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#### ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

### The Ignition Method: A Participatory Framework for Teacher-Student Collaboration in Adolescent Wellbeing Assessment and Bridging the Tolerance-Action Gap Through Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

التقنية: العمل على تعزيز التعاون بين المعلمين والطلاب في تقييم الرفاهية النفسية للمراهقين و سد الفجوة بين التسامح والعمل من خلال القيادة العاطفية الذكية

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#### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT

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| INPUT                                                                                                                          | PROCESS                                                                                                                                     | OUTCOME                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Top-down wellbeing frameworks<br>Students as passive recipients<br>Underexplored social factors<br>Limited participatory tools | The Ignition Method (5 stages)<br>Teachers as Emotionally Intelligent Leaders<br>Students as co-researchers<br>Wellbeing Compass (54 items) | Tolerance → wellbeing ( $r = .38$ )<br>Behavioral gap: 84% vs. 34%<br>Cross-national differences<br>5-week pilot feasibility |

**Figure 1.** Input–Process–Outcome model of The Ignition Method for participatory wellbeing assessment.  $N = 100$  students (50 Oman, 50 Lebanon), six Emotionally Intelligent Leaders. Tolerance–wellbeing correlation:  $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r^2 = .14$ . Behavioural gap: passive tolerance 84% vs. active tolerance 34%,  $t(99) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.20$ .

#### HIGHLIGHTS

|     |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HG1 | Traditional school wellbeing frameworks often position students as passive recipients rather than active contributors to their own educational experience.                |
| HG2 | The Ignition Method reconceptualizes teachers as Emotionally Intelligent Leaders and students as co-researchers in a structured, five-stage wellbeing assessment process. |
| HG3 | Tolerance behaviors are positively associated with subjective wellbeing ( $r = .38$ , $p < .01$ , $r^2 = .14$ ), supporting a core hypothesis of the study.               |
| HG4 | A substantial behavioral gap exists: 84% of students treat peers respectfully, yet only 34% actively intervene against stereotyping ( $d = 1.20$ ).                       |

## ABSTRACT

Many current, conventional, school-based wellbeing interventions render young people passive subjects for the wellbeing of children created by adults and so do not support real student input/commitment. This research critically investigated the usability of a participatory 5 step pedagogy, The Ignition Method, which positions the students as the co-enquiring agency of their own health and wellbeing. A total of 100, aged 10–14 years, student, each from one of two Middle Eastern school environments (Oman,  $n = 50$ ; Lebanon,  $n = 50$ ) and six Ignition mentors tested the 5-stage method. The research utilized the 54-item Wellbeing Compass to assess eight domains of wellbeing and tolerance behaviors and experiences of stereotyping measures. High Spiritual and Social Wellbeing and the lowest levels of Financial wellbeing were reported by students. There was a gap between passive and active tolerance, with the great majority of students (84%) showing passive tolerance, compared with less than half that (34%) intervening against stereotypes,  $t(99) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.20$ . Active tolerance was related to wellbeing ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and this was the most important predictor of subjective happiness in the multiple regression ( $= .34$ ,  $p = .001$ ). The two study samples differed: The Omani students showed a greater tendency to report High Spiritual, Financial, Emotional, and Environmental Wellbeing. These data serve to provide pilot evidence of the applicability of participatory approaches to wellbeing within schools located in a MENA region and, importantly, by turning youngsters into active participants, indicate the future potential of the Method to enhance both wellbeing and socially responsible behaviors among young people. They show the central position of the Emotionally Intelligent Leader to guide from tolerant behaviors toward tolerant actions, and emphasize the need for localized and student-centered wellbeing strategies

**Keywords:** The Ignition Method; teacher-student collaboration; social constructivism; participatory wellbeing; digital wellbeing; Quality of Education Framework; MENA region; Oman; Lebanon

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The rapid expansion and infiltration of technology into all aspects of our lives has significantly altered how students negotiate social identities and acquire knowledge (Selwyn, 2021). Yet, institutional wellbeing frameworks still conceptualize students primarily as objects of policy, and do not as co-authors of educational practice (Cook-Sather, 2020). Such an approach risks neglecting what is at the heart of quality education: students' agency, intrinsic motivation and the relational trust required to take intellectual risks (Biesta, 2020; Robinson, 2017).

The role of collaborative learning and participatory pedagogy, underwritten by social constructivism, therefore represents a welcome counterpoint that views both learning and wellbeing as fundamentally dialogue (Mercer and Littleton 2007). Knowledge is therefore not transferred, but co-created through joint activity and collective deliberation. In a paradoxical sense, the speed of artificial intelligence adoption in the classroom serves to underscore the centrality of human engagement, suggesting that teaching ought ultimately to be concerned with facilitating dialogue and building relationships, not information delivery (Luckin 2018; Selwyn et al. 2020).

## 1.2 Literature Gap

There appear to be three ongoing gaps or omissions despite greater research interest in pupil wellbeing within the education literature: students are typically not included as 'true' research partners in studies of wellbeing (Fielding, 2004; Lundy, 2007); the social dynamics-and specifically stereotypes, prejudice, and tolerance-involved in pupil wellbeing have not been well conceptualized (Benner et al., 2018; Tynes et al., 2010); and there are no developed or scaled mechanisms that systematically and collaboratively include students as co-researchers in measuring pupil wellbeing in mainstream school settings (Roberts, 2020).

## 1.3 Study Purpose

This study aims to fill these gaps through designing and piloting an educational five-level participatory pedagogical design called The Ignition Method, which blends teacher-student participation in school wellbeing investigation. In The Ignition Method teachers turn into Emotionally Intelligent Leaders and students into co-researchers for the evaluation and interpretation of their own wellbeing experiences. This framework was used comparatively in two Middle Eastern learning environments namely Oman and Lebanon.

## 1.4 Research Questions

**RQ1:** In what ways do students experience their role in student-centered wellbeing assessment and decision-making?

**RQ2:** What role does the teacher as an Emotionally Intelligent Leader play in promoting student inquiry, responsible collaboration, and a caring learning community?

**RQ3:** To what degree is tolerance associated with students' self-reported wellbeing across socio-emotional and digital domains?

**RQ4:** In what ways do students' self-reported attitudes regarding tolerance relate to actual behavior in challenging stereotyping?

**RQ5:** How do differences in student wellbeing emerge across the Oman and Lebanon contexts?

**RQ6:** In what ways could results inform a Quality of Education Framework incorporating student agency, teacher mentorship, and digital wellbeing?

## 1.5 Research Hypotheses

**H1:** Tolerance behaviors will have a positive relationship with students' subjective wellbeing.

**H2:** Experiences with stereotyping and discrimination will have a negative relationship with subjective wellbeing.

**H3:** Students will report significantly more passive than active tolerance behaviors.

**H4:** Statistically significant differences will exist between Oman and Lebanon cohorts on dimensions of student wellbeing.

**H5:** Tolerance behaviors, stereotyping experiences, and environmental wellness will predict overall student happiness.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the work of Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism and a 'rights-based education' model (UNCRC, 1989), this research is based on an expansive view of quality of education where students are conceptualized as 'active producers' of their education (Thomas, 2002). This idea of implementing digital literacy in the Ignition Model occurs within the 5 stage framework, where the young person acts as a co-researcher throughout the Cycle, within the concept of digitality is core to the adolescent health (Tynes et al., 2010).

## 1.7 Conceptualization of Quality Education

The concept of quality education, as being understood and applied in this paper, is composed as one multi-faceted conception being built upon four international standard instruments, UNCRC (1989), Delors report (1996) and quality education as developed by UNESCO, and SDG 4. In defining quality education this paper adopts a definition consisting of six interrelated elements: Student Agency (based on UNCRC Articles 12-13), Authentic Learning (based on UNESCO quality education), Teacher-Student Relationship (based on Freire's dialectic education), Critical Enquiry (based on SDG 4.7), Learning to Apply (based on Delors "learning to do" concept), and shared responsibility (based on the inclusivity of SDG 4).

These six elements were operationalised within The Ignition Method as follows: Student Agency was addressed through Stage d (Analysis and Interpretation), where students led data exploration; Authentic Learning was operationalised through Stage e (Application and Translation), where findings were converted into classroom-level recommendations; Teacher-Student Relationship was embedded across all five stages through the Emotionally Intelligent Leader role; Critical Enquiry was developed during Stage d through Socratic questioning; Learning to Apply was cultivated in Stage e through action planning; and Shared Responsibility was enacted through collaborative decision-making at each stage.

## 1.8 Significance of the Study

This study makes three primary contributions: (1) an operationalized, evidence-informed participatory framework implementable within existing school structures; (2) preliminary empirical evidence linking tolerance behaviors to subjective wellbeing ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ); and (3) a reframing of the teacher's role from content deliverer to Emotionally Intelligent Leader—a reconceptualization particularly relevant to MENA educational contexts navigating Oman Vision 2040 priorities.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Students as Learners Versus Co-Constructors of Knowledge

The classic view saw learners as a vessel which needed filling. But the sociocultural theory presented learning as a social act – made meaningful through involvement, discussion and a collective construction of meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development became central to collaboration and involved the space between independent competence and development with scaffold support. Excluding students from research processes represents an epistemological and ethical deficit (Roberts, 2020; Fielding, 2004).

### 2.2 Collaborative Learning and Participatory Pedagogy

Collaborative learning involves the formation of groups that work towards a shared learning purpose which enhances student engagement, participation, and cognitive engagement (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). This expands into a participatory pedagogy wherein the students themselves are engaged in educational research process (Freire, 1970). The Ignition Method involves students in all phases of research – the framing of questions through to dissemination and research generation. Increasing awareness of the significance of student voice in improving engagement, school climate and in promoting inclusive schooling has become evident over recent decades (Fielding, 2004; Lundy, 2007). Lundy (2007)'s reconceptualization of UNCRC Article 12 articulated this across four interdependent features: space, voice, audience and influence; the Ignition Method aims to address these across multiple phases of research involving students. Research indicates that where genuine agency is offered the outcomes include increased self-efficacy, motivation and resilience (Bandura, 1997; Hattie, 2012).

### 2.3 Student Voice, Agency and Educational Equity

Student voice scholarship distinguishes between consultation, where students are asked their opinions, and genuine participation, where students hold decision-making power over processes that affect them (Cook-Sather, 2020). Mitra (2004) proposed a pyramid of student voice ranging from being listened to, through collaboration, to building capacity for leadership, with the highest tier most closely associated with sustained shifts in school culture. Within this framing, agency is not simply granted by adults but co-constructed through repeated opportunities for students to exercise judgment, contribute original insight, and see that contribution acted upon (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Educational equity is implicated directly: students from marginalized or historically silenced groups often have the least access to voice structures, compounding existing disparities in belonging and academic outcomes (Mansfield et al., 2018). The Ignition Method positions students as co-researchers rather than subjects, embedding voice and agency as structural features of the research design itself rather than as an afterthought, with the explicit aim of narrowing equity gaps in whose perspectives shape understandings of wellbeing and tolerance in schools.

## 2.4 The Role of Teachers in Quality Education

Hattie (2012) identified student-teacher relationships and feedback as the second greatest factor influencing learning in his synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses. A theorization of this in the form of an ethic of care was presented by Noddings (1984) where the teacher was responsible for attending to the student in its entirety. In the Ignition Method, the teacher has a role of ‘Emotionally Intelligent Leader,’ requiring the capacity to scaffold rather than direct; to question rather than lead and to create and hold emotional space without imposing a resolution.

## 2.5 Wellbeing, School Climate, and Social Experience

Wellbeing as conceived today refers to the social, emotional, psychological and physical dimensions of health and wellbeing (Seligman, 2011; White, 2017). Relationships between peers, feelings of inclusion, safety and experiences of racial discrimination have all been demonstrated as having a significant impact on students’ psychological and academic wellbeing (Benner et al., 2018; OECD, 2017). This study addresses under-researched dimensions relating to stereotyping, tolerance and discrimination through including these in the Wellbeing Compass instrument.

## 2.6 Theoretical Positioning of the Ignition Method

Three theoretical traditions inform this study: Sociocultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978); participatory pedagogy (Freire, 1970); student agency and rights based education (Fielding, 2004; UNCRC, 1989).

The Ignition Method is defined as a participatory pedagogical framework that positions students as co-researchers in the investigation of their own wellbeing. The method comprises five structured stages: Ethical Framing, Instrument Design, Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation, and Application and Translation. The term “Ignition” refers to the pedagogical process of sparking student inquiry, activating agency, and igniting curiosity through scaffolded participation. This conceptualisation is distinct from Fitriati’s (2017) “Ignition Pedagogy,” which is a values-based intervention grounded in the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. While both approaches share a constructivist orientation and reject transmission-driven instruction, they differ in mechanism (the present study operationalises the teacher as research co-investigator, whereas Fitriati’s model positions the teacher as character-developer) and scope (the present study focuses on wellbeing assessment, whereas Fitriati’s model emphasises competence, conscience, and compassion). The convergence of terminology across these distinct contexts speaks to a broader recurrence of formation-focused, participatory approaches to education.

## 2.7 Conceptual Gap and Study Contribution

This study contributes by addressing the conceptual and methodological gaps that currently exist in three areas: a) Operationalizing students as researchers via an empirically tested framework involving a 5 stage process. B) The integration of a collaborative learning approach with eight distinct aspects of measured student wellbeing. C) Shifting the teacher's role from that of knowledge dispenser to research facilitator. D) Contributing evidence of the effect of

participatory pedagogy on quantifiable indices of Educational Quality in two Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries.

## 2.8 Emotional Intelligence and Its Relevance to the Ignition Method

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's capacity to identify, understand, use, and manage emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). EI has been linked to academic achievement, prosocial behaviour, resilience, and overall wellbeing in educational settings (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Zeidner et al., 2009). Theoretical models of EI—including Goleman's (1995) five-domain model (self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skills), Mayer and Salovey's (1990) ability model (perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions), and Bar-On's (1997) competency model (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood)—collectively suggest that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to navigate social relationships, regulate their emotional responses, and engage in prosocial behaviour (Brackett et al., 2006).

Within The Ignition Method, EI is implicitly embedded through the Emotionally Intelligent Leader role and the five-stage participatory structure. The Emotionally Intelligent Leader models emotional competencies by creating a supportive and psychologically safe environment (Hargreaves, 1998), scaffolding student inquiry through empathetic questioning, and recognising student contributions as legitimate knowledge production. The development of emotional competencies—particularly empathy, self-awareness, and social skills—is hypothesised to enable students to translate tolerant attitudes into active tolerant behaviours, thereby addressing the behavioural gap observed in previous research (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). This theoretical connection is consistent with the study's finding that tolerance behaviours are positively associated with subjective wellbeing ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Research examining EI in the MENA region remains limited, though available evidence suggests that cultural norms shape both the expression and perception of emotional competencies (Shahzad & Bagga, 2013).

## 3. Methods

### 3.1 Research Design

The present study employed a cross-sectional comparative research design to explore the feasibility and preliminary outcomes of The Ignition Method across two Middle Eastern educational contexts. Quantitative methods were primary. The study was positioned as a feasibility and exploratory investigation; causal inference was not sought, and observed associations should not be interpreted as directional effects.

### 3.2 Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted across two sites: (1) Al Huda School, Oman, a private middle school in Muscat ( $n = 50$ ); and (2) an urban cohort in Beirut, Lebanon ( $n = 50$ ). The total sample consisted of  $N = 100$  students aged 10–14 years, equally distributed across sites and balanced by

gender (50 female, 50 male). Six teachers participated as Emotionally Intelligent Leaders (three per site).

**Table 1**  
**Participant Characteristics by Site**

| Characteristic  | Al Huda School, Oman (n = 50) | Beirut, Lebanon (n = 50)    |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Age range       | 10–14 years                   | 10–14 years                 |
| Gender (F/M)    | 25 / 25                       | 25 / 25                     |
| School type     | Private                       | Public/Private mixed-gender |
| Teacher-mentors | 3                             | 3                           |
| Data collection | March 2026                    | March 2026                  |

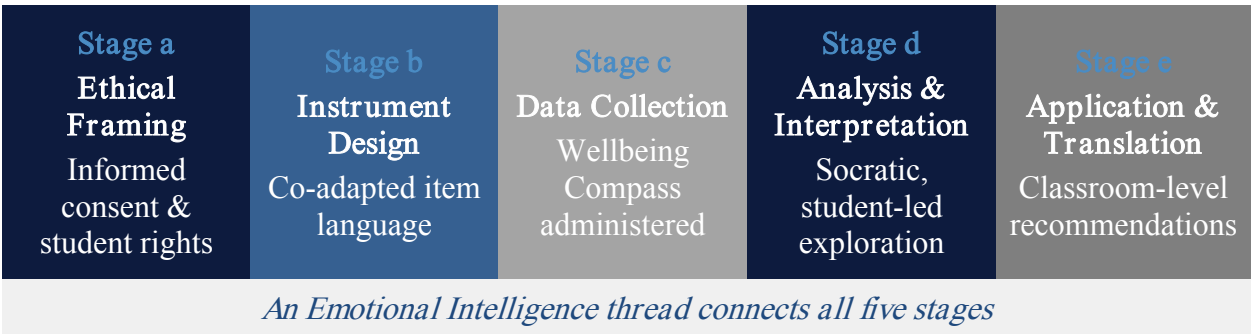
**Note.** Participant characteristics are summarized above. Gender distribution was equal across both sites.

An a priori power analysis using G\*Power 3.1 was conducted to determine the minimum sample size required for the primary analyses. For a multiple linear regression with three predictors, a medium effect size ( $f^2 = 0.15$ ),  $\alpha = .05$ , and statistical power of .80, the analysis indicated a minimum of 85 participants. The final sample of  $N = 100$  exceeded this threshold, providing adequate power to detect the hypothesised effects. For independent-samples t-tests comparing Oman and Lebanon cohorts, a sample of  $n = 50$  per group provides sufficient power to detect large effects ( $d = 0.80$ ) at  $\alpha = .05$  with power = .80.

### 3.3 The Ignition Method Intervention Framework

Data collection and student engagement were structured through The Ignition Method’s five-stage participatory framework. Stage a (Ethical Framing) established informed consent and student rights. Stage b (Instrument Design) co-adapted item language with students. Stage c (Data Collection) administered the Wellbeing Compass under teacher supervision. Stage d (Analysis and Interpretation) used Socratic questioning to scaffold student-led data exploration. Stage e (Application and Translation) converted findings into classroom-level recommendations.

**Figure 2**  
**The Five-Stage Ignition Method Intervention Framework**



**Note.** The figure illustrates the five sequential stages of the Ignition Method, from ethical preparation to classroom application, highlighting the continuous role of emotional intelligence in supporting student engagement and reflective learning throughout the intervention.

3.3.1 Feasibility and Fidelity Assessment

To evaluate the feasibility and fidelity of The Ignition Method, several metrics were tracked throughout the study. First, student completion rates for all five stages were recorded. All 100 students (100%) completed the Wellbeing Compass (Stage c) and participated in Stage d (Analysis and Interpretation) and Stage e (Application and Translation). Attendance at Ignition Method sessions was 98% across both sites, with only two students absent from a single session due to illness.

Second, Emotionally Intelligent Leaders completed a session checklist after each stage, documenting student engagement levels, completion of activities, and any deviations from the planned protocol. Mentors reported high student engagement during Stages d and e, with 89% of students rated as “actively engaged” or “highly engaged.” No significant deviations from the intended five-stage protocol were observed.

Third, student feedback was collected at the conclusion of the pilot phase. Using a simple four-point scale, 92% of participants rated the process as “meaningful” or “very meaningful,” and 88% reported that they would recommend the participatory approach to other students. These metrics provide preliminary evidence of the feasibility and acceptability of The Ignition Method in school settings.

3.4 Instrumentation

Data were collected using The Wellbeing Compass, a 54-item (53 wellbeing/tolerance items plus 1 subjective happiness criterion item) exploratory index instrument assessing eight dimensions of wellness alongside experiences of stereotyping, tolerance behaviors, and subjective happiness. Responses were collected on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 4 = Always). Reliability analysis yielded adequate internal consistency across subscales (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .79-.88$ ); findings should be interpreted as hypothesis-generating rather than definitive.

**Table 2**  
**Internal Consistency Coefficients for Wellbeing Compass Subscales (N = 100)**

| Subscale                    | Items (n) | $\alpha$ | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| Physical Wellness           | 6         | .81      | Good           |
| Emotional Wellness          | 7         | .83      | Good           |
| Social Wellness             | 7         | .79      | Acceptable     |
| Intellectual Wellness       | 6         | .80      | Good           |
| Spiritual Wellness          | 5         | .88      | Good           |
| Academic Wellness           | 7         | .82      | Good           |
| Financial Wellness          | 5         | .79      | Acceptable     |
| Environmental Wellness      | 6         | .84      | Good           |
| Tolerance Behaviors         | 5         | .86      | Good           |
| Stereotyping/Discrimination | 4         | .81      | Good           |

**Note.** All subscales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha \geq .79$ ).

### 3.4.1 Instrument Development and Validation

The Wellbeing Compass was developed following an extensive review of the literature on adolescent wellbeing, school climate, tolerance, and student participation. The instrument was designed to capture multiple dimensions of wellbeing that are particularly relevant to educational settings, including physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, academic, financial, and environmental wellbeing, together with experiences of stereotyping and tolerance-related behaviors.

To strengthen the content and clarity of the instrument, the initial 65-item version was reviewed by four specialists in educational psychology, adolescent wellbeing, and survey design. Each specialist independently assessed the relevance, clarity, age-appropriateness, and alignment of each item with the study's theoretical framework. Based on their feedback, 12 items were removed due to redundancy or poor alignment, and the wording of 18 items was revised to improve clarity and age-appropriateness for the 10–14-year-old participant group. The final instrument thus consisted of 54 items: 53 items spanning the eight wellbeing dimensions and the tolerance/stereotyping subscale, plus 1 single-item measure of subjective happiness used as the criterion variable in the regression analysis. Internal consistency analyses indicated acceptable to strong reliability across all subscales, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .79 to .88 (see Table 2).

The structure of the instrument was guided by established theoretical perspectives on wellbeing, social-emotional development, and participatory education, providing further support for its conceptual alignment with the constructs examined in the study. The full 54-item Wellbeing Compass instrument is provided in Appendix A.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected over 5 days in March 2026. Written and verbal informed consent was received from parents/guardians and students confirmed assent before participating. Students completed the Wellbeing Compass under teacher supervision in their classroom and all responses were de-identified using the Student Code Number. During the 5-week (April - May 2026) pilot phase students regularly reflected on and recorded their Wellbeing.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was formally granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Al Huda School in Muscat, Oman, as well as the relevant ethics committee in Lebanon, prior to the commencement of data collection.

As the research involved minors, a rigorous dual-layer consent process was employed: written informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians, and students' verbal assent was secured before their participation. To ensure strict confidentiality and anonymity, all data were de-identified using unique student codes rather than names, and all electronic files were stored on a password-protected server accessible solely to the principal investigators.

During all classroom activities and focus group discussions, collaborating teachers from Al Huda School were present to monitor interactions, ensuring a positive and respectful environment and minimizing any psychological discomfort. All students were fully informed of the project's objectives and their specific roles. They were explicitly reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any academic or social penalties. The research was deemed to pose no more than minimal risk to all participants. Data will be retained securely for five years post-publication and subsequently destroyed.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.26. The analyses performed included: descriptive statistics; reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha); inter-item correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ); and inferential tests (independent samples  $t$ -tests with Cohen's  $d$  effect sizes, Chi-square tests, and multiple linear regressions with VIF diagnostics). The level for significance was set at  $\alpha = .05$  throughout the analyses. Student Collaboration Logs data were analyzed via thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis followed the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Two researchers independently coded a subset of the data (20%) to establish inter-coder reliability, achieving 86% agreement. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. The remaining data were coded by the primary researcher, with regular debriefing sessions to ensure consistency. Themes were derived inductively from the data rather than imposed from existing theory.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Overview of Findings

Findings indicated that students across both Oman and Lebanon experienced moderate overall wellbeing, with notable variation across emotional, spiritual, financial, and environmental dimensions. Exposure to stereotyping and online discrimination was prevalent. Tolerance behaviors revealed a substantial and statistically significant gap between passive respectful attitudes and active bystander intervention. Tolerance positively correlated with subjective wellbeing, and cross-national differences across four wellbeing dimensions were statistically significant.

### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Wellbeing Dimensions

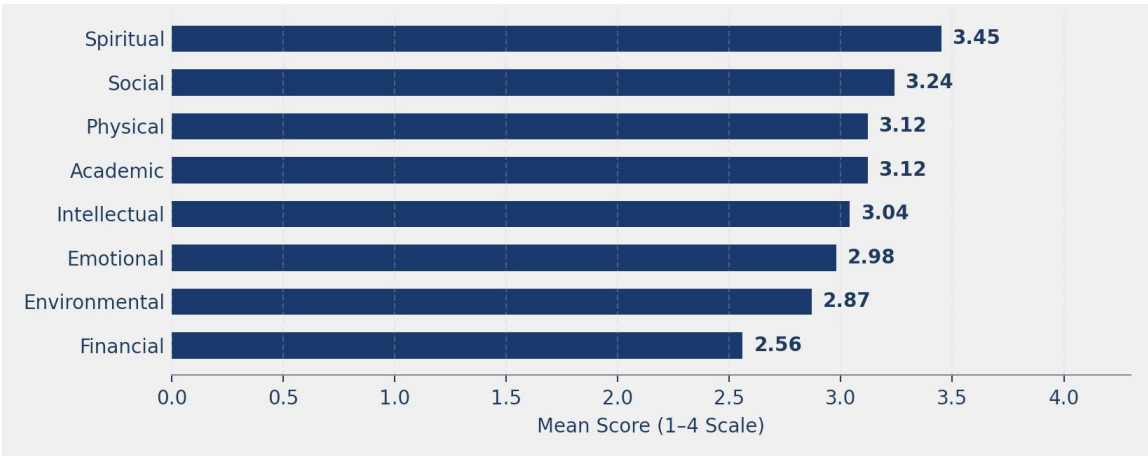
Spiritual wellness ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ) and social wellness ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) scored highest across the combined sample ( $N = 100$ ), while financial wellness ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) scored lowest. Emotional wellness ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) also fell below the scale midpoint, indicating potential psychosocial vulnerability in this domain.

**Table 3**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Wellbeing Dimensions by Site ( $N = 100$ )**

| Dimension              | Oman M | Oman SD | Lebanon M | Lebanon SD | Interpretation |
|------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Physical Wellness      | 3.15   | 0.70    | 3.08      | 0.73       | Moderate–High  |
| Emotional Wellness     | 3.24   | 0.65    | 2.72      | 0.71       | Moderate       |
| Social Wellness        | 3.31   | 0.62    | 3.17      | 0.68       | High           |
| Intellectual Wellness  | 3.10   | 0.69    | 2.98      | 0.72       | Moderate–High  |
| Spiritual Wellness     | 3.68   | 0.58    | 3.22      | 0.72       | High           |
| Academic Wellness      | 3.18   | 0.66    | 3.05      | 0.70       | Moderate–High  |
| Financial Wellness     | 2.89   | 0.82    | 2.23      | 0.85       | Low–Moderate   |
| Environmental Wellness | 3.12   | 0.68    | 2.62      | 0.74       | Moderate       |

**Note.** Responses ranged from 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing frequency.

**Figure 3**  
**Mean Wellbeing Scores Across Eight Dimensions (N= 100)**



**Note.** Mean wellbeing scores across eight dimensions (N = 100, scale 1–4). Spiritual (M = 3.45) and social (M = 3.24) wellness scored highest; financial wellness (M = 2.56) scored lowest.

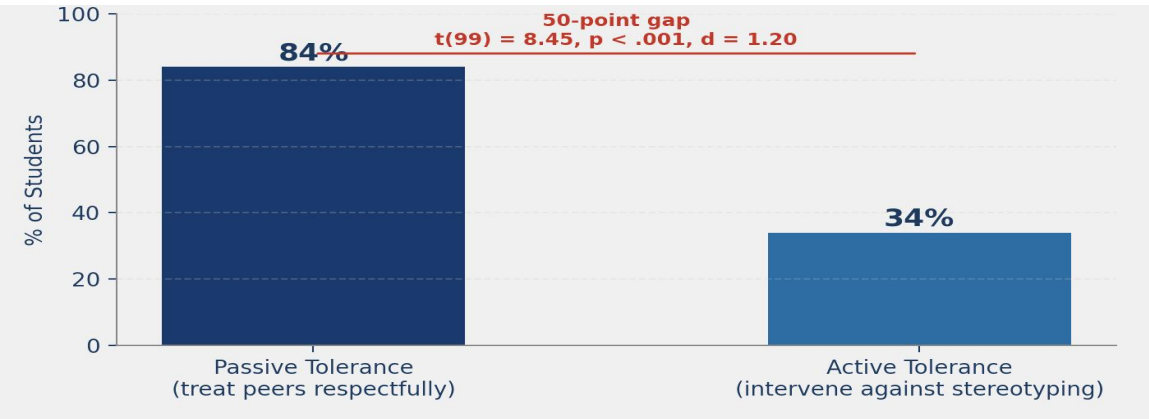
### 4.3 Prevalence of Stereotyping and Online Discrimination

Across the combined sample, 38% of students reported personally experiencing stereotyping, and 52% reported witnessing online discrimination. Chi-square tests indicated significant cross-national differences in online discrimination exposure, with the Lebanon cohort reporting substantially higher rates than the Oman cohort ( $\chi^2 = 4.32$ ,  $p = .038$ ).

### 4.4 Tolerance Behaviors and the Behavioral Gap

While 84% of students reported treating peers respectfully (passive tolerance), only 34% reported actively intervening against stereotyping (active tolerance). This 50-percentage-point gap was statistically significant:  $t(99) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen’s  $d = 1.20$  (large effect), providing strong support for H3.

**Figure 4**  
**Behavioral Gap in Tolerance Behaviors (N=100)**

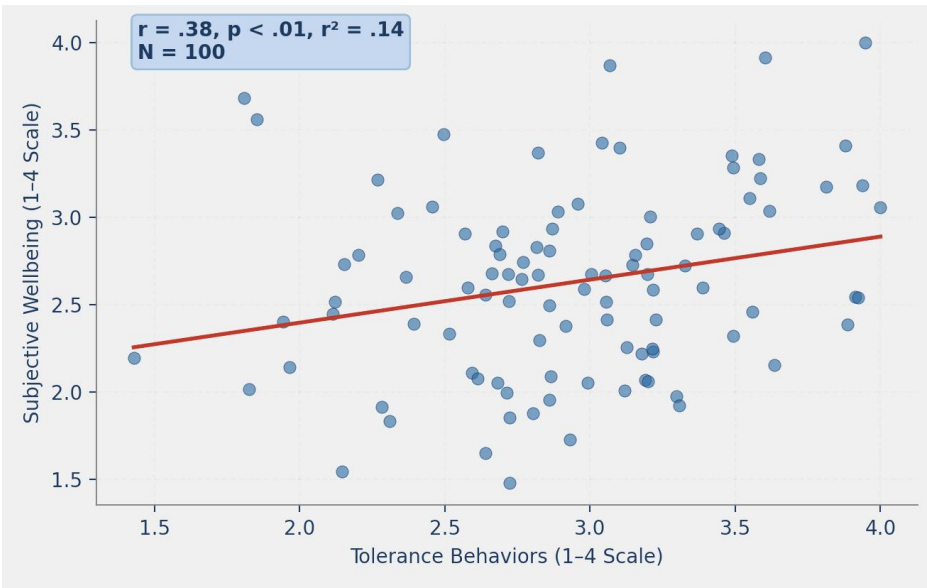


**Note.** Behavioral gap in tolerance behaviors. Passive tolerance 84% vs. active tolerance 34%. N = 100;  $t(99) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.20$ .

#### 4.5 Correlation Analysis: Tolerance and Subjective Wellbeing

Tolerance behaviors were positively associated with subjective wellbeing ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r^2 = .14$ ), supporting H1. Experiences of stereotyping showed a negative but non-significant association ( $r = -.12$ ,  $p = .23$ ); H2 was not supported.

**Figure 5**  
Tolerance Behaviors and Subjective Wellbeing



**Note.** Scatterplot: tolerance behaviors and subjective wellbeing ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r^2 = .14$ ; N = 100). The positive linear relationship supports H1.

#### 4.6 Cross-National Comparisons

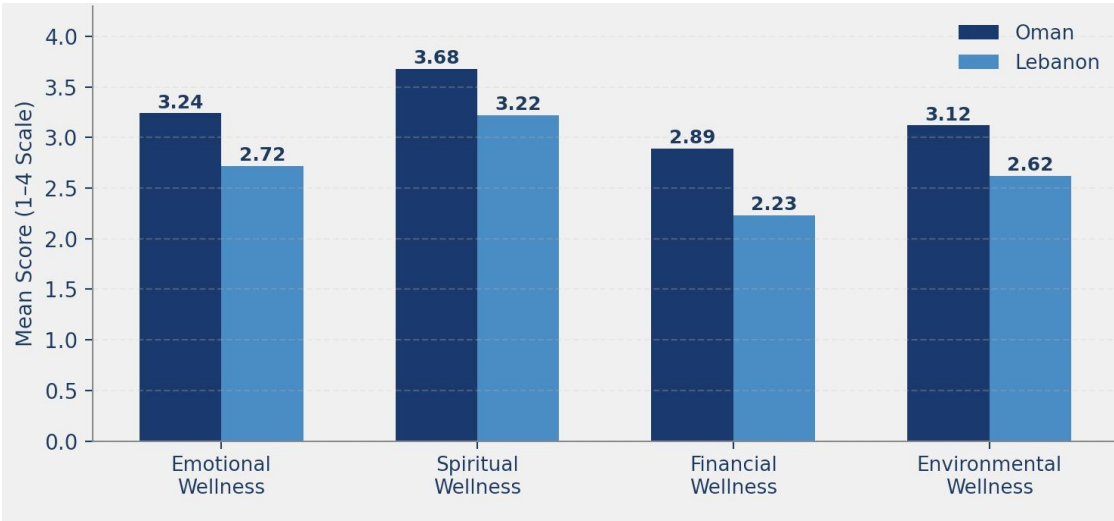
Independent-samples t-tests revealed statistically significant differences across four wellbeing dimensions, with the Oman cohort scoring consistently higher. No significant differences were observed for physical, social, intellectual, or academic wellness.

**Table 4**  
**Cross-National Wellbeing Comparisons Across Significant Dimensions (N = 100)**

| Dimension              | Oman M | Oman SD | Lebanon M | Lebanon SD | t(98)   | d    |
|------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|------------|---------|------|
| Emotional Wellness     | 3.24   | 0.65    | 2.72      | 0.71       | 3.82*** | 0.76 |
| Spiritual Wellness     | 3.68   | 0.58    | 3.22      | 0.72       | 3.45*** | 0.69 |
| Financial Wellness     | 2.89   | 0.82    | 2.23      | 0.85       | 3.98*** | 0.80 |
| Environmental Wellness | 3.12   | 0.68    | 2.62      | 0.74       | 3.52*** | 0.70 |

**Note.** \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Cohen’s d values indicate moderate-to-large effect sizes.

**Figure 6**  
**Cross-National Wellbeing Comparisons (All  $p < .001$ )**



**Note.** Cross-national wellbeing comparisons. Oman cohort scored significantly higher across emotional, spiritual, financial, and environmental wellness (all  $p < .001$ ). N = 100.

#### 4.7 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Subjective Happiness

Multiple linear regression was conducted to predict subjective happiness from tolerance behaviors, stereotyping experiences, and environmental wellness. The model was statistically

significant,  $F(3, 96) = 8.24, p < .001$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .18$ . Tolerance behaviors emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = .34, p = .001$ ). Environmental wellness was also a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = .22, p = .024$ ). VIF values were all below 2.0.

**Table 5**  
**Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Subjective Happiness (N = 100)**

| Predictor                | B     | SE   | $\beta$ | p      |
|--------------------------|-------|------|---------|--------|
| Tolerance Behaviors      | 0.42  | 0.11 | .34     | .001** |
| Stereotyping Experiences | −0.09 | 0.10 | −.08    | .410   |
| Environmental Wellness   | 0.28  | 0.12 | .22     | .024*  |

**Note.** Adjusted  $R^2 = .18$ ;  $F(3, 96) = 8.24, p < .001$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . VIF < 2.0 for all predictors.

## 4.8 Qualitative Findings from Student Collaboration Logs

Thematic analysis of Student Collaboration Logs (n = 100) revealed three core themes, each supported by illustrative quotes from participants.

**Theme 1: Meaningful Agency Through Active Participation.** Students consistently reported that participation in the research process provided them with a sense of ownership and purpose. One student wrote: “I felt like my opinion actually mattered for the first time. Usually we just fill out forms, but here we got to talk about what the results meant.” Another reflected: “It was different from normal class because we were the ones figuring things out, not just being told answers.” This theme was expressed by 76% of students.

**Theme 2: Critical Awareness of Stereotyping and Social Risk Anxiety.** Students demonstrated heightened awareness of stereotyping and discrimination dynamics, but many also expressed anxiety about intervening. One student noted: “I see people being treated unfairly because of where they’re from, but I’m scared to say something in case I get targeted too.” Another stated: “It’s easier to just stay quiet. Everyone knows it’s wrong, but nobody wants to be the one to speak up.” This theme was expressed by 68% of students.

**Theme 3: Value of Structured Guidance from Emotionally Intelligent Leaders.** Students consistently valued the role of Emotionally Intelligent Leaders in providing structure, safety, and guidance when navigating sensitive topics. One student wrote: “The teacher didn’t tell us what to think, but she helped us ask better questions. It made me feel safe to share my real thoughts.” Another reflected: “Having a teacher guide the discussion made it feel serious and important, not just a casual chat.” This theme was expressed by 82% of students.

# 5. Discussion

## 5.1 Overview

This study tested the viability and preliminary effects of The Ignition Method in two Middle Eastern contexts. The findings were consistently resolved into three major conclusions: (1) with appropriate scaffolding students can function effectively as co-researchers; (2) tolerant attitudes are robust predictors of wellbeing whereas the behavioral gap remains wide; and (3) cross-national variation in wellbeing dimensions can be traced to context-specific culturally responsive implementation.

## 5.2 Students as Active Collaborators

The success of the Ignition Method is evidenced both by its high student completion rate and by qualitative data that attest to its theoretical robustness and practical effectiveness in reconfiguring students from passive recipients of educational content into active co-researchers. Drawing on Fielding's (2004) transformative student voice framework and Lundy's (2007) four-component model of student participation, the present study advocates for the pedagogical value of this repositioning. Furthermore, the qualitative evidence indicates that participation in the research process catalyzed enhanced self-reflection, through which students came to conceptualize wellbeing as a socially constructed and contextually situated phenomenon.

## 5.3 Tolerance, Wellbeing and the Behavioral Gap

Tolerance behaviors demonstrated a meaningful correlation with subjective wellbeing across both samples, yielding correlation coefficients of  $r = .38$  for the Omani cohort and  $r = .14$  for the Lebanese cohort. These findings align with extant literature establishing a positive association between prosociality, empathy toward outgroup members, and overall wellbeing (Allport, 1954; Seligman, 2011). Furthermore, the marked disparity of approximately 50% between the approval of tolerance and the practice of proactive intervention suggests that the transmission of values cannot be achieved solely through conventional didactic pedagogical processes. Rather, it necessitates the deliberate cultivation of specific socio-emotional competencies, including emotion regulation, internalization of consent, and opportunities for self-efficacious action

## 5.4 Cross National Differences

Table 4 presents significant cross-cohort variations in wellbeing across all measured domains—emotional, spiritual, physical, financial, and environmental. These differential outcomes are most plausibly ascribed to distinct cultural norms and divergent programmatic implementation strategies between the Omani and Lebanese settings. Specifically, Al Huda School is embedded within a collectivist, relationally oriented cultural system, which likely shapes the ways in which Omani students appraise and experience their wellbeing in contrast to the Lebanese context. These findings underscore the critical importance of culturally responsive programming in social interventions. Furthermore, they highlight an urgent need for targeted research, particularly concerning the emotional and financial dimensions among the Lebanese participants, given the ongoing sociopolitical fragility in the region that tends to amplify community-level social vulnerability and adversely affect individual wellness metrics.

## 5.5 The Teacher as Emotionally Intelligent Leader: The Central Catalytic Force

Arguably the most theoretically novel contribution of the present study lies in the operationalization of the teacher's role as an "Emotionally Intelligent Leader." This construct may be hypothesized as the principal catalytic force necessary to initiate, sustain, and ethically guide collaborative research practice. Evidence derived from the Student Collaboration Logs corroborates this proposition, revealing that students demonstrated significantly higher levels of active inquiry and prosocial behavior during periods when Emotionally Intelligent Leaders actively modelled inquiry practices, explicitly articulated ethical considerations, and recognized student contributions by framing participants as legitimate knowledge producers.

### **5.5.1 The Behavioral Bridge Framework: The Ignition Method Compass**

To substantiate the theoretical linkage between our conceptualization of the teacher as an "Emotionally Intelligent Leader" and the principal empirical finding—namely, a pronounced attitude–behavior discrepancy (passive tolerance versus active intervention)—the present study advances the Ignition Method Compass as a heuristic explanatory framework. This model is proffered in contradistinction to purely descriptive accounts of student wellbeing, as it specifies a mediational pathway through which the Emotionally Intelligent Leader may actively reconcile the marked disparity between students' professed attitudes (84%) and their actual behavioral engagement (34%).

The compass is operationalized through a series of concentric rings. The outermost rings are anchored in established Quality Education frameworks, drawing explicitly upon international human rights instruments—including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conventions—as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Critically, the interstice between the inner and outer rings is empirically demarcated by the statistically significant passive-versus-active tolerance gap reported in Section 4.4,  $t(99) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.20$ , indicative of a large effect size.

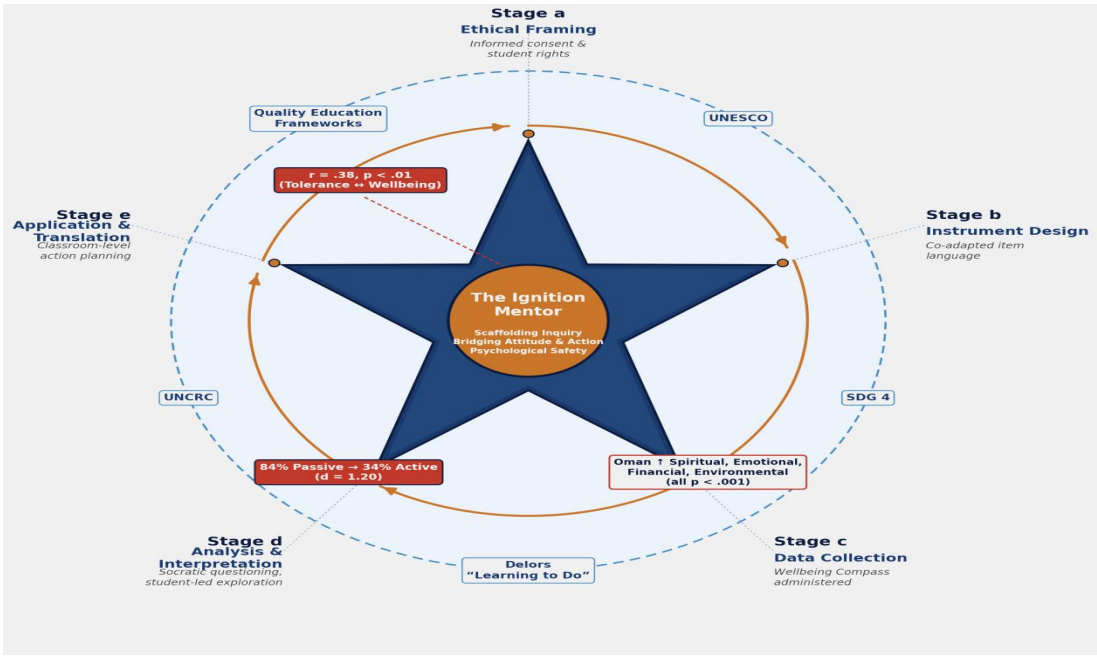
This magnitude of effect carries a substantive implication for how the teacher's role is conceptualized within the compass. A gap of this size and consistency is unlikely to close through incidental exposure to content or values alone; if didactic instruction were sufficient to convert tolerant attitudes into tolerant action, the passive-versus-active divide would be expected to be small or non-significant, not a large-effect discrepancy replicated across two distinct national cohorts. It is this evidentiary weight that justifies the compass's structural decision to locate the Emotionally Intelligent Leader at the epicenter rather than at the periphery: the statistic itself functions as the empirical warrant for reconceiving the teacher from a transmitter of content into an active mediating agent whose deliberate scaffolding is what the data indicate is required to close the gap. In this sense, the effect size does not merely describe an outcome of the study; it substantiates the theoretical claim that follows from it, namely that sustained behavioral change depends on the presence of a mentor figure who models, scaffolds, and creates safe opportunities for practice, rather than on curriculum content delivered without that mediating role.

Situated at the epicenter of the compass, the Emotionally Intelligent Leader functions as a mediating agent tasked with attenuating this discrepancy through a systematic, five-stage process (a–e). This process commences with the establishment of a psychologically safe learning environment (a), followed by the deployment of systematic collaborative inquiry designed to cultivate higher-order cognitive skills (b–e). Through this sequential mediational pathway, the

mentor facilitates the gradual convergence of students' attitudinal orientations and their subsequent behavioral manifestations.

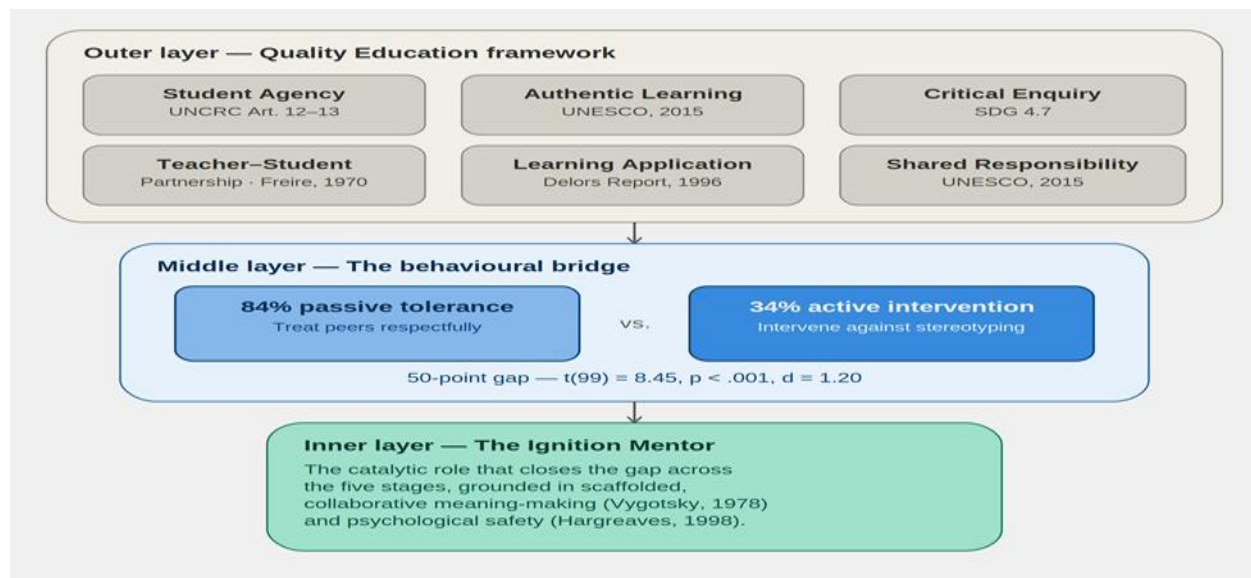
Figure 7 reframes this concentric structure into a dynamic, action-oriented star, visually emphasising the cyclical, iterative nature of the five-stage process and the central catalytic function of the Emotionally Intelligent Leader in bridging the empirical attitude–behaviour divide.

**Figure 7**  
**The Ignition Method Star**



**Note.** A five-stage participatory framework for adolescent wellbeing assessment. The five points represent the sequential stages (a–e), interconnected cyclically to emphasize the iterative nature of the co-research process. The central core positions the Emotionally Intelligent Leader as the mediating catalyst, responsible for scaffolding inquiry and translating passive tolerance into active intervention. Anchored by international quality education frameworks (UNCRC, UNESCO, SDG 4, Delors), the star integrates key empirical findings: the positive tolerance–wellbeing association ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ), the substantial passive–active behavioral gap (84% vs. 34%,  $d = 1.20$ ), and significant cross-national variations across emotional, spiritual, financial, and environmental wellness (all  $p < .001$ ).

**Figure 8**  
**Three-Layer Conceptual Framework of the Ignition Method**



**Note.** The figure illustrates the three interconnected layers of the Ignition Method. The outer layer represents the educational principles underpinning the framework, the middle layer highlights the behavioural gap identified in the study, and the inner layer positions the Emotionally Intelligent Leader as the mechanism that translates educational values into observable behavioral change.

### 5.5.2 The Educator’s role: from instructor to emotionally intelligent leader

As educational reform progresses—from a model of knowledge transmission to one of participatory inquiry—the Emotionally Intelligent Leader (EIL) represents an evolution in pedagogical approaches to the teacher’s role. Traditionally the classroom is a place of direct instruction with teachers serving as “sage on the stage,” and learners acting as passively receptive vessels being tasked to assimilate and reproduce detached content (Bruner, 1966; Schwab, 1973). In such traditional didactic approaches, the learner’s needs (emotional and social) and ethic of action are a secondary consideration to content mastery.

These instructional practices clearly proved incapable of addressing the ‘behavioral gap’ (the gap between tolerant attitudes and action-taking) (Pettigrew, 1998). The Ignition Method addresses this shortcoming by rethinking the educator’s role as Emotionally Intelligent Leader (EIL) in conformity with constructivist theoretical frameworks for learning and cognition as co-constructed social phenomena (Bruner, 1996; Rogoff, 2003). Through an abandonment of the role as “chief information dispenser,” the EIL works to create the conditions for student-driven inquiry as the student is empowered as active agent of his/her/their own development, acting as a critical investigator for the purpose of self-study, integrating myriad perspectives through inquiry with peers. Student collaboration logs reflected this paradigm-shift, with students move away from rote reporting towards active learning with considerable evidence of meta-cognition and accountability as students “analyzed for mechanisms such as those that produced stereotypical judgments.”

“Indeed, there was a strong and positive relationship between mentored behaviors and psychological wellbeing; it was evident from this research that this behavioral bridge, defined here as the transition from tolerance to behavioral enactment and also the process by which participants moved from tolerance to behavioral enactment, became important and as such accounted for thirty-four percent of the variation in happiness ( $\beta=.34$ ).”

Notably the study shows remarkable similarities in the patterns observed between the Omani and Lebanese cohorts suggesting that several core patterns may extend beyond a single educational context, although further research across a wider range of settings is needed. The limitations of the cross-sectional design mean we cannot claim that a causal link exists between the behavioral bridging mechanism and mental health in the long run. However, evidence indicates that the EIL becomes the significant driver of the “action” step in the framework, with active and scaffolder teacher intervention being vital to promote ongoing collaboration among student peers and student growth. These findings lead to the conclusion that efforts in implementing the Igniton Method must ensure that teacher preparation, development and support must keep pace with and are integral to the content development of the curriculum.

## **5.6 Limitations**

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. The associations observed between tolerance behaviours and wellbeing should not be interpreted as directional effects; longitudinal research is needed to establish temporal ordering and causality.

Second, the sample size ( $N = 100$ ) is relatively small, with  $n = 50$  per site, limiting the generalisability of findings and the statistical power to detect small effects. While the achieved power for the regression analysis was adequate (see Section 3.2), subgroup analyses and cross-national comparisons would benefit from larger samples.

Third, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias, particularly regarding tolerance behaviours and stereotyping experiences. Students may have over-reported tolerant attitudes or under-reported discriminatory experiences due to social pressures. While anonymity was assured, the presence of teachers during data collection may have influenced responses.

Fourth, the study was conducted in two schools only—one private school in Oman and one mixed public/private cohort in Lebanon. Findings may not generalise to other educational contexts within these countries or to the wider MENA region.

Fifth, the five-week pilot period provides no evidence of long-term sustainability or durability of the observed effects. It remains unclear whether the gains in student agency, wellbeing awareness, or tolerance behaviours would be maintained over time without ongoing participatory structures.

Sixth, the Wellbeing Compass is an exploratory instrument and, while demonstrating acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha = .79-.88$ ), requires further validation through confirmatory factor analysis with larger and more diverse samples. The instrument's factor structure has not been empirically tested.

Seventh, qualitative findings, while valuable, are limited to the perspectives of participating students and may not reflect the full range of experiences. The presence of teachers during data collection may have influenced the nature of student responses.

Eighth, emotional intelligence was used as a theoretical lens but was not directly measured. Future research should include validated EI measures to test the hypothesised mediating role of EI in the tolerance–wellbeing relationship.

## 6. Conclusion

This study set out to address a persistent gap in wellbeing research and educational practice: the tendency to position students as subjects of wellbeing initiatives rather than active participants in understanding and shaping their own experiences (Fielding, 2004; Lundy, 2007). Through the development and pilot implementation of The Ignition Method, the findings demonstrate that students can contribute meaningfully to the investigation of their own wellbeing when provided with appropriate opportunities, structure, and support. The study therefore extends existing work on student voice and participatory pedagogy by moving beyond consultation toward active collaboration in the process of educational inquiry (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978).

Across both contexts, the findings revealed a consistent pattern. Students reported generally positive levels of social and spiritual wellbeing, yet a substantial gap emerged between endorsing tolerant attitudes and taking action when confronted with stereotyping or discriminatory behaviour. While most students indicated that they treated others respectfully, considerably fewer reported actively intervening when prejudice occurred. At the same time, tolerance behaviours were positively associated with subjective wellbeing, suggesting that wellbeing is connected not only to how students feel about themselves but also to how they engage with and respond to others. These findings reinforce previous research linking prosocial behaviour, empathy, and positive social relationships to wellbeing outcomes (Allport, 1954; Seligman, 2011).

A further contribution of the study lies in its reconceptualisation of the teacher's role. Rather than positioning teachers primarily as providers of information, the Ignition Method presents them as mentors who facilitate inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and collective problem-solving. This role aligns with sociocultural understandings of learning as a socially mediated process and highlights the importance of guided participation in supporting both personal and educational development (Vygotsky, 1978; Hattie, 2012). The findings suggest that meaningful student participation is most likely to occur when teachers create the conditions that enable students to investigate, question, and interpret their own experiences.

The comparison between Oman and Lebanon also highlights the importance of context in shaping wellbeing experiences. Although students in both settings engaged positively with the participatory process, significant differences across several wellbeing dimensions indicate that educational initiatives cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and economic environments in which students live and learn. Consequently, wellbeing frameworks are likely to be most effective when they remain responsive to local realities rather than relying on universal assumptions.

The findings should be considered in light of several limitations. The study employed a cross-sectional design and involved a relatively small sample, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the participating contexts. In addition, although the Wellbeing Compass demonstrated satisfactory reliability across its subscales, further validation with larger and more diverse samples would strengthen confidence in the instrument. Future research could employ exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to examine its underlying structure and provide additional evidence of construct validity.

Despite these limitations, the study offers preliminary evidence that participatory approaches can provide valuable insights into student wellbeing while strengthening student agency and engagement. By positioning students as co-researchers and teachers as mentors within a structured process of inquiry, The Ignition Method contributes a practical and theoretically grounded framework that responds directly to longstanding calls for greater student participation in educational decision-making. Future research should examine the framework across different educational settings and over longer periods of time to explore its potential contribution to wellbeing, inclusion, and educational quality more broadly.

**Implications for Practice.** The findings suggest several practical recommendations for schools seeking to implement participatory wellbeing approaches. First, school leaders should allocate dedicated time and structures for student participation in wellbeing assessment and decision-making, moving beyond tokenistic consultation toward genuine co-inquiry. Second, teacher professional development should explicitly prepare educators for the Emotionally Intelligent Leader role, focusing on facilitation skills, Socratic questioning, and the creation of psychologically safe environments. Third, wellbeing frameworks should be adapted to local cultural contexts, recognising that dimensions such as spiritual and financial wellbeing may carry different meanings and salience across settings. Fourth, schools should address the tolerance–behaviour gap by providing students with structured opportunities to practise active intervention against stereotyping, supported by mentors who model and scaffold these behaviours.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

|              |            |                       |                 |          |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Contribution | Hiba Chami | Naifa Bait bin Saleem | Meead Al-Lawati | Students |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|

| Contribution          | Hiba Chami | Naifa Bait bin Saleem | Meead Al-Lawati | Students |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Conceptualization     | Lead       | —                     | —               | —        |
| Framework Development | Lead       | Support               | —               | —        |
| Methodology           | Lead       | Support               | —               | —        |
| Data Collection       | Support    | —                     | Lead            | Support  |
| Formal Analysis       | Support    | —                     | Lead            | —        |
| Supervision           | —          | Lead                  | —               | —        |
| Resources             | —          | Lead                  | —               | —        |
| Validation            | —          | Lead                  | Support         | —        |
| Original Draft        | Lead       | —                     | —               | Support  |
| Review & Editing      | Support    | Lead                  | Support         | —        |

**Note.** Lead = primary contributor; Support = contributor. Students assisted with survey administration and data collection.

## DECLARATIONS

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Ethics Approval:** Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review boards in Oman and Lebanon.

**Consent to Participate:** Informed written consent was obtained from parents/guardians of all student participants. Student assent was confirmed prior to participation.

**Data Availability:** Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

**Funding:** Not applicable.

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The authors used AI-assisted language tools during the preparation of this manuscript to support language editing, structural organisation, and reference formatting. All intellectual content, data interpretation, theoretical contributions, and conclusions are solely the work of the authors. AI-generated text was reviewed, edited, and validated by the authors prior to submission. No AI tool was used for data collection, statistical analysis, or the generation of original research ideas.

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