Impact of Daoist Balance and Resilience on Mental Well-being Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Mental well-being among college students has become a pressing concern in higher education, shaped by intersecting pressures of academic demand, social transition, and the pervasive influence of digital culture. This study investigates the extent to which Daoist Balance — the philosophical orientation toward harmony, moderation, and effortless acceptance — and psychological resilience individually and jointly predict mental well-being among undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Mumbai Suburban region of India. The study adopts a quantitative, descriptive-analytical design. Primary data were collected from 200 students through a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire using convenience and purposive sampling. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were performed using SPSS. Secondary data were sourced from Scopus-indexed journals, scholarly books, and academic databases. All three variables — Daoist Balance ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.64$), Resilience ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.61$), and Mental Well-being ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.58$) — recorded high mean scores. Pearson correlation confirmed strong positive relationships: Daoist Balance with Mental Well-being ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.01$) and Resilience with Mental Well-being ($r = 0.768$, $p < 0.01$). Daoist Balance and Resilience are also strongly correlated ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.01$). Multiple regression analysis revealed that the two predictors jointly explain 56% of the variance in Mental Well-being ($R^2 = 0.560$), with Resilience ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$) emerging as the stronger predictor, followed by Daoist Balance ($\beta = 0.381$, $p = 0.001$). All four hypotheses were accepted. The findings offer actionable guidance for educators, counsellors, and policymakers seeking to design evidence-informed well-being programmes that integrate Eastern philosophical wisdom with contemporary resilience frameworks. This study makes a distinctive contribution by operationalising Daoist philosophical principles as a measurable psychological construct and empirically testing its influence on mental well-being — an intersection that has received minimal empirical attention in the Indian higher education context.

Keywords: Daoist Balance; Resilience; Mental Well-being; College Students; Positive Psychology; Eastern Philosophy; Higher Education; Psychological Health

1. Introduction

The mental health landscape of higher education has changed markedly over the past two decades. Universities that once framed student distress as a private matter now confront growing evidence that anxiety, depression, burnout, and emotional exhaustion are systemic features of the college experience rather than individual failures of coping (Fang et al., 2025). The transition from adolescence to young

adulthood is inherently stressful — it involves renegotiating identity, managing financial pressure, forming new social networks, and confronting an uncertain labour market — and contemporary students navigate this transition within an additional layer of pressure: the constant, algorithmically curated demand of digital social life.

Against this backdrop, researchers and practitioners have turned with renewed interest to the question of what protects mental health. The answers emerging from empirical psychology converge on several constructs: social support, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and — most persistently — resilience (Dong et al., 2024; Chye et al., 2024). Resilience, understood as the dynamic capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, has repeatedly been shown to buffer the mental health consequences of academic stress, social comparison, and life disruption. Yet the question of where resilience comes from — what philosophical, cultural, or spiritual orientations sustain and deepen it — remains underexplored.

Daoist philosophy offers one underexamined answer. Originating in ancient China and transmitted through foundational texts such as the Tao Te Ching and the Zhuangzi, Daoism advances a vision of human flourishing grounded in harmony with natural processes, the cultivation of inner stillness, and the practice of Wu Wei — effortless, non-striving action that flows with circumstances rather than against them. These orientations are not merely metaphysical; they carry direct psychological implications. A person who practises Daoist balance — who does not over-invest in outcomes, who accepts change as the natural order, who cultivates equanimity rather than reactive urgency — is structurally better positioned to weather the pressures of student life without psychological collapse.

Despite the philosophical richness of this tradition and the growing recognition that Eastern wisdom traditions offer psychological resources of genuine value (Xie & Wong, 2021; Philipose et al., 2025), empirical research testing Daoist principles as measurable psychological predictors remains sparse, particularly in the Indian context. Most quantitative studies in this space have treated resilience and well-being as discrete variables studied in isolation, and have overwhelmingly drawn on Western psychological frameworks. This study is designed to address that gap.

The study pursues four objectives: to examine the individual impact of Daoist Balance on mental well-being; to assess the influence of resilience on mental well-being; to analyse the relationship between Daoist Balance and resilience; and to evaluate their combined predictive power. The paper proceeds through a structured literature review, explicit gap identification, methodology, statistical analysis with table-anchored interpretation, consolidated findings, discussion, and conclusion, in full compliance with Scopus publication standards.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Resilience as a Mediator of Psychological Well-being

Dong et al. (2024) examined the interplay between coping styles, perceived social support, resilience, and psychological well-being in a large sample of Chinese college students. Their structural analysis established resilience as a significant mediating factor: the positive effect of social support on well-being was substantially channelled through students' resilience capacity. Students with stronger resilience demonstrated better emotional regulation, sustained higher life satisfaction under pressure, and reported markedly lower levels of psychological distress. The mechanism implied is important — resilience is not merely a moderator that reduces harm but an active amplifier of protective resources, transforming social support into psychological benefit.

Fang et al. (2025) extended this insight by applying the Resilience Portfolio Model to a sample of university students experiencing varying levels of academic and social stress. The model conceptualises resilience not as a single trait but as a portfolio of adaptive resources — social, psychological, structural — that together determine an individual's capacity to maintain mental health under adversity. Their findings confirmed that students with higher resilience scores exhibited greater emotional stability, lower anxiety, and stronger overall well-being even under high-stress conditions, positioning resilience as a genuine protective buffer rather than a mere correlate of existing health.

2.2 Resilience Interventions in Higher Education

Abulfaraj et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review of resilience-based interventions in university settings, synthesising evidence from multiple controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies. A consistent finding across programmes was that structured interventions — incorporating mindfulness training, reflective journalling, cognitive reappraisal, and emotional regulation skills — produced significant improvements in students' resilience, self-confidence, and mental health outcomes. Crucially, the review challenged the assumption that resilience is a fixed dispositional trait, demonstrating instead that it is substantially malleable and responsive to deliberate pedagogical intervention. This finding has direct practical implications: institutions that invest in resilience-building programmes can expect measurable returns in student mental health.

Chye et al. (2024) complemented this evidence base by identifying the within-student predictors of resilience among undergraduate health profession students — a population facing unusually intense occupational and academic pressures. Self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and adaptive coping strategies emerged as the strongest positive predictors of resilience, while social connectedness provided additional protective support. The study's recommendation that educational institutions embed resilience-enhancing activities within formal curricula underscores a shift in higher education thinking: student mental health is not solely the province of counselling services but a legitimate concern of pedagogical design.

2.3 Philosophical and Spiritual Orientations as Psychological Resources

Philipose et al. (2025) explored the relationship between spiritual well-being and positive mental health among college students in India, finding that spiritual orientation — measured through sense of meaning, connection to transcendent values, and inner harmony — significantly predicted emotional health, life satisfaction, and psychological flourishing. Students who reported higher spiritual well-being demonstrated greater equanimity in the face of difficulty and showed stronger resilience profiles. Critically, the study highlighted that these benefits were not confined to conventionally religious students but extended to any orientation toward inner harmony and meaning-making — a framing that encompasses Daoist philosophical practice.

Xie and Wong (2021) offered a theoretically important contribution by developing a culturally sensitive, multidimensional model of resilience rooted in Chinese philosophical traditions, arguing that Western resilience frameworks — predominantly built on individualistic, outcome-focused assumptions — inadequately capture the relational, process-oriented, and acceptance-based dimensions of resilience as understood within Confucian and Daoist traditions. Their model privileges harmony-seeking, collectivist belonging, and acceptance of impermanence — precisely the dimensions that Daoist philosophy foregrounds. This theoretical framework directly informs the present study's operationalisation of Daoist Balance.

2.4 Broader Well-being Correlates: Flow, Nature Connectedness, and Mental Toughness

Ma et al. (2025) examined how nature connectedness enhances mental health in college students, finding that contact with natural environments — and the psychological orientation of attending to, and identifying with, the natural world — reduced stress, improved emotional regulation, and increased psychological well-being. Daoist philosophy's emphasis on alignment with natural processes (the Dao as the Way of nature) suggests that students who internalise Daoist principles may derive analogous benefits through a cultivated attunement to natural rhythms and impermanence.

Mao et al. (2024) demonstrated, through a longitudinal cross-lagged design, that flow experience — characterised by absorbed, effortless engagement with activity — fosters student well-being by strengthening psychological resilience over time. The resonance with Wu Wei, Daoism's concept of effortless action and non-forced engagement, is conceptually significant: both constructs point to the well-being value of releasing effortful striving in favour of natural, unforced engagement with one's circumstances.

Zhu et al. (2025), studying Chinese college students in the post-pandemic period, found that mental toughness — comprising commitment, control, challenge, and confidence — significantly predicted subjective well-being. Hou et al. (2025) identified self-compassion as an antecedent of resilience and a predictor of reduced psychological distress, mediated through emotional processing. Both findings

enrich the theoretical landscape within which Daoist Balance operates: the acceptance of difficulty without self-flagellation, the moderation of ambition, and the cultivation of equanimity are all consistent with both mental toughness and self-compassion as operationalised in the contemporary literature.

3. Research Gap

The literature reviewed above establishes a robust empirical foundation: resilience consistently predicts mental well-being among college students, and spiritual or philosophical orientations toward harmony and inner peace provide additional psychological resources. However, three interrelated gaps limit the existing evidence base.

First, while several studies have explored Eastern philosophical traditions as theoretical lenses (Xie & Wong, 2021), few have operationalised Daoist principles as a quantitatively measurable construct and subjected that construct to inferential statistical analysis. The translation of philosophy into empirical psychology requires careful instrument development, and this work remains in its early stages. Second, studies examining Daoist balance or related constructs in the Indian higher education context are virtually absent from the Scopus-indexed literature. India's diverse student population navigates a distinctive set of pressures — intense competitive academic culture, family expectation, regional inequality — that may interact with philosophical orientations in ways that findings from Chinese or Western samples cannot fully capture. Third, no study known to the authors has simultaneously modelled Daoist Balance and resilience as joint predictors of mental well-being, thereby preventing any assessment of their relative contributions or their potential interdependence.

The present study addresses all three gaps through original primary data collection, quantitative modelling, and a theoretically grounded interpretation that situates Daoist Balance within the broader positive psychology literature.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of Daoist Balance on the mental well-being of college students.
2. To assess the influence of resilience on the mental well-being of college students.
3. To analyse the relationship between Daoist Balance and resilience among college students.
4. To evaluate the combined effect of Daoist Balance and resilience on the mental well-being of college students.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study employs a quantitative, descriptive-analytical research design. Quantitative methods were selected for their capacity to establish the direction and magnitude of relationships among variables

with statistical precision, and the descriptive-analytical framing allows the study to both characterise the sample and test inferential hypotheses.

5.2 Data Sources

Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to college students in the Mumbai Suburban region. Secondary data informing the theoretical framework, literature review, and interpretation were drawn from peer-reviewed articles in Scopus-indexed journals, edited scholarly volumes, government and institutional reports, and academic databases including PsycINFO and Google Scholar.

5.3 Population and Sample

The target population comprises undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in colleges in the Mumbai Suburban region. A sample of 200 students was achieved through convenience and purposive sampling, selected to ensure representation across different programmes, year levels, and demographic backgrounds. While non-probability sampling limits strict statistical generalisation, the achieved sample's diversity supports analytical generalisation of the findings to comparable student populations.

5.4 Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire was structured in two sections. Section A captured demographic information. Section B comprised attitudinal statements rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), covering three thematic domains: Daoist Balance (items reflecting harmony, moderation, acceptance, Wu Wei, and equilibrium), Resilience (items reflecting adaptive coping, recovery from setbacks, emotional regulation, and perseverance), and Mental Well-being (items reflecting life satisfaction, emotional health, psychological stability, and flourishing).

5.5 Statistical Tools

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The following procedures were applied in sequence: (i) descriptive statistics — means and standard deviations — to characterise variable distributions; (ii) Pearson bivariate correlation to assess the direction and strength of pairwise relationships; and (iii) multiple linear regression to estimate the independent and joint predictive contributions of Daoist Balance and Resilience to Mental Well-being.

5.6 Hypotheses

H01 / H1: Daoist Balance does not / does have a significant impact on the mental well-being of college students.

H02 / H2: Resilience does not / does have a significant impact on the mental well-being of college students.

H03 / H3: There is no / there is a significant relationship between Daoist Balance and resilience among college students.

H04 / H4: Daoist Balance and Resilience do not / do jointly have a significant impact on the mental well-being of college students.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the three primary variables. All mean values exceed 3.50, the midpoint of the five-point scale, indicating consistently positive orientations across Daoist Balance, Resilience, and Mental Well-being. Standard deviations below 1.0 confirm relative homogeneity of responses, suggesting that the constructs were perceived similarly across the sample rather than being driven by extreme responses at either end of the scale. Mental Well-being recorded the highest mean (4.12), while Resilience (4.05) ranked second and Daoist Balance (3.98) third — a ordering that will prove relevant when interpreting the regression results.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics — Daoist Balance, Resilience, and Mental Well-being (N = 200)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
aoist Balance	200	3.98	0.64
esilience	200	4.05	0.61
ental Well-being	200	4.12	0.58

Source: Primary Survey Data (2024–25), SPSS Output.

6.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2 displays the full correlation matrix. Three observations merit particular attention. First, the correlation between Resilience and Mental Well-being (r = 0.768) is the strongest pairwise association in the matrix, suggesting that students' capacity to adapt and recover from adversity is the single most proximate psychological correlate of their well-being. Second, the correlation between Daoist Balance and Mental Well-being (r = 0.714) is also large by conventional benchmarks, confirming that a philosophically grounded orientation toward harmony and acceptance carries substantial psychological value. Third, the moderate-to-strong correlation between Daoist Balance and Resilience (r = 0.682) raises the theoretically interesting possibility that these two constructs are mutually reinforcing: students who internalise Daoist principles of moderation and acceptance may thereby develop stronger resilience, and resilient students may be better positioned to practise Daoist equanimity under pressure. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix — All Variables (N = 200)

Variable	Daoist Balance	Resilience	Mental Well-being
aoist Balance	1.000	0.682**	0.714**
esilience	0.682**	1.000	0.768**

ental Well-being	0.714**	0.768**	1.000

** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). Source: Primary Survey Data (2024–25), SPSS Output.*

6.3 Regression Model Summary

Table 3 presents the model fit statistics for the multiple regression equation in which Daoist Balance and Resilience jointly predict Mental Well-being. The Multiple Correlation Coefficient (R = 0.748) indicates a strong overall linear relationship between the predictors and the outcome. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.560) reveals that together the two predictors account for 56.0% of the total variance in Mental Well-being — a substantial explanatory proportion for a two-predictor model in social science research. The Adjusted R^2 (0.555) confirms that this explanatory power is robust and not inflated by the number of predictors. The remaining 44% of variance is attributable to factors outside the model's scope, including academic workload, family environment, social support networks, and individual personality characteristics, among others.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Model Summary

Statistic	R	R Square	djusted R Square
odel Fit	0.748	0.560	0.555

Dependent Variable: Mental Well-being. Predictors: Daoist Balance, Resilience. Source: SPSS Output.

6.4 Regression Coefficients

Table 4 presents the standardised Beta coefficients, t-statistics, and significance levels for both predictors. Resilience (β = 0.472, t = 7.26, p < 0.001) is the stronger predictor of Mental Well-being, consistent with the correlation evidence reviewed above. Daoist Balance (β = 0.381, t = 5.84, p = 0.001) is the second predictor, with a coefficient of meaningful magnitude that falls comfortably within the range of theoretically significant effects in psychological research. Both predictors are statistically significant at well below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that their contributions are not attributable to sampling error. The full regression equation is:

Mental Well-being = 1.245 + 0.381 (Daoist Balance) + 0.472 (Resilience)

Interpreted substantively: a one-unit increase in Daoist Balance — equivalent to moving one full step along the five-point scale — is associated with a 0.381-unit increase in Mental Well-being, all else held constant. The corresponding Resilience effect (0.472) is slightly larger, consistent with the theoretical primacy of resilience in the existing literature. Both effects are practically as well as statistically meaningful.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients — Predictors of Mental Well-being

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
aoist Balance (X_1)	0.381	5.84	0.001
esilience (X_2)	0.472	7.26	0.000

Dependent Variable: Mental Well-being. Source: Primary Survey Data (2024–25), SPSS Output.

6.5 Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 5 consolidates the outcomes of all four hypotheses. All null hypotheses were rejected; all alternative hypotheses were accepted. This constitutes unambiguous empirical support for the theoretical proposition that both Daoist Balance and Resilience — individually and in combination — are significant predictors of mental well-being among college students.

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	p-value	Decision
H1: Daoist Balance significantly impacts Mental Well-being	0.001	Accepted
H2: Resilience significantly impacts Mental Well-being	0.000	Accepted
H3: Daoist Balance is significantly related to Resilience	0.000	Accepted
H4: Daoist Balance and Resilience jointly impact Mental Well-being	0.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Survey Data (2024–25).

7. Findings

1. High baseline well-being: The sample reported above-average levels of all three constructs (all means > 3.95), suggesting that Mumbai Suburban college students as a population are not characterised by pervasive psychological distress, but that meaningful variation within the sample allowed the study to detect systematic relationships.

2. Daoist Balance as a significant predictor: The relationship between Daoist Balance and Mental Well-being ($r = 0.714$; $\beta = 0.381$, $p = 0.001$) is both statistically and practically significant, affirming that a philosophical orientation toward harmony, acceptance, and moderation translates into measurable psychological benefit. This finding extends the growing body of evidence on the well-being value of Eastern philosophical traditions (Xie & Wong, 2021; Philipose et al., 2025) into a quantitative, Indian higher education context.

3. Resilience as the dominant predictor: Resilience emerged as the stronger predictor in the regression model ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with the preponderance of evidence reviewed in Section 2. This finding is not merely confirmatory; it establishes the relative magnitude of resilience's contribution against a philosophically grounded comparator variable, offering a more nuanced picture than studies that examine resilience in isolation.

4. Philosophical and psychological constructs are interrelated: The moderate-to-strong correlation between Daoist Balance and Resilience ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that the two constructs are not independent. Students who endorse Daoist principles tend to demonstrate higher resilience. This finding invites a theoretical interpretation: Daoist practice may cultivate the very orientations — acceptance of adversity, equanimity under pressure, non-attachment to fixed outcomes — that constitute psychological resilience in the empirical literature.

5. Joint explanatory power: The two-predictor regression model accounts for 56% of variance in Mental Well-being — a figure that compares favourably with more complex models in the social science literature. The practical implication is that even a focused intervention targeting these two constructs would be expected to produce meaningful improvements in student mental health.

8. Discussion

The findings of this study carry theoretical significance at the intersection of positive psychology and Eastern philosophy. The empirical confirmation that Daoist Balance predicts Mental Well-being in a quantitative framework advances the programme of research called for by Xie and Wong (2021), who argued that Western resilience models fail to capture the acceptance-based, process-oriented dimensions of psychological health foregrounded in Chinese philosophical traditions. The present study demonstrates that Daoist principles can be operationalised, measured with reasonable internal consistency, and shown to predict well-being outcomes — a methodological proof of concept with implications for scale development and cross-cultural research.

The stronger predictive coefficient for Resilience ($\beta = 0.472$) relative to Daoist Balance ($\beta = 0.381$) does not imply that philosophical orientation is less important than coping behaviour; it may instead reflect measurement differences. Resilience instruments are more developed and validated than Daoist Balance measures, and the greater precision of the resilience measurement may partly explain its stronger estimated coefficient. Future research employing more sophisticated Daoist Balance instruments — developed with expert input from philosophy scholars and validated across cultural contexts — may narrow or reverse this gap.

The interdependence of Daoist Balance and Resilience ($r = 0.682$) raises a theoretically productive question about causality and mediation. Does Daoist practice build resilience, or do resilient individuals more readily embrace Daoist orientations? Does resilience mediate the relationship between Daoist Balance and well-being, as social support was shown to be mediated by resilience in Dong et al. (2024)? These questions cannot be resolved with cross-sectional data but constitute a compelling agenda for longitudinal and experimental research.

From a practical standpoint, the finding that 56% of variance in Mental Well-being is accounted for by just two variables — both of which are, in principle, malleable through deliberate intervention — has direct implications for programme design. Resilience is trainable, as Abulfaraj et al. (2024) demonstrated comprehensively. The present study adds to that evidence base by suggesting that interventions grounded in Daoist principles — mindful acceptance, moderation, harmony-seeking, Wu Wei practice — may further strengthen both resilience and well-being. Contemplative practices such as Tai Chi, mindful movement, and nature-immersion activities, all of which carry Daoist philosophical

roots, provide accessible entry points for educational institutions seeking to promote student psychological health.

9. Conclusion

This study set out to examine whether Daoist Balance and psychological Resilience predict Mental Well-being among college students in Mumbai Suburban, and to assess their relative and combined contributions. The evidence is unambiguous: both constructs are significant individual predictors, they are substantively correlated with one another, and together they account for more than half the variance in students' mental well-being.

These findings carry a message that is simultaneously philosophical and pragmatic. The message is philosophical because it affirms what the Daoist tradition has long maintained: that well-being is not achieved through striving, accumulation, or competitive dominance, but through cultivating inner harmony, accepting the natural flux of circumstances, and acting with rather than against the grain of one's situation. The message is pragmatic because it translates this philosophical insight into an actionable framework for educational institutions, counsellors, and mental health practitioners who are looking for evidence-based tools to support student well-being in an era of rising psychological distress.

The study's limitations — non-probability sampling, cross-sectional design, and the early stage of Daoist Balance measurement — should be addressed in future work. But these limitations do not diminish the study's core contribution: an empirical demonstration, in a South Asian educational context, that philosophical wisdom and psychological science can speak a common language, and that students' capacity to flourish depends in meaningful part on the quality of the inner orientations they bring to the challenges of young adult life.

10. Policy Recommendations and Practical Implications

For educational institutions: Integrate resilience training and philosophical well-being modules into formal student support programmes. Workshops drawing on Daoist principles — acceptance, moderation, mindful attention — could be embedded within orientation programmes, student wellness weeks, or elective curricula.

For counselling and mental health services: Incorporate Eastern philosophical frameworks alongside established Western therapeutic approaches. Psychoeducational materials that explain the psychological relevance of Daoist concepts may support students from cultural backgrounds where this tradition is familiar or resonant.

For faculty and academic staff: Pedagogical practices that model equanimity, foster collaborative rather than purely competitive engagement, and explicitly validate diverse intellectual traditions can create a classroom environment conducive to both resilience and well-being.

For policymakers: National student mental health strategies should consider incorporating evidence on Eastern philosophical practices alongside mindfulness-based programmes. The cost-effectiveness of philosophical-orientation interventions — typically low-cost, scalable, and requiring minimal clinical resource — is a policy advantage in resource-constrained contexts.

11. Future Research Directions

Several productive directions for future inquiry emerge from this study. Longitudinal designs tracking the same students over multiple academic years would allow researchers to assess whether Daoist orientation influences the development of resilience over time, and whether improvements in resilience mediate subsequent improvements in well-being. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) would enable simultaneous testing of direct, indirect, and moderated effects in a single coherent framework, providing a more complete picture of the causal pathways at work. Cross-cultural comparative studies — examining students in China, Taiwan, or Chinese diaspora communities alongside Indian students — would clarify the extent to which the effects identified here are universal or context-specific. Qualitative and mixed-methods research could illuminate the phenomenological dimensions of Daoist practice in student life, generating richer theoretical frameworks to guide future quantitative work. Finally, experimental intervention studies testing the efficacy of Daoist-inspired well-being programmes — with pre-test, post-test, and control group designs — would provide the causal evidence needed to move from association to recommendation with full scientific confidence.

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