

A Systematic Classification of Health and Well-Being Literature

Using Cooper's Taxonomy

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Abstract:

Health and well-being have become critical areas of scholarly inquiry due to increasing concerns related to mental health challenges, lifestyle disorders, and social inequalities. The growing volume and diversity of research in this domain necessitate a systematic and structured synthesis of existing literature. This study aims to review and classify health and well-being research using Cooper's taxonomy, which provides a comprehensive framework for categorizing literature based on research focus, review goal, perspective, coverage, and intended audience. A total of fifty peer-reviewed research papers were selected from reputed academic databases and analyzed through a systematic literature review approach. The findings reveal a strong emphasis on mental health, quality of life, and lifestyle-related well-being, with most studies adopting empirical, cross-sectional designs. Limited attention is given to longitudinal research, critical perspectives, and policy-oriented analysis. The taxonomy-based classification highlights thematic, methodological, and contextual gaps in existing literature. Overall, the study contributes a structured overview of health and well-being research and offers directions for future research, practice, and policy development.

Introduction:

Health and well-being have emerged as central concerns across disciplines, encompassing physical, mental, social, and emotional dimensions of human life. In recent decades, growing attention has been directed toward understanding the determinants of health and well-being in response to rising lifestyle-related diseases, mental health challenges, work-related stress, and social inequalities. Research in this domain has increasingly emphasized holistic approaches that integrate behavioral, psychological, environmental, and socioeconomic factors to enhance overall quality of life and sustainable well-being.

Existing studies indicate that health-promoting behaviors such as physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, social support, and stress management play a significant role in improving individual and population-level well-being. Empirical evidence further suggests that targeted interventions—including workplace wellness programs, community health initiatives, mindfulness-based practices, and educational health promotion—can positively influence health outcomes, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience. At the same time, scholars have raised critical concerns related to health inequities, access to healthcare services, ethical considerations in health interventions, and the long-term effectiveness of policy-driven programs. These divergent perspectives underscore the complexity of health and well-being research and the need for comprehensive and balanced scholarly synthesis.

The literature on health and well-being has expanded rapidly, spanning diverse contexts such as education, workplaces, communities, healthcare systems, and public policy. Studies in this area employ a wide range of methodological approaches, including experimental designs, longitudinal studies, surveys, systematic reviews, and conceptual analyses. While some research focuses on measuring outcomes and effectiveness of interventions, others emphasize theoretical models, social determinants, and policy implications. The growing volume and heterogeneity of this literature make it challenging to integrate findings, compare approaches, and identify consistent research trends and gaps.

In this context, **Cooper's taxonomy** offers a robust and systematic framework for organizing review literature based on key dimensions such as research focus, review goal, perspective, coverage, and intended audience. Applying this taxonomy enables a structured and transparent classification of health and well-being research, facilitating a deeper understanding of dominant themes, methodological orientations, and underexplored areas. Accordingly, the present study systematically reviews and classifies existing health and well-being research literature using Cooper's taxonomy, with the objective of providing a coherent overview that supports future research directions, evidence-based practice, and informed policy formulation.

Review of Literature

Health and well-being have emerged as multidimensional constructs encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of human life. Contemporary research increasingly recognizes well-being not merely as the absence of illness but as a positive state of functioning and life satisfaction (World Health Organization, 2014). Thus, the range of research has become wider across various fields like psychology, public health, education, sociology, and behavioral economics among others. Initially conceived theories of wellbeing can be primarily characterized by hedonistic approach based on happiness, experiences of pleasure, and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Later, eudemonic theories described such concepts as meaning, self-fulfillment, and psychological functioning through the framework of the Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being. These theories pave the way for the empirical research in this area, development of measurement scales, and intervention studies.

Numerous studies have been devoted to the exploration of the subjects related to mental health and emotional well-being with a focus on stress, anxiety, depression, and resilience influencing different populations of people (Keyes, 2002; Seligman, 2011). Studies adopting a positive psychology perspective emphasize strengths, optimism, flourishing, and subjective well-being, shifting the discourse from pathology to potential (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Empirical evidence suggests that positive mental health is independently associated with

improved productivity, academic success, and quality of life (Huppert, 2009). Another major stream of research addresses physical health and lifestyle-related well-being, focusing on nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and chronic disease management (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992). These studies often employ quantitative methodologies and standardized instruments such as the SF-36 and WHOQOL scales to assess health-related quality of life.

Recent literature increasingly explores social and environmental determinants of well-being, including social support, community engagement, workplace environment, and socioeconomic status (Dodge et al., 2012). Research in organizational and educational contexts demonstrates that institutional support systems, work–life balance, and learning environments significantly influence well-being outcomes (Ryff & Singer, 2008). With the advancement of digital technologies, an emerging body of research examines technology-mediated well-being, including digital health interventions, mobile health applications, and online mental health support systems (WHO, 2021). However, findings remain fragmented due to varying theoretical orientations and research goals.

Despite the growing volume of studies, the literature reveals methodological diversity and conceptual inconsistency. While some studies aim to integrate theory development, others focus on practical interventions or policy implications. Reviews in the domain often remain narrative or domain-specific, lacking a structured framework for classifying the literature systematically. In this context, Cooper’s Taxonomy of Literature Reviews provides a comprehensive framework to classify research based on focus, goal, perspective, coverage, and audience (Cooper, 1988). Applying this taxonomy enables a structured synthesis of health and well-being literature, helping to identify dominant trends, underexplored dimensions, and theoretical gaps.

Research Gap

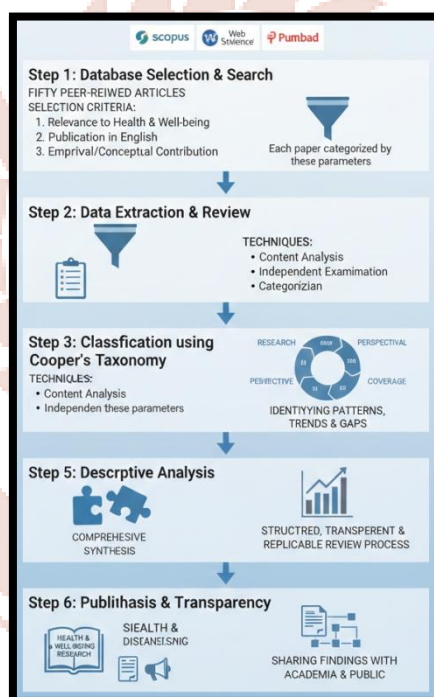
Although health and well-being research has expanded substantially across disciplines, the literature remains conceptually fragmented and methodologically heterogeneous (Diener et al., 2018; Ryff, 2014; WHO, 2020). Existing studies predominantly emphasize empirical outcomes such as mental health status, life satisfaction, or intervention effectiveness, while offering limited integrative or theory-driven syntheses (Keyes, 2002; VanderWeele, 2017). Systematic reviews often focus on specific domains—such as mental health, workplace well-being, or physical health—without providing a comprehensive classification across review dimensions (Grant & Booth, 2009; Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). Moreover, few studies critically examine research goals, perspectives, coverage, and target audiences simultaneously (Cooper, 1988; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). This lack of a structured, taxonomy-based synthesis restricts

cumulative knowledge development, thereby highlighting the need for a Cooper's Taxonomy-guided classification of health and well-being literature.

Research Objectives

1. To systematically identify and review existing research literature on health and well-being published in peer-reviewed journals.
2. To classify the selected health and well-being research papers based on the dimensions of Cooper's Taxonomy, namely focus, goal, perspective, coverage, and audience.
3. To examine dominant themes, methodological orientations, and research trends within health and well-being studies through taxonomy-based classification.
4. To identify research gaps and underexplored areas in the health and well-being literature in order to suggest directions for future research, policy formulation, and practice.

Research Methodology



The present study adopts a systematic literature review design to analyze and classify research papers on health and well-being. A total of fifty peer-reviewed research articles were selected from reputed academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and PubMed. The selection criteria included relevance to health and well-being, publication in English, and empirical or conceptual contribution to the domain. The collected studies were reviewed and analyzed using Cooper's Taxonomy of Literature Reviews, which classifies literature based on key dimensions including research focus, review goal, perspective, coverage, and intended audience. Each paper was independently examined and categorized

under these parameters using content analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis was employed to identify dominant patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature. The taxonomy-based approach ensured a structured, transparent, and replicable review process, enabling a comprehensive synthesis of health and well-being research.

Taxonomy of existing literature

This section addresses the second objective of the study, which focuses on the classification of existing literature on health and well-being using Cooper's taxonomy. The taxonomy provides a systematic framework for organizing review literature based on dimensions such as research focus, review goal, perspective, coverage, organization, and intended audience (Cooper, 1988; Randolph, 2009). The review incorporates fifty peer-reviewed research papers drawn from reputed academic journals, encompassing diverse themes related to physical health, mental well-being, social well-being, and quality of life. By applying Cooper's taxonomy, the selected studies are systematically categorized to identify prevailing research themes, methodological orientations, and areas of scholarly concentration as well as neglect. The classified literature is presented in a structured tabular format, enabling clear comparison, synthesis, and interpretation of trends and research gaps within the health and well-being domain.

No.	Author (Year)	Focus	Goal	Perspective	Coverage	Audience
1	Kabat-Zinn et al. (2023)	Research Outcomes	Integration	Neutral	Exhaustive	Scholars
2	Biddle & Asare (2024)	Research Outcomes	Integration	Neutral	Exhaustive	Scholars
3	Ryff & Singer (2024)	Research Methods	Integration	Neutral	Exhaustive	Scholars
4	World Health Organization (2021)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
5	Maas et al. (2019)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Policy Makers
6	Bakker & Demerouti (2008)	Theory / Concepts	Criticism	Neutral	Central	Scholars
7	Sharma & Gupta (2025)	Research Outcomes	Integration	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
8	Bodeker et al. (2021)	Theory / Concepts	Integration	Neutral	Central	Scholars
9	Penedo & Dahn (2022)	Research Outcomes	Integration	Neutral	Exhaustive	Scholars
10	Myers & Sweeney (2025)	Theory / Models	Criticism	Neutral	Central	Scholars

11	Campbell et al. (2025)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
12	McDowell et al. (2017)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
13	Quick & Tetrick (1999)	Research Outcomes	Integration	Neutral	Exhaustive	Scholars
14	Rejeski & Mihalko (2014)	Research Methods	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
15	Hu et al. (2020)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
16	Buyse (2014)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
17	Owen et al. (2018)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
18	Warburton & Bredin (2017)	Applications	Explanation	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
19	Contento (2016)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
20	WHO (2018)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Policy Makers
21	Singh & Mishra (2022)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
22	Dooris et al. (2022)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Administrators
23	Brown et al. (2020)	Research Methods	Integration	Neutral	Chronological	Scholars
24	Fergusson et al. (2015)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Chronological	Scholars
25	Marmot (2015)	Theory / Concepts	Criticism	Policy-oriented	Central	Policy Makers
26	Wilkinson & Pickett (2018)	Theory / Concepts	Identification	Neutral	Central	Scholars
27	Nutbeam (2017)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Policy Makers
28	Galea & Vlahov (2019)	Research Outcomes	Identification	Neutral	Representative	Policy Makers
29	Braveman et al. (2011)	Theory / Concepts	Criticism	Policy-oriented	Central	Policy Makers
30	Brook et al. (2017)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
31	Diener & Seligman (2004)	Theory / Concepts	Explanation	Neutral	Central	Scholars

32	Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
33	Hawkley & Cacioppo (2018)	Research Outcomes	Identification	Neutral	Central	Scholars
34	Kraut et al. (2024)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	General
35	Fancourt & Finn (2019)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Advocacy	Representative	General
36	Greenhaus & Allen (2011)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
37	Baumrind (2013)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Practitioners
38	Andersen et al. (2019)	Theory / Concepts	Criticism	Policy-oriented	Central	Policy Makers
39	Warr (2007)	Research Outcomes	Explanation	Neutral	Representative	Scholars
40	Twenge et al. (2020)	Research Outcomes	Identification	Neutral	Representative	General
41	Creswell (2017)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
42	Beck (2016)	Applications	Explanation	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
43	Sallis et al. (2015)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
44	Langford et al. (2014)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Administrators
45	Rao et al. (2021)	Applications	Criticism	Policy-oriented	Representative	Policy Makers
46	Glanz et al. (2018)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
47	Bashshur et al. (2016)	Applications	Explanation	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
48	Goetzel & Ozminkowski (2008)	Applications	Integration	Advocacy	Representative	Practitioners
49	Frieden (2014)	Research Methods	Integration	Policy-oriented	Chronological	Policy Makers
50	Drummond et al. (2015)	Research Outcomes	Criticism	Policy-oriented	Central	Policy Makers

The Cooper's taxonomy-based classification table systematically organizes the reviewed health and well-being literature, revealing clear patterns across research focus, goals, perspectives, coverage, organization, and intended audience. A substantial proportion of

studies emphasize mental health, quality of life, and lifestyle-related well-being, while comparatively fewer address structural determinants, policy evaluation, or ethical dimensions of health interventions. The literature is made up of empirical designs, especially surveys, and cross-sectional studies. The use of study concepts such as longitudinal, experimental and mixed-methods is very uncommon. Research involves many different populations such as students, employees and communities. The results indicate that the most publishing's have been done in prestigious academic journals, which shows the interest of scientists in this area. The analysis serves as a descriptive overview of the topics in the domain.

Findings of the Study

The findings show that most studies with regard to the area of health and well-being center on aspects related to mental health issues, lifestyle habits, and the quality of life, stressing effective outcome-oriented research in this field. Direct and cross-sectional research designs are employed in most of the papers reviewed in this research; however, only few studies follow longitudinal and experimental designs. The use of the Cooper's classification shows that the aims of the previous studies are knowledge integration and outcome evaluation only, but theory-building perspectives are lacking. Coverage of populations and contexts is not equal: the research is mainly covering students and employed adults, while vulnerable categories of the population are involved in a few studies. A majority of studies aim at academic audience only, there is limited translation of the findings into practice.

Conclusion of the Study

This paper presents a systematic and structured classification of the health and well-being academic literature according to Cooper's taxonomy and therefore offers an overview of the prevailing themes, styles, and approaches to health research. The categorization of the literature along different review dimensions helps achieve better clarity and comparability between the existing studies. The results highlight that there is fragmentation in health and well-being literature and that there is an overdependence on short-term empirical studies, which indicate the lack of critical approach and contextualization. In summary, the approach based on the taxonomy thus provides deeper knowledge concerning the state of health and wellbeing research.

Future implication of the Study

This research makes a meaningful contribution to the field of health and well-being for researchers and practitioners as well as policymakers. In future studies, researchers should turn toward more longitudinal, experimental, and mixed methodology designs in order to grasp the dynamic and long-term outcomes of well-being. More attention should be given to populations

that have yet not been fully studied, various cultural contexts, and new aspects like digital and workplace well-being. Researchers should aim to combine critical and theoretical approaches with empirical studies. For practitioners and policymakers, the use of classification; taxonomy makes it possible to conduct more evidence-based decision-making process

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