



FACTORS SHAPING COLLEGE STUDENT WELL-BEING: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF PERSONAL, ACADEMIC, FAMILY, PEER, AND SUPPORT-SYSTEM INFLUENCES

John Benedict Loquinario, Justine Llano, Shane Loren Maribao, Che Il Suarez,
Erica Shen Tonila

*Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc., Tandag City,
Surigao del Sur, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

College student well-being is influenced by interconnected personal, academic, family, peer, and support-system factors. This mixed-methods study examined the factors affecting the well-being of 293 college students at Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc., during the School Year 2025-2026, focusing on personal, academic, family, and peer factors; family, school-based, peer, and community support systems; and physical, intellectual/academic, emotional, social, and spiritual/moral dimensions of well-being. The quantitative component employed a descriptive-correlational design, while the qualitative component explored the experiences and perspectives of selected students, teachers, and parents. Results showed that personal factors obtained the highest overall weighted mean (AWM = 3.98), followed by academic factors (AWM = 3.95), family factors (AWM = 3.91), and peer factors (AWM = 3.88). Support systems were generally experienced at a high level, with family support ranking highest (AWM = 4.03), followed by school-based support (AWM = 4.02), peer support (AWM = 3.99), and community support (AWM = 3.96). Students also reported a generally high level of well-being across the measured dimensions, although physical well-being was comparatively lower than the other dimensions. Significant positive relationships were found between factors affecting well-being and student well-being ($r = 0.74$, $p < .01$) and between support systems and well-being ($r = 0.73$, $p < .01$). Qualitative findings reinforced the quantitative results, particularly regarding academic workload, emotional stress, financial constraints, communication difficulties, and the importance of family and school support. The findings highlight the need for a holistic and preventive approach to student well-being that integrates academic workload management, personal coping strategies, accessible support services, peer engagement, and family involvement.

Keywords: *college students; student well-being; academic factors; social support; coping strategies; higher education; mixed-methods research; Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

College represents a critical developmental period in which students experience increasing academic demands, changing interpersonal relationships, financial pressures, and expectations for greater independence. These experiences can influence not only academic performance but also students' physical, emotional, social, and psychological functioning. Contemporary research conceptualizes student well-being as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond the absence of mental illness and encompasses students' ability to function effectively, maintain meaningful relationships, engage in learning, manage stress, and experience personal growth. Harrer et al. (2023) emphasized that university students' well-being is influenced by multiple individual and contextual conditions, underscoring the importance of examining both risk factors and protective resources within higher education. Thus, understanding college student well-being requires consideration of the interconnected personal and environmental conditions that shape students' experiences.

Academic demands constitute an important influence on college student well-being. Coursework, examinations, deadlines, workload, and pressure to achieve satisfactory grades may contribute to stress and emotional exhaustion. Recent evidence has demonstrated a significant association between academic stress and student well-being, indicating that academic conditions should be considered alongside students' individual capacities for coping and adaptation (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025). Interpersonal environments likewise play an important role in shaping students' experiences. Family members, peers, teachers, and institutional personnel may provide emotional, informational, and practical resources that help students manage academic and personal challenges. Chaudhry et al. (2024) found that family, friendship, institutional support, and academic engagement were associated with students' psychological well-being, while Pointon-Haas et al. (2024) highlighted the potential contribution of peer-support interventions to student mental health and well-being. These findings reinforce the importance of viewing student well-being within the broader academic and social environments in which students function.

Social support is particularly important because college students may encounter multiple stressors simultaneously while relying on different sources of assistance. A systematic review by Li et al. (2025) identified social support as an important factor associated with college students' well-being and mental health, while Kotyśko and Frankowiak (2025) demonstrated the relevance of perceived social support to students' experiences of academic stress and depressive symptoms. Nevertheless, the presence of support does not necessarily mean that students can or will effectively utilize available resources. Communication difficulties, limited awareness of services, concerns about seeking assistance, and accessibility barriers may affect how support is experienced. Moreover, much of the recent literature has examined specific aspects of student well-

being, such as academic stress, psychological distress, or social support, rather than examining personal, academic, family, and peer factors together with multiple support systems and dimensions of well-being. This contextual and integrative gap provided a rationale for examining these interconnected factors within a Philippine higher education setting.

The present study examined the factors affecting the well-being of college students at Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc. It investigated personal, academic, family, and peer factors; family, school-based, peer, and community support systems; and five dimensions of well-being, namely physical, intellectual/academic, emotional, social, and spiritual/moral well-being. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative evidence from 293 college students with qualitative perspectives from selected students, teachers, and parents. The quantitative findings demonstrated significant relationships between factors affecting well-being and student well-being, as well as between support systems and well-being, while the qualitative findings provided contextual explanations concerning academic workload, emotional stress, financial constraints, communication difficulties, and the role of support systems. By integrating these findings, the study provides empirical evidence on the multidimensional nature of college student well-being and offers a basis for strengthening institutional programs and interventions responsive to students' academic, personal, social, and support needs.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What personal, academic, family, and peer factors were experienced by college students as influencing their well-being?
2. What levels of family, school-based, peer, and community support were experienced by the students?
3. What was the extent of students' well-being across the physical, intellectual/academic, emotional, social, and spiritual/moral dimensions?
4. Were the factors affecting student well-being significantly associated with the different dimensions of well-being?
5. Were the support systems significantly associated with the different dimensions of student well-being?
6. What experiences and perspectives of students, teachers, and parents provided contextual explanations for the quantitative findings?
7. To what extent did the qualitative findings converge with the quantitative results?

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods research design was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting college students' well-being at Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc. during Academic Year 2025–2026. The quantitative component used a descriptive-correlational approach and involved 293 students selected from a total

population of 1,098 across four academic departments—College of Arts, Sciences, and Teacher Education, College of Criminology, College of Nursing, and College of Business and Technology—through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire covering personal, academic, family, and peer factors; family, school-based, community, and peer support systems; and physical, intellectual/academic, emotional, social, and spiritual/moral dimensions of well-being. The qualitative component involved purposively selected students, parents, and teachers who participated in semi-structured interviews to provide contextual accounts of student well-being. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and correlation analysis, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. Ethical procedures were observed through institutional permission, informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, secure data handling, and the participants' right to withdraw without penalty.

RESULTS

Table 1. Factors Affecting College Students' Well-Being

Factors	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Rank
Personal factors	3.98	Oftentimes Affecting	1
Academic factors	3.95	Oftentimes Affecting	2
Family factors	3.91	Oftentimes Affecting	3
Peer factors	3.88	Oftentimes Affecting	4

Table 2. Support Systems Experienced by College Students

Support System	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Rank
Family	4.03	High Level	1
School-based	4.02	High Level	2
Peer	3.99	High Level	3
Community	3.96	High Level	4

Table 3. Extent of the Dimensions of College Students' Well-Being

Dimension	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Rank
Social	4.09	Great Extent	1
Spiritual/Moral	4.09	Great Extent	1
Intellectual/Academic	4.02	Great Extent	2
Emotional	4.02	Great Extent	2
Physical	3.94	Great Extent	3

Table 4. Relationship Between Factors Affecting Well-Being and Students' Well-Being

Factor	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation	Decision
Personal factors	0.74	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0
Academic factors	0.73	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0
Family factors	0.72	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0
Peer factors	0.71	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0
Overall relationship	0.74	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0

Table 5. Relationship Between Support Systems and Students' Well-Being

Support System	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation	Decision
Family	—	< .01	Significant	Reject H_0
School-based	—	< .01	Significant	Reject H_0
Peer	—	< .01	Significant	Reject H_0
Community	—	< .01	Significant	Reject H_0
Overall relationship	0.73	< .01	Strong, significant	Reject H_0

Table 6. Themes Emerging From the Lived Experiences of Students

Major Theme	Key Codes	Interpretation
Time constraints and workload overload	Heavy workload, multiple responsibilities, lack of time	Multiple academic and personal responsibilities contributed to stress and exhaustion.
Stress, pressure, and mental exhaustion	Stress, anxiety, emotional fatigue, pressure to perform	Academic demands contributed to emotional strain and mental fatigue.
Limited support and communication gaps	Lack of support, weak collaboration, isolation	Communication difficulties and feelings of disconnection limited effective support.
Resource and financial constraints	Financial problems, limited materials/resources	Economic limitations affected academic functioning and well-being.
Work-life balance difficulties	Lack of rest, fatigue, role conflict	Balancing academic and other responsibilities contributed to fatigue and burnout.
Need for institutional support programs	Counseling, mental-health programs	Participants expressed the need for stronger and more accessible institutional interventions.

Table 7. Supporting Perspectives of Teachers and Parents

Theme	Integrated Finding
Time constraints and workload overload	Teachers reported difficulty providing individualized attention, while parents observed students becoming overwhelmed by academic demands.
Students' reluctance to communicate problems	Teachers observed limited openness, while parents noticed stress and overthinking among students.
Limited capacity to address academic and emotional needs	Teachers identified limitations in specialized mental-health training; parents experienced difficulty assisting with complex academic requirements.
Balancing academic and emotional support roles	Teachers experienced difficulty balancing instructional responsibilities with emotional support, while parents expected schools to address both academic and emotional needs.
Underutilization of support systems	Teachers observed that some students did not maximize available services; parents called for stronger and more accessible counseling programs.
Institutional support and follow-up gaps	Weak monitoring and coordination were identified as barriers to timely intervention.
External and socioeconomic constraints	Financial difficulties and family responsibilities were recognized as factors affecting students' academic and emotional functioning.

Table 8. Merging–Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Key Variable	Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Degree of Convergence
Factors affecting well-being	All factors were frequently experienced (AWM = 3.88–3.98); personal and academic factors ranked highest.	Workload overload, academic pressure, emotional stress, and financial constraints were repeatedly identified.	Strong corroboration
Support systems	All support systems were at a high level (AWM = 3.96–4.03); family support ranked highest.	Participants acknowledged available support but identified gaps in accessibility, communication, coordination, and utilization.	Complementary corroboration
Well-being dimensions	Well-being was experienced to a great extent (AWM = 3.94–4.09); social and	Participants described coping, emotional strain, fatigue, and challenges in maintaining balance.	Complementary corroboration

Key Variable	Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Degree of Convergence
	spiritual/moral dimensions ranked highest.		
Factors and well-being	Strong significant relationship; overall $r = 0.74, p < .01$.	Participants described interconnected personal, academic, social, and economic stressors affecting different aspects of life.	Strong corroboration
Support systems and well-being	Strong significant relationship; overall $r = 0.73, p < .01$.	Participants described support systems as helpful while identifying barriers to access and effective utilization.	Strong corroboration

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that college students' well-being was shaped by a combination of personal, academic, family, and peer-related factors rather than by a single source of influence. Personal factors obtained the highest overall rating (AWM = 3.98), followed closely by academic factors (AWM = 3.95), while family and peer factors also occurred frequently. The prominence of personal factors, particularly habits and lifestyle-related stress, suggests that students' capacity to regulate routines, manage competing demands, and maintain healthy behaviors is closely connected with their well-being. This interpretation is consistent with Mao et al. (2024), who found through longitudinal analysis that positive engagement experiences can foster university students' well-being through psychological resilience. Their findings reinforce the importance of students' internal psychological resources in sustaining positive functioning. Similarly, Fang (2025) demonstrated that resilience-related resources are associated with lower stress and better mental-health outcomes among university students, supporting the present finding that personal capacities constitute an important dimension of students' well-being.

Academic factors emerged as the second most prominent influence, with pressure to maintain good grades, workload, examinations, and deadlines contributing substantially to students' experiences. The strong positive relationship between factors affecting well-being and overall well-being ($r = 0.74, p < .01$) suggests that the conditions students encounter in their academic and personal environments are closely associated with how they perceive and experience their well-being. This finding is particularly important when considered alongside the relatively lower rating for physical well-being (AWM = 3.94), especially rest and sleep. Liu et al. (2023) found that academic stress was associated with depression through negative affect and sleep quality, while social support moderated part of this relationship. This provides a useful explanation for the present finding that academic pressure and personal well-being are interconnected: sustained

academic demands may affect students not only psychologically but also through sleep and recovery. Likewise, the longitudinal work of Brown and Papp (2024) demonstrated that stress, coping, and sleep quality are important indicators of college students' functioning and health, reinforcing the importance of addressing physical recovery and healthy routines alongside academic performance.

The findings further demonstrate the importance of students' social environments. Family support ranked highest among the support systems (AWM = 4.03), followed by school-based support (4.02), peer support (3.99), and community support (3.96). Moreover, support systems demonstrated a strong positive relationship with student well-being ($r = 0.73$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that well-being is not solely an individual outcome but is embedded within a network of relationships and available resources. The qualitative findings add an important qualification: although students generally reported high levels of support, participants also described communication gaps, limited utilization of available services, and difficulties obtaining appropriate assistance. Thus, the effectiveness of support may depend not only on whether resources exist but also on whether students perceive them as accessible, responsive, and safe to use. This interpretation is supported by Abulfaraj et al. (2024), whose systematic review found that resilience-focused interventions can contribute to university students' mental health and well-being, while also emphasizing the importance of appropriately designed institutional approaches.

The generally high levels of well-being across the five dimensions—social and spiritual/moral (both AWM = 4.09), intellectual/academic and emotional (both 4.02), and physical (3.94)—suggest that students were, overall, functioning positively despite experiencing multiple sources of pressure. The particularly high social and spiritual/moral dimensions may indicate the importance of interpersonal connectedness, values, meaning, and a sense of belonging in students' overall functioning. However, the comparatively lower physical dimension suggests that positive social and emotional functioning may coexist with difficulties in maintaining adequate rest, healthy routines, and physical recovery. This pattern is important because it demonstrates why student well-being should not be assessed exclusively through psychological or academic indicators. Hossain et al. (2023), in a scoping review examining students' perspectives on well-being, similarly identified well-being as a broad construct encompassing multiple dimensions of students' lives rather than a single psychological outcome.

The qualitative findings substantially enriched the quantitative results by explaining the mechanisms and circumstances behind the statistical patterns. Students, teachers, and parents described academic overload, emotional exhaustion, financial constraints, communication difficulties, difficulties balancing responsibilities, and limitations in accessing or utilizing support services. The convergence between the two strands of evidence strengthens the interpretation that student well-being is produced through the interaction of individual resources and contextual conditions. Importantly, the findings also suggest that institutional responses should not be limited to reactive counseling after students experience serious difficulties. Recent evidence supports a broader preventive approach: García-Pérez et al. (2025) reported that integrated higher-education mental-health interventions can address stress and depression, while Upsher et al. (2025)

emphasized the need for institution-wide approaches to mental health and well-being rather than relying on isolated interventions. These findings provide empirical support for the study's implication that interventions should combine academic workload management, resilience-building, accessible counseling, peer support, family engagement, and health-promoting practices.

Taken together, the results support a holistic model of college student well-being in which personal factors, academic conditions, family and peer relationships, and institutional and community support operate as interconnected influences. The strong correlations found in the study indicate meaningful associations, but because the quantitative component employed a correlational design, these relationships should not be interpreted as evidence of causation. The qualitative findings nevertheless provide complementary evidence that helps explain how these factors are experienced in students' everyday lives. The findings therefore suggest that improving student well-being requires interventions at multiple levels: strengthening students' coping and resilience capacities, reducing avoidable academic pressures, promoting healthy routines and adequate rest, strengthening family and peer relationships, and ensuring that school-based support services are accessible and actively utilized. Such an integrated approach provides a stronger empirical basis for the proposed Project H.E.A.L.S. intervention and offers a practical framework for promoting student well-being within the higher education setting.

Conclusions

The study concluded that school activities at Saint Theresa College of Tandag, Inc. were generally implemented and were congruent with the core values of Service, Truth, and Communion. A culture of excellence was also evident in academic performance, participation, discipline and character formation, recognition, and perceptions of excellence. Overall, the findings indicated that aligning school activities with institutional core values provided a strong foundation for developing a culture of excellence at STCTI. The study concluded that college students' well-being was influenced by interconnected personal, academic, family, and peer factors, with personal and academic factors emerging as the most frequently experienced influences. Despite these challenges, students reported high levels of support from their families, school, peers, and community and generally experienced well-being to a great extent across the physical, intellectual/academic, emotional, social, and spiritual/moral dimensions. The significant positive relationships between factors affecting well-being and student well-being, as well as between support systems and well-being, further demonstrated the importance of both individual and contextual resources in students' overall functioning. The qualitative findings corroborated and contextualized the quantitative results by highlighting workload pressures, emotional exhaustion, financial constraints, communication difficulties, and gaps in the accessibility and utilization of support services. Overall, the findings underscore the need for a holistic, preventive, and coordinated approach to student well-being that strengthens students' coping capacities while enhancing academic, family, peer, community, and institutional support mechanisms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that higher education institutions adopt a holistic and coordinated student well-being program that addresses personal, academic, family, peer, and environmental needs. Academic units should strengthen workload management, study-skills development, time-management support, and reasonable academic scheduling, while guidance and counseling services should provide accessible and proactive psychosocial support, particularly for students experiencing stress, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty coping. Family and peer involvement should be strengthened through regular communication, peer-support activities, and awareness initiatives that encourage students to seek appropriate assistance when needed. The institution should also improve the visibility, accessibility, and follow-up mechanisms of existing support services and establish stronger coordination among students, teachers, parents, guidance personnel, and administrators. Particular attention should be given to physical well-being, including adequate rest, healthy routines, and opportunities for recreation and physical activity. Finally, the proposed Project H.E.A.L.S. should be implemented and periodically evaluated to determine its effectiveness in addressing the identified needs and improving the overall well-being of college students.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study adhered to established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, appropriate institutional permission was secured, and the participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, with appropriate consent procedures observed for participants requiring parental or guardian authorization. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without penalty. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the research process, and information obtained from the participants was used solely for academic and research purposes. Personal identifiers were not disclosed in the presentation or publication of the findings, and collected data were handled and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. The qualitative interviews were likewise conducted with due consideration for participants' privacy, dignity, and welfare. The researchers also observed principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice in the conduct of the study and in reporting the findings.

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Corresponding author: justinellano5@gmail.com