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ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG STUDENTS AT UITM
SEREMBAN 3

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Abstract:

This study investigates the relationship between psychological well-being and academic success among students at UiTM Seremban 3. A total of 360 respondents (185 males and 175 females) participated in the study. Psychological well-being was assessed using Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), while academic success was measured using the Academic Success Inventory for College Students (ASICS). Descriptive findings indicate that self-acceptance recorded the highest mean score ($M=3.09$) among the dimensions of psychological well-being, followed by purpose in life ($M=2.93$), while positive relation to other recorded the lowest mean score ($M=2.22$). In terms of academic success, external motivation recorded the highest mean ($M=4.08$), followed by internal motivation ($M=3.96$), while socializing recorded the lowest mean score ($M=1.88$). Independent t -Test was performed to investigate variables differences in terms of gender. The findings illustrate that the psychological well-being between male and female students differed significantly, $t(358)=282$, $p<0.05$ when male students reported higher psychological well-being ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.34$) as compared to female students ($M=2.99$, $SD=0.42$). Correspondingly, results demonstrate a statistically significant disparity in student academic-related factors between male and female students, $t(358)=2.80$, $p<0.05$ when male students reported

higher academic success ($M=4.10$, $SD=0.46$) than female students ($M=3.95$, $SD=0.59$). Inferential statistic (Pearson correlation) was used to investigate relationship between psychological well-being and academic success. The findings reveal that psychological well-being is moderately associated with academic success, although academic success is likely shaped by multiple factors. Therefore, the universities must play a vital role in helping to raise the student's psychological well-being so that they can adapt and facing the challenges in the university life. In addition, the university also needs to improve their support services, especially counselling services.

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Keyword:

Academic Success, Psychological Well-Being, University Students



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Introduction

The integration of psychological well-being into higher education contexts is increasingly recognized as a fundamental component that influences student experiences and outcomes (Arnas et al., 2025). They added that in academic environments, psychological well-being is associated with academic engagement, motivation and overall academic performance, underlining its role as a crucial determinant of success (Arnas et al., 2025). Studies suggest that positive psychological states may foster resilience against stressors inherent in academic life and enhance students' capacities for learning and performance (Agha et al., 2023; Reuter & Forster, 2021). High levels of well-being can lead to improved attention and cognitive functioning, driving higher academic success, whereas lower levels have been linked to increased dropout rates and poor academic outcomes (Kilgore et al., 2023).

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model presents a comprehensive framework applicable in academic settings, addressing dimensions such as self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, autonomy and environmental mastery (Boehm, 2021; Miller, 2023). This model underscores the multifaceted nature of well-being, emphasizing that enhancing psychological well-being in students involves supporting their emotional, relational, and cognitive development, which collectively contributes to an enriched learning environment (Boehm, 2021; Miller, 2023). In practice, institutions may implement programs focusing on mindfulness, community building and support systems that cater to diverse student needs, thus bolstering psychological well-being as a strategic priority (Agha et al., 2023).

According to Kabrita and Hajjar-Muça (2016) and Boehm (2021), understanding the intricate relationships among psychological well-being, academic performance and non-cognitive factors reflects a paradigm shift in higher education research that prioritizes holistic student success. Interventions grounded in promoting psychological well-being are essential for

fostering environments where students not only excel academically but also thrive personally, equipping them with the necessary skills and resilience to navigate their educational journeys effectively (Kabrita & Hajjar-Muça, 2016; Boehm, 2021). Therefore, continued exploration into the dynamics between these areas is vital for shaping effective educational policies and practices, ensuring that holistic well-being is positioned as a priority within academic discourse (Kabrita & Hajjar-Muça, 2016; Boehm, 2021).

In conclusion, the role of psychological well-being in higher education allows for a deeper understanding of student success (Kilgore et al., 2023; Reuter & Forster, 2021). It is imperative that educational frameworks integrate these insights to shape a future where academic excellence and psychological health are interwoven, driving the next generation of leaders toward sustainable success both within and beyond the realm of academia (Kilgore et al., 2023; Reuter & Forster, 2021).

Literature Review

Psychological Well-Being (PWB)

Psychological well-being is a longstanding issue faced by university students worldwide (Hamdani, 2021). Obviously, the university education is a significant life transition, and students need to adjust to several new social, cultural and academic demands (Hamdani, 2021). He stated that students' well-being can be affected by several factors including transition to a different pedagogy and tools and techniques for learning, relational support and education environment (Hamdani, 2021). Arnas et al. (2025) added that psychological well-being can play a central role in students' academic functioning. Psychological well-being consisted of several dimensions. Ryff (1989) conceptualizes psychological well-being through autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations and purpose in life. These dimensions inform how students interpret experiences and manage learning tasks (Ryff, 1989). By bolstering emotional resilience and cognitive clarity, high psychological well-being may enhance academic outcomes (Ryff, 1989).

This study was grounded in Ryff's theoretical framework, which suggests that psychological well-being is significantly associated with human development and self-realization. Based on Boehm (2021) and Miller (2023), Ryff's theoretical framework underscores the multifaceted nature of well-being, emphasizing that enhancing psychological well-being in students involves supporting their emotional, relational and cognitive development, which collectively contributes to an enriched learning environment. From the practical perspectives, institutions may implement programs focusing on mindfulness, community building and support systems that cater to diverse student needs, thus bolstering psychological well-being as a strategic priority (Agha et al., 2023).

Amongst the six dimensions of psychological well-being, self-acceptance which was defined as the student's ability to set and achieve personal goals and the quality of interpersonal relationships has been recognized as the dimension most significantly correlated with students' academic performance (Agha et al., 2023; Miller, 2023). Research indicates that these facets facilitate better coping strategies under academic pressure and foster an environment conducive to both personal and academic growth (Kabrita & Hajjar-Muça, 2016). For instance, students who display high levels of self-acceptance and positive relations with peers often exhibit higher GPAs due to increased engagement in collaborative learning environments (Reuter & Forster,

2021). Additionally, the cultivation of a sense of purpose may further energize students' academic pursuits, linking psychological well-being directly to academic outcomes (Boehm, 2021).

Empirical studies have sought to clarify the distinction between mental health and psychological well-being among students (Boehm, 2021). Mental health typically refers to the absence of mental disorders and a condition marked by emotional stability, while psychological well-being encompasses a broader spectrum of positive psychological states, including life satisfaction and personal fulfilment (Boehm, 2021). Notably, research indicates that while students may experience mental health challenges, they can still maintain positive psychological well-being through effective coping strategies and supportive environments (Mayer & Smith, 2019). A comprehensive understanding of these distinctions is essential for developing interventions targeting student populations and promoting a positive psychological culture in universities (Shostak et al., 2021).

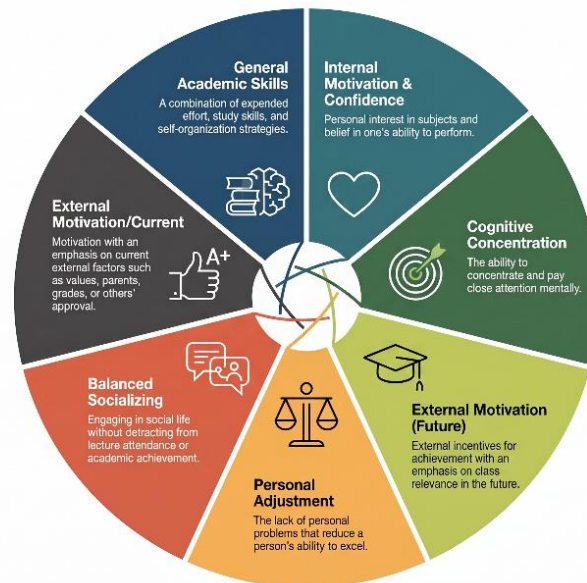
Academic Success

Academic success is defined differently by experts. As referred to York et al. (2019), academic success is defined as academic achievement, engagement in activities aimed at education, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, achievement of educational outcomes and post-college performance. Some other researchers defined academic success as achieving self-defined goals positively at the individual level and attaining the desired academic goals (Demir & Acar, 2020; Prevatt et al. 2011; Orcanli et al., 2021). There are those who define academic success as learning outcomes in the form of scores and there are also those who define it as academic achievement (Serrano et al., 2022), academic performance (Gutiérrez & Tomás, 2019) and academic outcomes (Bachik et al., 2021; Roksa, 2019).

The concept of academic success in this study is based on important themes from previous theories related to academic success, namely motivation, academic skills, environment, locus of control, and social environment. From these five themes, several dimensions were developed as the basis for academic success, namely general academic skills, internal motivation/confidence, personal adjustment, external motivation for the future, external motivation for the current time, concentration and socialization (Orcanli et al., 2021; Prevatt et al., 2011). Below infographic explains the dimensions of student academic success:

The Wheel of Academic Success: 7 Dimensions of Achievement

Academic success is a multi-faceted construct determined by more than just intelligence. It involves a synergy of internal drive, organizational habits, mental focus, and the ability to balance external pressures with social life.

**Figure 1: Dimensions of Student Academic Success**

Sources: Orcanli et al., 2021; Prevatt et al., 2011

Academic success so far has been measured primarily using academic achievement, which is expressed in the form of an academic achievement index value (Orcanli et al., 2021; Prevatt et al., 2011). However, this method pays less attention to psychological maturity, which is heavily influenced by individual differences (Anwar et al., 2022). So that, psychologically, it will affect the quality of graduates. In addition, student academic success is not solely a cognitive factor (intelligence), but other psychological factors such as motivation, school welfare, and the ability to master and use technology to support their academics are also very important.

University Students' Psychological Well-Being (PWB) and Academic Success

Previous papers about PWB of higher education students focused on the understanding of factors improving psychological well-being (Burris et al., 2009; Charles et al., 2022; Tay et al., 2022) and the influence of academic performance on psychological well-being (Ahmed et al., 2023; Lipson & Eisenberg, 2018; Topham & Moller, 2011; Trucchia et al., 2013; Turashvili & Japaridze, 2012). Researchers studied demographic, individual and behavioural predictors of psychological stress of higher education students. Thus, optimism and health values (physical activity and giving up bad habits) decreased stress and improved psychological well-being.

A considerable number of studies have investigated the relationship between student psychological well-being and academic performance across various educational contexts worldwide. For instance, Topham and Moller (2011) focused on the well-being of British first-year students. The authors studied the relationship between initial well-being and academic performance at the end of the year. The results indicate that there were no statistically significant correlations between initial well-being and academic performance at the end of the academic year. Years after that, Trucchia et al. (2013) studied the relationship between academic achievement, psychological well-being and coping strategies in a sample of medical

students. Students with normal/insufficient academic performance from the study of Trucchia et al. (2013) reported dissatisfaction with most aspects of their personality.

On the contrary, students with high academic performance were satisfied with their lives. Academic performance, according to the findings of Trucchia et al. (2013), directly affects psychological well-being, a sense of satisfaction with achievements, and stress management abilities. According to Bazlan Mustafa et al. (2020), there is a relationship between psychological wellbeing and academic achievement. Lipson and Eisenberg (2018) established an association between mental health and academic outcomes in terms of self-efficacy, motivation, teacher expectations, and learning satisfaction. The results obtained by Lipson and Eisenberg (2018) demonstrate the importance of mental health for success at university. The authors confirmed that academic dissatisfaction causes mental health problems and intentions to drop out. Positive mental health was associated with academic satisfaction and perseverance (Lipson & Eisenberg, (2018). Ahmed et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between the components of PWB (self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and social intelligence), academic performance (student self-efficacy, engagement and anxiety of social interaction), and materialism. The researchers revealed the negative influence of materialism on the components of PWB. They also found a strong positive relationship between the components of PWB and academic performance (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Hence, integrating psychological well-being into academic strategies is not only theoretically relevant but also practically necessary. Institutions that support student well-being through mentorship, reflective learning, and structured support programs stand to enhance both academic outcomes and holistic development.

Gender Comparison of Psychological Well-Being and Academic Success

One of the study objectives is to compare psychological well-being and academic success between male and female students in UiTM Seremban 3. Previous research on student psychological well-being and academic success has produced mixed findings with respect to gender differences, with some studies reporting significant variations between male and female students, while others have found no significant differences. Research indicates that female students experience bad psychological well-being namely burnout more frequently than their male counterparts (Andrade et al., 2023; Mahfouz et al., 2020). For example, a study of 494 Italian university students discovered that female students experienced higher levels of exhaustion, cognitive impairment, and emotional impairment than male students (Fiorilli et al., 2022).

Some studies have found no significant differences in academic burnout between male and female students (Jihye Yu & Chae, 2020). For instance, a study focusing on 97 medical students in Korea revealed no significant difference in academic burnout between the sexes (Jihye Yu & Chae, 2020). Female students scored higher on positive relations with others, whereas male students scored higher on cynicism (Jihye Yu & Chae, 2020). Male students tend to give up academics earlier when they experience severe academic burnout (Jihye Yu & Chae, 2020). Similarly, a study conducted among 506 first-semester university students in Spain found no significant differences in burnout levels between the male and female respondents (March-Amengual et al., 2022). Interestingly, the study revealed a significant difference between sexes in depersonalization, a dimension of academic burnout (March-Amengual et al., 2022). This emphasizes the need for further research to explore the relationship between gender and

psychological well-being specifically to burnout and the factors contributing to depersonalization among male and female students (March-Amengual et al., 2022).

From the local perspectives, a study conducted among medical students in Malaysia in 2016 found no significant correlation between burnout prevalence and sex (Chin et al., 2016). However, another study found that male students, Malaysians, third-year medical school students and those with lower CGPA scores had a significantly higher risk of academic burnout (Daud et al., 2020). Studies have shown that academic burnout is not limited to medical students and that the findings on gender differences among university students are contradictory (Daud et al., 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate further gender differences among students enrolled in Malaysian public universities and to develop effective strategies for resolving these problems.

Methodology

Participants and Procedure

To achieve the objectives of this study, questionnaires were distributed to students from three faculties at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Seremban 3 namely the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR), the Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences (FSKM) and the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (FSPPP). A total of 360 students participated in the survey. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire and respondents were selected through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation from each faculty. An ethics approval has been granted from UiTM Research Ethics Committed prior distributing the questionnaire to targeted respondents. All obtained data were extracted by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27.

Instruments

The research instrument was adopted and adapted from existing review of literature. The questionnaire consisted of three sections namely Section A which assessed the demographic profile of the respondents particularly gender. Section B measured psychological well-being using the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) scale. While Section C assessed academic success by utilizing the Academic Success Inventory for College Students (ASICS). Items in Section B and Section C were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale response format with values ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analyses

All gathered data are analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27. For this study, a descriptive analysis was conducted to provide information on respondent characteristics. To achieve objectives pertaining to components of psychological well-being and factors on academic success, a descriptive analysis was used to determine the frequency, mean and standard deviation of each item. Meanwhile, an inferential statistic namely Independent Samples *t*-Test and Pearson correlation were utilized to achieve objectives related to gender differences as well as relationship between psychological well-being and academic success respectively. Statistical significance was established at the $p < .05$ level.

Results and Findings

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Demographic Profile of the Respondent

		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	185	51.4
	Female	175	48.6
Total		360	100

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on gender. The results indicate that out of a total of 360 respondents, 185 were male, representing 51.4% of the sample. Meanwhile, 175 were female and accounting for 48.67%. This distribution shows that male respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion compared to female respondents. Nevertheless, both groups were adequately represented, allowing for meaningful comparison in examining gender differences in psychological well-being among UiTM Seremban 3 students.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Psychological Well-Being (PWB)

Domains of PWB	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Self-Acceptance	3.09	.544
Purpose in Life	2.93	.448
Personal Growth	2.37	.369
Environmental Mastery	2.31	.349
Autonomy	2.29	.361
Positive Relations with Others	2.22	.411

The results in Table 2 indicate that Self-Acceptance recorded the highest mean score among the six dimensions of psychological well-being ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.54$), followed by Purpose in Life ($M=2.93$, $SD=0.45$). Personal Growth demonstrated a moderate mean score ($M=2.37$, $SD=0.37$), whereas Environmental Mastery ($M=2.31$, $SD=0.35$), Autonomy ($M=2.29$, $SD=0.36$), and Positive Relations with Others ($M=2.22$, $SD=0.41$) obtained comparatively lower mean scores. Overall, the findings suggest that respondents exhibited stronger levels of self-acceptance and purpose in life than the other dimensions of psychological well-being. The relatively low standard deviation values across all PWB domains indicate consistency in respondents' perceptions.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Academic Success

Domains of Academic Success	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
External Motivation	4.08	.522
Internal Motivation	3.96	.455
General Academic Skills	3.96	.498
Concentration	3.25	.754
Personal Adjustment	2.99	.869

Socializing	1.88	.843
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Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the six domains of academic success. Among the domains, External Motivation recorded the highest mean score ($M=4.08$, $SD=0.52$), followed by Internal Motivation ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.46$) and General Academic Skills ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.50$). Concentration demonstrated a moderate mean score ($M=3.25$, $SD=0.75$), while Personal Adjustment recorded a lower mean score ($M=2.99$, $SD=0.87$). Socializing obtained the lowest mean score among all domains ($M=1.88$, $SD=0.84$). Overall, the findings suggest that respondents exhibited strong levels of motivation and academic skills, whereas socializing represented the weakest aspect of their academic success. The standard deviation values indicate moderate variability in respondents' perceptions across the domains, particularly for Personal Adjustment and Socializing.

Table 4: Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being (PWB) among UiTM Seremban 3 Students

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	df	p-value (significant)
PWB	Male	185	3.10	0.34	2.82	358	.005
	Female	175	2.99	0.42			

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the psychological well-being of UiTM Seremban 3 students by gender. The findings in Table 4 showed a significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female students, $t(358)=2.82$, $p<0.05$. Male students ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.34$) reported significantly higher psychological well-being than female students ($M=2.99$, $SD=0.42$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that psychological well-being differs according to gender among UiTM Seremban 3 students.

Table 5: Gender Differences in Academic Success among UiTM Seremban 3 Students

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	df	p-value (significant)
Academic Success	Male	185	4.10	0.46	2.80	358	.005
	Female	175	3.94	0.58			

The results in Table 5 revealed a statistically significant difference in academic success between male and female students, $t(358)=2.80$, $p<.005$. Male students reported a higher level of academic success ($M=4.10$, $SD=0.46$) compared to female students ($M=3.94$, $SD=0.58$). Since the *p*-value (.005) is less than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the findings indicate that academic success differs significantly according to gender, with male students demonstrating higher levels of academic success than female students.

Table 6: The Relationship Between Psychological Well-Being and Academic Success among UiTM Seremban 3 Students

Psychological Well-Being	Academic Success	
	Pearson's Correlation	0.544
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	360

Table 6 revealed a significant positive relationship between psychological well-being and academic success, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=.544$, $p<.001$, based on a sample of 360 respondents. This indicates that students with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to report higher levels of academic success. The correlation coefficient of .544 suggests a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. Since the p -value is less than .05, the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it can be concluded that psychological well-being is significantly associated with academic success among UiTM Seremban 3 students.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to identify factors of psychological well-being among UiTM Seremban 3 students. This study discovered six factors related to psychological well-being including self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relation with other. Eventually, findings indicate that self-acceptance was the most important factor of psychological well-being among UiTM Seremban 3 student. This study findings are corresponding to research conducted by Avialioti et. al. (2020 cited in Setiasih, 2025) which stated that self-acceptance can have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of students. In addition, Lena et.al. (2021) found that self-acceptance was positively related to life satisfaction and negatively related to depressive symptoms in college students. These findings are consistent with Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model, which emphasizes self-acceptance as essential components of positive psychological functioning. However, psychological well-being components including positive relations with others, autonomy and environmental mastery were the least important factors among UiTM Seremban 3 student. It indicates that students may experience challenges in interpersonal relationships, independent decision-making and managing their surrounding environment. Such findings may reflect the academic and social adjustments required during university life.

In higher education, a student's motivation is the most crucial component of their learning environment, particularly when it comes to the significance of academic success (Khaliq et al, 2023). Regarding academic success of this study, the results found that external motivation emerged as the highest-scoring dimension, followed by internal motivation and general academic skills. These findings suggest that students are highly motivated to achieve academic success, possibly due to personal aspirations, family expectations, career goals and future employment prospects. Conversely, socializing recorded the lowest mean score, which may indicate that students prioritize academic responsibilities over social engagement or face challenges in balancing social and academic commitments. These results supported previous studies conducted by Ryan (2000 cited in Khaliq et al, 2023) when they stated that the main predictor of scholastic success is external motivation because it energizes and directs behaviour towards success. The tools necessary for students to thrive must be available to them (Khaliq et al, 2023). They need resources, including desire and direction to succeed academically.

Students who are motivated attend class for extended periods of time, put in more effort, learn more efficiently and score better on exams (Ryan, 2000 cited in Khaliq et al, 2023).

The study further revealed significant differences in psychological well-being between male and female respondents. Male students experienced higher levels of psychological well-being compared to opposite gender. This finding supports previous studies that reported greater psychological distress and burnout among female students (Andrade et al., 2023; Fiorilli et al., 2022). Female students experienced higher levels of emotional stress due to academic demands, social expectations and multiple role responsibilities. However, the findings contrast with studies that reported no significant gender differences in psychological well-being (Jihye & Chae, 2020; March-Amengual et al., 2022). These inconsistencies suggest that gender differences in psychological well-being may vary across cultural, institutional and educational contexts.

Similarly, there is significant difference in academic success in terms of gender, with male students reporting higher levels of academic success than female students. This finding differs from some previous studies that found either no gender differences or higher academic achievement among female students. The present finding may be influenced by differences in self-perceptions of academic competence, learning strategies, motivation or coping mechanisms. Therefore, further research is required to thoroughly examine factors contribute to these gender disparities within the Malaysia universities context.

The most important finding of this study is the significant moderate positive relationship between psychological well-being and academic success. The correlation coefficient ($r=.544$) indicates that students with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to experience greater academic success. This finding supports previous studies by Ahmed et al. (2023), Agha et al. (2023) and Shostak et al. (2021), which demonstrated that psychologically healthy students are more capable of managing academic pressures, maintaining motivation and achieving positive educational outcomes. Students with greater psychological well-being are likely to possess stronger emotional regulation, resilience, self-confidence and coping abilities which contribute to better academic performance and overall success.

Overall, the results suggest that higher education institutions should prioritize initiatives that promote students' mental health and psychological well-being through counselling services, wellness programmes, peer-support systems and stress management interventions. Such efforts may be relevant to supporting students' academic performance and long-term personal development.

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