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Psychological Well-Being of a University Student Experiencing Social Withdrawal on Campus: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract

University students are expected to adapt to academic, social, and emotional demands, yet some respond by withdrawing from social interaction. Psychological well-being and social withdrawal have been studied mostly with quantitative designs, so little is known about how well-being is experienced by students who withdraw socially. This qualitative case study described the psychological well-being of one undergraduate student with social withdrawal tendencies at a private university in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, Indonesia, using Ryff's six-dimension model (self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth). The participant was selected through purposive sampling based on observation, information from a close peer, and an initial interview. Data were collected through two semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participant and one interview with a peer informant, and were analyzed using descriptive thematic analysis. The findings show an uneven profile. Self-acceptance and positive relations with others were low, and environmental mastery was adequate for academic routines but limited in the campus social environment. Autonomy was fairly good but inconsistent. In contrast, purpose in life and personal growth remained strong, anchored in the wish to make his parents proud. Social withdrawal in this case was associated mainly with the social and relational dimensions of well-being rather than with its internal, meaning-oriented dimensions. Campus support may therefore need to strengthen self-acceptance and gradual social re-engagement while building on students' existing sources of purpose. As a single case, the findings are not statistically generalizable.

Keywords: *social withdrawal; psychological well-being; university students; Ryff's model; qualitative case study*

1. Introduction

University students are at the stage of early adulthood and face a wide range of academic, social, and emotional demands. During their studies they are expected to adapt to the campus environment, build positive interpersonal relationships, and take part in both academic and non-academic activities. The ability to form social relationships is an important resource for completing these developmental tasks. However, not all students adapt successfully. Some find it difficult to engage with others, tend to avoid relationships, and prefer to be alone, a pattern known as social withdrawal.

Social withdrawal refers to an individual's tendency to avoid social interaction, restrict interpersonal relationships, and prefer solitude over participation in social activities (Rubin et al., 2009). Among university students it may emerge as a response to adjustment difficulties, academic pressure, or unpleasant social experiences. A study at a university in West Sumatra reported that most of the students sampled fell into the moderate category of social withdrawal (Putri, 2023). This suggests that retreating from social life is fairly common among students and deserves attention because of its possible implications for their social and psychological lives.

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The phenomenon matters because withdrawing from social life is not only a matter of low interaction. It also concerns how students understand themselves, experience university life, and relate to their surroundings. Hayundaka and Yuniardi (2023) found that loneliness was related to students' psychological well-being, with lonelier students tending to report lower well-being. Although that study involved Indonesian students pursuing education abroad, its findings indicate that the quality of social relationships and the experience of loneliness cannot be separated from psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being describes a person's capacity to live life optimally. In Ryff's (1989) model it comprises six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Together they describe how individuals accept themselves, build positive relationships, develop their potential, and hold meaningful life goals. For students, well-being helps them meet the challenges of higher education. Purbandhini et al. (2025) showed that first-year students who adjusted well to campus and received good social support tended to have better psychological well-being. Their findings also imply that students' social experiences differ from one another, so well-being should be understood not only through scale scores but also through individuals' own accounts.

Although research on social withdrawal and psychological well-being is extensive, most earlier studies are quantitative and test relationships or effects between variables. They have identified correlates of well-being such as social support, adjustment, and loneliness. Studies that seek to understand the lived experience of students who withdraw socially, particularly through Ryff's six dimensions and a case study approach, remain limited. Such experiences cannot be fully captured by quantitative data and call for in-depth exploration of individuals' subjective accounts.

This study therefore aims to describe the psychological well-being of a university student with social withdrawal tendencies across Ryff's six dimensions, using a qualitative case study. It contributes to the literature by offering a dimension-by-dimension account of well-being in a socially withdrawn student in an Indonesian university context, and to practice by offering input for counseling and psychological services in higher education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a condition in which individuals develop their potential optimally through self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Ryff's approach rests on an eudaimonic view of well-being, which holds that well-being arises from self-actualization, the development of potential, and a meaningful life rather than from positive emotions or momentary happiness alone (Ryff, 1989). The six dimensions, summarized in Table 1, describe how individuals function psychologically in everyday life.

Table 1. *Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, 1989)*

Dimension	Characteristics	When low
Self-acceptance	Accepts oneself wholly, including strengths and weaknesses; views past experience positively; does not constantly blame oneself.	Dissatisfied with oneself, finds it hard to accept personal weaknesses, prone to regret.
Positive relations with others	Warm, trusting, and empathic relationships; emotional closeness; gives and receives support.	Difficulty building meaningful relationships.
Autonomy	Makes choices according to personal values and beliefs; holds one's opinions; not dependent on others' evaluations.	Easily influenced by the environment in attitudes and behavior.
Environmental mastery	Manages surroundings to meet needs and goals; uses opportunities; solves problems; adapts to change.	Difficulty controlling life's demands.
Purpose in life	Has direction, goals, and meaning; sees even difficult experiences as part of a path toward goals.	Life feels meaningless; loss of direction.
Personal growth	Continues to develop; open to new experience; aware of improvement over time; sees experiences as chances to learn.	Feels stagnant; no sense of development.

2.2 Social Withdrawal in the Context of Psychological Well-Being

Among university students, social withdrawal can be understood as a condition in which individuals tend to pull away from social interaction and limit their involvement in campus social life. It concerns not only avoidance behavior but may also reflect individuals' subjective experience of their social lives. From a psychological well-being perspective, withdrawal may be related to how people make sense of social relationships, accept themselves, and manage everyday life. Students with social withdrawal tendencies may therefore show different patterns across the dimensions of well-being, for example in building relationships, managing their social environment, or making sense of their life goals.

Ryff (1989) described well-being as six dimensions of optimal psychological functioning. In the present study, social withdrawal is treated not as a variable in a cause-and-effect relationship with psychological well-being but as a phenomenon that offers a window onto the condition and experience of students' well-being in the social life of a university.

2.3 Previous Studies and Research Gap

Research on students' psychological well-being has mostly examined psychosocial factors. Purbandhini et al. (2025) found that adjustment and social support were related to the psychological well-being of first-year students: those who adapted well to campus and received good social support tended to report more optimal well-being. Hayundaka and Yuniardi (2023) showed that psychological aspects such as self-esteem and loneliness are related to students' well-being, which indicates that subjective experiences such as loneliness are part of understanding well-being in everyday student life. Ryff's (1989) framework provides the theoretical basis for these studies.

Most of this work, however, focuses on relationships between variables or on measuring overall levels of well-being. Research that specifically describes the experience of psychological well-being among students with social withdrawal tendencies, based on Ryff's six dimensions and from a qualitative perspective, remains limited. The research question guiding this study was: *How is psychological well-being experienced by a university student with social withdrawal tendencies, viewed across the six dimensions of Ryff's model?*

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. A case study was chosen because the aim was to understand in depth the psychological well-being of one student with social withdrawal tendencies within the context of his social and academic life at a private university in Bukittinggi. The design allows a holistic picture of the participant's experience, meaning-making, and the dynamics of well-being across the six dimensions of Ryff (1989). It is suited to exploring subjective experience rather than testing relationships between variables or measuring magnitudes.

3.2 Participant and Informant

One participant was selected through purposive sampling according to four criteria: (a) an active student of the university, so that the experiences explored were situated in the same social and academic context; (b) tendencies toward social withdrawal, so that the participant had direct, lived experience of the phenomenon; (c) willingness to take part, in line with the ethical principle of voluntary participation; and (d) the ability to express his experiences verbally, since the study relied on narrative interview data.

The selection process began with observation of students' social behavior on campus, such as the tendency to be alone, patterns of interaction with peers, and involvement in academic and non-academic activities. The researchers then gathered information from a close friend of the candidate about his social behavior, daily habits, and interaction patterns. Finally, an initial interview was held, after which the researchers judged that the candidate met the criteria. Two earlier candidates could not be included: the first left university and the second declined to take part, a decision the researchers respected. The interviewing researcher knew the participant as a fellow student, which eased the first approach. To protect objectivity, selection rested on how well the candidate fit the research criteria and not on personal relationship.

The participant, referred to as Participant A, was a 20-year-old male in his fourth semester who lived in a boarding house. He mentioned membership of a student association but described rarely taking part in its activities. A classmate who interacted with him daily in lectures and group work, and occasionally visited his boarding house, served as a supporting informant (Informant I) and provided an observer's perspective.

3.3 Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with semi-structured guides. The researchers themselves were the main instrument (human instrument), supported by interview guides built on Ryff's (1989) six dimensions, with three questions per dimension. The participant guide asked about his own experience (for example, "When you have to make an important decision, how do you usually decide?"), and the informant guide asked about what the informant had observed (for example, "When the participant has a problem, does he usually tell someone?"). The semi-structured format let the participant tell his story freely while keeping the conversation anchored to the six dimensions. Table 2 summarizes the data sources.

Table 2. *Data Sources and Collection Schedule*

Data source	Description	Time	Setting
Observation	Informal observation of students' social behavior, interaction patterns, and tendency to be alone.	17 June 2026	Campus
Informant interview	Semi-structured interview with a classmate who knew the participant's daily behavior (approx. 16 minutes).	July 2026	Campus classroom
Participant interview 1 (A-1)	Initial interview on withdrawal experiences and first exploration of the six dimensions (approx. 33 minutes).	July 2026	Campus classroom
Participant interview 2 (A-2)	In-depth follow-up on the six dimensions, closing with a summary for confirmation (approx. 30 minutes).	July 2026	Informal private setting

With permission, interviews were audio-recorded, and the interviewer wrote field notes on expressions, body language, and the interview setting. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian. The participant switched to Minangkabau at points in the second interview, which the interviewer had invited him to do if he found it easier. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the excerpts quoted below were translated into English by the authors. Excerpts are labeled A-1 and A-2 (the participant's first and second interviews) and I-1 (the informant's interview).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive thematic analysis, which suits the aim of describing in depth the psychological well-being of a withdrawn student. The analysis proceeded in five steps. First, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked against the recordings. Second, the transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an overall understanding of the participant's experience before any grouping of data. Third, important statements were coded. Fourth, codes with similar meanings were grouped into themes, which were organized under the six dimensions of Ryff (1989), with sub-themes derived from the data. Fifth, the themes were interpreted to give an overall picture of the case and related to Ryff's theory and to the concept of social withdrawal. Coding tables and analytic notes were kept as an audit trail.

3.5 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Data quality was supported by four criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For credibility, the researchers used member checking. At the end of the second interview the interviewer summarized the main points (difficulty interacting with classmates, few close friends, seeking friends' views when deciding, attending campus events when close friends do, and a preference for solitude) and the participant confirmed them. Credibility was further supported by repeated reading of the transcripts and by triangulating the participant's account with the informant's interview and the initial observation. For transferability, the participant and context are described in detail so that readers can judge the applicability of the findings to similar situations. For dependability, each stage from participant selection to analysis was documented in an audit trail. For confirmability, recordings, transcripts, coding tables, and analytic notes were retained so that findings can be traced to the data.

Before each interview, participants were informed of the aims, procedures, and benefits of the study, the confidentiality of their data, and their right to stop at any time without consequence. The participant signed an informed consent form, and the informant gave consent to take part and to be recorded. The participant and informant are identified only by code, the data are used for academic purposes only and stored securely, and details that could identify them have been omitted from this report.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis produced an uneven profile across Ryff's six dimensions. Table 3 summarizes the main patterns, and the sections that follow present the findings for each dimension together with their interpretation. The labels in the last column of Table 3 are the authors' interpretive judgments based on the interview material, not scores from a psychometric scale.

Table 3. *Summary of Findings Across the Six Dimensions*

Dimension	Pattern in Participant A	Informant's view (I-1)	Interpretation
Self-acceptance	Unsure who he is; low confidence despite valuing his appearance; cannot accept his habit of solitude; says he has not accepted himself; accepts strengths inconsistently; dissatisfied in peer interaction; wants to grow.	Overthinks and sometimes thinks negatively; doubts himself in presentations and question sessions.	Low
Positive relations with others	Limited, selective relationships; limits contact because peers seem incompatible; keeps problems to himself; passive in initiating contact; about five fairly close and two close friends; close to his mother.	Relations "quite good" but with certain classmates only; prefers keeping problems inside; unsure of close friends.	Low
Autonomy	Decides by himself and feels sure, yet seeks friends' views; parents sometimes decide; avoids conflict; limited public speaking; uses entertainment to ease problems.	Often hesitant and easily influenced; sometimes sure, sometimes not.	Fairly good, inconsistent
Environmental mastery	Manages classes, assignments, and exercise; uncomfortable in crowds; rarely joins organizational activities; difficulty waking early; joins events only if close friends do.	Capable of managing responsibilities; adapts "so far"; seems anti-social and goes home after class.	Adequate for academic routines, limited socially
Purpose in life	Wants to be better and make his parents, especially his mother, proud; mother as main motivation; wants a job near home; wishes to be active on campus.	Probably motivated by parents; wants to become a school counselor.	Strong
Personal growth	Behavioral change from a troubled school past; more mature mindset; wakes earlier; bolder in asking questions; learned that change takes time; wants to develop his potential.	More active in class recently; motivated by seeing friends participate.	Strong, still developing

4.1 Self-Acceptance

Participant A had not yet fully accepted himself, and this showed in several ways. First, he found it hard to describe who he was. Asked how he saw himself, he answered, "I don't really understand," and "I just don't

know myself," explaining that it was "because I'm often at the boarding house" (A-1). The informant likewise described him as someone who "overthinks" and sometimes "thinks negatively" (I-1).

Second, his confidence remained low even though he valued his physical appearance as an asset. He said it helped him be more confident when going places, "but right now I'm still not confident enough" (A-1). The informant observed that in class presentations he sometimes could do the task but hesitated, and that in question-and-answer sessions he held back from asking questions he had in mind (I-1).

Third, he struggled to accept his habit of being alone because, in his words, "it can't be changed" (A-1). Asked whether he had accepted himself as he was overall, he answered "No," and gave as the reason that he did not socialize enough (A-1). In the second interview he was still unsure ("I think not yet, but I don't know") and described his acceptance as inconsistent: "Sometimes I accept my strengths, but sometimes I accept my weaknesses less" (A-2). He was aware of his strengths and weaknesses as a student. He named his persistence in attending class despite often being late as a strength, and a lack of initiative, seldom asking classmates for help, and passivity in class as weaknesses (A-2). He wanted to grow "very much" but felt unable, for now, to accept himself: "I'd like to, but I don't think I can yet" (A-2). He was also dissatisfied with himself ("not very satisfied, but what can you do"), particularly in interactions with friends (A-2).

These accounts match the pattern Ryff (1989) described for low self-acceptance: dissatisfaction with oneself, uncertainty about one's identity, and difficulty accepting personal limitations. Notably, the participant himself linked his non-acceptance to a lack of socializing. This is consistent with studies reporting that loneliness and self-esteem accompany psychological well-being among students (Hayundaka & Yuniardi, 2023) and that adjustment and social support are related to better well-being (Purbandhini et al., 2025). Our design, however, cannot establish the direction of influence. Limited social contact may reduce the feedback and affirmation through which students come to know and value themselves, while low self-acceptance may in turn make social contact less appealing. His account of feeling at once lonely and comfortable when alone (Section 4.2) suggests that both processes may operate together.

4.2 Positive Relations with Others

Participant A described relationships that were adequate but narrow. He characterized his relations with campus friends as "quite good," explaining that some friends were close and some were not, and that he interacted mostly with classmates and occasionally with students from other programs (A-1). The informant also described his relationships as quite good and his way of interacting as ordinary, like most people, but added that in class he befriends only certain people and not everyone (I-1).

He limited his contact with others, partly because he felt most peers were not a good match for him. He said conversations were sometimes "toxic" and that friends were often simply busy (A-1). He spent more time alone at present ("just more comfortable"), a pattern he dated to roughly the past year (A-1). His feelings about this were mixed: "Sometimes I feel lonely, but what can I do… sometimes there's comfort in it too" (A-1). He tended to keep problems to himself ("Who do I tell? I just keep it in"), and when asked whether he had anyone to confide in, he answered "No," although he said he sometimes did tell others (A-1). The informant likewise thought he preferred to keep things inside (I-1).

The participant was aware that solitude affected his social life. He rated its effect as strong and negative: "People want to have many friends, so if I rarely interact, I don't have friends," and he often did not join

when friends went out together (A-1). The informant, too, thought that his preference for being alone made it hard for him to develop (I-1). In the second interview he reported about five fairly close friends in class, of whom only about two were truly close, with whom he visited each other's boarding houses and shared stories (A-2). The informant, by contrast, said he thought there were no close friends, "or maybe I just don't know" (I-1). The participant's style was passive: "If I'm invited to chat, I chat; if not, I play on my phone" (A-2). In group assignments he wanted to approach classmates but was reluctant to make the first move and waited to be invited, and afterward he lost interest in continuing the conversation (A-2). He described his relationship with the wider class as "not yet quite good" (A-2).

In contrast to these peer relations, his relationship with his family, especially his mother, was warm. They talked about school and daily life, and he named his mother as the one person who could understand him (A-1). The informant confirmed that his relationship with his parents was fairly good, though perhaps with only one of them (I-1).

The participant thus showed what Ryff (1989) described as difficulty in building broad, meaningful relationships: a limited circle, selective contact, reluctance to confide, and passivity in initiating contact. This fits the characterization of social withdrawal as a restriction of interpersonal relationships and a preference for solitude (Rubin et al., 2009), and it echoes the link between loneliness and well-being reported by Hayundaka and Yuniardi (2023). His own reasoning, that solitude leaves him without friends, describes a self-reinforcing loop in which withdrawal reduces the chances of forming the relationships that might otherwise buffer it. At the same time, the case shows that withdrawal need not mean the absence of all intimacy: he kept a trusting bond with his mother and with a few friends. The gap between his account of close friends and the informant's uncertainty may mean that some friendships lie outside the informant's view, but our data cannot settle this.

4.3 Autonomy

Participant A showed fairly good but inconsistent autonomy. He said he made decisions by choosing "whichever is better," guided by his interests (for example, when choosing a study program), and that he felt "very sure" about them (A-1). In the second interview he said that in the end he could decide by himself, while sometimes asking friends for their views in case theirs were better (A-2). He admitted that he was sometimes influenced by others' opinions, "if there's something right in it" (A-1). The informant described him as often hesitant and easily influenced, giving the example that after asking for a hairstyle suggestion he adopted it right away, and as "sometimes sure, sometimes not" about his choices (I-1). His freedom of choice was also sometimes limited by his parents: "If my parents' opinion is good, I follow it; if it doesn't suit me, I follow myself" (A-1).

In disagreements he said that if the other person was right, that was fine, and if he was right, he held to his own view (A-1). He tended, however, to avoid conflict. When a classmate's answer in a discussion was only slightly wrong, he said, "I just let it go," because "I don't want to complicate other people's lives" (A-2). He admitted that he sometimes felt like debating but gave it up, and he attributed this partly to limited public-speaking skills (A-2). Under pressure, he usually turned to games, YouTube, music, and TikTok, which he said could ease problems but did not help him deal with them (A-1).

The pattern suggests that social withdrawal does not necessarily undermine the capacity to decide for oneself, which Ryff (1989) describes as determining one's choices according to personal standards. What appears

affected is the readiness to voice opinions and face disagreement, which seems tied to low social confidence, a feature associated with social withdrawal in the literature (Rubin et al., 2009). His reliance on solitary entertainment to relieve stress also suggests that he regulates distress largely on his own.

4.4 Environmental Mastery

Participant A managed his academic routine reasonably well: classes in the morning, then assignments at the boarding house, along with regular exercise (A-1). In his free time he went out with friends, played games, and exercised (A-1). The informant judged him capable of managing his activities and responsibilities, though with some reservation (I-1).

His mastery of the social environment was weaker. He mentioned belonging to a student association, yet in the second interview said he rarely took part in organizational activities "because I don't really like socializing" and was "more comfortable alone" (A-2). In free time on campus, such as when a lecturer was late, he usually played on his phone or played games and chatted only if invited (A-2). He felt "not very comfortable" in crowded places and would "pretend not to see people" unless he was on his phone (A-1). The informant recalled that when friends were playing games together at the participant's boarding house, he stayed upstairs instead of joining, "maybe just wanting to be alone" (I-1).

Asked whether he could adapt to the campus environment, he answered "Not really," explaining that everyone is different and some people are "toxic"; when facing new changes or problems, his response was to be alone (A-1). The informant offered a different view: "so far you could say he is able," because he was doing fine in lectures and activities (I-1). The same informant, however, described him as seeming "anti-social," going straight home after class (I-1). Practical difficulties also limited his participation. He wanted to attend a regular campus student activity but often arrived late because he could not fall asleep until three or four in the morning, despite setting alarms and forcing himself to sleep (A-2). His participation also depended on his close friends: "If my friends join, I try to join"; if they did not, he stayed away and so remained less close to others (A-2). He named friendship as his biggest challenge as a student, which he handled mainly by tolerating it, with "no other way" (A-1).

His environmental mastery was therefore uneven. He was competent in structuring academic and personal routines, which reflects managing everyday demands in Ryff's (1989) sense, but he struggled with the social side of the campus, where his strategies were mainly avoidance (staying alone, using his phone) and dependence on close friends' presence. The difference between his self-assessment and the informant's view suggests that academic functioning is visible to others, whereas the effort and discomfort of social adjustment are largely private. Purbandhini et al. (2025) linked adjustment to campus with psychological well-being; in this case, it is social rather than academic adjustment that remains difficult.

4.5 Purpose in Life

In contrast with the dimensions above, Participant A had a clear and meaningful sense of purpose. His main aim for his studies was to "become better"; because he had troubled his parents in high school, he now wanted to make them happy (A-1, A-2). His parents, especially his mother, were his main source of motivation: "Because there are parents who must be made happy," and what helped him get back up when tired or discouraged was himself and his parents (A-1). The most important thing in his life was his mother, "because

only Umi [Mom] can understand me" (A-1). The informant likewise guessed that his motivation came from his parents, particularly his mother (I-1).

He also held concrete aspirations: to make his parents happy, to become wealthy, and, after graduating, to find a job near home so that he could keep looking after his mother (A-1). The informant reported that he wanted to become a school counselor (I-1). He wished to be active on campus, in class and in organizations, but felt "not yet able" (A-2). Asked what kept him going through his studies despite these difficulties, he said it was his parents: "I want to prove to my parents that I've started to change," since he had been a troublesome student before (A-2).

His purpose is clear, future-oriented, and meaningful, matching Ryff's (1989) description of high purpose in life, in which individuals hold goals and find meaning in their present and past. Withdrawal from campus social life did not erase this sense of direction. As a dimension concerned with meaning and direction (Ryff, 1989), purpose in life may be less directly dependent on the quality of peer relationships. It is, however, relationally anchored: his motivation rests on his bond with his parents. Supportive family ties may thus sustain him while peer ties are thin. Because his purpose is expressed largely in terms of what he owes his parents, future work could examine how far it is also self-endorsed.

4.6 Personal Growth

Participant A perceived himself as having changed positively since entering university. He described a shift in behavior: "I used to be very naughty, now it's rare," and he no longer skipped class as he had often done in high school (A-1, A-2). From this he learned that "you don't have to be naughty forever; there's a time to change," and that people can change, "but it takes time": slowly and not all at once (A-1, A-2). He also noticed a change in mindset ("My way of thinking used to be very childlike; now it's better than before"), which he attributed to learning and to watching other people's experiences, and he woke up early more often than at the start of university (A-2).

He had also become somewhat bolder in class. In the early semesters he rarely asked questions because he was afraid and nervous; "it's still like that, but not as bad as before" (A-2). He said he wanted to develop his potential (A-1). The informant corroborated these changes, saying that the participant used to be inactive in class but had recently become active, motivated by seeing his friends participate (I-1).

These accounts reflect Ryff's (1989) notion of personal growth: a sense of continued development, learning from experience, and openness to change. Although the participant struggled with confidence and self-acceptance (Section 4.1), these difficulties did not prevent a sense of growth, which suggests that well-being dimensions can vary independently within a person rather than rise and fall together as aggregate scores might imply. The informant's corroboration strengthens the credibility of this finding. Growth was nonetheless incomplete: he was still nervous about asking questions, and his wish to be more active on campus remained unfulfilled.

4.7 Social Withdrawal and the Profile of Psychological Well-Being

Across the six dimensions, not all aspects of well-being were affected equally. The dimensions most clearly affected were those that depend on social and relational experience: self-acceptance and positive relations with others were low, and environmental mastery was limited in the social domain. By contrast, purpose in life and personal growth remained strong, and autonomy was reasonably developed though inconsistent.

Withdrawal in this case thus appears to be associated mainly with the social and relational dimensions of well-being rather than with its internal, meaning-oriented dimensions, in line with Ryff's (1989) description of the latter as concerned with meaning and direction.

Two further points emerge. First, the participant's experience was ambivalent: he felt lonely yet comfortable alone, wanted to be more active yet found it hard to take the first step, and coped with distress mostly alone through solitary entertainment. Such ambivalence is easily missed by scale-based measures and illustrates the value of qualitative case studies for this phenomenon. Second, the findings are consistent with research linking social support, adjustment, and loneliness to psychological well-being (Hayundaka & Yuniardi, 2023; Purbandhini et al., 2025), while suggesting that, for withdrawn students, strengths in purpose and growth could be mobilized as resources. Because this is a single case without a comparison group, we do not claim that withdrawal caused the observed pattern. The study describes how well-being looked for a student who withdrew socially, and the relationship between the two is more plausibly reciprocal than one-directional.

5. Conclusion

This study described the psychological well-being of one university student with social withdrawal tendencies across Ryff's six dimensions. The findings show an uneven profile. Self-acceptance and positive relations with others were low, environmental mastery was adequate for academic routines but limited in the social environment, and autonomy was fairly good but inconsistent, while purpose in life and personal growth were strong. The participant's social withdrawal therefore appears to be associated mainly with the social and relational dimensions of well-being, and it did not remove his sense of purpose or his capacity for growth.

These findings carry several practical implications. University counseling and psychological services could develop early detection for students who show signs of withdrawal and offer support that focuses on self-acceptance and the gradual development of social skills, alongside promotive and preventive programs that foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment. Support can build on strengths that withdrawn students already have, such as clear goals and a willingness to change, as seen in this case. Students who tend to withdraw may be encouraged to increase their social involvement step by step and to seek help from close friends, academic advisors, or campus counselors when difficulties arise.

Several limitations should be noted. The study involved one participant, one supporting informant, and one private university, so the findings describe this case and cannot be generalized to all students with withdrawal tendencies. Social withdrawal was judged through observation, information from a close peer, and an initial interview rather than a validated scale, and the study did not distinguish characteristics such as gender, age, or semester. The data relied on self-report and a single observer, parts of the participant's speech were in Minangkabau and translated, and the interviewer's prior acquaintance with the participant may have shaped rapport and interpretation despite the safeguards described. Future research should include more participants with varied characteristics and from different institutions, draw on multiple informants such as family members, close friends, or academic advisors, and use longitudinal designs to follow the development of well-being over time. Studies could also examine factors that shape well-being, such as social support and coping strategies, compare students with and without withdrawal tendencies, and develop instruments or interventions to enhance the well-being of students who withdraw socially.

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