สรุปสาระสำคัญบทที่ 1

Summary of Key Ideas from Chapter 1

Introduction to Balanced Well-Being

The translation below preserves the structure and meaning of the Thai summary while using clear English suitable for first-year university students. The term “สมดุลสุข” is translated consistently as “balanced well-being.”

Chapter 1 provides a basic understanding that students’ happiness does not come only from getting good grades, having many friends, or living a comfortable life. Instead, it comes from the ability to care for and manage different areas of life in an appropriate way. These areas include physical health, emotions and mental health, relationships with others, thoughts, personal values, and life goals. This concept is called balanced well-being.

Balanced well-being is especially important for first-year students because they are moving from school life into university life. They have more responsibility for themselves and more freedom to make decisions. At the same time, they must deal with many changes, such as new learning methods, time management, friendships, living away from family, managing money, using digital media, and beginning to think seriously about their future.

1. What Is Balanced Well-Being?

Balanced well-being does not mean living without problems or stress, or feeling happy all the time. It also does not mean giving the same amount of time to every part of life. For example, students do not need to spend equal amounts of time studying, resting, meeting friends, and joining activities every day. Each person has different needs, responsibilities, and life conditions.

Balanced well-being means being able to adjust and organize one’s life according to the situation, responsibilities, personal values, and goals. During some periods, students may need to spend more time studying, especially during examinations. At other times, they may need to reduce some responsibilities in order to recover physically and mentally. They may also need to focus more on family matters, relationships, or financial problems.

Therefore, the important goal is not to make every area of life equal. It is to recognize which part of life currently needs more attention and which part should be adjusted in order to prevent negative effects on life as a whole.

In this course, balanced well-being is understood as both a state and a process. It is a quality of life that a person wishes to develop. At the same time, it is an ongoing process of observing, reflecting, making decisions, and adjusting one's way of life.

A person with balanced well-being is not someone who never experiences suffering, disappointment, or difficulty. Rather, it is someone who can recognize emotions, cope with change, care for themselves, build supportive relationships, and live according to values that are personally meaningful.

2. Why Do Students Need to Learn About Balanced Well-Being?

Balanced well-being is important for physical health because the body is the foundation of learning. Students who do not get enough sleep, do not eat properly, rarely move their bodies, or spend long periods looking at screens may experience tiredness, poor concentration, memory difficulties, and changes in mood. No matter how strongly students wish to learn, their academic performance may decline when their physical health is neglected.

Balanced well-being is also important for mental and emotional health. University life includes expectations, uncertainty, and comparison with others. Some students may worry about their grades. Some may feel that they do not fit in with their friends, while others may be uncertain about the field they have chosen to study.

Having balanced well-being does not make all these feelings disappear. However, it helps students become aware of their emotions, accept what is happening, and choose ways of coping that do not harm themselves or other people.

Balanced well-being is directly connected to the quality of learning. Students who manage their time for studying, resting, joining activities, and maintaining relationships appropriately are often more motivated and better prepared to develop themselves than students who focus too heavily on one area and neglect other parts of life.

For example, studying all night may help a student perform well on one examination. However, if this behaviour continues, it may harm physical health, emotional stability, and the ability to learn effectively in the long term.

Balanced well-being also helps students build a foundation for adult life. Skills developed at university, such as self-understanding, time management, health care, communication, decision-making, and goal-setting, will continue to be important in working life, family life, and participation in society.

3. How Have Ideas About Happiness Developed?

Ideas about happiness have developed over a long period of time. In the ancient world, happiness was not viewed simply as comfort or pleasure. It was connected with goodness, self-development, and living a meaningful life.

Aristotle introduced the concept of eudaimonia. This refers to happiness that comes from using one's human potential fully, applying reason, developing moral character, and living a meaningful life. From this perspective, happiness is not a temporary feeling of pleasure. It is a quality of life that grows through continuous personal development.

In Buddhism, happiness is connected with understanding the causes of suffering, practising mindfulness, reducing attachment, avoiding harm, and developing wisdom in order to understand that life is always changing. This perspective shows that external events are not the only causes of suffering. The way people perceive, hold on to, and respond to events is also important.

In the modern period, happiness began to be studied scientifically. Psychologists developed theories and tools for studying life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions, self-acceptance, relationships, and purpose in life.

Diener explained happiness through the concept of **subjective well-being**. It includes satisfaction with life, the experience of positive emotions, and negative emotions at a manageable level. This concept suggests that two people in similar situations may experience different levels of happiness because they have different expectations, experiences, and ways of evaluating their lives.

Ryff developed a deeper understanding of happiness through the concept of **psychological well-being**. It includes self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, the ability to manage one's life and environment, purpose in life, and personal growth.

From this perspective, happiness is not based only on the question, "Do I feel good today?" It also involves asking, "Am I living meaningfully and continuing to develop myself?"

Today, the study of happiness combines knowledge from psychology, philosophy, religion, social sciences, public health, and culture. This broader perspective helps us understand that happiness is influenced by both internal factors and social conditions, including family, friends, community, income, environment, and opportunities in life.

4. Important Characteristics of Balanced Well-Being

The first important characteristic of balanced well-being is that all areas of life are connected. For example, a lack of sleep may cause physical tiredness, poor concentration, irritability, and conflict with friends at the same time. In contrast, having a friend who listens may reduce stress, increase motivation, and create a greater sense of emotional security.

Therefore, a problem in one area of life may be caused by, or may affect, several other areas.

The second characteristic is that balanced well-being changes according to the situation. A suitable balance at the beginning of a semester may not be suitable during an examination period. The balance of a student who lives with their family may also be different from that of a student who lives in a dormitory and must take full responsibility for daily life. There is no single form of balanced well-being that is suitable for everyone.

The third characteristic is that balanced well-being can be learned and practised. Students may begin by observing their own behaviour. They may ask themselves how many hours they sleep, how much time they spend using their phones, what causes them stress, and how they spend their time. They can then make suitable changes step by step.

The fourth characteristic is that balanced well-being is connected with other people. Happiness does not result only from personal strength. An understanding family, supportive friends, helpful lecturers, and a safe environment can all support students' well-being.

The final characteristic is that balanced well-being must be consistent with personal values and life goals. People do not value the same things in the same way. Developing balanced well-being must therefore begin with self-understanding, rather than living according to other people's expectations or comparing oneself with the images of other people's lives on social media.

5. The Main Dimensions of Balanced Well-Being

This chapter explains balanced well-being through four connected dimensions: the physical dimension, the mental and emotional dimension, the social dimension, and the wisdom dimension.

The Physical Dimension

The physical dimension includes sleep, food, physical movement, rest, health care, and appropriate screen use. Caring for the body is not only about avoiding illness.

It also helps students become physically ready to learn, participate in activities, and manage the responsibilities of daily life.

The Mental and Emotional Dimension

The mental and emotional dimension includes awareness of emotions, thoughts, stress, anxiety, and disappointment. It also includes the ability to regain emotional stability after facing difficult experiences.

Good mental health does not mean never experiencing negative emotions. It means being able to recognize those emotions without allowing them to control every decision.

The Social Dimension

The social dimension concerns relationships with family members, friends, lecturers, and the university community. It also includes communication skills, the ability to live with differences, and the willingness to ask for help when necessary.

Students who have someone to listen to them and who feel that they belong to a group are often better able to adjust to university life.

The Wisdom Dimension

The wisdom dimension includes rational thinking, mindful decision-making, recognizing what is important, understanding the influence of media, reflecting on personal values, and setting life goals.

Wisdom in this context does not mean academic ability alone. It means being able to use knowledge and experience to live appropriately and make thoughtful decisions.

The model presented in the chapter shows that these four dimensions are connected with the real lives of first-year students. They influence areas such as studying, time management, friendships, family relationships, finances, digital media use, physical health, mental health, and life goals.

Balanced well-being therefore develops through the connected care of many areas of life. It cannot be achieved by developing only one area while ignoring the others.

6. How Are Well-Being, Quality of Life, and Balanced Well-Being Different?

The terms well-being, quality of life, and balanced well-being are closely related, but they do not have exactly the same meaning.

Well-being is the state in which a person can live, learn, work, cope with stress, use their abilities, and participate with others appropriately. It is not simply the absence of illness or problems. It also includes the ability to function effectively in life.

Quality of life refers to the overall conditions of a person's life and the way that person evaluates those conditions. It includes health, relationships, education, finances, housing, environment, safety, and satisfaction with life.

People who have similar resources or live in similar environments may evaluate their quality of life differently because they have different values and expectations.

Balanced well-being is the process of managing life in order to maintain and improve both well-being and quality of life. In simple terms, well-being is the state of living and functioning well. Quality of life is the overall picture of life conditions and personal satisfaction. Balanced well-being is the ability to organize and adjust life in order to create and maintain that positive state.

7. Theories of Happiness That Help Explain Balanced Well-Being

This chapter presents four major perspectives on happiness.

The first perspective concerns hedonia and eudaimonia. Hedonia refers to happiness that comes from pleasure, comfort, and positive emotions. Eudaimonia refers to happiness that comes from using one's abilities, developing oneself, living according to personal values, and having a meaningful life.

Both forms of happiness are important. Students should not reject the happiness that comes from resting, listening to music, meeting friends, or doing enjoyable activities. At the same time, they should not allow short-term pleasure to interfere with long-term goals. For example, using entertainment media until there is no time to sleep or complete responsibilities may provide immediate pleasure but cause later problems.

Balanced well-being therefore involves using short-term happiness in ways that support a meaningful and valuable life in the long term.

The second perspective is the PERMA Model, which explains well-being through five elements:

Positive Emotion refers to experiencing positive feelings.

Engagement refers to becoming fully involved in an activity.

Relationships refers to having supportive and meaningful relationships.

Meaning refers to having a sense of purpose and belonging to something greater than oneself.

Accomplishment refers to achieving goals that are personally valuable.

The PERMA Model helps students examine whether their happiness depends on only one area or is supported by several connected areas of life.

The third perspective is Self-Determination Theory. It explains that human beings have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy means feeling that one has a choice and some control over one's life.

Competence means feeling able to learn, improve, and complete tasks successfully.

Relatedness means feeling connected to, understood by, and supported by other people.

When students feel that they have some choice in how they learn, can develop their abilities, and have people who understand or support them, they are more likely to develop internal motivation and experience better well-being.

The fourth perspective is the Buddhist view of happiness, which emphasizes mindfulness, wisdom, moderation, non-harm, and the reduction of the causes of suffering.

This perspective helps students understand that happiness does not come from trying to control everything according to personal wishes. Instead, it comes from understanding oneself, accepting change, and responding to situations mindfully and appropriately.

When these four perspectives are considered together, happiness can be understood as including positive feelings, the development of human potential, relationships with others, motivation, meaning in life, and wisdom. No single theory can fully explain every aspect of human happiness.

8. Applying Balanced Well-Being to the Lives of First-Year Students

Knowledge about balanced well-being becomes valuable when students use it to examine their own lives. University life is not only about learning academic content. It is also a place for practising self-management, living with other people, coping with disappointment, discovering personal strengths, and developing a direction for life.

An important starting point is self-understanding. Students should explore their strengths, areas for improvement, needs, values, concerns, and goals. They should also consider which areas of life are receiving enough attention and which areas are being neglected.

Self-understanding does not mean blaming oneself. It means seeing oneself realistically in order to choose suitable ways to grow and improve.

Factors that support balanced well-being include getting enough sleep, caring for physical health, managing time, building supportive relationships, receiving support from family, friends, and lecturers, using digital media wisely, having meaningful goals, and being willing to ask for help when a problem is too difficult to manage alone.

In contrast, ongoing stress, insufficient sleep, uncontrolled online media use, comparison with others, loneliness, financial difficulties, unrealistic expectations, and fear of discussing problems can become barriers to balanced well-being.

Students should therefore notice early signs that their lives are becoming unbalanced. They should not wait until a problem becomes serious before taking action.

Key Understanding

Balanced well-being does not mean having a perfect life, and it does not mean making every part of life equal. It means being able to care for, prioritize, and adjust the relationships among the physical, mental and emotional, social, and wisdom dimensions according to one's situation.

Sustainable happiness does not result only from feeling good or achieving success in one area. It develops when a person can care for their health, understand their emotions, maintain supportive relationships, use thought and wisdom in decision-making, and live according to meaningful values and goals.

For first-year students, developing balanced well-being does not need to begin with a major life change. It can begin with honest self-observation, small and manageable changes in behaviour, a willingness to ask for help, and regular reflection on one's life.

Balanced well-being is not something that is achieved once and remains unchanged. It is an ability that must be learned, practised, and adjusted throughout life.