

Cultivating Social and Emotional Competencies Through a Digital Platform: An Integrated Intervention Combining Mindfulness, Gratitude, and Emotion-focused Writing

Fan-yu Yang*

General Education Center, National Taipei University of Technology, Taipei, China

Email address:

fanyu@ntut.edu.tw (Fan-yu Yang)

*Corresponding author

Abstract

University students face multiple sources of stress arising from academic demands, interpersonal relationships, and career development. Accordingly, providing accessible psychological support that can be readily integrated into students' daily lives has become an important concern in higher education. Grounded in the self-awareness and self-management domains of social and emotional learning and informed by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, this study developed a digital mental health support platform for university students to use independently outside class. The study examined changes in mental health and positive affect following four consecutive weeks of platform use. By combining reflective, contemplative, and strength-based activities, the platform was intended to provide a low-threshold form of preventive support that students could access flexibly and repeatedly in daily life. A one-group pretest–posttest design was employed, and 70 university students participated in the intervention. The platform incorporated several functions, including daily mood tracking, personal journaling, recording three things for which one felt grateful each day, self-affirming statements, and mindfulness meditation. Participants were instructed to log in and complete the assigned activities daily. Daily mood tracking and emotion-focused writing were designed to strengthen emotional identification and self-reflection. Mindfulness meditation emphasized present-moment awareness, stress coping, and emotion regulation. Gratitude and self-affirmation activities were intended to help participants recognize positive experiences and personal resources in everyday life. The findings indicated that, after completing the one-month intervention, participants reported better mental health and higher levels of positive affect than before the intervention. These results suggest that integrating brief, repeated, and self-directed social-emotional activities into a digital platform may contribute to the enhancement of university students' psychological well-being. Such a platform may also serve as a supplementary resource for campus mental health education and counseling services by extending support beyond formal classroom or counseling settings and encouraging regular self-care practices. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Because the study used a one-group design, involved a relatively short intervention period, and relied on self-report measures, causal conclusions cannot be drawn. Future research should include a control group, follow-up assessments, objective indicators of platform engagement, and direct measures of social and emotional competencies. These additions would allow for a more rigorous examination of the durability of the intervention effects, the relationship between actual platform use and outcomes, and the mechanisms through which digital social-emotional activities may influence students' mental health and emotional functioning.

Keywords

Social and Emotional Learning, Digital Intervention, Mindfulness, Gratitude, Reflective Journaling