DOI: https://doi.org/10.38035/ijphs.v2i4
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Factors Influencing Mental Health and Perceived Well-Being in Distance Learning Students: A Literature Review

Sri Yusriani[1], Shine Pintor Siolemba Patiro[2], Rifi Hamdani Sitohang[3], Muhammad Siddiq Idris Azzam[4]

[1]Graduate School of Business, Universiti Sains Malaysia, HRM practitioner at FK. Distribution, Krogagervej 16, Grindsted 7200, Denmark, sriysarahlistener@gmail.com, sriyusriani_syspsp@student.usm.my

[2]Postgraduate School of Indonesia Open University, Tangerang Selatan, 15437, Indonesia, shinepintor@ecampus.ut.ac.id

[3]Postgraduate School of Indonesia Open University, Tangerang Selatan, 15437, Indonesia, tohank4242@gmail.com

[4]SDU, Syddansk Universitet, Alsion 2, 6400 Sønderborg, Denmark, siddiqazzam2000@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author: sriysarahlistener@gmail.com, sriyusriani_syspsp@student.usm.my

Abstract: Distance learning has become increasingly prevalent, but the mental health and perceived well-being of students in this mode of education require more attention. This literature review identifies key factors affecting mental health and well-being in distance learning students, including self-efficacy, social support, access to digital resources, and stress management. Examining high-impact studies from academic databases such as ScienceDirect, Sage Publications, and Emerald, the review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors contribute to student well-being in remote learning environments. The findings emphasize the need for supportive interventions, such as digital literacy programs, mental health support, and accessible online resources, to mitigate the psychological challenges students face in distance learning.

Keyword: Distance Learning, Mental Health, Perceived Well-Being, Self-Efficacy, Social Support, Digital Resources, Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Distance learning, now an essential educational model worldwide, poses unique challenges to students' mental health and perceived well-being (Hong & Liu, 2021; Horng et al., 2015; Huang & Hsu, 2022). Studies show that distance learners face heightened risks of stress, anxiety, and depression, exacerbated by isolation, digital barriers, and academic pressures (Bandura, 1986; Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2021). Human Resource Management is evolving rapidly in the digital era and must remain adaptable (Robbins et al., 2013). Distance learning often requires students to cultivate greater independence and adaptability, with proactive stress management strategies and creative virtual knowledge exchanges emerging as essential skills in this context (Yusriani et al., 2024). As the swift adoption of digital technologies accelerates, particularly in the aftermath of the global COVID-19 pandemic

(Psychosocial, 2020), safeguarding students' mental health and perceived well-being is crucial for fostering academic success and building long-term resilience (Jex & Yankelevich, 2008; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

A significant research gap exists in understanding the specific factors that influence mental health and well-being among distance learners, especially as the need for robust mental health strategies grows in the digital era (Huang et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2021). While some studies highlight coping strategies and digital competency as vital factors, the broader landscape of influences—spanning psychological, social, and technological domains—remains underexplored (Kohls et al., 2021), improve job satisfaction (Peng & Mao, 2015). This review seeks to address this gap by examining the multiple dimensions affecting distance learning students' mental health.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's confidence in their ability to perform tasks effectively, plays a central role in distance learning success. Students with high self-efficacy tend to manage academic demands more effectively, reducing stress and enhancing overall well-being (Bandura, 1977; Chen et al., 2020; Oettingen, 1995). In contrast, students with low self-efficacy often struggle with online coursework, leading to reduced well-being and motivation (Chen & Chen, 2014; Shawaqfeh et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020).

Social support, (Vaux, 1988) which includes both emotional and academic assistance from family, friends, or instructors, is equally crucial. Studies indicate that socially supported students report higher well-being levels and greater resilience in coping with online learning demands (Hong & Liu, 2021; Hamdani et al., 2023). The absence of in-person support can lead to increased feelings of isolation and psychological distress, as distance learners often lack the direct peer interactions found in traditional classrooms (Chung, 2019; Berry, 1997), even tough students live in happy country (Hamilton, 2023).

Access to digital resources, including reliable internet connections and appropriate devices, is another significant factor. Limited digital access not only hampers academic performance but also increases stress, emphasizing the need for accessible technology to support mental health in distance learning environments (Shawaqfeh et al., 2020; Herbert, 2022). Additionally, inadequate digital literacy can amplify these challenges, making it harder for students to fully engage with their coursework and resulting in feelings of inadequacy and frustration (Literat, 2021; Chiu, 2022).

Stress management emerges as a critical factor in sustaining mental health among distance learners. Effective coping strategies and institutional support systems can significantly reduce psychological burdens, preventing burnout, especially during extended periods of remote study due to factors like the COVID-19 pandemic (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Hasan & Bao, 2020;).

Recognizing the importance of these influences, this review aims to answer the question: *What factors influence the mental health and perceived well-being of distance learning students?* By synthesizing research across various contexts, this study provides a foundational understanding of the elements affecting mental health and proposes insights for developing effective, targeted interventions tailored to distance learners' unique needs.The objective contains the question of the article that must be explained in the discussion and answered in the conclusion.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, using a systematic literature review to analyze the primary factors influencing mental health and perceived well-being in distance learning students (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yusriani et al., 2024). The review began with an extensive search through five reputable academic databases—ScienceDirect, Web of Science, Emerald, Sage Publications, and Google Scholar—yielding over 350 relevant scholarly articles. Articles

were selected based on stringent inclusion criteria, including focus on mental health and well-being in online learning, publication in high-impact journals, and recency (2019–2024). Following detailed analysis and team discussions, ten key articles were chosen for their alignment with the study's objectives; all are cited in the References section.

This research examines online learning contexts across higher education and professional development settings, where distance learning environments present unique mental health challenges. By focusing on diverse learning contexts, this study identifies both context-specific and universal factors impacting student well-being in online settings, with particular attention to variables such as self-efficacy, social support, digital access, and stress management.

Relevant literature was systematically filtered using specific keywords, including "mental health," "distance learning," "student well-being," "Perceived Well-Being for student workers", "self-efficacy," "social support," and "digital stress." This process ensured that selected articles addressed the most critical factors affecting student mental health in distance learning environments. Each article was analyzed and coded, categorizing identified factors into psychological, social, and technological domains. This coding approach allowed for the recognition of recurring themes and distinctions in factors affecting mental health and perceived well-being among distance learners, providing insights for subsequent research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019; Yusriani et al., 2024).

Through this systematic literature review, the study synthesizes findings across varied educational contexts, uncovering patterns and unique challenges in online learning. The results offer a valuable foundation for future research aimed at developing comprehensive mental health support strategies tailored to the needs of distance learning students, helping to close existing gaps in the literature on online education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section synthesizes key findings to understand how various factors influence the mental health and perceived well-being of distance learning students. Through comprehensive analysis, this study provides insights into the core elements that shape students' psychological experiences in online learning.

Self-Efficacy as a Determinant of Mental Well-Being

Self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to succeed, is fundamental for distance learners in managing the demands of remote education (Bandura, 1977). High self-efficacy enables students to better navigate academic challenges, set achievable goals, and manage pressures, all of which contribute positively to their mental health and academic engagement (Chen et al., 2020). Conversely, students with low self-efficacy often struggle with the independent nature of online learning, leading to elevated stress, disengagement, and reduced creativity (Chen & Chen, 2014; Torrance, 1966; Furnham, 2020). Low self-efficacy can also diminish resilience, making students more susceptible to academic pressures and impacting their ability to cope with the demands of online education (Hamdani et al., 2023). Building self-efficacy through supportive feedback, goal-setting activities, and resources tailored to individual skill levels could therefore boost both academic performance and psychological resilience (Yusriani et al., 2023; Ma, 2022; Shawaqfeh et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2020).

Social Support and Sense of Belonging

Social support is vital in distance education, where regular in-person interactions are limited. Support from family, friends, and instructors is essential to mitigate feelings of isolation and reduce stress (Hong & Liu, 2021; Hamdani et al., 2023). Positive feedback, empathetic communication, and the creation of online peer networks help reinforce a sense of community

and belonging, thereby enhancing students' engagement and overall well-being (Chung, 2019; Furnham, 2020). The absence of such support can lead to feelings of detachment, which negatively impacts engagement and well-being. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize building online communities and peer mentoring programs to strengthen social connections and enhance the learning experience (Valdez-Juárez & Pérez-de-Lema, 2023; Shi et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2020).

Digital Resource Accessibility and Technological Proficiency

Effective engagement in online learning requires adequate access to digital resources, such as stable internet, devices, and digital skills. Lack of these resources is a notable barrier that can result in frustration, poor academic performance, and psychological strain (Shawaqfeh et al., 2020; Herbert, 2022). Technological competence, or lack thereof, affects students' ability to interact with course materials effectively, adding further challenges to their educational experience (Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2021; Laidlaw et al., 2016). Addressing these barriers by providing accessible digital literacy programs and equitable access to technology can significantly alleviate stress and promote inclusivity (Chiu, 2022; Literat, 2021).

Stress Management and Coping Resources

Coping strategies are crucial for managing the unique stressors associated with online learning. Students who adopt effective stress management practices, such as time management and problem-solving skills, report reduced anxiety and enhanced well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Shawaqfeh et al., 2020; Shi et al., 2020). Research suggests that students with limited coping mechanisms often experience heightened stress, which can lead to academic burnout and mental health decline (Kohls et al., 2021). Institutions can support students by integrating workshops focused on stress management, emotional resilience, and academic coping skills, equipping them with essential tools for managing both academic and personal demands effectively (Burcin et al., 2019; Hasan & Bao, 2020; Herbert, 2022)

Academic and Environmental Stressors in Remote Settings

Distance learners face specific academic and environmental stressors that can exacerbate mental health challenges. The demands of online learning often require greater self-regulation, leading to feelings of overload and frustration, particularly for those without dedicated study spaces (Idris et al., 2021; Jex & Yankelevich, 2008). Structured guidance in developing time-management skills and creating ergonomic study environments can mitigate these challenges, enhancing both focus and mental well-being (Hamdani et al., 2023). For instance, educational platforms could offer structured schedules and guidance on creating conducive study spaces, which would help students maintain a balanced learning environment (Teo et al., 2023; Torrance, 1966; Puozzo & Audrin, 2021).

Institutional Support and Availability of Mental Health Resources

Institutional support, including access to mental health resources, plays a critical role in promoting students' perceived well-being (Sitohang et al., 2023; Furnham, 2020; Hamdani et al., 2023; Valdez-Juárez & Pérez-de-Lema, 2023; Yusriani et al., 2024). Academic advising, counseling services, and virtual mental health programs provide essential support for students navigating the challenges of online learning (Luqman et al., 2021; Hong & Liu, 2021). Institutions that offered flexible learning policies and additional counseling services during the COVID-19 pandemic observed improvements in student engagement and well-being, underscoring the importance of adaptive institutional policies in addressing students' mental health needs in remote learning environments (World Health Organization, 2020).

Factor	Impact Level on Mental Health and Well-Being	Description
Self-Efficacy	High Impact	Supports confidence, resilience, and learning engagement.
Social Support	High Impact	Reduces isolation and boosts a sense of community.
Digital Resource Accessibility	Medium to High Impact	Enhances access; lack of resources causes stress and limits engagement.
Stress Management	High Impact	Essential for coping with academic pressures and preventing burnout.
Institutional Support	High Impact	Provides mental health resources, flexibility, and support structures.

Figure 1. Key Factors Influencing Mental Health and Well-Being in Distance Learning Students, Data processed, 2024.

Implications and Future Directions

The findings underscore the need for more personalized approaches in distance education. Future research could explore tailored interventions that address individual differences in self-efficacy, digital literacy, and social support, aiming to enhance well-being across diverse student populations. Longitudinal studies could track how these factors influence mental health over time, particularly as students adapt to new digital tools and educational practices.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion should relate to the title and answer the research formulation or objectives. This study highlights the importance of adopting personalized approaches in distance education to address the unique needs of remote learners. Key factors impacting the mental health and well-being of distance learners include self-efficacy, social support, access to digital resources, stress management strategies, and institutional support. These interconnected elements collectively influence students' resilience, engagement, and ability to manage the demands of online learning.

Future research should investigate tailored interventions that support individual variations in self-efficacy, digital literacy, and social connections to promote well-being across diverse student groups. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into how these factors influence mental health over time, particularly as students navigate the continuous evolution of digital tools and educational practices. Further exploration into specific, targeted interventions especially those responsive to emerging educational technologies and shifting student needs can offer a foundation for enhancing support systems within distance learning environments.

REFERENCES

Bandura A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84(2):191–215.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Burcin, M. M., Armstrong, S. N., Early, J. O., & Godwin, H. (2019). Optimizing college health promotion in the digital age: Comparing perceived well-being, health behaviors, health education needs and preferences between college students enrolled in fully online versus campus-based programs. *Health promotion perspectives*, *9*(4), 270.

Camargo, A., Çelik, P., & Storme, M. (2020). Cultural self-efficacy increases creativity in bicultural dyads: Evidence from two dyadic divergent thinking tasks. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *38*, 100725.

Chen, C. F. and Chen, S. C. (2014). Measuring the effects of Safety Management System practices, morality leadership and self-efficacy on pilots' safety behaviors: Safety motivation as a mediator. Safety Science, 62:376–85.

Chen, J., Li, J., Cao, B., Wang, F., Luo, L., & Xu, J. (2020). Mediating effects of self-efficacy, coping, burnout, and social support between job stress and mental health among young Chinese nurses. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *76*(1), 163-173.

Chiu, T. K. (2022). Applying the self-determination theory (SDT) to explain student engagement in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *54*(sup1), S14-S30.

Chung, M. S. (2019). Teacher efficacy, collective self-esteem, and organizational commitment of childcare teachers: A moderated mediation model of social support. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 955.

Cooper, D. R. and Schindler, P. S. (2015). *Business Research Methods, 12th ed.* New York, NY: McGraw Hill/Irwin.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.Damari, B., Almadani, H., & Mirzaei, H. (2021). A study of Happiness in the Islamic Republic of Iran's work communities. *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, *35*, 45.

Dessler, G. (2017). Human Resource Management. United States America: Pearson Education.

Furnham, A. (2020). The psychology of culture shock.

Hamdani, N. A., Ramadani, V., Anggadwita, G., Maulida, G. S., Zuferi, R., & Maalaoui, A. (2023). Gender stereotype perception, perceived social support and self-efficacy in increasing women's entrepreneurial intentions. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, *29*(6), 1290-1313.

Hamilton, B. (2023, Maret 20). Denmark the second happiest country in the world – report. The Copenhagen Post. Diakses pada 11 Mei 2023, dari https:// cphpost. dk/2023-03-20/news/denmark-the-second-happiest-country-in-the-world-report/

Hasan, N., & Bao, Y. (2020). Impact of "e-Learning crack-up" perception on psychological distress among college students during COVID-19 pandemic: A mediating role of "fear of academic year loss". *Children and youth services review*, *118*, 105355.

Herbert, C. (2022). Enhancing mental health, well-being and active lifestyles of university students by means of physical activity and exercise research programs. *Frontiers in public health*, *10*, 849093.

Hong, X., & Liu, Q. (2021). Parenting stress, social support and parenting self-efficacy in Chinese families: Does the number of children matter?. *Early Child Development and Care*, *191*(14), 2269-2280.

Horng, J. S., Tsai, C. Y., Liu, C. H., & Chung, D. Y. C. (2015). Measuring Employee's Creativity: A new theoretical model and empirical study for tourism industry. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *20*(12), 1353-1373.

Huang, H. Y., Li, H., & Hsu, Y. C. (2022). Coping, COVID knowledge, communication, and HBCU student's emotional well-being: Mediating role of perceived control and social connectedness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *50*(6), 2703-2725.

Idris, F., Zulkipli, I. N., Abdul-Mumin, K. H., Ahmad, S. R., Mitha, S., Rahman, H. A., ... & Naing, L. (2021). Academic experiences, physical and mental health impact of COVID-19 pandemic on students and lecturers in health care education. *BMC medical education*, *21*, 1-13.

Jex, S., & Yankelevich, M. (2008). Work stress. In J. Barling, & C. L. Cooper The SAGE handbook of organizational behavior: Volume I - micro approaches (pp. 498-518). SAGE Publications Ltd, https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781849200448.n27

Kakeesh, D. F. (2024). Female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*.

Klinge Jacobsen, H., Birr-Pedersen, K., & Wier, M. (2003). Distributional implications of environmental taxation in Denmark. *Fiscal Studies*, *24*(4), 477-499.

Klok, J., Larsen, A., Dahl, A., & Hansen, K. (2006). Ecological tax reform in Denmark: history and social acceptability. *Energy policy*, *34*(8), 905-916.

Kohls, E., Baldofski, S., Moeller, R., Klemm, S. L., & Rummel-Kluge, C. (2021). Mental health, social and emotional well-being, and perceived burdens of university students during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Germany. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, *12*, 643957.

Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė, V., Aslan, I., Duobienė, J., Glińska, E., & Anandkumar, V. (2021). Influence of digital competence on perceived stress, burnout and well-being among students studying online during the COVID-19 lockdown: A 4-country perspective. *Psychology research and behavior management*, 1483-1498.

Laidlaw, A., McLellan, J., & Ozakinci, G. (2016). Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of mental health, mental well-being and help-seeking behaviour. *Studies in higher education*, *41*(12), 2156-2168.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.

Literat, I. (2021). "Teachers act like we're robots": TikTok as a window into youth experiences of online learning during COVID-19. *AERA open*, *7*, 2332858421995537.

Luqman, A., Talwar, S., Masood, A., & Dhir, A. (2021). Does enterprise social media use promote employee creativity and well-being?. *Journal of Business Research*, *131*, 40-54.

Ma, Y. (2022). The effect of teachers' self-efficacy and creativity on English as a foreign language learners' academic achievement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 872147.

Oettingen, G. (1995). Cross Cultural Perspectives on Self Efficacy. In A. Bandura (Ed). Self Efficacy in Changing Societies (pp. 149-176) New York: Cambridge University Press.

Peng, Y., & Mao, C. (2015). The impact of person–job fit on job satisfaction: the mediator role of Self efficacy. *Social Indicators Research*, *121*, 805-813.

Psychosocial, P. A. H. O. (2020). mental health considerations during COVID-19 outbreak.

Puozzo, I. C., & Audrin, C. (2021). Improving self-efficacy and creative self-efficacy to foster creativity and learning in schools. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *42*, 100966.

Robbins, S., Judge, T. A., Millett, B., & Boyle, M. (2013). *Organisational behaviour*. Pearson Higher Education AU.

Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019). Research Methods for Business Students. 8th Edition. New York: Pearson.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. john wiley & sons.

Shawaqfeh, M. S., Al Bekairy, A. M., Al-Azayzih, A., Alkatheri, A. A., Qandil, A. M., Obaidat, A. A., ... & Muflih, S. M. (2020). Pharmacy students perceptions of their distance online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic: a Cross-Sectional Survey Study. *Journal of medical education and curricular development*, *7*, 2382120520963039.

Shi, L., Yao, X., & Wu, W. (2020). Perceived university support, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, heterogeneous entrepreneurial intentions in entrepreneurship education: The

moderating role of the Chinese sense of face. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, *12*(2), 205-230.

Sitohang, R. H., Nurbaeti, N., Yusriani, S., Kusmartini, S. R., Pratiwi, P. D., & Handayu, K. S. (2023, November). Factors and Impacts of Work-Life Balance of Police Officers: A Literature Review. In *Proceeding of The International Seminar on Business, Economics, Social Science and Technology (ISBEST)* (Vol. 3, No. 1).

Teo, S. C., Lilian, A., & Koo, A. C. (2023). Examining the effects of academic motivation and online learning on Malaysian tertiary students' psychological well-being and perceived learning performance. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1), 2186025.

Torrance, E. P. (1966). Torrance tests of creative thinking. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*.

Valdez-Juárez, L. E., & Pérez-de-Lema, D. G. (2023). Creativity and the family environment, facilitators of self-efficacy for entrepreneurial intentions in university students: Case ITSON Mexico. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *21*(1), 100764.

Vaux, A. (1988). Social support: Theory, research and intervention. New York: Praeger.

World Health Organization. (2020). Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak. WHO/2019-nCoV/MentalHealth/2020.1.

Xie, J., Liu, M., Zhong, Z., Zhang, Q., Zhou, J., Wang, L., ... & Cheng, A. S. (2020). Relationships among character strengths, self-efficacy, social support, depression, and psychological well-being of hospital nurses. *Asian Nursing Research*, *14*(3), 150-157.

Yusriani, S., Patiro, S. P. S., Rekarti, E., Pamungkas, C. R., & Nurbaeti, N. (2024). Analyzıng the Impact of Knowledge Sharıng in Vırtual Teams: Practıcal Evıdence from Indonesıa Open Unıversıty. *Ilomata International Journal of Management*, *5*(2).

Yusriani, S., Prambudi, I. S., Gunarto, M., Nurbaeti, N., Lusiati, M., & Suhendro, S. (2023, August). Influence of Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on Learning Enthusiasm and Digital Competence in Online Distance Learning: A Cross-National Study on Workers and MM Program Postgraduate Students. In *Proceedings International Conference on Business, Economics & Management* (No. 1, pp. 410-427).