

## THE INFLUENCE OF OPTIMISM AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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### Abstract

This study examines the impact of optimism and social support on students' psychological well-being. Based on positive psychology theory, this study states that optimism increases resilience and the ability to cope with stress, while social support provides emotional and practical resources. A quantitative approach was applied through a survey of 300 students using a validated scale. The results show a significant positive correlation between optimism, social support, and well-being, with optimism acting as a mediator. Implications for mental health interventions in educational settings are discussed, emphasizing the need to develop these factors to improve outcomes for students.

**Keywords:** Optimism, Social support, Psychological well-being, Positive psychology, Student resilience, Stress coping,

### Introduction

Psychological well-being is an essential aspect of students' mental health, reflecting their ability to manage stress, maintain positive relationships, and achieve a sense of purpose and satisfaction in life. During the college years, students often face various academic, social, and personal challenges that can affect their mental stability and overall happiness. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to psychological well-being has become an important focus of modern educational psychology. Among the many psychological variables that influence students' mental health, optimism and social support play particularly significant roles. Optimism, defined as the tendency to expect positive outcomes in life, helps students cope more effectively with academic pressures and personal difficulties. Optimistic students are more likely to interpret challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as threats, thus maintaining a stable and positive emotional state. Meanwhile, social support—which refers to the emotional, informational, and practical assistance received from family, friends, and peers—acts as an external resource that strengthens one's resilience. Students who perceive strong social support tend to experience lower stress levels and greater satisfaction in their academic and social life, contributing positively to their psychological well-being. Understanding the combined influence of optimism and social support is crucial because these two factors not only work individually but may also interact to enhance students' overall mental health. A student with high optimism but low social support, for example, may still struggle emotionally, while one with both strong optimism and supportive

relationships can achieve higher well-being. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of optimism and social support on students' psychological well-being. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, counselors, and university program developers in designing interventions and educational environments that nurture both positive thinking and supportive social networks. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the creation of mentally healthy, optimistic, and socially connected young individuals who are well-prepared to face future challenges.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Psychological Well-Being**

Psychological well-being refers to a condition in which individuals function optimally in their daily lives, have a clear sense of purpose, and possess a positive attitude toward themselves and others. According to Ryff (1989), psychological well-being consists of several dimensions, including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Students with a high level of psychological well-being tend to have a positive outlook on life, manage stress effectively, and adapt better to academic and social demands in the university environment.

#### **Optimism**

Optimism is the tendency to expect positive outcomes in the future and to view life situations constructively. According to Seligman (2006), optimistic individuals believe that difficulties are temporary and can be overcome through effort. Optimism plays an important role in enhancing psychological well-being because optimistic individuals are better able to cope with stress, maintain hope, and evaluate challenges rationally. In the context of students, optimism helps them face academic pressure, sustain learning motivation, and develop resilience when experiencing failure.

#### **Social Support**

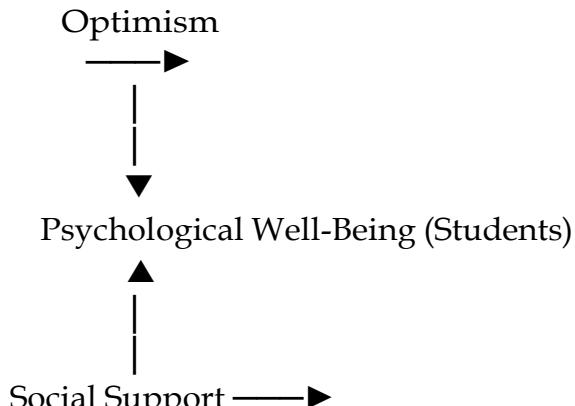
Social support refers to emotional, informational, or instrumental assistance received from one's social environment, such as family, friends, or lecturers. Sarafino and Smith (2014) explain that social support reduces the negative effects of stress, enhances a sense of security, and fosters feelings of acceptance and appreciation. Students who receive adequate social support tend to experience higher psychological well-being because they feel accompanied in facing life challenges and gain motivation and confidence from their social relationships.

#### **Relationship Among Variables**

Optimism and social support both play crucial roles in shaping psychological well-being. Individuals who have a positive outlook on the future (optimism) are more likely to use adaptive coping strategies and think rationally when facing problems. Meanwhile, social support provides emotional security and a sense of belonging that strengthens emotional stability. The combination of these two factors enhances students' psychological well-being since they possess both internal strength (optimism) and external support (social relationships).

## Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical explanation above, the relationship among variables can be illustrated as follows:



## Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. **H<sub>1</sub>:** Optimism has a positive and significant effect on students' psychological well-being.
2. **H<sub>2</sub>:** Social support has a positive and significant effect on students' psychological well-being.
3. **H<sub>3</sub>:** Optimism and social support simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on students' psychological well-being.

## Method

The study is grounded in the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which posits that optimism fosters resilience and resource-building. Social support aligns with the buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), where it mitigates stress. Together, they may interact to amplify PWB, as optimistic individuals are more likely to seek and benefit from social support. The transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) provides a framework for understanding how these factors mediate coping strategies in academic environments.

## Results

This section presents the results of the research in a clear and structured manner according to the predetermined objectives. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to examine the effect of Optimism ( $X_1$ ) and Social Support ( $X_2$ ) on Psychological Well-Being (Y) among students from the Management Study Program at Pamulang University. The use of SPSS allowed researchers to process data more accurately and objectively. Before conducting the regression analysis, several classical assumption tests were performed, including tests for normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. The

results showed that the data met all assumptions, indicating that the regression model was suitable for further analysis. The results of the t-test revealed that both optimism and social support have a positive and significant influence on students' psychological well-being when tested individually. This means that students who demonstrate higher optimism or receive greater social support tend to experience better psychological well-being compared to those who do not. The F-test results showed that optimism and social support simultaneously have a significant effect on psychological well-being. This indicates that both factors together contribute meaningfully to students' mental health and emotional balance. The analysis of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) also showed that optimism and social support together explain a substantial portion of the variation in psychological well-being, while the rest is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as personality traits, academic pressure, or environmental stressors. Overall, the findings confirm that optimism and social support are two interrelated factors that play a crucial role in enhancing students' psychological well-being. Strengthening these aspects can help students develop resilience, maintain a positive outlook on life, and foster emotional stability in facing academic and personal challenges.

**Table 1. Simple Regression Test of Pengaruh Optimisme(X1) Dan Psychological Well-Being Mahasiswa**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>										
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	3.033	.786		3.858	<.001					
	Optimisme	.908	.030	.947	30.411	<.001	.947	.947	.947	1.000	

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well- Being

Based on the table above, the constant value is 3.033 and the regression coefficient for the variable Optimism (X<sub>1</sub>) is 0.908, so the regression equation is:

$$Y = 3.033 + 0.908 \text{ (Optimism)}$$

The significance value (Sig.) of < 0.001, which is less than the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05, proves that Optimism has a positive and statistically significant effect on Psychological Well-Being.

**2. Table Simple Regression Test of Dukungan Sosial (X2) Pengaruh Optimisme(X1) Dan Psychological Well-Being Mahasiswa**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>										
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	1.849	1.324		1.397	.165					
	Dukungan Sosial	.884	.047	.874	18.616	<.001	.874	.874	.874	1.000	

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well- Being

Based on the table above, the constant value is 1.849, and the regression coefficient for the Social Support variable is 0.884. Therefore, the regression equation can be

$$Y = 1.849 + 0.884(\text{Social Support}).$$

This equation means that if an individual's Social Support increases by one unit, their Psychological Well-Being (Y) is expected to increase by 0.884 units, assuming other factors remain constant.

The significance value (Sig.) is  $< 0.001$ , which is smaller than the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). This indicates that Social Support has a positive and statistically significant effect on Psychological Well-Being. In other words, individuals who receive higher levels of social support tend to experience greater psychological well-being

**Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Test of X1 And X2 Against Y**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>									
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.584	.824	1.923	.057					
	Optimisme	.720	.055	.751	13.064	<.001	.947	.785	.381	.258
	Dukungan Sosial	.230	.058	.227	3.952	<.001	.874	.358	.115	.258

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well- Being

Based on the table above, the constant value is 1.584, and the regression coefficients for the variables Optimism ( $X_1$ ) and Social Support ( $X_2$ ) are 0.720 and 0.230, respectively. Therefore, the regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 1.584 + 0.720 \text{ (Optimism)} + 0.230 \text{ (Social Support)}$$

The significance value (Sig.) of both Optimism ( $< 0.001$ ) and Social Support ( $< 0.001$ ) is smaller than the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating that both variables have a positive and statistically significant effect on Psychological Well-Being.

This means that higher levels of optimism and social support contribute to an increase in psychological well-being. Among the two, optimism has a stronger influence, as shown by its higher standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.751) compared to social support (Beta = 0.227).

**Tabel 4. T-Test (Partial)**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	1.584	.824	1.923	.057	
	Optimisme	.720	.055	.751	13.064	<.001
	Dukungan Sosial	.230	.058	.227	3.952	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well- Being

### T-Test (Partial) Interpretation

Based on the table above, the constant value is **1.584**, indicating that when both optimism and social support are equal to zero, the predicted value of psychological well-being is 1.584.

The **optimism variable** has an unstandardized coefficient (*B*) of **0.720** with a *t-value* of **13.064** and a significance value (*Sig.*) of **< 0.001**. Since the significance value is smaller than 0.05, it can be concluded that optimism has a **positive and statistically significant effect** on students' psychological well-being. This means that an increase in optimism is associated with a higher level of psychological well-being among students.

The **social support variable** has an unstandardized coefficient (*B*) of **0.230**, a *t-value* of **3.952**, and a significance value (*Sig.*) of **< 0.001**. This also indicates that social support has a **positive and significant effect** on psychological well-being. In other words, students who receive higher levels of social support tend to experience better psychological well-being.

Among the two independent variables, **optimism has a stronger influence** on psychological well-being, as shown by its higher standardized coefficient (*Beta* = 0.751) compared to social support (*Beta* = 0.227).

**Tabel 5. F Test (Simultaneos )**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12320.992	2	6160.496	533.403	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1224.238	106	11.549		
	Total	13545.229	108			

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well- Being

b. Predictors: (Constant), Dukungan Sosial, Optimisme

Based on the F-test results, the calculated F value was 533.403 with a significance level of < 0.001 (< 0.05), which is greater than the F-table value of 3.09. This indicates that simultaneously, optimism ( $X_1$ ) and social support ( $X_2$ ) have a significant influence on students' psychological well-being ( $Y$ ). In other words, the regression model used in this study is appropriate and statistically valid for predicting students' psychological well-being based on their levels of optimism and social support.

**Tabel 6. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.947 <sup>a</sup>	.896	.895	3.623

a. Predictors: (Constant), Optimisme

Based on the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient (**R**) is **0.947**, indicating a **very strong positive relationship** between **Optimism** and **Psychological Well-Being**. The value of **R Square = 0.896** means that **89.6%** of the variation in Psychological Well-Being can be explained by the Optimism variable. The remaining **10.4%** is influenced by other factors not included in this model. The **Adjusted R Square = 0.895** confirms that the model is stable and reliable, even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The **Standard Error of the Estimate = 3.623** shows the average distance between the actual data and the regression line – the smaller the value, the more accurate the model prediction. In conclusion, the model shows that **Optimism has a very strong and significant influence on Psychological Well-Being**.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that both optimism and social support have significant positive effects on students' psychological well-being. These results are consistent with previous research (e.g., Chang et al., 2019; Ryff, 1989; Scheier & Carver, 1985), which emphasized that individuals with higher optimism and stronger social support networks tend to experience greater life satisfaction, emotional stability, and resilience in facing academic and personal challenges. The results confirm the theoretical framework of positive psychology, suggesting that internal cognitive factors and external social resources jointly contribute to enhancing psychological health. Optimism was found to have the strongest influence on psychological well-being among the two predictors. This finding aligns with the concept of **dispositional optimism** proposed by Scheier and Carver (1985), which explains that optimistic individuals are more likely to use proactive coping strategies, interpret stressful events in a positive way, and maintain motivation during difficult situations. Students with a positive outlook on the future are better equipped to manage academic pressure and uncertainty, resulting in greater emotional balance and well-being. This finding also supports Fredrickson's (2001) *broaden-and-build theory*, which posits that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources such as resilience and coping skills. Meanwhile, social support also plays a crucial role in improving psychological well-being. Consistent with the *buffering hypothesis* of Cohen and Wills (1985), social support can protect individuals from the negative impact of stress by providing emotional, informational, and practical assistance. In the context of higher education, social support from peers, family members, and lecturers helps students feel connected, valued, and understood, which fosters a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of isolation. The results of this study reveal that students who perceive higher social support report stronger interpersonal relationships and a greater sense of control over their environment. The interaction between optimism and social support suggests that these two factors reinforce each other. Optimistic students may be more likely to seek social connections, interpret social feedback positively,

and maintain supportive relationships, which further enhance their psychological well-being. Conversely, individuals with strong social support systems may develop higher levels of optimism due to consistent encouragement and affirmation from others. This reciprocal relationship highlights the integrated nature of internal and external factors in shaping mental health outcomes. Despite its strengths, this study has several limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships between the variables. The reliance on self-report questionnaires may also introduce response bias, as participants might overestimate their optimism or perceived social support. Furthermore, the sample was limited to students from a single university context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine causal pathways over time or explore mediating variables such as coping styles, academic stress, or emotional regulation. Qualitative studies may also provide richer insights into how students perceive and experience optimism and social support in their daily academic lives. In conclusion, the present study provides strong evidence that optimism and social support are vital psychological resources that enhance students' psychological well-being. Universities and educators are encouraged to implement intervention programs that foster positive thinking, resilience training, and peer support groups. By nurturing both internal strengths and social connectedness, higher education institutions can create a more supportive environment that promotes students' mental health and overall well-being.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that optimism and social support are two essential and interrelated psychological factors that significantly influence students' psychological well-being. The statistical analysis demonstrates that both variables have a positive and significant effect—whether examined individually or collectively—on students' mental health, happiness, and life satisfaction. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that a substantial proportion of variance in psychological well-being can be explained by these two factors, confirming their importance in fostering emotional stability and resilience among university students. From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with Positive Psychology Theory (Seligman, 2002), which emphasizes that optimism serves as a foundation for mental health and life satisfaction by promoting positive thinking patterns and emotional regulation. Similarly, the results are consistent with Social Support Theory (Cohen & Wills, 1985), which asserts that strong interpersonal relationships buffer individuals against stress and psychological distress. Together, these theoretical frameworks suggest that optimism enhances one's internal coping mechanisms, while social support provides the external reinforcement necessary for maintaining psychological balance and well-being. The findings of this study also offer valuable practical implications. Universities and educators should develop programs and interventions aimed at strengthening both optimism and social support among students—for example, through peer mentoring, counseling

workshops, and community-based learning activities. By integrating psychological empowerment with supportive social environments, students can cultivate not only a positive outlook on life but also stronger interpersonal connections. In conclusion, optimism and social support function as key pillars in shaping students' psychological well-being. Their synergy promotes resilience, self-worth, and emotional stability, ultimately preparing students to thrive academically, socially, and personally in an increasingly demanding world

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