

Editorial Introduction

Advancing Human Well-Being: Psychological and Social Perspectives

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN WELL-BEING

In the wake of rapid technological, social, and psychological transformations, the discourse on human well-being has become increasingly multidimensional. The AKADEMIKA Special Section on “Advancing Human Well-Being: Psychological and Social Perspectives” seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between mental, emotional, and social determinants of well-being within contemporary societies. This thematic issue arises from the recognition that well-being cannot be confined to the absence of illness or distress; rather, it must be understood as a dynamic equilibrium between personal resilience, social connectedness, and structural support systems that empower individuals to thrive.

As Guest Editor, I envisioned this Special Section as an intellectual platform that integrates insights from psychology with broader perspectives in the social sciences and humanities—fields that, together, offer a more holistic understanding of human flourishing in a rapidly evolving world. In alignment with AKADEMIKA’s long-standing commitment to advancing Southeast Asian scholarship, the section welcomes empirical studies, conceptual analyses, and policy reflections that broaden our comprehension of well-being from culturally grounded and contextually nuanced perspectives.

FRAMING THE DISCOURSE: FROM INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE TO COLLECTIVE FLOURISHING

The Special Section was first announced in February 2025, inviting contributions that investigate psychological resilience, social support, stress management, digital mental health, and the interdependence between lifestyle, environment, and emotional balance. The overwhelming response underscored an emerging scholarly consensus: that the well-being of individuals is inseparable from the social ecologies in which they live and work. From the very start, our aim was not only to document challenges but to cultivate forward-looking insights that can inform both academic inquiry and real-world intervention.

Fifteen manuscripts were shortlisted after a rigorous double-blind review process, representing a rich diversity of themes—from psychopathology and social stigma to recovery, digital behavior, and community empowerment. Each paper underwent multiple stages of refinement: an abstract screening, a full-paper submission, reviewer evaluation, and a developmental workshop held in collaboration with the AKADEMIKA Chief Editor. The outcome is a collection of interdisciplinary works that weave together psychological theory, social reality, and applied intervention, forming a comprehensive tapestry of how well-being is experienced, constructed, and sustained across different populations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES

Several contributions in this section offer fresh perspectives on the psychology of personality and behavior.

Nurul-Azza Abdullah, Siti Norafizan Jalaluddin, and Fariza Md Sham examine “Menelusuri Personaliti Triad Gelap: Kuasa, Manipulasi, dan Implikasi Dalam Kehidupan,” exploring how dark-triad traits influence manipulation, power relations, and moral decision-making among individuals in everyday social contexts. This study not only extends personality research into the Malay cultural domain but also provides a mirror for reflecting on ethical challenges in interpersonal dynamics. Complementing this is the work of Muhammad Ajib Abd Razak and colleagues, “Personality Effects on Deviant Behavior Among Adolescents: Concurrent Triangulation Technique,” which highlights the predictive influence of specific personality dimensions on youth deviance. Together, these articles underscore how understanding psychological predispositions can contribute to preventive and rehabilitative approaches within education and community settings.

A second cluster of articles foregrounds social support, stigma, and recovery as central determinants of well-being. Wan Shahrazad Wan Sulaiman and colleagues explore “Pengaruh Sokongan Sosial dan Stigma Kendiri sebagai Peramal Kepulihan Sosial,” offering empirical evidence on how social connections mitigate self-stigma among individuals striving for reintegration and psychological recovery. In parallel, Najwa Afifa Roshaid and Mohd Suhaimi Mohamad examine HIV-positive individuals’ perspectives on the combined impact of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART), social support, and counselling. Both studies converge on a common message: that recovery is not a solitary journey, but a socially scaffolded process shaped by empathy, acceptance, and sustained care networks.

From a crisis-intervention standpoint, Tengku Syuhada Elissa Tengku Adam Azli and Noremy Md Akhir contribute a compelling article on psychosocial support among flood-disaster responders, drawing attention to occupational stress, emotional fatigue, and coping strategies among first responders. Their findings carry practical implications for disaster management agencies seeking to strengthen mental-health preparedness during humanitarian emergencies. Another notable inclusion is Bima Maulana Putra and Abdul Rahman Ahmad Badayai’s article, “The Mediating Role of Demographic Factors on the Relationship of Socio-Psychological Variables to Psychological Well-Being of Parents with Children with Down Syndrome.” This study provides a valuable contribution to family psychology by highlighting how age, gender, and socioeconomic variables mediate parents’ emotional adjustment, further demonstrating the importance of tailored intervention frameworks for caregivers of children with disabilities.

EMERGING DISCOURSES: DIGITAL BEHAVIOR, OPENNESS, AND GENDER

Several papers expand the conversation into emerging domains of digital and gendered experience. Salina Nen’s article, “Understanding Openness: Factors Influencing Individuals’ Willingness to Share Mental Health Experiences,” delves into the socio-psychological enablers of mental-health disclosure, a topic of growing relevance in online and community spaces where sharing personal narratives can both empower and expose. Norulhuda Sarnon and Nor Hamizah Mohd Sharif address behavioral health through “Willingness and Challenges to Change among Female Emerging Adults Compulsively Viewing Pornography,” evaluating the potential of motivational

interviewing (MI) as a therapeutic approach. Their research sensitively unpacks the gendered dimensions of behavioral addiction and emphasizes compassionate, evidence-based interventions. International collaboration is also reflected in Surendran Rajaratnam and colleagues' contribution, "Unveiling Gendered Realities in Myanmar's Small-Scale Aquaculture: Opportunities for Change." The study situates well-being within livelihood and gender-equity frameworks, illustrating how economic empowerment and cultural transformation are intertwined in sustaining social well-being across Southeast Asia.

HUMAN VULNERABILITY, REHABILITATION, AND EMPOWERMENT

This issue also brings to light the often-unseen psychological struggles within institutional and marginalized contexts. Luqman Hamid and collaborators present "Pengalaman Cubaan Bunuh Diri dalam Kalangan Banduan di Penjara Malaysia: Satu Tinjauan Awal," an exploratory study that gives voice to incarcerated individuals confronting suicidal ideation. By integrating criminological and psychological insights, this work invites broader reflection on correctional mental-health policies in Malaysia. Within the same spirit of recovery and resilience, the article "Healing Through Helping Services: Insights from Peer Recovery Workers in Malaysia's Community-Based Drug Treatment Program," co-authored by myself, foregrounds the transformative role of lived experience in addiction recovery. The narratives of peer workers demonstrate that empowerment is reciprocal—those who once received help become catalysts for others' healing, embodying the theme of social reciprocity central to this Special Section.

Further enriching this discussion are four contributions that broaden the discourse on well-being across spirituality, family, volunteerism, and organizational life. Isabela Senti Rijeng and Khadijah Alavi explore senior volunteers' resilience in "Cabaran Kesukarelawan dan Strategi Daya Tindak Sukarelawan Senior di Malaysia," while Ateerah Abdul Razak in "Religious Practices and Muslim Well-Being in Malaysia" highlights how faith, knowledge, and relationships nurture holistic well-being. Nabihah Pakharuddin and Suzana Mohd Hoesni examine "Kepuasan Hubungan Kekeluargaan dan Kesejahteraan Psikologi dalam Kalangan Pelajar Remaja Tahfiz di Selangor," emphasizing the role of family satisfaction in adolescents' psychological health. Finally, Fathimah Dzahra Mohamed Musaddik and colleagues, through "Mediation Effect of Employees' Well-Being in the Relationship Between Perceived Organizational Support and Adaptive Job Performance," reveal how workplace support enhances adaptive performance via well-being. Collectively, these studies reaffirm that human flourishing is multidimensional shaped by spiritual grounding, supportive relationships, and institutional care.

A VISION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Collectively, the studies featured in this Special Section offer a panoramic view of human well-being—one that transcends disciplinary boundaries and cultural contexts. From psychological resilience and religious engagement to community volunteerism, family relationships, and workplace adaptability, each contribution underscores the interconnectedness of individual and collective thriving. Taken together, these works reaffirm that well-being is neither a fixed state nor a purely personal pursuit, but a shared endeavor shaped by social environments, cultural values, and institutional support. It is my hope that the insights presented here will inspire further cross-

disciplinary scholarship, evidence-based policymaking, and community-driven practices that continue to advance the understanding and promotion of human well-being across Southeast Asia and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CLOSING REFLECTIONS

This Special Section would not have been possible without the dedication of contributing authors, reviewers, and the AKADEMIKA editorial team. Special thanks also go to the Chief Editor of AKADEMIKA for fostering a collegial environment that encourages innovative interdisciplinary discourse. Above all, I am deeply inspired by the contributors whose research amplifies human stories—of struggle, resilience, empathy, and growth. Their collective work reaffirms that advancing human well-being is not merely an academic endeavor but a moral and social commitment. As readers engage with this Special Section, may they find insights that not only inform scholarship but also inspire action toward a more compassionate and inclusive society.

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