

## Stress Management Methods to Improve Student Well-Being(A Systematic Literature Review)

Amri Muqaffi Fatih <sup>1</sup> , M. Ramli <sup>2</sup> , Fitri Wahyuni <sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

**Background.** The increasing academic, social, and digital pressures faced by students have led to a significant rise in stress-related issues, which negatively impact their overall well-being. Stress not only affects academic performance but also students' emotional, psychological, and physical health. As a result, managing stress effectively has become a key focus in educational and psychological research.

**Purpose.** This systematic literature review aimed to identify, classify, and evaluate various stress management methods that have been implemented to improve student well-being. The study specifically focused on psychological, behavioral, and institutional strategies employed across different educational contexts.

**Method.** The review analyzed 42 peer-reviewed articles published between 2013 and 2023, selected through databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using PRISMA guidelines. The inclusion criteria focused on studies that measured both stress reduction and indicators of student well-being. Data were synthesized thematically to identify patterns, approaches, and outcomes.

**Results.** The review revealed that cognitive-behavioral techniques, mindfulness practices, time management training, physical exercise programs, and peer support systems were among the most effective stress management methods. Interventions that incorporated a holistic and student-centered approach tended to yield better results in improving emotional balance, resilience, and life satisfaction.

**Conclusion.** Stress management strategies play a vital role in enhancing student well-being. Educational institutions are encouraged to adopt evidence-based and preventive approaches to help students cope with stress effectively. Future research should focus on integrating culturally responsive and technology-assisted interventions to further support students in diverse learning environments.

### KEYWORDS

Stress Management, Student Wellbeing

**Citation:** Amri, F., Rafli, M., & Fitri, W. (2025). Stress Management Methods to Improve Student Well-Being(A Systematic Literature Review) (Universitas Negeri Malang). *International Journal of Research in Counseling*, 4(1), 49–54. <https://doi.org/10.70363/ijrc.v3i2.257>

### Correspondence:

Amri Muqaffi Fatih,  
[amri@gmail.com](mailto:amri@gmail.com)

**Received:** June 12, 2025

**Accepted:** June 15, 2025

**Published:** June 31, 2025

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction is a little different from the short and concise abstract. The reader needs to know the background to your research and, most importantly, why your research is important in this context. The purpose of the Introduction is to stimulate the reader's interest and to provide pertinent background information necessary to understand the rest of the paper. Several core characteristics of student well-being include having positive attitudes and emotions toward school, a strong



academic self-concept, enjoyment of school activities, freedom from anxiety, absence of physical complaints, and minimal social issues at school (Abbasi, 2025; Balle, 2022; Gunkel, 2022). When these aspects are fulfilled, students are more likely to engage meaningfully in learning and school activities, contributing to the overall success of educational goals.

However, various studies and observations indicate that many students still experience low levels of well-being, reflecting ongoing challenges in the school environment (Hong, 2022; Mathew, 2022; Mughal, 2023). A significant number of students report feeling disconnected, unmotivated, anxious, or dissatisfied with their school life, which negatively affects their concentration, relationships with teachers, and academic performance.

Preliminary observations in Islamic high schools, for example, reveal common issues such as lack of motivation, frequent absenteeism, discomfort at school, feelings of parental favoritism, misunderstandings with teachers, and pressure to meet academic expectations—often leading to emotional or even psychosomatic symptoms (Mandl, 2023; Sampene, 2024; J. Wang, 2023). In contrast, supportive teacher-student relationships that are based on care and mutual respect tend to enhance student well-being, while authoritarian interactions tend to diminish it. High levels of stress, anxiety, and depression are detrimental to well-being, while activities such as sports, a sense of belonging, and practicing gratitude can significantly enhance it.

Considering the importance of promoting student well-being, this study systematically reviews stress management methods applied in educational contexts and evaluates their effectiveness in improving student well-being and reducing academic stress.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

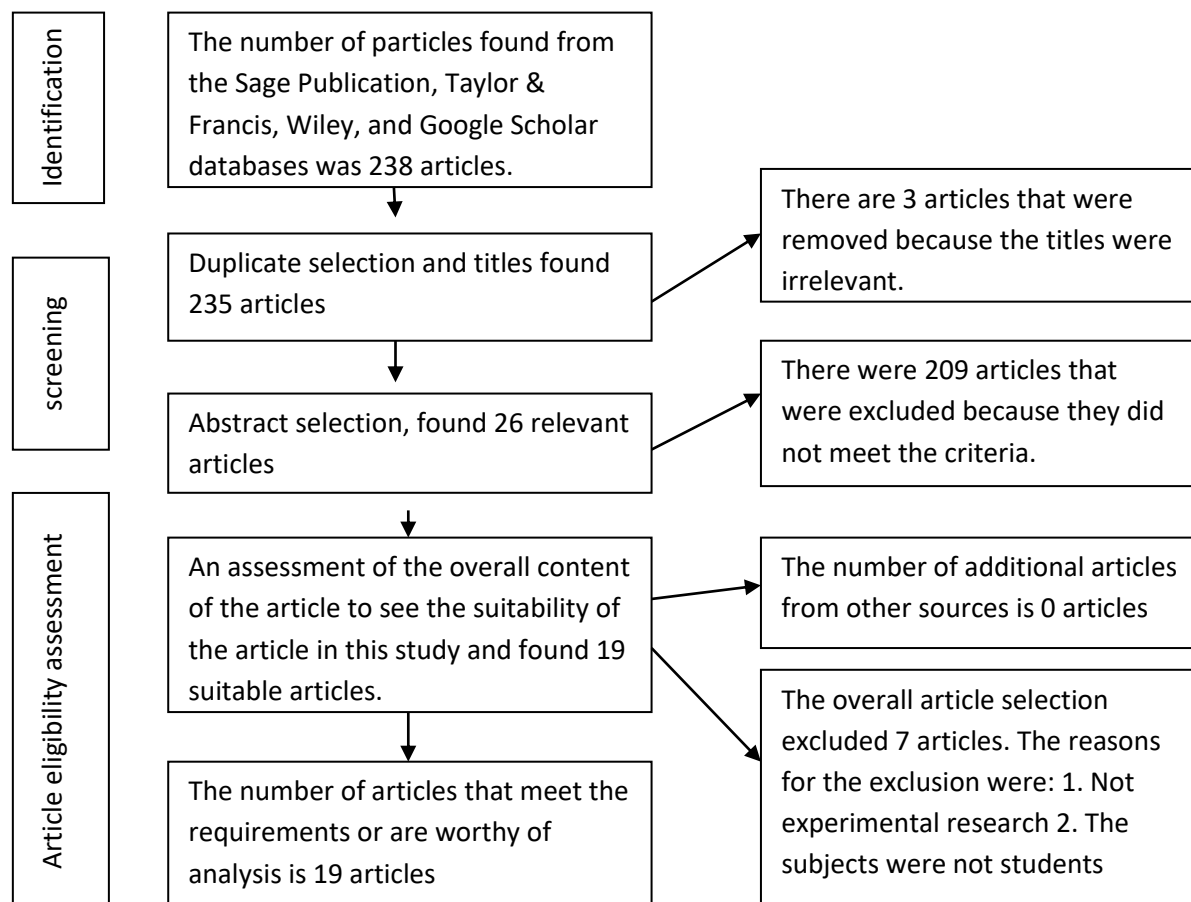
To explore various stress management methods used to enhance student well-being, the authors conducted a systematic literature review. Data were extracted from online journal databases accessible through Indonesia's National Library (<https://e-resources.perpusnas.go.id/>), focusing on databases like SAGE Publications, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in both English and Indonesian included "stress management," "student well-being," "manajemen stress," and "kesejahteraan siswa." Inclusion criteria encompassed studies conducted between 2010 and 2021, experimental studies on stress management and well-being, and research focusing on middle and high school students or university students (Barreiro, 2022; Čop, 2024; Molinaro, 2024). Exclusion criteria ruled out non-experimental studies and studies involving participants other than students.

From an initial pool of 238 articles, 209 were excluded after title and abstract screening. Only 19 articles met all inclusion criteria and were analyzed in detail. These articles employed various stress management techniques, which were categorized and evaluated based on their effectiveness in enhancing well-being.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 below illustrates the structured literature study diagram conducted by the authors. Based on the general search results of articles from online journal databases of the Indonesian National Library (<https://e-resources.perpusnas.go.id/>), specifically from databases such as SAGE Publications, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, and Google Scholar, 238 articles relevant to the keywords established by the researchers were found. The researchers then performed a title relevance screening and excluded three articles due to irrelevance. At the next stage, the researchers conducted an abstract screening, excluding 209 articles that did not meet the criteria, leaving 26 relevant articles based on the abstract selection. The final step was an assessment of the articles

based on their content, revealing only 19 articles suitable for further analysis. In this final selection stage, seven articles were excluded because they were not experimental studies or their subjects were not students or college students. Subsequently, the researchers analyzed the 19 articles, presented in Table 1:



Academic stress experienced by students has a direct negative impact on their psychological well-being. Many students report discomfort in the school environment, which eventually hinders their academic performance and overall engagement. Various methods have been developed to help students manage stress and improve their well-being in educational settings. One effective method is mindfulness-based relaxation, which includes techniques such as mindful eating, mindful movement, body scanning, and mindful walking. These activities help students focus on the present moment, cultivate gratitude, and build emotional awareness. Mindfulness practices are often combined with reflective storytelling and letter writing exercises, carried out over several weeks to enhance self-awareness and emotional resilience. Some interventions even utilize short, daily online guided meditations to accommodate busy student schedules.

Meditation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and positive self-talk are also commonly used. These are often paired with gratitude journaling exercises over several weeks to build emotional regulation and optimism. Implementing such techniques during classroom activities encourages both teachers and students to participate and benefit together. Cognitive and behavioral-based methods are also widely applied. These include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) approaches that train students to identify and challenge negative thought patterns, recognize the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and develop healthier cognitive attributions. Similar methods, such as cognitive behavior modification, involve structured phases like stress education, coping skill development, and skill application in

real-life contexts. Group interventions like psychoeducation also introduce time management, emotional intelligence, and self-management skills as tools for stress reduction.

Other strategies include multi-module programs focusing on the basics of stress, relaxation techniques, cognitive and affective skill training, and behavioral regulation (Murtaza, 2023; Pirdelkhosh, 2022; Ukil, 2024). Courses on compassion and empathy, delivered over a semester, combine philosophical readings, interfaith perspectives, meditative practices, and behavioral assignments to cultivate kindness and emotional balance. Experiential learning programs have also shown promise in improving student well-being by involving active participation in real-life tasks, reflection, and cooperative learning. Additional methods include structured time management training, the development of effective study habits, and modules that address coping strategies, self-concept, failure management, and social problem-solving skills.

Stress management training can also be delivered in phases, beginning with conceptual education, followed by skills development, and concluding with application and follow-up. Short-term programs focusing on the cultivation of positive emotions—such as gratitude, mindfulness, personal strengths, and acts of kindness—have been shown to significantly boost emotional well-being. Integrative programs use combined counseling and behavioral strategies to improve academic motivation, self-regulation, and healthy habits (Aleshaiwi, 2023; Fantus, 2023; L. Wang, 2023). Peer-based programs involve structured activities around social connections, relaxation, routine building, and mental health education, offering a community-based approach to stress management. Even non-traditional interventions such as animal-assisted therapy have been employed to create a calming and emotionally enriching experience for students.

Some stress management approaches emphasize the importance of four major strategies: avoiding stressors by recognizing and steering clear of known triggers; altering one's response to stress through improved communication and time management; adapting one's mindset to better tolerate unavoidable stress; and accepting difficult life circumstances with emotional maturity and resilience. Overall, these diverse and adaptive stress management methods effectively reduce academic stress and enhance psychological well-being. Implementing such interventions in schools underscores the importance of addressing students' emotional needs in tandem with their academic goals, ultimately contributing to healthier and more productive learning environments.

## CONCLUSION

The systematic review identified key stress management methods that significantly contribute to student well-being. These methods include relaxation and meditation, mindfulness, cognitive and behavioral strategies, and peer-based support systems. Integrating these approaches into educational curricula can provide students with essential tools to manage stress and enhance their overall well-being. Future research should explore long-term impacts and scalability of these methods to broader student populations.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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