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Navigating Emotional Turbulence: Understanding How Socio-Psychological Factors Shape Academic Well-being Among Indian University Students

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ABSTRACT

Romantic relationships and their dissolution can affect an individual's well-being. This study examines the academic well-being of emerging adults, particularly undergraduate and postgraduate students, focusing on socio-psychological factors including social connectedness, self-compassion, love, liking, and happiness. Although considerable research has examined student well-being, the academic well-being of university students in India remains comparatively underexplored. The study investigates the relationships between these socio-psychological factors and academic well-being and examines whether the dissolution of a non-marital relationship (commonly referred to as a breakup) moderates these relationships. Using a robust analytical framework, the findings indicate that liking, self-compassion, happiness, and social connectedness are positively related to academic well-being, whereas love is not significantly related to

academic well-being. The dissolution of non-marital relationships does not significantly moderate the relationships between these socio-psychological factors and academic well-being. These findings contribute to understanding the socio-psychological factors associated with academic well-being among university students in India and provide insights for educators and mental health professionals.

Keywords: Academic well-being (AWB), dissolution of non-marital relationships, undergraduate students, postgraduate students, love, liking, social connectedness, self-compassion, and happiness.

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INTRODUCTION

A vital component of students' general success and contentment in learning environments is their academic well-being (AWB). Academic well-being refers to students' positive and negative experiences within the academic context, including how they feel about their studies, engage with academic activities, and experience academic demands. Thus, AWB is distinct from general psychological or emotional well-being because it focuses specifically on students' experiences in relation to their academic environment and educational activities. It is considered crucial for a range of educational outcomes and academic adjustment. Signals of diminishing emotions towards studying, as well as experiences of academic pressure, should therefore be addressed carefully. Earlier studies have underlined the importance of social and emotional support in fostering academic achievement (Collie et al., 2024). Emotionally invested students usually perform better in academic settings (Bae et al., 2020), are highly motivated (Tuominen-Soini et al., 2020), and aim for higher education (Wang & Eccles, 2012). In contrast, overworked students often struggle with their academic performance (Madigan & Curran, 2020) and can face issues such as depression (Gerber et al., 2015).

This study is based on Arnett's (1998) theory of Emerging Adulthood. Arnett (2000) states that young adults, including university students, face common challenges like academic pressure, peer influence, and personal relationships. However, research indicates that students have different patterns of academic and emotional functioning. Academic stress can affect both high-performing and low-performing students (Salmela-Aro & Read, 2017).

The term "social connectedness" (SoC) describes the feeling of inclusion and belonging to a community of supporting people. Research shows that it is a key factor for positive outcomes, such as academic success and good mental health (Allen et al., 2018). Similarly, better coping mechanisms and increased academic resilience have been linked to self-compassion (SC), which is the practice of treating oneself with kindness and understanding when facing failure or difficult times (Arshad et al., 2026; Eraslan-Capan, 2016).

Love is a feeling that encompasses affection, care, and emotional support from close friends, family, and significant others. Liking, a pleasant feeling, can influence students' motivation and engagement. Both factors may be relevant to their academic experiences (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009). Happiness is generally associated with positive feelings and life satisfaction. The dissolution of romantic relationships can significantly affect a person's well-being, leading to issues such as decreased academic performance and mental distress (Sbarra & Emery, 2005). However, there is limited research on how these socio-psychological factors, particularly in combination with the experience of non-marital relationship dissolution, relate to the academic well-being of university students.

This research aims to enhance understanding of the relationship between academic well-being, socio-psychological factors, and non-marital relationship dissolution among university students in India. Specifically, the study examines the relationships between AWB and social connectedness, self-compassion, love, liking, and happiness. It also examines the moderating role of the dissolution of non-marital relationships. The findings may offer valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to enhance students' academic well-being and academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Well-being

Academic well-being (AWB) is a multidimensional construct encompassing both positive and negative aspects of students' experiences in the academic context. Hascher (2008) conceptualised AWB in terms of positive indicators such as enjoyment of school, a positive attitude towards school, and positive academic self-image, alongside negative indicators such as school-related worry, physical complaints, and social problems. Subsequent studies have similarly linked AWB to academic self-concept, perceived learning difficulties, school burnout, engagement, and school value (Fiorilli et al., 2017). More broadly, AWB has been associated with satisfaction with educational choices and academic engagement (Tuominen-Soini et al., 2012). Although much of the earlier literature on academic well-being has been developed in school settings, the present study examines academic well-being among undergraduate and postgraduate students in the higher education context.

Following Tuominen et al. (2020), the present study considers AWB as encompassing both positive and negative aspects of students' academic experiences. Given the focus of this study, AWB is operationalised through academic engagement and academic burnout. Engagement reflects students' active involvement and positive investment in academic activities, whereas burnout captures the negative experience of exhaustion and disengagement associated with academic demands (Salmela-Aro & Read, 2017). Both have been identified as important indicators of students' academic functioning and well-being (Parviainen et al., 2021; Putwain et al., 2020). Research further indicates that academic engagement is associated with subsequent life satisfaction, whereas academic burnout is associated with subsequent depression (Upadhyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2017).

Although these measures have traditionally been applied in school settings, the present study extends their use to undergraduate and graduate students to examine AWB at the university level. Importantly, social connectedness, self-compassion, love, liking, and happiness are treated in this study as separate socio-psychological predictors of AWB rather than as components of AWB itself.

Academic Engagement and Burnout

Academic engagement is associated with students' academic performance and adjustment to academic life and is therefore important for their positive development (Fredricks et al., 2004). It is generally understood as a multidimensional construct comprising affective, cognitive, and behavioural components. The affective component includes students' happiness and interest in their studies, the cognitive component reflects their investment and readiness to learn, and the behavioural component involves participation and adherence to academic expectations (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004). Higher engagement has also been associated with better academic performance, motivation, aspirations, and future educational choices, while protecting against negative outcomes such as dropout and depressive symptoms (Li & Lerner, 2011; Salmela-Aro & Upadhyaya, 2020).

Alongside engagement, academic burnout represents a negative aspect of students' academic experiences. As academics involve sustained demands and pressure to perform, students may experience burnout when they struggle to cope with these demands (Di Chiacchio et al., 2016; Fiorilli et al., 2017;

Walburg, 2014). Academic burnout is generally characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and inadequacy (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Exhaustion reflects persistent academic fatigue, cynicism involves detachment or loss of interest in studies, and inadequacy refers to reduced perceptions of one's academic abilities and accomplishments (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009). These dimensions have been linked to outcomes such as motivation and academic achievement (Tuominen-Soini et al., 2012; Salmela-Aro & Upadhyaya, 2014).

Engagement and burnout are negatively related, but they are not simply opposite ends of the same continuum. They represent distinct psychological processes with different implications for students' academic functioning (Skinner et al., 2008). This distinction supports their use as complementary indicators of academic well-being in the present study.

Social Connectedness

According to certain theories, social connectedness is one of the characteristics of a person that indicates how that person perceives their social surroundings (Lee & Robbins, 1998). It relates to how individuals view themselves in relation to others and to their understanding of their relationships with others and their surrounding environment (Lee & Robbins, 2000).

Research has shown a positive relationship between social connectedness and improved health (Seeman et al., 2001), well-being (Jose et al., 2012), life satisfaction (Siebert et al., 1999), personal meaning (Hagerty & Williams, 1999), and sense of belonging (Hagerty et al., 1992). Conversely, low social connectedness has been associated with depression, prolonged loneliness, low self-esteem, high anxiety, and increased social mistrust (Lee & Robbins, 1995; Vanderhorst & McLaren, 2005). In the context of education, social connectedness may also influence how students experience and engage with their academic environment, as supportive social relationships can contribute to students' sense of belonging and positive experiences within the learning setting. Recent research among international students similarly highlights the importance of social support and academic integration for students' psychological well-being in higher education (Mahmood et al., 2026).

In the present study, social connectedness is considered a separate socio-psychological predictor of academic well-being rather than a component of academic well-being itself. Its proposed relationship with academic well-being is based on the premise that students who experience stronger connections with others may have more positive experiences within their academic environment. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_1: Social Connectedness (SoC) is positively related to Academic well-being (AWB)

Self Compassion

Research has investigated several predictors of students' academic well-being, including self-compassion (Zareian & Imani, 2018). Self-compassion involves treating oneself with care, understanding, and forgiveness when facing failure or difficulties (Neff, 2003). It entails a nonjudgmental perception of oneself and an empathetic response towards one's own difficulties (Neff, 2011). Self-compassion may therefore help students manage the pressures and setbacks associated with academic life and maintain a more positive outlook towards their studies.

Research has linked self-compassion with students' academic well-being and related experiences. Cadime et al. (2016), for example, reported a significant relationship between university students' academic well-being and self-compassion, along with feelings of integrity and responsibility. Self-compassion has also been associated with greater emotional resilience and lower anxiety and sadness, suggesting that it may support students in coping with academic pressures and difficulties (Neff, 2003). Further, self-compassion may encourage students to respond constructively to setbacks and persist in their studies (Neff et al., 2005).

Shirmohammadi et al. (2021) similarly suggest that cultivating self-compassion may help students develop healthier coping mechanisms and enhance their academic well-being.

In the present study, self-compassion is considered a separate socio-psychological predictor of academic well-being rather than a component of academic well-being itself. Its proposed relationship with academic well-being is based on the premise that students who respond to academic difficulties with greater self-compassion may be better able to manage setbacks and maintain positive academic experiences. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_2: Self Compassion (SC) is positively related to AWB

Love and Liking

Rubin (1970) was among the first researchers to distinguish and quantitatively assess love and liking as separate interpersonal constructs. He proposed that although platonic friendships may primarily involve liking, romantic relationships may involve both love and liking. To examine these distinctions, Rubin developed separate Love and Liking Scales.

Love involves feelings of affection, concern, and emotional support towards significant others. Previous research suggests that supportive and loving relationships can contribute to students' academic and psychological experiences. Pittman and Richmond (2008), for example, found that students' perceptions of being loved and supported by significant others were associated with academic achievement and general well-being. Similarly, social and emotional support may help students manage academic pressures and maintain positive functioning (Wilcox et al., 2005), while encouragement from significant others may support students' motivation and persistence in academic endeavours (Wentzel, 1998). Thus, although love is primarily an interpersonal construct, supportive relationships may have implications for students' experiences within the academic context. In the present study, love is therefore considered a separate socio-psychological predictor of academic well-being rather than a component of academic well-being itself. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_3: Love is positively related to AWB

Liking is conceptually distinct from love. Rubin (1970) proposed that liking reflects positive feelings and favourable evaluations towards another person, whereas love involves a deeper interpersonal attachment characterised by affection and concern. Liking has been extensively examined in research on interpersonal attraction (Berscheid & Hatfield, 1969). Unlike love, however, liking can also extend beyond close interpersonal relationships to students' experiences of their teachers, peers, and academic subjects.

There is limited evidence directly examining the relationship between liking of a significant other and academic well-being. However, research on students' liking of teachers, peers, and academic experiences suggests that positive interpersonal and academic relationships may be associated with greater engagement, motivation, and positive educational experiences. For example, students who experience positive relationships with teachers and peers may show greater engagement and motivation (Furrer & Skinner, 2003), while supportive relationships can contribute to a positive learning environment and students' sense of belonging (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students who are interested in and enjoy their academic subjects may also be more willing to invest effort in learning (Wentzel, 1998). Based on this related evidence, the present study examines liking as a separate socio-psychological predictor of academic well-being. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_4: Liking is positively related to AWB

Happiness

Happiness generally refers to positive feelings and satisfaction with life. Research suggests that students who experience greater happiness may show higher motivation and persistence in their academic

lives (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happiness may also be associated with more positive relationships with faculty and peers, which can contribute to a supportive learning environment (Seligman, 2009). These positive experiences may, in turn, support students' engagement with their academic activities and contribute to more positive experiences within the academic context.

In the present study, happiness is considered a separate socio-psychological predictor of academic well-being rather than a component of academic well-being itself. The proposed relationship is based on the premise that students who experience greater happiness may be better positioned to remain motivated, persistent, and positively engaged in their academic environment. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_5: Happiness is positively related to AWB

Dissolution of a non-marital relationship as a moderator

The break-up or end of a romantic relationship, including a serious non-marital relationship, can be associated with negative emotional outcomes. Research suggests that individuals who are left by their partners may experience greater emotional distress than those who initiate the separation (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Individuals who end a relationship may initially experience feelings such as guilt or regret, although relationship dissolution may also bring feelings of relief or happiness (Sprecher et al., 1998).

SoC, AWB and Dissolution of Non-marital Relationship

Social connectedness has been associated with lower stress, greater motivation, and improved academic well-being (Wilcox et al., 2005). However, the termination of a non-marital romantic relationship may disrupt students' social and emotional connections and may be associated with greater emotional distress and loneliness (Sbarra, 2006). Relationship dissolution has also been associated with changes in students' academic involvement (Field et al., 2009). Therefore, the experience of relationship dissolution may influence how social connectedness relates to students' academic well-being. In the present study, dissolution of a non-marital relationship is examined as a moderating variable, with the expectation that it may alter the strength of the relationship between social connectedness and academic well-being. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H_6: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between SoC and AWB

SC, AWB and Dissolution of Non-marital Relationship

Self-compassion supports emotional resilience, lowers anxiety, and contributes to well-being by encouraging individuals to respond to difficult experiences with kindness and understanding (Neff, 2003). Neff et al. (2005) suggest that this approach may help students cope with academic challenges and maintain their academic functioning and well-being. However, the experience of dissolving a romantic relationship may create emotional difficulties that can affect students' ability to cope with other demands (Sbarra, 2006). Thus, the experience of relationship dissolution may influence the extent to which self-compassion is associated with students' academic well-being.

In the present study, dissolution of a non-marital relationship is examined as a moderating variable that may alter the strength of the relationship between self-compassion and academic well-being. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_7: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between SC and AWB

Love and Liking, AWB and Dissolution of Non-marital Relationship

Feelings of love, affection, and support from significant others may contribute to students' positive experiences and functioning. Pittman and Richmond (2008) found that students' perceptions of being loved

and supported by significant others were associated with academic achievement and general well-being. However, the dissolution of a romantic relationship may disrupt an important source of emotional support and may be associated with emotional difficulties and changes in students' academic involvement (Field et al., 2009; Sbarra, 2006). Thus, the experience of relationship dissolution may influence the extent to which love is associated with students' academic well-being.

In the present study, dissolution of a non-marital relationship is examined as a moderating variable that may alter the strength of the relationship between love and academic well-being. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_8: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Love and AWB

Liking involves positive feelings and favourable evaluations towards another person and is distinct from the deeper interpersonal attachment associated with love (Rubin, 1970). Positive interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers have been associated with greater student engagement and motivation (Furrer & Skinner, 2003), suggesting that positive interpersonal experiences may contribute to students' academic experiences. However, the dissolution of a romantic relationship may disrupt positive interpersonal experiences and may be associated with emotional distress and changes in academic involvement (Field et al., 2009; Sbarra, 2006). Thus, relationship dissolution may influence the extent to which liking is associated with academic well-being.

In the present study, dissolution of a non-marital relationship is examined as a moderating variable that may alter the strength of the relationship between liking and academic well-being. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H_9: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Liking and AWB

Happiness, AWB and Dissolution of Non-marital Relationship

Studies indicate that personal life events, such as the breakdown of a romantic relationship, can significantly affect an individual's emotional state and general well-being (Sbarra & Emery, 2005). Such emotional changes may also affect students' academic experiences, as changes in happiness have been associated with academic achievement (Yap et al., 2012). Therefore, the dissolution of a non-marital relationship may influence the relationship between students' happiness and their academic well-being. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H_{10}: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Happiness and AWB

RESEARCH METHOD

Sampling Design and Data Collection

The questionnaire was circulated through a Google Form among 800 undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in universities in Uttar Pradesh, including students from both public and private institutions.

Participants

Participation was limited to currently enrolled students. The questionnaire was circulated through available student networks and contacts. A total of 554 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 69.25%. Incomplete or duplicate responses were excluded during data screening. No incentive was offered for participation. The target of 800 was based on the number of students to whom the questionnaire could be practically circulated rather than on a predetermined sample-size calculation.

Sample Size: Out of 554 students surveyed, 276 (49.8%) were male and 278 (50.2%) were female.

Age Distribution: The students were predominantly between 19 and 23 years of age (55.6%). Educational Background: Both undergraduate (59.5%) and postgraduate students (40.5%), were included in the study.

Residential Status: Students were from both rural and urban areas. Students from rural area were 44.4% while those from urban areas were 55.6%.

MEASURES

School Burnout Inventory and the School Work Engagement were used to measure AWB. The School Burnout Inventory (SBI), created by Salmela-Aro and others in 2009, assesses academic burnout. It has three parts: feeling inadequate as a student ("I often feel inadequate in my schoolwork"), feeling cynical about the value of school ("I feel that I am losing interest in my schoolwork"), and feeling exhausted by school ("I feel overwhelmed by my schoolwork"). Each part has three statements, and respondents rate their agreement on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (completely agree). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.757. The Schoolwork Engagement Inventory (EDA; Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2012) measures how engaged students are with their academic work. It contains nine statements, like "I feel full of energy when I study." This scale had a reliability score of 0.818. The Short Self-Compassion Scale, developed by Raes et al. in 2010, has twelve statements rated on a five-point scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). Higher self-compassion is indicated by lower total scores, which can range from 12 to 60. This scale had a reliability score of 0.807 for the current study. The Social Connectedness Scale (SCS), created by Lee and Robbins in 1995, measures how connected people feel socially. It includes eight statements, rated on a six-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Examples are "I feel like I'm losing all sense of connection with society" and "I feel disconnected from the world around me." This scale had a reliability score of 0.83. The Love and Liking Scale was created by Rubin in 1970 to measure how much people like and love their partners. Each scale has 13 items and shows consistent results. In this study, the Love Scale had a coefficient of 0.822, and the Liking Scale had 0.785. Information regarding ending a non-marital relationship was taken by asking a simple question to the participants: "Have you ever experienced the dissolution of a non-marital relationship?" They had the option to answer with a yes or a no. A 6-item Short Depression-Happiness Scale (SDHS), with a four-point rating system from Joseph et al. (2004), was used to measure happiness. It is a shorter version of the 25-item Depression-Happiness Scale (DHS) created by Joseph and Lewis in 1998. The full scale measures both depression and happiness. It includes 12 questions about positive feelings and 13 about negative feelings. The short scale has three questions about positive feelings and three about negative feelings, such as "I felt dissatisfied with my life," "I felt happy," "I felt cheerless," and "I felt pleased with the way I am." This study only used the questions related to happiness. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.755.

The following hypotheses were proposed:

H_1: Social Connectedness (SoC) is positively related to Academic well-being (AWB)
H_2: Self Compassion (SC) is positively related to AWB
H_3: Love is positively related to AWB
H_4: Liking is positively related to AWB
H_5: Happiness is positively related to AWB
H_6: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between SoC and AWB
H_7: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between SC and AWB
H_8: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Love and AWB

H_9: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Liking and AWB
H_{10}: Dissolution of non-marital relationship moderates the relationship between Happiness and AWB

RESULTS

The demographic distribution of participants in the study is shown in Table 1. Gender is almost equally distributed whereas the marital status is highly skewed as 80% of the respondents fall under the age group of 17-25. Around 60% of the respondents are undergraduates. Around 67% of the respondents are falling within the income range of 5-15 lacs. Around 55% of the respondents live in Urban area.

Principal component analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 23.0 to check for the common method bias (Podasakoff et.al., 2003). We ensured that no construct accounted for more than 50% of the variance, indicating a lower likelihood of common method bias.

Table 1

Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Male	276	49.8
Female	278	50.2
Age Category		
17-19 years	56	10.1
19-21 years	143	25.8
21-23 years	165	29.8
23-25 years	66	11.9
25-27 years	62	11.1
Above 27 years	62	11.1
Marital Status		
Unmaried	528	95.3
Married	26	4.7
Qualification		
Post Graduate	224	40.5
Undergraduate	330	59.5
Family Income (in INR)		
Upto 5 Lacs	102	18.4
5-10 Lacs	246	44.4
10-15 Lacs	123	22.2
15 Lacs and Above	83	15
Residential Status		
Rural	246	44.4
Urban	308	55.6

Note. N = 554 Participants.

Measurement Model

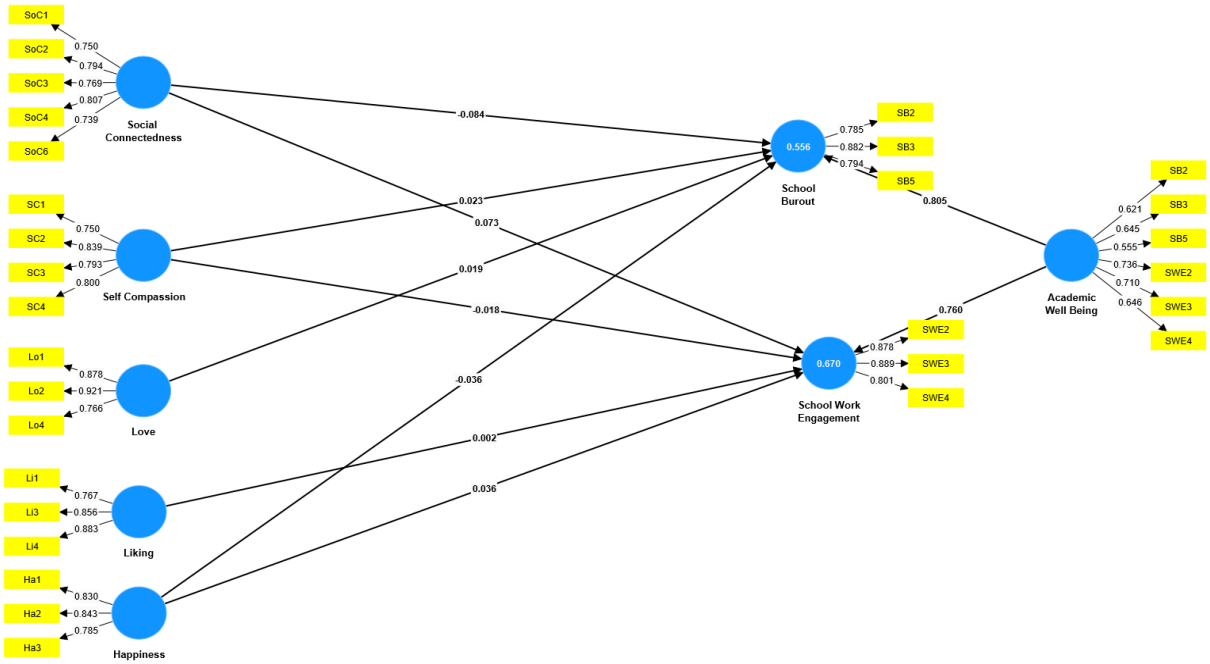
To test the validity of our measures, we used Smart PLS 4.0 to check both convergent and discriminant validity. For convergent validity, we examined the outer loading, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). All the constructs, Love, Self-Compassion, Liking, Social Connectedness, school burnout, school work engagement, and happiness, met the required standards (Nunnally, 1978; Hair et al., 2019). Table 2 shows the criteria we used to ensure the convergent validity of these constructs.

Table 2: *Construct Validity Parameters*

Construct	Outer loadings	Cronbach Alpha	AVE	CR
Love	0.878 0.921 0.766	0.822	0.735	0.861
Self-Compassion	0.75 0.839 0.793	0.807	0.633	0.81
Liking	0.8 0.767 0.856 0.883	0.785	0.7	0.8
Social Connectedness	0.75 0.794 0.769 0.807	0.83	0.596	0.832
School Burnout	0.739 0.785 0.882 0.794	0.757	0.675	0.763
School Work Engagement	0.878 0.889 0.801	0.818	0.734	0.825
Happiness	0.83 0.843 0.785	0.755	0.672	0.759

To ensure discriminant validity, we checked the Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell and Larcker Criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to that, the correlation between the constructs is less than 0.85 and the average variance of each construct is less than the squared inter-correlation between each construct. This ensured the discriminant validity of the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Fig. 1 *Measurement Model*



Construct Validity of Academic Well-being (AWB)

AWB being the second order construct, its validity has to be ensured separately (Hair et.al., 2019). The composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c) along with Cronbach alpha and AVE has been given in Table 3, ensuring the construct validity of AWB.

Table 3: *Construct Validity of AWB (Second Order Construct)*

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Academic _Well Being	0.733	0.701	0.753	0.605
Happiness	0.755	0.759	0.86	0.672
Liking	0.785	0.802	0.875	0.701
Love	0.822	0.825	0.894	0.739
Self Compassion	0.807	0.811	0.873	0.633
Social Connectedness	0.83	0.832	0.881	0.596

Structural Model

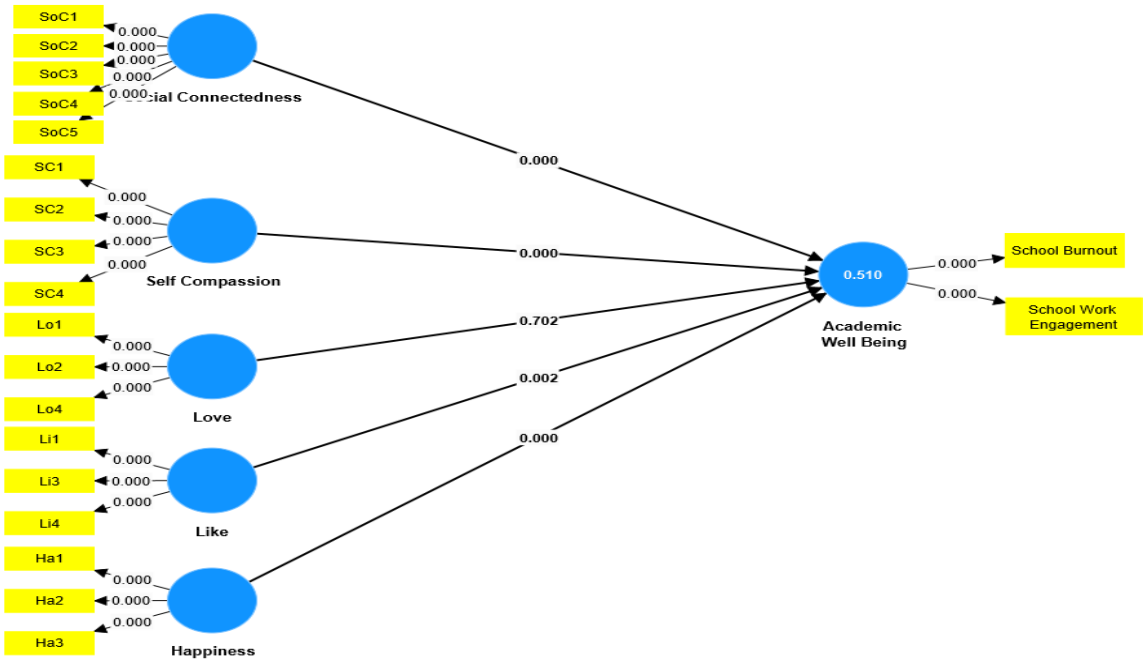
To test the proposed hypotheses, a structural model was proposed (Figure 2). The results of path coefficients and respective p-values are shown in Table 4. It was found that Happiness (β = 0.25, p < .001), Liking (β =

0.12, p < .01), Self-Compassion (β = 0.29, p < .001) and social connectedness (β = 0.24, p < .001) are positively related to AWB and therefore H1, H2, H4 and H5 are supported whereas Love (β = 0.004, p >0.1) was not related to AWB leading to rejection of H3.

Table 4: *Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing*

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Hypothesis
Happiness -> Academic Well Being	0.252	0.252	0.052	4.872	0	Supported
Liking -> Academic Well Being	0.115	0.116	0.035	3.241	0.001	Supported
Love -> Academic Well Being	0.004	0.003	0.041	0.103	0.918	Not Supported
Self Compassion - Academic Well Being	0.286	0.288	0.048	5.909	0	Supported
Social Connectedness Academic Well Being	0.248	0.246	0.042	5.832	0	Supported

Figure. 2: *Structural Model*



Moderation of Dissolution of Relationship

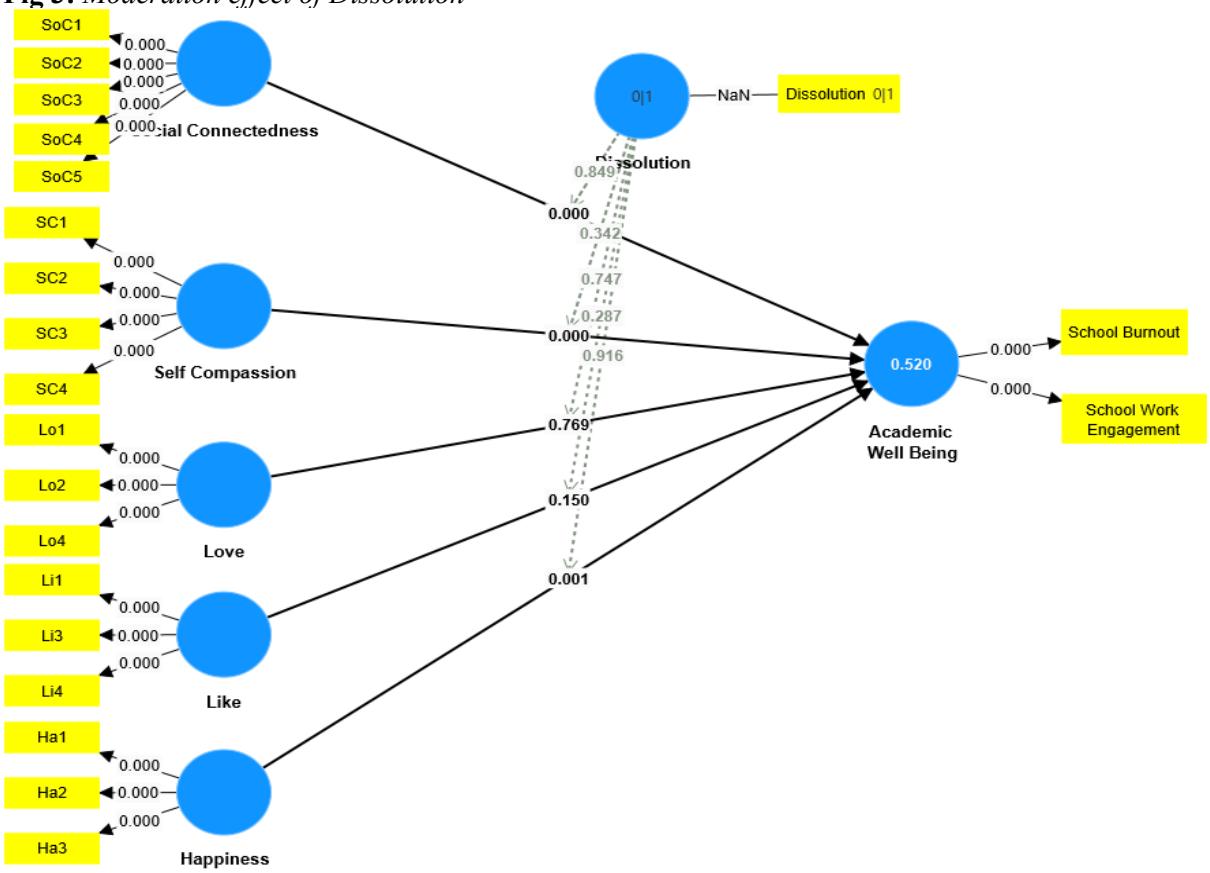
The moderation of dissolution was tested using the same structural model (Figure 3) by adding a categorical moderator, Dissolution, to the model. The results of bootstrapping are given in Table 5.

Table 5: *Moderation results of Dissolution*

Moderation effect	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
Dissolution x Happiness -> Academic Well Being	0.011	0.009	0.105	0.105	0.916	Not Significant
Dissolution x Social Connectedness -> Academic Well Being	0.017	0.017	0.089	0.19	0.849	Not Significant
Dissolution x Love -> Academic Well Being	0.027	0.027	0.085	0.323	0.747	Not Significant
Dissolution x Like -> Academic Well Being	0.08	0.081	0.075	1.064	0.287	Not Significant
Dissolution x Self Compassion -> Academic Well Being	0.091	0.091	0.096	0.95	0.342	Not Significant

It was found that Dissolution does not play the moderating role for the relationships of Happiness, Liking, Social Connectedness and Self-Compassion with that of AWB.

Fig 3: *Moderation effect of Dissolution*



FINDINGS

The findings show that academic well-being is positively related to social connectedness, self-compassion, liking, and happiness among university students. Of these factors, self-compassion had the strongest relationship with academic well-being, followed by happiness, social connectedness, and liking. This suggests that students' academic well-being is related not only to their academic experiences but also to how they experience themselves and their social environment. In contrast, love was not significantly related to academic well-being. This indicates that having feelings of love or being in a close relationship does not necessarily relate to students' academic well-being.

The moderation results show that the dissolution of a non-marital relationship did not significantly moderate the relationships of social connectedness, self-compassion, liking, or happiness with academic well-being. Thus, in this study, these relationships remained similar irrespective of whether students had experienced the dissolution of a non-marital relationship.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

University students navigate a range of academic, interpersonal, and personal demands alongside their educational responsibilities. Concerns about academic performance, career and future prospects, peer expectations, competitive examinations, and interpersonal relationships can add to the pressures experienced during university life (Gupta & Sinha, 2023). These demands may interact with students' personal and social experiences and influence how they respond to academic challenges. This context is

particularly relevant during emerging adulthood, a period characterised by considerable changes across multiple domains of life (Arnett, 2015; Nice, 2023). Decisions related to career, close relationships, and living arrangements, together with ongoing cognitive and neurological development, represent important transitions during this period (Masten et al., 2004). Thus, the academic experiences of university students need to be understood within the broader developmental and social context in which they are navigating these multiple transitions. These changes make the university period important for understanding students' academic and personal experiences. In this study, a positive relationship was found between AWB and social connectedness, self-compassion, liking, and happiness. These results are consistent with recent research emphasising the importance of social support and positive adjustment in higher education (Aqsa, 2026). Allen et al. (2018) reported that strong social networks can provide students with emotional support and a feeling of inclusion, which are relevant to their academic experiences. Similarly, self-compassion may help individuals manage stress and self-criticism, supporting a more positive academic experience (Marsh et al., 2018).

Among the factors examined, self-compassion showed the strongest relationship with AWB, followed by happiness, social connectedness, and liking. This suggests that students' academic well-being is related not only to their academic experiences but also to how they respond to themselves and their social environment. Students regularly face academic demands, setbacks, and performance-related pressures. Self-compassion may help students respond to such difficulties with greater understanding and less self-criticism. Happiness may also be associated with students' motivation and persistence in academic life, while social connectedness may provide a sense of belonging and support. Liking, as a positive interpersonal feeling, may also be associated with students' positive experiences in their academic environment. Taken together, these findings suggest that both personal and social experiences are associated with students' academic well-being.

Notably, H3, which proposed a favourable relationship between love and academic well-being, was not supported. Previous research has linked feeling loved and supported by significant others with students' academic achievement and general well-being (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). However, the present finding suggests that love, as an interpersonal construct, may not have the same relationship with academic well-being as self-compassion, social connectedness, happiness, and liking. One possible explanation is that love may be more closely related to broader emotional and interpersonal well-being, whereas the other factors examined in this study may have a closer connection with students' everyday academic experiences. This interpretation, however, requires further investigation.

The dissolution of non-marital relationships was hypothesised to moderate the relationships between social connectedness, self-compassion, love, liking, happiness, and academic well-being. However, the moderation hypotheses were not supported. The results indicate that the relationships between the socio-psychological factors and AWB did not significantly differ according to whether students had experienced the dissolution of a non-marital relationship. Previous research has shown that relationship dissolution can be associated with emotional and psychological distress (van der Watt et al., 2023). However, the present study does not provide evidence that relationship dissolution changes the relationships examined between these socio-psychological factors and academic well-being. This finding should not be interpreted as suggesting that relationship dissolution has no emotional consequences; rather, its moderating role in the relationships examined in the present study was not statistically evident.

Overall, the findings indicate that social connectedness, self-compassion, liking, and happiness are important factors to consider when understanding students' academic well-being. From a practical perspective, educational institutions may consider creating opportunities that strengthen students' social connections, supportive peer and teacher relationships, and healthier ways of responding to academic difficulties. Peer support activities and programmes that encourage self-compassion and positive social interaction may provide useful avenues for supporting students' academic experiences. However, these suggestions should be considered as areas for institutional support rather than as causal interventions established by the present study.

Future studies ought to continue examining the relationship between academic well-being and interpersonal experiences. Longitudinal research may provide a deeper understanding of how changes in students' personal and interpersonal relationships over time relate to AWB. Furthermore, examining additional potential moderating variables, such as personality characteristics and the availability of social support networks, may provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study provide several directions for future research on academic well-being among university students. First, the positive relationships observed between self-compassion, happiness, social connectedness, liking, and academic well-being suggest the need for further research to understand how these factors are related to students' academic experiences over time. Longitudinal studies could examine whether changes in these socio-psychological factors are accompanied by changes in academic engagement and burnout, which were used as indicators of academic well-being in the present study.

Second, the non-significant relationship between love and academic well-being and the absence of significant moderation effects of non-marital relationship dissolution warrant further investigation. Future studies could examine whether the nature, duration, timing, and quality of romantic relationships are relevant to students' academic well-being rather than treating relationship dissolution only as a yes/no experience. It would also be useful to examine whether the availability of social support from family, friends, peers, or teachers changes students' experiences following relationship dissolution.

Finally, future research could extend the present study by examining students from different types of higher education institutions and from different geographical and cultural contexts in India. Comparative studies involving undergraduate and postgraduate students may also help determine whether the relationships identified in the present study vary across educational levels. Such research may provide a more detailed understanding of the socio-psychological factors associated with academic well-being among university students.

LIMITATIONS

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional research design. Therefore, the observed relationships between the socio-psychological factors and academic well-being cannot be interpreted as causal relationships. Longitudinal research would be more appropriate for examining how these relationships develop or change over time.

Second, data were collected through an online Google Form and were based on participants' self-reports. This approach may be subject to self-selection and response bias, as students who chose to participate may differ from those who did not respond. Although the study received 554 responses from the 800 students invited, the response rate does not eliminate the possibility of non-response bias.

Third, the study examined students' experiences using a predefined set of socio-psychological factors, social connectedness, self-compassion, love, liking, and happiness, and focused on dissolution of a non-marital relationship as a moderator. Other factors, such as family support, peer support, personality characteristics, financial circumstances, academic workload, and institutional environment, were not examined and may also be relevant to students' academic well-being.

Finally, the study included undergraduate and postgraduate students. Although this provides representation across educational levels, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of this student population and should not be generalised to working professionals or other populations without further evidence.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest several practical considerations for higher education institutions seeking to support students' academic well-being. Since self-compassion, social connectedness, happiness, and liking were positively related to academic well-being, institutions may consider supportive peer interaction, mentoring, student counselling, and opportunities for meaningful engagement and constructive coping with academic difficulties.

Since relationship dissolution did not significantly moderate the relationships examined, institutions should avoid assuming that students who have experienced relationship dissolution necessarily have poorer academic well-being. Student support may instead be provided according to individual needs rather than relationship status alone.

These implications should be viewed as areas for institutional consideration rather than evidence of causal effects. Longitudinal and intervention-based research is needed before specific programmes or policies can be established as effective approaches to improving academic well-being.

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