

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN ENHANCING MOTIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS: PERSPECTIVES FROM EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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**Abstract.** The digital era has fundamentally transformed the paradigm of education. Nowadays, students not only interact with learning materials but also with various digital platforms that offer access to unlimited resources and information. This research aims to analyze the role of social support in enhancing motivation and psychological well-being of students from the perspective of Education in the digital era. The research method employed in this study is a literature review with a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. Data for this study were gathered from Google Scholar spanning from 2013 to 2024 through a focus on the keywords social aspects, motivation, psychological well-being of students, education, and the digital era. The results of the study indicate that social support is a crucial factor influencing the motivation and psychological well-being of students in the context of education in the digital era. Despite the continuous evolution of technology, genuine human relationships and emotional support remain key pillars in shaping positive learning experiences. Social support emanates from various sources, including peers, family, faculty, and academic communities. The expansion of technology usage enables the preservation of social connections, although it is important to note that the quality of interactions in the virtual world may not always be equivalent to face-to-face interactions.

**Keywords:** Social, Motivation, Psychological Well-being, Education

**Abstrak** Era digital telah mengubah paradigma pendidikan secara fundamental. Kini, mahasiswa tidak hanya berinteraksi dengan materi pembelajaran, tetapi juga dengan berbagai platform digital yang menawarkan akses ke sumber daya dan informasi yang tak terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran dukungan sosial dalam meningkatkan motivasi dan kesejahteraan psikologis mahasiswa ditinjau dari perspektif Pendidikan di era digital. Metode penelitian ini merupakan tinjauan pustaka dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Penelitian ini menggunakan data yang diambil dari Google Scholar dalam rentang tahun 2013 hingga 2024 melalui fokus pada kata kunci aspek sosial, motivasi, kesejahteraan psikologis mahasiswa, pendidikan, dan era digital. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa dukungan sosial adalah faktor krusial yang memengaruhi motivasi dan kesejahteraan psikologis mahasiswa dalam konteks pendidikan di era digital. Meskipun teknologi terus berkembang, hubungan antarmanusia yang nyata dan dukungan emosional tetap menjadi pilar utama dalam membentuk pengalaman belajar yang positif. Dukungan sosial berasal dari berbagai sumber, termasuk teman sebaya, keluarga, dosen, dan komunitas akademik. Perluasan penggunaan teknologi memungkinkan terjaganya hubungan sosial, namun kualitas interaksi dalam dunia maya mungkin tidak selalu setara dengan interaksi langsung.

**Kata Kunci:** Sosial, Motivasi, Kesejahteraan Psikologis, Pendidikan

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## INTRODUCTION

The transformation in the educational paradigm occurs fundamentally alongside the development of the digital era (Fauzi et al., 2023). Currently, students are not only engaged in conventional learning processes but also actively interact with various digital platforms that provide unlimited access to resources and information (Ausat, Massang, et al., 2023). In this context, the role of social support from various parties becomes crucial in helping students face the complex challenges associated with learning in the digital age.

In the digital era, students face various psychological challenges, including anxiety, stress, and feelings of loneliness, which can directly influence their motivation and psychological well-being. Research has shown that social support from various sources, such as peers, faculty, and family, plays a significant role in helping students overcome these challenges (McLean et al., 2023). Peers can provide emotional and practical support, while faculty can offer objective insights and academic guidance (Wentzel et al., 2017). On the other hand, family support can provide the necessary sense of security and moral encouragement for students to face various obstacles that arise during their educational journey in this digital era (Kerimbayev et al., 2023).

Although technology is often seen as a stress trigger for students, its wise utilization can also enhance their access to the necessary social support. Social media and various digital communication platforms create a social networking ecosystem that can provide emotional, informational, and instrumental support to students (Ohara, 2023) and (Heriyanto et al., 2022). Social media offers a platform for students to engage in diverse social interactions, connecting them with peers, faculty, and professionals in relevant fields (Sivakumar et al., 2023). Additionally, digital communication platforms, such as online discussion groups and academic forums, facilitate collective information exchange and problem-solving, potentially reducing stress levels and enhancing students' psychological well-being (Agrawal & Krishna, 2021).

Previous studies have revealed a positive correlation between social support, academic motivation, and students' psychological well-being. Social support received by students can provide an additional boost to their academic motivation, which can then significantly contribute to the level of psychological well-being they experience (Yusof et al., 2022). In this context, social support encompasses not only emotional aspects such as recognition, support, and friendship but also instrumental factors such as academic guidance and available resources to help overcome academic challenges that may arise. With strong social support, students tend to have higher motivation to achieve their academic goals, which in turn can enhance their overall psychological well-being (Chaudhry et al., 2024).

Higher education in Indonesia faces complex challenges in adapting and integrating digital technology into the learning process (Hasnida et al., 2024). Despite progress in technology adoption, there are still several obstacles such as limited access to digital infrastructure and limited technology skills among faculty and students. Additionally, Indonesian students also face both academic and non-academic pressures that affect their overall well-being (Dewi et al., 2022). Academic pressure may result from intense competition to achieve high academic performance, while non-academic pressure may stem from economic, social, and psychological factors. Therefore, this research aims to understand the role of social support in improving students' motivation and psychological well-being in the digital age. Through a better understanding of this, this research provides an opportunity to develop more effective and targeted educational interventions to improve the quality of students' learning experiences.

## **METHOD**

The research method employed in this study is a literature review using a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. Data for this study were gathered from Google Scholar spanning from 2013 to 2024. Initially, 60 relevant articles were identified through a thorough search related to the research topic through a focus on the keywords social aspects, motivation, psychological well-being of students, education, and the digital era. In this study, the inclusion criteria used included topic relevance, data availability, publication time, and methodological quality. The exclusion criteria included irrelevance, unavailability of data, out of time, and low methodological quality. Thus, using these criteria, we selected 44 of the most relevant and high-quality articles for analysis. The qualitative approach in this literature review allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the role of social support in enhancing motivation and psychological well-being of students from various researchers' perspectives and existing concepts. Descriptive analysis will be utilized to present and summarize the main findings of the selected articles, showcasing emerging trends and patterns, and providing a comprehensive overview of the knowledge development in this topic during the specified timeframe.

## **RESULTS**

Social refers to all interactions, relationships, and dynamics that occur among individuals or groups within a community or society (Ahmad et al., 2023). It encompasses various forms of communication, information exchange, emotional support, and other social interactions that enable humans to interact, share, and cooperate. More broadly, the social dimension forms the foundation of individual identity and influences one's behaviors, perceptions, and thought

patterns (Stokowski et al., 2021). In the context of psychological research, the social aspect often becomes the focus in understanding how individuals adapt, develop, and function within their social environments (Heriyanto et al., 2020). Social support, for instance, is a key concept encompassing a network of social interactions that provide assistance, encouragement, and emotional connections necessary for individual psychological well-being. Thus, the social dimension not only encompasses physical interactions but also the psychological and emotional aspects underlying interpersonal relationships in society.

Motivation is the internal or external drive that prompts individuals to act or behave in a certain way in order to achieve goals or fulfill specific needs (Vo et al., 2022). It involves a complex process within an individual's thoughts and emotions that influences the intensity, direction, and persistence of activities or efforts undertaken. Motivation can stem from various factors, including biological drives, desires for achievement or recognition, needs for social affiliation, or even external pressures such as job demands or expectations from others (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018). Moreover, motivation is also influenced by individuals' perceptions of the likelihood of success, the importance placed on particular goals, and their belief in their ability to achieve those goals (Zimmerman & Hung, 2013). A deep understanding of motivation is crucial in the educational context as it can aid in designing more effective learning strategies and motivating students to reach their potential optimally.

The psychological well-being of students refers to the positive and stable mental and emotional conditions experienced by individuals undergoing studies at the tertiary level (Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2020). It encompasses various aspects such as life satisfaction, emotional balance, well-managed stress levels, and the ability to function optimally in academic and social contexts. The psychological well-being of students can be influenced by factors such as the social support received, the ability to cope with academic pressures, the balance between academic and personal life, and perceptions of control over their lives and futures (Asad et al., 2023). Students with good psychological well-being are more likely to develop personally, effectively complete academic tasks, and establish healthy social relationships. Therefore, understanding and addressing the psychological well-being of students are crucial in the context of holistic educational development and support (Aryani et al., 2020).

Education is a systematic and structured process aimed at transferring knowledge, skills, values, and norms to individuals through various methods and learning experiences (Cahyono et al., 2023; Rukman et al., 2023). It involves interactions between teachers and students, both within and outside formal settings such as schools, universities, or non-formal educational

institutions (Manafe et al., 2023; Zen et al., 2023). The primary goal of education is to prepare individuals to face life's challenges, develop their potential to the fullest, and help them become positive contributors to society. Education also encompasses the development of social, critical, and analytical skills, apart from academic learning (Sunarso et al., 2024; Tuhuteru et al., 2023). Furthermore, education plays a vital role in transmitting cultural values and promoting equal access to learning opportunities for all individuals, thereby contributing to social and economic development. Thus, education is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about shaping character and preparing individuals to face a dynamic and complex future.

The digital era refers to a period in which information and communication technology, particularly the internet, computers, and mobile devices, have experienced rapid development and significantly changed how humans interact, work, and live in general (Harini et al., 2023). This era is marked by increased global connectivity, where information can be accessed quickly and easily from various parts of the world. The development of digital technology has affected almost every aspect of human life, including education, business, entertainment, communication, and culture (Sudirjo et al., 2023). In the digital era, individuals can easily communicate through social media platforms, learn online through distance courses, work remotely with the aid of telecommunication technology, and access various services and information using only devices connected to the internet (Ausat, Azzaakiyyah, et al., 2023). This transformation also has significant impacts on the economy, politics, and social structure, opening up new opportunities while also posing new challenges in managing and responsibly utilizing digital technology. Thus, the digital era depicts a period characterized by the widespread adoption of digital technology that fundamentally changes how we interact with the world around us.

## **DISCUSSION**

Social support has been proven to be one of the crucial elements significantly influencing the motivation and psychological well-being of students, especially in the context of education in the continually evolving digital era. In an age where technological advancements often diminish or replace face-to-face social interactions with digital ones, it is important to acknowledge that authentic interpersonal relationships and emotional support remain the cornerstone in shaping positive learning experiences and strengthening psychological well-being. In the digital education context, where communication often occurs through electronic platforms, efforts to maintain and enhance meaningful social interactions among peers and with educators become increasingly vital, as a counterbalance to the negative impacts of digital

isolation and as a means to support holistic personal and academic development (Rahmawati & Sujono, 2021).

Social support, as a multidimensional construct, is a phenomenon involving various sources, including but not limited to peers, family, instructors, and academic communities (Estell & Perdue, 2013). The presence of support from these diverse entities becomes increasingly crucial in the higher education context, especially when students are confronted with complex academic challenges, heightened levels of stress, or uncertainties surrounding their educational processes. For example, peer support not only provides channels for acceptance and understanding but also offers significant encouragement for students to maintain their motivation and self-confidence in facing any obstacles that arise in their academic journey. Therefore, a profound understanding of the dynamics and benefits of various forms of social support is essential in designing effective supportive strategies to enhance the psychological and academic well-being of students in higher education environments.

In the digital era, the evolution of social support forms becomes increasingly evident. Interactions occurring through social media and online platforms provide opportunities for students to maintain connections with friends and family, even when geographical distances separate them (Abel et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the quality of interactions in the virtual world is not always equivalent to face-to-face interactions in real life. Hence, the importance of strengthening the quality of social relationships in the real world, alongside leveraging technology to expand social support networks (Hatamleh et al., 2023); (Heriyanto et al., 2022). In this context, it is important to consider the psychosocial impact of digital interactions, which may be less profound and empathetic, while also acknowledging the potential of technology to serve as a means to enrich and expand social support networks through carefully selected and appropriate platforms. Therefore, students are challenged to find the right balance between online and offline interactions, prioritizing the cultivation of quality relationships in daily life while still leveraging the positive potentials offered by technology to expand access to social support resources.

In the context of education in the digital era, the presence of social support can also be found through interactions between students and academic instructors and mentors. This support is not only focused on assistance in understanding the taught material but also encompasses broader aspects such as provided encouragement, conveyed constructive feedback, and guidance in academic as well as professional career planning. Engagement and assistance from instructors and mentors not only facilitate the learning process but also form a strong foundation for students to develop intrinsic motivation in achieving their academic goals

(Johnson, 2017). In a supportive academic environment, students tend to feel more motivated and confident in their learning journey, which in turn can influence academic achievement and success in attaining their educational and career goals (Arianto & Yasin, 2023).

Apart from its role in supporting the academic process, the importance of social support is also evident in its contribution to students' psychological well-being. Students who perceive the existence of a social support network tend to exhibit lower levels of stress, higher levels of life satisfaction, and may even have better coping abilities in facing challenges in their academic and personal lives (Mahmoud et al., 2015). The presence of this social support can be a key factor in preventing the emergence of mental well-being problems, such as depression and anxiety, by creating an environment that promotes support, understanding, and acceptance of individuals. Thus, strengthening and maintaining social support networks within academic communities can significantly contribute to students' psychological well-being and, therefore, also enhance their likelihood of success in navigating the challenges of higher education.

It is important to remember that opportunities to access social support are not always evenly distributed among students. Those who may feel isolated or disconnected from their academic community may experience difficulties in accessing the resources and support they need (Leal Filho et al., 2021). In this context, educational institutions have a responsibility to create an inclusive environment where every student feels accepted and supported. Measures to promote social engagement and provide adequate resources, such as counseling services, mentoring programs, and diverse student clubs or organizations, can be effective ways to ensure that all students feel supported in their academic and personal journeys (Wiedermann et al., 2023); (Heriyanto et al., 2020). In this way, educational institutions can play a crucial role in ensuring that no student is left behind in their efforts to achieve their full potential in higher education.

In the context of education in the digital era, it is important to realize that the role of social support in enhancing student motivation and psychological well-being has a significant impact. Strengthening social relationships among students, faculty, and the academic community as a whole is not merely symbolic but a substantial investment in shaping an inclusive and empowering learning environment. Through active engagement in fostering positive and supportive relationships, we can create an educational ecosystem that provides consistent support, motivation, and empowerment for students to pursue optimal achievements in their education. Thus, recognizing the importance of social support as an integral element of student learning experiences in the digital era drives us to commit to sustained efforts in strengthening social bonds and promoting holistic well-being within the educational community.

In addition to the aspects highlighted earlier, it is important to acknowledge that the role of social support in enhancing student motivation and psychological well-being has broader implications in the context of education in the continually evolving digital era. One crucial implication of this integration is the need for a synergistic blend of technology and effective social support strategies (Alerasoul et al., 2022). While technology provides wide accessibility and flexibility in communication, the success of social interactions lies not only in the existence of technology but also in the quality of those interactions. Therefore, creating an educational environment that integrates technology with carefully designed social support strategies becomes increasingly important. Through this approach, educational institutions can ensure that students are not only connected virtually but also feel emotionally and socially supported in their journey to overcome challenges and achieve success in higher education.

The shift towards increasingly common remote education during the pandemic has revealed the crucial role of effective social support as a determinant factor in student learning success (Ausat, 2022); (Heriyanto, 2022). In response to these dynamics, educational institutions have a responsibility to take proactive steps in providing platforms and virtual spaces that support meaningful social interactions among students, faculty, and peers. These efforts may include the development of structured online discussion forums, organized virtual study groups, or even the implementation of online-based mentorship programs (Abouzeid et al., 2022). By providing adequate infrastructure and incentives for social interaction in virtual environments, educational institutions can facilitate the formation of sustainable and inclusive learning communities, thereby enhancing the quality of student learning experiences and increasing their chances of success in achieving academic and career goals.

Furthermore, it is important for educational institutions to raise awareness of the importance of social support in enhancing student motivation and psychological well-being. These efforts can be undertaken through various methods, including regularly organized seminars, training for academic staff and counselors on social support strategies, or even integrating social support concepts into the academic curriculum as part of holistic learning. By providing students with a strong understanding of the importance of building and maintaining healthy social relationships as an integral part of their educational experience, educational institutions can help shape proactive mindsets and prepare students to effectively cope with academic and personal challenges (Pulimeno, Piscitelli, & Colazzo, 2020; Pulimeno, Piscitelli, Colazzo, et al., 2020). Thus, strengthening awareness of the crucial role of social support can be a strategic step in fortifying the foundations of students' psychological and academic well-being and enriching their overall educational experience.



Educational institutions can take concrete steps to ensure that students have equal access to the social support they need. These steps may involve enhancing the accessibility and availability of various social support services, including but not limited to affordable psychological counseling services, academic mentoring tailored to individual needs, or emotional support programs designed to respond to various challenges faced by students. As part of a commitment to inclusive education, educational institutions should ensure that no student feels marginalized or neglected in efforts to provide social support. By aligning existing resources and policies with the diverse needs of the student population, educational institutions can strengthen a foundation of equitable and inclusive social support, thereby supporting the overall psychological and academic well-being of students (Woodcock et al., 2022).

Finally, it is important to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of social support strategies in the context of education in the digital era periodically. This evaluation process involves closely monitoring the impact of interventions and the level of success achieved by students. Through data analysis and feedback obtained from this evaluation, educational institutions can gain valuable insights to continuously improve and adjust their approaches according to the evolving needs of students and the dynamics of the educational environment (Gligorea et al., 2023). This approach not only enables educational institutions to respond to changes in a timely manner but also helps ensure that social support strategies implemented remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the goals set in supporting academic success and psychological well-being of students.

Overall, the role of social support in enhancing student motivation and psychological well-being in the context of education in the digital era is a crucial aspect that requires serious attention. The importance of recognizing this role lies not only in understanding its impact on individual academic success but also in acknowledging its contribution to the overall dynamics of the educational environment. By understanding the complexity of interactions among students, faculty, and technology in the context of online learning, educational institutions are urged to integrate technology with effective social support strategies. These efforts are aimed not only at creating technology-supported learning environments but also at building an educational ecosystem that is supportive, inclusive, and motivating for all students. Thus, focusing on strengthening social support in the digital era is not only a strategy to ensure academic and professional success for students but also a strategic step in building a strong foundation for holistic well-being and individual development.

## CONCLUSION

Social support is a crucial factor that influences students' motivation and psychological well-being in the context of education in the digital age. While technology continues to evolve, real human connection and emotional support remain key pillars in shaping positive learning experiences. Social support comes from various sources, including peers, family, lecturers and the academic community. In the digital age, the expanded use of technology allows for the maintenance of social relationships, although it is important to remember that the quality of interactions in cyberspace may not always be equivalent to in-person interactions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions that can be given for the results of this study include: 1) Integration of Technology with Social Approaches: Educational institutions need to integrate technology with effective social support strategies, ensuring that technology use does not replace, but supports healthy and meaningful social relationships. 2) Awareness Raising: It is important for educational institutions to raise awareness of the importance of social support in improving student motivation and well-being through counselling, training, and integration of social support concepts into the curriculum. 3) Equitable Access: Educational institutions should ensure that all students have equal access to social support by increasing the availability of social support services and ensuring that no student feels marginalised. 4) Periodic Evaluation: Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of social support strategies needs to be conducted to monitor the impact of interventions and student success, so that educational institutions can continuously improve and adapt their approach according to evolving needs. By taking these steps, educational institutions can create a supportive, inclusive and motivating learning environment for all students, thus ensuring their success and well-being in pursuing their academic and professional goals in the digital age.

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