

# MECHANISMS OF FUNCTIONING OF AN INTEGRATIVE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR ENSURING ADOLESCENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Received: 17 Oktabr 2026  
Accepted: 22 Oktabr 2026  
Published: 27 Oktabr 2026

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**Iqtibos uchun:** Khazieva, E. D. MECHANISMS OF FUNCTIONING OF AN INTEGRATIVE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR ENSURING ADOLESCENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT / E. D. Khazieva // Buxoro xalqaro universiteti ilmiy axborotnomasi. — 2026. — T. 10, № 2. — B. 433–439.

**Abstract.** The article provides a theoretical rationale for the mechanisms underlying an integrative socio-psychological model designed to support adolescents' psychological safety in the digital educational environment. The model is viewed as a multilevel system comprising personal, group, and institutional-digital levels. Particular attention is paid to the direct and mediated relationships among social identity, cognitive reappraisal, constructive coping, and psychological safety, as well as to the possible independent contribution of emotional suppression and digital risk factors. The central testable proposition concerns the sequential association of social identity with psychological safety through cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping. The proposed relationships and hypotheses are intended for subsequent empirical testing and are not presented as already confirmed findings. The model may inform the design of assessment and prevention practices addressing psychological risks in digital educational settings.

**Keywords:** psychological safety, adolescents, digital educational environment, integrative socio-psychological model, social identity, cognitive reappraisal, constructive coping, emotional suppression, digital risks.

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**Annotatsiya.** Maqolada raqamli ta'lim muhitida o'smirlarning psixologik xavfsizligini ta'minlashga qaratilgan integrativ ijtimoiy-psixologik modelning ishlash mexanizmlari nazariy jihatdan asoslanadi. Model shaxsiy, guruhviy va institutsional-raqamli darajalarni birlashtiruvchi ko'p darajali tizim sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi. Ijtimoiy identifikatsiya, kognitiv qayta baholash, konstruktiv coping va psixologik xavfsizlik o'rtasidagi bevosita hamda bilvosita bog'liqliklarga, shuningdek, emotsional bostirish va raqamli xavf omillarining ehtimoliy mustaqil hissasiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Asosiy tekshiriladigan taxmin ijtimoiy identifikatsiyaning kognitiv qayta baholash va konstruktiv coping orqali psixologik xavfsizlik bilan ketma-ket bog'lanishidan iborat. Taklif etilgan bog'liqliklar va gipotezalar keyingi empirik tekshiruv uchun mo'ljallangan bo'lib, tasdiqlangan natijalar sifatida talqin qilinmaydi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** psixologik xavfsizlik, o'smirlar, raqamli ta'lim muhiti, integrativ ijtimoiy-psixologik model, ijtimoiy identifikatsiya, kognitiv qayta baholash, konstruktiv coping, emotsional bostirish, raqamli xavflar.

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**Аннотация.** В статье теоретически обосновываются механизмы функционирования интегративной социально-психологической модели обеспечения психологической безопасности подростков в цифровой образовательной среде. Модель рассматривается как многоуровневая система, объединяющая личностный, групповой и институционально-цифровой уровни. Основное внимание уделяется прямым и опосредованным связям между социальной идентичностью, когнитивной переоценкой, конструктивным копингом и психологической безопасностью, а также возможному самостоятельному вкладу эмоционального подавления и цифровых факторов риска. Центральным проверяемым предположением выступает последовательная связь социальной идентичности с психологической безопасностью через когнитивную переоценку и конструктивный копинг. Сформулированные положения и гипотезы задают направление дальнейшей эмпирической проверки; они не интерпретируются как уже подтвержденные результаты. Практическая значимость работы связана с возможностью использовать модель при планировании диагностики и профилактики психологических рисков в цифровой образовательной среде.

**Ключевые слова:** психологическая безопасность, подростки, цифровая образовательная среда, интегративная социально-психологическая модель, социальная идентичность, когнитивная переоценка, конструктивный копинг, эмоциональное подавление, цифровые риски.

**Introduction.** The digitalization of the educational environment is transforming the conditions of adolescents' socialization, communication, and interaction with their peers. Digital technologies expand opportunities for information acquisition, learning, and communication; however, they also create situations that may involve psychological risks. Cyberbullying, information overload, digital anxiety, and violations of personal boundaries may affect adolescents' subjective perceptions of safety [1–3, 4, 7–9].

Under these conditions, psychological safety cannot be adequately explained solely in terms of adolescents' individual resilience. It develops through the interaction of personal resources, relationships with significant social groups, support from the family and educational institution, and the characteristics of the digital environment. Therefore, the proposed model considers individual and social factors jointly [5–6].

Research on psychological safety and digital risks describes a broad range of protective resources and risk factors. Nevertheless, the interrelationships among these factors and the mechanisms through which they are associated with psychological safety require separate analysis. In particular, it is important to distinguish between direct associations, simple mediation, sequential mediation, and the combined contribution of multiple factors [1–3, 5–6, 10].

This article focuses not so much on the structural description of the integrative model as on the proposed mechanisms linking its components. It examines the direct association between social identity and psychological safety, as well as the possibility that this association is sequentially mediated by cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping. Emotional suppression is analyzed as a potential independent negative factor, while digital risks are considered additional contextual conditions [11–13].

The model is examined at three interrelated levels. The individual level encompasses adolescents' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral resources; the group level includes social identity, a sense of belonging, and supportive relationships; and the institutional and digital level comprises the conditions within the educational institution and the characteristics of the digital environment. These levels represent different aspects of a unified system of factors associated with adolescents' psychological safety [4–9].

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to systematize the proposed mechanisms underlying the functioning of the model, relate them to testable hypotheses, and establish a conceptual foundation for subsequent empirical research.

The aim of the study is to provide a theoretical justification for the mechanisms underlying the functioning of an integrative socio-psychological model for ensuring adolescents' psychological safety in the digital educational environment, clarify the proposed relationships among its components, and systematize hypotheses for subsequent empirical testing.

**Literature review.** Considering psychological safety as a phenomenon associated with the interaction between personal resources and the characteristics of the social environment makes it possible to avoid explaining its development in terms of a single isolated factor. In the digital educational environment, adolescents are simultaneously involved in a system of direct social relationships and online interactions. Therefore, alongside individual characteristics, it is necessary to take into account the roles of the family, peers, teachers, and the educational institution [5–6, 7–9].

Social support and a sense of belonging to a significant group are important social resources that may potentially be associated with psychological safety. Support from family members, peers, and teachers may help adolescents make sense of difficult situations and choose appropriate ways of responding to them. However, the availability of social support and the subjective experience of belonging to a group are not identical concepts. In the proposed empirical pathway, social identity itself serves as the independent variable [4–6, 11].

Social resources may be associated with psychological safety both directly and through mechanisms of emotional regulation and coping with difficulties. Cognitive reappraisal is understood as a change in the interpretation of a situation, whereas constructive coping refers to the selection of adaptive ways of responding to difficulties. The proposed relationships among these variables require empirical testing to establish their direction and strength [12–13].

Particular attention in this article is devoted to sequential mediation. The proposed pathway is as follows:

Social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety.

This approach makes it possible to examine whether social identity is associated with psychological safety not only directly or through a single mediating variable, but also through a sequence of two interrelated psychological mechanisms. The existence and statistical significance of this pathway are not assumed to have been established in advance.

Digital risks constitute an important contextual dimension of the problem of psychological safety. Cyberbullying, digital anxiety, information overload, destructive content, and violations of personal boundaries may be associated with a reduced subjective sense of safety. However, assessing their independent or combined contribution requires the identification of specific operational indicators and their inclusion in the empirical analysis [1–3, 7–10].

When analyzing psychological safety, it is important to distinguish between the associations of individual factors and their combined contribution. Considering several protective resources simultaneously may enhance the explanatory value of the model, whereas the simultaneous presence of multiple risks may potentially increase vulnerability. Nevertheless, a conclusion regarding additivity can be drawn only after assessing the combined contribution of the included variables and, where necessary, examining interaction effects.

The integrative model systematizes the factors across three levels. At the individual level, cognitive reappraisal,

emotional suppression, and constructive coping are examined; at the group level, social identity, a sense of belonging, and social support are considered; and at the institutional and digital level, the psychological climate of the educational institution, the availability of psychological support services, and measures for preventing digital risks are addressed. The interrelationships among these levels determine the integrative nature of the model [4–9, 11–13].

The literature review suggests that the social, individual, and digital factors associated with psychological safety are examined across different research areas.

The conceptual objective of this article is to integrate these factors within a single model and distinguish between the proposed mechanisms: direct association, simple and sequential mediation, the independent contribution of risk factors, and the combined contribution of protective resources [1–13].

Thus, the identified theoretical gap lies not only in the need to integrate the components of psychological safety, but also in the need to formulate the proposed relationships among them as testable hypotheses. The following section systematizes these relationships and aligns them with areas for subsequent empirical testing.

Research methodology and empirical analysis. The effectiveness of an integrative model is determined not only by its structure but, above all, by the mechanisms linking its components. The absence of clearly described mechanisms renders models declarative in nature and deprives them of explanatory power. The proposed model describes three types of mechanisms: the direct effect of a fundamental social resource, the mediated effect through adaptive mediators, and the independent effect of a risk factor. The general framework of these mechanisms is presented in Figure 1.

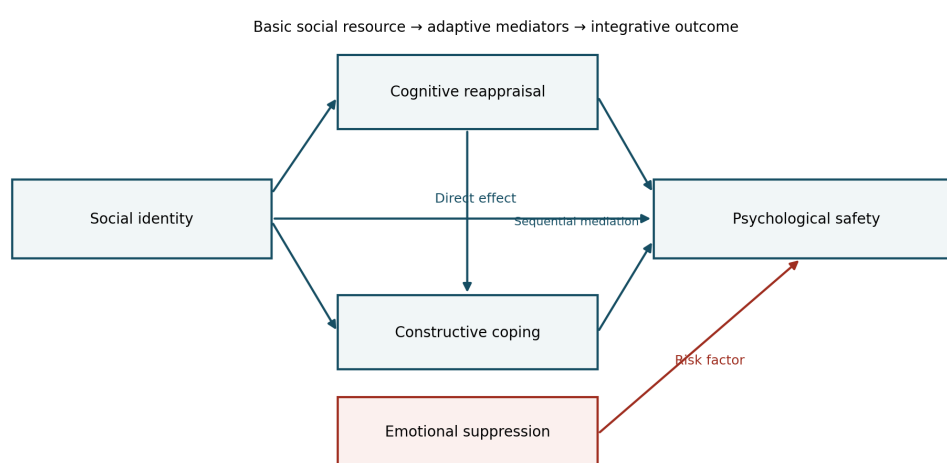


Figure 1. Hypothetical Framework of the Mechanisms Underlying the Functioning of the Integrative Model

**Direct-effect mechanism.** Social identity is directly associated with psychological safety: a stable sense of belonging to a group reduces subjective uncertainty in social situations and provides adolescents with grounds for expecting support. In the digital educational environment, this mechanism acquires additional significance because the public nature and permanence of communication increase the cost of social errors, while group belonging serves as a form of protection against their consequences [11].

**Mediated-effect mechanism.** In addition to its direct association, social identity is linked to psychological safety through the development of individual resources. Group involvement creates conditions for acquiring ways of interpreting difficult situations, primarily cognitive reappraisal, which is largely learned through observing the reactions of significant others and discussing ongoing events. Established reappraisal strategies, in turn, determine the selection of constructive coping strategies, which facilitate actual changes in the situation and, consequently, the restoration of a sense of safety. Thus, the model proposes not only simple mediation but also a sequential, two-stage mediation pathway [11–13].

**Risk-factor mechanism.** Emotional suppression is considered an independent component that contributes negatively to psychological safety regardless of the extent of adaptive resources. The psychological rationale for this mechanism is that suppressing the outward expression of emotions limits opportunities to receive social support because other people lack the cues needed to recognize an adolescent's distress. In digital communication, this effect is amplified because the mediated nature of communication already reduces the availability of nonverbal cues [12].

A fundamental assumption of the model is the additive nature of the components' effects. The contributions of social identity, cognitive reappraisal, constructive coping, and emotional suppression are assumed to be additive rather than multiplicative: the presence of a well-developed social resource does not eliminate the negative effect of a risk factor, just as the absence of one resource does not prevent the others from exerting their effects. This assumption has an important practical implication, as it allows each area of psychological and pedagogical intervention to be implemented independently. However, it requires specific empirical verification.

The proposed account of the mechanisms allows for alternative explanations that must be identified before empirical testing. The first alternative explanation concerns the possibility of a reverse direction of association: a sense of safety may strengthen the feeling of belonging to a group rather than the other way around. A cross-sectional correlational design cannot rule out this interpretation, and this limitation must be reflected in the formulation of the conclusions.

The second alternative explanation concerns the possible influence of an unaccounted-for variable. Both social

identity and psychological safety may be determined by a third factor, such as an adolescent's overall level of social competence or characteristics of the family situation. This explanation can be partially controlled by simultaneously including several predictors in the model: if the association between social identity and psychological safety persists after controlling for individual resources, an explanation based on general competence becomes less likely.

The third alternative explanation is methodological in nature and concerns common method variance: all variables are measured through self-report within a single assessment procedure, which may inflate the magnitude of the observed associations. Control for this potential bias is предусмотрен at the empirical testing stage through a specific statistical procedure. Explicitly identifying alternative explanations before obtaining the results is a methodological requirement that helps prevent interpretations from being tailored to the observed data.

The functional roles of the components and their corresponding testable implications are systematized in Table 1.

Table 1.

Mechanisms Underlying the Functioning of the Model and Their Testable Implications

| Mechanism                                 | Description                                                                                                                              | Testable implication                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Direct effect of the fundamental resource | Social identity is directly associated with the subjective experience of safety.                                                         | A significant positive association that remains after controlling for the other predictors. |
| Simple mediation                          | The association between social identity and psychological safety is partially mediated by cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping. | Significant indirect effects alongside a significant direct effect.                         |
| Sequential mediation                      | Social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety.                                                    | A significant two-stage indirect effect.                                                    |
| Risk-factor effect                        | Emotional suppression reduces psychological safety independently of other resources.                                                     | A significant negative contribution after controlling for the other predictors.             |
| Additivity of contributions               | The components exert cumulative rather than multiplicative effects.                                                                      | No significant interaction effects among the predictors.                                    |

The general hypothesis of the study is that adolescents' psychological safety in the digital educational environment results from the combined effects of personal and social resources, among which social identity plays a leading role by influencing the subjective experience of safety both directly and indirectly.

The general hypothesis is specified through a set of specific hypotheses, each corresponding to a particular proposition of the model.

H1. The level of adolescents' psychological safety in the digital educational environment is heterogeneously distributed: alongside a group with moderate scores, there is a substantial group characterized by low levels of psychological safety.

H2. Cognitive reappraisal is positively associated with the level of psychological safety.

H3. Emotional suppression is negatively associated with the level of psychological safety.

H4. Constructive coping is positively associated with the level of psychological safety.

H5. Social identity is positively associated with psychological safety and is the strongest of the predictors under consideration.

H6. The association between social identity and psychological safety is partially mediated by cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping.

H7. Social identity serves a moderating function by weakening the negative association between emotional suppression and psychological safety.

H8. The structure of the relationships among the model components is invariant across adolescents' gender.

H9. Distinct and stable typological profiles of personal resources can be identified within the sample, and these profiles differ significantly in their levels of psychological safety.

H10. The set of measured resources makes it possible to predict adolescents' membership in the psychological risk group with acceptable diagnostic accuracy.

Results. The theoretical analysis made it possible to systematize the proposed mechanisms underlying the functioning of the integrative model across five areas: the direct association between social identity and psychological safety; the indirect association through a single mediator; sequential mediation; the potential independent negative contribution of emotional suppression; and the combined contribution of resources. These areas represent the model's conceptual assumptions, which require empirical testing.

The mechanisms must be distinguished from one another. The assumption of a direct association concerns the relationship between social identity and psychological safety. Simple mediation involves examining this relationship through a single intermediate variable.

In sequential mediation, the central focus is the pathway "social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety." The potential negative association of emotional suppression and the combined contribution of the measured resources are examined separately.

Table 2.

Main Mechanisms Underlying the Functioning of the Integrative Socio-Psychological Model

| Mechanism                                 | Main variables                                                                                                   | Proposed nature of the relationship                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Direct effect of social identity          | Social identity → psychological safety                                                                           | Proposed positive direct association                                                                                        |
| Simple mediation                          | Social identity → cognitive reappraisal OR constructive coping → psychological safety                            | Indirect association through a single mediator; examined separately for each mediator                                       |
| Sequential mediation                      | Social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety                             | Proposed sequential indirect effect                                                                                         |
| Independent contribution of a risk factor | Emotional suppression → psychological safety; digital risks, provided that relevant measures are available       | Proposed negative association between emotional suppression and psychological safety; digital risks are analyzed separately |
| Combined contribution of resources        | Social identity, cognitive reappraisal, constructive coping, and other measured resources → psychological safety | Combined contribution assessed on the basis of empirical data                                                               |

The mechanisms presented in the table summarize the theoretical assumptions underlying the model. They require empirical testing; theoretical analysis alone does not mean that the described relationships have already received statistical confirmation.

The first mechanism is the direct association between social identity and psychological safety. It is assumed that an adolescent's identification with a personally significant group may be positively associated with the subjective experience of safety. When testing this hypothesis, it is important not to equate social identity with social support: these constructs may be interrelated, but they are not the same measure.

The second mechanism is simple mediation. In this case, the association between social identity and psychological safety is examined through a single intermediate psychological variable. Cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping may be analyzed as separate mediators. The indirect effect of each mediator and the persistence of the direct association are assessed separately during the empirical analysis.

The third mechanism is sequential mediation. The central pathway to be tested in this article is as follows: social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety. The theoretical assumption is that social identity may be associated with the reappraisal of a situation, which, in turn, is associated with the selection of constructive coping strategies and subsequently with the experience of psychological safety. The sequential indirect effect and its confidence interval must be estimated using empirical data.

The fourth mechanism concerns the potential independent contribution of emotional suppression and digital risks. Emotional suppression may be negatively associated with psychological safety; however, this assumption should be tested while accounting for social identity, cognitive reappraisal, and constructive coping. Cyberbullying and other digital risks are considered contextual factors. If they were not measured, no conclusions can be drawn about their empirical influence within the specific study.

The fifth mechanism is the combined contribution of resources. In explaining psychological safety, the combined contribution of social identity, cognitive reappraisal, constructive coping, and other resources actually measured may be assessed. In this context, an additive model must be distinguished from a model that assumes interactions among variables. The final conclusion regarding additivity must be based on statistical results.

The identified mechanisms correspond to the three levels of the model. At the individual level, cognitive reappraisal, emotional suppression, and constructive coping are examined; at the group level, social identity and a sense of belonging are considered; and at the institutional and digital level, the psychological climate of the educational institution, the availability of psychological assistance, and measures for preventing digital risks are addressed. This distribution represents a conceptual framework and does not, in itself, establish causal relationships between the variables.

Table 3.

Levels of Functioning of the Integrative Model and Their Relationship to the Variables Under Investigation

| Model level               | Main factors and characteristics                                                                                                                                | Proposed mechanism of influence                                                                                         | Related hypotheses |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Individual                | Cognitive reappraisal, emotional suppression, constructive coping, and other measurable personal resources                                                      | Regulation of emotional responses and selection of coping strategies; associations require testing                      | H2, H3, H4, H9     |
| Group                     | Social identity, a sense of belonging, social support, and the nature of interactions within significant groups                                                 | Potential association with the experience of safety; social identity is not equated with social support                 | H5, H6, H7         |
| Institutional and digital | Psychological climate of the educational institution, availability of psychological support services, and measurable characteristics of the digital environment | Context in which personal and social resources operate; conclusions depend on the availability of relevant measurements | H1, H10            |
| Cross-level interaction   | The combined set of personal resources, social identity, and environmental characteristics                                                                      | Assessment of the combined contribution of factors and the stability of relationships among                             | H8, H9, H10        |

| Model level | Main factors and characteristics | Proposed mechanism of influence | Related hypotheses |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
|             |                                  | them                            |                    |

The interrelationships among these levels reflect the integrative nature of the model. For example, a sense of belonging to a group may be associated with adolescents' emotional and behavioral resources, while supportive conditions within an educational institution may be associated with opportunities to use these resources. These examples represent theoretical assumptions; testing each relationship requires the corresponding measurable indicators.

Overall, the theoretical analysis makes it possible to conceptualize the integrative model as a system combining direct associations, simple and sequential mediation, the potential independent contribution of risk factors, and the combined contribution of resources. At the subsequent empirical stage, it is advisable to focus on testing the pathway "social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety" and the related additional hypotheses.

Table 4.

Correspondence Between the Propositions of the Integrative Model and the Testable Hypotheses

| Model proposition                          | Variables                                                                            | Proposed nature of the relationship                                                                   | Hypothesis |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Distribution of psychological safety       | Psychological safety scores                                                          | Proposed heterogeneity of the distribution; to be examined using sample data                          | H1         |
| Cognitive reappraisal                      | Cognitive reappraisal → psychological safety                                         | Positive association                                                                                  | H2         |
| Emotional suppression                      | Emotional suppression → psychological safety                                         | Negative association                                                                                  | H3         |
| Constructive coping                        | Constructive coping → psychological safety                                           | Positive association                                                                                  | H4         |
| Direct association of social identity      | Social identity → psychological safety                                               | Positive association; its status as the strongest predictor requires a comparison of effect sizes     | H5         |
| Sequential mediation                       | Social identity → cognitive reappraisal → constructive coping → psychological safety | Presence of a sequential indirect effect; assessed separately from simple mediation                   | H6         |
| Moderating role of social identity         | Social identity × emotional suppression → psychological safety                       | Proposed weakening of the negative association between emotional suppression and psychological safety | H7         |
| Stability of the structure of associations | Main relationships in the model across groups of adolescents of different genders    | Invariance testing; a conclusion is possible only if the corresponding analysis is conducted          | H8         |
| Profiles of personal resources             | Resource profiles → psychological safety                                             | Proposed differences between profiles                                                                 | H9         |
| Predictive value of resources              | Measured personal and social resources → membership in the risk group                | Predictive accuracy assessed using empirical data                                                     | H10        |

The table summarizes the content of the testable hypotheses. The direction, strength, and statistical significance of the proposed relationships must be assessed on the basis of empirical data.

Conclusions. The theoretical analysis made it possible to systematize the proposed mechanisms underlying the functioning of the integrative socio-psychological model for ensuring adolescents' psychological safety in the digital educational environment. The model makes it possible to consider psychological safety not only in terms of individual characteristics but also in terms of the interrelationships among personal resources, group relationships, and institutional and digital conditions.

Within the framework of the model, five areas have been identified: the direct association between social identity and psychological safety; mediation through individual mediators; sequential mediation through cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping; the potential independent contribution of emotional suppression and digital risks; and the combined contribution of resources. These areas represent theoretically formulated assumptions rather than empirically confirmed findings.

The individual, group, and institutional and digital levels are considered interconnected aspects of a unified model. The individual level encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral resources; the group level includes social identity and a sense of belonging; and the institutional and digital level encompasses the conditions within the educational institution and the characteristics of the digital environment.

The practical application of the model may involve a comprehensive assessment of psychological safety, the study of social identity and coping strategies, and an analysis of digital risks and the availability of psychological support. Specific preventive recommendations should be based on the empirical findings actually obtained and the diagnostic indicators

assessed.

At the next stage of the research, it would be appropriate to empirically test the sequential association between social identity and psychological safety through cognitive reappraisal and constructive coping, the potential negative contribution of emotional suppression, and the predictive value of the combined set of measured resources. If the data are collected at a single point in time, the identified associations should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of causal effects.

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