

## **Factors Influencing the General Well-Being of Adolescents: A Thematic Study on Emotional, Social, and Environmental Determinants**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid emotional, social, and environmental changes that significantly impact general well-being. This conceptual research article explores key factors influencing adolescent well-being, including emotional health, social interactions, family dynamics, academic pressures, and lifestyle habits. Special attention is given to the impact of technology and social media on well-being. Through a thematic analysis, this study integrates theoretical models of well-being, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, to understand the multi-dimensional nature of adolescent well-being. The article argues for holistic approaches to fostering adolescent well-being, emphasizing the intersection of emotional, social, and environmental factors in shaping the quality of life and personal development.*

**\*Key Words: Adolescents, General Well-Being, Thematic Study, Emotional Determinants, Social Determinants, Environmental Determinants.**

## Introduction

Adolescence is a complex period marked by developmental transitions that significantly shape an individual's overall well-being. As adolescents navigate emotional, social, and environmental changes, their general well-being is affected by various interconnected factors, including family relationships, academic pressures, lifestyle choices, and the pervasive influence of technology (Sawyer et al., 2012). Understanding these influences is critical for developing effective interventions to promote adolescent well-being. This article provides a conceptual analysis of the factors influencing adolescent well-being through a thematic lens, drawing on key theoretical frameworks, including Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. These frameworks offer insights into how emotional regulation, social connections, and environmental contexts impact adolescents' physical, mental, and emotional health (Maslow, 1943; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This research aims to highlight the multi-dimensional nature of well-being and discuss how various determinants intersect to shape adolescents' quality of life.

## Thematic Areas of Adolescent Well-Being

**2.1 Emotional Well-Being** Emotional well-being is a core component of adolescent health, encompassing the ability to regulate emotions, manage stress, and maintain a positive self-concept (Suldo et al., 2014). Adolescents experience heightened emotional fluctuations due to developmental changes, and their emotional resilience can be challenged by factors such as peer relationships, academic expectations, and self-image. Emotional regulation, or the ability to manage one's emotional responses effectively, is closely tied to overall well-being (Gross, 2015). Adolescents who struggle with emotional dysregulation are more vulnerable to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Compas et al., 2017).

**2.2 Social Interactions and Relationships:** Social interactions are vital to adolescent well-being, influencing their sense of belonging and self-worth (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Peer relationships become increasingly important during adolescence, with adolescents seeking approval and validation from friends and social groups (Brown & Larson, 2009). Positive peer

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interactions contribute to social competence, self-esteem, and overall happiness, while negative experiences, such as bullying or social exclusion, can lead to feelings of isolation and low self-worth (Vernberg et al., 2010). The support received from family, teachers, and friends plays a pivotal role in fostering adolescents' emotional and social development.

**2.3 Family Dynamics:** Family relationships remain a key determinant of adolescent well-being, with parental support, communication, and emotional warmth strongly correlating with positive outcomes (Steinberg, 2001). Adolescents raised in supportive family environments are more likely to develop healthy coping mechanisms, resilience, and self-esteem (Hair et al., 2005). Conversely, family conflict or parental neglect can contribute to emotional difficulties and behavioral issues. Research has shown that a strong family bond acts as a protective factor against mental health problems, academic struggles, and risky behaviors (García-Moya et al., 2013).

**2.4 Academic Pressures:** Academic pressures are a significant source of stress for adolescents, particularly in cultures that place high value on academic success (Luthar et al., 2013). The drive to meet academic expectations, coupled with the fear of failure, can lead to anxiety, burnout, and decreased well-being (Putwain et al., 2018). Adolescents who perceive high academic demands without adequate support may experience diminished self-esteem and increased mental health problems. However, academic success also contributes positively to well-being when adolescents feel confident in their abilities and supported in their educational environments (Wang et al., 2014).

**2.5 Lifestyle Habits:** Adolescent well-being is also influenced by lifestyle factors, such as physical activity, diet, and sleep patterns. Regular physical exercise is associated with improved mental health, reduced stress, and enhanced mood (Biddle & Asare, 2011). A balanced diet and adequate sleep are essential for cognitive functioning and emotional stability. Adolescents who engage in healthy lifestyle habits tend to have higher levels of general well-being, while poor habits are linked to emotional dysregulation and physical health problems (Sahoo et al., 2015).

**2.6 Impact of Technology and Social Media:** The rise of social media and digital technology has significantly affected adolescent well-being, both positively and negatively. Social media platforms provide opportunities for social connection, self-expression, and identity formation (Best et al., 2014). However, excessive use and negative online interactions, such as cyberbullying and social comparison, can lead to diminished self-esteem, anxiety, and depression (Valkenburg et al., 2017). The impact of technology on adolescent well-being depends largely on how it is used, with balanced and mindful engagement leading to more positive outcomes.

### **3. Conceptual Focus: Theoretical Models of Well-Being**

**3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a useful framework for understanding the general well-being of adolescents. According to Maslow (1943), well-being is achieved when individuals' basic needs—physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization—are met. Adolescents, in particular, must navigate the challenges of fulfilling their emotional and social needs, such as forming meaningful relationships and developing a sense of identity. Failure to meet these needs can hinder their progress toward self-actualization and overall well-being.

**3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory** Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) provides a comprehensive view of how various environmental contexts influence adolescent well-being. This model posits that adolescents' development is shaped by interactions within multiple systems, including the family, school, peer groups, and broader societal influences. By examining how these systems interact, we gain a deeper understanding of the environmental determinants of adolescent well-being, including the protective effects of supportive social networks and the detrimental impact of adverse environments.

### **4. Research Significance**

The multi-dimensional nature of adolescent well-being requires an integrated approach to understanding how emotional, social, and environmental factors intersect to shape their quality of life. Adolescents face increasing challenges in maintaining well-being due to rising academic pressures, social comparisons via technology, and complex family dynamics. Effective interventions must target these diverse areas, promoting emotional resilience, supportive

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relationships, and healthy lifestyle habits (Sawyer et al., 2012). By applying theoretical models such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, we can identify both the individual and environmental needs that must be met to foster well-being in adolescents. Designing interventions that address these multi-faceted influences will lead to more holistic approaches to promoting adolescent health, ultimately enhancing their emotional, social, and physical well-being.

## **5. Measurement of Well-Being**

The assessment of adolescent well-being is essential for identifying challenges and designing interventions to enhance their quality of life. Several measurement tools have been developed to evaluate general well-being, with the WHO-5 Well-Being Index (WHO-5) being one of the most widely used instruments. This index, along with other popular scales, provides a comprehensive view of adolescent well-being across emotional, social, and environmental domains.

### **5.1. WHO-5 Well-Being Index**

The WHO-5 Well-Being Index, developed by the World Health Organization, is a short, self-reported measure consisting of five items that assess positive well-being. It has been widely validated across different age groups, including adolescents, and has demonstrated high reliability and construct validity (Topp et al., 2015). The WHO-5 measures general feelings of well-being over the past two weeks, focusing on positive mood, vitality, and general interest in life. It is simple to administer, making it suitable for both clinical and research settings (Bech, 2004).

### **5.2 The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)**

Another widely used tool is the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), which includes 14 items covering both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being (Tennant et al., 2007). This scale assesses a broader spectrum of mental well-being, including positive functioning, emotional well-being, and interpersonal relationships. The WEMWBS has been validated in adolescents and is frequently used in school-based mental health research (Clarke et al., 2011).

### **5.3 The KIDSCREEN-27**

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The KIDSCREEN-27 is a comprehensive measure specifically designed for children and adolescents, assessing well-being across five dimensions: physical well-being, psychological well-being, autonomy and parent relations, social support and peers, and school environment (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2014). It provides a holistic view of well-being by addressing both health-related quality of life and emotional factors. The KIDSCREEN-27 has been used across various cultural contexts, making it a versatile tool for cross-national studies on adolescent well-being (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2008).

### **5.3 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)**

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is another commonly used instrument to measure well-being indirectly by assessing the level of stress perceived by adolescents in their daily lives (Cohen et al., 1983). High levels of perceived stress have been linked to lower well-being, making the PSS a useful tool for understanding the relationship between stress and mental health among adolescents.

### **5.4 The Flourishing Scale**

The Flourishing Scale is a short measure that assesses psychological well-being by evaluating an individual's self-perceived success in areas such as relationships, purpose, and self-esteem (Diener et al., 2010). It captures the eudaimonic aspects of well-being, focusing on the sense of meaning and engagement, which are essential for adolescent development.

### **5.5 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is often used to measure well-being in the context of behavioral and emotional difficulties (Goodman, 1997). It assesses various aspects of mental health, including emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationships, and pro-social behavior. The SDQ has been validated for use in adolescents and is frequently employed in both clinical and educational settings to identify mental health challenges that may affect well-being (Goodman et al., 2010).

### **5.6 The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is another commonly used tool that measures global cognitive judgments of one's satisfaction with life as a whole (Diener et al., 1985). Adolescents who score higher on the SWLS tend to report greater well-being, while lower scores may

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indicate dissatisfaction with life or a potential risk for psychological distress. The SWLS has been shown to correlate strongly with other indicators of emotional well-being and is often used in conjunction with other tools, such as the WHO-5, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of adolescent well-being (Pavot&Diener, 2008).

### **5.7 Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB)**

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) measure multiple dimensions of well-being, including self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff& Keyes, 1995). These scales provide a comprehensive evaluation of well-being by focusing not only on emotional and social aspects but also on the individual's ability to manage life challenges and maintain personal growth. Ryff's model has been influential in well-being research, particularly in its application to developmental transitions in adolescence (Ryff, 2014).

#### ***Measurement Implications***

Instruments such as the WHO-5, WEMWBS, KIDSCREEN-27, and others provide valuable insights into the different dimensions of well-being. These measures are useful for capturing both subjective and objective aspects of adolescent well-being, enabling researchers and practitioners to develop targeted interventions. Understanding well-being through such standardized measures allows for cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis of how emotional, social, and environmental factors influence adolescent health over time.

### **6. Conclusion**

Adolescent well-being is influenced by a wide range of emotional, social, and environmental factors. Emotional regulation, social relationships, family support, academic pressures, lifestyle habits, and technology use all play critical roles in shaping adolescents' overall quality of life. The theoretical models of Maslow and Bronfenbrenner provide valuable frameworks for understanding how these diverse factors intersect. Promoting holistic well-being in adolescents requires a multi-dimensional approach, addressing their emotional needs, supporting healthy relationships, reducing academic stress, and fostering positive engagement with technology. By understanding and addressing these factors, we can help adolescents navigate the challenges of this developmental stage and promote lifelong well-being.

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