# BEYOND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELF-EFFICACY IN ADOLESCENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to analyze the roles of perceived social support, self-efficacy, and academic performance as predictors of psychological well-being among students in public and private high schools in the municipality of Klina. This study employs a quantitative, non-experimental design, utilizing a purposive sample of 139 students to test the study variables. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that self-efficacy was a positive and statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = .229$, $p = .007$), and social support also predicted psychological well-being ($\beta = .301$, $p < .001$). Similarly, Spearman's correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being ($r = 0.364^{**}$; $p < .01$). Likewise, social support was associated with psychological well-being, showing a significant, moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.417^{**}$; $p < .01$). In contrast, academic performance did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = .091$, $p = .251$), whereas the Kruskal–Wallis test revealed differences based on grade level, with students having higher average grades reporting higher levels of psychological well-being ($\chi^2(3) = 9.561$, $p = .023$).

Keywords: self-efficacy, psychological well-being, academic performance, social support.

## 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by substantial cognitive, emotional, social, and psychological changes. During this stage, young people develop their identities, become increasingly independent, and face growing expectations related to peer relationships, academic achievement, and future goals. These developmental demands may influence their psychological well-being, making adolescence an important period for identifying the personal and academic factors associated with positive psychological functioning. Psychological well-being extends beyond the absence of mental health problems and encompasses positive functioning, personal development, and the ability to cope with everyday challenges (Ryff, 1989; WHO, 2021). Understanding the factors associated with adolescents' well-being is particularly important in school settings, where students encounter both developmental opportunities and academic pressures.

Psychological well-being can be understood through Ryff's (1989) multidimensional model, which identifies six dimensions of positive psychological functioning: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. This perspective emphasizes that well-being involves more than the experience of positive emotions; it also reflects an individual's ability to function effectively and develop personal potential. During adolescence, these dimensions may be particularly relevant because students are simultaneously navigating changes in self-perception, interpersonal relationships, and academic responsibilities. Consequently, examining the personal characteristics associated with psychological well-being may contribute to a better understanding of adolescents' adjustment and functioning in educational environments.

One important personal factor that may be associated with psychological well-being is self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1994, 1997), self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve desired outcomes. These beliefs influence how individuals approach challenges, regulate their motivation, sustain effort, and

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respond to difficulties. Individuals with higher self-efficacy are generally more likely to perceive demanding situations as manageable challenges rather than insurmountable threats. Conversely, lower self-efficacy may be associated with avoidance, reduced persistence, and greater vulnerability to stress. In the school context, students' beliefs about their capabilities may influence how they respond to academic demands and how they evaluate their ability to manage everyday challenges.

The relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being can also be understood through the perception of personal competence and control. Students who believe they can cope effectively with challenges may experience greater confidence in their abilities and a stronger sense of control over their circumstances. These perceptions are conceptually consistent with Ryff's (1989) dimensions of environmental mastery, self-acceptance, and personal growth. Empirical research supports an association between self-efficacy and well-being during adolescence. Caprara et al. (2006) found positive relationships between self-efficacy and psychological well-being among Italian adolescents aged 14–18, particularly in relation to environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance. Similarly, Moksnes et al. (2020) reported that higher levels of social and emotional self-efficacy were associated with better mental well-being among adolescents. Andretta and McKay (2020) also found that adolescents with higher self-efficacy across emotional, social, and academic domains reported better psychological and somatic well-being. More recently, Raimondi et al. (2025) found that academic self-efficacy was associated with higher positive affect and lower negative affect among secondary school students. Collectively, these findings suggest that self-efficacy may represent an important personal resource associated with adolescents' psychological well-being.

In addition to personal psychological resources, academic performance is another factor relevant to understanding students' experiences in school. Academic performance represents an important indicator of students' educational functioning and may be associated with their perceptions of competence, achievement, and progress toward personal goals. Students who achieve satisfactory academic results may experience a stronger sense of accomplishment, whereas persistent academic difficulties may contribute to frustration, uncertainty, and concerns about their abilities. However, academic performance should not be considered equivalent to psychological well-being, since students' psychological experiences are shaped by a broader range of individual and contextual factors.

Previous research has examined the relationship between well-being and academic achievement, although findings indicate that this association is not straightforward. Suldo et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of students' subjective well-being for educational functioning, noting that greater life satisfaction and more frequent positive emotions are associated with more favorable academic experiences and outcomes. In contrast, Bücker et al. (2018), in a meta-analysis involving 47 studies, 49 independent samples, and 38,946 participants, identified a statistically significant but relatively modest positive association between subjective well-being and academic achievement (r=.164). Their findings suggest that academic achievement and well-being are related but distinct constructs and that academic performance alone cannot fully explain differences in students' psychological experiences. Further research by Mallick et al. (2022) also examined the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance among adolescent students, reporting differences in the direction of this association between boys and girls. These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship and the importance of examining academic performance in relation to adolescents' psychological well-being within specific educational contexts.

Although previous studies have contributed to understanding the roles of self-efficacy and academic achievement, the available findings indicate the need for further investigation of these relationships among secondary school students in different educational and sociocultural

settings. In particular, examining self-efficacy alongside academic performance may help clarify whether students' beliefs about their personal capabilities and their academic outcomes are associated with differences in psychological well-being. Such evidence may contribute to a more context-sensitive understanding of adolescent well-being and provide a basis for informing school-based practices that support students' psychological and educational development.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being and to investigate differences in psychological well-being according to academic performance among secondary school students in Klina, Kosovo. More specifically, the study focuses on the extent to which self-efficacy is positively associated with psychological well-being, as well as on whether students with lower academic performance tend to report lower levels of psychological well-being.

## 2. Body of Manuscript

### 2.1. Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research design to examine the relationship between perceived social support, self-efficacy, academic performance, and psychological well-being among secondary school students. The study also investigated differences in psychological well-being according to gender and place of residence.

Data were collected in April 2026 using standardized self-report questionnaires administered to students in grades 10–12 in public and private secondary schools in the Municipality of Klina, Kosovo. The initial target sample was 150 students. Following data screening, 11 questionnaires were excluded because of missing academic performance information or errors in completion, resulting in a final sample of 139 participants.

A purposive sampling method was used to recruit eligible students. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from students and their parents or legal guardians. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process.

### 2.2. Study Variables and Measurement Instruments

Four main variables were examined: psychological well-being, perceived social support, self-efficacy, and academic performance. Age, gender, grade level, and place of residence were considered demographic variables.

Self-efficacy was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The instrument consists of 10 items rated on a four-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater perceived self-efficacy.

Perceived social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), developed by Zimet et al. (1988). The scale contains 12 items assessing perceived support from family, friends, and significant others. Responses are rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater perceived social support.

Psychological well-being was assessed using the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), developed by Tennant et al. (2007). The instrument consists of 14 items rated on a five-point response scale. Total scores range from 14 to 70, with higher scores indicating greater psychological well-being.

Academic performance was operationalized using students' self-reported average grades. Demographic information included age, gender, grade level, and place of residence (urban or rural).

The internal consistency of the three questionnaires was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The social support questionnaire demonstrated good reliability (α = .854), while the self-efficacy (α = .699) and psychological well-being (α = .686) questionnaires showed acceptable reliability, with values close to the recommended threshold of .70. Overall, the results indicate adequate internal consistency, suggesting that all three instruments were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of the present study

### 2.3. Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Data were collected using printed questionnaires distributed in collaboration with school administrators. Students completed the questionnaires independently during scheduled school sessions. The process was conducted in cooperation with school psychologists, who were available to provide clarification when necessary.
Permission was obtained from the directors of the participating schools before data collection. Students were included only when the required parental or guardian consent had been provided. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw without consequences. The collected data were used exclusively for academic research.

### 2.4. Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximum values, were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and the principal study variables.
The internal consistency of the measurement instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests, together with histograms and Q–Q plots, were used to examine the distribution of the study variables.
Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationships between self-efficacy, perceived social support, and psychological well-being. Multiple linear regression was conducted to assess the unique contribution of self-efficacy, perceived social support, and academic performance to the prediction of psychological well-being. Differences in psychological well-being according to academic performance, gender, and place of residence were examined using the Kruskal–Wallis test and independent-samples t-tests, as appropriate. Statistical significance was evaluated using a significance level of $p < .05$.

### 2.5. Results

The findings are presented through descriptive statistics, tables, and figures, followed by the results of the inferential analyses. The descriptive results summarize the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of the main study variables. Subsequent analyses examine the relationships between the study variables, the predictive contribution of self-efficacy, social support, and academic performance, and differences in psychological well-being according to demographic characteristics.

**Table1.** *Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for the study variables, namely self-efficacy, social support, psychological well-being, and grade point average (GPA).*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-efficacy | 139 | 17.00 | 40.00 | 30.4820 | 4.39590 |
| Social_support | 139 | 28.00 | 84.00 | 61.5540 | 13.00344 |
| Psychological_well-being | 139 | 33.00 | 67.00 | 50.4748 | 6.52124 |
| Grade_point_average (GPA). | 139 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 2.5683 | .86853 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 139 | | | | |

The table above presents the descriptive statistics for self-efficacy, perceived social support, psychological well-being, and students' grade point average. The results indicate that self-efficacy scores ranged from 17 to 40 (M = 30.48; SD = 4.40), suggesting a relatively high level of self-efficacy among participants. Perceived social support ranged from 28 to 84, with a mean of M = 61.55 (SD = 13.00), indicating a moderate to high level of perceived social support. Regarding psychological well-being, scores ranged from 33 to 67, with a mean of M = 50.47 (SD = 6.52), suggesting moderate to high levels of psychological well-being among participants. Meanwhile, students' grade point average ranged from 2 to 5, with a mean of M = 2.56 (SD = 0.87), reflecting a moderate distribution of academic performance within the sample**.**

**Table 2**. *Multiple Linear Regression Results for Psychological Well-Being*

**ANOVA[b]**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regression | 1243.178 | 3 | 414.393 | 12.095 | .000[a] |
| | Residual | 4625.484 | 135 | 34.263 | | |
| | Total | 5868.662 | 138 | | | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Grade_point_average (GPA). Social Support, Self-efficacy
b. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-being

**Table 3.** *Summary of the Multiple Linear Regression Model for Psychological Well-Being*

| **Coefficients**[a] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| Model | | | | T | Sig. |
| (Constant) | 29.047 | 3.775 | | 7.694 | .000 |
| Self- efficacy | .340 | .124 | .229 | 2.748 | .007 |
| Social_Support | .151 | .041 | .301 | 3.724 | .000 |
| Grade_point_average (GPA). | .684 | .594 | .091 | 1.152 | .251 |

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being

Multiple linear regression was used to examine whether self-efficacy, social support, and academic performance predict psychological well-being. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 135) = 12.095$, $p < .001$, and explained 21.2% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = .212$; $R^2 = .194$). The coefficient analysis showed that self-efficacy was a positive and statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = .229$, $p = .007$), while social support was also a positive and statistically significant predictor ($\beta = .301$, $p < .001$). Compared to the other predictors, social support had the largest unique contribution to the model. Meanwhile, grade point average was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = .091$, $p = .251$).

**Table 4.** *The Correlation Between Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being*

| | | Self-efficacy | Psychological well-being |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-efficacy | Spearman Correlation | 1 | .364** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 139 | 139 |
| Psychological well-being | Spearman Correlation | .364** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 139 | 139 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis indicate a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being ($r = 0.364$**; $p < .01$). This suggests that higher levels of self-efficacy among students are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, indicating that a sense of competence and the ability to cope with academic challenges have a direct impact on improving emotional and psychological functioning. This finding confirms the hypothesis that self-efficacy is an important protective

factor for adolescents' well-being, making it a key element in understanding the psychological mechanisms that contribute to their healthy development.

**Table 5.** *Results of the Kruskal–Wallis Test for Differences in Psychological Well-Being by Grade Point Average (GPA)*

**Ranks**

| | GPA | N | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Psychological Well-being | 2 | 14 | 65.75 |
| | 3 | 53 | 57.91 |
| | 4 | 51 | 81.64 |
| | 5 | 21 | 75.10 |
| | Total | 139 | |

**Test Statistics[a,b]**

| | Psychological Well-being |
|---|---|
| Chi-Square | 9.561 |
| Df | 3 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .023 |

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: GPA

The Kruskal–Wallis test revealed statistically significant differences in psychological well-being according to grade point average, $\chi^2(3) = 9.561$, $p = .023$. Students with grade point averages of 4 and 5 reported higher levels of psychological well-being compared to students with lower grades. The findings from this analysis are consistent with the predicted direction of the third hypothesis. However, the findings from the regression analysis indicated that grade point average was not a statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = .091$, $p = .251$).

## 3. Discussion

**Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being.** The findings supported the first hypothesis, demonstrating a positive and statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being ($r = .364$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, self-efficacy emerged as a positive and statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being in the regression model ($\beta = .229$, $p = .007$). These results suggest that students who have greater confidence in their abilities to cope with academic demands tend to report higher levels of psychological well-being. The findings are consistent with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy beliefs in how individuals respond to challenges and obstacles. They are

also in line with the studies of Caprara et al. (2006) and Andretta and McKay (2020), which highlight the importance of self-efficacy for adolescents' positive functioning and well-being.

**Academic Performance and Psychological Well-Being.** The findings indicated that academic performance was not a statistically significant predictor of psychological well-being in the regression model ($\beta = .091$, $p = .251$). However, comparisons across academic performance levels showed that students with grade point averages of 4 and 5 reported higher levels of psychological well-being than those with lower grades. These findings suggest that although differences in well-being may exist between academic performance groups, academic performance does not make a statistically significant independent contribution to predicting well-being when other variables in the model are taken into account. The results are partially consistent with the meta-analysis by Bücker et al. (2018), which identified a relatively small association between subjective well-being and academic achievement. Therefore, students' psychological well-being should be understood as a complex phenomenon that is not determined solely by academic outcomes but is also associated with other personal and social resources.

## 4. Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being, as well as differences in psychological well-being according to academic performance among secondary school students. The findings revealed that self-efficacy was positively and significantly associated with psychological well-being, indicating that students with stronger beliefs in their ability to overcome challenges tend to report higher levels of well-being.

Similarly, perceived social support was positively associated with psychological well-being and emerged as a significant predictor, demonstrating a stronger unique contribution than self-efficacy. Furthermore, students with higher academic grades generally reported higher levels of psychological well-being, although academic performance was not a significant predictor in the multiple regression analysis.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of students' psychological resources, supportive social environments, and academic experiences in understanding adolescent well-being. Schools may benefit from initiatives that strengthen self-efficacy and provide appropriate academic and psychological support. Future research using larger and more diverse samples and longitudinal designs could further clarify these relationships over time.

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