

Literature Review: Multidimensional Factors Influencing Psychological Well-Being—A Comprehensive Analysis of Recent Research

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ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is an important issue in present mental health research, including several interrelated elements and influenced by different environmental factors. This comprehensive investigation summarizes the recent empirical data (from 2021 to 2026) to explain the multifactorial factors affecting psychological well-being in various stages of life and different groups. According to bibliometric network analysis and current research, this review classifies the major topics into five categories: (1) definition and quality of life of psychological well-being; (2) impact of working conditions and occupations on employees' psychological strength; (3) assessment of life satisfaction, purpose in life and existential problems; (4) psychological consequences of the epidemic and measures to enhance resilience; and (5) special vulnerability among young people and gender-related differences. The research indicates that psychological well-being is very important and is related to many aspects such as social support system, comfortable job, psychological flexibility, personal ability and life importance. Furthermore, recent studies emphasize the severe mental health issues faced by young people because of lifestyle changes, frequent use of electronic devices and economic uncertainty. This review integrates the credible results to offer advice for clinical treatment, organizational interventions and enhancement of public health policies. In the future, more research is needed to explore the mechanisms of well-being, conducting longitudinal studies to analyze the causal relationships, designing culturally suitable intervention schemes and applying implementation science approaches to link research with practice.

Keywords: psychological well-being; mental health determinants; life satisfaction; workplace well-being; pandemic resilience; quality of life; social support; younger generations

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Background and Significance

Psychological well-being is one of the most researched but conceptually complicated concepts in present-day psychology and positive psychology. It differs from the mere absence of psychiatric disorders or mental diseases, including subjective feelings of happiness, significance, aim, positive emotions and the realization of one's ability (Ryff, 1989). The World Health Organization describes mental health as 'a state of mental well-being where each individual can realize his or her own potentials, deal with the ordinary stresses of life, work efficiently

and creatively, and make contributions to the community' (WHO, 2021). This definition goes beyond the pathologic-oriented approaches, considering well-being as an active and changing state which needs continuous development and assistance.

The importance of psychological well-being research has greatly increased in recent years because of some common global events: the lasting effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid development of digitalization and social media impact, economic instability and job insecurity, and the recorded epidemiological tendencies of rising mental health problems in all ages, especially in young people (Mental State of the World Report, 2024). Present epidemiological data shows serious figures - 95.5 million confirmed cases of mental disorders occurred worldwide in 2023, and it is predicted that the increase will continue (Sapien Labs, 2025). These figures highlight the urgent need for a thorough comprehension of the determinants of well-being and evidence-based preventive measures.

Scope and Organization of Review

This literature review systematically merges the empirical studies published between 2024 and 2026, examining various factors influencing the psychological well-being in different groups and life conditions. It combines the findings of bibliometric network analysis, indicating the connections among research clusters and new thematic trends, with the thorough assessment of the substantive research such as: (a) basic concepts and measurement aspects of psychological well-being; (b) impact of occupation and workplace on employees' well-being and psychological capital; (c) satisfaction with life, meaning making and existential aspects of well-being; (d) psychological effects during the pandemic and resilience building; and (e) demographic disadvantages with particular emphasis on age-group differences and gender-related results.

The review is conducted as follows: In Section 2, important theoretical frameworks and conceptual differences are explained; Section 3 summarizes the extensive empirical results into major thematic groups; Section 4 investigates the integrated theoretical consequences concerning the mechanisms and relationships among the determinants of welfare; Section 5 points out the current research foci and the lack of evidence; and Section 6 summarizes the practical suggestions and the prospective research directions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Defining Psychological Well-being: Theoretical Perspectives

Present-day studies acknowledge several approaches in the field of psychological well-being. The hedonic approach, which focuses on the individual's subjective feelings of pleasure, satisfaction and positive emotions, is different from the eudaimonic approach which concentrates on the sense of meaning, purpose, personal development and self-actualization. Ryff's multi-faceted model of psychological well-being includes six core dimensions: autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). In addition, some other frameworks consider: subjective well-being (based on personal evaluation of life and positive affect), life satisfaction (judgment of one's life in various fields by oneself) and quality of life (a complete evaluation of one's functioning in physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects).

Recent integrative viewpoints consider psychological well-being as a complicated and changing entity resulting from the interactions among individual traits (personality, coping abilities, psychological flexibility), social environments (family ties, friendships, social assistance), working conditions (job features, organizational

atmosphere, economic stability) and major social frameworks (unequal conditions, social capital, cultural customs). This biopsychosocial system approach indicates that well-being is an emergent characteristic produced by hierarchically-structured interactions, not a single-factor determined outcome (Frontiers in Psychology, 2019).

Measurement and Assessment Approaches

Current evaluation of psychological happiness uses several verified tools which cover different aspects. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being evaluate autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance in a multi-dimensional way. The Positive Mental Health Scale deals with psychological resources and strengths. Life satisfaction measuring devices such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) give a brief, validated subjective opinion on the general contentment of life. Specialized measures are also used to assess well-being in certain situations like in working conditions (Job Satisfaction Scale, Work Engagement Scale), educational environments (Student Well-being Inventory) and during the pandemic period (specific mental health measurements for COVID).

Recent studies highlight the importance of measurement difficulties and possibilities: (1) the requirement of multi-dimensional evaluation to assess various aspects of well-being instead of single-item indices; (2) the significance of longitudinal repeated measurements for dynamic assessment over time; (3) the need for cultural adaptation and validation to ensure the equivalence of measurement in different groups; (4) the combination of objective indicators (such as behavioral, physiological and social network characteristics) with subjective self-report data; and (5) the application of new technologies like experience sampling and real-time assessment methods (CDC, 2025).

Empirical Research Findings: Major Thematic Clusters

Fundamental Conceptualizations: Quality of Life and Meaning-Making

Recently, a study has shown the important role of quality of life and meaning-making as basic elements of psychological health. Quality of life includes the overall evaluation of one's functioning in physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects. Research in 2025 also indicates the significant relationships between the assessments of life quality and psychological well-being, indicating that these concepts are related hierarchical domains (Frontiers in Psychology, 2025). The network analysis demonstrates that "quality" and "life" are central nodes with many links to various results such as happiness, life satisfaction and meaning.

Constructing coherent narratives from life experiences, identifying purpose and perceiving significance, plays an important role in one's welfare. Recent research indicates that persons having a sense of meaning in their lives have better mental health, greater ability to resist difficulties and improved psychological conditions (PMC, 2024). This connection has been observed in different categories like those who have experienced pandemics, patients with chronic diseases and the old people facing life changes.

Psychological capital, including efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism, plays a significant role in converting meaning and purpose into better health and happiness. It has been found that people with higher psychological capital have a stronger ability to achieve meaningful objectives, withstand difficulties and keep good health under hard conditions (PMC, 2024).

Occupational and Workplace Influences: Employee Well-being and Psychological Capital

Current organizational studies show that employee psychological well-being is not only an important

organizational value but also has a significant effect on organizational performance, productivity and staff retention. Recent empirical investigations have found the complex effects of working environment on well-being:

Research indicates that job characteristics such as task autonomy, skill application, worthwhile contribution, task diversity and performance evaluation have a significant effect on employees' happiness (CDC, 2025). The organizations which carry out job enrichment programs, encourage participation in decision-making and provide more freedom to workers, experience better mental health of the employees along with increased efficiency and decreased absence from work.

Social Support in Occupational Settings: The workplace social support, including supervisor aid, friendly relations with colleagues, peer guidance and organizational membership, is identified as the main protective element against occupational stress. Recent research shows that the employees who have strong workplace social support experience less depression and anxiety, greater satisfaction in life and better physical health (Frontiers in Psychology, 2019).

Conversely, occupational stress such as heavy work load, unclear roles, interpersonal conflicts and job insecurity have a bad effect on the health and happiness of the employees. Burnout, which is defined by feelings of exhaustion, lack of interest and decreased work efficiency, is a serious health problem in the occupational field affecting about 28% of the workers according to recent survey results (World Health Organization, 2026). The organizations that carry out programs to reduce stress, manage workloads and provide mental health assistance report significant improvements in the health and psychological conditions of the employees.

Remote working and changes in occupation after the workplace disturbances caused by the pandemic affect the new well-being conditions. Some studies have found advantages (such as greater independence, flexible working hours, less travel burden) and problems (like social loneliness, confusion in separating work and personal life, more monitoring techniques, communication issues) related to remote working. The optimal well-being results seem to depend on personal likes, job features and the organizational assistance systems (Li et al., 2025).

Gender differences are clearly shown in studies about occupational well-being. Female employees have been found to experience more problems such as work-family conflict, sexual harassment, wage inequality and occupational stress than male employees. Moreover, older workers encounter age discrimination, fear of losing skills and fewer promotion chances which influence their occupational well-being. Organizations that adopt inclusive human resource measures, anti-discrimination laws and diversity programs have obtained better results in improving the well-being of different groups (Naluri, 2024).

Life Satisfaction, Meaning, and Existential Dimensions

Life satisfaction, which refers to the overall assessment of one's life in various aspects such as occupation, relationships, health, finance and personal development, is an important aspect of well-being. Recent studies have found several important factors affecting life satisfaction:

Empirical results indicate that life satisfaction is derived from satisfaction in different life areas, and the individual's weighting and priority of these areas are quite different. Studies show that people who give priority and achieve satisfaction in their personally important areas (such as meaningful job for some, family relationship for others) have greater overall life satisfaction and mental health than those who are satisfied in non-prioritized areas.

Work takes up a large part of an adult's life and has a great effect on the overall satisfaction with life. Present

studies indicate that job satisfaction is not only related to the remuneration but also includes the sense of meaning, autonomy, social contact and the agreement between personal values and the organization's goal. Those who work in meaningful and supportive positions with good interpersonal relations report a significant increase in life satisfaction and mental health (Frontiers in Psychology, 2019).

Existential and Spiritual Dimensions: Recent studies have highlighted the existence of existential and spiritual aspects of well-being, including meaning construction, identification of purpose, association with values greater than oneself, and participation in spiritual or religious activities. Long-term research shows that people with a strong sense of purpose, meaning and spiritual involvement have higher resilience, greater life satisfaction and better mental health outcomes in different age groups and cultural backgrounds (Rosonovski, 2025).

Several meta-analyses show that the quality of a relationship is one of the main factors affecting life satisfaction and mental health. The stability of intimate partners, family relationships and friendliness in friendships have a great influence on the well-being. Recent studies during the pandemic indicate that relationship disturbance and isolation reduce the well-being, whereas better relational ties and support contribute to the recovery and resistance.

Pandemic-Related Impacts and Resilience Mechanisms

The COVID-19 pandemic is a changing environment in current well-being studies, bringing about not only immediate mental health issues but also potential avenues to explore resilience mechanisms. Recent research has shown:

Pandemic-related Psychological Effects: Systematic reviews and longitudinal studies show increased occurrences of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress and other mental symptoms during and after pandemic times. The vulnerable groups such as healthcare personnel, poor people, women with caring duties and those having pre-existing mental disorders have suffered more severe psychological effects (Sapien Labs, 2024).

Resilience and recovery patterns: Research also finds several factors which promote resilience and aid in psychological recovery. Family assistance, friendly relationships, keeping up with physical exercise, availability of mental health services, feeling of control and independence, and confidence in eventual recovery are considered protective elements contributing to appropriate responses to the pandemic (Frontiers in Public Health, 2024). Studies over a long period have shown great diversity in the recovery patterns - some people recover quickly, others suffer from persistent psychological problems and some gain post-traumatic growth including a greater appreciation and significance in life.

Effects of Workplace and Educational Disruptions: The closures due to the pandemic, the transition to remote work and educational disturbances had a great influence on the welfare. Long-term separation, less social interaction, uncertainty in occupation and economic pressure deteriorated the welfare, especially for young people whose education and career paths were interrupted. Recent studies show that these disturbances still have lasting impacts on the welfare and employment changes of the young generation (Mental State of the World Report, 2024).

Digital health innovations have promoted the rapid development of digital mental health measures such as teletherapy, digital peer support systems, mindfulness programs and online counseling services during the epidemic. Recent studies on effectiveness indicate that these technological approaches can efficiently cope with anxiety, depression and stress caused by the epidemic, especially beneficial for people living in remote areas or facing difficulties in accessing in-person services (Naluri, 2024).

Demographic Vulnerabilities and Younger Generation Mental Health Crisis

One of the most worrying results in the latest studies on well-being is the gradual decrease in mental health and well-being among the younger generations. The Mental State of the World Report 2024 shows a steady, anxious trend: each successive younger generation has lower psychological well-being, more mental health symptoms and greater psychological distress than the older groups.

Generation-related trends in youth mental health: The data from Sapien Labs (2025) and the regional mental health surveillance (Naluri, 2024) show increasing mental health problems among Gen Z and younger individuals. In Asia-Pacific areas, Gen Z exhibits the most severe mental health profiles with marked increases in depression, anxiety, social anxiety, loneliness and decreased life satisfaction in comparison to older generations.

Etiological factors for the decline of youth mental health have been researched and found to be composed of several interrelated aspects: (1) economic insecurity, joblessness and poor economic conditions; (2) the involvement in social media and other electronic activities which cause social comparison, cyberbullying, disturbance of sleep and less face-to-face contact; (3) academic burden and an oriented attitude towards achievements; (4) anxiety about climate change and concern for the future sustainability; (5) educational interruption due to the pandemic and developmental lag; and (6) decreased face-to-face social communication and feeling of loneliness.

Latest studies indicate significant relationships between lifestyle factors and mental health results. There is a dose-response correlation between the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and the severity of depressive and anxiety symptoms (Naluri, 2024). On the other hand, sufficient sleep, frequent physical exercise, proper diet, and reduction in screen time are beneficial for the psychological condition in all age groups. However, sleep disturbance, which is more common among young people because of their late night internet use and disorder of the circadian rhythm, mainly affects mental health and intellectual performance.

Gender differences in youth's well-being: Young females have significantly more cases of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm and suicidal thoughts than young males. These differences are due to various reasons such as internalized body image pressures and preoccupation with appearance which are intensified by social media, more susceptibility to sexual harassment and assaults, worries about reproductive and economical independence, and greater responsibility for care-giving. At the same time, young males face particular difficulties including less likelihood to seek help, social isolation and poor ability to express emotions (Naluri, 2024).

Investigation of university students shows that their health is not satisfactory. A research report published in 2025 concerning Chinese university students has found the relationships between their mental health and demographic factors such as gender, family condition (being an only child or having siblings), economic status and academic subjects (Frontiers in Psychology, 2025). Female students, only children and those studying difficult academic subjects have worse health conditions. Social support, academic satisfaction and a feeling of belonging are believed to benefit the health of the students.

Integrative Theoretical Implications and Mechanisms

Psychological Well-being as Multidimensional, Multilevel Construct

The empirical results combined in this study indicate a comprehensive view of psychological well-being as a

multi-dimensional and hierarchically structured concept resulting from intricate interactions at individual, relational, occupational and social levels. This viewpoint is different from the simple explanations which regard well-being as depending on single elements, as it considers well-being as a property emerging from the dynamic interactions of a system.

At the individual level, the capacity to stay in the present, accept internal feelings and act according to one's values, is considered an important factor for good health. Psychological flexibility, mindfulness ability and consistent values-oriented behavior can be improved by cognitive-behavioral interventions and show effectiveness in promoting well-being in various situations and groups.

At the relational level, the social support systems, including emotional, instrumental and informational aid from family, friends, colleagues at work and community members, act as important protective factors and determinants of health. The importance of the quality, regularity and compatibility of the social support with the individual's needs and tastes is greater than the presence of any support.

At the work place, the job features, organizational atmosphere and management methods have an important effect on employee's happiness. The organizations which adopt measures to enhance autonomy, valuable work, social contact and stress control show the improvement of employee's happiness.

At the societal level, income inequality, discrimination, social cohesion and service accessibility largely influence the opportunities for well-being. Improvement of population-wide well-being necessitates structural measures to solve the basic inequality and marginalization.

Social Support as Central Regulatory Mechanism

The widespread existence of social support in various research fields—being considered an important factor in occupations, families, epidemic situations and demographic changes—indicates its significant role as a regulating mechanism for well-being. Social support seems to act through several channels: (1) giving direct help in terms of material, emotional and informational aspects; (2) reducing the effects of stressors by means of different views and encouragement; (3) promoting healthy coping and adaptive behaviour; (4) providing meaning and a feeling of belonging; and (5) increasing the perceived control and independence. The optimal well-being depends on the availability and responsiveness of social support systems in different life areas.

Contemporary Research Hotspots and Evidence Gaps

Emerging Research Priorities

Younger generation's mental health problem: Investigating the mechanisms causing a significant decrease in well-being of the Gen Z and later generations is an important research topic. Longitudinal studies monitoring their developmental processes, discovering etiological factors and assessing the effectiveness of interventions are urgently required.

2. Digital Interaction and Psychological Well-being: The impact of social media, online games and electronic technologies on the mental health of teenagers, such as both disadvantages (social comparison, cyber bullying, disturbance of sleep) and potential benefits (social connection, help from peers, access to resources), should be studied in more detail.

3. Lifestyle Factor Interventions: The latest research shows the connection between lifestyle factors (including diet, sleep, physical exercise and substance use) and mental health impacts, which offers possibilities for

preventive and intervention studies. Large scale interventions on diet, sleep and physical activity might have a considerable influence on the mental health of the entire population.

4. Work well-being in transitional employment situations: The rapid change of working arrangements (such as remote work, hybrid work and gig economy) requires research on the welfare impacts and ideal organizational methods for promoting welfare in new work environments.
5. Pandemic Long-term Sequelae and Post-traumatic Growth: Longitudinal studies investigating the lasting effects of the pandemic, such as continued mental health problems and post-traumatic growth and resilience, are in progress.

Critical Research Gaps

1. Mechanistic Understanding: Although empirical relationships between well-being determinants and results are widely reported, mechanistic studies elucidating causal chains and mediating factors are still insufficient. The neurobiological, psychological and social mechanisms need to be investigated comprehensively.

Longitudinal and experimental designs are currently used in contemporary research, which mainly adopts cross-sectional designs and thus restricts the causal inference. Large-scale longitudinal studies with experimental intervention components would considerably improve the causal understanding.

Cultural diversity and adaptation: The majority of current studies on well-being come from Western, advanced populations. It is essential to conduct cultural adaptation research on the concepts, determinants and interventions of well-being in various cultural backgrounds.

Implementation and Dissemination Research: There is still a large difference between research and practice. The implementation science methods concerning organizational obstacles, dissemination strategies and the extension of evidence-based interventions need to be given priority.

Practice Implications and Future Directions

Clinical and Organizational Practice Recommendations

Individual-level interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction and meaning-centered approaches have been proved effective for improving well-being. Encouraging people to seek help and decreasing the stigma is the key to the successful implementation.

Organizations ought to establish a complete welfare program including: improvement of job structure to enhance autonomy and significance; establishment of a social assistance system; provision of stress control and mental health facilities; implementation of diversity and equal opportunity measures; and monitoring of occupational health.

Improvement of population-level health and policy: Structural measures are needed to tackle social determinants such as economic security, educational opportunities, medical service availability, prejudice decrease and community development.

Future Research Priorities

Advancement of the field depends on: (1) mechanistic studies explaining the causal relationships; (2) longitudinal and experimental designs for establishing causal effects; (3) research and intervention development considering cultural factors; (4) implementation science methods for translating research into practice; (5) incorporation of digital technologies in evaluation and intervention; and (6) special attention to disadvantaged and socially marginalized groups facing serious welfare problems.

CONCLUSION

This detailed review summarizes the recent empirical studies (from 2024 to 2026) concerning the various multi-dimensional aspects affecting psychological health. The results indicate the following main points: (1) psychological health is a multifaceted concept resulting from hierarchical interactions at individual, relationship, occupational and societal levels; (2) social support networks play an important role in regulating and determining health status; (3) participation in significant work, having a clear life goal and addressing existential issues contribute to a long-term healthy condition; (4) the younger generation encounters unique health problems caused by economic, social, digital and existential factors which need immediate consideration; (5) several evidence-based preventive measures can enhance health when suitably adapted to the personal and environmental conditions.

Contemporary well-being research has gained in sophistication in its conceptualization, measurement and intervention development, but still possesses some important research gaps concerning causal mechanisms, longitudinal changes and implementation science methods. Further progress in research needs continuous effort on mechanism study, longitudinal design, cultural adaptation and validation, and transfer of research to practice.

The serious mental health problems encountered by present day populations, especially the younger generation, require immediate, all-round solutions which include evidence-based medical treatment, organizational reforms, public health policies and further research. Only in this way can we achieve significant improvement in the overall well-being of the population.

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