

The Relationship between Campus Climate and Students' Flourishing: A Mediation Model Parallel University Belonging

Dhanang Budi Santosa^{ORCID}, Achmad Miftachul 'Ilmi*^{ORCID}

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Sekaran St., Semarang City, Central Java, 50229, Indonesia

*Corresponding author, email: achmadilmi@mail.unnes.ac.id

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Abstract

A study about students' flourishing shows that not all students are in an optimal psychological condition. In the context of education, a high-quality campus environment is estimated to contribute to students' flourishing psychological experiences. This aims to test the role of university belonging as a mediator in the relationship between Campus climate and student flourishing. The research uses a quantitative, correlational mediation design with stratified random sampling to examine 460 students at a selected state university. Data were collected using the campus climate scale, the university belonging scale, and the flourishing scale. Data analysis was carried out using Pearson correlation and the PROCESS Hayes Model 4 mediation. Research results show that campus climate is positively and significantly related to flourishing ($r = .434, p < .001$) and university belonging ($r = .623, p < .001$). University belonging was also found to mediate a full connection between campus climate and flourishing (indirect effect = 0.427, 95% CI [0.347, 0.507]). At the level of dimensions, university support and acceptance show the strongest mediation, whereas social connectedness shows no significant mediation. Findings show that a high-quality campus environment plays a more significant role in fostering development when students feel accepted and appreciated and become part of the university community. Research confirms the importance of students' psychosocial experiences in explaining flourishing development in the context of educational attainment.

1. Introduction

The mental health condition of students in Indonesia shows that not all students are yet in a condition of psychological prosperity or flourishing. Research Yuaridha, Rani, and Fahdhienie (2024) shows that depression is one of the mental health issues found in students and is related to various psychosocial and academic environmental factors. In addition to the findings, empirical studies said, various cases of students killing themselves that occurred in Semarang throughout 2023–2024 also show that the problem of mental health in students remains an issue that requires serious attention in the context of education tall. This shows that the psychological student's welfare is not yet optimal. From a psychological perspective, individuals tend to be more prone to experience psychological pressure, dissatisfaction with life, and difficulty in operating social functions at their own level of flourishing.

The low level of flourishing has a significant impact, with a serious risk of depression in individuals with low flourishing levels that can double compared to individuals who have high flourishing levels (Keyes, 2002). In the context of education, flourishing is understood as a condition of a welfare-optimal psychological state that allows students to develop positively in academic and psychosocial domains (Seligman, 2011). Students who are in a state of flourishing tend to function more psychologically adaptively, engage more academically, and demonstrate greater optimal capabilities in the face of demanding lectures (Sekarini, Hidayah, & Hayati, 2020). In addition, individuals with a level of flourishing height also tend to feel happy and satisfied with their lives (Shafaira & Yulianti, 2025). From a positive perspective, flourishing is influenced not only by an individual's personal characteristics but also by the quality of the social and environmental context in which the individual develops (Keyes, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2000).

In higher education, the campus climate's role in enhancing students' subjective well-being is important (Prasetyo, 2018). Some studies show that experiencing a positive learning environment and a supportive campus environment are associated with increased flourishing among students (Fink, 2014; Zhao & Hua, 2025). Thus, the relationship seems not to work in a fully direct way. Campus climate is an external factor, whereas flourishing develops through students' internal psychological experiences. Therefore, it is a necessary psychological mechanism that explains how the campus environment relates to flourishing students.

Psychologically, the bridge connection was estimated as a sense of belonging to a university. University belonging refers to the extent to which students feel accepted and appreciated and feel part of the campus environment (Strayhorn, 2018). According to Maslow (1943), a sense of belonging is one of the basic needs humans must fulfill to develop optimally. sense of belonging. This is influenced by various factors, including connections with friends, peers, and lecturers, as well as the campus environment (Jones & Bell, 2025). In addition, a sense of belonging also plays a role. to increase students' mental health, engagement, and well-being (Hilton & Herman, 2017; van Kessel, Ryan, & Paras, 2025). Research by McKenzie, Farmer, and Chear (2024) also showed that a sense of belonging plays a role as a psychological mechanism in the connection between campus climate and students' mental health outcomes. Thus, university belonging appears to be a psychological mechanism that explains the connection between campus climate and flourishing.

Studies of flourishing among students in Indonesia are still dominated by studies about individual internal factors, such as self-compassion and self-efficacy (Lutfianawati, 2024; Oktafiani & Ekasari, 2023). Meanwhile, research on factors external to social support for welfare students continues to focus on direct social support without explaining the underlying psychological processes (Maharani & Putriani, 2025; Masturah & Hudaniah, 2022; Satria & Kurniawati, 2024). As a result, there are still limitations in research on how students' experiences in the campus environment can lead to flourishing. In addition, research has not previously examined the role of university belonging as a psychological mechanism in the relationship between campus climate and flourishing, particularly among students in Indonesia.

Based on the description, this study aims to examine the role of university belonging as a mediator in the relationship between campus climate and student development. Specifically, this study seeks to answer several research questions, namely: (1) Is campus climate significantly related to student development?; (2) Does university belonging mediate the relationship between campus climate and student development?; and (3) Which dimension of university belonging has the strongest mediating role in the relationship between campus climate and student development? This study is expected to provide empirical contributions regarding the psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between campus climate and student development, particularly in the context of higher education in Indonesia.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational mediation design. This design was used to determine the relationships among variables and to test the mediating role of university belonging in the relationship between campus climate and students' flourishing. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study focused on objective measurement of research variables and hypothesis testing using statistical analysis.

2.2. Population & Sample

The population in this study comprised all active undergraduate students at Semarang State University, with intakes from 2022 to 2025, totaling 40,122 students. The sampling technique used was proportional stratified random sampling by faculty to ensure proportional representation of respondents across various academic fields. The minimum sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate, yielding a minimum of 396 respondents. During data collection, this study successfully recruited 460 respondents who met the research criteria, all of whom were included in the analysis. This number exceeds the minimum sample size requirement for regression-based mediation analysis.

2.3. Instrument

Flourishing scale and university belonging are instrument adaptations, with back-translation and expert validation. Meanwhile, scale campus climate researchers developed based on relevant theories. All instruments have also undergone trials limited to respondents with characteristics similar to those of the population, to ensure clarity, editorial consistency, and conformity with the context before being used in the study (Hidayat & Putra, 2022).

2.3.1. Flourishing Scale

Variables flourishing are measured using the Flourishing Scale, based on the PERMA model developed by Martin Seligman, and adapted to the Indonesian context. Instrument: This instrument measures students' optimal psychological state, encompassing five main dimensions: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). The scale uses a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very much suitable) to 6 (very suitable), with higher scores indicating a higher level of flourishing. Reliability test results show a Cronbach's alpha of 0.845, and all items have corrected item-total correlations above 0.30, indicating that all items are valid and reliable.

2.3.2. University Belonging Scale

Variables related to university belonging are measured using the University Belonging Scale, Indonesian-language adaptation compiled from the draft belongingness scale by Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, and Collier (1992) and Lee and Robbins (1995), as well as the Adaptation University Belonging Questionnaire by Slaten, Elison, Deemer, Hughes, and Shemwell (2018). Instrument: This consists of dimensions such as university affiliation, university support and admissions, faculty and staff relations, and social connectedness, which are measured by how much students feel accepted, appreciated, and part of the university environment. The scale uses a 6-point Likert format, ranging from 1 (very much suitable) to 6 (very suitable), with higher scores indicating a higher level of university belonging. Reliability test results show a Cronbach's alpha of 0.778, and all items have corrected item-total correlations above 0.30, indicating that all items are valid and reliable.

2.3.3. Campus Climate Scale

Variables of campus climate are measured using an established scale based on the theory of school climate Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009), which has been customized for the higher education context. Instrument: This instrument measures students' perceptions of the quality of the campus environment, including social connections, institutional support, learning processes, clear rules, a secure environment, and the academic experience. Consisting of aspects such as safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and institutional environmental structure. In this study, the sense of belonging was examined in terms of dimensions of campus climate to avoid overlap with the construct of university belonging. The scale uses a 6-point Likert format, ranging from 1 (very much suitable) to 6 (very suitable), with higher scores indicating a perception of a better campus climate. Before being used in research, the scale was previously tested for validity through professional judgment by lecturers, mentors, and people who understand the construct. Reliability test results show a Cronbach's alpha of 0.909, and all items have corrected item-total correlations above 0.30, indicating that all items are valid and reliable.

Table 1. Examples of Items for Each Research Variable

Variables	Indicator	Example items
Campus climate (CC)	Safety	Available means security on campus (CCTV, security posts, security systems, card access).
	Teaching and learning	The lecturer is perceived as lacking sufficient control over the material taught.
	Relationship	A discussion about transporting students rarely occurs during classroom learning.
	Institutional environmental structural	The campus provides a facility for practical work as well as a laboratory study program.
Flourishing (FG)	Positive emotion	I feel satisfied with the condition of life.
	Engagement	I can forget the time to do activities that I like.
	Relationships	I feel loved by the people around me.
	Meaning	I feel like I have clear goals.
	Accomplishment	I feel experience progress in reaching the objective.
University belonging (UB)	University affiliation	I am proud to wear my university colors.
	University support & admission	I believe that there is a source of power available to support me while I'm on campus.
	Faculty & staff relations	I feel that lecturers/staff at my university value me.
	Social connectedness	I feel no part of anyone or any group on campus.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and the PROCESS macro for SPSS version 4.2. Descriptive analysis was performed to characterize the data using mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis. Assumptions were tested parametrically using tests for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. Data is considered normal if the skewness and kurtosis values are within ± 1.5 . Assumptions of linearity are fulfilled with deviation from linearity $> .05$, whereas multicollinearity is evaluated using the Mark Tolerance $> .10$ and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) < 10 . The intervariable was analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation. Mediation was analyzed using PROCESS Hayes Model 4 with a bootstrapping technique (5000 bootstrap samples and 95 % confidence intervals). Reported statistics included regression coefficient (B), standard error (SE), t-value, p-value, coefficient determination (R^2), and confidence intervals (LLCI-ULCI). Effect mediation is considered significant if the bootstrap confidence interval (BootLLCI - BootULCI) does not include zero. In addition to using the total score of university belonging, research also analyzes parallel multiple mediations on dimensions of university affiliation, university support and admission, faculty and staff relations, and social connectedness. To get a clearer picture of the details about how dimensions of university belonging play a role in the connection between campus climate and flourishing students.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and the PROCESS macro for SPSS version 4.2. Descriptive analysis was performed to characterize the data using the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum,

skewness, and kurtosis. Parametric assumptions were tested through normality, linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation tests. Data were declared normal if the skewness and kurtosis values were within the range of ± 1.5 . The linearity assumption was met with a linearity deviation > 0.05 , while multicollinearity was evaluated using a tolerance value > 0.10 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) < 10 . The relationship between variables was analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Mediation analysis was performed using PROCESS (Hayes, Model 4) with 5000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. Statistics reported include estimate (Est), standard errors (SE), t-values, p-values, coefficients of determination (R^2), and confidence intervals (LLCI-ULCI). The mediation effect is declared significant if the bootstrap confidence interval (BootLLCI-BootULCI) does not exceed zero. In addition to using the total score of university belonging, this study also conducted parallel multiple mediation analyses on the dimensions of university affiliation, university support and acceptance, faculty and staff relationships, and social connectedness to obtain a more detailed picture of the dimensions of university belonging that play a role in the relationship between campus climate and student development.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in Table 2, the campus climate variables had means of $M = 4.47$ ($SD = 0.64$) for campus climate, $M = 4.75$ ($SD = 0.70$) for prosperity, and $M = 4.57$ ($SD = 0.67$) for sense of university belonging. At the dimension level, university affiliation had a mean of $M = 4.82$ ($SD = 0.83$), university support and acceptance had a mean of $M = 4.86$ ($SD = 0.76$), faculty and staff relationships had a mean of $M = 4.50$ ($SD = 0.88$), and social connectedness had a mean of $M = 4.22$ ($SD = 1.14$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics (M Multidimensional)

Variable	Min	Max	M	SD
Campus climate (CC)	3.22	6.00	4.47	0.64
Flourishing (FG)	2.85	6.00	4.75	0.70
University belonging (UB)	2.85	6.00	4.57	0.67
University affiliation (UA)	1.00	6.00	4.82	0.83
University support & acceptance (US)	2.33	6.00	4.86	0.76
Faculty & staff relations (FS)	1.67	6.00	4.50	0.88
Social connectedness (SC)	1.00	6.00	4.22	1.14

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

The results of the classical assumption tests, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation, are presented in Table 3. All variables are normally distributed with skewness and kurtosis values ranging from -2 to $+2$. The linearity test results indicate a linear relationship between the research variables ($p > 0.05$), while the Levene Test results indicate homogeneous data variance ($p > 0.05$). In addition, all predictor variables have tolerance values > 0.10 and VIF values < 10 . The heteroscedasticity test results indicate that the residuals are randomly distributed and do not exhibit a specific pattern, while the Durbin-Watson value of 2.098 indicates the absence of autocorrelation.

Table 3. Classical Assumptions

Assumptions Test	Indicator	Result	Conclusion
Normality	Skewness & Kurtosis	CC (Skewness = 0.13; Kurtosis = -0.70) FG (Skewness = -0.41; Kurtosis = -0.17) UB (Skewness = 0.13; Kurtosis = -0.52)	Normal
Linearities	Deviation from linearity	CC → UB ($p = .898$) UB → FG ($p = .052$) CC → FG ($p = .174$)	Linear
Multicollinearities	Tolerance & VIF	CC (Tolerance = .612; VIF = 1.635) UB (Tolerance = .612; VIF = 1.635)	Not occur multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	Residual scatterplot	Residual points are spread randomly and do not form a certain pattern	Not occur heteroscedasticity
Autocorrelation	Durbin-Watson	2,098	Not occur autocorrelation

Note. CC = Campus climate; FG = Flourishing; UB = University belonging.

The results of the reliability analysis are presented in Table 4, showing that the campus climate variable has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.912, the developmental variables have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.902, and the sense of university belonging has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.864. Furthermore, all items in each instrument have a corrected item-total correlation above 0.30.

Table 4. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Validity Criterion	Conclusion
CC	.912	> .30	Valid and reliable
FG	.902	> .30	Valid and reliable
UB	.864	> .30	Valid and reliable

Note. CC = Campus climate; FG = Flourishing; UB = University belonging

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 5 show that campus climate is positively correlated with flourishing ($r = .434, p < .01$) and university belonging ($r = .623, p < .01$). University belonging is also positively correlated with flourishing ($r = .651, p < .01$). At the dimension level, university affiliation is positively correlated with flourishing ($r = .608, p < .01$), university support and acceptance ($r = .662, p < .01$), faculty and staff relations ($r = .603, p < .01$), and social connectedness ($r = .236, p < .01$).

Table 5. Pearson Correlations (M Multidimensional)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Campus climate (CC)	—						
Flourishing (FG)	.434**	—					
University belonging (UB)	.623**	.651**	—				
University affiliation (UA)	.438**	.608**	.751**	—			
University support & acceptance (US)	.493**	.662**	.800**	.739**	—		
Faculty & staff relations (FS)	.420**	.603**	.728**	.583**	.672**	—	
Social connectedness (SC)	.465**	.236**	.685**	.185**	.239**	.162**	—

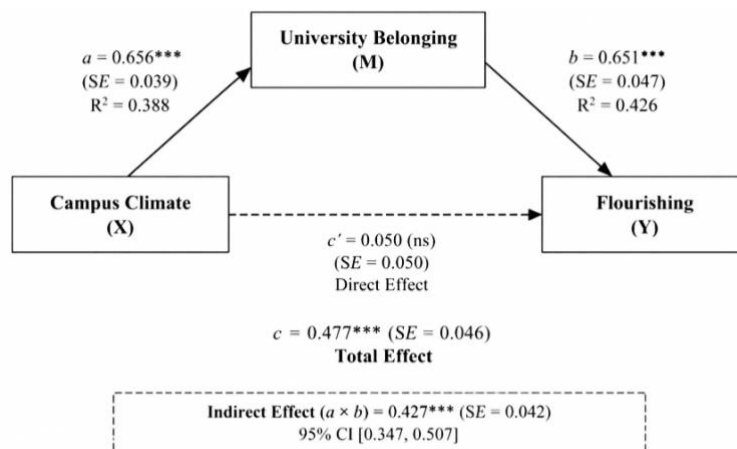
The results of the simple mediation analysis using PROCESS Hayes Model 4, presented in Table 6, show that campus climate is positively and significantly related to university belonging (Est = 0.656, SE = 0.039, LLCI = 0.580, ULCI = 0.731, $p < .001$). University belonging is also positively and significantly related to flourishing (Est = 0.651, SE = 0.047, LLCI = 0.558, ULCI = 0.744, $p < .001$). After the mediator is entered into the model, the direct effect of campus climate on flourishing becomes insignificant (Est = 0.050, SE = 0.050, LLCI = -0.048, ULCI = 0.148, $p = .313$). The bootstrap results show an indirect effect of 0.427 with a 95% confidence interval that does not cross zero (LLCI = 0.347, ULCI = 0.507).

Table 6. Simple Mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Campus climate and Flourishing Through University belonging

Outcome Variable	Predictor Variable	Est	SE	LLCI	ULCI	R	R ²	F	P
UB	CC	0.656	0.039	0.580	0.731	0.623	0.388	290.679	< .001
FG	UB	0.651	0.047	0.558	0.744	0.652	0.426	169.351	< .001
	CC	0.050	0.050	-0.048	0.148				.313
Indirect Effect		0.427	0.042	0.347	0.507				
Total Effect		0.477	0.046	0.386	0.568				< .001

Note. CC = Campus climate; FG = Flourishing; UB = University belonging

A simple mediation model that tests the role of university belonging in the relationship between campus climate and student growth is shown in Figure 1.



Note. Unstandardized coefficients are presented. *** $p < .001$; ns = not significant ($p > .05$).

Figure 1. Simple Mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Campus Climate and Flourishing Through University Belonging

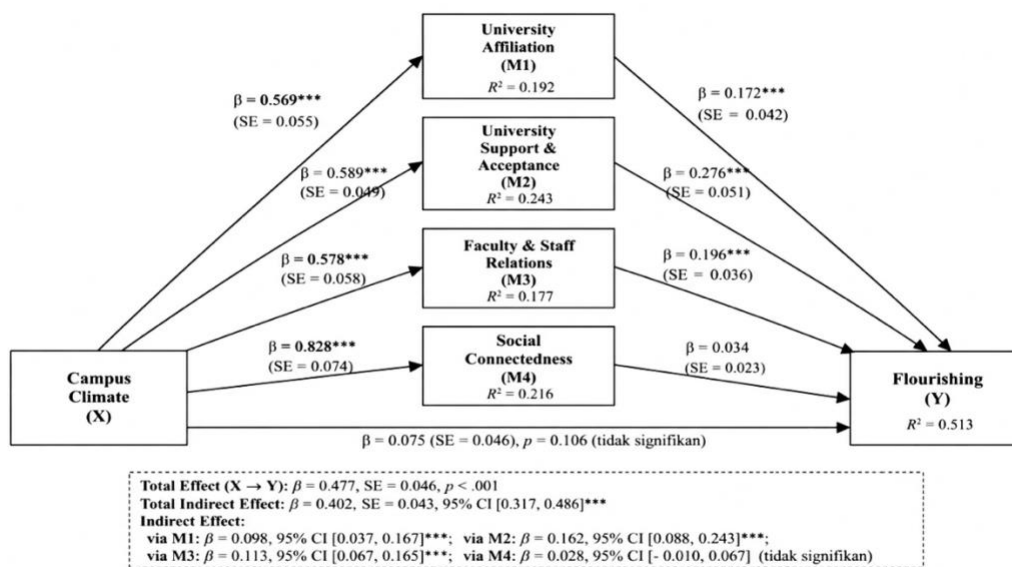
The results of the parallel multiple mediation analysis presented in Table 7 indicate that campus climate is positively and significantly related to university affiliation (Est = 0.569, SE = 0.055, 95% CI [0.462, 0.677], $p < 0.001$), university support and acceptance (Est = 0.589, SE = 0.049, 95% CI [0.493, 0.684], $p < 0.001$), faculty and staff relationships (Est = 0.578, SE = 0.058, 95% CI [0.464, 0.693], $p < 0.001$), and social connectedness (Est = 0.828, SE = 0.074, 95% CI [0.684, 0.973], $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, university affiliation was positively and significantly associated with well-being (Est = 0.172, SE = 0.042, 95% CI [0.090, 0.255], $p < 0.001$), university support and acceptance (Est = 0.276, SE = 0.051, 95% CI [0.175, 0.376], $p < 0.001$), and faculty and staff relationships (Est = 0.196, SE = 0.036, 95% CI [0.125, 0.267], $p < 0.001$), while social connectedness did not show a significant association with well-being (Est = 0.034, SE = 0.023, 95% CI [-0.011, 0.079], $p = 0.136$). The direct effect of campus climate on well-being became insignificant after all mediators were included in the model (Est = 0.075, SE = 0.046, 95% CI [-0.016, 0.166], $p = 0.106$), while the total effect remained significant (Est = 0.477, SE = 0.046, 95% CI [0.386, 0.568], $p < 0.001$). The results of the indirect effects analysis showed significant mediation effects on university affiliation (95% CI [0.037, 0.167]), university support and acceptance (95% CI [0.088, 0.243]), and faculty-staff relationships (95% CI [0.067, 0.165]), while the mediation effect through social connectivity was not significant (95% CI [-0.010, 0.067]).

Table 7. Parallel Multiple Mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Campus climate and Flourishing Through Dimensions of University belonging

Outcome Variable	Predictor Variable	Est	SE	95% CI (LLCI, ULCI)	R	R ²	F	p
UA	CC	0.569	0.055	[0.462, 0.677]	0.438	0.192	108.674	<.001
US	CC	0.589	0.049	[0.493, 0.684]	0.493	0.243	146.819	<.001
FS	CC	0.578	0.058	[0.464, 0.693]	0.420	0.177	98.301	<.001
SC	CC	0.828	0.074	[0.684, 0.973]	0.465	0.216	126.402	<.001
FG	UA	0.172	0.042	[0.090, 0.255]	0.716	0.513	95.635	<.001
	US	0.276	0.051	[0.175, 0.376]				<.001
	FS	0.196	0.036	[0.125, 0.267]				<.001
	SC	0.034	0.023	[-0.011, 0.079]				.136
Direct Effect (X → Y)		0.075	0.046	[-0.016, 0.166]				.106
Indirect Effect	via UA	0.098	0.034	[0.037, 0.167]				
	via US	0.162	0.039	[0.088, 0.243]				
	via FS	0.113	0.025	[0.067, 0.165]				
	via SC	0.028	0.019	[-0.010, 0.067]				
Total Effect	X → Y	0.477	0.046	[0.386, 0.568]	0.434	0.188	106.253	<.001
Total Indirect Effect		0.402	0.043	[0.317, 0.486]				

Note. CC = Campus climate; FG = Flourishing; UB = University belonging; UA = University affiliation; US = University support & acceptance; FS = Faculty & staff relations; SC = Social connectedness.

The parallel multiple mediation model, which tests the contribution of each dimension of university belonging to the relationship between campus climate and student flourishing, is shown in Figure 2.



Catatan. Standardized beta (β) dilaporkan. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1. Parallel Multiple Mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Campus Climate and Flourishing

3.2. Discussion

From a positive psychology perspective, flourishing in the PERMA model developed by Martin Seligman is understood as a state of optimal well-being, characterized by the emergence of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). This model emphasizes that flourishing is influenced not only by an individual's internal traits but also by the quality of social interactions around them. In higher education, students' experiences during their time at the university can be a crucial factor supporting the development of these aspects of flourishing. A supportive, safe, and accepting campus environment provides opportunities for students to build positive relationships, foster positive emotions, increase engagement in academic activities, and strengthen meaning and purpose in their studies. Furthermore, the experience of feeling accepted and part of the university environment can also support the development of more optimal psychological functioning in students. Thus, flourishing in students can be understood as the result of the interaction between individual potential and the quality of psychosocial experiences gained during their time at the university.

The main finding of this study indicates that university belonging fully mediates the relationship between campus climate and student well-being. This full mediation finding suggests that positive perceptions of campus climate do not necessarily directly result in well-being if students have not internalized these experiences as a sense of acceptance and belonging within the university environment. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this condition is understandable because the social environment will support well-being only when it can fulfill an individual's basic psychological needs, particularly the need for relatedness or social connection (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In other words, the quality of the campus environment has psychological significance for well-being only when these experiences shape students' sense of belonging at the university. This finding is also in line with Maslow (1943) the view that belonging is a basic need essential for individual psychological development, as well as Keyes (2002) with the view that optimal well-being develops through individuals' connectedness to their social environment. In this study, campus climate appears to function not only as a place of learning but also as a psychosocial context that shapes students' experiences of belonging. When students see the campus as a supportive and accepting environment, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging at the university, which ultimately contributes to flourishing.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research showing that campus climate is related to student well-being (Fink, 2014; Zhao & Hua, 2025). However, this study provides a more in-depth explanation of how this relationship operates. While previous research has primarily examined the relationships among campus climate, belonging, and flourishing separately, this study suggests that these relationships can be understood through the mediating mechanism of university belonging. This finding also reinforces the research of McKenzie et al (2024), which found that a sense of belonging plays a psychological role in the relationship between the campus environment and student mental health. Therefore, this study extends previous research by showing that belonging is not only related to mental health in general, but also to flourishing, a more optimal form of psychological well-being. These findings indicate that the influence of the campus environment on student well-being may not occur directly, but rather through the process of psychological interpretation of the campus experience. Therefore, students' perceptions of acceptance and belonging to the university community appear to be more determinant than the characteristics of the campus environment itself.

In parallel, research results show that university support and acceptance have the strongest mediating effect among the dimensions of university belonging. Student flourishing appears to develop more when students feel accepted, valued, and supported by the university environment. Psychological well-being develops when the social environment meets an individual's basic need for relatedness or meaningful social connection (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Social support and the experience of being accepted in an academic environment are positively related to student flourishing and psychological well-being because they help students feel more secure, valued, and have psychological comfort in facing academic demands (Chaudhry, Tandon, Shinde, & Bhattacharya, 2024; Masturah & Hudaniah, 2022; Satria & Kurniawati, 2024). Furthermore, Alle, Kern, Rozek, McInerney, and Slavich (2021) explains that belonging is not only about an individual's personal abilities but also about their subjective experience of feeling accepted, valued, and having a place in their social environment. In higher education, being accepted into the academic environment likely provides a sense of psychological safety, helping students become more engaged in academic activities, build positive relationships, and view the college experience as meaningful. Thus, student flourishing appears to develop not only through individual personal abilities but also through psychosocial experiences that enable students to feel accepted and supported by their university environment.

The finding that university support and acceptance were the strongest mediators suggests that students' experiences of belonging are shaped more by perceptions of institutional support and acceptance than by symbolic identification with the university or by more general social relationships. Students likely assess the quality of their campus connection based on how responsive the university is perceived to be to their academic and personal needs. Therefore, tangible institutional support may have greater psychological significance in supporting flourishing than simply feeling proud of the university or having a social network on campus.

Social connectedness did not demonstrate a significant mediating effect on flourishing. This finding contrasts with several previous studies that identified peer social relationships as a crucial factor in student well-being. However, this finding indicates that the mere presence of social relationships among students is not necessarily sufficient to support flourishing. Furthermore, previous findings confirm that the quality of belonging is determined more by perceptions of social acceptance and psychological validation than simply the presence of social interactions (Allen et al., 2021). This means that students may have social relationships with peers, but these relationships may not necessarily provide psychological experiences such as emotional support, a sense of appreciation, or acceptance within the academic community. This explanation aligns with Abraham Maslow's view, which places the need for belonging among the basic human needs related to individual psychological development (Maslow, 1943).

These findings also need to be understood in the context of the parallel mediation analysis conducted in the study. When all dimensions of university belonging were analyzed simultaneously, university support and acceptance and faculty and staff relations remained significant, while social connectedness did not. These findings indicate that social connectedness among students remains related to flourishing, but its contribution is relatively smaller than that of the experience of support and acceptance derived from the institutional environment. This condition indicates that the influence of social connectedness on flourishing may be explained by other dimensions of belonging that better represent the experience of university acceptance and support. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, psychological well-being develops when the need for relatedness is met through relationships that provide a sense of security, acceptance, and support (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Flourishing occurs when individuals build optimal social and psychological functioning through meaningful relationships with their environment (Keyes, 2002). Therefore, general social connectedness may not be enough to trigger flourishing if students do not experience the quality of supportive relationships and a sense of acceptance within the academic environment. This finding is also in line with research Maharani & Putriani (2025), that shows that the quality of social support has a greater influence on psychological well-being than the mere presence of social interactions. Therefore, the results of this study indicate that student flourishing appears to be more influenced by the quality of experiences of acceptance and support within the university environment than simply by social closeness between students.

These findings demonstrate that university belonging is not a homogeneous construct. Each dimension contributes differently to flourishing, thus enhancing our understanding of the psychological mechanisms linking the campus environment to student well-being. The results indicate that aspects of belonging related to acceptance and institutional support play a more prominent role than social connectedness in explaining flourishing among students.

3.3. Implications

This research offers theoretical and practical implications for understanding student flourishing in higher education. Theoretically, the results show that university belonging serves as a psychological mechanism in the relationship between campus climate and student flourishing. This finding indicates that the quality of the campus environment must first be internalized as psychological experiences, such as a sense of acceptance and belonging within the university environment, before it can be linked to student flourishing. Practically, the results demonstrate the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive campus climate to enhance university belonging and student well-being.

3.4. Limitations

This research provides an empirical contribution to explaining the relationships among campus climate, university belonging, and student flourishing in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Future research could expand the context of the universities studied and employ a longitudinal design to deepen understanding of the dynamics of student flourishing. Furthermore, developing a model that considers psychological and other contextual factors can enrich the study of student well-being in higher education.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research shows that campus climate is positively related to student flourishing, with university belonging serving as a full mediating role. The results of hypothesis testing show that positive perceptions of the campus environment are not directly related to the development of flourishing, but first work through students' psychological experiences in the form of feeling accepted, appreciated and being part of the university environment. At the dimension level, university affiliation, university support & acceptance, and faculty & staff relations were proven to have a significant effect on flourishing, with university support & acceptance as the strongest mediator, while social connectedness did not show a significant mediating effect. These findings indicate that student flourishing seems to be more influenced by the experience of being accepted and supported by the institutional environment than by social connectedness among students. Overall, this research expands the study of student flourishing in Indonesia by emphasizing the importance of environmental

factors and students' psychosocial experiences in explaining flourishing development. It is recommended that future research involve a more diverse university context and employ a longitudinal design to better understand the relationships among variables.

Author Contributions

Dhanang Budi Santosa: Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, investigation, visualization, and writing draft beginning. Achmad Miftachul 'Ilmi: Supervision, validation, and review and editing script.

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Ethics and Consent Declarations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of psychological research. Consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality of data and respondent identities. All data was anonymized to maintain participant privacy and confidentiality.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The writer states that technology intelligence, including artificial intelligence (AI), is used only to improve the readability and editing of the script below under full author supervision. AI is not used to produce research ideas, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions.

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