

The Systematic Review of Psychological Hardiness and Sustainable Wellbeing Among Young Adult Under Low-Income Group

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Abstract

Psychological hardiness serves as a vital psychological source that help individuals in the society to adapt and improve effectively and maintain long-term wellbeing. Even though hardiness had increased the attention scholarly, resilience, and wellbeing had also received attention regarding existing evidence which currently remains fragmented. In this study, researcher focused on young adults from low-income group who experienced persistent socioeconomic difficulties that may relate their financial knowledge, psychological functioning, and sustainable wellbeing. Therefore, a comprehensive study of available data was required to determine the role of psychological hardiness in contributing the long-term wellbeing among the susceptible population. The aim of this systematic literature review is to collect and study the existing research on psychological hardiness, resilience, and wellbeing within young adults under low-income contexts, and applied the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology as the main framework. The database platform used in this study was Scopus and Web of Science which focused on publications from 2024 until 2026 applied in an advanced search approach. Besides, the keywords used for searching string include “psychological hardiness”, “sustainable wellbeing”, “young adult”, and “low-income group”, following the process with identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and quality appraisal procedure. The total of 30 primary studies had met the inclusion criteria which had been chosen as the final synthesis. Furthermore, there main themes had been detected based on the findings of the data which include (1) hardiness, resilience, and psychological well-being, (2) academic and student-focused psychosocial outcomes, and (3) stress, coping, and adaptation in specific populations and life contexts. This reviewed study concludes psychological hardiness reduced the negative impacts of stress among the communities, and consistently demonstrated positive correlation with resilience, adaptive coping strategies, and psychological wellbeing. Nonetheless, significant study regarding low-income group from young adults are limited, where the researcher found as a gap to highlight for the further research. Thus, this review presents an updated study based on contemporary evidence that may assist in developing the future empirical research that focused on psychological hardiness as the main factor for improving the wellbeing among young adults from low-income households by forming interventions, policy development, and sustainable wellbeing.

Keywords: *Psychological Hardiness, Sustainable Wellbeing, Young Adult, Low-Income Group.*

Introduction

Psychological hardiness can be defined as a personality trait that shows by attitudes of commitment, control, and challenge, this trait had successfully promoted the crucial factor in developing resilience and sustainable well-being, especially in facing the hardship. Besides, hardiness also provides individuals with strength, courage, and fortitude for their mental by turning the challenges to be the chances for development, and support both their physical and psychological wellbeing [1] [2]. Resilience, closely linked to hardiness, is the capacity to adapt and thrive despite challenges, and it is often supported by effective coping strategies such as problem-solving, emotional regulation, and social support [1] [3] [4]. All of the attributes mentioned are important especially for young adults in low-income group, for example under low-income demographic, which have to deal with additional stressors such as limited access of resources, social exclusion, and unstable finances. Hardiness and resilience may reduce the negative consequences of socioeconomic adversity and help in build a better quality of life, which allowing individuals to enhance their mental wellbeing and create an adaptive coping strategies were mentioned in several research [5] [6].

The role of psychological hardiness and resilience is important among young adults in low-income group to face with the challenges of stressors which come with it. It has been demonstrated that coping strategies such as “shift-and-persist”, which includes with brain storming stresses and sustaining long term objectives, have

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been taking care of underprivileged groups based on psychological and psychological risks [5]. Additionally, interventions that emphasize hardiness training, social-emotional learning, and community support have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering resilience and improving mental health outcomes [4] [7]. All the strategies emphasized on how importance is to mention contextual elements that involves with social pressures, educational opportunities, and family dynamics to ensure supporting a sustainable life for low-income populations. The young generations under low-income groups may gain the skills needed to protect hardship, improve their self-worth, and improve for a better society by applying psychological hardiness and resilience in their life [6] [8] [9].

Thus, this study is to review the role of psychological hardiness in studies around the world. It is vital to gain resilience, and discover the best coping strategies to help the young generations achieve a better quality of life. Besides, the researcher also aims to mentioned the important of roles from the communities, government, and family to enhance a better quality of life to reduce the issues of low-income groups among the youngsters.

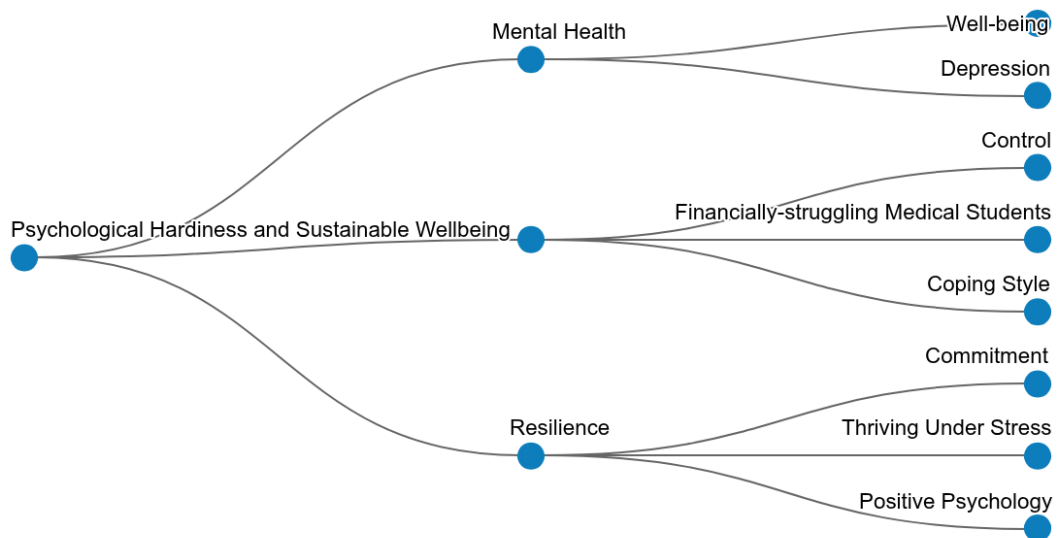


Figure 1 : Concept Map of Bibliography by Scopus

Literature Review

In this study the literature shows the relationships between psychological hardiness and sustainable wellbeing which relate with coping mechanisms and resilience are shaped by both individual characteristics and structural disadvantages that focused on the young adults under low-income group. However, hardiness shows to act as a significant protective factor that help young adults to endure with variety of conflicts include, anxiety, financial hardship, despair, family issues, and overwhelmed social instability, meanwhile resilience had predicted to help in gaining a positive mental health based on the recent studies [10] [11] [12]. Among young adults, resilience is positively associated with wellbeing and negatively associated with distress, with a 2025 meta-analysis reporting a correlation of 0.499 with positive mental health indicators and -0.391 with negative indicators [11]. Repeated cross-sectional evidence also shows that resilience predicts higher autonomy and personal growth and lower negative cognitive patterns, even under academic, relationship, and financial stress [13]. Hardiness overlaps conceptually with resilience but is not identical, and recent confirmatory evidence suggests that hardiness is the more stable protective factor in buffering the effects of depression and anxiety on subjective wellbeing [12]. In vulnerable young adult groups, hardiness also contributes substantially to psychological wellbeing, as shown in broken-home young adults where hardiness and social anxiety together explained 53.8% of variance in wellbeing [14]. A study mentioned that resilience under low-income communities hardly seen as an internal factor because of socioeconomic factors which relate with direct effect on mental health and wellbeing. A significant systematic study had discovered the effect of reduction in income may weakened mental health, meanwhile a better income may lifted individuals to leave through poverty which relate to a better mental wellbeing [15]. Based on a scoping assessment done in 2025, mentioned resilience help to gain wellbeing from a structural mediators which consist of social protection, economic security, and service accessibility rather than aspects from psychological alone [10]. This context is applicable especially among low income young adults that frequently experienced which variety of issues such as academic pressure, limited access for support resources, and hard financial strain which caused the young adult from low income group hard to develop the coping mechanism [16].

Coping strategies are one of the clearest mechanisms linking resilience and sustainable wellbeing. Across socioeconomic contexts, coping is repeatedly identified as a key mediator between resilience and mental health [10][17]. Adaptive coping strategies such as seeking support, positive reframing, active coping, meaning-focused

coping, gratitude, and sleep hygiene are associated with better wellbeing and lower anxiety or depressive symptoms [18] [19][20]. By contrast, maladaptive coping strategies including avoidance, self-blame, behavioural disengagement, substance use, violence, and withdrawal are associated with higher distress and poorer wellbeing [18], [19], [20]. In young people specifically, resilience appears to increase support-seeking and reduce emotionally dysregulated coping, which in turn improves life satisfaction and mental wellbeing [17]. Evidence that is most directly relevant to low-income youth comes from Malaysian and other low-resource settings. Among young Malaysians aged 18-24 from low-income families, most reported medium or high resilient coping, and resilient coping was the second strongest predictor of depression, anxiety, and stress outcomes [21]. However, this same study showed that parent-youth conflict was the strongest predictor of distress and was more common in the lowest-income households, indicating that family stress can overpower individual coping resources when poverty is severe [21]. Related work in low-income South African communities found that community connectedness, mutual support, and faith functioned as protective coping resources, whereas food insecurity, uncertainty, substance misuse, and violence intensified distress [22]. The reviews of resilience among young adults that experienced adversity also shows the role of protective variables such as family, school, peer, cultural, and communities, indicate that both personal resilience and environmental support are crucial for long term sustainable wellbeing [23]. Further study indicates treatments that may help to build daily health resources and psychosocial skills and improvise the sustainable wellbeing among young adults under low-income groups. In India, a programs applied school-based resilience structured which helped young people to overcome the financial strain and develop the individuals to adept at problem-solving, perspective-taking, helping practices, future orientation, and enhance personal strengths [24]. Physical activity is also positively associated with psychological resilience in young students, with a meta-analytic average correlation of 0.249 [25]. Furthermore, a good affect on young people in LCMICs mentioned wellness as obtained sufficient personal resources to endure with daily difficulties and gain assistance from lay networks and family [26]. The more comprehensive approach had matched with the concept of sustainable wellbeing among low income young adults, which maintaining mental health need long-term abilities to adapt, cope, and connect under difficult conditions [26].

In summary, the literature reviews mentioned psychological hardiness promotes resilience and appropriate coping strategies, are correlate positively with sustainable wellbeing among young adults under low-income group. However, the advantages are mostly sustained once communities, family support, and financial security applied together to fight with the hardship. Therefore, in this generations, the awareness of communications, and act of togetherness is crucial in developing the resilience and work as a structural way in coping with the hardiness, rather than based on the power of individual alone.

Material and Methods

Identification

This systematic literature review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure a transparent, systematic, and reproducible review process. During the identification stage, a comprehensive search strategy was developed based on the main constructs of the study, namely psychological hardiness, resilience, coping strategies, and sustainable wellbeing. Relevant synonyms and related terms were identified through dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopaedias, and previous empirical studies to enhance the comprehensiveness of the search. The keywords were then export using phrase searching and Boolean operators (AND, OR) to build database-specific search strings which customised to the search format from selected databases, consist of Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), both of the databases known for their broad coverage of high-impact, peer-reviewed research in psychology, social sciences, and allied fields, also used for the search in this study (see Table 1).

A total of 1,116 records has been obtained from the identification process, consist 545 citations from Web of Science and 571 records from Scopus. All the records had constructed the first group of potentially relevant studies based on coping mechanisms, resilience, psychological hardiness, and sustainable wellbeing. According to PRISMA framework, all selected publications had been exported for further screening and duplication elimination.

Table 1: The search string

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("psychological hardiness" OR hardiness OR "mental hardiness" OR "hardy personality" OR "stress resistance") AND ("sustainable wellbeing" OR wellbeing OR "well-being" OR "quality of life" OR flourishing OR "positive mental health" OR "life satisfaction")) Date of Access: July 2026
Wos	("psychological hardiness" OR hardiness OR "mental hardiness" OR "hardy personality" OR "stress resistance") AND ("sustainable wellbeing" OR wellbeing OR "well-being" OR "quality of life" OR flourishing OR "positive mental health" OR "life satisfaction") (Topic) and 2025 or 2026 or 2024 (Final Publication Year) and Article (Document Types) and Article (Document Types) and Psychology Multidisciplinary or Psychiatry or Social Sciences Interdisciplinary or Education Educational Research or Psychology Social or Social Sciences Biomedical or Psychology or Psychology Experimental (Web of Science Categories) and 2024 or 2025 or 2026 (Publication Years) and English (Languages) Date of Access: July 2026

Screening

Based on the PRISMA framework, in this screening process shows records from Scopus and Web of Science were systematically reviewed for the relevant papers based on the objective in this study. Next, after the initial filtering process, 165 records had been obtained based on 45 records from Scopus and 30 records from Web of Science. In order to ensure the accuracy and avoid redundancy based on the dataset obtained, the researcher found out four duplicate records and eliminated the data and proceed with the next procedure. After that, the remaining records were filtered using the specified inclusion and exclusion criteria listed in Table 2 after the duplicated were eliminated. In this process, a total of 951 records were all eliminated, consist of non-English publications, research published before 2024, conference papers, books, and review article, in press publications, and studies outside of the social sciences and psychology were among the list that leading to exclusion. The screening only emphasizes on research relevant to psychological hardiness, resilience, coping strategies, and sustainable wellbeing were selected for further eligibility evaluation.

Table 2: The selection of criterion in searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2024 – 2026	< 2024
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject	Social science, and psychology	Besides Social science, and psychology

Eligibility

In this process, a total of 161 articles were obtained for full-text evaluation, where this steps known as the eligibility phase. In this stage, each article with full-text dataset was evaluate critically to identify the applicability and alignment with the objective in this study, which focused on coping strategies, psychological hardiness, resilience, and sustainable wellbeing. The evaluation made is to ensure that only studies that were both methodologically valid and practically relevant were considered as the inclusion criteria for final synthesis. Next, after the full-text evaluation, 131 publications had been eliminated due to variety of reasons, for example beyond the research topic domain, having unrelated titles with research issues, shows abstracts that does not align with the objective in this study, and lack of full-text access. Following the review of the excluded articles criteria, the final number of datasets to be analysed consist of 30 publications that fulfilled all the eligibility criteria and had been focused for the qualitative analysis.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

The primary analytical technique applied in this study to systematically review and evaluate the results from qualitative research designs was an integrative thematic analysis. Therefore, in order to create cohesive themes and subthemes related to psychological hardiness, resilience, and sustainable wellbeing, this method had made it easier to discover, manage, and discuss frequent patterns occurred in the literature. Besides, to examine the relevant statements, concepts, and scientific evidence which align with the study objectives, the researcher had examined separate dataset of 30 chosen articles during the first stage of the analysis, that consist of comprehensive data initiation and extraction (see Figure 2).

Next, the researcher worked together to build a preliminary thematic categories based on the data obtained via a collaborative coding process. Subsequently, to enhance opened and analytical rigor, an analytical audit report was documented for the descriptive decision made, new findings, and conceptual conclusion. Throughout this process, to ensure the internal consistency and conceptual study, the themes had been identified and systematically revised through continues comparison based on the studies obtained. The analytical consensus and conceptual validity were supported by the researcher through examination of any gaps in the topic develop.

Lastly, the final stage was to improve each purposed themes credibility, clarity, and importance thorough peer review and validation where the procedure was conducted for the final step. However, to ensure the final thematic structure had appropriately reflect the synthesized literature, therefore the repeated revision had been included based on authorial deliberation and comment from expert. Based on the context of this study, psychological hardiness and sustainable wellbeing had been reflectively analysed to ensured that the underlying themes were both theoretically and empirically supported. Besides, it is also important to straighten the findings credibility and the validity.

1. Based on the socioeconomic lifestyle in this generations, how does psychological hardiness affect resilience and psychological well-being among young adults under low-income group?
2. How does psychological hardiness influence the academic-related psychosocial outcomes and wellbeing among young adult students from the low-income group based on educational settings?
3. How do psychological hardiness and coping strategies develop the stress adaptation and wellbeing among young adults under low-income group in high stress life contexts?

Table 3 : Number and Detail of Primary Studies based on Scopus and World of Science

AUTHORS	TITLE	YEAR	SCOPUS	WOS
Hoopsick R.A.; Homish D.L.; Collins R.L.; Nochajski T.H.; Read J.P.; Bartone P.T.; Homish G.G.	Resilience to mental health problems and the role of deployment status among U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers	2021	/	
Abdollahi A.; Maleki Farab N.; Panahipour S.; Allen K.A.	Academic Hardiness as a Moderator between Evaluative Concerns Perfectionism and Academic Procrastination in Students	2020	/	
Liu Z.; Guo J.; Huang H.; Tang X.	Which social-emotional skills are most important for students' learning and well-being? An international comparison among China, USA and Finland	2026	/	
Watson R.; Kemp A.H.	Promoting holistic wellbeing during the polycrisis: An essay on inner development through the martial art of Wing Chun	2025	/	
Mikhailova O.B.; Farennikova E.S.	Distance Learning: Cross-Cultural Characteristics of Stress Resistance of Russian and Chinese Students	2022	/	
Crowley B.J.; Hayslip Jr. B.; Hobdy J.	Psychological Hardiness and Adjustment to Life Events in Adulthood	2003	/	
Epishin V.E.; Salikhova A.B.; Bogacheva N.V.; Bogdanova M.D.; Kiseleva M.G.	Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Hardiness and Meaningfulness Reduce Negative Effects on Psychological Well-Being	2020	/	
Easler J.K.; Taylor T.M.; Roper S.O.; Freeborn D.S.; Mandelco B.	Family Hardiness, Religiosity/Spirituality, and Depression in Mothers and Fathers of Children With Disabilities	2025	/	/

Volkova E.N.; Miklyaeva A.V.; Khoroshikh V.V.	Subjective Predictors of Psychological Well-being of Gifted Adolescents; [Субъективные предпосылки психологического благополучия одаренных подростков]	2022	/	
Hedrick B.; Heaton K.J.; Moore B.A.; Judkins J.L.	Spirituality is associated with psychological hardiness in U.S. army soldiers and civilians	2026	/	
Sweetman M.E.; Munz D.C.; Wheeler R.J.	Optimism, hardiness, and explanatory style as predictors of general well-being among attorneys	1993	/	
Gugliandolo M.C.; Liga F.; Larcan R.; Cuzzocrea F.	Parents of children with developmental disorders: Family hardiness and resilience	2023	/	
Abdollahi A.; Panahipour S.; Akhavan Tafti M.; Allen K.A.	Academic hardiness as a mediator for the relationship between school belonging and academic stress	2020	/	
Yaprak P.; Güçlü M.; Durhan T.A.	The happiness, hardiness, and humor styles of students with a bachelor's degree in sport sciences	2018	/	
Carson D.K.; Araquistain M.; Ide B.; Quoss B.; Weigel R.	Stress, strain, and hardiness as predictors of adaptation in farm and ranch families	1994	/	
Park A.; Suh K.-H.	Hardiness and Expectations for Future Life: The Roles of Perceived Stress, Music Listening for Negative Emotion Regulation, and Life Satisfaction	2023	/	
Fedotova V.A.	Determinants of hardiness among representatives of three generations in modern Russia	2020	/	
Maddi S.R.; Harvey R.H.; Khoshaba D.M.; Fazel M.; Resurreccion N.	The relationship of hardiness and some other relevant variables to college performance	2012	/	
Clark L.M.; Hartman M.	Effects of hardiness and appraisal on the psychological distress and physical health of caregivers to elderly relatives	1996	/	
Vasilievna G.A.; Vladimirovna A.I.	Informational behavior in the COVID-19 pandemic: Psychological predictors	2020	/	
Niyazova A.; Madaliyeva Z.	Impact of Resilience on Psychological Well-Being	2022	/	
Bartone P.T.; Bowles S.V.	Coping with recruiter stress: Hardiness, performance and well-being in US Army recruiters	2020	/	
Neria Y.; Guttman-Steinmetz S.; Koenen K.; Levinovsky L.; Zakin G.; Dekel R.	Do attachment and hardiness relate to each other and to mental health in real-life stress?	2001	/	
Sotardi V.; Fang J.; Ren X.	Influences of school climate and social-emotional characteristics on adolescent wellbeing in New Zealand: Evidence from PISA 2022	2026	/	/
Shifren K.; Bauserman R.L.; Blackwood J.; Coles A.; Hillman A.	Personality and Mental Health: A Comparison of Emerging Adult Women from Divorce and Intact Families	2015	/	
Sharma, Preejana; Rai, Shweta; Jose, Tessy Tressa; Lakshmi, R. Vani; George, Linu Sara	Adolescents' emotional competence in relation to sociodemographic factors: a study on regulation, hardiness, and self-awareness	2026		/
Konno, Kazuho	Psychological hardiness and coping behaviour implementation in Japanese menopausal women: a cross-sectional survey of stress, coping strategies, and their translation into behaviour	2026		/
Chuning, Anne E.; Durham, Michelle R.; Killgore, William D. S.; Smith, Ryan	Psychological resilience and hardiness as protective factors in the relationship between depression/anxiety and well-being: Exploratory and confirmatory evidence	2024		/
Zhou, Lihua; Tang, Mingdan; Du, Xuejuan; Chen, Jian	Correlation between academic hardiness and subjective well-being among teenagers: the chain mediating role of academic passion and academic self-efficacy	2025		/

Giostra, Valeria; Maiorano, Tiziana; Vagni, Monia	What Resilience Skills Do Emergency Workers Need During a Widespread Phase of a Socio-Health Emergency? A Focus on the Role of Hardiness and Resilience	2025		<i>I</i>
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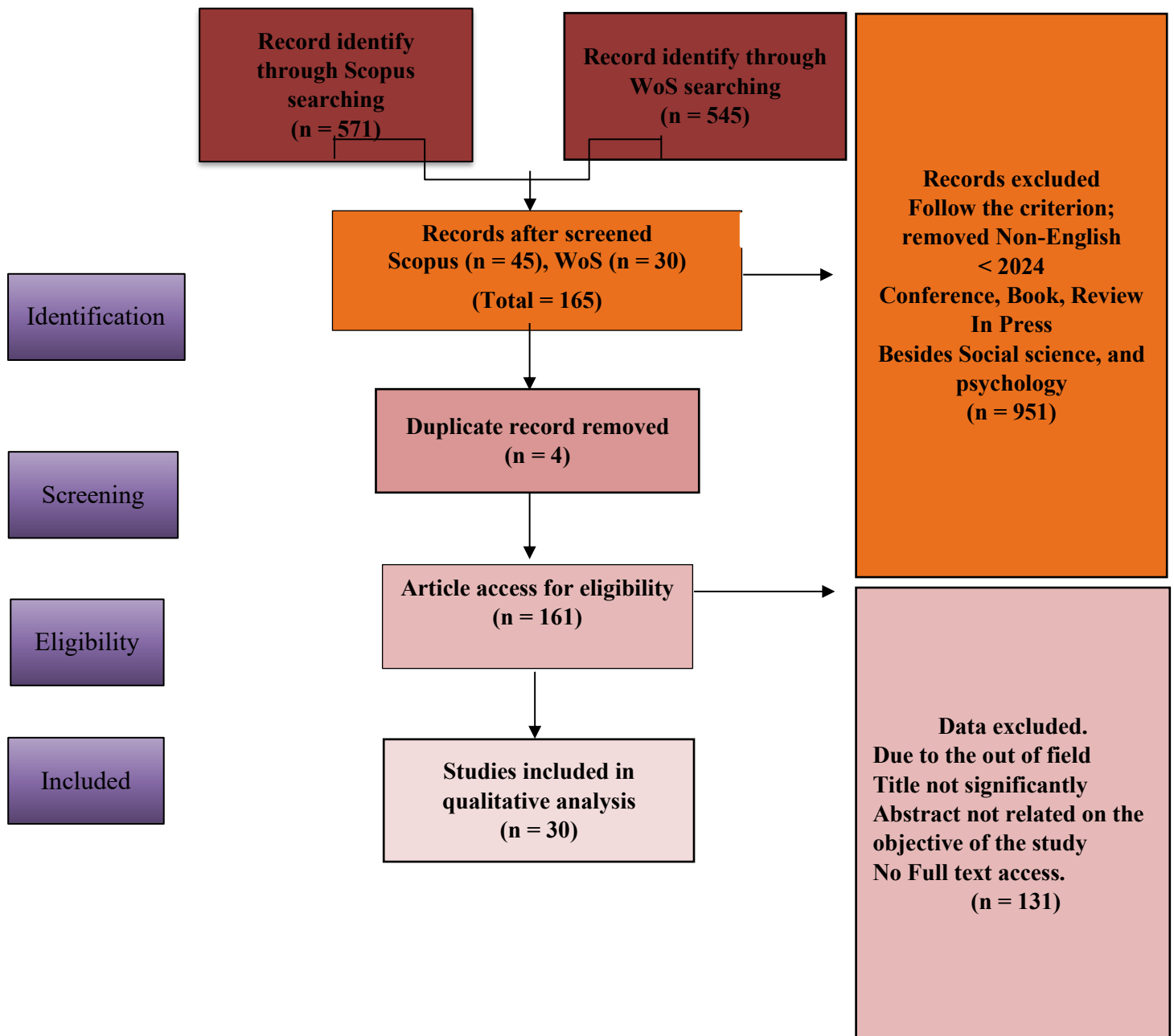


FIGURE 2. Flow diagram of the proposed searching study

Result and Finding

The results and discussion section presents the synthesis of findings derived from the final corpus of **30 included studies** identified through the systematic review process on **psychological hardiness and sustainable wellbeing**. In accordance with the PRISMA-guided selection procedure, the extracted evidence was subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns and conceptual relationships across diverse populations and research contexts. The studies collectively addressed interrelated constructs of psychological hardiness, resilience, coping strategies, and wellbeing outcomes, which were subsequently organised into three analytically derived themes. These include: (1) **hardiness, resilience, and psychological well-being**, which captures core theoretical and empirical linkages among the principal constructs; (2) **academic and student-focused psychosocial outcomes**, which focuses on wellbeing dynamics within educational and developmental settings; and (3) **stress, coping, and adaptation in specific populations and life contexts**, which examines the role of psychological hardiness across occupational, familial, and high-stress environments. This thematic structure provides a coherent framework for interpreting how psychological hardiness contributes to sustainable wellbeing across varying life domains and population groups.

Hardiness, resilience, and psychological well-being

The synthesized findings from the selected studies consistently position psychological hardiness as a central dispositional resource that contributes significantly to mental health stability and sustainable wellbeing across diverse populations. Across military, occupational, clinical, and developmental contexts, hardiness is repeatedly conceptualised as a protective personality framework characterised by commitment, control, and challenge appraisal. In the study by Hoopsick et al., resilience processes among U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers demonstrate that individuals with stronger hardiness profiles exhibit greater psychological stability despite exposure to deployment-related stressors, suggesting that hardiness functions as a buffering mechanism against operational stress exposure [27]. Similarly, Epishin et al. highlight that during the COVID-19 pandemic, hardiness combined with meaningfulness significantly mitigates adverse psychological outcomes, reinforcing the role of existential appraisal in sustaining mental equilibrium under prolonged uncertainty [28]. In parallel, Sweetman et al. demonstrate among attorneys that hardiness, alongside optimism and explanatory style, significantly predicts general wellbeing, indicating that cognitive appraisal systems interact with personality resilience traits to sustain adaptive functioning in high-demand occupational environments [29]. Collectively, these findings converge on the interpretation that psychological hardiness is not merely a static trait but operates dynamically as a cognitive-affective filter that moderates stress perception and enhances wellbeing sustainability across different life domains.

A second dominant thematic pattern emerging from the synthesis relates to the interdependent relationship between resilience processes, coping mechanisms, and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes. Resilience is consistently framed as both an outcome and a mediating mechanism through which psychological hardiness exerts its influence on wellbeing. For instance, Niyazova and Madaliyeva establish that resilience significantly predicts psychological wellbeing, reinforcing the functional role of adaptive coping capacities in maintaining emotional equilibrium [30]. Similarly, Chuning et al. provide evidence that psychological resilience and hardiness jointly serve as protective factors in buffering the adverse effects of anxiety and depression on wellbeing, suggesting a synergistic relationship between these constructs rather than isolated effects [12]. In developmental populations, Volkova et al. demonstrate that subjective psychological predictors, including resilience-related attributes, significantly contribute to wellbeing among gifted adolescents, indicating that adaptive coping and internal resources shape wellbeing trajectories early in life [31]. Additionally, Giostra et al. emphasize that emergency workers require robust resilience skills during socio-health crises, with hardiness identified as a foundational psychological resource that enhances adaptive coping under acute and chronic stress exposure [32]. Across these studies, coping strategies are implicitly embedded within resilience functioning, particularly through mechanisms of cognitive reframing, emotional regulation, and meaning-making. The convergence of these findings indicates that sustainable wellbeing is best understood as an outcome of continuous interaction between trait hardiness and learned resilience-based coping responses, rather than a single determinant factor.

The third emergent theme highlights the contextual and socio-ecological determinants shaping the expression of hardiness, resilience, and wellbeing outcomes, particularly across family systems, spirituality, education, and occupational environments. In family-based contexts, Easler et al. demonstrate that family hardiness, together with religiosity and spirituality, plays a significant role in mitigating depression among parents of children with disabilities, indicating that collective coping

resources extend beyond individual psychological traits [33]. Similarly, Hedrick et al. identify a significant association between spirituality and psychological hardiness among both soldiers and civilian populations, suggesting that existential and belief systems contribute to strengthening internal resilience structures [34]. In educational settings, Maddi et al. show that hardiness is associated with improved academic performance in college populations, reinforcing the role of psychological endurance and engagement in achievement-related wellbeing [35]. Furthermore, Shifren et al. reveal that emerging adult women from different family structures exhibit variations in mental health outcomes, implying that early environmental conditions influence the development of personality-based resilience resources [36]. Across these contextual domains, hardiness and resilience are not isolated intrapsychic constructs but are embedded within broader socio-environmental systems that include family support, cultural meaning frameworks, occupational stressors, and developmental experiences. Taken together, these studies suggest that sustainable wellbeing emerges from a multilayered interaction between individual psychological resources and external contextual supports, reinforcing the necessity of integrative models that account for both personal and environmental determinants of mental health.

Academic and student-focused psychosocial outcomes

Across the selected studies, academic hardiness emerges as a central psychological construct shaping students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement within educational environments, particularly in relation to stress regulation and achievement-related wellbeing. A consistent body of evidence indicates that academic hardiness functions as both a protective and explanatory mechanism in students' academic functioning. For instance, Abdollahi et al. demonstrate that academic hardiness moderates the relationship between evaluative concerns perfectionism and academic procrastination, suggesting that students with higher levels of hardiness are less likely to translate maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies into avoidance behaviours [37]. In a complementary framework, Abdollahi et al. further establish that academic hardiness mediates the relationship between school belonging and academic stress, indicating that perceived institutional connectedness contributes to reduced stress primarily through the strengthening of hardiness-related cognitive dispositions [38]. Similarly, Maddi et al. highlight that hardiness is positively associated with academic performance in college populations, reinforcing its role as a foundational psychological resource that enhances persistence, commitment, and engagement under demanding academic conditions [35]. Collectively, these findings suggest that academic hardiness operates as a cognitive-emotional resilience system that enables students to reinterpret academic pressure as manageable and meaningful rather than threatening, thereby stabilising both performance outcomes and psychological wellbeing.

A second prominent pattern within the synthesis concerns the interaction between social-emotional competencies, personality resources, and subjective wellbeing in academic contexts. Evidence across cross-cultural and developmental studies indicates that students' wellbeing is not solely determined by academic demands but is strongly shaped by broader emotional and interpersonal skill sets. Liu et al. identify that social-emotional skills play a differential yet significant role in student learning and wellbeing across China, the United States, and Finland, suggesting that cultural context influences how emotional regulation and interpersonal competence translate into academic adaptation [39]. In alignment with this, Sharma et al. find that emotional competence, including regulation, self-awareness, and hardiness, is significantly associated with adolescent wellbeing, reinforcing the interconnectedness of emotional intelligence and resilience-based constructs [40]. Additionally, Sotardi et al. demonstrate that school climate and social-emotional characteristics jointly influence adolescent wellbeing, highlighting the importance of institutional environment in shaping psychological adjustment [41]. Furthermore, Yaprak et al. report that happiness, hardiness, and humor styles are interrelated among students in sport sciences, indicating that positive affective dispositions and adaptive personality traits jointly contribute to psychological wellbeing in academic settings [42]. These findings collectively indicate that student wellbeing is multidimensional, emerging from the interaction between individual emotional competencies, personality-based resilience factors such as hardiness, and contextual variables such as school climate and cultural expectations.

The third thematic dimension highlights the mediating and cross-contextual mechanisms through which academic hardiness influences wellbeing, particularly under stress-intensive learning environments and socio-demographic variation. In technologically mediated learning contexts, Mikhailova and Farennikova demonstrate that distance learning environments introduce culturally variable stress responses among Russian and Chinese students, with stress resistance emerging as a key determinant of adaptation [43]. This suggests that academic hardiness may function differently across digital learning environments depending on cultural and contextual stressors. Similarly, Zhou et al. provide evidence that academic hardiness is positively correlated with subjective wellbeing among

teenagers, with academic passion and academic self-efficacy operating as sequential mediators, indicating a complex pathway through which motivational and cognitive belief systems enhance wellbeing outcomes [25]. These findings align with the broader understanding that hardiness does not act in isolation but interacts dynamically with self-efficacy beliefs, motivational engagement, and emotional regulation processes. Across these studies, academic hardiness consistently emerges as a foundational psychological mechanism that enables students to maintain wellbeing in the face of academic pressure, technological adaptation demands, and developmental transitions. Taken together, the synthesis underscores that sustainable student wellbeing is best conceptualised as a multi-layered process shaped by the integration of personality-based resilience, socio-emotional competencies, and contextual learning environments.

Stress, coping, and adaptation in specific populations and life contexts

The synthesized evidence indicates that psychological hardiness operates as a fundamental adaptive resource in buffering stress exposure and facilitating adjustment across diverse high-demand life contexts, particularly where individuals are confronted with chronic, uncontrollable, or multidimensional stressors. Across adulthood and occupational settings, hardiness consistently functions as a stabilising psychological construct that shapes appraisal processes and mitigates distress outcomes. For example, Crowley et al. demonstrate that psychological hardiness significantly predicts adaptive adjustment to major life events in adulthood, suggesting that individuals with higher hardiness levels are more capable of maintaining psychological equilibrium when confronted with transitional or disruptive experiences [44]. Similarly, Clark and Hartman find that caregivers of elderly relatives experience reduced psychological distress and improved physical health outcomes when hardiness and appraisal mechanisms are strong, indicating that cognitive interpretation of caregiving demands is central to stress adaptation [45]. In occupational contexts, Bartone and Bowles report that US Army recruits with higher hardiness demonstrate better coping capacity, enhanced performance, and improved wellbeing under sustained occupational stress [46]. Collectively, these findings position hardiness as a core psychological mechanism that enhances stress appraisal flexibility, enabling individuals to reinterpret adverse conditions as manageable rather than overwhelming, thereby improving adaptive functioning across both personal and professional domains.

A second major theme emerging from the synthesis concerns the role of family systems, attachment processes, and generational or developmental differences in shaping stress coping and resilience outcomes. Within family-based contexts, Gugliandolo et al. demonstrate that parents of children with developmental disorders exhibit higher levels of family hardiness and resilience when supportive family dynamics are present, indicating that collective coping resources strengthen psychological adaptation in prolonged caregiving stress environments [47]. Similarly, Carson et al. identify that stress, strain, and hardiness interact significantly in predicting adaptation outcomes in farm and ranch families, suggesting that rural family systems rely heavily on shared coping structures to manage economic, environmental, and occupational uncertainty [48]. In a related interpersonal framework, Neria et al. find that attachment patterns and hardiness are interrelated and jointly contribute to mental health outcomes under real-life stress exposure, highlighting the importance of early relational security in shaping later-life resilience capacities [49]. Additionally, Fedotova provides evidence that determinants of hardiness vary across generations in modern Russian populations, indicating that socio-cultural and generational factors influence the development and expression of psychological resilience traits [50]. Across these studies, coping is not solely an individual psychological process but is embedded within relational, familial, and socio-cultural systems, where interpersonal support, attachment security, and generational context significantly shape adaptive capacity under stress.

The third thematic dimension highlights the interaction between cognitive-emotional regulation strategies, environmental stressors, and behavioural adaptation mechanisms in sustaining wellbeing across complex and crisis-driven contexts. In contemporary global stress conditions, Watson and Kemp emphasise that holistic wellbeing during polyresins environments can be supported through inner development practices, such as martial arts training (Wing Chun), which enhance emotional regulation, attentional control, and psychological balance [51]. This suggests that embodied and experiential coping strategies may serve as alternative pathways to strengthen resilience under sustained uncertainty. Similarly, Park and Suh demonstrate that hardiness is associated with future life expectations, where perceived stress and emotional regulation strategies such as music listening for negative emotion management play mediating roles in enhancing life satisfaction [52]. This indicates that coping is not only cognitive but also behavioural and affective, involving diverse regulatory strategies. In a health-related population context, Konno shows that menopausal women's coping behaviour implementation is significantly associated with psychological hardiness, reinforcing the role of hardiness in translating

coping intentions into adaptive actions [53]. Additionally, Vasilevna highlights that informational behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic is influenced by psychological predictors, suggesting that hardiness may shape how individuals process, seek, and interpret crisis-related information [54]. Across these findings, adaptation emerges as a dynamic process involving continuous interaction between cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, behavioural coping strategies, and environmental stress demands. The synthesis therefore indicates that sustainable psychological adaptation is achieved through multi-layered mechanisms in which psychological hardiness functions as a central integrative factor linking perception, coping behaviour, and long-term wellbeing outcomes.

Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, the systematic literature review was undertaken to synthesize the existing evidence on the relationship between psychological hardiness and sustainable wellbeing among young adults, with particular emphasis on individuals from the low-income group. Following the PRISMA framework, an advanced literature search was conducted using the Scopus and Web of Science databases, covering publications published between 2024 and 2026. The review applied predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in the selection of 30 primary studies for qualitative synthesis. The review sought to examine how psychological hardiness influences resilience and psychological wellbeing, how it contributes to psychosocial outcomes in educational settings, and how coping strategies support adaptation to stressful life circumstances among young adults experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

The findings consistently demonstrate that psychological hardiness serves as a significant protective psychological resource that promotes sustainable wellbeing through enhanced resilience, adaptive coping strategies, and effective stress management. Across the selected studies, psychological hardiness was associated with improved psychological wellbeing, greater emotional regulation, stronger resilience, and better adaptation to challenging life events. The thematic synthesis further identified three dominant themes: (1) hardiness, resilience, and psychological well-being; (2) academic and student-focused psychosocial outcomes; and (3) stress, coping, and adaptation in specific populations and life contexts. Collectively, these themes indicate that sustainable wellbeing is influenced not only by individual psychological strengths but also by educational environments, family support, social relationships, and broader socioeconomic conditions. Although the reviewed studies adopted diverse methodological approaches and examined various populations, a consistent pattern emerged highlighting the important interaction between psychological hardiness, resilience, coping strategies, and contextual support systems in promoting long-term psychological wellbeing.

This review contributes to the existing body of knowledge by integrating recent empirical evidence into a comprehensive thematic framework that explains the multidimensional relationship between psychological hardiness and sustainable wellbeing. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on resilience or wellbeing independently, the present review synthesizes these interconnected constructs while considering the unique challenges experienced by young adults from low-income backgrounds. The three-theme framework developed through the thematic analysis offers a clearer conceptual understanding of how psychological hardiness operates across educational, psychological, and social contexts. Furthermore, the review highlights the limited availability of studies specifically investigating young adults from low income group, indicating that current evidence remains largely indirect and emphasizing the need for greater contextualized research within low-income communities.

The findings also have important practical implications for policymakers, educators, mental health professionals, and community organizations. Strengthening psychological hardiness through resilience-building programmes, coping skills interventions, psychological education, and community-based support initiatives may contribute to improved mental health and sustainable wellbeing among young adults facing financial hardship. Educational institutions may incorporate psychological hardiness and adaptive coping training into student development programmes to enhance academic adjustment and emotional wellbeing. Likewise, public policies addressing youth mental health should adopt a holistic approach by integrating psychological resources with socioeconomic support, family engagement, and community empowerment to reduce the long-term impact of poverty on psychological wellbeing.

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this review. The review was restricted to studies indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, published in English between 2024 and 2026, which may have excluded relevant evidence from other databases, grey literature, and earlier publications. Additionally, the relatively limited number of studies directly focusing on young adults from low income group restricted the ability to draw population-specific conclusions. Future research should expand database coverage, include longitudinal and mixed-method designs, examine culturally diverse low-income populations, and investigate the mechanisms through which psychological hardiness interacts with resilience, coping strategies, family functioning, and socioeconomic conditions to promote sustainable wellbeing. More empirical studies conducted within the Malaysian low income group also known as B40 context are particularly needed to provide stronger evidence for policy development and intervention planning.

Overall, this systematic literature review demonstrates that psychological hardiness represents an

important psychological resource for fostering sustainable wellbeing among young adults experiencing socioeconomic adversity. The synthesis provides a consolidated evidence base that strengthens theoretical understanding while identifying important research gaps requiring further investigation. By systematically integrating contemporary evidence, this review offers valuable guidance for future empirical studies, intervention development, and evidence-informed policies aimed at promoting resilient, psychologically healthy, and socially sustainable outcomes among young adults from low-income communities.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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