

Student Well-Being and Academic Success in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Student well-being has become an important determinant of academic success in higher education by influencing students' psychological health, engagement, resilience, and learning experiences. This study examines the relationship between student well-being and academic success through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 framework. Studies published between 2019 and 2023 were systematically collected from major academic databases and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that positive student well-being contributes to improved academic achievement, stronger engagement, greater resilience, and higher learning satisfaction. Social support, institutional support, and supportive learning environments further strengthen students' psychological well-being and educational success. However, academic stress, burnout, anxiety, and mental health challenges continue to affect students' learning experiences. The study concludes that promoting student well-being is essential for improving academic success and fostering sustainable educational development in higher education.

Keywords: *Student Well-Being, Academic Success, Higher Education, Psychological Well-Being, Student Engagement, Resilience.*

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Student well-being has become an increasingly important concern in higher education as universities recognize that academic success depends not only on intellectual ability but also on students' psychological, emotional, and social well-being. The transition to university life often exposes students to new academic responsibilities, social environments, and personal challenges that influence their overall well-being. Consequently, higher education institutions have expanded their focus beyond academic achievement to include strategies that support students' mental health, resilience, and quality of life throughout their educational journey.

Student well-being refers to a multidimensional state in which students experience positive psychological functioning, emotional stability, social connectedness, and satisfaction with their academic and personal lives. It encompasses students' ability to manage academic demands, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, and achieve a balanced educational experience. Liu, Ping, and Gao (2019) explain that university students' psychological well-being evolves throughout their academic journey as they adapt to new learning environments and social responsibilities. Similarly, Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) report that psychological well-being is strongly associated with various psychosocial factors that influence students' academic adjustment and overall educational experiences.

Growing attention to student well-being reflects increasing awareness of its relationship with academic success. Students with higher levels of well-being are generally more engaged in learning, demonstrate stronger motivation, and exhibit greater persistence when encountering academic challenges. Conversely, poor well-being may reduce concentration, learning engagement, and academic performance. Morinaj and Hascher (2022) found a positive relationship between student well-being and academic achievement, suggesting that psychological well-being serves as an important foundation for successful learning. Likewise, Holzer et al. (2022) demonstrate that students' school-related well-being is positively associated with achievement goals and academic performance, highlighting the importance of promoting positive educational experiences.

The importance of student well-being has become even more evident following the rapid transformation of higher education in recent years. Changes in learning environments, increased use of digital technologies, and evolving academic expectations have created new opportunities as well as additional pressures for university students. King et al. (2021) found that many students entering university experience significant mental health needs that may influence both well-being and academic success. Furthermore, Ferrari et al. (2022) report that digital interventions have emerged as promising approaches for supporting psychological well-being among university students, demonstrating the growing role of technology in student support services.

Several factors influence student well-being throughout higher education. Academic stress, workload, social relationships, institutional support, and learning environments all contribute to students' psychological and emotional experiences. Teixeira, Brandão, and Dores (2022) found that academic stress is closely associated with emotional regulation difficulties and psychosomatic symptoms among higher education students. Similarly, Maymon, Hall, and Harley (2019) emphasize that high-quality academic and social support during the transition to university significantly improves students' well-being by facilitating successful adjustment to higher education.

Student well-being also contributes to broader educational outcomes beyond academic performance. Students experiencing positive well-being are generally more resilient, demonstrate stronger engagement in learning, and develop greater confidence in managing future educational and professional challenges. Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2021) explain that student engagement serves as an important mechanism through which well-being promotes positive youth development and educational success. Likewise, Buttazzoni (2022) highlights that resilience-oriented educational practices strengthen students' capacity to overcome adversity while maintaining positive learning experiences in higher education.

Despite growing institutional attention, maintaining student well-being remains a considerable challenge. Increasing academic demands, burnout, anxiety, financial pressures, and changing educational environments continue to affect students' psychological health and learning experiences. Rahmatpour et al. (2019) identify academic burnout as an important educational barrier that negatively influences students' motivation and academic functioning. Similarly, Reyes-de-Cózar, Merino-Cajaraville, and Salguero-Pazos (2023) demonstrate that reducing academic burnout while promoting student engagement is essential for sustaining positive well-being throughout university education.

Although numerous studies have examined psychological well-being, academic stress, resilience, and student engagement individually, fewer studies comprehensively synthesize how student well-being contributes to academic success while simultaneously considering its influencing factors, educational benefits, and implementation challenges in higher education. A systematic synthesis is therefore needed to provide a broader understanding of the role of student well-being in supporting successful educational experiences.

Therefore, this study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 framework to examine the relationship between student well-being and academic success in higher education. By synthesizing studies published between 2019 and 2023, this review aims to identify the principles of student well-being, factors influencing well-being, its contribution to academic success, and the challenges affecting student well-being within higher education. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, researchers, and higher education institutions

seeking to strengthen student well-being and improve academic success through supportive educational environments.

2. | LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Well-Being in Higher Education

Student well-being has become an essential component of higher education because it influences students' academic experiences, personal development, and long-term educational success. Universities increasingly recognize that successful learning extends beyond cognitive achievement and requires attention to students' psychological, emotional, and social conditions. Consequently, promoting student well-being has become an important objective for higher education institutions seeking to create supportive learning environments and improve educational quality.

Student well-being refers to a multidimensional concept encompassing psychological health, emotional balance, social relationships, life satisfaction, and positive functioning within academic environments. It reflects students' ability to cope effectively with academic demands, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, and experience positive educational engagement throughout their university studies. Liu, Ping, and Gao (2019) explain that students' psychological well-being develops continuously as they adapt to university life and encounter new academic and social experiences. Similarly, Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) describe psychological well-being as the result of interactions among emotional, personal, and social factors that collectively influence students' educational experiences.

Student well-being is closely associated with positive educational environments that encourage academic engagement, personal growth, and social connectedness. Universities that provide supportive learning environments, effective academic guidance, and accessible student services contribute significantly to students' overall well-being. Douwes et al. (2023) emphasize that educators play an important role in promoting student well-being by creating inclusive learning environments, providing emotional support, and recognizing students' psychological needs. Likewise, Maymon, Hall, and Harley (2019) found that high-quality social and academic support during students' transition into higher education contributes positively to their psychological well-being and academic adjustment.

Well-being in higher education is also influenced by students' physical health and lifestyle. Healthy behaviors such as regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, and effective stress management contribute to improved psychological functioning and academic performance. Hanawi et al. (2020) reported that healthy lifestyle practices positively influence university students' psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of holistic approaches that integrate physical and mental health within higher education. These findings indicate that student well-being should be viewed as a comprehensive educational objective that extends beyond academic achievement alone.

Overall, student well-being represents a multidimensional foundation for successful higher education by integrating psychological health, emotional resilience, social support, and positive learning experiences. As universities continue to respond to increasingly complex educational challenges, strengthening student well-being has become essential for supporting academic success, personal development, and lifelong learning.

Student Well-Being and Academic Success

Student well-being plays a significant role in promoting academic success by enhancing students' motivation, engagement, persistence, and overall learning experiences. Students with positive psychological well-being are generally better prepared to manage academic responsibilities, cope with educational challenges, and maintain consistent participation in learning activities. Consequently, student well-being has become an important predictor of academic achievement within higher education.

Research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between student well-being and academic performance. Students experiencing higher levels of psychological well-being tend to demonstrate stronger academic achievement because they are better able to concentrate, regulate emotions, and maintain motivation throughout their studies. Morinaj and Hascher (2022) found that student well-being is positively associated with academic achievement, indicating that emotionally healthy students perform better academically than students experiencing lower levels of well-being. Similarly, Holzer et al. (2022) reported that school-related well-being contributes positively to academic achievement by strengthening students' achievement goals and learning motivation.

Student well-being also influences academic success through increased engagement and persistence. Students who experience positive emotional and psychological conditions participate more actively in classroom discussions, collaborative learning, and independent study while demonstrating greater resilience when facing academic difficulties. Ling et al. (2022) explain that multidimensional student well-being contributes to improved educational outcomes by supporting engagement, emotional stability, and sustained learning effort. Likewise, Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2021) emphasize that student engagement functions as an important mechanism connecting well-being with positive educational development and academic success.

Furthermore, student well-being encourages long-term educational success by supporting resilience and adaptive learning behaviors. Students with stronger psychological well-being are more likely to recover from academic setbacks, maintain confidence during challenging learning situations, and continue pursuing their educational goals. These findings suggest that promoting student well-being not only improves immediate academic performance but also strengthens students' capacity for lifelong learning and continuous personal development.

Factors Influencing Student Well-Being

Student well-being is influenced by various personal, social, academic, and institutional factors that collectively shape students' educational experiences. Although each student responds differently to university life, research consistently demonstrates that supportive learning environments, healthy social relationships, effective coping strategies, and positive institutional practices contribute significantly to psychological well-being. Understanding these influencing factors is essential for developing educational policies that promote student success and overall well-being.

One of the primary factors affecting student well-being is academic stress. University students frequently encounter demanding coursework, examinations, assignment deadlines, and performance expectations that may negatively influence their psychological health. When academic demands exceed students' coping capacities, stress may develop into emotional exhaustion and reduce learning effectiveness. Teixeira, Brandão, and Dores (2022) found that academic stress is strongly associated with emotional dysregulation and psychosomatic symptoms among higher education students. Similarly, Casuso-Holgado et al. (2019) reported that perceived academic stress significantly affects students' physical and psychological health, ultimately influencing their academic experiences.

Social support also plays an important role in maintaining student well-being. Support received from family members, peers, instructors, and university communities provides students with emotional encouragement, practical assistance, and a stronger sense of belonging. Maymon, Hall, and Harley (2019) demonstrated that high-quality academic and social support during students' transition into university significantly enhances psychological well-being and facilitates successful academic adjustment. Likewise, Alsubaie et al. (2019) found that stronger social support is associated with lower levels of depression and higher quality of life among university students.

Institutional support and the learning environment further contribute to student well-being. Universities that provide accessible counseling services, supportive instructors, inclusive learning environments, and opportunities for student participation create conditions that promote positive educational experiences. Zandvliet, Stanton, and Dhaliwal (2019) emphasize that healthy learning environments positively influence student well-being by improving students' perceptions of safety, belonging, and academic support. Similarly, Douwes et al. (2023) highlight that educators play a central role in promoting student well-being through supportive teaching practices, effective communication, and recognition of students' psychological needs.

In addition to external support, students' resilience and coping abilities influence their capacity to maintain positive well-being throughout higher education. Students who develop effective coping strategies and emotional resilience are generally better able to manage academic challenges while maintaining motivation and psychological stability. Consequently, promoting resilience alongside supportive educational

environments represents an important strategy for strengthening student well-being and improving long-term academic success.

Benefits of Student Well-Being

Student well-being provides numerous educational benefits that extend beyond psychological health to influence academic achievement, engagement, motivation, and lifelong learning. Students who experience positive well-being are generally more confident, motivated, and actively involved in learning activities, enabling them to achieve stronger educational outcomes. Consequently, promoting student well-being has become an important objective for higher education institutions seeking to improve both student success and educational quality.

One of the primary benefits of student well-being is improved academic performance. Students with positive psychological and emotional well-being demonstrate greater concentration, stronger learning motivation, and higher persistence when completing academic tasks. Morinaj and Hascher (2022) found that student well-being positively predicts academic achievement because psychologically healthy students are better able to manage learning demands and maintain effective study behaviors. Similarly, Holzer et al. (2022) reported that school-related well-being contributes directly to stronger academic achievement through increased learning motivation and goal orientation.

Student well-being also strengthens engagement, resilience, and satisfaction with learning. Students who experience supportive educational environments are more likely to participate actively in classroom discussions, collaborate effectively with peers, and remain committed to achieving their academic goals. Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2021) explain that student engagement serves as an important pathway through which well-being contributes to positive educational development. Likewise, Buttazzoni (2022) found that resilience-supportive educational practices improve students' capacity to overcome academic challenges while maintaining positive learning experiences and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, positive student well-being contributes to long-term personal development and lifelong learning. Students with healthy psychological functioning develop stronger self-confidence, adaptive coping skills, and greater readiness to respond to future educational and professional challenges. These competencies support not only immediate academic success but also continuous personal growth, career preparedness, and sustainable participation in lifelong learning. Consequently, investing in student well-being benefits both individual learners and higher education institutions by creating healthier, more productive academic communities.

Challenges of Student Well-Being

Despite its importance, maintaining student well-being remains a major challenge in higher education. University students face increasing academic demands, psychological pressures, social adjustments, and personal responsibilities that may negatively affect their well-being throughout their studies. When these challenges are

not adequately addressed, students may experience declining motivation, emotional distress, reduced academic engagement, and lower academic achievement. Consequently, supporting student well-being has become an essential responsibility for higher education institutions.

One of the most significant challenges affecting student well-being is academic burnout. Continuous academic pressure, heavy workloads, frequent assessments, and high performance expectations may result in emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and reduced learning effectiveness. Rahmatpour et al. (2019) identified academic burnout as a major educational barrier that negatively influences students' academic functioning and psychological health. Similarly, Reyes-de-Cózar, Merino-Cajaraville, and Salguero-Pazos (2023) found that reducing academic burnout while strengthening student engagement is essential for maintaining positive well-being and improving educational outcomes.

Mental health concerns also represent an important challenge in higher education. Many university students experience anxiety, depression, loneliness, and psychological distress during their academic journey, particularly when adapting to new educational and social environments. King et al. (2021) reported that a considerable proportion of students enter university with existing mental health needs that may influence both their well-being and academic success. Likewise, Ferrari et al. (2022) found that although digital mental health interventions provide promising support for university students, maintaining long-term psychological well-being continues to require comprehensive institutional strategies and accessible student support services.

Another challenge involves balancing academic responsibilities with personal well-being. Students often struggle to manage coursework, extracurricular activities, employment, financial responsibilities, and social relationships simultaneously. These competing demands may increase stress levels and reduce opportunities for rest, healthy lifestyles, and emotional recovery. Teixeira, Brandão, and Dores (2022) emphasize that prolonged academic stress contributes to emotional dysregulation and psychosomatic symptoms, reducing students' ability to cope effectively with educational challenges.

Institutional limitations may further affect student well-being. Limited counseling services, insufficient academic support, large class sizes, and inadequate communication between students and educators may reduce students' access to psychological and academic assistance. Douwes et al. (2023) highlight the importance of educators' active involvement in recognizing students' well-being needs and providing supportive learning environments that encourage both academic and personal development.

Overall, the literature indicates that promoting student well-being requires collaborative efforts among students, educators, and higher education institutions. Reducing academic stress, strengthening mental health services, enhancing social support, and creating inclusive learning environments are essential strategies for improving student well-being and supporting long-term academic success.

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine the relationship between student well-being and academic success in higher education. The review synthesized previous empirical studies to identify the principles of student well-being, factors influencing well-being, educational benefits, and implementation challenges within university learning environments.

The review followed the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework proposed by Page et al. (2021). The review process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of relevant studies. This systematic procedure ensured transparency, consistency, and rigor throughout the literature selection process.

Relevant studies were identified through Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, ERIC, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, and Google Scholar. The search employed combinations of keywords including *student well-being*, *psychological well-being*, *academic success*, *academic achievement*, *student engagement*, *academic stress*, *academic burnout*, *resilience*, *mental health*, *social support*, and *higher education*. Only English-language publications published between 2019 and 2023 were included to capture recent developments in student well-being research.

The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, systematic literature reviews, and scholarly books focusing on student well-being in higher education. Studies discussing psychological well-being, academic performance, student engagement, resilience, academic stress, burnout, mental health, social support, and learning environments were included. Editorial articles, duplicate publications, opinion papers, and studies conducted outside higher education contexts were excluded from the review.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings were organized into five themes: (1) student well-being in higher education, (2) student well-being and academic success, (3) factors influencing student well-being, (4) benefits of student well-being, and (5) challenges of student well-being. This thematic organization enabled a comprehensive synthesis of current evidence regarding how student well-being contributes to academic success in higher education.

The analytical framework positions student well-being as a multidimensional construct that enhances academic success through improved psychological health, engagement, resilience, motivation, and positive learning experiences. The framework also recognizes academic stress, social support, institutional support, learning environments, and mental health as important factors influencing student well-being and educational success in higher education.

4. | RESULTS

The findings of this systematic literature review indicate that student well-being plays a significant role in supporting academic success in higher education. Across the

reviewed studies, students with higher levels of psychological well-being consistently demonstrate stronger academic performance, greater engagement, higher resilience, and improved learning satisfaction. The literature further emphasizes that positive well-being is influenced by supportive learning environments, social support, and institutional commitment to students' mental health and personal development.

One of the most consistent findings is the positive relationship between student well-being and academic success. Students experiencing positive psychological well-being are more capable of managing academic demands, maintaining concentration, and achieving higher learning outcomes. Morinaj and Hascher (2022) found that student well-being is positively associated with academic achievement, indicating that emotionally healthy students perform better academically. Similarly, Holzer et al. (2022) reported that school-related well-being strengthens students' achievement goals and contributes directly to improved academic performance.

The review also demonstrates that student well-being enhances engagement and resilience throughout higher education. Students with positive emotional and psychological conditions participate more actively in classroom activities, collaborate effectively with peers, and demonstrate greater persistence when facing academic challenges. Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2021) found that student engagement serves as an important mechanism linking well-being with positive educational development and learning success. Likewise, Sun and Liu (2023) reported that academic resilience and academic well-being positively influence educational attainment through increased student engagement in online learning environments.

Another important finding concerns the influence of social and institutional support on student well-being. Universities that provide supportive learning environments, effective academic guidance, counseling services, and positive instructor-student relationships create conditions that strengthen students' psychological well-being. Maymon, Hall, and Harley (2019) found that high-quality academic and social support significantly improves first-year students' well-being and facilitates successful adjustment to university life. Similarly, Chen, Bian, and Zhu (2023) demonstrated that social support improves academic engagement through increased life satisfaction and academic motivation, highlighting the importance of supportive educational communities.

The reviewed studies further indicate that resilience and effective coping strategies contribute substantially to maintaining student well-being. Students who develop resilience are better able to manage academic stress, recover from setbacks, and maintain positive learning behaviors despite educational challenges. Buttazzoni (2022) found that resilience-oriented pedagogical approaches strengthen students' ability to cope with adversity while promoting psychological well-being and academic success. Likewise, Daddow et al. (2020) reported that supportive educational experiences promote graduate attributes while enhancing students' confidence and overall well-being.

Despite these positive findings, several challenges continue to affect student well-being in higher education. Academic stress, burnout, anxiety, mental health concerns, and increasing educational demands remain significant barriers to students' academic success and personal development. Rahmatpour et al. (2019) identified academic burnout as a major educational complication that negatively influences students' motivation and academic functioning. Similarly, Teixeira, Brandão, and Dorez (2022) found that prolonged academic stress contributes to emotional dysregulation and psychosomatic symptoms, reducing students' capacity to perform effectively in higher education.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that student well-being contributes substantially to academic success by strengthening engagement, resilience, motivation, and positive learning experiences. However, maximizing these educational benefits requires comprehensive institutional support, accessible mental health services, supportive learning environments, and educational strategies that promote students' psychological well-being throughout their university studies.

5. | DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that student well-being represents a fundamental component of academic success in higher education. Beyond supporting psychological health, student well-being enhances motivation, engagement, resilience, and students' capacity to manage academic challenges effectively. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that students with positive well-being are more likely to participate actively in learning, achieve stronger academic outcomes, and experience greater satisfaction throughout their educational journey.

One of the principal findings of this review is the positive relationship between student well-being and academic success. Students who maintain positive psychological and emotional well-being demonstrate stronger academic engagement, improved concentration, and greater persistence when facing educational challenges. These characteristics enable students to perform more effectively while reducing the negative effects of academic pressure. The findings therefore suggest that student well-being should be recognized as an essential foundation for academic achievement rather than simply a complementary aspect of university education.

The review also highlights the important role of social and institutional support in promoting student well-being. Supportive relationships with instructors, peers, and university communities create learning environments that encourage confidence, belonging, and positive academic experiences. Institutions that provide counseling services, academic advising, mentoring programs, and inclusive learning environments contribute significantly to students' psychological well-being. These findings indicate that universities should adopt comprehensive support systems that integrate academic assistance with student well-being initiatives.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between student well-being, engagement, and resilience. Students with positive well-being are more likely to remain

actively involved in learning activities, demonstrate stronger commitment to academic goals, and recover more effectively from academic setbacks. Resilience enables students to adapt to changing educational demands while maintaining motivation and positive learning behaviors. Consequently, educational strategies that strengthen resilience and encourage active engagement can simultaneously improve both well-being and academic success.

The findings further indicate that maintaining student well-being requires attention to students' mental health and learning environments. Academic stress, excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion, and limited access to support services continue to influence students' educational experiences. Universities therefore need to create learning environments that balance academic excellence with psychological well-being by promoting healthy study habits, flexible support services, and positive instructor-student interactions. Such approaches contribute not only to improved learning outcomes but also to healthier educational communities.

Despite increasing awareness of student well-being, several challenges remain. Academic burnout, anxiety, financial pressures, social adjustment difficulties, and post-pandemic educational changes continue to affect students across higher education institutions. These challenges require coordinated institutional responses involving educators, counselors, administrators, and policymakers to ensure that students receive appropriate academic and psychological support throughout their studies.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that student well-being is closely associated with academic success, engagement, resilience, and long-term educational development. Strengthening student well-being through supportive institutional policies, positive learning environments, accessible mental health services, and student-centered educational practices will contribute to improved academic achievement and sustainable success in higher education.

6. | CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between student well-being and academic success in higher education through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 framework. By synthesizing studies published between 2019 and 2023, the review identified the principles of student well-being, factors influencing well-being, educational benefits, and implementation challenges within higher education.

The findings indicate that student well-being positively contributes to academic success by strengthening psychological health, learning engagement, resilience, motivation, and persistence. Students with higher levels of well-being demonstrate stronger academic performance, greater satisfaction with learning, and better capacity to manage educational challenges. Furthermore, social support, institutional support, positive learning environments, and effective coping strategies play significant roles in maintaining students' well-being throughout their academic journey.

However, several challenges continue to influence student well-being in higher education, including academic stress, burnout, anxiety, mental health concerns, and increasing educational demands. Addressing these challenges requires universities to develop comprehensive support systems that integrate academic guidance, counseling services, resilience development, and supportive learning environments.

Overall, student well-being represents a fundamental foundation for academic success and sustainable educational development in higher education. Universities should continue prioritizing student well-being through inclusive institutional policies, student-centered teaching practices, accessible mental health support, and positive educational environments. Future research may further explore innovative institutional interventions and cross-cultural perspectives to strengthen student well-being and improve academic success across diverse higher education contexts.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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