



Towards improving the quality of student life in the university Environment From knowledge accumulation to psychological capital development

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Abstract:

As an academic environment for education and research, the university setting plays a significant role in developing students' human capital (cognitively, behaviorally, and socially) by striving to enhance these capacities. However, the university space is not without crises and challenges at all levels – academic, psychological, and social – that students encounter throughout their university journey. These challenges may cause them to develop various psychological disorders, differing in severity, which underscores the importance of improving students' quality of life within the university setting. Among the top priorities in this regard is providing mental health services to support them in coping with the pressures of university life, as well as equipping them with personal skills to successfully integrate into social membership.

Keywords: *Quality of Life, University Setting, Knowledge Accumulation, Psychological Capital.*

Vers une meilleure qualité de vie étudiante dans l'environnement universitaire : de l'accumulation des connaissances au développement du capital psychologique

Résumé :

En tant qu'environnement académique d'enseignement et de recherche, l'université joue un rôle essentiel dans le développement du capital humain des étudiants (sur les plans cognitif, comportemental et social) en s'efforçant de renforcer ces capacités. Cependant, l'espace universitaire n'est pas exempt de crises et de défis à tous les niveaux – académique, psychologique et social – que les étudiants rencontrent tout au long de leur parcours. Ces défis peuvent engendrer divers troubles psychologiques, d'intensité variable, ce qui souligne l'importance d'améliorer la qualité de vie des étudiants au sein de l'université. Parmi les priorités absolues figurent l'accès à des services de santé mentale pour les aider à faire face aux pressions de la vie universitaire, ainsi que le développement de compétences personnelles favorisant leur intégration sociale.

Mots-clés : *Qualité de vie, Milieu universitaire, Acquisition de connaissances, Capital psychologique.*



Introduction:

There is no doubt that the university student population in this era endures exceptionally difficult psychological and social circumstances. These are a result of pressures stemming from the repercussions of contemporary social change, which are capable of generating all forms of behavioral and psychological disorders for this group. This makes psychological knowledge in general, and psychological support programs with preventive and therapeutic orientations in particular, a necessary and essential public need. The aim is to ensure that today's university student develops a balanced personality, capable of living a more content life and better confronting the challenges and demands of contemporary life. Psychologists point out that modern life is full of contradictions and pressures that lead contemporary humans to imbalance and disturbance. The result is either a profound sense of frustration and psychological collapse—leading to depression, suicide, and withdrawal from social life—or anxiety and agitation, resulting in aggression, violence, and behavioral deviance in society.

From this perspective, a brief survey within student circles is, in fact, sufficient to recognize the prevalence of diverse and multiple crises on the psychological and social levels. Any single one of these crises could destabilize university life; what then can be said when they all proliferate among our university students? The prevalence of violence, crime, drug abuse, moral deviation, suicide and suicide attempts, university dropout, psychological and mental illnesses, etc., are all visible phenomena affecting our

students. This is due to the demands imposed by the high-stakes, rapid civilizational social change, the consequences of which have become unbearable and intolerable for youth and adolescents. Its temptations create a vast gap between their psychological capabilities and requirements, which has become a generator of feelings of despair, frustration, hopelessness, or anxiety, anger, and impulsivity, particularly among university students. This has driven them to adopt various strategies of varying danger levels to cope with these feelings, including drug addiction, various forms of deviance, illegal immigration, various forms of violence, suicide and suicide attempts, and psychological and mental illnesses.

Therefore, given the tragic reality surrounding our students on the psychological and social front, a large number of specialists in the fields of psychological and social research and treatment is imperative. The umbrella of their assistance must extend to cover as many needy individuals as possible from different segments of society, particularly the student population, given the increasing complexity of their psychological and social problems. Consequently, securing psychological support for this group constitutes a vital, existential demand today that must be given the necessary attention. This will enable this sensitive segment to overcome its problems and adapt soundly and balancedly to life's demands. The university student population is the nation's energy and its strategic future asset, forming the basis for its development. Failure to invest this energy properly in national development leaves this segment floundering in a crisis of existential void and a life of meaninglessness. This places them in a position vulnerable to a complex and dangerous syndrome of deviant behaviors



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and psychological disorders, which typically result in random explosions of violence, like those witnessed in the external environment today. All of this is due to the absence of plans to invest youth energy in major developmental projects required by the waves of social change in the contemporary world, and the requirements and capabilities that university youth aspire to in their reality to build a destiny matching their ambitions and goals. Such a destiny would open before them opportunities for sacrifice, dedication, and contribution, giving the youth stage the necessary value and meaning to live in the euphoria of pride in belonging and the honor of building the national entity. If youth are deprived of these characteristics, they live in a genuine predicament that threatens their well-being and mental health, making them prey to various forms of compensatory behaviors that are either harmful or, at the very least, unproductive. This is what prompted us to examine the reality of mental health and quality of life for students in the university setting.

In this context, a coherent and systematic approach to addressing the issue of university students requires beginning with an examination of their reality in general, in light of the repercussions of contemporary social change – considering their status, trajectory, and destiny. While the university student population is the segment most oriented towards the future, it is simultaneously the most susceptible to crises, exposed to challenges, and targeted by the explosion of satellite media openness, information networks, consumer markets, and the potential for recruitment by various extremist tendencies. They are at the heart of the vortex of accelerating events carried by the waves of

contemporary social change, and the most affected by its repercussions in terms of increasing opportunities, temptations, competitions, and the risks of deprivation and unemployment. University youth, therefore, represent the critical mass holding the most important opportunities for societal development and shaping its future. Yet, at the same time, they pose the significant challenge of being framed and integrated into active and participatory social, national, and productive life pathways. Consequently, this group is in dire need of strategies capable of effectively harnessing their productive energies and devising plans that align with their future aspirations, which must correspond to the demands of a social change accelerating day by day – leaving no room for complacency or delay in continuous and sustained future thinking and planning.

Perhaps most questionable is the shortcoming of psychology and the humanities in general in studying the reality of university students and their issues, which are increasingly intense and pressing. The focus in psychology remains centered on childhood and adolescence, overlooking the student demographic and skipping over it. This is happening at a time when the situation of university students has transformed, necessitating the development of a distinct, specialized field—a composite and holistic specialization that must incorporate psychology, sociology, political science, economics, the labor market, media, information technology, and future studies. This is because the issues facing university students are not isolated from one another; therefore, traditional, partial, and limited-scope approaches cannot encompass the reality of university students in their crises, dilemmas, dangers, opportunities, and potential. Diagnosing the problems of university



students and studying their needs transcends any sectoral approach within a single, isolated discipline. There is an urgent necessity for a holistic perspective in dealing with this complex and vitally important dossier.

Likewise, intervention in addressing the issues of this important group must be holistic. The repercussions of contemporary social change and their serious implications for the mental health of university students require personal solidity and immunity more than ever before. The pressures of reality and life's demands, with their simultaneous and rapid transformations on various fronts—competition for jobs, shifts in tasks and roles, the race to keep up with developments, lack of job security and stable incomes, disruptions in daily and family life programming, and increasing human isolation accompanied by existential emptiness—all represent unprecedented pressures on the lives of university students. This demands high psychological mobilization and constant readiness, imposes varying degrees of stress and psychological drain, and consequently requires a high degree of psychological immunity and the ability to adapt, find solutions to problems, and deal with emergent situations. The contexts of the current reality and life in the age of globalization will not provide security, safety, and psychological balance except for those human elements possessing a high level of mental health, grounded in the development of psychological capital.

Globalization is not based solely on elitism and cognitive competence but also, and simultaneously, on strength and elitism in the realm of psychological solidity and the ability to fully employ various capacities and functions

(cognitively, socially, and emotionally). This goes far beyond merely being free from illness and disorder. Only through this can university students manage their selves and their lives, both of which will require an advanced degree of initiative, openness, achievement capability, decision-making, problem-solving, dealing with highly diverse and changing human and technical environments, and crafting a personal standing. Hence, the vital importance of mental health programs for university students becomes evident.

In this regard, it can be emphasized that if we do not act quickly to prevent what exposes this group to disorder, our destiny is threatened at an ever-increasing pace. The rapid scientific progress in the modern lifestyle leaves no room for negligence and slow thinking, especially since investment in the university-educated human being has become a top priority for developed countries, obliging their governments to care for it. We see them harnessing all efforts and resources to work on removing the adverse effects and repercussions their people experience due to increasing pressures and complex civilizational requirements placed upon them, which expose them to disorders.

It is erroneous to claim that the psychological problems faced by university students are not prevalent in our universities; this claim is refutable as there are no statistics in Algeria that reveal this matter. Otherwise, psychological crises among university students are indeed widespread and are worsening in severity and danger because we lack clear strategies for adequately addressing the issues of this group in our developmental plans, as is the case in developed countries. Therefore, it is necessary to work on providing such strategies and plans to confront and overcome these problems affecting our youth in their mental and



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psychological health, and their social, economic, political, ethical, and spiritual conditions, while we remain unaware of them. For there is no future for a nation whose crisis lies in its youth.

And from here, we can pose the following problem:

What is the reality of the mental health and quality of life of the university student within Algerian university institutions?

1. The Quality of University Life in Algeria: Issues and Questions:

Enrolling in university is not a transient event for the student; rather, it is a major transformative process in their life, no less significant than other important stages in a human's life. This is because the university stage constitutes one of the first steps towards entering the world of societal membership. It is the stage of moving from the law of the parents and primary relationships to the law of the institution and knowledge, which represents the actual integration into that membership. Academic scientific training, personal responsibility, new, broad relational links, and greater openness to the external environment cause very significant changes in the student's personality. These changes involve dynamism: adjustment, enrichment, and participation. The student is no longer that dependent person subject to the family's dictates, but must deal with this new environment with its own references, systems, relationships, and interactions. The most prominent factor influencing the student's personality is the criterion of academic training, which determines future orientations, whether related to the job market or free intellectual and

cognitive choices. Whereas previously, they were taught limited knowledge within a specific and directed framework. These two criteria may complement each other in a form of mutual reinforcement and enrichment that elevates the processes of personal formation, or they may conflict to varying degrees, imposing psychological burdens of significant weight upon the student – specifically those concerning the contradiction between personal orientation and the demands of reality.

Therefore, there are significant changes, involving connection and separation, continuity and difference, that occur in the university student's personality from the moment they join the university institution. These changes entail new tasks at the level of building their psychological being and existential project. It is a stage of building competencies (cognitively, professionally, socially, and psychologically). The university is the space that allows for the initiation of a comprehensive construction of personality, where the scope of horizontal relationships expands, and the student gradually opens up to various fields of knowledge, which in turn shapes opinion and thought orientations, forms choices, and determines decisions for the future. Here, prominently in its emotional and psychological nature, the question of their capability and readiness for these qualitative leaps arises: To what extent has the student been prepared for this new role and status so that enrolling in university becomes an opportunity for growth and launch into the broadness of life?

Conversely, what is the magnitude of difficulties faced by a student if they suffer from specific psychological problems or disorders?



Thus, the university institution is considered a cognitive, psychological, and social reference point, and as such, it is a vital institution in deciding the fate of the student's developmental completion and the construction of their selfhood, stemming from their formative path through crossing various previous academic stages. Entry into the law of life and membership in society is only possible to the extent of the quality of university life; without its availability, this process of belonging often falters to varying degrees, and with it, the process of developing the student's psychological capital may falter.

If "human quality of life," as an existential, lived concept, is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as: "individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, and their relationship to salient features of their environment" (World Mental Health Report 2023), then the quality of life of the university student does not deviate from this general meaning in terms of enhancing the physical, psychological, health, and social conditions within the university institution to ensure a level of satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment of educational-learning needs, self-esteem, institutional support or backing, and achieving a high degree of security and happiness. All this is considered among the central indicators by which we can measure what we mean by the variable "quality of university student life." This is because the concept of the university student is an (educational-learning) interactive

concept within psychological, ecological, institutional, and sociological fields – that is, an interaction between the subjective and the objective.

Therefore, discussing the quality of life of the student is essentially discussing the measurement of their level of satisfaction with their learning and their sense of security and happiness in the university environment in all its dimensions. The university student is essentially a psychological and biological state or condition, and the quality of their teaching, learning, and satisfaction – which includes objective conditions and according to the law of adaptation and assimilation – depends largely on the quality of their mental and physical health from the outset. This health is the ability of the elements of the personality to provide an individual, subjective response to the stimuli and conditions of university learning, the student's adaptation to the variables of university life, and their comprehension of its data. This pertains to the subjective dimension of the student's quality of life. Secondly, it depends on the suitability of the institution, as the field of interaction in all its legal, sociological, and pedagogical dimensions, to facilitate cognitive assimilation and achieve success, excellence, distinction, and educational satisfaction, as these are components of the quality of university student life in its objective dimension. Consequently, the question of compatibility between the two dimensions (subjective and objective) is what we consider the primary level of the problem posed in our article, which can be summarized in the following question: To what extent is there integration and harmony between the physical, social, and legal conditions (objective) and the psychological and physical conditions (subjective), considering the integration between



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them a condition for achieving the quality of life of the university student in its learning-educational dimension (i.e., excellence in learning)?

At the secondary level of the problem that our article aims to pose, it concerns the nature of university life as the interactive vital field for the university student, which is changing within the forces of local social change and the forces of global change – two of the most conflicting and contradictory forces. Often, these forces have been the cause of psychological and professional problems at the level of the self and a conflict between local and global goals at the institutional level. Thus, the institution becomes structurally and functionally disturbed, and the institutional disturbance encompasses (the rapidly changing legislative-normative dimension, the slowly changing physical-institutional dimension, and between them, the disturbance of the psychological dimension of individuals). This leads to what is called the critical duality, as seen in the disturbances caused by university reforms, such as those related to the LMD system.

2. The Reality of Higher Education and Its Impact on Quality of Life in the University Environment:

The university institution, in a significant aspect, represents the actual starting point for the project of building the cognitive framework. It is a formal consecration of a process that began with the student's first educational experiences and remained guided until the moment of university enrollment. Here begins the constructive process of genuine knowledge, which judges the student's efficiency and progress along its paths. This is a radical shift in the

student's status and significance, both cognitively and psychologically, laying the foundations for subsequent societal competence. The acquisition of knowledge is the key strategic issue, forming the sure key to accessing the future. Knowledge has become the driver of human activity at all levels, simultaneously determining the quality of the student's external life and their destiny.

Consequently, knowledge is power. University institutions are currently measured internationally by their production, processing, exchange, and marketing of knowledge. All sources of power today – whether financial, military, cultural, industrial, agricultural, commercial, or media – are based on this advanced foundation of knowledge. Therefore, all advanced countries compete to finance and strengthen institutions that produce knowledge through research, application, and consumption. Here, it can be said that power in our contemporary era has shifted to the power of knowledge. The authority of science and its astounding technical applications has replaced various other epistemic authorities, as indicated by the American futurist "Alvin Toffler" in his book **Powershift**. Therefore, if this is the case, is the knowledge received by the student in the Algerian university effective and proficient? Is this knowledge employable in real life, or is it a cramming of information disconnected from reality? Does it contribute to developing the university student's psychological capital, or is it merely a cognitive accumulation that does not contribute to the student's subjective development?

On this basis, modern studies in neuropsychological sciences have proven beyond doubt that knowledge contributes to developing the student's mental capacities. The student can control their reality through this



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knowledge, via the mental strength of thinking and working on the acquired knowledge. Here, mental control over the processed knowledge reaches its advanced level, and knowledge becomes part of the mental formation itself, acquiring the characteristic of a reference point. Intellectual matter transforms into major life orientations representing the fundamental references for attitudes, behaviors, and ideas, in a form of foresight-oriented wisdom that regulates and guides behaviors, ensuring the durability, growth, and balance of destiny.

To what extent does the Algerian university build actual, competent knowledge through which it can provide students with insightful, guiding visions for the present and future?

This question refers us to the reality of education in Algerian university institutions and the diagnosis of its problems and obstacles. In doing so, we do not generalize absolutely nor base this on rigorous studies that reveal the truths of the problem posed. Rather, we present a vision from lived reality, as a member of the teaching staff in an Algerian university, drawing from my modest experience to compile some observations and conclusions that enable me to highlight the features of the reality of education in our university institutions.

To what extent does our higher education provide these capacities where the subjective integrates with the objective? What are the reasons that render the knowledge provided by our universities without consumption or employment? Does this knowledge play an effective role in improving the quality of life of the university student? Does it genuinely contribute to developing their psychological capital?

The university bears the greatest and most critical tasks in dealing with knowledge and building scientific and technical competence. Universities are institutions honored by their nations to carry out this necessary and urgent mission in partnership with major research centers. They must, therefore, be questioned and held accountable, without favor or leniency, for what they have offered and offer regarding the quality, effectiveness, and application potential of knowledge – in production and consumption. We fully agree here with the questions raised by the Lebanese researcher "Mustafa Hijazi" regarding the reality of higher education in Arab universities: Is it truly effective with this abundance of available information? Have universities truly exerted the required effort to properly consume it – scrutinizing, selecting, and processing it – to ultimately produce productive knowledge? Or do they remain content, until now, with a timid, superficial, and partial engagement with this wealth of information?

If universities consume and produce knowledge, what is its quality in terms of effectiveness and applicability in serving the needs of the present and future? Or do they produce and consume knowledge that merely serves to exempt from functional duty, serve promotion purposes, or covet rewards, detached from reality and life, and without sufficient evaluation of its ability to serve them as originally assumed? The internal evaluation processes that often occur remain disconnected from the applied functions of knowledge in growth and development. In many cases, they turn into verifying the formalities of consuming and producing knowledge, or they take on the character of an operation with a self-enclosed mathematical-statistical logic, content with verifying distribution and significance criteria,



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in a manner that almost completely obscures the actual reality of work and production life.

The subsequent question raised by "Mustafa Hijazi" in this series may be greater and more critical: Are we dealing with the consumption of knowledge borrowed from its countries of origin in its raw form, where our role is merely redistribution and marketing? Or do we exert the necessary effort to localize this knowledge and readjust it to serve our developmental needs, or even to ultimately offer an original contribution, as done and still done by countries that built for themselves a knowledge project that meets their growth needs and constitutes their original contribution to global knowledge?

If our universities have managed to produce effective knowledge, for what purposes? Is it through unexamined and undeliberated spontaneous conformity, which currently serves the market economy, the savagery of financial markets, quick profit, and the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few? Or is the knowledge we produce employed in the service of sustainable human development, elevating the quality of human life, preserving social security, and developing psychological, social, and cultural capital, which constitute the actual future guarantees?

A final necessary question: Do our universities, in what they produce and market of knowledge, truly perform the main function of empowerment and building cognitive competence, which alone guarantees our nations' standing on the global stage and ensures our rising generations' right to their share of opportunities and equips them with the requisites for dealing with escalating challenges? Or do we not exceed distributing knowledge goods that barely meet

basic needs, if they do not turn into mere passes to the certificate, and therefrom to the job – which takes on the character of claiming a right to spoils more than that of productive, developmental capability? Are we truly preparing future cadres, which is one of the most prominent functions of higher education? Do we provide all the requisites for preparing cadres and leaders in our education, or do we not exceed providing fragmented information and knowledge that does not form a cognitive, psychological, behavioral, and cultural system enabling the control and shaping of destiny? With this knowledge, are we developing a strong personality in all its dimensions, enjoying high-level psychological immunity capable of effectively confronting contemporary challenges, or are we pushing the student to accumulate information barely suitable for exams?

Therefore, based on these major questions that must be raised to salvage the project of improving the quality of university life and elevating it to its actual levels, which constitute the goals of higher education, we will take a sharply critical stance towards this knowledge provided by our university institutions in their actual reality. We can say that its results do not provide coherent knowledge that enables the student to build cognitive systems capable of developing their capacities in all dimensions. It is knowledge that pushes the student towards a near-raw memorization of the materials presented to recall them in exams. The strongest evidence for what we say is the inability of the majority of students to perform selective scrutiny, critical engagement, or practical application skills when faced with analytical questions in an exam. They content themselves with listing information in its raw form, in a kind of mechanical recitation of the information itself.



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At best, they are good at memorizing the information contained in the material.

This might be the most alarming aspect of this cognitive farce: its disconnection from reality and its actual issues. The reality of knowledge in our universities – in production and consumption – has reached a point that requires a courageous self-reflection, questioning, and contemplation of remedial measures. Otherwise, the reality of knowledge in the higher education adopted by our university institutions is in an extremely difficult, if not critical, situation, unless radical transformations are swiftly undertaken regarding the quality of practices in consuming, producing, and ensuring the quality of knowledge, especially in light of current and future global challenges.

3. University Life Quality: From Cognitive Accumulation to Developing the Student's Psychological Capital

Developing the university student's psychological capital is a critical process for effectively dealing with knowledge – its consumption, operation, and reproduction. This is predicated on the understanding that the student's personality is both the agent in the cognitive process and its ultimate target. The goal is to build a life quality fortified against adversities by enhancing the growth of the student's psychological capital. It is a profound error to steer students solely towards academic success and obtaining degrees; it has become imperative to shift the perspective towards preparing them for success in life.

The focus of higher education in our university institutions is predominantly on academic achievement and excellence, rarely addressing the evaluation of life success

skills development. Our education system concentrates almost exclusively on cognitive development—despite its aforementioned impediments—at the expense of balanced growth. This imbalance has reached a degree where the student becomes an alienated individual, engrossed in an educational process accompanied by endless examinations, which stunts the development of their personality affectively, morally, culturally, and physically. Consequently, the student is isolated from life, as all efforts are channeled into a single (cognitive) dimension, disconnected from the integrity of the personality, as if the student were merely a mind that memorizes and comprehends.

It is widely recognized that this approach does not guarantee success in life—professionally, emotionally, or socially. Therefore, the urgently needed alternative perspective for enhancing the quality of life within the university milieu is simply to abandon the obsession with hollow, indoctrinating knowledge transfer aimed solely at obtaining a certificate. Instead, attention must turn to discovering the strengths in students' potentials, thereby providing them with opportunities for success in public life. This entails giving due importance to developing the university student's psychological capital.

According to American psychologist Fred Luthans, psychological capital represents a fundamental, multi-dimensional construct. It signifies an individual's positive appraisal of their own circumstances, associated with a developable psychological energy characterized by confidence and self-efficacy to expend the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks, make distinctive positive contributions towards achieving success in the present and



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future, and persevere towards goals. When necessary, it also involves the ability to redirect pathways to goals to achieve success, as well as the capacity to bounce back from adversity (Luthans, 2017).

An individual with high psychological capital is characterized by an ability to control their future and is always prepared to take responsibility for their actions, increasing their chances of becoming more successful in life (Chaudhary & Narad, 2022). Consequently, this concept is among the most important characteristics an individual can possess, as it leads to behavioral quality, culminating in a sense of satisfaction, and aids in success, excellence, and overcoming psychological and social pressures. American researcher Dina V. Krasikova (2015) notes that psychological capital comprises four main dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

Based on this, the most significant contribution the university institution can make through its educational policy for the student is to assist them in orienting towards a field that best aligns with their personal capabilities, wherein they can be happy and successful. This stems from viewing academic engagement as an outcome of successful academic integration within the university. Academic engagement is a fundamental factor in student success and better performance, manifested through several indicators such as students enjoying their studies, their positive attitudes towards studying, and the amount of time and effort they devote to their studies (Horstmanshof & Zimitat, 2007, p. 705).

The term "positive academic engagement" refers to the amount of psychological and physical energy a student

invests to achieve academic knowledge and experience. It encompasses the energy the student expends in studying, spending time on learning, their participation in university and classroom/extra-curricular activities, and their interaction with faculty members and peers (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013).

Thus, the concept of positive academic engagement is one of the most prominent indicators of a high level of psychological capital in the university student, enabling them to be happy and successful. This is a call for universities to develop life and success skills, chief among them being the "development of psychological capital," which constitutes a major sector of students' mental health in the university environment.

Therefore, we anticipate that future university curricula will include equipping students with the core human competencies encompassed by Psychological Capital (PsyCap), which consists of the following components:

- Self-Insight: Awareness and knowledge of one's own affective states in various life situations, which helps in self-guidance towards better decisions.
- Emotional Regulation: The ability to manage emotions, deal with psychological pressures, and acquire psychological resilience against life's adversities.
- Self-Motivation: The ability for self-motivation and reinforcing positive affective states and attitudes in life, serving the goals of building one's life project and its requirements.
- Empathy: Understanding others, the ability to empathize with them, and apprehend their



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emotional experiences, forming the basis for genuine human communication.

These skills, which reflect a good level of mental health, can be learned just as various knowledge is acquired through course content. Consequently, the paths of academic education and psychological capital development should be integrated in the future. Higher education systems can establish programs to promote mental health in university settings. We are facing a paradigm shift: from focusing on cognitive accumulation to caring for the development of the student's personality through nurturing their psychological capital, with all its psychosocial, existential, and physical skills. This is the new model advocated by mental health, replacing the old model that ignored holistic formation within the university system for students—a model that operated under the illusion of creating a cognitive machine that accumulates knowledge while lacking a balanced personality, psychologically and socially, with strong fortitude and immunity against external life challenges.

4. Project for the Establishment of University Psychological Support Centers (CAPU) as a positive step towards promoting mental health and improving the quality of life for students in the university setting:

The quality of life for university students has become one of the most important current strategic priorities for major universities worldwide. This is due to the significance of the university environment as a vital life space for the student, aimed at enhancing the psychological, social, and physical conditions within the university institution. The goal is to

ensure a level of satisfaction, a sense of fulfillment of educational and learning needs, self-esteem, institutional support, and a high degree of psychological and socio-psychological security and balance. All these are considered central indicators for measuring what we mean by the variable "quality of student life." This concept is no longer confined solely to the educational and learning process but is linked to the psychological, sociological, ecological, and institutional spheres – essentially, an interaction between the subjective and the objective.

Consequently, measuring the quality of student life depends on the student's sense of security, satisfaction, happiness, and the achievement of growth and balance in all these areas. On this basis, quality is highly dependent on the level of mental and physical health of the university student from the outset. This refers to the ability of the personality elements to provide an individual, subjective response to the stimuli and conditions of university learning, the student's adaptation to the variables of university life, and their assimilation of its requirements. This constitutes the subjective dimension of student quality of life.

On the other hand, quality of life also depends on the suitability of the institution as the field of interaction in all its legal, sociological, and pedagogical dimensions. This suitability facilitates cognitive assimilation and the achievement of success, excellence, distinction, and educational satisfaction, which are components of student quality of life in its objective dimension.

Hence, the question of compatibility between the two dimensions (subjective and objective) is the greatest challenge, raising numerous issues and problems within the university environment. This, in turn, positively or



negatively impacts the student's personality. Additionally, university life, as the interactive vital sphere for the student, is changing within the forces of local and global social change—forces that are among the most contradictory and conflicting. These forces can cause the emergence of psychological problems of varying complexity and severity, such as addictions, violence in its various forms, apathy and withdrawal, deterioration in performance and effectiveness, disorders and illnesses, sexual deviance, and other issues.

All of this impacts the university institution structurally and functionally, and the disruption affects the entire university community, including the teaching faculty and administrative staff. Furthermore, students face familial pressures and an uncertain future. Under all these pressures, the student may appear unable to comprehend their position in life within a globalized cultural context, struggling to keep pace with the rapid changes and surprises of life. Consequently, the level of their university quality of life declines into dissatisfaction, feelings of distress, lack of harmony, doubt, and fear of the unknown. This, in turn, leads to a decline in their academic achievement.

In light of this issue, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research aims to establish and generalize University Psychological Support Centers across all pedagogical institutions nationwide. This initiative focuses on addressing the reality of the university student's quality of life in its psychological, physical, and social dimensions within the institutional living space in all its facets. This is based on correspondence received from the Directorate for the Improvement of Student Life and University Activities, under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific

Research, concerning the necessity of psychological support for the university community through the establishment of University Psychological Support Centers (CAPU) at pedagogical institutions that have a Psychology department, as outlined in the following correspondence:

- Correspondence No. 391 dated March 13, 2019.
- Correspondence No. 72 dated May 5, 2019.
- Correspondence No. 80 dated June 13, 2019.
- Correspondence No. 543 dated September 22, 2020.
- Correspondence No. 1110 dated October 5, 2020.
- Correspondence No. 31 dated January 15, 2025.

This is because diagnosing the problems of university youth and studying their needs transcends any sectoral approach confined to a single specialty. There is an urgent necessity for a holistic perspective in dealing with this complex and vitally important dossier. Similarly, the intervention must be comprehensive in addressing the issues of this important group. The ramifications of contemporary social change and the resulting serious repercussions on the psychological health of university youth require personal resilience and immunity more than ever before. The pressures of reality, the demands of university life with its diverse challenges on various fronts, and the consequent disruption to daily and family routines, pedagogical problems, learning difficulties, addictions, and the accompanying existential void all represent unprecedented pressures on the university student's life. This necessitates high psychological mobilization and constant preparedness, imposes varying degrees of stress and psychological exhaustion, and consequently requires a high degree of psychological immunity, adaptability, problem-solving skills, and the ability to handle emergency



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situations. The contexts of the current reality and life in general, whether within the university sphere or beyond, will only provide security, safety, and psychological balance for those human elements who possess a high level of psychological health. University life is not founded solely on elitism and cognitive competence but also, and simultaneously, on strength and elitism in terms of psychological resilience and the ability to fully utilize various capacities and functions (cognitively, socially, and emotionally). This goes far beyond merely the absence of illness or disorder.

Only through this can the university student manage their self and their life, both of which will require an advanced degree of initiative, openness, ability to achieve, make decisions, solve problems, deal with highly diverse and changing human and technical environments and worlds, and craft their personal standing. Hence, the vital importance of mental health programs for university students becomes clear. In this regard, it can be emphatically stated that if we do not act swiftly to prevent what exposes this group to disorder, our future is threatened at an ever-increasing pace. The rapid scientific progress inherent in the modern lifestyle leaves no room for negligence and slow deliberation, especially since investment in the university individual has become a top priority for developed countries, obliging their governments to care for it, as we see them mobilizing all efforts and resources to work on removing the negative effects and repercussions their people face due to increasing pressures and complex civilizational requirements placed upon them, which expose them to disorders. It is erroneous to claim that the psychological

problems faced by university youth are not prevalent in our universities; this claim is refuted by the fact that there are no statistics in Algeria that reveal this matter. Otherwise, psychological crises among university youth are indeed widespread and are worsening in severity and danger.

Many studies indicate that some university students are susceptible to facing numerous difficulties and psychological disorders as a result of the situations they encounter while striving to adapt to the demands of their university lives. Therefore, establishing this psychological center at our university aims to attempt to diagnose the psychological problems that impede the university student's life path throughout their academic journey, in order to produce positive outcomes that benefit both the student and the university.

Within this framework, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, driven by its keenness to establish such important centers, has initiated efforts to monitor the various psychological problems students face in the university environment and their diverse effects on their quality of life, and subsequently to provide the necessary psychological services capable of alleviating these problems. Since we lack clear strategies for adequately addressing the issues of this group in our university institutions, as is the case in developed countries, it is imperative to work on providing such strategies and plans to confront and overcome these problems affecting our university students in their psychological and mental health, and their social, economic, political, ethical, and spiritual conditions, which we are overlooking. There is no future for a nation whose crisis lies in its elite youth. Accordingly, through the strategy of establishing such centers, the overseeing ministry aims to



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provide a space for enhancing student mental health, ultimately leading to an improved quality of life within university institutions.

In this context, the Algerian researcher Samia-Dalila Haddadi, in her capacity as the current supervisor of the first university psychological support center established in the Algerian university by Professor and psychological specialist Samia Ben Ouniche in 1988, states that the psychological support services provided at this center within the university environment of University of Algiers 2 since its establishment have had very significant benefits for students. She mentions in her statement: «The data we obtained through psychological practice at the University Psychological Support Center since 1990 indicate that the psychotherapy provided to students was beneficial in most cases. Following treatment, the student reaches an awareness of their inner world and the possibility of controlling what previously appeared to them as external pressure from which they escape by avoiding this environment, coupled with a feeling of acute anxiety due to their inability to overcome this conflict between their desire for success and the psychological forces preventing its achievement. We see them gradually abandoning the position of victimhood to adopt active stances that help them invest in the relationship and, simultaneously, in their studies. Often, liberation from these psychological complexes leads to a reformulation of the student's relationship with study, framing it within a mold of love for knowledge and deriving pleasure from it; here, the relationship between the psyche and the mind is established.» (Haddadi 2022, p. 23-24)

And indeed, we endorse what researcher "Samia - Haddadi Dalila" states, in light of what modern research in the neurosciences has proven about the brain: that there is an integration between thought and emotion, which provides the actual capacity to deal with life's issues and confront them with the required effectiveness. For the university student, they cannot succeed in their studies by attaining a high cognitive level unless they overcome their psychological disorders. Only then do their cognitive powers activate and their mental performance rise. This is the new model advocated by university mental health, as opposed to the old model which ignored and negated the psychological aspect in favor of pure cognitive attainment, in a kind of illusion of reaching a cognitive machine that acquires knowledge with excellence in a state of psychological imbalance.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we assert that there is an urgent need to change the perspective towards our university system by adopting a new and serious strategy in its dealings with its human capital, represented by its students. It has become necessary to improve the quality of student life in the university environment and enhance their developmental psychological health, which is ultimately the product of a full quality of life that allows students to **be** and to **become**. This starts by initiating an educational project that can no longer usefully remain confined to cognitive instruction alone; rather, it must attend to the student's



personality in all its dimensions and their intrinsic value as a future entity.

Consequently, the fundamental issue is: how does the university system deal with the student as a *future entity project*, and to what extent does it allow them the opportunity *to be* and *to become*? As for policies of cognitive instruction and entrenching a culture of academic attainment crowned merely by awarding certificates, these are far from meeting the students' needs and from providing the requirements for development, which brings us back again to the square of psychological health in its integrated components. Thus, the transformation is achieved from knowledge accumulation and grade numbers to the project of crafting a *quality of life*, of which knowledge is but one dimension. Preparing for the future, which places developmental psychological health at the heart of its priorities, necessitates building the student's cognitive competence, entrenching a culture of achievement and productive effort, and constructing the image of a productive, effective, proactive, self-initiating identity that is open to life's rapid changes and challenges. It also necessitates instilling a spirit of responsibility and duty, building a steadfast belonging to a solid national cultural identity, and unleashing creative energies and universal participation in shaping destiny through global cultural communication.

Therefore, the university environment can indeed be transformed into an important space for development, and for cognitive and existential enrichment, thereby enhancing psychological health and raising the level of quality of university life, instead of monotony, boredom, and a sense

of constricted being. Students today face increasing challenges, whether on the academic, psychological, social, or existential levels, which highlights the importance of providing mental health services within universities to meet the diverse needs of students and provide them with the necessary support to face these challenges.

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