Scientific Research Publishing

Psychology, 2026, 17(10), 1044-1053
https://www.scirp.org/journal/psych
ISSN Online: 2152-7199
ISSN Print: 2152-7180

Health Psychology in Educational Contexts: A PRISMA-Informed Review-Level Synthesis of Student Well-Being, Belonging, Resilience, and Digital Change

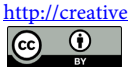
Pierre E. Wright

Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Behavioral Health, Coppin State University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Email: pwright@coppin.edu

How to cite this paper: Wright, P. E. (2026). Health Psychology in Educational Contexts: A PRISMA-Informed Review-Level Synthesis of Student Well-Being, Belonging, Resilience, and Digital Change. *Psychology, 17,* 1044-1053.
https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2026.1710052

Received: September 12, 2026
Accepted: October 25, 2026
Published: October 28, 2026

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/



Open Access

Abstract

Health psychology provides a useful framework for understanding how psychological, behavioral, relational, institutional, and technological conditions are associated with well-being in educational settings. This PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis examines five review publications addressing student well-being, school belonging, resilience, and digital change, including emerging scholarship on artificial intelligence and technology-mediated learning. Relevant reviews were identified through structured searches of major educational, psychological, and multidisciplinary scholarly databases and academic search platforms. Because complete archived search histories and screening records were unavailable, the exact search period and record counts could not be reconstructed. Candidate publications were screened for relevance and verified through full-text review. Psychological safety was treated as a cross-cutting interpretive construct because the included reviews addressed it primarily through related concepts such as trust, inclusion, participation, belonging, privacy, and supportive educational climates. Across the reviewed literature, student well-being was represented as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by individual characteristics, social relationships, institutional practices, and technological environments. Belonging was associated with engagement, psychological adjustment, and educational persistence, whereas resilience was characterized as a dynamic process involving personal strengths and contextual supports. Digital learning and artificial intelligence offered potential benefits related to access, flexibility, and personalization while also raising concerns about equity, privacy, digital burden, reliability, and human oversight. The synthesis supports a systems-oriented perspective on health psychology in education. Findings should be interpreted as an integration of recurring re-

view-level themes rather than as a comprehensive or fully reproducible systematic review.

Keywords

Health Psychology, Education, Student Well-Being, School Belonging, Resilience, Psychological Safety, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Learning

1. Introduction

Health and education are closely interconnected domains of human development. Educational environments are associated with stress, social relationships, identity development, academic engagement, health behavior, and access to supportive resources. Psychological and physical health are likewise associated with learning, motivation, persistence, and participation. Health psychology is therefore relevant not only to clinical and medical settings but also to schools, colleges, universities, and digitally mediated learning environments. The biopsychosocial model provides a foundation for this interdisciplinary perspective by locating health within interacting biological, psychological, and social systems rather than within a narrowly biomedical account (Bolton, 2023; Engel, 1977). In education, this orientation directs attention to the learner as well as to the classroom, peer group, institution, technological environment, and broader social context.

Growing attention has been directed toward student well-being as educational institutions respond to concerns related to mental health, social connectedness, academic stress, and technological change. Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that educational experiences are associated with psychological well-being, belonging, resilience, and the quality of learning environments. The rapid incorporation of artificial intelligence into education has also introduced questions about privacy, trust, inclusion, digital fatigue, reliability, equity, and the appropriate role of human support (Klimova & Pikhart, 2025; Wang et al., 2026). For the purposes of this synthesis, psychological well-being is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning within educational environments. Belonging refers to students' perceptions of acceptance, inclusion, support, and valued membership within educational communities. Resilience is defined as a dynamic process of positive adaptation to academic, social, and environmental challenges through interactions between individual strengths and contextual resources. Although conceptually distinct, these constructs frequently overlap within educational and health psychology literature and collectively contribute to understanding how students experience and navigate educational environments. Recent review literature suggests that student well-being is associated not only with personal resources but also with relationships, institutional practices, educational climates, and access to supportive technologies. Belonging has been linked with engagement, persistence, and

adjustment, whereas resilience is increasingly understood as context dependent rather than as an individual characteristic alone. Emerging scholarship on digital learning and artificial intelligence further identifies opportunities and challenges for educational well-being, including accessibility, engagement, equity, privacy, and psychological safety. Rather than synthesizing primary empirical studies directly, the present study adopts a PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis approach. This approach integrates findings reported across existing review publications to identify recurring themes, conceptual patterns, limitations, and future directions concerning health psychology in educational contexts.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this review-level synthesis is to examine how contemporary review literature conceptualizes health psychology within educational contexts and to identify the principal individual, relational, institutional, and technological conditions associated with student well-being. The synthesis addresses the following questions:

1) How does contemporary review literature conceptualize psychological well-being in educational contexts?

2) What roles do belonging, relationships, and institutional climate play in student well-being?

3) How is resilience characterized in relation to individual and contextual resources?

4) What opportunities and challenges are associated with digital learning and artificial intelligence in relation to student well-being?

5) How does psychological safety function across the identified themes?

2 Method

Review Design

This study employed a PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis to examine contemporary review evidence relevant to health psychology in educational contexts. PRISMA 2020 informed the organization and transparent reporting of eligibility, source selection, and synthesis procedures (Page et al., 2021). The designation PRISMA-informed is used because complete database exports, search histories, deduplication logs, screening counts, and exclusion records were not available during final manuscript reconstruction. Accordingly, the study does not claim exhaustive retrieval or full reproducibility.

Search Strategy and Source Identification

Relevant review publications were identified through structured searches of major educational, psychological, and multidisciplinary scholarly databases and academic search platforms. The available materials did not preserve a sufficiently complete record to verify the exact database list, search dates, or search period; these details are therefore not reconstructed from memory. Core concepts used to identify candidate publications included combinations of health psychology, student well-being, mental health, school belonging, sense of belonging, resilience, psycho-

logical safety, digital learning, online learning, artificial intelligence, and education. Candidate review publications were screened for direct relevance to educational contexts and the research questions and were subsequently verified through full-text review. Five review publications comprised the final evidence set. Because complete source records were unavailable, numerical flow counts are not reported.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible sources were peer-reviewed, English-language review publications, including systematic reviews, scoping reviews, narrative reviews, mini-reviews, and other evidence syntheses. Publications were required to address primary, secondary, postsecondary, or digitally mediated educational contexts and to examine psychological well-being, belonging, resilience, psychological safety, digital learning, artificial intelligence, or closely related health psychology constructs. Publications were excluded when educational relevance was peripheral, when review-level findings were insufficient for interpretation, or when bibliographic information could not be verified. Primary empirical studies were not directly synthesized. Foundational publications were retained only to define the biopsychosocial framework and reporting approach.

Source Selection and Data Extraction

Source selection, eligibility assessment, and data extraction were conducted by a single reviewer. For each included review, information was extracted regarding the review objective, educational setting and population, geographic scope when reported, review design, focal construct, principal findings, and relevance to the research questions. When eligibility or extraction decisions were uncertain, they were resolved through repeated examination of each publication's objectives, inclusion criteria, methods, findings, and relevance to the synthesis. Independent dual screening and extraction were not conducted.

Data Synthesis

A thematic synthesis approach was used to identify recurring patterns across the five included reviews. Similar concepts were compared across sources, discrepant emphases were retained, and causal language was avoided unless supported by the source design. Findings were organized around four interconnected domains: student mental health and psychological well-being; school belonging and relational connectedness; resilience and adaptive functioning; and digital learning and artificial intelligence. Psychological safety was examined as a cross-cutting interpretive construct because the included reviews addressed it primarily through related interpersonal, institutional, and technological conditions.

Quality Control

In-text citations were cross-checked against the reference list, and bibliographic details were standardized in accordance with APA Style. Claims were restricted to those supported by the five verified review publications and the foundational sources used for conceptual framing. The final manuscript was also reviewed for causal wording, so that conclusions remained consistent with heterogeneous review-level evidence.

3. Results

Characteristics of the Included Reviews

Five review publications met the eligibility criteria and were included in the thematic synthesis. Collectively, they addressed general educational well-being, school belonging, the experiences of students encountering marginalization, higher education, and college mental health education. The populations represented across the reviews included school students, students experiencing marginalization, university students, and learners in technology-supported educational settings. Educational levels therefore ranged from school contexts to post-secondary education. Geographic coverage varied across the source reviews and was not consistently reported in sufficient detail to support a definitive regional summary. The conclusions should therefore be interpreted as review-level thematic patterns rather than as geographically representative estimates. The reviews addressed four interconnected areas: 1) student mental health and psychological well-being, 2) school belonging and relational connectedness, 3) resilience and adaptive functioning, and 4) digital learning and artificial intelligence. Psychological safety functioned as a cross-cutting interpretive construct connecting these themes through discussions of trust, inclusion, participation, support, privacy, and educational climate.

Student Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being

Across the included reviews, psychological well-being was described as multidimensional rather than solely as the absence of distress. Sarzhanova and Nurgabdeshov (2025) identified emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, motivation, resilience, social support, institutional intervention, and digital literacy as relevant contributors, while academic stress and excessive social media use were identified as potential risks. This pattern supports an account of student well-being that includes both internal resources and environmental conditions. The reviewed literature suggested that supportive relationships, inclusive climates, access to resources, and meaningful engagement were associated with more positive educational experiences. Conversely, academic stress, social isolation, inadequate support, and environmental barriers were discussed as factors associated with poorer well-being. Collectively, the evidence supports a systems-oriented understanding in which student well-being is shaped by individual, relational, institutional, and environmental influences.

School Belonging and Relational Connectedness

Belonging emerged as a relational and ecological construct. Štremfel et al. (2024) reviewed 86 studies and concluded that school belonging is influenced by factors operating across multiple ecological levels. Zaman et al. (2025) similarly identified respectful teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, supportive educational cultures, and students' self-perceptions as important influences for students experiencing marginalization. Across the included reviews, perceptions of acceptance, inclusion, and valued membership were associated with engagement, persistence, psychological adjustment, and positive educational experi-

ences. Belonging was therefore represented not merely as an individual perception but also as a relational and institutional phenomenon shaped by interactions, organizational practices, and educational culture.

Resilience and Adaptive Functioning

Resilience was primarily characterized as a dynamic process of adaptation rather than a fixed personal trait. Sarzhanova and Nurgabdeshov (2025) situated resilience among cognitive, emotional, and contextual contributors to educational well-being. Protective conditions discussed across the literature included social support, access to resources, positive relationships, self-efficacy, and supportive learning environments. A contextual interpretation avoids presenting resilience as an obligation for students to withstand preventable barriers. Educational research and practice should therefore examine coping and self-efficacy alongside accessibility, instructional practices, supportive relationships, and institutional resources.

Digital Learning and Artificial Intelligence

Digital technology and artificial intelligence presented both opportunities and challenges. Klimova and Pikhart (2025) described potential benefits in personalization, communication, and mental health support while also identifying concerns related to digital fatigue, loneliness, technostress, privacy, and reduced face-to-face interaction. Wang et al. (2026) emphasized privacy, reliability, equitable access, governance, and the importance of using artificial intelligence to complement rather than replace professional and human-centered support. The reviewed evidence did not support characterizing technological innovation as inherently beneficial or harmful. Educational outcomes were associated with purpose, design, implementation, governance, accessibility, and meaningful human oversight. Evaluation should therefore, extend beyond adoption rates to include trust, student autonomy, inclusion, privacy, and well-being.

Psychological Safety as a Cross-Cutting Construct

Psychological safety was not retained as a separate evidentiary theme because the five-review evidence set did not provide a sufficiently distinct body of directly focused scholarship. Instead, it appeared across the four themes through conditions that permit students to ask questions, express uncertainty, seek assistance, and participate without humiliation or punitive interpersonal consequences. This interpretation connects psychological safety with belonging, supportive relationships, inclusion, trust, privacy, and institutional climate while preserving conceptual boundaries. Psychological safety concerns interpersonal and group conditions for participation and should not be treated as interchangeable with mental health. Future research should examine these relationships directly rather than infer them from conceptual proximity (**Table 1**).

4. Discussion

Integrated Interpretation

The purpose of this PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis was to examine how contemporary review literature characterizes health psychology within

Table 1. Evidence summary for the four themes and cross-cutting construct.

Source	Design/Context	Contribution to Synthesis	Theme
Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshov (2025)	Systematic review; education	Identified individual and contextual contributors to psychological well-being and potential risk factors.	Well-being; resilience
Štremfel et al. (2024)	Systematic review; school belonging	Synthesized multilevel influences on school belonging across 86 studies.	Belonging
Zaman et al. (2025)	Systematic review; students experiencing marginalization	Highlighted teacher-student relationships, peers, supportive culture, and self-perceptions.	Belonging; safety
Klimova & Pikhart (2025)	Mini-review; higher education	Summarized potential benefits and risks of artificial intelligence for student and academic well-being.	Digital change
Wang et al. (2026)	Review; college mental health education	Emphasized privacy, reliability, equity, governance, and human-centered support.	Artificial intelligence; safety

Note. Psychological safety is treated as a cross-cutting construct because the available review set addresses it primarily through adjacent relational, institutional, and digital conditions. The term safety in the Theme column refers to psychological safety.

educational contexts, with particular attention to student well-being, belonging, resilience, and digital change. Across the included reviews, student well-being was represented as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by individual, relational, institutional, and technological conditions. Well-being, belonging, resilience, and psychological safety were discussed as conceptually distinct but interconnected dimensions of educational experience. One of the most consistent themes was the importance of relationships and social connectedness. Students' perceptions of acceptance, value, and support were associated with positive educational experiences and indicators of psychological adjustment. Belonging functioned not only as an individual perception but also as a reflection of educational climates, institutional practices, and patterns of social interaction. These findings are compatible with health psychology perspectives that emphasize social and environmental contexts in understanding health-related outcomes. The synthesis also highlights the importance of conceptualizing resilience as dynamic and context dependent. Adaptive functioning was commonly described as emerging through interactions between individual strengths and contextual supports, including relationships, institutional resources, accessibility, and opportunities for engagement. This perspective supports ecological and systems-oriented models that recognize reciprocal relationships between individuals and educational environments.

Digital learning and artificial intelligence represented a significant area of contemporary discussion. Educational technologies were associated with opportunities to increase access, flexibility, personalization, and resource availability. At the same time, the literature identified concerns related to digital inequality, privacy, reliability, algorithmic governance, cognitive burden, and changing patterns of social interaction. The implications of technology for student well-being therefore depend substantially on how systems are designed, implemented, supported, governed, and integrated within educational contexts. Psychological safety emerged

as an interpretive framework connecting the principal themes. Although it was not consistently examined as an independent outcome, it was reflected through trust, inclusion, participation, support, respect, belonging, privacy, and positive educational climates. Psychological safety may therefore offer a useful integrative concept for future research, if it remains conceptually distinct from mental health and is examined directly. Taken together, the review-level evidence supports a systems-oriented perspective on health psychology in education. Student well-being is associated with overlapping influences that extend beyond individual coping capacities. Relationships, institutional practices, educational climate, access to resources, and technological conditions contribute to the contexts within which students learn and develop. Multilevel approaches may therefore provide a more complete basis for research and practice than isolated student-level interventions.

Implications for Research

Future research should use longitudinal and implementation-focused designs to examine how well-being, belonging, resilience, and psychological safety change over time and across educational settings. Greater attention to cultural, geographic, institutional, and socioeconomic variation is needed to clarify the transferability of findings. Studies of artificial intelligence should examine effectiveness alongside privacy, trust, accessibility, autonomy, equity, governance, and implications for human relationships. Researchers should also distinguish related constructs and directly test the pathways through which they may be associated.

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

For educational practitioners and policymakers, the synthesis reinforces the value of supportive relationships, inclusive educational climates, equitable access to resources, and psychologically safe opportunities for participation and help-seeking. Initiatives intended to strengthen belonging and resilience may be more useful when embedded within broader institutional strategies rather than treated as isolated programs directed solely at individual students. Digital systems should be evaluated not only for functionality but also for privacy, reliability, equity, accessibility, autonomy, and the continued availability of meaningful human support. These are literature informed implications rather than causal conclusions from the present synthesis.

5. Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was reconstructed from the available review set rather than from complete archived search records. Although PRISMA 2020 informed the reporting structure, complete database exports, search dates, deduplication logs, screening counts, exclusion records, and a fully reproducible search history were unavailable. Consequently, the study should be interpreted as a PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis rather than as a comprehensive systematic review. Second, the synthesis relied on review publications rather than direct examination of primary empirical studies. The findings therefore depend on the methodological decisions,

eligibility criteria, reporting quality, and interpretations of the source reviews. Nuances within individual primary studies may not be fully represented in review-level conclusions. Third, source selection, eligibility assessment, and data extraction were conducted by a single reviewer. Although explicit eligibility criteria and repeated source examination were used, the absence of independent dual screening and extraction may have increased the possibility of selection or interpretive bias. Fourth, overlap among primary studies included across the five source reviews was not formally assessed. Some primary investigations may therefore have contributed to more than one review, creating the possibility of indirect double-counting and overrepresentation of findings. Fifth, the included reviews varied in scope, methodology, educational populations, and reporting of geographic coverage. This heterogeneity limits direct comparison and does not support estimates of effect, causal inference, or claims of geographic representativeness. English language and indexing restrictions in the source-gathering process may also have limited linguistic and regional representation. Finally, psychological safety was supported indirectly through adjacent constructs rather than through a distinct body of focused review of evidence. Its proposed integrative role should therefore be treated as an interpretive contribution that requires direct examination in future research.

6. Conclusion

Health psychology in educational contexts is best understood through a systems-oriented framework that recognizes how student well-being is shaped by individual, relational, institutional, and technological conditions. This PRISMA-informed review-level synthesis identified four interconnected areas across the five included reviews: psychological well-being, belonging, resilience, and digital change. Collectively, these themes suggest that student experiences cannot be understood through individual characteristics alone but should be considered within the broader contexts of relationships, educational environments, organizational practices, and evolving technological systems. The reviewed literature indicates that belonging, supportive relationships, and access to resources are associated with positive educational and psychological experiences. Resilience is most appropriately characterized as a dynamic process involving personal strengths and contextual support rather than a fixed trait. Educational environments marked by inclusion, trust, support, and meaningful participation were more frequently associated with positive indicators of well-being and engagement.

Digital learning and artificial intelligence may expand access, flexibility, and personalization, but they also raise concerns related to equity, privacy, reliability, digital burden, and the quality of human relationships. Educational technologies should therefore be considered within their psychological, ethical, and institutional contexts. Psychological safety offers a potentially useful cross-cutting lens because it connects participation, trust, inclusion, help-seeking, belonging, and supportive educational climates while remaining distinct from mental health. Be-

cause this study is a PRISMA-informed synthesis of review literature rather than a fully reproducible systematic review, the findings should be interpreted as an integration of recurring themes and patterns rather than as definitive evidence of causal relationships or exhaustive coverage. Despite these limitations, the synthesis contributes to an integrated health psychology perspective that brings together scholarship on student well-being, belonging, resilience, psychological safety, and digital change within a single conceptual framework. Future research should prioritize longitudinal, cross-cultural, and implementation-focused studies that examine these interconnected dimensions across diverse learner populations and educational systems.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

Bolton, D. (2023). A Revitalized Biopsychosocial Model: Core Theory, Research Paradigms, and Clinical Implications. *Psychological Medicine, 53,* 7504-7511. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291723002660

Engel, G. L. (1977). The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine. *Science, 196,* 129-136. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.847460

Klimova, B., & Pikhart, M. (2025). Exploring the Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Student and Academic Well-Being in Higher Education: A Mini-Review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 16,* Article 1498132. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1498132

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D. et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews. *BMJ, 372,* n71. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Sarzhanova, G., & Nurgabdeshov, A. (2025). Mapping Psychological Well-Being in Education: A Systematic Review of Key Dimensions and an Integrative Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Pedagogical Research, 9,* 327-349. https://doi.org/10.33902/jpr.202534832

Štremfel, U., Šterman Ivančič, K., & Peras, I. (2024). Addressing the Sense of School Belonging among All Students? A Systematic Literature Review. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education, 14,* 2901-2917. https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe14110190

Wang, R., Sun, X., Sun, Y., & Wang, J. (2026). Artificial Intelligence in College Students' Mental Health Education: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategic Responses. *Frontiers in Psychology, 17,* Article 1794568. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1794568

Zaman, R. A., Sharma, U., & Round, P. (2025). Key Factors Influencing the Sense of Belonging in Students Experiencing Marginalisation: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 30,* 2187-2208. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2025.2556000