

Psychological Wellbeing and Holistic Development among Students: A Review of Related Literature

Lili Bhoi¹ Prof. and Laxmidhar Behera²

- 1) Research Scholar, Department of Education Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Bhubaneswar, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar Email- bhoili525@gmail.com
 - 2) Professor & Head, Department of Education Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Bhubaneswar Email- behera17@yahoo.co.in
- Page No. 105-112

Abstract: *Psychological wellbeing of students is one of growing concern from local to global context. As it is an important aspect relating to students' holistic development, which is the key vision of education process. So, this paper identifies and synthesizes the review related to psychological wellbeing and holistic development among students to give a comprehensive insight into the research trends relating this area. It includes 45 articles/literatures published between 2010 to 2025. For identifying this literature specific term i.e psychological wellbeing, mental health, socio-emotional development, holistic development, students, learners, adolescents, school students, university students etc. are used to search and retrieve from different database such as, Google Scholar, Academia, ProQuest, Web of Science, Springer Link etc. Further proper inclusion and exclusion criteria are followed for screening out the article, from which 30 articles are included for final review analysis. A qualitative theme-based analysis was done to highlight the research trends and synthesize the review summary on outcomes across research studies. It revealed that there are different influencing factors such as stress, anxiety, work pressure, negative environment, which negatively affect the psychological wellbeing of students whereas the protective factors like social support, conducive learning environment, resilience, self-efficacy etc. positively promote the psychological wellbeing among them. It also found that, psychological wellbeing affects the overall work performance of students and also support for their holistic development. Based on reflection of study, it will provide a future direction for conducting further research on this area.*

Keywords- *Psychological wellbeing, mental health, and holistic development*

Introduction

In the present education system, students' academic success is mostly prioritized along with their personal and national development. Now, the focus is shifted from mere high academic score to cumulative academic achievement which not only confined to classroom conditions rather social, emotional and economic aspect as well. In another way, the foremost important aim of education is lies on promoting holistic development of the students. Due to the rapid technological advancement, unavoidable social expectations, increasing academic demands and personal unfulfilled goals and personal unfulfilled goals, and personal unfulfilled goals, the psychological wellbeing and mental health are emerged as significant area of concern in educational research (Osamika et al., 2021). Because it is need to explore how the students thrive with social, emotional and others academic difficulties in educational settings. A major part of university students (almost one-third) is suffered with mental health problem, who are not finding any treatment/ professional help for it (Rasanen et al., 2016). It only confined to any particular stage of education, rather all the students deal with dynamic academic environment, social and emotional demands, where they require psychological adjustment

(Ozpolat et al., 2012; Stamp et al., 2015). In this regard, psychological wellbeing of students is a key aspect need to be taken care for protecting their mental health. Psychological wellbeing is a very broader and multidimensional concept, which includes self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relationship with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy or sense of self-determination (as cited by Stamp et al., 2015). It not merely refers to only absence of mental illness rather it gives emphasis on life satisfaction and happiness of students. Further, it develops positive mental health and make the students resilient to face and overcome from all kinds of adversities. In this way, students create path for their own holistic development, which is the focus of today education system. NEP 2020 also emphasizes on holistic development of students and it should be the primary aim need to fulfill irrespective of all stages of education. As, holistic development of students follows an integrated approach of balanced development of students social, cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects. Both psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students are complementary to each other. To bridge this gap there is demand to conduct research on this pivotal area. For which, a comprehensive review of related literature has been done to develop an insight into the research trends on this specific area.

Objectives

1. To study the research trends in psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students.
2. To identify gaps in current research and give future direction for undertaking research on psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students.

Dimensions of Review

Psychological wellbeing and holistic development among students are emerging areas of concern for conducting studies. By considering the above objectives following dimensions are taken for conducting review of related literature.

1. Psychological wellbeing of students
2. Factor influencing psychological wellbeing
3. Impact of psychological wellbeing
4. Psychological wellbeing and holistic development

Methodology

The present study followed a systematic procedure to conduct the review and develop in insight for carrying out further research on psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students. The articles have been identified from different database such as Google Scholar, Eric, Web of Science, Pro-Quest, Springer Link etc. for which the search terms like psychological wellbeing, mental health, and holistic development of students/university students/college students are used. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are specified for screening out the articles for review. From which 30 research articles retrieved for final review purpose.

Exclusion Criteria

As the main purpose of the study is to examine the research trends on psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students, that's why the present study excluded the irrelevant articles. After going through initial review all the thematic article/conceptual paper, the article based on psychological wellbeing of teachers and people/ stakeholders and most considerably article published before the year 2010 are excluded from the present study.

Inclusion Criteria

The article which are specifically focus on psychological wellbeing of students/ learners and their social, cognitive and emotional development or their holistic development are mostly taken into consideration for the present study. Furthermore, the data-based research article from

different peer-review journals and other social science index journals exclusively published in between the year of 2010-2025, are only selected for review.

Data Extraction

After final selection of 30 empirical paper or research article from the authentic journals an in-depth review was done to develop an insight to this specific research area. For which, data has been extracted about the location of study, methodology followed and the major findings of the studies related to psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students. After this, a thematic analysis of all studies was done, on pre-defined dimension wise.

Review of related literature

The review analysis has been done comprehensively on this pertinent area of research. It comprises psychological wellbeing of students, factor influencing psychological wellbeing, Impact of psychological wellbeing, holistic development of students and psychological wellbeing and holistic development of student. It throws the lights on research trends on this area, which mainly includes place of study, level of education (students), methodology particularly types of research and findings of the studies. The dimension wise review of related literatures is analyzed, which is given below.

Psychological wellbeing of students

Psychological wellbeing is now emerged as an attention seeking area of educational setting. As, psychological wellbeing is the main concern which mostly affect the mental health of the students (Udhayakumar & Illango, 2018). It is now a growing global concern, for conducting study due to increasing mental health challenges particularly for students in this present scenario (Twenge, 2019). It is a significant determinant of students' academic success, academic performance, engagement and adjustment in the learning environment and most significantly their long-term mental health (Osamika et al., 2021). Numbers of studies were conducted on psychological wellbeing of students at different stages. Because, it plays a pertinent role to navigate the learning activities along with psychological conditions of the students (Ozpolat et al., 2012). In the recent few years, the studies are surprisingly increase at global scenario in the area of students' positive psychology or specifically on their psychological wellbeing and mental health. Research also revealed that, now a days students are also facing different issues and challenges relating to their academic journey, like academic stress, anxiety, depression and fear of failure etc., which negatively affects their academic achievement (Rasanen et al., 2016). Although female students have found more depressed and stress as compare to their counterpart male, but study reported that there is no gender-based difference found in psychological wellbeing among students (Dodd et al., 2021; Morales-Rodríguez, 2020; Udhayakumar & Illango, 2018; Yang, 2010). Contradict to this finding, a study revealed that female have low psychological wellbeing status as compare to male and negative learning experiences, which mostly influence their study (Brooker & Vu, 2020; Dodd et al., 2021).

Factor influencing psychological wellbeing

Stamp et al. (2015) found that mental toughness is a strong predictive factor of students' psychological wellbeing. Accordingly, the students who are facing academic stress, family conflict and environmental barrier are found to have maladaptive coping skills which leads to drop down their psychological wellbeing (El Ansari et al., 2011; Yang, 2010). Whereas the students who better cope with the adverse conditions have higher psychological wellbeing (Shengyao et al., 2024). In these depressive conditions social support positively influence the psychological wellbeing of students (El Ansari et al., 2011; Hanawi et al., 2020). The social and academic experiences of students is a positive contributing factor to their good psychological wellbeing whereas gender and emotional experiences of students is seen as a

negative factor for it (Brooker & Vu, 2020). Contradict to this statement, a research study also highlighted that psychological characteristics of students like, self-efficacy, resilience, and motivation mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing (Shengyao et al., 2024). Everyone has different personality, so far as individual difference is concerned. But a study claimed that alone personality has no impact on psychological wellbeing of students, but the integrated personality characteristics such as openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, positively predict their psychological wellbeing (Osamika et al., 2021). Another study also revealed that emotional intelligence That is why everyone differently deal with day-to-day activities in their life, which mostly affect their own set of lifestyles which is another key factor affecting psychological wellbeing of students (Ozpolat et al., 2012). Research shows that, students having poor lifestyle have suffering from depression, anxiety and stress which are the key factors for psychological wellbeing of the students (Hanawi et al., 2020). Aligned with this research findings, a study also highlighted that, locality of students also affects the psychological wellbeing of students, as students from rural are found to have more psychological wellbeing status as compared to students belonging from urban area (Udhayakumar & Illango, 2018). Research conducted by Yang (2010) also revealed that, there found differences with regard to coping skills and psychological wellbeing among Asian and American international students. Some others psychological factors like, emotional intelligence, anxiety, self-concept and empathy are associated with students' psychological wellbeing (Morales-Rodríguez, 2020).

Students returning to the college have more depression, stress and anxiety related to their both personal and professional/ career, for general mental health program are not just enough. Studies suggested to take step seriously for detection, and treatment of students' psychiatric disorder (Liu et al., 2019). Age is also an influential factor of students' psychological wellbeing, as students in early years or undergraduate students have found to have high stress with regards to future career and simultaneously have, lack of coping skills as compare to postgraduate students (Dodd et al., 2021). Besides all these factors, students need to have support and care for increasing their psychological wellbeing status (Hanawi et al., 2020). Study evident that need based online and offline intervention program can help the students to develop their psychological wellbeing (Rasanen et al., 2016).

Impact of psychological wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional concept which is centered around the life satisfaction and students' happiness. Psychological wellbeing is not mere absence of mental illness among the students. It influences the overall behavior and work performance of students. Because students having good psychological wellbeing status can develop positive emotional state which leads to happiness in their life (Mustafa et al., 2020; Navale, 2017; Sulaiman et al., 2023). It encourages the students to better cope with their learning environment and develop their academic performance (Mustafa et al., 2020). A study also evident that psychological wellbeing has no impact on students' academic achievement ((Topham & Moller, 2010). But some research studies revealed that, psychological wellbeing and academic performance of students are positively correlated (Grabel, 2017; Mustafa et al., 2020). The psychological characteristics like motivation, resilience and self-efficacy of students can mediate and strengthen the relationship between psychological wellbeing and academic achievement (Shengyao et al., 2024). All the dimensions of psychological wellbeing have positive impact on academic achievement of the students (Mustafa et al., 2020; Grabel, 2017). As a multidimensional concept it also impacts the overall work performance of students along with their socio-emotional development (Liu et al., 2019).

Psychological wellbeing and holistic development

The psychological wellbeing of students not only affect the academic performance of the students, but also it mostly influenced their overall developmental aspects (Liu et al., 2019). The dimension of psychological wellbeing i.e purpose in life, self-acceptance, personal growth, environmental mastery, positive relationship with others and autonomy, all are somehow affecting the different developmental aspects of students. A strong sense of purpose in life develops academic motivation among the students and also helps for their positive cognitive learning (Hill et al., 2016; Steger, 2020). This also facilitates the future orientations of life among the students with greater happiness and satisfaction. Self-acceptance among the learners makes them more resilient and develops confidence to look forward besides any kinds of issues or challenges. It reduced stress, anxiety and depression and ultimately help for their socio-emotional development (Khan et al., 2022; Neff & Germer, 2013). When students more inclined towards their personal growth, they become openness to different learning experiences in all situations. Study found that, it helps the students to be more adaptable and engageable in diverse learning environment (Zhou et al., 2021). Students having environmental mastery are found to have good coping skills in stressful situations and specially accommodate themselves in transitional period like entering to the college (Asante & Mensah, 2023; Kuh et al., 2011). The most important component of psychological wellbeing i.e positive relationship with others, helps the students to find the social support when they need the most, to overcome from different problem. The support, belongingness and emotional understanding of the people promotes the emotional stability and also encourages socio-emotional development among the students (Naz et al., 2024; Roffey, 2012; Varga & Zilberberg, 2024). And the last one is autonomy of students to perform their task independently and making own decision directly influence their own psychological wellness or mental health status (Nwagu et al., 2023; Van Petegem et al., 2015).

Meta Analysis and Reflections of the study

Research showed that female students are facing more stress than male students (El Ansari et al., 2011; Yang, 2010). The experience that may be positive or negative, gained by the students from their educational institutions mostly affect their psychological wellbeing (Brooker & Vu, 2020). Study also suggested that, urgent steps should be taken to provide intervention support to the students for prosperous their psychological wellbeing (Udhayakumar & Illango, 2018). Several studies evident that lifestyle has a greater influence on psychological wellbeing of students (Hanawi et al., 2020; Ozpolat et al., 2012). Students from different residence are found to have different psychological characteristics. Due to environmental influence students are facing stress, depression and anxiety problem which limit their psychological wellbeing status (El Ansari et al., 2011; Yang, 2010). For which needed social support by family and educational institutions should be provided to the students to develop a healthy lifestyle and to increase their psychological wellbeing (Hanawi et al., 2020; Naz et al., 2024). Both the psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students are emerging concern of educational setting. As, first one is the key to students' life and second one i.e holistic development of learners is the ultimate aim of education. Study also showed that each dimension of psychological wellbeing such as self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationship with others and purpose in life, all have positive contributing factors for students social, emotional, cognitive development (Roffey, 2012; Varga & Zilberberg, 2024). In this way it promotes holistic development among the students (Nwagu et al., 2023; Van Petegem et al., 2015).

A substantial similarity is found in study design to conduct the research on psychological wellbeing. Most of the research followed descriptive, correlational and few of experimental research method, with quantitative data (Mustafa et al., 2020; Navale, 2017; Liu

et al., 2019). Psychological wellbeing students is a growing concerned which cannot be ignored. As, most of the research are already conducted on College and University students, but less numbers of studies conducted on elementary and secondary level students. When look into Indian context the studies are further very few, although NEP 2020 also given emphasize on students' psychological wellbeing. From the review analysis it has been that, most of the studies were from abroad, like Malesia, UK etc. To meet the demands and bridge this research gap, future research may be conducted on psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students by following a mixed method approach to give a comprehensive result.

Conclusion

Psychological wellbeing of students is an emerging need which now creating demands for conducting research to resolve the challenges faced by the students and foster their academic success. This review will provide a comprehensive view on current trends of research on psychological wellbeing and holistic development of students. By addressing, the present research gaps, the study should be undertaken to know the status of students psychological or mental health and also accordingly plan for intervention program for the students to support their psychological wellbeing and facilitates holistic development among the students.

References

- Twenge, J. M. (2019). More Time on Technology, Less Happiness? Associations Between Digital-Media Use and Psychological Well-Being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(4), 372-379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419838244> (Original work published 2019)
- Asante, K. O., & Mensah, K. A. (2023). Environmental mastery and academic stress: The mediating role of coping strategies among university students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(2), 223-237.
- Brooker, A., & Vu, C. (2020). How do university experiences contribute to students' psychological wellbeing? *Student Success*, 11(2), 99-108.
- Dodd, R. H., Dadaczynski, K., Okan, O., McCaffery, K. J., & Pickles, K. (2021). Psychological wellbeing and academic experience of university students in Australia during COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(3), 866.
- El Ansari, W., Stock, C., Snelgrove, S., Hu, X., Parke, S., Davies, S., ... & Mabhala, A. (2011). Feeling healthy? A survey of physical and psychological wellbeing of students from seven universities in the UK. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 8(5), 1308.
- Gräbel, B. F. (2017). The relationship between wellbeing and academic achievement: A systematic review. <https://purl.utwente.nl/essays/73514>
- Hanawi, S. A., Saat, N. Z. M., Zulkafly, M., Hazlenah, H., Taibukahn, N. H., Yoganathan, D., ... & Low, F. J. (2020). Impact of a healthy lifestyle on the psychological well-being of university students. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Research and Allied Sciences*, 9(2-2020), 1-7.
- Hill, P. L., Burrow, A. L., Brandenberger, J. W., Lapsley, D. K., & Quaranto, J. C. (2016). Purpose in life and positive youth development: A meta-analytic review. *Youth & Society*, 48(4), 529-547.
- Khan, M. A., Yousaf, A., & Fatima, T. (2022). Self-acceptance and psychological well-being among university students: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, 12(1), 45-53.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2011). *Piecing together the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations*. ASHE Higher Education Report.

- Liu, X., Ping, S., & Gao, W. (2019). Changes in undergraduate students' psychological well-being as they experience university life. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(16), 2864.
- Morales-Rodríguez, F. M., Espigares-López, I., Brown, T., & Pérez-Mármol, J. M. (2020). The relationship between psychological well-being and psychosocial factors in university students. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(13), 4778.
- Mustafa, M. B., Rani, N. H. M., Bistaman, M. N., Salim, S. S. S., Ahmad, A., Zakaria, N. H., & Safian, N. A. A. (2020). The Relationship between Psychological Well-Being and University Students Academic Achievement. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(7), 518–525.
- Navale, D. N. (2018). Psychological well-being and academic performance of students. *International Journal of Physiology, Nutrition and Physical Education*, 3(1), 949-951.
- Naz, A.M., Khan, S., Manzoor, S., Rehman, K.U., Aslam Z, and Noor, N. (2024). Relationship between resilience, social support and psychological well-being in nursing students. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 29(8),718-731. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/17449871241278854>
- Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2013). A pilot study and randomized controlled trial of the mindful self-compassion program. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69(1), 28-44.
- Nwagu, C., Alade, F., & Omokaro, F. (2023). The role of autonomy and motivation in predicting academic persistence among Nigerian undergraduates. *African Journal of Psychology*, 9(3), 112-126.
- Ozpolat, A. R., Isgor, I. Y., & Sezer, F. (2012). Investigating psychological wellbeing of university students according to lifestyles. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 256-262.
- Räsänen, P., Lappalainen, P., Muotka, J., Tolvanen, A., & Lappalainen, R. (2016). An online guided ACT intervention for enhancing the psychological wellbeing of university students: A randomized controlled clinical trial. *Behaviour research and therapy*, 78, 30-42.
- Roffey, S. (2012). *Positive relationships: Evidence-based practice across the world*. Springer.
- Shengyao, Y., Xuefen, L., Jenatabadi, H. S., Samsudin, N., Chunchun, K., & Ishak, Z. (2024). Emotional intelligence impact on academic achievement and psychological well-being among university students: the mediating role of positive psychological characteristics. *BMC psychology*, 12(1), 389.
- Sulaiman, S. K., Tsiga-Ahmed, F. I. I., Arora, T., Faris, M. E., Musa, M. S., Kareem, Y. A., & Khan, M. A. (2023). Perceived changes in the mental well-being among Nigerians due to Ramadan Intermittent Fasting during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Brain and Behaviour*, 13(5), e2990.
- Stamp, E., Crust, L., Swann, C., Perry, J., Clough, P., & Marchant, D. (2015). Relationships between mental toughness and psychological wellbeing in undergraduate students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 75, 170-174.
- Steger, M. F. (2020). Meaning in life and well-being: A comparative review. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 15(2), 121–131.
- Topham, P. and Moller, N. (2010). New students' psychological well-being and its relation to first year academic performance in a UK university. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 11(3), 196-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733145.2010.519043>

- Udhayakumar, P., & Illango, P. (2018). Psychological wellbeing among college students. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, 3(2), 79-89.
- Van Petegem, S., Beyers, W., Vansteenkiste, M., & Soenens, B. (2015). On the association between adolescent autonomy and psychosocial functioning: Examining decisional independence from a self-determination theory perspective. *Developmental Psychology*, 51(5), 671–682.
- Varga, A., & Zilberberg, Y. (2024). The impact of teacher-student relationships on adolescents' mental well-being: A longitudinal perspective. *Journal of School Psychology*, 92, 101-114.
- Yang, Y. T. T. (2010). Stress, coping, and psychological well-being: Comparison among American and Asian international graduate students from Taiwan, China, and South Korea.
- Zhou, M., Zhang, G., & Yang, Y. (2021). Personal growth initiative and academic engagement among college students: The role of resilience. *Current Psychology*, 40(12), 5908–5916.