The Influence of the PERMA Model on EMP Students' English Speaking Performance

Tra-My Thi Ly [ID]
Can Tho University
Can Tho University of Medicine and Pharmacy
Can Tho City, Vietnam

Huan Buu Nguyen [ID]
Can Tho University
Can Tho City, Vietnam

Abstract. Despite gaining great concerns in English language teaching (ELT), students' wellbeing and the role of the Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in life and Accomplishment (PERMA) model has not been thoroughly explored in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and especially English for Medical Purposes (EMP). In Vietnam, the PERMA model has also been understudied, especially in ELT. These gaps trigger this study to examine the increased importance of student wellbeing in academic settings, with a particular focus on English learning and speaking performance. Conducted at a university of Medicine and Pharmacy in the Mekong Delta, the mixed-methods research involved 675 students who completed a questionnaire via Google Forms and five volunteers who attended face-to-face interviews to provide triangulated data. The sampling technique and data analysis methods used in the study included the convenience sampling technique, the Descriptive analysis of the SPSS version 22, and the thematic analysis. The results show that the PERMA model has a moderate to high impact on EMP students' speaking performance. The aspects of the PERMA model were ranked in order of influence as follows: Accomplishment, Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, and Meaning in life. Based on these findings, it is recommended that EMP lecturers and ELT teachers integrate this model into their teaching methods for English speaking. These findings will inform the development of PERMA-based learning activities in future EMP English speaking lessons, supporting a larger ongoing project. Recommendations for further studies and related stakeholders were also made.

Keywords: wellbeing; PERMA model; English for Medical Purposes; speaking performance

1. Introduction

Recently, the term 'wellbeing' has emerged as a research trend in the academic world. This trend is likely because wellbeing plays a crucial role in achieving a sustainable and high quality life and promoting lifelong learning (Aulia et al., 2020). Advocates for integrating wellbeing into education, such as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Seligman (2002), Seligman et al. (2009), and Seligman (2011) have delineated the construct of wellbeing into five dimensions to enhance its accessibility and measurability. These dimensions include Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in life, and Accomplishment. Collectively, the initial letters of these mentions form the widely recognized PERMA model, familiar to many today.

On the basis of the PERMA model, it is argued that the intervention of the model in educational contexts will help to foster students' wellbeing and thus contribute to enhancing their learning performance at school. In ELT for example, Cheng and Chen (2021) claim that there is a connection between the PERMA model and foreign language learning and that the PERMA model has a significant influence on the development of the participants' listening and speaking competencies. Likewise, Dong (2021) confirms that there is a structural relationship between the PERMA model, interest, and confidence, and proves the beneficial effects of the PERMA model on students' communicative competence. Despite gaining great concerns in ELT, the role of the PERMA model has not been thoroughly explored in ESP and especially EMP.

Regarding the context of Vietnam, until now, there have been several studies on students' wellbeing, such as Dinh and Le's (2022) exploration of factors influencing students' wellbeing in an architecture university and Nguyen's (2021) investigation of factors influencing students' financial wellbeing. On the other hand, studies related to the PERMA model in ELT, especially in EMP could hardly be found here. In other words, the role of the PERMA model has not been investigated adequately in the Vietnamese ELT or EMP context, triggering greater attention from local researchers and educators.

Regarding ELT and EMP, this study attempts to focus on students' English speaking performance rather than other language skills. This is because learning English speaking is usually a primary purpose when learning a new language (Shintasiwi & Anwar, 2021). Apart from that, good English speaking performance is hard to attain (Jaya et al., 2022) and is often interfered with by many factors. For example, internal factors e.g. students' anxiety, linguistic deficiency, and personality hold students back from their efforts to speak English (Irawan et al., 2021; Jaya et al., 2022; Ly et al., 2023; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018; Shintasiwi & Anwar, 2021; Tong, 2022). Aside from that external factors i.e. topics, environments, friends and teachers affect students badly when they speak English (Jaya et al., 2022; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018; Tong, 2022).

From this point, some conclusions can be drawn. First, the PERMA model influences English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English speaking (Cheng & Chen,

2021; Dong, 2021). Next, factors influencing students' English speaking in ELT have been identified. However, the question arises as to whether a relationship exists between the PERMA model and EMP students' English speaking performance. Moreover, if such a relationship is present, it is important to examine how each aspect of the PERMA model influences EMP students' speaking abilities. This knowledge has not been explored in prior research, creating an opportunity for the present study.

Three gaps have emerged from the discussion that need to be addressed. First, the role of the PERMA model in ELT, particularly in EMP, has not been examined sufficiently. Moreover, the model has received limited attention in the Vietnamese context, especially EMP. Additionally, the relationship between the PERMA model and EMP students' English speaking performance remains unclear. These gaps lay the groundwork for the implementation of this study.

This study, as part of a larger project, seeks to explore how the PERMA model influences EMP students' English speaking. If such influence exists, the study aims to examine how each aspect of the PERMA model impacts EMP students' speaking performance. The findings from this study serve two purposes. First, they contribute to the construction of PERMA-based lessons which will be used in the later stage of the project. Second, it triggers the attention from English language teachers, particularly those focused on speaking skills, to help students develop their speaking skills in both effective and enjoyable ways. To achieve these goals, a mixed-methods approach was employed. The data collected through a questionnaire and interview with EMP students were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to generate the findings from the study.

2. Literature Review
2.1 The PERMA model
Proposed by Seligman et al. (2009), the model covers five dimensions that contribute to wellbeing including Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in Life, and Accomplishment.

2.1.1 *Positive emotion*
According to Seligman (2011), positive emotion is the first element that shapes the construct of well-being. Specifically, hedonic emotions e.g. love, contentment, pleasure, etc. all contribute to constructing a state of positivism that helps to achieve a happy life and reduce biases. Happiness and life satisfaction are what human beings long to seek for their entire lives. Therefore, positive emotions should be cultivated in education to help student learning thrive.

2.2.2 *Engagement*
What human beings seek to ensure an "engaged life" may rest upon the so-called 'state of flow' (Seligman, 2011). Flow is a major part of an engaged life which includes a loss of self-consciousness on time stopping people from being 'one with the music' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Seligman, 2011). Once the flow of engagement occurs,

people can exploit their highest strengths and talents to cope with challenges hindering their way.

2.2.3 *Relationship*
Seligman (2011) attaches the term 'Other people' to describe the meaning of positive relationships. This is to say that the connection that people have with other people around do have an important impact on their pursuit of positive emotions, engagement, meaning, and accomplishment.

2.2.4 *Meaning in life*
This dimension is especially vital because it gives people a purpose to live on. Meaning is increased when people feel their connections to others in the community (Seligman et al., 2009). In this case, Meaning in life has a strong bond to Relationship when both imply the importance of the connection between people.

2.2.5 *Accomplishment*
Accomplishment is a mediation to reach achievement, mastery, or competence (Cheng & Chen, 2021). Throughout the process of working toward and reaching their goals, and developing self-engagement, students achieve 'a sense of pride', contributing to their learning well-being and success (Seligman, 2011).

The relationship between the PERMA model and English learning has been established by researchers such as Cheng and Chen (2021) and Dong (2021). These authors believe that the PERMA model has an impact not only on EFL students' speaking and listening skills but on their interest, and confidence also. Despite this knowledge, little has been known about how each aspect of the PERMA model influences students' English speaking, inspiring further research into this gap.

2.2 English for Medical Purposes
Maher (1986) defines the term 'English for Medical Purposes' as the teaching of English to medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers. EMP is tailored to address the specific English language needs of medical students, enabling them to read medical English books, interact with medical professionals during their studies, and most importantly, attend and present at international medical conferences (Salager-Meyer, 2014).

Salager-Meyer (2014) argues that one of the most important skills to be cultivated in EMP courses is speaking skill. Furthermore, the researcher outlines three important values that such instruction should focus on. First of all, the mission of the spoken EMP should focus on helping medical students and health professionals to be able to communicate in their academic cultures where they need to exchange information or cultivate medical knowledge with their institutions, instructors, peers, or colleagues. The second purpose of these spoken EMP courses should be laid to familiarize EMP students with the language of medical conference presentations where they can not only strengthen their understanding of medical problems shared in the conference

but deliver presentations themselves also. The last concern in this respect implies doctor-nurse-patient communications in which the doctors are expected to diagnose a patient's health problem, enquire about their patient's social or psychological issues, or even check their patient's understanding.

2.3 Factors Influencing Students' English Speaking Performance
As the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in that language in both spoken or written forms, speaking performance is one of the major aspects that both language teachers and learners should pay more attention to (Nguyen, 2020). However, students' English-speaking performance is governed by a lot of factors. For example, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) explore 104 EFL students' perceptions about the role of classroom participation in speaking classes and then conclude that EFL students' participation in their classroom activities matters a lot in helping them achieve a high level of speaking performance. Moreover, Riasati (2018) claims that students' willingness to communicate plays a key role in improving their speaking competence.

Furthermore, Riasati and Rahimi (2018) investigate factors that promote EFL students' willingness to speak English. The authors asked 166 EFL students to answer a questionnaire about their wish to communicate in English under several aspects and interviewed seven of them to provide more insightful information regarding their choice of answers in the questionnaire. The result indicates that the factors that can engage students to speak English fall into two categories namely environmental (situational) factors and individual factors. This claim is confirmed by Ly et al. (2023), who further explain how linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and psychological problems influence students' English speaking considerably.

Mehregan and Seresht (2014) study ESP teachers' and learners' views on the difficulties that they have in speaking classes. The results indicate that a variety of factors influence ESP students' English speaking. They account for the topics, linguistic knowledge, peer influence, personality, and environment.

Venkateswara and Divya (2021) share Mehregan and Seresht's (2014) viewpoints and take a further step in elaborating measures to address factors that influence ESP (English for Specific Purposes) students' English speaking. Accordingly, language instructors when designing speaking activities should enhance ESP students' awareness of speech functions e.g. interaction, transaction, and performance so that students can apply them appropriately in real-life situations. Aside from that, ESP students are more willing to speak when they feel secure and comfortable. To facilitate this emotion, language instructors should create a supportive and cooperative environment and deliver positive feedback to their students. Moreover, Venkateswara and Divya (2021) argue that speech events such as monologues, conference presentations, seminar talks, dialogues, poster presentations, oral examinations, and the like provide ESP students with opportunities to experience the

target language in different contexts, giving them the sense of the language learned and thus making their language learning meaningful. As a result, these academic speech events should be integrated into ESP speaking practice in the classroom.

The review of literature indicates various factors influencing students' English speaking performance, whether they are EFL or ESP students. These factors include student participation in classroom activities, willingness to communicate affected by English language learning environment and anxiety, and self-perceived speaking ability. Moreover, to encourage students' willingness to speak English, it is significant to foster positive emotions, build strong relationships among instructors, students, and peers, and most importantly incorporate teaching contents or tasks that are meaningful and applicable to students' field of study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Question
How does the PERMA model influence EMP students' English speaking performance?

3.2 Design
This study applied a mixed-methods approach to get data for analysis. Specifically, quantitative data from a questionnaire and qualitative data from interviews were triangulated to shed light on the research question.

3.3 Participants
First-year students of a university of Medicine and Pharmacy in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam who completed their first EMP course were recruited for the study. In particular, among 1700 freshmen entering the university, the study applied the formulae for a known population size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to find the ideal sample.

$$n = Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 \frac{p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

- X2=table value of Chi-Square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (X2=3.841 if d.f=.05).
- N = the population size.
- P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).
- d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

Given a total of 1700 students, the expected sample size was 313 students. Nevertheless, the study obtained responses from 675 students, suggesting that the results represent the targeted population.

3.4 Instruments

3.4.1 *Questionnaire*

A 40-item questionnaire was used to examine how each dimension of the PERMA model affects EMP students' speaking performance. The items were developed by combining Butler and Kern's (2016) PERMA-Profiler, which manifests each dimension of the PERMA model, with Riasati and Rahimi's (2018) rating scales on situational and individual factors influencing the willingness to speak English in foreign language classrooms, thereby making it more relevant to the context of ESP learning. Specifically, 19 items except for the Health cluster in Butler and Kern's (2016) PERMA-Profiler were rearranged according to the order of Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in life, and Accomplishment. The keywords 'when I speak English' were added to clarify some items. Then, the other 21 items from Riasati and Rahimi's (2018) were adapted and added to the five clusters-Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in life, and Accomplishment. Eventually, the questionnaire contained 40 items and then was sent to two other researchers to validate before the final version was released.

The questionnaire employed a 7-point Likert scale to obtain the participants' responses. Table 1 explains the meaning of each scale.

Table 1: Explanation of the scores used in the questionnaire

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The questionnaire was piloted to 50 students and necessary modifications were again made before it was officially launched to participants via Google Forms. Then, a reliability test was run using the SPSS version 22 to verify the reliability of the questionnaire. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2: Reliability test result of the questionnaire

Section	Dimension	Number of items	Question number	Cronbach's alpha
	Overall	40	1-40	.994
PERMA	Positive emotion	8	1-8	.971
	Engagement	8	9-16	.968
	Relationship	8	17-24	.979
	Meaning in life	8	15-32	.977
	Accomplishment	8	33-40	.985

According to Kline (2000), Cronbach's alpha above .60 is acceptable, above .70 is good, and above .90 is excellent for confirmatory purposes. In this study, the overall Cronbach's alpha was .994, with specific values of .971 for Positive emotion, .968 for Engagement, .979 for Relationship, .977 for Meaning in life, and .985 for

Accomplishment. This means that the items composed in the questionnaire were of great reliability.

3.4.2 *Interview*
To obtain more interesting data to explain the figures in the questionnaire, interviews were employed. To do this, the researcher applied a convenience sampling technique where she invited students in her class to join a face-to-face interview with her after they completed the questionnaire. Eventually, five students agreed to join and provide their answers in the interviews.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures
Initially, the questionnaire was distributed to students through Google Forms, with a one-week period allocated for responses. After completing the questionnaire, students were invited to do face-to-face interviews with the researcher. Five students participated in these follow-up interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis
Before the analytical process, the quantitative data were cleaned, organized, and stripped of personal information. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS's Descriptive Statistics, which provided measures of central tendency and dispersion, including mean, min, max, and standard deviation. Simultaneously, the qualitative data were coded according to the overarching theme of how the PERMA model influenced students' English speaking performance. This coding was further divided into subthemes, namely Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning in life, and Accomplishment. Students' identities were anonymized with labels such as Student 1, Student 2, and the like. . Thematic analysis was then utilized to interpret the qualitative data from the interviews. The triangulation of the two types of data helped answer the research question and ensured the reliability of the findings.

4. Results
4.1 Questionnaire Results
This section presents the results of the impact of each PERMA dimension on students' English speaking performance. Table 3 shows the results.

Although all five aspects of the PERMA model influence EMP students' English speaking performance, the overall impact was relatively low to average, with scores between 4.9 and 5.2. Accomplishment had the greatest influence, with an average score of 5.191 (Min=1, Max=7). Positive emotion was the second most influential, with an average score of 5.145 (Min=1, Max=7). Engagement followed, with an average score of 5.042 (Min=1, Max=7). Meaning in life ranked next, with an average score of 5.022. Relationship had the least influence, with an average score of 4.917 (Min=1, Max=7). The next section will detail the impact of each dimension.

Table 3: The impacts of each PERMA dimension on EMP students' speaking performance

N	Item	Min	Max	Positive emotion	Engagement	Relationship	Meaning in life	Accomplishment
675	1	1.0	7.0	4.841	5.240	4.759	5.068	5.200
675	2	1.0	7.0	5.041	4.160	4.914	5.004	5.181
675	3	1.0	7.0	5.218	5.178	4.716	5.212	5.302
675	4	1.0	7.0	5.043	5.169	4.895	5.274	5.281
675	5	1.0	7.0	5.279	5.187	5.086	5.037	5.049
675	6	1.0	7.0	5.277	5.124	4.923	4.960	5.096
675	7	1.0	7.0	5.233	5.135	4.966	5.009	5.191
675	8	1.0	7.0	5.225	5.142	5.079	4.615	5.227
	Average scores			5.145	5.042	4.917	5.022	5.191

4.1.1 *Impacts of Accomplishment*
Table 4 shows the extent of the influence that each item in Accomplishment had on EMP students' speaking performance.

Table 4: Impacts of Accomplishment on EMP students' speaking performance

I'd like to speak in English…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
when I have enough knowledge about the task	675	1.0	7.0	5.302	1.7994
when I have enough vocabulary for the task	675	1.0	7.0	5.281	1.8403
when I feel I have achieved my goal of speaking in English	675	1.0	7.0	5.227	1.8522
when I can achieve fluency in speaking English	675	1.0	7.0	5.200	1.8553
when I feel I have been doing what really interests me	675	1.0	7.0	5.191	1.8167
when I have correct pronunciation	675	1.0	7.0	5.181	1.8553
when I feel that my ideas reflect what I really want to convey	675	1.0	7.0	5.096	1.7570
when I feel I can successfully complete difficult tasks	675	1.0	7.0	5.049	1.7674

Table 4 shows that background and vocabulary knowledge were the most critical factors, with mean scores of 5.302, and 5.281, respectively. While pronunciation was a factor, its influence was less significant compared to the top two. Additionally, key factors included students' ability to achieve their goals, speak English fluently, and participate in engaging activities. Students also agreed to a certain extent that their likelihood of speaking English increased when they could clearly express their ideas and complete difficult tasks. Overall, the data suggest that Accomplishment had an average to above-average impact (*M*=5.0–5.3) on EMP students' speaking performance, with all items in this category scoring at least 5.

4.1.2 *Impacts of Positive emotion*
Table 5 presents how Positive emotion influenced EMP students when they spoke English.

Table 5: Impacts of Positive emotion on EMP students' speaking performance

I'd like to speak in English…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
when I believe in myself	675	1.0	7.0	5.279	1.8479
when I have figured out ways to overcome my problems in speaking English	675	1.0	7.0	5.277	1.8284
when I have figured out ways to overcome stress in speaking English	675	1.0	7.0	5.233	1.8257
when I feel confident that I can do things well	675	1.0	7.0	5.225	1.8584
when I have prepared well in advance	675	1.0	7.0	5.218	1.8380
when I see that I do a good job after the first time speaking English	675	1.0	7.0	5.043	1.7709
when I feel positive about myself	675	1.0	7.0	5.041	1.8258
when I feel safe and secure	675	1.0	7.0	4.841	1.8124

Positive emotion was the second most common factor in the PERMA model influencing EMP students' speaking performance. Students were most willing to speak English when they held strong belief in themselves, felt confident, knew how to manage stress while speaking, and could prepare in advance. Less impactful factors included other positive emotions, such as feeling safe and secure, and the enjoyment of successfully completing tasks in previous attempts.

4.1.3 Impacts of Engagement
Engagement ranked third place in the order of the extent of influence on EMP students' speaking performance. Table 6 illustrates the specific impact of this aspect.

Table 6: Impacts of Engagement on EMP students' speaking performance

I'd like to speak in English…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
when the task is within my ability	675	1.0	7.0	5.240	1.8493
when I have a choice over what I want to speak	675	1.0	7.0	5.187	1.8102
when I have understood the task thoroughly	675	1.0	7.0	5.178	1.7946
after I have practiced many times with my friends	675	1.0	7.0	5.169	1.8258
when I become absorbed in what I am doing to prepare for the speaking task	675	1.0	7.0	5.142	1.7829
when I fully enjoy the speaking task	675	1.0	7.0	5.135	1.7788
when I feel excited and interested in the speaking task	675	1.0	7.0	5.124	1.8057
when the task is beyond my ability	675	1.0	7.0	4.160	1.7004

According to the statistics, cognitive engagement influenced students the most. Specifically, students preferred the tasks to be appropriate to their present capacity (M=5.24) and few of them would like to cope with more difficult tasks (M=4.16). Other components of engagement i.e. choice, flow, behavioral, and emotional engagement almost shared a similar pattern of influence (M≥5.1).

4.1.4 *Impacts of Meaning in life*
Meaning in life held the fourth place in influencing students' English speaking. This is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Impacts of Meaning in life on EMP students' speaking performance

I'd like to speak in English…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
when I recognize the importance of speaking English in my future	675	1.0	7.0	5.274	1.8223
when I recognize the importance of speaking English in my study	675	1.0	7.0	5.212	1.7921
when I see that the task is meaningful to my study	675	1.0	7.0	5.068	1.8029
when my influence in the study of my friends has been positive	675	1.0	7.0	5.037	1.7601
when I help other classmates answer a question	675	1.0	7.0	5.009	1.7550
when I can help my partners learn to speak English	675	1.0	7.0	5.004	1.7647
when I feel alive and vital	675	1.0	7.0	4.960	1.7793
when I feel that my actions have a positive impact on my classmates.	675	1.0	7.0	4.615	1.7951

Meaning in life had an average impact on EMP students' English speaking performance (M=5.022), ranking fourth in the model. Among this aspect, it was found that factors related to students' own sakes were more meaningful to them. Meanwhile, factors about the influence of students on other friends had less meaning to their effort in speaking English.

4.1.5 *Impacts of Relationship*
Relationship ranked last on the list of factors that affected students' English speaking. Table 8 indicates the specific details.

Table 8: Impacts of Relationship on EMP students' speaking performance

I'd like to speak in English…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
when I receive my teacher's feedback	675	1.0	7.0	5.086	1.7092
when I feel connected with my teacher and my friends	675	1.0	7.0	5.079	1.7781
when I feel that my teacher and my friends care about me	675	1.0	7.0	4.966	1.7585
when I receive my friends' feedback	675	1.0	7.0	4.923	1.7226
when I'm encouraged by my teacher	675	1.0	7.0	4.914	1.7308
when my teacher compliments me	675	1.0	7.0	4.895	1.7421
when I'm encouraged by friends	675	1.0	7.0	4.759	1.7285
when my friends compliment me	675	1.0	7.0	4.716	1.7352

Ranging between 4.7 and 5.1, Relationship had less influence on students' English speaking than other aspects of the PERMA model. Moreover, teachers seem to have a more impact on students' English speaking than students' friends. Most

interestingly, being complimented either by teachers or friends may not affect students a lot when they speak English.

4.2 Interview Results

Five students agreed to participate in the face-to-face interviews. They all answered two questions relating to factors influencing their English speaking.

Table 9: Students' references to aspects of the PERMA model

Theme	Sub-themes	Acronyms	Times of mentioning
The influence of the PERMA model on students' English speaking English	Positive emotion	P	20
	Engagement	E	20
	Relationship	R	7
	Meaning in life	M	2
	Accomplishment	A	26

4.2.1 *Factors influence students when they speak English in their EMP class*
In this section, factors that influenced students when speaking English in their EMP class are discussed, with the relevant interview excerpts.

> *"I think I can't speak English well because I lack background knowledge [A], practice [E], vocabulary [A], and grammar [A]. I'm afraid of making mistakes [P, R]. I don't have the motivation to study English [E]. I don't participate in class activities sufficiently [E]. The change in the learning atmosphere from high school to university also influenced me [R]. I don't like learning EMP [E]. I just want to gain enough marks to pass the course [E]."* (Student 1, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

Various factors hindered Student 1 from speaking English. First of all, it was the lack of necessary knowledge. This accounted for background knowledge, knowledge of vocabulary, and grammar. This person also lacked the motivation to study and practice in class. This could result from the fact that this student did not like the EMP course, and this person's sole aim in this course was to gain enough marks to pass the course. Moreover, the shift that Student 1 experienced from the change of the learning environment from high school to university caused difficulty when s/he studied English. Finally, the fear of making mistakes when speaking English deteriorated his/her problems.

> *"I often feel shy and stressed [P]. I don't interact with foreigners much [E]. I spend too much time making money and therefore it shifts me away from my study as well as learning English [E]. I don't see the importance of English [M]. I'm scared of how people look at me [P]. I rely too much on the internet and play games a lot [E]. In high school, we did not learn English speaking in English lessons [E, R]."* (Student 2, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

The most striking factor that prevented this student from speaking English was emotions. Specifically, Student 2 was "shy and stressed" and "scared" of how other

people looked at him/her when s/he spoke English. This student did not recognize the importance of learning English. Consequently, s/he preferred earning money and playing games to studying English. Moreover, this student depended too much on the Internet when studying English, meaning that s/he did not construct an appropriate method to study English. Lastly, Student 2 also mentioned the differences that s/he experienced in learning English between high school and university. This student exemplified that at high school levels, teachers did not teach English speaking, contributing to his/her failure to speak English.

> *"I don't like to study English [E]. The teaching strategies are not appropriate for me [R]. My learning strategies are not good [E]. I am shy to speak in front of many people [P]. I did not study English soon and had no environment to practice [E, R]."* (Student 3, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

There were quite a few factors that affected this student's English speaking. The external reasons consisted of the teacher's teaching strategies and the lack of an environment for practicing the language. The internal factors included the fact that the student began learning English at a late time and did not have good learning strategies. His/Her being shy when talking in front of many people was mentioned as another barrier to his/her speaking English.

> *"I'm stressed about learning scores [P, E]. I don't want to fail the course [E]. I don't have enough vocabulary to speak [A]. That leads me to feel unconfident when speaking [P]. I'm affected by psychological factors [P]. I feel scared when speaking English in front of my class [P]. I don't speak English fluently [A]. I think my personality also affects me [P]. For example, I'm introverted and usually have difficulty sharing my ideas [P]."* (Student 4, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

The biggest problem that this student encountered was psychological factors. S/he felt scared, and unconfident when s/he had to speak English in front of many people. Moreover, being an introverted person s/he had difficulty sharing her ideas. Two other internal factors influencing his/her English speaking were his/her lack of vocabulary knowledge and his/her not being able to speak English fluently. Furthermore, scores had a great impact on him/her since s/he did not want to fail the course. In other words, the written exam which involved other knowledge rather than speaking performance was more important to him/her since it weighed much heavier than the oral exam. As a result, s/he would invest more in learning other knowledge of the course to pass the subject rather than in speaking English.

> *"I don't have enough vocabulary [A]. I don't have a social environment to practice speaking English [E, R]. I don't have motivation to study and speak English [E]. I have a fear of speaking incorrectly [P, R]. Studying English is time-consuming and I'm lazy [E]. I don't understand what they are saying, so I don't reply [A]. I feel shy [P], inactive [P], introverted [P]. Therefore, I don't like to communicate with other people [P, E]."* (Student 5, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

Similar to lots of previous sharings, this student confessed that s/he lacked vocabulary knowledge and an environment to practice the language. Therefore, it is likely that because of this, s/he did not understand when people spoke English and failed to interact with them. Moreover, s/he did not have motivation to study English. As a result of this, s/he thought learning English was time-consuming and s/he was lazy to study it. Aside from that, s/he was also affected by psychological factors such as feeling shy, inactive, and introverted.

The review of students' answers to the factors influencing their English speaking revealed that there were a number of shared issues that these students faced. The most striking factor accounted for psychological characteristics. For example, students often felt shy, unconfident, afraid of making mistakes, and afraid of speaking English in front of many people. In addition to this, they had low motivation to study English, and they just wanted to achieve enough marks to pass the course. As a result of this, they tended to focus on learning other knowledge involved in the written test which could secure their pass. Some of the interviewees admitted that they did not have either proper learning strategies or necessary knowledge to convey their English conversations successfully. Two other factors that the students also mentioned were the change in the learning environment between high school and higher education as well as the lack of a necessary environment for students to practice the language.

4.2.2 *Students' objectives when attending English speaking lessons in their EMP class*
This section presents the results on students' objectives when attending English speaking lessons in their EMP class, with the relevant interview excerpts.

> *"I can speak confidently [P] and fluently [A]. I can interact with foreigners [R, A], and attend and understand international conferences in my field [A, E]."* (Student 1, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

> *"I want to speak English fluently [A], learn a variety of vocabulary [A]. I can use English to communicate in daily situations as well as in medical contexts [A, E]."* (Student 2, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

> *"I can speak English fluently [A]. The listeners can understand what I mean [A, R]. I can use vocabulary appropriately in any situation [A]. I become more confident [P]. This will help me to overcome the fear of speaking English [A, P]. I can increase my vocabulary knowledge [A] so that I can read more medical books [E]. I can present in English [A, E] and interact with foreigners [A, E, R]."* (Student 3, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

> *"English supports my future work [M]. I want to speak English more fluently [A]. I can express my opinions clearly so that others can understand me [A, R]. I learn more vocabulary knowledge [A], have more chances to communicate with foreigners in real life [A, R]."* (Student 4, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

> *"I want to speak English more fluently [A]. I want to improve my grammar knowledge [A]. I want to speak more confidently [P]. I want to learn more vocabulary knowledge [A]. I don't have a fear of speaking in front of many people anymore [P]."* (Student 5, personal communication, September 6, 2023)

All students wanted to speak English fluently. Apart from that, they hoped to become more confident when speaking English (students (STS) 3 and 5). They would like to extend their vocabulary knowledge (STS 2, 3, 4, and 5) so that they can communicate successfully not only in daily life situations but also in medical contexts e.g. international conferences in the healthcare sciences. (STS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Most importantly, they could overcome the fear when speaking in front of many people. The combination of students' responses in the two interview questions indicates that they were influenced by many factors when they attempted to speak English in their EMP class. These include aspects of the PERMA model and the lack of the necessary environment to practice English.

Apparently, all aspects of the PERMA model influenced EMP students' English speaking. Among the five dimensions, Accomplishment was the most frequently mentioned. For example, students failed to communicate in English because they lacked the necessary knowledge accounting for background knowledge, knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Due to this insufficiency, students could not make themselves understood by others, understand others and hence cannot respond appropriately. For these reasons, students' intention when taking EMP speaking lessons was to remedy these weaknesses so that they could speak better and more fluently.

Secondly, Positive emotion impacted students' English speaking to the point that they were shy, terrified, and unconfident in speaking English. Consequently, students hoped to overcome these negative feelings so that they could speak English in a more confident way.

Engagement was mentioned in terms of motivation, learning strategies, and opportunities to practice the language. Students had low motivation, or in other words, love engagement level in learning English speaking. That is why they were lazy in studying and did not want to practice English speaking. What more is students did not try to build up good learning strategies to help them cope with the difficulty that they were encountering in learning English speaking. Lastly, the lack of opportunity to practice the language forms another obstacle to students' English

speaking. This lack includes both the less time to practice speaking English in class and the insufficient opportunities to interact with foreigners in their educational contexts.

The next dimension of the PERMA model to have an impact on students' English speaking was Relationship. Although students' description of this aspect was different from the word choice used in the Questionnaire, it implied students' relationship with different agents around them. First of all, some students said that they were afraid of making mistakes or being criticized by others when they spoke English. This was an example of the fear of losing one's face in front of other people including their teachers, friends, or even the foreigners who they were communicating with. Another example of the relationship affection was implied in the mentioning of the teacher's teaching strategies, which to some extent was considered inappropriate to reach all students. Finally, changing the learning atmosphere between high school and university was blamed as another barrier to students' English speaking. The learning environment may refer to different concepts. One of which could be the contact of the school with students, thus making up another domain of students' relationship with the surrounding world.

The last aspect arising from students' sharing was Meaning in life. Some students did not think that English was important to their study or even to their future work, resulting in the fact that they did not invest time and effort in learning the skill.

5. Discussion
The triangulation of the results of the questionnaire and interviews reveals that all aspects of the PERMA model influenced students when they spoke English. This is in good agreement with Cheng and Chen (2021) and Dong (2021). Interestingly, the study complemented the existing literature on the influence of the PERMA model. Specifically, it successfully characterized specific features of each PERMA dimension in English language learning and teaching. Furthermore, the study even specified the concrete level of affection of each dimension.

Accomplishment was noticed to be the most influential factor in students' English speaking. This is quite understandable because students often set specific goals when they study English. This will help them specify appropriate learning strategies to reach their learning purposes. Accomplishment acts as either a motivation for students to strive or an assessment tool for students' efforts. In respect of this study, apart from the description of Accomplishment in the questionnaire, the interview contributed more ideas on the types of achievements that students hoped to obtain. Specifically, it was the desire to be able to attend international conferences in their field and thus give English presentations in these cases. This finding confirms what Salayer-Meyer (2014) argued earlier about the mission of spoken EMP courses.

Another type of accomplishment that put pressure on students' English speaking was learning scores. According to the design of the EMP course evaluation, speaking

weighs less than other types of language skills. As a result of this, if students are weak at speaking, they can focus on studying other contents to compensate for the scores. This contributes to shifting students' attention from speaking to other more important knowledge in the course, leading to their poor performance in speaking. The finding of Accomplishment influence on students' English speaking provides essential information for the construction of PERMA-based speaking lessons in the latter stage of this project. It is significant that the lessons can address this aspect by taking students' learning objectives into consideration to help them fulfill their goals when learning English speaking. Last but not least, the manipulation of the lessons should be able to engage students in learning to speak English and thus overcome the deficits that they are facing.

Emotion is the second most influential factor in students' English speaking. For instance, negative factors contributed to hindering students from speaking English. Moreover, students were shy and stressed when speaking English. This became more deteriorated in introverted students. Furthermore, students experienced different types of fear i.e. fear of speaking English in front of other people or being criticized. Consequently, students failed to speak English successfully. This finding is in line with Ly et al. (2023) and Riasati and Rahimi (2018). These researchers have confirmed that psychological factors and fear of correctness in speaking endangered students' English speaking. However, the interesting point in students' sharing was that they would love to overcome these fears so that they could become more confident in speaking English fluently and correctly in front of a crowd. Then, it can be inferred that students could speak English better when they feel confident, safe, and secure.

At this point, two conclusions can be drawn. First, while negative emotions influenced students' English speaking seriously, positive emotions may play an important role in encouraging students to speak English better. Second, the PERMA-based lessons to be intervened in students' learning of English speaking should include measures that target the development of positive emotions e.g. making students believe in themselves, and feel encouraged and supported. These would help a lot in supporting students' effort of speaking English.

Low engagement was found to influence students' English speaking badly. This concurs with Mercer (2019). Initially, engagement was implied in the term "motivation". Specifically, students did not have good motivation to study English. This led to their laziness in studying, resulting in the fact that they neither tried to invest time in the subject nor built up good learning strategies. This is a manifestation of a low behavioral engagement in learning. Apart from that, students preferred tasks to be of their present competence rather than those that were beyond their capacity. What more is they solely aimed to pass the course and had no intention to upgrade their speaking skills. Obviously, students' cognitive engagement was quite low, contributing to worsening their English speaking performance.

In addition, students complained that they did not have enough opportunities to practice English, which contributed to their imperfect speaking performance. This finding is consistent with the results of studies by Cheng and Chen (2021) and Riasati and Rahimi (2018). From the lens of this study, however, this deficiency could be attributed to the design of the lesson tasks. Within the context of a course, the nature of the tasks determines the level of effort, engagement, and practice required from students to complete the tasks. Therefore, it is the responsibility of engaging tasks to respond to students' needs for language practice.

Apart from this, in mentioning their expectations, students looked forward to remedying their weaknesses and having more chances to practice the language when taking the English speaking course. One of their big objectives was to be able to get involved in diverse communicative situations ranging from their academic field to daily life. This is to confirm the influence of engagement on students' English speaking. Thus, the PERMA-based lessons must take students' expectations into account and offer activities that can cope with students' desires. Specifically, the lessons should be able to motivate students to study and provide opportunities for students to practice the language. Moreover, they should offer tasks that are not only appropriate to students' current proficiency but can foster students beyond their zone of proximal development also.

Relationship and Meaning in life affected students' English speaking to a lesser extent. This finding is found to be consistent with both the questionnaire and the interview. However, the contradiction between the results of these two instruments rests upon the order of each dimension's influence. Although in the questionnaire, Meaning in life had a higher score than Relationship (5.022 vs. 4.917), the result of the interview proved the opposite when Relationship was mentioned more than Meaning in life (4 vs. 2). This could be because the items that depicted Meaning in life used in this study were not strong enough to make a good distinction to students. Based on this evidence, it can be concluded that both Relationship and Meaning in life had a low affection on students' English speaking and their order of influence can be interchangeable.

Under the influence of Relationship, while compliments might not affect students much, criticism distressed students more. Students said that they were afraid of being criticized when they spoke English incorrectly. This value supports previous findings in the literature, especially those made by Ly (2023) and Riasati and Rahimi (2018). Moreover, teacher affection implied in their teaching strategies was referred to as a barrier to students' English speaking. Another influential factor regarding Relationship was the learning environment. The differences in the English learning environment between high school and university created a gap that students could not fill. One striking point in Relationship refers to the mentioning of the role of foreigners. As students expressed, they would love to be able to communicate with foreigners and thus keep in contact with them in not only medical contexts but also

in daily life. This was one of the motivations that urged them when they studied English speaking.

From this point of view, an integral definition of Relationship can be formed in the context of English learning. That is, Relationship in language learning refers to the connection between students and those who may get into contact with them during their study and practice. These people can range from their teachers, friends, and school supporting staff to foreign visitors. Based on this finding, the PERMA-based lessons should propose tasks and activities that nurture positive relationships among teachers, students, and their peers. Moreover, a harmonious learning environment should be created so that students can feel at ease during English speaking lessons, this will help to push students to speak. In addition to this, the way of delivering feedback should also be taken into consideration. To help students feel comfortable during feedback, teachers should elaborate on the differences between feedback and criticism, and teach students to give feedback on a constructive initiative rather than on judgment and criticism. Students should perceive that making mistakes when speaking English is a ubiquitous phenomenon and that mistake correction will help them develop better. One good way to do this is to make giving feedback a routine during students' speaking practice. The teachers can have students comment on each other's performance publicly during practice time. By doing this, students can learn from each other, familiarize themselves with accepting feedback, and learn how to give feedback properly. These points are to be included in the PERMA-based lessons.

In terms of Meaning in life, factors related to students' own benefits were found to be more prominent than other ideas. In the questionnaire, students believed that they would love to speak English when they recognized the importance of English learning to their study and future. This was confirmed in the interview when students admitted that they did not appreciate the role of English in their study or future work, resulting in their failure to speak English. To resolve this incorrect perception, students expected to make changes in their English study and make more effort to master the language when they took the EMP speaking class.

There are two key considerations for the designer of the PERMA-based lessons from this finding. Firstly, the lesson tasks should aid students in self-improvement, particularly in raising their awareness of learning English. Additionally, while students were primarily focused on their own benefits, the lessons should encompass a broader meaning. To address this, the tasks should connect students' concerns with their peers' learning and the wider societal trust in students. Encouraging students to recognize that by helping others succeed, they simultaneously enhance their own skills and receive rewarding outcomes. This will make their learning experience more meaningful and worthwhile.

6. Conclusion

This study has addressed the impact of the PERMA model on EMP students' English speaking, using a mixed-method approach with 675 respondents to the questionnaire and 05 interviewees at a university of Medicine and Pharmacy in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The results indicate that the model had a multifaceted influence on students' English speaking abilities. Moreover, the study identified the varying degrees of influence that each aspect of the model had on students' English speaking. Specifically, Accomplishment was the most influential factor, followed by Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, and Meaning in life. The detailed insights from students' experiences offer a comprehensive understanding of the affective impact of each aspect of the PERMA model, particularly highlighting the role of Relationship and providing evidence for the construction of PERMA-based English speaking lessons in the latter stage of the project. Two crucial implications were drawn from these findings. First, understanding how each aspect of the PERMA model influences students' English speaking must be considered in efforts to enhance these skills. Second, this knowledge is valuable for designing wellbeing-oriented English lessons and for dedicated teachers of English.

The findings from the current study indicate that the PERMA model plays a significant role in assisting students to study English, especially English speaking. Therefore, it is recommended that lecturers of English apply this model in designing their teaching strategies. This can contribute to enhancing the quality of their teaching and students' learning. It is also suggested that universities study and implement PERMA-based intervention programs to enhance their students' learning wellbeing which is important to students' durable learning. Based on this, further research can be done on the effects of these intervention programs on students' learning

Lastly, one limitation of the design of this study is its design. While the questionnaire involved 675 students to reply, only five students participated in the interviews, leading to a concern about the adequacy of the qualitative data for triangulating with the quantitative results. Therefore, it is recommended future studies should include a larger number of participants in both quantitative and qualitative phases.

7. Acknowledgments

8. References

Aulia, F., Hastjarjo, T. D., Setiyawati, D., & Patria, B. (2020). Student well-being: A systematic literature review. *Buletin Psikologi, 28*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.22146/buletinpsikologi.42979

Butler, J., & Kern, M. L. (2016). The PERMA-Profiler: A brief multidimensional measure of flourishing. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 6*(3), 1–48. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v6i3.526

Cheng, M., & Chen P. (2021). Applying PERMA to develop college students' English listening and speaking proficiency in China. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, *10*(4), 333–350. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2021.104.333.350

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 24(1), 93–94. https://doi..org/10.1080/00222216.1992.11969876

Dinh, T. T., & Le, T. P. (2022). Các nhân tố ảnh hưởng đến cảm nhận hạnh phúc của sinh viên: Nghiên cứu tại Trường Đại Học Kiến Trúc Đà Nẵng [Factors affecting students' well-being: Case study at Da Nang Architectural University]. *TNU Journal of Science and Technology*, 227(12), 34–44. https://doi.org/10.34238/tnu-jst.6230

Dong, M. J. (2021). *Applying positive psychology to EFL learning: An analysis of the effects of a PERMA program in English education in elementary school classrooms based on the structural relationships among PERMA, interest, confidence, and communication skills* [Doctoral dissertation]. Ewha Womans University.

Irawan, D., Susyla, D., Angraini, R., & Ananda, R. P. (2021). Students' speaking performances evaluation in English webinar series activity. *Literary Criticism, 08(01),* 22–29.

Jaya, H. P., Petrus, I., & Pitaloka, N. L. (2022). Speaking performance and problems faced by English major students at a university in South Sumatera. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, *8*(1), 105–112. https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v8i1.5603

Kline, P. (2000). *Handbook of psychological testing*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315812274

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Education and Psychological Measurement*. *30*, 607–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308

Ly, M. T. T., Nguyen, H. T, Nguyen, M. T. T., Lam, T. T. T., Le, P. H. L., & Au, S. X. (2023). Factors affecting English majored freshmen's speaking performance in a university in the Mekong Delta – Viet Nam. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies, 3*(4), 687–695. https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/V03I4Y2023-20

Maher, J. C. (1986). English for medical purposes. *Language Teaching, 19*(2), 112–145. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444800012003

Mehregan, M., & Seresht, D. J. (2014). ESP teachers and learners' views about speaking difficulties: A view through a critical lens. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *2*(2), 245–252.

Mercer, S. (2019). Language learner engagement: Setting the scene. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1–19). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58542-0_40-1

Nguyen, H. B. (2020). Lecturers' beliefs and agency about active learning in English for specific purposes classes. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 19*(3), 86–105. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.3.6

Nguyen, M. S. (2021). Financial well-being of Vietnamese students. *Investment Management and Financial Innovations*, *18*(4), 355–365. https://doi.org/10.21511/imfi.18(4).2021.29

Nguyen, T. T. N., & Nguyen, H. B. (2020). Classroom participation in EFL speaking classes: Students' perceptions. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, *9*(4), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.24940/ijird/2020/v9/i4/APR20004

Riasati, M. J. (2018). Willingness to speak English among foreign language learners: A causal model. *Cogent Education*, *5*(1), Article 1455332. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1455332

Riasati, M. J., & Rahimi, F. (2018). Situational and individual factors engendering willingness to speak English in foreign language classrooms. *Cogent Education*, *5*(1), Article 1513313. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1513313

Salager-Meyer, F. (2014). Origin and development of English for medical purposes. Part II: Research on spoken medical English. *Medical Writing*, *23*(2), 129–131. https://doi.org/10.1179/2047480614z.000000000204

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. Free Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0360966900000426

Seligman, M. E. P., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education*, *35*(3), 293–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980902934563.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing*. Free Press. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.48-7217

Shintasiwi, F. A., & Anwar, K. (Eds.). (2021). *Analysis of English-speaking performance for the effective language learning in digital era* [Conference session]. Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Education & Social Sciences (ICESS 2021). Series: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research. Atlantis. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210918.022

Tong, T. T. N. (2022). Factors affecting English major students' speaking performance at University of Phan Thiet. *American Journal of Sciences and Engineering Research*, *5*(4), 48–58.

Venkateswara, U., & Divya, J. (2021). A survey of the speaking components of an ESP course: The students' mindset. *MEXTESOL Journal*, *45*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v45n1-17