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<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9792-3447>PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS IN EVERYDAY
SCHOOL PRACTICE*

Introduction: The article addresses mental health of children and adolescents, which constitutes a key element of social and educational development. Contemporary challenges – such as academic pressure, difficulties in peer relationships, and the influence of digital media – contribute to the intensification of mental health crises, which calls for particular attention from the education system and social policy.

Research Aim: The aim of the article was to analyse mental health problems among young people in Poland, identify their scale and risk factors, and draw conclusions regarding possible systemic and educational solutions. An attempt was made to answer the following questions: how do school, family, and the peer environment influence students' mental health and well-being, and what systemic and educational measures can support young people in coping with mental health crises?

Evidence-based Facts: The analysis is based on the literature on students' mental health and well-being, as well as research reports such as *Rozmawiaj z Klasą* [Talk to Your Classmates] (Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, 2022), *Młode Głowy* [Young Minds] (Fundacja UNAWĘZA, 2023), and reports of the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland (2023). The findings indicate low level of students' self-esteem, sense of loneliness, lack of trust in teachers, as well as insufficient parental involvement. The studies show that a school system burdened with bureaucracy and an extensive core curriculum often does not foster relationship-building and can be a source of additional stress. The reports emphasize the need for psychoeducational interventions.

Summary: Students' mental health requires priority treatment. Key actions include development of psychoeducation, increased accessibility of psychological support, strengthening teachers' competencies, and greater parental involvement. Further research on the well-being of the youngest groups – preschool and early primary school children, which have so far been rarely addressed – is also essential.

Keywords: student mental health support, promotion of mental health in schools, psychological well-being, systemic support, students' mental health difficulties and crises

* Suggested citation: Buchaniec, K. (2026). Psychological Well-Being of Students in Everyday School Practice. *Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, 45(2), 63–78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/lrp.2026.45.2.63-78>

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the essence of well-being is the starting point for the present considerations. It has recently become the subject of numerous studies conducted internationally. Perception of one's own health status and formation of a sense of identity are closely related to an individual's level of well-being. In the academic literature, psychological well-being is conceptualized within two main theoretical traditions: hedonic and eudaimonic (Nikiel, 2024). The hedonic approach emphasizes the subjective dimension, understood as life satisfaction and an emotional balance, in which positive emotions prevail and negative emotions are minimized. In this sense, well-being is closely associated with feelings of satisfaction and pleasure derived from everyday experiences. In contrast, the eudaimonic tradition defines well-being in terms of realizing one's human potential, personal development, and engaging in actions that possess value and existential meaning.

An individual experiences well-being when functioning at an optimal level, pursuing goals aligned with personal values, and engaging in self-development. Both approaches are present in reflections on students' well-being, yet the eudaimonic perspective highlights the role of the school as an environment that supports development and full realization of a young person's potential. From an educational perspective, this means that well-being is not limited to momentary experiences of pleasure but also encompasses the capacity to build lasting psychological and social resources. Considering both traditions allows for a more comprehensive understanding of well-being, which on the one hand manifests itself in the experience of positive emotional states and, on the other, in the pursuit of long-term life goals and meaningful achievements. Such an approach enables a fuller explanation of the mechanisms that foster optimal functioning of individuals within the school environment and beyond (Aulia, 2018).

In the concept of well-being developed by Seligman (2011), elements of both the hedonic and the eudaimonic traditions are evident. The hedonic tradition emphasizes the importance of experiencing positive emotions, feeling pleasure, and avoiding undesirable states, whereas the eudaimonic approach focuses on striving for self-realization, developing one's potential, and giving life deeper meaning. From the eudaimonic perspective, well-being depends on possessing valuable dispositions that enable realization of one's developmental capacities. Within the framework of positive psychology, Seligman introduced a model of well-being known by the acronym PERMA, encompassing five mutually independent components: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The author emphasizes that the so-called "flourishing" is the most complete indicator of well-being. It is defined as a state that includes not only the core elements of the model (positive emotions, engagement, and meaning) but also additional characteristics such as self-esteem, optimism, resilience, vitality, and the capacity for self-determination. In this view, well-being is not reduced merely to fleeting expe-

riences of pleasure; rather, it constitutes a complex developmental process in which integration of emotional, relational, and existential experiences plays a key role and leads to a lasting sense of fulfillment and a full life (Seligman, 2011).

There is no single, universally accepted definition of students' school well-being, as the literature presents various conceptualizations. This diversity stems from research identifying numerous different factors that support students' proper functioning within the school environment, making it difficult to encompass them within one universal definition. Moreover, students themselves assign different levels of importance to particular elements that influence their well-being. In seeking to understand children's well-being in the service of education, it is valuable to adopt the framework of social constructivism, which views childhood as a social and cultural construct. From this perspective, childhood is not regarded as a fixed, natural stage of development but as a product of historical and cultural processes of meaning-making.

The way the role of the child is defined and the beliefs surrounding it are shaped socially and culturally, continually evolving over time, and all of this profoundly influences the child's well-being (Grochowalska, 2025). Contemporary research on childhood conducted within the field of childhood studies treats children not as homogeneous objects but as active subjects – participants in social life whose experiences and interpretations constitute a valuable area of analysis. In light of this approach, a child's well-being may be understood as a subjective experience of the quality of life, encompassing the emotional, social, and cognitive aspects of the child's well-being and satisfaction (Jarosz, 2017). Samborska (2018) further develops this perspective by identifying a child's good – understood as well-being – as a category that can be captured within the child's own individual experience. The author's analysis is based on the assumption that children are active participants in research and in society; therefore, their perspective should be taken into account in studies on the quality of life, rights, and needs, recognizing them also as citizens and partners in educational dialogue.

Children's experience of well-being may vary across different developmental stages and processes. In Guz's (2018) research, children completing preschool education perceive childhood as a time of play, learning, and closeness with peers and parents, experienced as a "pleasant, carefree" period of life. Children's statements emphasize the importance of play, participation in activities, access to toys, and increasing freedom in everyday actions. At the same time, children identify their responsibilities – attending preschool and school and adapting to adults' expectations – as an inseparable element of their daily lives. Consequently, among the children studied, positive well-being is primarily associated with access to spaces for play and autonomy, whereas pressure and restrictions represent its profound opposite.

Research conducted by Fortuin and colleagues (2024) on children's perspectives on health and well-being indicates significant differences between children

and adults in how these issues are perceived. The findings suggest that younger, school-aged children display a broader and more diverse perception of well-being. They include both positive experiences, such as forming close relationships with peers, participating in enjoyable school and extracurricular activities, and using social media or games, as well as negative experiences, including conflicts with peers and family members, adaptation difficulties related to the school environment, and changes and challenges associated with maturation. In contrast to children, adults – including teachers and parents – tend to assess well-being primarily in the context of potentially destabilizing factors, such as excessive workload, poor organization of classes, inadequate facilities, or other risk factors. In adults' evaluations, the dominant motive is preventing situations that may negatively affect students' well-being, which results in a narrower perspective compared to that of children (Fortuin, 2024).

In general terms, however, school well-being can be described as a complex construct that encompasses students' subjective feelings and attitudes toward school. Hascher (2012) identifies six key dimensions of school well-being: positive attitude toward school, enjoyment at school, positive self-esteem in the school context, absence of school-related worries, absence of school-related physical complaints, and absence of social problems at school. These dimensions indicate that school well-being is not limited merely to the absence of negative experiences but also includes positive aspects, such as joy in learning and a sense of belonging to the school community.

Students' well-being is not confined solely to emotional aspects but is closely linked to their educational experiences, such as academic achievement, relationships with teachers and peers, and the overall atmosphere prevailing at school. Kizeweter (2016) emphasizes that school well-being is crucial not only for the effectiveness of the teaching process but also for students' personal development and their preparation for active participation in society. Gutman and Vorhaus (2012) conceptually frame school well-being through two complementary dimensions: school satisfaction and school engagement. School satisfaction refers to students' subjective evaluation of the school environment, including their positive attitudes and enjoyment derived from participation in school life. School engagement, in turn, describes the degree of students' active motivation to undertake educational responsibilities, their interest in learning, and their readiness to participate in instructional processes, constituting an important variable in learning effectiveness.

Multiplicity and diversity of presented perspectives clearly demonstrate that students' well-being is closely linked to their mental health. These factors serve as key indicators that influence students' development, learning, and everyday functioning. Care for both of these areas forms the foundation for creating a supportive educational environment.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

In recent years in Poland, increasing attention has been devoted to the issue of children's and adolescents' mental health, as well as to the role of schools and the family environment in shaping the psychological well-being of the younger generation. The aim of undertaken analyses was to present the current state of knowledge regarding the psychological well-being of young people in the context of functioning within the educational environment, with particular emphasis on the significance of school-, family-, and peer-related factors. The analyses were oriented toward identifying the main psychological and psychosocial problems experienced by students, risk factors that contribute to their intensification, and the level and forms of support available in Polish schools.

An attempt was made to answer the following questions: "What is the significance of school, family, and the peer environment for students' mental condition and well-being?" and "What systemic and educational measures can support young people in coping with crises?" The analyses were based on selected reports concerning the mental health of children and adolescents in Poland. Key elements of the school environment were taken into account, including the quality of teacher-student relationships, degree of curriculum overload, availability of specialized psychological and pedagogical support, and the psychosocial climate prevailing at school. Reference was also made to the importance of the family environment, with attention paid to the level of emotional support, as well as parental involvement and interest. Peer environment was an additional important area of analysis. It encompassed the quality of social relationships, experiences of peer pressure, and the sense of acceptance or exclusion among students.

Review analysis of selected reports on the mental health of children and adolescents in Poland was the research method adopted in this article. The primary sources of data included reports published by the School with Class Foundation (Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą), *Rozmawiaj z Klasą. Zdrowie psychiczne uczniów i uczennic oczami nauczycieli i nauczycielek* [Talk to Your Classmates: Students' Mental Health from Teachers' Perspectives] (2022), the UNaweza Foundation (Fundacja UNaweza), *MŁODE GŁOWY – Zdrowie psychiczne dzieci i młodzieży w wieku szkolnym w Polsce* [YOUNG MINDS: The Mental Health of School-Aged Children and Adolescents in Poland] (2023), and the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland at the Ministry of Education and Science (Rada Dzieci i Młodzieży RP przy Ministerstwie Edukacji i Nauki), *Zdrowie psychiczne dzieci i młodzieży* [Mental Health of Children and Adolescents] (2023).

The analysed reports included data from both teachers' and students' perspectives. The study conducted by the School with Class Foundation was based on an anonymous survey carried out among more than 1,500 teachers from various educational levels, as well as two focus group meetings with experts. This made it possible to assess teachers' competencies in recognizing students' mental health

problems and the role of the school in preventing emotional crises. The study conducted by the UNaweza Foundation covered 184,447 students from 1,923 primary schools, general secondary schools, and technical secondary schools across Poland. It took the form of a nationwide online survey examining subjective feelings, self-esteem, sense of agency, and social acceptance among children and adolescents. The report of the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland was developed as a result of nationwide student consultations, which involved several thousand young people. Its aim was to identify barriers to accessing psychological support, experiences of school-related pressure, and other factors that affect psychological well-being.

Selection of reports and studies for analysis was based on criteria of data reliability and representativeness, as well as inclusion of diverse perspectives – those of teachers, students, and the education system. The analysis considered the methodological scope, characteristics of the research samples, as well as reported findings, with particular emphasis on psychological and emotional problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, difficulties in peer relationships, low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness, and limited access to psychological support. The analysis also enabled a comparison of quantitative and qualitative data from different sources, including percentages of students and teachers identifying specific problems, which allowed for an assessment of the scale of the phenomenon and its determinants in Polish schools.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis employed a narrative literature review and a synthesis of selected research reports concerning the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents within the Polish education system. The adopted methodology aimed to systematically organize the current state of knowledge and to identify key problems, risk factors, and institutional conditions affecting students' mental condition. This form of review made it possible to include both quantitative and qualitative data derived from nationwide studies, as well as to interpret them within a broader pedagogical and psychosocial context.

The analysis was based on research reports characterized by high level of credibility and representativeness, prepared by institutions and organizations engaged in issues related to education and the mental health of children and adolescents. The main sources included the report of the School with Class Foundation, *Rozmawiaj z Klasą. Zdrowie psychiczne uczniów i uczennic oczami nauczycieli i nauczycielek* [Talk to Your Classmates: Students' Mental Health from Teachers' Perspectives] (2022), the UNaweza Foundation report *MŁODE GŁOWY – Zdrowie psychiczne dzieci i młodzieży w wieku szkolnym w Polsce* [YOUNG MINDS: The

Mental Health of School-Aged Children and Adolescents in Poland] (2023), and the report of the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland at the Ministry of Education and Science, *Zdrowie psychiczne dzieci i młodzieży* [Mental Health of Children and Adolescents] (2023). Selection of these studies was determined by their timeliness, nationwide scope, large sample sizes, and inclusion of the perspectives of students, teachers, and the education system.

The qualitative content analysis was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved exploration of source materials, including a review of the methodological assumptions of the reports, characteristics of the research samples, and the scope of the analysed issues. Particular attention was paid to definitions of mental health and well-being, operationalization of the studied variables, and the socio-educational context of the research. The second stage consisted of content categorization, involving identification of recurring problem areas such as low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness, difficulties in peer relationships, concentration and motivation disorders, school-related pressure, access to psychological support, and the role of school and family in preventing mental health crises. The third stage involved interpretation and synthesis of the findings, consisting of comparing data from different sources and relating them to a broader theoretical context drawn from developmental psychology, pedagogy, and research on student well-being.

The analysis included both quantitative data (percentages of students and teachers reporting specific problems) and qualitative data derived from student consultations and focus group studies. This made it possible to capture not only the scale of the phenomenon but also the subjective experiences and evaluations of young people and the teaching staff. The comparative method applied made it possible to identify similarities and differences between students' and teachers' perspectives and assessment of the consistency of conclusions across the reports.

The literature and report review was purposeful and problem-oriented. Its overarching aim was to identify the key determinants of students' mental health and to indicate areas that require further systemic and educational action. The applied methodology is consistent with the principles of narrative literature reviews in the social sciences, which serve to organize knowledge, identify research gaps, and formulate practical recommendations (Rubacha, 2011).

EVIDENCE-BASED FACTS

Mental health of the child and adolescent population constitutes a fundamental factor that determines proper psychosocial development and an individual's effective adaptation to functioning within social structures. However, a growing prevalence of mental health crises has recently been observed in this developmental group (Matusiak & Dębicka, 2023). One of the most frequently identified prob-

lems in this area is the gradual decline in self-esteem, which significantly affects overall psychological well-being of children and adolescents. Self-esteem, together with self-evaluation, represents a key personality construct and one of the basic mechanisms regulating behaviour, influencing both self-perception and relationships with others (Wosik-Kawala, 2007).

A student exposed to negative self-evaluation experiences tension and anxiety, which may manifest itself in various forms of behaviour. They may display aggressive or provocative attitudes as a defence mechanism masking an internal sense of threat. Another possible reaction is withdrawal from social contact and isolation. In order to reduce the perceived threat to self-worth, an individual may reinterpret an anxiety-provoking situation, for example by devaluing or blaming others. In some cases, excessive dependency in social relationships may also emerge, making the student more susceptible to peers' opinions and judgments (Supińska, 2003). Low self-esteem may lead to reluctance to undertake new activities and intensify fear related to evaluation and possible social rejection. Students with low self-worth often perceive themselves as less competent, inferior to their peers, or socially insignificant. Such an attitude fosters withdrawal from school activities, reduced engagement in school life, and increased susceptibility to negative feedback from the environment (Szwejka, 2022).

Low self-esteem may result from negative school experiences, criticism from adults, and peer comparisons. The literature indicates that disturbances in self-esteem may manifest themselves in diverse emotional, behavioural, and social changes (Dąbrowska, 2021). Commonly observed symptoms include sudden behavioural changes, concentration difficulties, lowered mood, decreased energy, apathy, drowsiness, social withdrawal, isolation, emotional outbursts, hyperactivity and excessive motor activity, changes in appearance and dress, increased school absenteeism, declining academic performance, nervous tics, excessive mobile phone use, disturbing content on private online profiles, and – in extreme cases – unexplained injuries or bruises (Szymańska, 2014). This phenomenon is closely linked to a deficit in motivation to engage in cognitive activity.

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the problem of burnout among children and adolescents, whose growing dynamics and frequency indicate its status as a new and significant developmental and social phenomenon. Its determinants are complex and include family and school factors, achievement pressure, and broader socio-cultural transformations. The result is often reduced motivation to act, leading to decreased activity and engagement in everyday functioning (Schulte-Markwort, 2017). Students who do not see the point of the tasks they undertake tend to exhibit a diminished sense of satisfaction with the learning process and a lack of clearly defined goals, which in turn fosters attitudes of passivity. A lack of motivation may stem from individual difficulties (e.g., personal emotional problems) as well as insufficient support from the educational or family

environment (Mołodecka, 2020). Absence of clear goals, meaning in education, and satisfaction with completed tasks promotes discouragement and passivity. This condition may result from chronic stress, excessive workload, lack of adult support, or low self-esteem. Consequently, students tend to withdraw from activities, avoid challenges, and isolate themselves in interpersonal relationships, negatively affecting their psychological functioning (Dudek, 2024).

The experience of existential loneliness is an increasingly common phenomenon among adolescents. This type of loneliness is subjective and intrapsychic, primarily associated with a perceived deficit in interpersonal bonds, a sense of alienation, and the absence of a close partner. Loneliness during adolescence may be conditioned by external and situational factors; however, it does not constitute a permanent or unchangeable phenomenon (Papież, 2005). Loneliness belongs to the category of psychological states that generally exert a detrimental influence on an individual's emotional development during the period of maturation. It may lead to distortions in the process of personality formation and generate difficulties in proper functioning both at the individual level and in social relationships (Lake, 1993).

Adolescents who experience intense loneliness often show reduced behavioural stability and difficulty satisfying basic needs such as acceptance, understanding, affiliation, and emotional expression. They may also exhibit shyness, a subjective sense of low quality of life, increased vulnerability to depressive moods, and a higher risk of addiction (Rębisz et al., 2016). The literature emphasizes that loneliness in childhood and adolescence may serve as a prognostic factor for serious adaptive and personal difficulties. Socially isolated youth or those experiencing rejection are more likely to face academic problems, drop out of education, and exhibit increased vulnerability to addiction, delinquency, and risky sexual behaviour (Dołęga, 2003). Loneliness is often a taboo topic for adolescents, rarely discussed openly. It can become a source of anxiety, a barrier to achieving happiness and fulfillment, and – in extreme cases – may lead to self-destructive behaviours, including suicide attempts.

Silence surrounding this issue further intensifies isolation and hinders access to social and professional support, making loneliness one of the more serious threats to mental health (Wasilewska-Ostrowska, 2018). Peer pressure and social relationship difficulties also deserve attention, as adolescents experience a particularly strong need for acceptance (Leksy, 2025). The literature highlights that the ability to construct a positive self-image is a key determinant of self-esteem and self-acceptance (Szpunar, 2016). In today's rapidly developing world, characterized by widespread Internet access and dynamic social change, pressure from both school and peer environments has systematically increased. This significantly influences adolescents' functioning and well-being. The use of new technologies may disturb emotional balance and increase susceptibility to mental disorders such as depression, attention deficits, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms (Banasiak-Parzych, 2013).

It is within such a socio-cultural context that the contemporary young generation comes of age. In addition to pressure related to educational achievement, particular emphasis is placed on pressure concerning physical appearance and the construction of one's image on social media. Developmental processes involving bodily changes may not be accepted by the individual from the outset, which can generate feelings of anxiety and uncertainty regarding one's own attractiveness and position within the peer group. In this context, the need to be perceived as attractive – both physically and socially – becomes a significant motivating factor prompting adolescents to engage in behaviours aimed at shaping their appearance and evaluating others through the lens of external attributes (Ziółkowska, 2009). The pressure to achieve an ideal appearance is so strong that for many young people, physical attractiveness appears to be the primary, sometimes the only, means of gaining acceptance and popularity. As noted by Ostaszewska (2012), contemporary media, popular culture, and the Internet constitute new spaces for identity formation, where adolescents constantly confront image-based standards and social expectations.

In analysing the significance of social relationships during adolescence, it is impossible to overlook the particular role of peer bonds, which at this stage of development play a fundamental role in shaping an individual's subsequent experiences. The peer group becomes such an important point of reference for adolescents that negative evaluations or pressure from its members can lead to lowered self-esteem and emergence of complex emotional states. Notably, young people who are strongly influenced by their peer group often tend to attribute responsibility for their own distress to themselves rather than to their peers. (Bee, 2004). The subject literature emphasizes the importance of peer pressure and difficulties in social functioning as significant factors that affect adolescents' mental health. Adolescence is associated with a particularly strong need for acceptance and belonging to a peer group, which often results in the necessity to conform to its norms and expectations. The pursuit of recognition and the fear of marginalization may generate high levels of stress and emotional tension. Phenomena such as conflicts, social isolation, cyberbullying, and bullying constitute serious threats to the psychological well-being of young people, who often face these challenges without adequate support. Out of fear of rejection, adolescents may engage in behaviours aimed at gaining acceptance "at any cost," which can lead to a loss of authenticity and an intensification of internal discomfort.

A lack of communication competencies, experiences of exclusion, and chronic peer conflicts further contribute to deterioration of mental health. Therefore, ensuring that adolescents have access to stable and supportive relationships is of key importance, as these form the foundation of a sense of security and healthy emotional development (Mondry et al., 2024). Psychological literature underscores that peer pressure, social threats, and lack of interpersonal support may contribute

to anxiety disorders and persistent worry, significantly impairing daily functioning. Students affected by anxiety often experience concentration problems, sleep disturbances, and reduced academic performance. Chronic anxiety may lead to a long-term deterioration in the quality of life. This is not an isolated issue but a complex social phenomenon requiring coordinated responses from parents, teachers, educators, psychologists, and students themselves (Kaniewska-Mackiewicz, 2023).

State and Determinants of Students' Mental Health in Polish Schools

An analysis of data from reports by the School with Class Foundation (2022), the UNAWEZA Foundation (2023), and the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland (2023) indicates a complex and multidimensional picture of children's and adolescents' mental health in Polish schools. From both students' and teachers' perspectives, emotional and social problems are evident, including low self-esteem, loneliness, peer relationship difficulties, and concentration disorders. The UNAWEZA Foundation's study, which reflected students' own perspectives, showed that 52.4% reported lack of motivation, 38.1% concentration problems, 37.5% loneliness, 36.3% poor psychological well-being, 32.5% sleep problems, 30.6% learning difficulties, and 28% a lack of will to live (UNAWEZA Foundation, 2023). These findings indicate high level of psychological burden.

According to the School with Class Foundation survey, 58% of teachers reported being able to recognize students' mental health problems, 39% were uncertain, and 3% were unable to identify them. At the same time, 75% believed students could approach them with a problem, although nearly one in four teachers was unsure whether they had established trust-based relationships with all their students (School with Class Foundation, 2022). Data concerning self-esteem are particularly alarming. Nearly half of the students in the UNAWEZA report displayed extremely low self-esteem; 26.4% considered themselves less valuable than others; 56.4% felt "worthless;" and 31% did not like themselves. Risk behaviours such as eating disorders (43.3%), excessive exercise (34.2%), and acting against one's values to gain social acceptance (29.3%) were linked to low self-esteem. Moreover, 27.4% stated that their value depended on others' acceptance, and 10.5% had no one who fully accepted them (UNAWEZA Foundation, 2023).

The School with Class Foundation report highlights the school's role in shaping mental health. Curriculum overload and bureaucratization limit opportunities to build trust-based relationships. Psychologists are employed in only 60% of schools, often part-time, restricting access to support (School with Class Foundation, 2022). Such extracurricular factors as family problems and peer pressure coexist with school-related difficulties. Teachers identified the most common causes of students' mental health problems. They included lack of parental interest (76%), low self-esteem (76%), lack of peer acceptance (68%), and family problems (65%). Depression, anxiety, and addictions were considered the most

serious issues requiring support. In primary schools, aggression, peer relationship problems, and concentration difficulties were more frequently noted, whereas in secondary schools depression and anxiety predominated (School with Class Foundation, 2022).

Student consultations reported by the Children and Youth Council emphasized low public awareness of mental health, limited access to assistance, school pressure, increased technology and substance addictions, insufficient family support, and excessive informational stress (Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland, 2023). Systemic data show that the number of specialists in schools increased from 22,000 in 2022 to 38,000 in 2024, with a target of 51,000 positions. Financial expenditures rose from PLN 520 million in 2022 to nearly PLN 2.7 billion in 2024 (Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland, 2023). Overall, the analysed reports present a consistent picture of challenges related to young people's mental health in Polish schools: teachers observe significant psychological difficulties, while students report low self-esteem, loneliness, and relational problems. At the same time, systemic data indicate increasing support through expanded specialist employment and financial investment, providing a foundation for further actions aimed at improving students' psychological well-being.

SUMMARY

The reports indicate significant challenges in the area of adolescents' psychological well-being, resulting both from the structure of the education system itself and from external factors. Data from both teachers and students point to widespread presence of emotional and psychosocial problems. The most frequently mentioned issues include low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness, difficulties in peer relationships, concentration and motivation disorders, as well as depression and anxiety. Quantitative data confirm that these are large-scale phenomena: more than half of examined students report lacking motivation to act, nearly half struggle with low self-esteem, and approximately one-third experience loneliness or lack of social acceptance.

School, as the primary environment for children's and adolescents' development, plays a dual role. It can support psychological well-being; however, within the current educational model, it often functions as a stress-inducing factor. An overloaded curriculum, bureaucratization, and limited time for individual conversations with students weaken teacher-student relationships and reduce opportunities for early identification of mental health problems. Out-of-school factors, including family relationships and peer pressure, are also significant determinants of adolescents' mental health. Lack of parental interest, social pressure, and peer rejection strongly coexist with school-related difficulties, increasing the risk of

depression, anxiety, and risky behaviours. At the same time, systemic measures currently being implemented – such as the growing number of specialists and increased financial investment – provide a foundation for further preventive and intervention efforts. Nevertheless, continued monitoring of young people's mental health and evaluation of the effectiveness of undertaken measures are necessary in order to genuinely improve their well-being and functioning within the school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the reports by the School with Class Foundation (Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, 2022), the UNaweza Foundation (Fundacja UNaweza, 2023), and the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland (Rada Dzieci i Młodzieży RP, 2023) allows for formulating several key conclusions regarding mental health of children and adolescents within the Polish education system. A review of the presented reports highlights, first and foremost, the urgent need for comprehensive mental health support in Polish schools. Key priorities include increasing access to specialized psychological assistance, introducing psychoeducation into school curricula, developing teachers' competencies in recognizing mental health problems, raising parental awareness, and promoting positive social practices among students. Attention should also be drawn to the mismatch between the psychological support system and students' actual needs. Despite the growing number of specialists, access to support remains limited, often restricted to only a few consultation hours and burdened by a lack of anonymity, which reduces young people's willingness to seek help.

Another significant issue is the absence of a coherent communication strategy regarding mental health. Emotional crises are still frequently marginalized or treated as taboo, which prevents the creation of open and safe spaces for dialogue within schools. Inequality in access to support is another concern – schools in large cities have considerably greater resources than those in smaller towns, reinforcing territorial disparities in psychological well-being. The role of digital factors also deserves attention: social media serve an ambivalent function, on the one hand they generate comparison pressure and intensify crises, and on the other, they offer potential tools for education and preventive campaigns. The analysis further indicates the need to build a school culture based on relationships and trust, as the effectiveness of support measures depends not only on the availability of specialists but also on the quality of interactions within the school community. An important conclusion is also the necessity of incorporating students' voices into the design of preventive and intervention measures, which strengthens young people's sense of agency and enhances the effectiveness of implemented solutions.

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DOBROSTAN PSYCHICZNY UCZNIÓW W CODZIENNEJ PRAKTYCE SZKOLNEJ

Wprowadzenie: W artykule podjęto tematykę zdrowia psychicznego dzieci i młodzieży, które stanowi kluczowy element rozwoju społecznego i edukacyjnego. Współczesne wyzwania, a więc presja szkolna, trudności w relacjach rówieśniczych oraz oddziaływanie mediów cyfrowych sprzyjają nasilaniu kryzysów psychicznych, co wymaga szczególnej uwagi ze strony systemu edukacji i polityki społecznej.

Cel badań: Celem artykułu była analiza problemów psychicznych młodych osób w Polsce, identyfikacja ich skali oraz czynników ryzyka, a także wyciągnięcie wniosków dotyczących możliwych rozwiązań systemowych i edukacyjnych. Podjęto próbę odpowiedzi na pytania: w jaki sposób szkoła, rodzina i środowisko rówieśnicze wpływają na kondycję psychiczną uczniów i ich dobrostan oraz jakie działania systemowe i edukacyjne mogą wspierać młodych ludzi w radzeniu sobie z kryzysami?

Stan wiedzy: Podstawą analizy jest literatura dotycząca zdrowia psychicznego i dobrostanu uczniów, a także raporty badawcze: *Rozmawiaj z Klasą (Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, 2022)*, *Młode Głowy (Fundacja UNAWĘZA, 2023)* oraz *Rady Dzieci i Młodzieży RP (2023)*. Wnioski wskazują na niski poziom samooceny uczniów, poczucie osamotnienia, brak zaufania do nauczycieli, a także niewystarczające zainteresowanie rodziców. Badania dowodzą, że szkoła przeciążona biurokracją i podstawą programową często nie sprzyja budowaniu relacji i bywa źródłem dodatkowego stresu. Raporty podkreślają potrzebę działań psychoedukacyjnych.

Podsumowanie: Zdrowie psychiczne uczniów wymaga traktowania priorytetowego. Kluczowe działania to: rozwój psychoedukacji, zwiększenie dostępności pomocy psychologicznej, wzmacnianie kompetencji nauczycieli oraz większe zaangażowanie rodziców. Niezbędne są również dalsze badania nad dobrostanem najmłodszych grup przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej, dotąd rzadko uwzględnianych.

Słowa kluczowe: wspieranie zdrowia psychicznego ucznia, promocja zdrowia psychicznego w szkole, dobrostan psychiczny, wsparcie systemowe, trudności i kryzysy psychiczne uczniów