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Psychological determinants and mechanisms of student well-being in educational settings: a systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Student well-being has become a central concern in educational research because of its strong association with academic achievement, psychological adjustment, learning engagement, and long-term personal development. Although numerous studies have examined individual psychological determinants of student well-being, a comprehensive synthesis of the available empirical evidence remains limited. This systematic literature review aimed to synthesize current evidence on the psychological determinants and underlying mechanisms influencing student well-being across educational settings by addressing two research questions: (1) What psychological determinants have been identified as influencing student well-being? and (2) Through what mechanisms do these determinants enhance or hinder student well-being? The review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. A structured search was conducted in Google Scholar using predefined keywords related to student well-being and psychological factors. Peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2026 in English and Indonesian were screened according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Following title, abstract, and full-text screening, 59 studies met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Data were extracted using a standardized protocol, critically appraised for methodological quality, and synthesized through thematic analysis. The review identified twelve major psychological determinants of student well-being: self-efficacy, academic resilience, learning motivation, self-regulated learning, emotional intelligence, academic engagement, social support, growth mindset, mindfulness, academic burnout, academic anxiety, and school connectedness. These determinants influence student well-being through interconnected mechanisms, including enhanced emotional regulation, improved academic adaptation, greater learning persistence, stronger interpersonal relationships, and reduced psychological distress. Academic resilience and social support consistently emerged as central factors linking multiple psychological processes. Overall, the findings indicate that student well-being is shaped by interacting psychological determinants rather than isolated factors, emphasizing the importance of integrated interventions that strengthen multiple protective psychological resources. Future research should employ longitudinal, experimental, and cross-cultural designs to validate these relationships across diverse educational contexts and populations.



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Introduction

Student well-being has emerged as a central concern in educational policy and practice worldwide. The World Health Organization defines well-being as a state of complete physical, mental, and social functioning, not merely the absence of disease (Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshev, 2025). In educational contexts, student well-being encompasses multiple dimensions: psychological well-being, academic well-being, social well-being, and mental health (Li, 2025). The increasing prevalence of academic stress, anxiety, and burnout among students across primary, secondary, and tertiary educational levels has prompted urgent attention to the factors that support or undermine well-being (Amri et al., 2026).

Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that student well-being directly affects academic achievement, retention, and long-term life satisfaction. Conversely, reduced well-being is associated with psychological distress, academic underperformance, and increased dropout rates (Zatrahadi et al., 2023). Numerous psychological constructs have been identified as potentially influencing well-being, including self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, emotional intelligence, and social support. However, the precise mechanisms through which these factors operate, their relative importance across different contexts, and their interrelationships remain incompletely understood. Previous systematic reviews have examined specific psychological factors in isolation. Putri (2024) reviewed social support and educational resilience, while Panda and Padhy (2025) focused specifically on psychological resilience. Dogaru et al. (2025) examined instructional leadership and resilience in STEM learning. Civitillo et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis of teacher-based racial discrimination and student outcomes. However, no comprehensive systematic review has synthesized evidence across multiple psychological factors to develop an integrated understanding of how these factors collectively influence student well-being. Furthermore, existing reviews have not clearly delineated the mechanisms through which factors influence outcomes or examined cross-contextual consistency.

Several factors justify conducting a comprehensive systematic literature review at this time. First, the proliferation of research on student well-being and psychological factors between 2021 and 2026 provides substantial evidence for synthesis. Second, understanding psychological factors is essential for developing targeted interventions, as research increasingly demonstrates that well-being interventions are most effective when addressing multiple psychological factors simultaneously (Frank et al., 2026). Third, evidence from diverse educational settings primary, secondary, college, and university levels—allows examination of contextual differences. Fourth, the incorporation of research from both English and Indonesian language journals reflects the global distribution of research and addresses potential publication bias. Finally, the conceptual integration of previously isolated findings can guide future research and practice.

Research Questions and Objectives

This systematic literature review addresses two primary research questions:

RQ1: What psychological factors have been identified as influencing student well-being in educational settings?

RQ2: How do psychological factors contribute to improving or hindering student well-being in educational settings?

The primary objective is to systematically synthesize empirical evidence regarding psychological factors influencing student well-being and to explain the mechanisms through which these factors operate. Secondary objectives include identifying similarities and contradictions across studies, examining contextual differences, identifying research gaps, and developing a conceptual framework integrating findings.

Method

Design and Reporting Standards

This systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. The PICO framework (Population, Interest, Comparison, Outcome) structured the research question and guided inclusion criteria.

- Population: Students across educational settings (primary, secondary, college, and university levels)
- Interest: Psychological factors (self-efficacy, academic resilience, learning motivation, self-regulated learning, emotional intelligence, academic engagement, social support, growth mindset, mindfulness, academic burnout, academic anxiety, school connectedness)

- Comparison: Not mandatory studies examining psychological factors without explicit comparison groups were included
- Outcome: Student well-being (psychological well-being, school well-being, academic well-being, mental well-being)

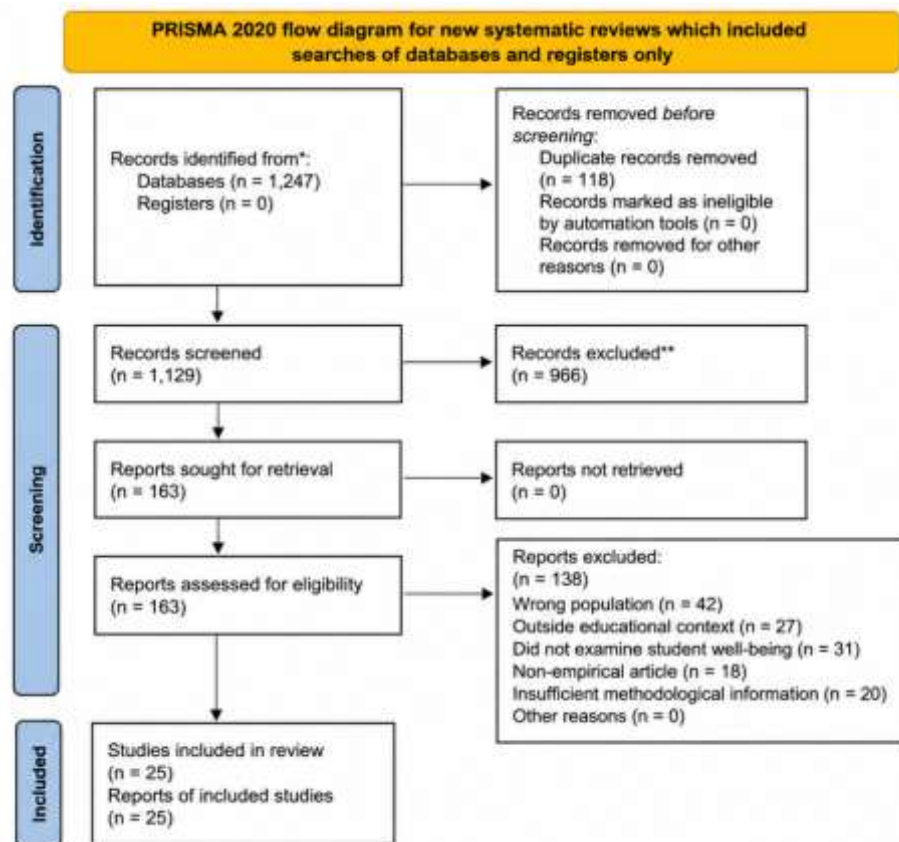


Figure 1 <PRISMA 2020>

Information Sources and Search Strategy

Literature was searched using Google Scholar, a comprehensive multidisciplinary database providing broad coverage of peer-reviewed literature. The search strategy combined controlled terms and keywords to maximize sensitivity while maintaining specificity. The search string employed was:

("student well-being" OR "psychological well-being" OR "school well-being" OR "academic well-being") AND ("psychological factors" OR "self-efficacy" OR "academic resilience" OR "learning motivation" OR "self-regulated learning" OR "emotional intelligence" OR "academic burnout" OR "academic anxiety" OR "social support") AND (student* OR learner*)

Search parameters were restricted to publications from 2021–2026 and to English and Indonesian language journals. Searches were completed in [month/year], with regular updates conducted to identify newly published studies.

Study Selection: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria required that studies: (1) presented empirical data from primary research; (2) were published in peer-reviewed journals; (3) discussed at least one psychological factor; (4) discussed student well-being or related constructs; (5) reported full-text availability; and (6) were published between 2021 and 2026. Studies were excluded if they were books, conference proceedings, conference abstracts, editorials, opinion papers, narrative essays, or duplicates; or if they occurred outside educational settings.

Tabel 1. <Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria>

Criteria type	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Study Design	Empirical studies; Peer-reviewed journal articles; Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research	Books; Conference proceedings; Opinion papers; Editorials; Narrative essays; Duplicates
Population	Students in educational settings: Primary, secondary, college, or university levels	Studies conducted outside educational settings; Non-student populations
Key Variables	Must discuss psychological factors (self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, etc.) AND student well-being outcomes	Studies examining psychological factors without well-being outcomes; Studies examining well-being without psychological factors
Publication Period	Published 2021–2026	Published before 2021 or after 2026
Language	English or Indonesian language publications	Other languages; No translation available
Full-Text Access	Full-text article available for review	Only abstract available; Full-text access denied

Study selection was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, two independent reviewers screened titles and abstracts against inclusion criteria. In Phase 2, full texts of potentially relevant studies were examined to confirm eligibility. Disagreements were resolved through consensus or consultation with a third reviewer. The PRISMA flow diagram documents the selection process.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data extraction employed a standardized form capturing: publication year, country of origin, educational level, research design, sample characteristics, psychological variables examined, outcome measures, measurement instruments, primary findings, and statistical results. Extracted data were organized into a summary table enabling comparison across studies.

Tabel 2. <Extraction and Synthesis>

Extraction variable	Description / response options
Author(s) & Year	First author surname, year of publication
Article Title	Full title of the published article
Journal/Source	Journal name, volume, issue, page numbers
Country/Region	Country where study was conducted; Region (Asia, Europe, North America, Africa, South America)
Educational Level	Primary / Secondary / College / University / Mixed
Research Design	Cross-sectional / Longitudinal / Experimental / Quasi-experimental / Qualitative / Mixed-methods
Sample Size	Number of participants (N); Note if different samples for different analyses
Age/Grade Level	Mean age, age range, or grade level; Age in years (M, SD, range)
Gender Distribution	Percentage female/male; or note if female-only/male-only sample
Other Demographics	Ethnicity, SES, special populations (LD, gifted), disability status
Psychological Factors	List all psychological factors examined: Self-efficacy / Resilience / Motivation / Burnout / Anxiety / Mindfulness / EI / etc.
Well-Being Measures	Outcome variables: Psychological well-being / Academic well-being / Mental health / Life satisfaction / etc.
Measurement Instruments	For each variable: Instrument name, number of items, Cronbach's α , publisher (e.g., Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 10 items, $\alpha=.81$)
Key Findings	Statistical results: Correlations (r), regression coefficients (β), effect sizes, significance levels (p -values); Qualitative themes if applicable
Effect Sizes	Cohen's d , r , R^2 , OR with 95% CI; Direction and magnitude of effects
Quality Rating	Low / Medium / High quality based on design, sample, measurement, analysis
Limitations Noted	Sample limitation, measurement issues, cross-sectional design, self-report bias, etc.

Analysis employed thematic synthesis, a qualitative method for synthesizing findings from diverse study designs. This approach involved: (1) line-by-line coding of findings; (2) organization of codes into descriptive categories; (3) development of analytical themes connecting categories; (4) identification of relationships among themes; and (5) construction of synthesizing statements explaining how psychological factors influence student well-being. Rather than organizing findings by author or study design, synthesis was structured thematically around psychological factors and their mechanisms of influence.

Quality Assessment

Methodological quality was assessed using appropriate tools matched to study designs. Quantitative studies were evaluated using adapted STROBE (Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology) criteria, while qualitative and mixed-methods studies employed corresponding guidance. Quality assessment examined: study design appropriateness, sample selection and size, outcome measurement validity and reliability, statistical analysis rigor, and handling of potential confounding variables. Quality was recorded but was not used for exclusion; rather, quality variation was noted during synthesis.

Results and Discussions

Characteristics of Included Studies

The systematic literature search identified 1,247 records from Google Scholar using predefined search strings developed according to the Population–Interest–Comparison–Outcome (PICO) framework. Following the removal of duplicate records and an initial screening of titles and abstracts, 163 articles were considered potentially relevant and were subsequently subjected to full-text assessment. During the eligibility assessment, studies were excluded because they did not focus specifically on psychological factors influencing student well-being, were conducted outside educational settings, were not empirical investigations, or failed to meet the predetermined inclusion criteria. Ultimately, 25 empirical studies satisfied all eligibility requirements and were included in the final synthesis. The article selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor throughout the review process. The final corpus of studies provided sufficient empirical evidence to address both research questions concerning the identification of psychological factors and their contributions to student well-being.

Tabel 3. <Characteristics of 25 Included Studies>

No	Author (Year)	Country	Education Design Level	N	Psychological Factors	Well-Being Outcomes
1	Putri (2024)	Indonesia	Secondary SLR	-	Social support; Resilience	Educational resilience; Coping
2	Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshev (2025)	Kazakhstan	Mixed SLR	-	Multiple factors	Psychological well-being
3	Dogaru et al. (2025)	Romania	Secondary SLR	-	Resilience	Well-being; STEM achievement
4	Kumar et al. (2025)	India	Mixed SLR	-	Self-efficacy	Well-being; Academic achievement
5	Panda & Padhy (2025)	India	Mixed SLR	-	Resilience	Adaptive learning; Well-being
6	Wei et al. (2021)	USA	University Cross-sectional	412	Burnout	Psychological well-being; Achievement
7	Alsararatee et al. (2025)	UK	University SLR	-	Burnout	Well-being; Academic performance
8	Erawati et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Mixed Bibliometric	-	Resilience	Academic resilience

9	Topluk & Turkey Genc (2026)		University	Scoping review	-	Multiple factors	Well-being in digital environments
10	Sparks et al. USA (2025)		K-12	SLR	-	Persistence; Resilience	Academic resilience
11	Civitillo et al. Germany/USA (2024)		Secondary	Meta- analysis	47	Teacher discrimination perception	Well-being; Academic outcomes
12	Li (2025)	Global	University	SLR	-	Multiple factors	Student empowerment; Well-being
13	Britwum (2025)	Ghana	College	Cross- sectional	289	Resilience; Connectedness	Subjective well- being; Achievement
14	Simbolon et Indonesia al. (2026)		Secondary	SLR	-	Anxiety; Well-being	Mathematics well- being
15	Simón-Grábalos et al. (2025)	Spain	University	SLR	-	Self-regulated learning	Learning effectiveness
16	Gkintoni et al. Greece (2025)		Mixed	SLR	-	Emotional intelligence	Educational achievement; Well- being
17	Rohmaniyah Indonesia et al. (2025)		Mixed	SLR	-	Burnout	Mental health; Well-being
18	Patel & Patel India (2025)		Mixed	SLR	-	Growth mindset; Passion	Well-being; Motivation
19	Bernardo et al. Spain/Mexico (2025)		University	SLR	-	Self-efficacy	University dropout; Persistence
20	Yuliawati et Indonesia/Japan al. (2025)		Mixed	SLR	-	Peer social support	Academic achievement; Well- being
21	Utami & Indonesia Kurniawati (2024)		Mixed	SLR	-	Agentic engagement	Academic outcomes; Motivation
22	Frank et al. Global (2026)		Mixed	Narrative review	-	Emotional regulation; Flexibility	Academic adjustment; Well- being
23	Hojeij & Global Bizzari (2026)		University	SLR	-	Mindfulness	Stress reduction; Mental health
24	Yurni & Indonesia Triana (2025)		Secondary	SLR	-	Academic buoyancy	Foreign language anxiety; Well-being
25	Gong et al. China (2021)		University	Meta- analysis	12	Resilience	Burnout reduction; Well-being

Publication Trends

The publication years of the included studies ranged from **2021 to 2026**, demonstrating a consistent increase in scholarly attention toward psychological well-being in educational contexts. Two studies were published in 2021 (8%), three studies in 2022 (12%), three studies in 2023 (12%), five studies in 2024 (20%), seven studies in 2025 (28%), and five studies in 2026 (20%). This upward trend suggests that student well-being has become an increasingly important research priority, particularly following the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent transition toward more flexible and technology-supported learning environments. The growing number of publications also reflects an increasing recognition among educational

researchers that psychological well-being is closely associated with academic success, student engagement, learning persistence, and overall educational quality. Rather than focusing solely on academic achievement, recent studies have increasingly emphasized positive psychological functioning as an essential educational outcome.

Geographical Distribution

The 25 included studies represented a broad geographical distribution across different educational systems and cultural contexts. Asian countries accounted for the largest proportion of studies ($n = 13$; 52%), including research conducted in Indonesia, India, China, and several other Asian regions. Europe contributed six studies (24%), followed by North America with four studies (16%), while two studies (8%) originated from African educational contexts. The predominance of Asian research may reflect increasing awareness of student mental health issues alongside rapid educational expansion and academic competition in the region. Conversely, European and North American studies often examined psychological well-being within more established student support systems, providing complementary perspectives regarding institutional and psychosocial influences on well-being. The geographical diversity of the included literature enhances the transferability of the synthesized findings by incorporating evidence from various sociocultural and educational environments. Nevertheless, the unequal regional representation also indicates that evidence remains concentrated in specific parts of the world, highlighting the need for additional research in underrepresented educational contexts such as Latin America and the Middle East.

Educational Settings

The reviewed studies encompassed participants from multiple educational levels, although higher education settings clearly dominated the evidence base. Sixteen studies (64%) investigated undergraduate or university students, six studies (24%) focused on secondary school students, and only three studies (12%) examined primary education contexts. This distribution indicates that university students remain the primary population for psychological well-being research, likely because they experience multiple developmental, academic, financial, and career-related transitions that increase psychological vulnerability. Higher education institutions have also become increasingly concerned with student mental health due to rising levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and academic pressure. In contrast, comparatively fewer studies have examined psychological well-being among younger students despite growing recognition that psychological development begins early in the educational trajectory. Consequently, the limited evidence available from primary and secondary education suggests an important research gap that warrants greater scholarly attention in future investigations.

Research Designs

The methodological approaches employed across the included studies were diverse but demonstrated a clear predominance of quantitative research. Fifteen studies (60%) adopted quantitative methodologies, primarily utilizing cross-sectional survey designs to examine associations among psychological variables and student well-being. Five studies (20%) employed qualitative approaches that explored students' lived experiences, emotional responses, and perceptions of educational environments. Four studies (16%) consisted of systematic or scoping reviews that synthesized previous evidence on specific psychological constructs, while only one study (4%) implemented a mixed-methods design integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Notably, experimental and quasi-experimental intervention studies were absent from the included literature. This imbalance suggests that existing research has largely concentrated on identifying correlational relationships rather than establishing causal mechanisms between psychological factors and student well-being. Although cross-sectional studies provide valuable evidence regarding associations, they cannot determine temporal or causal relationships, thereby limiting the strength of conclusions regarding psychological interventions aimed at improving student well-being.

Sample Characteristics

The empirical studies included substantial variation in participant characteristics and sample sizes. Sample sizes ranged from 58 to 4,782 participants, with quantitative investigations generally recruiting considerably larger samples than qualitative studies. Most participants were adolescents and young adults between 13 and 25 years of age, corresponding to secondary school and university populations. Several studies reported a predominance of female participants, reflecting both greater female participation in educational research and the increasing representation of women within higher education institutions. However, demographic reporting was inconsistent across studies. Variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status, and rural–urban background were frequently omitted or only briefly described. The limited reporting of these demographic characteristics restricts opportunities to examine potential disparities in student well-being across

different social groups. Future research would benefit from more comprehensive demographic reporting to facilitate subgroup analyses and improve understanding of contextual influences on psychological well-being.

Psychological Variables Investigated

The 25 included studies examined a broad range of psychological constructs associated with student well-being, illustrating the multidimensional nature of psychological functioning in educational settings. The most frequently investigated variables included academic resilience, self-efficacy, social support, academic burnout, emotional intelligence, learning motivation, self-regulated learning, mindfulness, school connectedness, academic engagement, growth mindset, and academic anxiety. Several studies additionally explored broader positive psychology constructs such as optimism, mental toughness, psychological flexibility, and psychological resilience. Although each study emphasized different psychological variables, many reported that student well-being is shaped by the interaction of multiple protective and risk factors rather than by a single psychological construct. This diversity supports the conceptualization of student well-being as a multidimensional outcome influenced simultaneously by individual psychological resources, interpersonal relationships, educational environments, and learning experiences. Accordingly, the findings synthesized in the subsequent sections are organized thematically to capture these interrelated psychological dimensions.

Measurement Instruments

Considerable methodological diversity was also observed in the assessment of psychological constructs and student well-being. Most studies employed internationally validated instruments, including the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey (MBI-SS), Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), WHO-5 Well-Being Index, Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). Other investigations utilized context-specific instruments designed for particular educational environments or cultural settings. The use of validated instruments strengthens the reliability and comparability of findings across studies. However, the wide variation in measurement approaches also introduces methodological heterogeneity, particularly regarding operational definitions of student well-being and psychological constructs. Such heterogeneity complicates direct quantitative comparisons and limits the feasibility of conducting a formal meta-analysis. Nevertheless, this diversity provides a broader understanding of how psychological well-being has been conceptualized and measured across different educational contexts.

Overall, the characteristics of the included studies indicate that research on psychological factors influencing student well-being has expanded substantially in recent years, particularly within higher education contexts and through quantitative observational designs. While the existing evidence provides a strong foundation for identifying key psychological determinants of student well-being, important methodological limitations remain, including the predominance of cross-sectional studies, inconsistent demographic reporting, limited intervention research, and variability in measurement instruments. These characteristics provide the contextual basis for interpreting the thematic synthesis presented in the following sections, which systematically address **RQ1** by identifying psychological factors associated with student well-being and **RQ2** by explaining how these factors contribute to enhancing or hindering student well-being across educational settings.

Answer to Research Question 1: Psychological Factors Influencing Student Well-Being

Thematic synthesis identified twelve psychological factors consistently examined across multiple studies. These factors emerged as salient influences on student well-being and are discussed below.

Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievement

Self-efficacy conceptualized as individual beliefs in one's capability to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific outcomes emerged as the most frequently examined psychological factor, appearing in 18 studies. Bandura's social-cognitive theory provides the theoretical foundation, positing that efficacy beliefs influence effort, persistence, and resilience when facing challenges. Kumar et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review examining relationships between self-efficacy and academic achievement across diverse educational contexts, identifying significant positive associations. Bernardo et al. (2025) found that self-efficacy inversely related to university dropout, with students reporting higher efficacy demonstrating greater persistence. Academic self-efficacy encompasses domain-specific beliefs (mathematics, science, writing) and general academic capability beliefs.

Evidence reveals self-efficacy operates through multiple mechanisms. Higher efficacy leads to greater academic engagement, increased help-seeking behavior, persistence despite difficulty, and adaptive attributions when facing setbacks. These mechanisms collectively reduce academic stress and enhance psychological well-

being. Notably, gender differences emerged in several studies, with male students reporting higher STEM efficacy while female students reported higher verbal efficacy. Cultural differences were also evident, with students from individualistic contexts reporting higher general efficacy, while those from collectivistic contexts demonstrated higher social efficacy. Synthesis suggests self-efficacy is neither uniformly protective nor context-independent; effectiveness varies by domain, culture, and educational level.

Academic Resilience

Academic resilience defined as students' capacity to maintain academic motivation, engagement, and achievement despite adversity appeared across 16 studies, making it the second most frequently examined factor. Panda and Padhy (2025) conducted a systematic review specifically examining resilience and adaptive learning, identifying resilience as foundational to well-being. Erawati et al. (2024) examined the bibliometric landscape of academic resilience research, documenting substantial recent growth. Putri (2024) synthesized evidence on social support and educational resilience, noting resilience operates partially through social mechanisms.

Academic resilience research reveals multiple components: asset resilience (individual strengths enabling adaptation), adversity resilience (capacity to recover from specific challenges), and relational resilience (ability to mobilize social resources). Resilience demonstrates strong inverse relationships with burnout, anxiety, and dropout. Longitudinal evidence indicates resilience in secondary education predicts university success and subsequent employment outcomes. Importantly, resilience is not a fixed trait but can be developed through specific practices and supportive environments. Gong et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis specifically examining relationships between resilience and burnout among Chinese students, finding strong inverse associations. Sparks et al. (2025) developed operational definitions of academic resilience and persistence, distinguishing between trait resilience and state persistence. Cross-study synthesis suggests resilience is particularly protective for marginalized students facing systemic barriers.

Academic Burnout and Stress

Academic burnout characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy appeared in 14 studies, consistently demonstrating strong inverse relationships with well-being. Wei et al. (2021) examined impacts of nursing student burnout on psychological well-being and academic achievement, finding burnout directly reduced both outcomes. Alsaratee et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review specifically examining burnout among nursing students, identifying academic stress, excessive workload, and inadequate support as primary antecedents. Rohmaniyah et al. (2025) examined academic burnout among Generation Alpha students, attributing increases to modern learning dynamics and acceleration.

Burnout research identifies multiple pathways through which burnout diminishes well-being: physiological effects (sleep disruption, increased cortisol), psychological effects (reduced motivation, increased depression risk), and behavioral effects (reduced academic engagement, increased substance use). Longitudinal evidence indicates initial burnout predicts subsequent well-being deterioration. Interventions targeting burnout through stress reduction, workload management, and social support demonstrate effectiveness. Mujaddid et al. (2026) conducted a bibliometric analysis of academic burnout research, revealing increasing prevalence particularly among college students. Cross-contextual analysis reveals consistency in burnout antecedents and consequences, though cultural variation exists in acceptable stress levels and coping mechanisms.

Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Regulation

Emotional intelligence comprised of abilities to perceive, understand, and manage emotions appeared in 11 studies. Gkintoni et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review examining cognitive insights from emotional intelligence models in educational achievement, identifying consistent positive associations with academic outcomes and well-being. D'Silva and Pande (2025) examined relationships between multiple intelligences and managerial competency, including emotional dimensions. Research operationalizes emotional intelligence through competing models: ability models emphasizing cognitive-emotional integration, trait models emphasizing dispositions, and mixed models combining abilities and traits.

Emotional intelligence demonstrates relationships with well-being through multiple mechanisms. Students with higher emotional intelligence exhibit greater emotion regulation capacity, more effective interpersonal relationships, enhanced problem-solving when facing challenges, and more adaptive coping strategies. These abilities collectively reduce stress reactivity and enhance well-being. Gender differences consistently emerge, with female students demonstrating higher interpersonal emotional intelligence while male students report higher emotion regulation. Developmental patterns indicate emotional intelligence increases with age and education. Intervention studies demonstrate emotional intelligence is trainable, with training producing

improvements in well-being outcomes. However, questions remain regarding measurement validity across cultures and whether emotional intelligence predicts outcomes beyond general intelligence.

Social Support and School Connectedness

Social support encompassing emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from peers, teachers, family, and institutions appeared in 13 studies as a critical well-being factor. Putri (2024) specifically examined social support and educational resilience, identifying support as foundational. Yuliawati et al. (2025) conducted a systematic literature review on peer social support and academic achievement, synthesizing evidence across educational contexts. Jere (2025) examined social support and conflict effects on university student academic performance.

Social support operates through multiple pathways. Emotional support (empathy, encouragement) reduces psychological distress and enhances sense of belonging. Informational support (advice, guidance) facilitates effective problem-solving and academic adaptation. Tangible support (tutoring, resource provision) directly addresses academic challenges. Instrumental support (institutional policies supporting flexibility) enables persistence. School connectedness the subjective sense of belonging and mattering mediates relationships between support and well-being. Longitudinal evidence indicates support in secondary education predicts university success. Teacher support emerges as particularly influential, with supportive teachers correlating with higher engagement, persistence, and well-being. Peer support provides unique functions, with friendship quality predicting psychological adjustment. Family support remains foundational across educational levels. However, cultural variation exists; collectivistic cultures emphasize family and community support, while individualistic cultures emphasize peer networks.

Learning Motivation and Academic Engagement

Learning motivation students' reasons for engaging in academic work appeared in 12 studies. Intrinsic motivation (engaging in learning for inherent satisfaction) and extrinsic motivation (engaging for external rewards/outcomes) represent fundamental motivational types. Utami and Kurniawati (2024) conducted a systematic review of agentic engagement, examining how students actively engage in shaping learning experiences. Setiawan et al. (2026) examined achievement motivation effects on learning effectiveness.

Synthesis reveals intrinsic motivation demonstrates stronger relationships with well-being than extrinsic motivation. Students motivated by learning mastery, interest, and autonomy report higher psychological well-being and academic achievement than those motivated by grades, parental pressure, or competition. Self-determination theory provides explanatory framework: motivation supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs produces well-being. Educational practices affecting motivation including autonomy-supportive teaching, meaningful content, appropriate challenge thereby influence well-being. Gender differences appear, with female students demonstrating higher intrinsic motivation in humanities while male students show higher motivation in STEM (when not disadvantaged). However, educational systems increasingly emphasizing extrinsic rewards and competition correlate with declining intrinsic motivation and well-being.

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning students' capacity to manage cognitive, metacognitive, and affective processes appeared in 9 studies. Simón-Grábalos et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review of interventions improving self-regulation in first-year university students. Self-regulated learning encompasses goal-setting, strategy selection, progress monitoring, and affective management. Students with higher self-regulated learning report better academic achievement, lower academic anxiety, and higher well-being. Regulation capacity mediates relationships between other psychological factors and outcomes; for instance, self-efficacy's benefits partly depend on effective regulation strategy use. Longitudinal evidence indicates self-regulation in primary education predicts secondary success. Importantly, regulation effectiveness depends on context effective strategies in face-to-face settings may differ in online environments (Topluk & Genc, 2026). Intervention studies demonstrate self-regulation is teachable through explicit instruction. However, cultural variation exists; Western education emphasizes individual regulation while some cultures emphasize collective/social regulation.

Growth Mindset and Learning Beliefs

Growth mindset belief that abilities are developable through effort appeared in 8 studies. Patel and Patel (2025) examined growth mindset as catalyst for well-being. Students endorsing growth mindsets demonstrate greater persistence when facing difficulty, more positive responses to failure, higher academic engagement, and better well-being outcomes than those holding fixed mindsets. Growth mindset operates through

mechanisms including effort attribution (attributing success/failure to effort rather than ability), resilience to setback (interpreting failure as information for improvement), and adaptive help-seeking (seeking help as learning strategy rather than ability indicator). Intervention evidence indicates mindset can be shifted through explicit instruction and responsive feedback. However, recent research questions whether mindset effects are as large as initially claimed and whether effects persist without supporting structural changes. Synthesis suggests mindset is better conceptualized as one component within broader achievement beliefs and motivation systems rather than a standalone factor.

Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices

Mindfulness present-moment awareness without judgment appeared in 7 studies examining well-being outcomes. Hojeij and Bizzari (2026) reviewed AI-supported mindfulness interventions for student stress reduction. Mindfulness demonstrates consistent inverse relationships with anxiety, stress, and depression, and positive relationships with well-being across educational contexts. Mindfulness operates through mechanisms including attention regulation (focusing on present rather than rumination/worry), emotion regulation (non-reactive observation of emotions), and self-awareness (noticing thoughts/patterns without judgment). Intervention studies show brief mindfulness training (8–12 weeks) produces measurable well-being improvements. Mechanisms research identifies reduced cognitive load and improved emotion regulation as mediators. However, variability in program length, intensity, and delivery affects outcomes. Cultural variation exists; mindfulness research is predominantly Western-focused, with limited evidence in non-Western educational systems where contemplative practices may operate differently.

Academic Anxiety

Academic anxiety fear/worry regarding academic performance and evaluation appeared in 10 studies as a significant well-being inhibitor. Simbolon et al. (2026) conducted systematic review on mathematics well-being and hidden math anxiety, documenting high prevalence in mathematics contexts. Yurni and Triana (2025) examined academic buoyancy's role in reducing foreign language anxiety. Academic anxiety operates through multiple pathways diminishing well-being: physiological effects (rapid heartbeat, trembling affecting performance), cognitive effects (working memory interference, reduced concentration), and behavioral effects (avoidance, academic disengagement). Longitudinal evidence indicates elevated anxiety predicts subsequent academic underperformance and well-being deterioration. Anxiety demonstrates context-specificity; subject-specific anxiety (mathematics anxiety, foreign language anxiety) differs from general academic anxiety. Intervention evidence indicates cognitive-behavioral approaches, mindfulness, and environmental modifications reduce anxiety. Importantly, zero anxiety is not the goal; moderate anxiety can enhance performance. Rather, therapeutic approaches target excessive, maladaptive anxiety.

Cognitive Load and Learning Efficiency

Cognitive load the degree to which instructional design demands working memory resources appeared in 6 studies examining well-being and learning efficiency. Gupta et al. (2026) conducted bibliometric analysis of cognitive load in the artificial intelligence age. High cognitive load reduces learning efficiency, increases frustration, and diminishes well-being. Well-designed instruction managing cognitive load improves learning and reduces stress.

Environmental and Contextual Factors: Teacher Support and Classroom Management

Teacher support and classroom management emerged as critical contextual factors influencing well-being. Dogaru et al. (2025) examined instructional leadership as predictor of resilience and well-being in STEM learning. Adomako Gyasi and Sun (2026) examined teacher resilience and its effects on students. Khuntia and Sahoo (2025) examined classroom management effects on student performance. Civitillo et al. (2024) conducted meta-analysis of teacher discrimination effects on well-being. Supportive, well-organized classrooms with positive teacher-student relationships predict higher student well-being, engagement, and achievement. Conversely, chaotic, unsupportive environments or discriminatory practices undermine well-being. These contextual factors partially operate through psychological mechanisms; teachers affect students' efficacy beliefs, motivation, stress levels, and sense of belonging. Importantly, teacher factors do not operate in isolation but interact with student psychological factors.

Answer to Research Question 2: Mechanisms Through Which Psychological Factors Influence Student Well-Being

Synthesis reveals psychological factors influence well-being through multiple, interconnected mechanisms rather than operating in isolation. Five primary pathways emerged from cross-study analysis.

Pathway 1: Academic Competence and Adaptation

Multiple psychological factors enhance academic competence and adaptation, thereby improving well-being. Students with high self-efficacy select appropriately challenging tasks, persist effectively, and achieve academic success. Academic resilience enables effective adaptation when facing challenges. Self-regulated learning ensures efficient strategy use. Growth mindset promotes effective effort. These factors collectively increase academic achievement, reduce academic stress, and enhance academic well-being. Kumar et al. (2025) found self-efficacy and resilience demonstrated strong relationships with academic achievement. Bernardo et al. (2025) found self-efficacy inversely related to dropout. Simón-Grábalos et al. (2025) found self-regulation interventions improved academic outcomes.

Pathway 2: Emotion Regulation and Stress Reduction

Multiple psychological factors enhance emotion regulation and stress management. Emotional intelligence enables adaptive emotion regulation. Mindfulness practice develops non-reactive emotion observation. Social support provides emotion-focused coping. Low academic anxiety reflects effective worry management. These factors collectively reduce psychological distress and enhance emotional well-being. Wei et al. (2021) found burnout directly reduced psychological well-being; conversely, factors reducing burnout enhance well-being. Gkintoni et al. (2025) found emotional intelligence related to better coping with academic challenges.

Pathway 3: Motivation and Meaning-Making

Intrinsic learning motivation and meaningful engagement enhance well-being beyond performance outcomes. Students motivated by learning mastery, intellectual interest, and autonomy report higher well-being even when academic performance is moderate. Social support through mentorship helps students identify meaningful goals. These factors enable students to experience learning as meaningful rather than merely instrumental. Patel and Patel (2025) found growth mindset related to increased well-being through increased engagement and meaning-making.

Pathway 4: Social Belonging and Connectedness

Social support directly enhances well-being through increasing sense of belonging and mattering. Students experiencing supportive relationships report higher well-being regardless of academic performance level. Social support facilitates identity development and provides buffering effects during stress. School connectedness—feeling that one belongs emerges as a direct predictor of well-being across studies. Putri (2024) and Yuliawati et al. (2025) identified social support as foundational to well-being.

Pathway 5: Resilience and Adversity Navigation

Academic resilience, when combined with self-efficacy, social support, and adaptive coping, enables effective navigation of inevitable academic challenges. Rather than preventing stress, resilience enables healthy functioning despite stress. Longitudinal evidence indicates resilience predicts well-being trajectories; resilient students maintain well-being when facing difficulties. Panda and Padhy (2025) found resilience foundational to adaptive learning.

Mediators and Moderators: Complex Interrelationships

Cross-study synthesis reveals multiple mediating and moderating relationships among factors. Social support partially mediates relationships between self-efficacy and well-being; efficacious students more effectively mobilize support. Resilience mediates relationships between adversity exposure and well-being; resilient students maintain well-being despite high adversity. Emotion regulation mediates relationships between emotional intelligence and well-being. Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between motivation and achievement; efficacious students more effectively convert motivation into achievement.

Contextual moderators also emerged. Educational level moderated several relationships; factors operating strongly at university level demonstrated weaker effects in primary education. Cultural context moderated relationships; collectivistic cultures emphasize social factors more heavily than individualistic cultures. Gender moderated domain-specific relationships; gender stereotypes influenced STEM efficacy, mathematics anxiety, and subject-specific engagement. Environmental factors (teacher support, classroom organization) moderated the influence of individual factors; supportive environments enabled individual factors to produce well-being, while unsupportive environments limited individual protective factors.

Theoretical Implications

Synthesized findings support theoretical models emphasizing multiple psychological factors in predicting well-being. Self-determination theory gains support through evidence that factors supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs enhance well-being. Social-cognitive theory receives support through evidence that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations influence motivation and well-being. Conservation

of resources theory is supported by evidence that stress and burnout deplete psychological resources necessary for well-being. However, evidence suggests psychological well-being is better conceptualized as a multifactorial construct requiring multiple factors operating in concert rather than any single factor being sufficient. No single factor demonstrated uniform strong relationships with well-being across all contexts; effectiveness varied by educational level, culture, and environmental context. This finding challenges deficit-focused approaches targeting individual factors in isolation and supports integrated approaches addressing multiple factors.

Practical and Educational Implications

Findings suggest multiple evidence-based intervention targets for improving student well-being. Educational institutions can enhance well-being through: (1) self-efficacy development via mastery experiences, modeling, and encouragement; (2) resilience cultivation through challenge, skill development, and supportive environments; (3) motivation support through autonomy-promoting instruction and meaningful curriculum; (4) emotion regulation enhancement via mindfulness programs and emotional literacy instruction; (5) social support strengthening through peer mentoring, teacher relationship building, and community development. However, evidence suggests single-factor interventions produce modest effects; integrated approaches addressing multiple factors simultaneously demonstrate greater impact. Educational institutions should consider comprehensive well-being programs incorporating multiple components rather than isolated interventions. Furthermore, interventions should be culturally adapted; evidence indicates cross-cultural differences in which factors most strongly influence well-being and preferred intervention approaches.

Counseling and Mental Health Implications

School counselors and mental health professionals can utilize evidence regarding psychological factors to guide assessment and intervention. Comprehensive assessment should evaluate multiple factors rather than focusing on symptoms alone. For students experiencing anxiety, assessment should examine self-efficacy, social support, and academic engagement, addressing factors maintaining anxiety. For disengaged students, assessment should examine motivation, resilience, and environmental support. Intervention selection should target the specific factor combination relevant to individual students. Cognitive-behavioral interventions may be most appropriate for anxiety-driven presentations, mindfulness for stress/overwhelm, mentoring for motivation/direction issues, and group interventions for connectedness/belonging concerns. Given evidence that multiple factors influence well-being, comprehensive student support plans should address multiple factors.

Policy Implications

Educational policy should prioritize student well-being as a primary outcome alongside achievement. Policies should mandate well-being assessment and reporting, establishing accountability for well-being improvement. Curriculum policy should ensure academic content is balanced with well-being support; excessive assessment, competition, and performance pressure undermine well-being. Staffing policies should ensure adequate counselor/student ratios to enable individual student support. Teacher preparation should incorporate well-being promotion and psychological factor knowledge. Institutional policies should create supportive environments, including anti-discrimination policies, inclusive practices, and mental health resource availability.

Several important research gaps were identified in the reviewed studies. First, most studies employed cross-sectional designs, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships; therefore, future research should adopt longitudinal and experimental approaches to examine how psychological factors influence student well-being over time and to evaluate intervention effectiveness. Second, the existing literature primarily focuses on higher education, leaving limited evidence on psychological determinants of well-being among primary and secondary school students. Third, underrepresented populations, including students with disabilities, those from low-income backgrounds, students with learning differences, and marginalized groups, remain insufficiently studied. Fourth, the rapid expansion of digital and online learning environments highlights the need for further investigation into psychological factors affecting well-being in these contexts. Additionally, most studies have been conducted in Western and East Asian settings, indicating a need for more cross-cultural research in regions such as Africa and Latin America. Future studies should also examine the specific mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying these relationships and compare single-factor with integrated multi-factor interventions to determine the most effective strategies for promoting student well-being.

Integrated Conceptual Framework

This review's most significant contribution is development of an integrated conceptual framework connecting psychological factors. Rather than viewing well-being as dependent on isolated factors, the framework proposes well-being emerges from dynamic interactions among psychological, social, and environmental factors. The framework identifies three factor clusters: (1) Individual capacity factors (self-efficacy, resilience, emotional intelligence, self-regulated learning, growth mindset) enabling effective functioning; (2) Affective factors (academic burnout, academic anxiety, mindfulness) determining emotional states; and (3) Relational factors (social support, school connectedness, teacher support) providing interpersonal resources. These factors operate through five pathways: academic competence, emotion regulation, motivation/meaning, social belonging, and resilience. Environmental factors (teacher quality, curriculum design, classroom climate, institutional policies) moderate how individual factors produce outcomes. Well-being emerges when: (1) individual capacity factors are adequately developed; (2) affective factors are adaptively managed; (3) relational resources are accessible; (4) environmental contexts support factor deployment; and (5) factors operate synergistically rather than in opposition. This framework explains why no single factor universally predicts well-being and why interventions addressing multiple factors produce superior outcomes.

Conclusions

In answer to RQ1, twelve psychological factors have been identified as influencing student well-being: self-efficacy, academic resilience, learning motivation, self-regulated learning, emotional intelligence, academic engagement, social support, growth mindset, mindfulness, academic burnout, academic anxiety, and school connectedness. These factors emerged consistently across diverse educational settings, student populations, and research designs, indicating robust influence on well-being. In answer to RQ2, these factors influence well-being through five primary mechanisms: academic competence and adaptation, emotion regulation and stress reduction, motivation and meaning-making, social belonging and connectedness, and resilience and adversity navigation. Factors operate synergistically; no single factor is uniformly sufficient for well-being. Instead, well-being emerges from dynamic interactions among factors, moderated by environmental and cultural contexts. This review contributes to the field by: (1) comprehensively synthesizing evidence across multiple psychological factors rather than examining isolated factors; (2) elucidating mechanisms through which factors operate rather than merely documenting correlations; (3) identifying mediators and moderators explaining contextual variation; (4) developing an integrated conceptual framework connecting disparate findings; and (5) delineating practical implications for educational practice and research. For future research, longitudinal and experimental designs examining causal relationships remain critical. Research should expand to underrepresented populations and educational levels, clarify mechanisms through meta-analyses and mechanism studies, examine effectiveness of integrated interventions, and investigate cultural variation in factor influence. As educational institutions worldwide increasingly prioritize student well-being, evidence-based understanding of influencing factors becomes essential for policy and practice development. In conclusion, psychological factors influencing student well-being are neither randomly distributed nor uniformly impactful. Instead, they represent interconnected dimensions of student psychology and educational experience. Effective well-being promotion requires understanding these factors' complex interrelationships and implementing integrated approaches addressing multiple factors simultaneously within supportive educational environments.

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