

Project Wellnes: Physically and Mentally Healthy Together

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Abstract

The "Project Wellness: Physically and Mentally Healthy Together" program successfully introduced 8th-grade students at SMPN 3 Ungaran to a holistic approach to health, blending physical nutrition with mental resilience through Japanese cultural philosophies. By integrating concepts such as Shokuiku, Ikigai, Kaizen, and disciplined time management, the initiative provided students with practical tools to navigate the challenges of adolescence.

Keywords: Ikigai, Kaizen, Wellness, Health, School

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a crucial aspect that often receives insufficient attention, particularly among adolescents. During their junior high school years, many students undergo various physical, emotional, and social changes. These changes can sometimes lead to anxiety, stress, and feelings of pressure. If not addressed properly, minor issues can escalate into more serious disorders, disrupting both their learning process and daily lives.

Japan is known for its unique culture and habits regarding the maintenance of its citizens' mental well-being. For instance, they incorporate the practice of Ikigai: seeking a life purpose (finding what we love, what we excel at, what the world needs, and giving meaning to daily life), and Kaizen: continuous improvement (teaching that small changes can yield significant impacts). Furthermore, Japanese society emphasizes the importance of cleanliness, discipline, and valuing rest periods, all of which positively influence mental health.

We chose this school as a partner due to its strategic and easily accessible location, adequate facilities for community service activities, and the strong enthusiasm from both students and teachers for interactive learning and character development programs. We specifically targeted 8th-grade students because they are relatively independent and capable of working well in groups. They are also able to articulate their ideas and opinions clearly, and they tend to be highly active and engaged in interactive activities.

We are proposing a community service and socialization program for junior high school students titled "PROJECT WELLNESS: PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY TOGETHER." This initiative aims to encourage students to cultivate awareness of a healthy lifestyle—including a balanced diet—help them discover their life purpose, train them in time management and healthy sleep habits, and instill discipline to overcome laziness.

Through this activity, students are expected to learn how the Japanese maintain their mental health and subsequently apply these practices in their daily lives, adapted to the Indonesian context. Consequently, students will not only acquire new knowledge but also develop the necessary skills to cope with stress, boost their self-confidence, and build healthier, more balanced life habits.

Objectives The objectives of this activity are as follows:

1. To improve students' understanding of the importance of maintaining mental health from adolescence.
2. To introduce Japanese culture and habits that can help manage stress and maintain emotional balance.

3. To train students in applying simple methods such as Ikigai, Kaizen, or Japanese-style healthy routines in their daily lives.
4. To help students develop a positive mindset and the skills to cope with pressure at school and within their social circles.
5. To foster awareness of caring for their own mental health as well as that of their peers.

Target Audience and Schedule The target audience for this community service and socialization program, "PROJECT WELLNESS: PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY TOGETHER," is 8th-grade junior high school students. The aim is to raise their awareness and ability to adopt a healthy and happy lifestyle through the materials we will present. This activity is expected to help students develop positive and healthy habits that will benefit them in the long term. The event held on November 12, 2025.

METHOD

Physical Health	Mental Health	Physical Health	Mental Health
A. Nutrition		B. Ikigai	
Providing light material on healthy versus unhealthy foods, followed by an interactive "Nutrition Guessing Game" using images.		Providing light material on <i>Ikigai</i> (life purpose) and the importance of finding meaning in daily life. This includes a simple workshop where students write down: What they love; What they are good at; What the world needs; and What can be rewarded.	
Time Management		Kaizen	
This session emphasizes the importance of time management and adequate sleep by modeling the Japanese culture of discipline. By organizing schedules, setting priorities, and maintaining regular sleep patterns, students can become healthier and more disciplined, following the proverb " <i>Hayane hayaoki</i> " (Early to bed, early to rise).		Providing light material on <i>Kaizen</i> (continuous self-improvement) and the importance of making small, consistent changes in daily life. This includes a simple exercise where students write down: One small habit they want to improve; A small step they can take today; A realistic daily target; and How to evaluate and refine it further.	

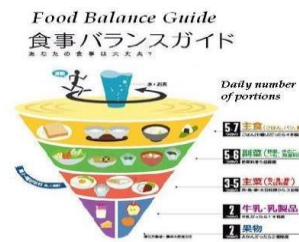
RESULT

The learning session on Shokuiku (Japanese food education) was conducted using interactive methods, including visual observations, group discussions, and balanced menu planning. The material focused on basic Shokuiku concepts, such as eating until 80% full (Hara Hachi Bu), respecting food (saying "Itadakimasu" before meals and "Gochisousama" after), and the importance of balanced nutrition based on the Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top. Students were shown examples of Japanese school lunches, discussed food values using local ingredients, and played a guessing game to identify healthy versus unhealthy foods. This method not only introduced balanced eating habits but also built cultural awareness, discipline, and gratitude for food.

The response from the 8th-grade students was very positive. They were enthusiastic and particularly interested in cultural habits like saying *Itadakimasu*. During the menu-guessing activity, students demonstrated creativity and were able to apply balanced nutrition principles quite well. Overall, this activity increased students' awareness of the importance of eating healthy, avoiding overeating, and appreciating the food they consume daily.



(Figure 2.1 Presentation of Shokuiku Materials)



(Figure 2.2 Shokuiku Materials)

Learning about Japanese-style Time Management and Adequate Sleep was carried out using posters and interactive discussions. The materials covered the importance of valuing time through the concept of “Jikan wa kane nari” (time is money), discipline in managing daily schedules, and the necessity of sleeping 7–8 hours per day. Additionally, students were introduced to Japanese cultural terms such as “Inemuri” and “Hayane Hayaoki” as examples of maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

Student response was highly enthusiastic. They actively participated in discussions, answered questions, and shared their daily habits regarding study time and sleep hours. Through this session, students gained a better understanding of how time management and sufficient rest are vital for maintaining health and improving concentration.



(Figure 2.3 Material Presentation)



(Figure 2.4 Time Management Materials)

The lesson on finding life’s meaning and purpose was conducted by grouping concepts into the four elements of Ikigai, using posters and interactive discussions. The material explored things they love, things they are good at, what the world needs, and what can provide an income. Throughout the activity, students were quite active, and the Q&A session proceeded smoothly. This learning helped students identify their interests and talents, understand their skills, recognize the needs of their environment, and link them to potential economic opportunities.



(Figure 2.5 Presentation of Ikigai Materials)



(Figure 2.6 Ikigai Materials)

Kaizen is a Japanese philosophy meaning continuous effort toward improvement in various aspects of life. It teaches individuals to improve themselves little by little every day. For junior high students, Kaizen can be applied through the 5S framework: Seiri (Sort), Seiton (Set in order), Seiso (Shine), Seiketsu (Standardize), and Shitsuke (Sustain). Practical examples for students include:

1. Building a study habit by reading for just 1 minute every day, then gradually increasing the duration.
2. Creating a manageable daily study schedule and slowly overcoming procrastination.
3. Cleaning and organizing the study desk daily to support better concentration.
4. Writing down one small goal to achieve each day and doing it consistently.
5. Training oneself to finish tasks as quickly as possible, starting with the easiest ones, to develop an organized workflow.

By applying Kaizen, students can boost their confidence and academic success. It also applies to teachers to improve teaching methods and classroom productivity. Essentially, Kaizen is about starting with small improvements and maintaining them until they become positive habits.

Activity Report (November 12, 2025)

On November 12, 2025, we conducted the Community Service Program (PKM) “Project Wellness: Physically and Mentally Healthy Together” at SMPN 3 Ungaran. We provided education to several 8th-grade classes, specifically classes 8, 8A, and 8I.

For class 8, the session was held during the first period. Hugo and Popi presented on Nutrition and Time Management, with Aluka as the moderator. The classroom atmosphere was supportive, and students were active, allowing the session to run smoothly.

Classes 8A and 8I were combined during the final period in the multipurpose hall for a session on Ikigai and Kaizen presented by Sarah and Chandra. However, the hall environment was less than ideal because many students could not see the materials clearly and were distracted by talking. Consequently, only the Ikigai material could be delivered effectively. Following the session, we presented a plaque as a token of appreciation and took group photos.



(Figure 2.7 Presentation of Kaizen Materials)



(Figure 2.8 Kaizen Materials)

CONCLUSION

The "Project Wellness: Physically and Mentally Healthy Together" program successfully introduced 8th-grade students at SMPN 3 Ungaran to a holistic approach to health, blending physical nutrition with mental resilience through Japanese cultural philosophies. By integrating concepts such as Shokuiku, Ikigai, Kaizen, and disciplined time management, the initiative provided students with practical tools to navigate the challenges of adolescence.

Key Findings and Outcomes:

1. Holistic Awareness: Students demonstrated a heightened awareness of how physical habits (balanced nutrition and sleep) directly correlate with mental clarity and discipline.
2. Cultural Integration: The use of Japanese philosophies like Ikigai and Kaizen proved effective in helping students identify personal goals and the importance of consistent, small-scale self-improvement.
3. Student Engagement: The interactive nature of the program—incorporating visual media, games, and group discussions—resulted in high enthusiasm and better retention of the material, particularly regarding healthy lifestyle choices.
4. Adaptive Learning: While the implementation faced minor environmental challenges in larger group settings, the core message of finding purpose and maintaining balance remained clear.

In conclusion, this project highlights the importance of early intervention in adolescent mental health. By fostering a "Wellness Mindset" that values self-discipline, gratitude, and continuous improvement, students are better equipped to handle academic pressure and social dynamics. It is hoped that the habits initiated during this program will serve as a foundation for long-term physical and mental well-being, allowing the students to grow into resilient and balanced individuals.

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