idea of an "equal opportunities" society; yet social stereotypes still remain [37-39]. All people are equal but not identical, and the possible differences between people need to be considered in order to empower all individuals to achieve self-actualization and to fulfill their potential (thereby promoting optimal psychological well-being), whilst being offered equal opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings within the limitation of this study, it was concluded that self-acceptance has its positive and significant impact on psychological Well-being among undergraduate students and it was also

found that self-acceptance enhance the psychological well-being. Consequently, high level of self-acceptance contributes to high levels of engagements and life satisfaction, if self-acceptance is low psychological well-being also low, if self-acceptance is high psychological well-being also high. And that age and gender are positively correlated with psychological wellbeing.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Since there was a high state of self-acceptance of undergraduate students in the study area future researches should try and consider experimental study of state of self-acceptance while increasing the number of participants by using more Universities from other geo-political zones in Nigeria.
- Future researches should therefore, examine the patterns of state of self-acceptance in normative samples.
- Future researches should also investigate the roles of self-esteem, self-concept, including the effects of mood, environment, residential mobility, spirituality, narcissism, and bystander effect on personal growth of undergraduate students.
- Universities should give their students an opportunity to work collaboratively in small groups and participate in activities designed to enhance the level of sense of self determination of undergraduate students.
- There should also be opportunities for training designed to teach social problem solving skills and to reduce peer rejection.
- Effective cognitive-behavioural therapy should also be put in place to increase the capacity of undergraduate to manage their lives and surrounding world.

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