

A Model of School Social Well-Being for Elementary School Students: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introduction is comprehensive but remains largely narrative. When you write: “several gaps remain in the literature” (paragraph beginning “Despite this growing body...”), please add 2–3 precise, testable gaps tied to your deliverables (e.g., absence of validated multidimensional models for elementary settings in Iran/Alborz; lack of prioritization evidence using BWM; lack of model confirmation using PLS-SEM). This will sharpen the logic leading to “This study aimed...”.

You describe social well-being broadly (e.g., “perceived quality of functioning in their social world”). Please add a definitional paragraph specifying what “school social well-being” means in this manuscript (boundaries vs. adjacent constructs such as school climate, belonging, peer acceptance, social support). This is important because later your model includes “school environment and atmosphere,” which overlaps conceptually with school climate; readers need a boundary statement.

Table 6 lists paths as “School social well-being → School environment and atmosphere” etc. Conceptually, dimensions should predict (or form) school social well-being, not the reverse. Please correct the arrow direction (dimension → well-being) and ensure the figures (1–2) match. If you intended a formative higher-order construct, explicitly state that school social well-being is a second-order construct formed by five dimensions, and use appropriate higher-order modeling in PLS.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence “375 questionnaires were collected from principals and teachers in elementary schools of the Alborz Province Department of Education... using simple random sampling” needs operational details: sampling frame (list of schools?), randomization unit (schools, teachers, principals?), number of schools, response rate, inclusion/exclusion criteria for respondents, and whether multiple respondents came from the same school (nesting). If nesting exists, please justify ignoring clustering or adjust analyses (e.g., robust SEs / multilevel approach).

The qualitative phase states: “research synthesis... using journals, websites, theses” and then interviews with 15 experts. Please provide: (a) search strategy (databases, years, keywords), (b) inclusion/exclusion criteria, (c) how synthesis outputs informed the interview guide, and (d) a brief interview protocol description (number of questions, example prompt). Without this, the “research synthesis” reads as unsystematic and difficult to replicate.

You write: “theoretical saturation was achieved after the twelfth interview” and later: “In interviews 13, 14, and 15, no new codes were identified.” Please add a short saturation table or narrative: what constituted “new code,” how you tracked code emergence across interviews, and whether saturation applied to themes or codes. This will strengthen qualitative rigor.

The statement “an initial version... provided to five specialists... content validity” is too vague. Please specify whether you computed CVR/CVI, how items were revised or dropped, and provide thresholds used. If you did not compute CVR/CVI, please justify and consider adding them, because your instrument is “researcher-developed.”

You report: “Ultimately, all identified factors... were approved... consensus achieved.” Please specify the fuzzy Delphi procedure: number of rounds, fuzzy numbers used (triangular?), defuzzification method, consensus threshold, criteria for dropping/retaining items, and whether any items were revised between rounds. If all items were retained, clarify whether Delphi served only as confirmation (and discuss the implications).

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.