




# Relationship Analysis of Interpersonal Support with Well-being Index Among University Students

Rajinder Kaur  and Seema Sharma

Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab (141 004), India



Corresponding  [iamrajinderkaur@gmail.com](mailto:iamrajinderkaur@gmail.com)

 0000-0002-4938-1452

## ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted August to December, 2019 under the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India to assess the relationship between the well-being index and interpersonal support among university students i.e. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (GNDU), Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana (PAU) and Punjabi University, Patiala (PUP). The sample consisted of 480 students from the science stream studying in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years of the undergraduate program. The sample consisted of an equal number of first-year students (n=80) and second-year students (n=80) from each university. Random sampling was done to draw samples from three purposively selected universities. The study's objective was to assess the relationship between the well-being index and interpersonal support of university students. The well-being index and the Interpersonal support scale were used as data collection tools to evaluate the well-being index and available interpersonal support among university students. Statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The results revealed that all the dimensions of the well-being index were positively related to interpersonal support year-wise, gender-wise, and overall universities-wise. Those students who perceived higher levels of interpersonal support also tended to have higher levels of well-being across various dimensions. The study will be helpful for the youth to understand the importance of interpersonal support and its relationship with the well-being index. University students who perceived better social support networks tend to have higher levels of well-being compared to those who lack such support.

**KEYWORDS:** Interpersonal support, well-being index, psychological, university students

**Citation (VANCOUVER):** Kaur and Sharma, Relationship Analysis of Interpersonal Support with Well-being Index Among University Students. *International Journal of Bio-resource and Stress Management*, 2023; 14(8), 1116-1126. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.23910/1.2023.3597a](https://doi.org/10.23910/1.2023.3597a).

**Copyright:** © 2023 Kaur and Sharma. This is an open access article that permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium after the author(s) and source are credited.

**Data Availability Statement:** Legal restrictions are imposed on the public sharing of raw data. However, authors have full right to transfer or share the data in raw form upon request subject to either meeting the conditions of the original consents and the original research study. Further, access of data needs to meet whether the user complies with the ethical and legal obligations as data controllers to allow for secondary use of the data outside of the original study.

**Conflict of interests:** The authors have declared that no conflict of interest exists.

RECEIVED on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023

RECEIVED in revised form on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023

ACCEPTED in final form on 09<sup>th</sup> August 2023

PUBLISHED on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The entrance to the university marks a period of transition for newly admitted students. Through this transition, students face new difficulties like peer pressure, loneliness, personal autonomy, academic performance, demanding lecture schedules, and pressure to succeed (Asghar et al., 2019; Bahhawi et al., 2018; Beiter et al., 2015; Subhaluksuksakorn et al., 2016). In addition, many students first time leave their homes and distance themselves from their support networks (Cleary et al., 2011). Most of the university students who experienced mental health problems and low levels of well-being are not receiving treatment (Blanco et al., 2008; Eisenberg et al., 2011; Lipson et al., 2019) and, while universities continue to expand, there is a growing concern that the services available to provide support to students are not developing at an equivalent rate (Davy et al., 2012). Therefore, university students who perceived interpersonal support have been positively correlated with the overall well-being of an individual (Goldsmith, 2004). On the other hand, university students who perceive less social support are more likely to experience academic stress (Baldwin et al., 2003; Skowron et al., 2004). First-year students need to adjust to a new environment. Sometimes, these new problems may have an impact on their psychological well-being and physical well-being (Islam et al., 2020). Well-being is an indicator of which an individual feels self-sufficient. Therefore, students need to maintain their psychological and emotional well-being (Swenson et al., 2008). Similarly, Ye et al. (2019) reported that emotional well-being was affected by the amount of social support, and low levels of social support received were more associated with depressive symptoms. Physical well-being evaluates students' physical health, including their exercise habits, nutrition, sleep patterns, and overall physical fitness. According to Sarokhani et al. (2013), undergraduates perceived a higher rate of distress as compared to the general population. University students who perceived a greater level of social support from friends, family, and college faculty have a higher level of well-being index. The perception of support that students had during the beginning of their university life benefits their general well-being, which contributes to their mental health (Rendón et al., 2020). Interpersonal support plays a vital role in strengthening and helping individuals to cope with issues related to mental health (Gillard, 2019). Students who perceived social support are seen as mediating the relationship between stress and well-being (Poots and Cassidy, 2020).

According to (Cohen and Janicki-Deverts, 2009; Umberson and Montez, 2010) perceived social support and social bonds are positively related to mental and physical health. A positive relationship between perceived interpersonal support and

psychological well-being, allows it to be seen as a valuable protective mechanism that can improve psychological well-being by maintaining positive emotional feelings and mitigating stress (Chu et al., 2010; Thoits, 2011; Liu et al., 2014). Psychological Well-Being is positively related to undergraduates so the university is seen to provide a better overall experience for them. Undergraduates should be able to find support, comfort, and advice on how to live wholly to their potential (Khairani et al., 2019). The interpersonal support that students receive from their families, friends, and the academic community can directly influence their ability to deal with the challenges associated with university life (Cage et al., 2021; Mishra, 2020). Interpersonal support has the potential to normalize experiences and promote a sense of belonging among university students (Batchelor et al., 2020). Students in junior years are more likely to report lower levels of perceived interpersonal support than second years (Chavajay, 2013; Vungkhanching et al., 2017). Thus, the objective of the study aimed to examine the relationship between interpersonal support and well-being index year-wise, gender-wise, and overall universities-wise.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Study location

The study was conducted (August–December, 2019) in government three universities of Punjab. The total sample of the study comprised 480 graduate students drawn randomly. Care was taken to distribute the total sample equally across two genders [females ( $n_f=80$ ) and males ( $n_m=80$ )] were randomly selected under 1<sup>st</sup> year ( $n_1=80$ ) and 2<sup>nd</sup> year ( $n_2=80$ ) category from each university till the desired number of 160. Students in each university were completed. Thus, the total sample comprised 480 university students ( $n_1=160$  from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar;  $n_2=160$  from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana and  $n_3=160$  from Punjabi University Patiala) belonging to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the undergraduate program.

### 2.2. Research tools

The following tools were used for collecting the information from the respondents.

#### 2.2.1. Well-being index scale

The well-being of the students was assessed by administering the Well-being Index Scale developed by Chouhan and Sharma (1971). This scale covered six dimensions—emotional well-being, psychological well-being, social well-being, spiritual well-being, self-awareness, and physical well-being. It was useful to measure the quality of lifestyle of the individuals and also useful to find out those individuals who were at risk with very low levels of well-being. Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, Spiritual Well-being, Self-awareness, and Physical well-being

The reliability coefficient was 0.71 and validity was 0.85. It consisted of 50 statements, out of which 32 statements were positive and 18 statements were negative on a five-point scale. The criteria for scoring positive items (5=always, 4=often, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely and 1=never) and negative items (1=always, 2=often, 3=sometimes, 4=rarely and 5=never). The scale was scored by summing the keyed responses of well-being index for each of the statements. The well-being index was assessed across the following three levels: low  $\leq 2.3$ , medium 2.4-3.6 and high  $\geq 3.7$ . The sum of the scores was obtained for the entire scale. Higher the score more was the well-being.

### 2.2.2. Interpersonal support evaluation scale

Interpersonal Support Scale was developed by Cohen et al. (1985) and used to measure the peer support available to university students. Higher scores on each of the dimensions (Appraisal, Belonging, and Tangible) indicated stronger perceived availability of social support in each context. The scale consisted of 12 statements, out of which 6 statements were positive and 6 statements were negative on a four-point Likert scale with a reliability and validity coefficient of ( $\geq 70$ ). It covered three dimensions of interpersonal support: Appraisal support, Belonging support and Tangible support. The criteria for scoring positive items (1=definitely false, 2=probably false, 3=probably true and 4=definitely true) and negative items (4=definitely false, 3=probably false, 2=probably true and 1=definitely true). The scale was scored by summing the keyed responses of interpersonal support for each of the statements. The interpersonal support was

assessed across the following three levels: low, medium and high.

### 2.2.3. Statistical analysis of data

According to the objective appropriate tables were formulated depending on the kind of information required. The following statistical tools used in order to analyze the data were frequency, percentage, and Karl Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data illustrated in Table 1 depicted the correlation analysis between different dimensions of interpersonal support and well-being index as per their academic year. The data indicated that among 1<sup>st</sup>-year students, appraisal support a dimension of interpersonal support was significantly positively correlated with social well-being ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, these findings suggested that among 1<sup>st</sup>-year students, who perceived more access to support from classmates when worried or need help, they were more likely to report better social well-being. However, appraisal support a dimension of interpersonal support had a non-significant correlation with other dimensions of the well-being index. A parallel trend was noticed wherein belonging support, a dimension of interpersonal support had a significant positive correlation with emotional ( $r=0.20$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.29$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, it could be concluded from the findings that 1st-year students who experienced a stronger sense of belonging and support within the university campus were more likely to

Table 1: Correlation between different dimensions of interpersonal support and well-being index among university students as per their academic year (n=480)

| Dimensions of well-being index | 1 <sup>st</sup> year (n <sub>1</sub> = 240) |                       |                      |                                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year (n <sub>2</sub> = 240) |                       |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                | Dimensions of interpersonal support         |                       |                      |                                   | Dimensions of interpersonal support         |                       |                      |                                   |
|                                | Appraisal support (r)                       | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) | Appraisal support (r)                       | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) |
| Emotional well-being           | 0.09  | 0.20**                | 0.14*                | 0.18**                            | 0.13*                                       | 0.17**                | 0.18**               | 0.21**                            |
| Psychological well-being       | -0.04                                       | 0.13                  | 0.10                 | 0.07                              | 0.06  | 0.27**                | 0.16*                | 0.22**                            |
| Social well-being              | 0.19**                                      | 0.29**                | 0.18**               | 0.28**                            | 0.19**                                      | 0.22**                | 0.28**               | 0.30**                            |
| Spiritual well-being           | 0.02  | 0.05                  | 0.01                 | 0.03                              | 0.08  | 0.12                  | 0.05                 | 0.11                              |
| Self-awareness                 | 0.04  | 0.09                  | 0.03                 | 0.07                              | 0.06  | 0.01                  | 0.06                 | 0.06                              |
| Physical well-being            | 0.10  | 0.09                  | 0.03                 | 0.09                              | -0.01                                       | 0.07                  | 0.01                 | 0.03                              |
| Overall well-being Index       | 0.09  | 0.18**                | 0.11                 | 0.16*                             | 0.12  | 0.20**                | 0.16*                | 0.21**                            |

\*:  $p=0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p=0.01$ ; r: Correlation coefficient

report better emotional and social well-being. On the other hand, belonging support had a non-significant correlation with psychological, spiritual, physical well-being, and self-awareness dimensions of the well-being index. Further, the data reflected that tangible support had a significant positive correlation with emotional

( $r=0.14$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). So, it could be deduced that the students who have more access to tangible items in any form are more likely to have better emotional and social well-being. The tangible support dimension was noted to have a non-significant correlation with other dimensions of the well-being index. A statistically significant positive relationship was determined between overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and two dimensions of the well-being index viz. emotional well-being ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.28$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, this suggests that 1<sup>st</sup>-year students, who possessed higher levels of interpersonal support, were found to have better emotional and social well-being. Similarly, Ye et al. (2019) reported that emotional well-being was affected by the amount of social support, and low levels of social support received were more associated with depressive symptoms. However, other dimensions of interpersonal support had a non-significant association with other dimensions of the well-being index.

Also, the data illustrated that overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and belonging support ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) were found to be significantly positively related to the overall well-being index. This finding is supported by the study conducted by Stebleton et al. (2014) who observed that 1<sup>st</sup>-year students who experienced a higher level of perceived belonging support were linked to better social and emotional well-being as well as a higher level of self-esteem and college attachment.

Further analysis of data among 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students illustrated that appraisal support was significantly positively correlated with emotional well-being ( $r=0.13$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). So, these findings indicate that 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students, who perceived a strong sense of appraisal support within the university, were more likely to experience better emotional and social well-being. The belonging support dimension was noted to have a significant correlation with emotional well-being ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.27$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, this suggests that 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students, residing on campus reported higher involvement in university activities and a greater tendency to attend campus events, presumably increasing their emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The same trend was observed in tangible support as it was also found to be significantly positively correlated with emotional well-being

( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.28$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, these results imply that 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students, who perceived more tangible support were more likely to experience better emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Similarly, higher levels of interpersonal support have been found to be associated with improved psychological well-being (Glozah, 2013; Poudel et al., 2020; Reeve et al., 2013; Poots and Cassidy, 2020), with students that perceived interpersonal support positively found to at a lower-risk for mental health problems and improved psychological, emotional and social well-being (Karaca et al., 2019; Khallad and Jabr, 2016; Terzi, 2008; Yildirim et al., 2008). Additionally, Cohen et al. (1985) who referred to interpersonal support as resources provided to an individual by others in the form of appraisal, tangible and belonging support which contributed to social and emotional well-being.

Further probing into data highlighted that overall interpersonal support was significantly positively correlated with emotional well-being ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.30$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, it can be inferred that 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students who perceived higher levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being of the students were found to be increased with higher perceived interpersonal support. Also, the data illustrated that overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) as well as its dimensions of interpersonal support i.e. belonging support ( $r=0.20$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and tangible support ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) were found to be significantly positively related with overall well-being index. Thus, it could be concluded from the findings that when 2<sup>nd</sup> year students perceived better belonging and tangible support along with overall interpersonal support then, they tend to have better well-being. A similar finding reported by (Oriol, 2017; Zhang and Chen, 2018) when second-year students perceive a strong sense of belongingness, it indicates that they feel included and accepted within their academic environment. This sense of belonging can lead to increased social support, positive social interactions, and a greater sense of identity and purpose. These factors positively influence well-being, contributing to emotional, social, and psychological health. Moreover, when second-year students perceive higher levels of tangible support, it suggests that they have access to resources, financial assistance, or practical help. This support can alleviate stress related to meeting basic needs, provide a sense of security, and contribute to more positive overall well-being. Having the necessary resources and practical support can positively impact various dimensions of well-being, including emotional, social, and physical health. According Pinquart and Sorensen (2001), Ruini et al. (2003), and Daraei (2012) psychological well-being of second students were higher than first year students. Second-year students



perceived higher levels of overall interpersonal support; it indicates that they have a strong network of supportive relationships. This support contributes to their emotional well-being, provides a sense of belonging, fosters positive social interactions, and enhances their overall satisfaction with their social connections and academic environment. According to Bewicka et al. (2010) indicated that during the first year at university, students' psychological well-being changed significantly over time. This is because they are more likely to be influenced by academic environments such as effective lecturers, materials for the study, dealing with challenging situation. On the other hand, Guo et al., (2022) reported that university students who perceived more interpersonal support in the context of appraisal, tangible and sense belonging support from friends and family would also experience more happiness and life satisfaction which would also help to increase their psychological well-being.

The representation of data in Table 2 reported the correlation analysis between three dimensions of interpersonal support and six dimensions of the well-being index with regard to gender. The analysis of data mentioned that among female students, appraisal support was found to be significantly positively related to the social well-being ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) dimension of the well-being index. A parallel pattern was noticed for belonging support where also significant positive association was seen with emotional ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.28$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Further interpretation of data indicated that tangible support had a significant positive relationship with the two dimensions of the well-being

index i.e. emotional ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.25$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). In the same way, overall interpersonal support had a significant positive correlation with emotional ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological ( $r=0.14$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.31$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). So, these findings indicate that females who perceived better appraisal, belonging, tangible support, and overall support in all the components of interpersonal support were found to have better emotional, psychological, and social wellness. Also, the data illustrated that overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and belonging support ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) were found to be significantly positively related to the overall well-being index. These findings of the study are supported by Bowman (2010) who also found a positive relationship between perceived interpersonal support and the well-being index which enhances the emotional, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being among female students. Similar finding Gardner and Webb (2021) who found that interpersonal support from family had a direct impact on Jamaican adolescents' psychological well-being. Another study reported by Lundberg (2006) age-related differences in self-acceptance and gender differences, so females scored higher in personal growth, positive relationship with others. According to Panahi et al., (2015) male students were found significantly higher on self-acceptance, feeling of personal growth than women. Females have lower score in well-being index (Ruini et al., 2003). This might be related to family roles and social responsibilities between genders in which females increased involvement in social responsibilities. Further investigation of data among male students

Table 2: Correlation between different dimensions of interpersonal support and well-being index among university students as per their gender (n=480)

| Dimensions of well-being index | Females (n <sub>1</sub> =240)       |                       |                      |                                   | Males (n <sub>2</sub> = 240)        |                       |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                | Dimensions of interpersonal support |                       |                      |                                   | Dimensions of interpersonal support |                       |                      |                                   |
|                                | Appraisal support (r)               | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) | Appraisal support (r)               | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) |
| Emotional well-being           | 0.09                                | 0.18**                | 0.16*                | 0.18**                            | 0.13*                               | 0.19**                | 0.17**               | 0.21**                            |
| Psychological well-being       | 0.04                                | 0.19**                | 0.11                 | 0.14*                             | -0.08                               | 0.22**                | 0.15*                | 0.15*                             |
| Social well-being              | 0.19**                              | 0.28**                | 0.25**               | 0.31**                            | 0.21**                              | 0.22**                | 0.22**               | 0.28**                            |
| Spiritual well-being           | -0.05                               | 0.03                  | 0.01                 | -0.03                             | 0.15*                               | 0.12                  | 0.05                 | 0.14*                             |
| Self-awareness                 | 0.08                                | 0.03                  | 0.06                 | 0.07                              | 0.02                                | 0.07                  | 0.02                 | 0.05                              |
| Physical well-being            | -0.01                               | 0.06                  | -0.01                | 0.02                              | 0.11                                | 0.09                  | 0.05                 | 0.11                              |
| Overall well-being Index       | 0.07                                | 0.17**                | 0.12                 | 0.15*                             | 0.15*                               | 0.21**                | 0.15*                | 0.22**                            |

\*:  $p=0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p=0.01$ ; r: Correlation coefficient



highlighted that appraisal support was significantly positively correlated with emotional ( $r=0.13$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), social ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and spiritual well-being ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Thus, it could be inferred that male students who had high scores of perceived appraisal support had better levels of emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This support provides them with validation, recognition, and positive feedback, which contributes to their overall well-being. Creating an environment that fosters a culture of positive evaluation and support, and encourages peers and mentors to provide constructive feedback, can have a significant impact on the well-being of male students in these dimensions. The same trend was observed in belonging support a dimension of interpersonal support had a significant positive relationship with the dimensions of the well-being index i.e. emotional ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and social ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) well-being. So, these findings indicate that a high sense of belongingness was associated with male students who viewed themselves as emotionally, socially, and psychologically healthy and were concerned about others. It promotes a positive self-perception, supports healthy social interactions, and fosters concern for the well-being of others. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment that nurtures belongingness can have a significant impact on the well-being of male students. A similar study conducted by Pittman and Richmond (2007) reported that higher levels of college belongingness were associated with more positive emotional, social and psychological well-being. Further, the data reflected that the tangible support dimension had a significant positive correlation with emotional ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, it could be implied that male students, who perceived higher levels of tangible support were found to have better social, and psychological well-being which enhances their satisfaction with themselves. When male students receive tangible support, such as financial assistance, access to resources, or practical help, it can positively impact their social well-being. For example, having the means to participate in social activities, join clubs or organizations, or engage in extracurricular pursuits can enhance social connections and involvement, leading to a greater sense of belonging and satisfaction with their social lives. When male students receive tangible support, they may experience a greater sense of security, reduced stress levels, and increased self-confidence. Having access to resources and practical assistance can alleviate financial stress, reduce worries about meeting basic needs, and provide a sense of stability. This, in turn, can contribute to improved psychological well-being, including higher self-esteem, a positive self-image, and overall satisfaction with oneself. Tangible support is

based on practical support, like material aid and behavioral assistance (Sterbourne and Stewart, 1991) therefore tangible support proved to be a more effective form of interpersonal support for college students. Similar findings Adanyi and Kosa (2011) revealed that psychological wellbeing was lower among female public health students than in the same age male students population. Moreover, a significant positive correlation existed between overall interpersonal support and four dimensions of the well-being index viz. emotional well-being ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), social ( $r=0.28$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and spiritual well-being ( $r=0.14$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The application of correlation analysis showed that male students who perceived more interpersonal support tended to have better psychological, emotional and spiritual well-being. When male students have access to interpersonal support, they are more likely to experience positive self-esteem, self-acceptance, and a sense of belonging. This can contribute to better psychological well-being, including improved self-confidence, a more positive outlook on life, and greater resilience in facing challenges. When male students perceived a higher level of support that helps to regulate their emotions, reducing the likelihood of experiencing emotional difficulties such as anxiety or depression. The presence of supportive individuals who validate their emotions and provide comfort can contribute to a healthier emotional state. When male students have supportive relationships, they may engage in conversations and experiences that explore their values, beliefs, and personal growth in the spiritual realm. This exploration can contribute to a greater sense of purpose, a deeper understanding of oneself, and enhanced spiritual well-being. Also, overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) as well as all the dimensions of interpersonal support i.e. appraisal support ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), belonging support ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and tangible support ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) were found to be significantly positively correlated with overall well-being index. A similar study was reported by Wood et al (2008), who also found a significant relationship between well-being index and interpersonal support. Moreover, the appraisal, belonging, and tangible support of males contributed towards a positive relationship with overall well-being. This finding is in line with the results of Tanwar (2013) who reported that interpersonal support of boys was higher than girls. This can be attributed to the gender differences in socialization and social roles. High social well-being was found to be associated with students who viewed themselves as healthy and were integrated with, and concerned about, others. Low social well-being was associated with students who were in college for primarily instrumental reasons and who lacked social integration (Fagan, 1994).

The data portrayed in Table 3 represents the correlation analysis of different dimensions of interpersonal support

with various dimensions of the well-being index among total students in the selected universities. The results reflected that for students from GNDU, belonging support was significantly positively correlated with emotional ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and psychological ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) well-being a dimension of the well-being index. This implies that students having a high level of social cohesion tended to report significantly better emotional and psychological wellness. According to Torales et al. (2018) reported a close relationship between perceived social support with psychotically well-being. Further probing into data highlighted that overall interpersonal support was significantly positively correlated with emotional well-being ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This correlation showed that the students

who perceived more interpersonal support were facing less of emotional problems. Also, overall interpersonal support and its dimensions had non-significant relation with the overall well-being index. Further analysis of data reveals that for students from PAU, belonging support was significantly positively related to emotional well-being ( $r=0.20$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.23$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and social well-being ( $r=0.26$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) dimensions of well-being index. This correlation showed that students from PAU who had a strong sense of belonging support were more likely to report better emotional, psychological, and social stability. Similarly, the correlation of tangible support with emotional well-being ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), social well-being ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and physical well-being ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.05$ )

Table 3: Correlation between different dimensions of interpersonal support and well-being index among total students in the selected universities (n=480)

| Dimensions of well-being index | Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (GNDU) ( $n_1=160$ ) |                       |                      |                                   | Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana (PAU) ( $n_2=160$ ) |                       |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                | Dimensions of interpersonal support                      |                       |                      |                                   | Dimensions of interpersonal support                          |                       |                      |                                   |
|                                | Appraisal support (r)                                    | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) | Appraisal support (r)  | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) |
| Emotional well-being           | 0.13   | 0.19*                 | 0.11                 | 0.17*                             | 0.15   | 0.20**                | 0.17*                | 0.23**                            |
| Psychological well-being       | 0.02   | 0.16*                 | 0.10                 | 0.11                              | -0.04  | 0.23**                | 0.05                 | 0.11                              |
| Social well-being              | 0.02   | 0.14                  | 0.15                 | 0.12                              | -0.04  | 0.26**                | 0.21**               | 0.32**                            |
| Spiritual well-being           | 0.09   | 0.08                  | 0.06                 | 0.10                              | 0.04   | -0.01                 | -0.12                | -0.04                             |
| Self-awareness                 | 0.08   | 0.04                  | -0.01                | 0.04                              | 0.08   | -0.01                 | 0.01                 | 0.03                              |
| Physical well-being            | 0.12   | 0.07                  | 0.06                 | 0.10                              | 0.09   | -0.01                 | 0.19*                | -0.05                             |
| Overall well-being Index       | 0.12   | 0.15                  | 0.09                 | 0.15                              | 0.13   | 0.14                  | 0.02                 | 0.13                              |

Table 3: Continue...

| Dimensions of well-being index | Punjabi University, Patiala (PUP) ( $n_3=160$ ) |                       |                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                | Dimensions of interpersonal support             |                       |                      |                                   |
|                                | Appraisal Support (r)                           | Belonging support (r) | Tangible support (r) | Overall interpersonal support (r) |
| Emotional well-being           | 0.09  | 0.17*                 | 0.23**               | 0.21**                            |
| Psychological well-being       | 0.06  | 0.23**                | 0.27**               | 0.24**                            |
| Social well-being              | 0.06  | 0.36**                | 0.37**               | 0.40**                            |
| Spiritual well-being           | 0.01  | 0.16*                 | 0.16*                | 0.14                              |
| Self-awareness                 | 0.01  | 0.16*                 | 0.19*                | 0.15*                             |
| Physical well-being            | -0.05   | 0.18*                 | 0.21**               | 0.14                              |
| Overall well-being Index       | 0.07  | 0.30**                | 0.35**               | 0.31**                            |

\*:  $p=0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p=0.01$ ; r: Correlation coefficient



was found to be significant and positive. In the same way, overall interpersonal support had a significant positive correlation with emotional well-being ( $r=0.23$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and social well-being ( $r=0.32$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). It means students who perceived a higher level of interpersonal support were facing fewer emotional and social problems. Overall, higher levels of interpersonal support correlate with fewer emotional and social problems among students. Nurturing supportive relationships, fostering a sense of community, and providing resources for interpersonal support within educational environments can contribute to students' overall well-being and help mitigate the emotional and social difficulties they may face. The positive relationships between perceived interpersonal support and emotional well-being is also consistent with other research establishing that: when students perceive greater social support from their friends and college staff at university level, they reported greater satisfaction with life (Marrero and Carballeira, 2010; Kong et al., 2012; King et al., 2020).

In case of students from PUP showed that belonging support where also significant positive relationship existed with emotional well-being ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.23$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), social well-being ( $r=0.36$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), spiritual well-being ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), self-awareness ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and

physical well-being ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Thus, it could be inferred that students having a high level of college belongingness tends to report significantly better emotional, psychological, spiritual, physical, and social well-being. College belongingness provides students with a sense of connection, acceptance, and support from their peers, faculty, and the overall college community. This sense of belonging can contribute to increased positive emotions, a greater sense of security, and a reduced likelihood of experiencing feelings of loneliness or isolation. When students feel a strong sense of belongingness in college, they are more likely to have positive self-esteem, self-acceptance, and a sense of identity. They may experience a greater sense of purpose, meaning, and personal growth, which are important factors contributing to psychological well-being (Kleiman and Riskind, 2013; Santini et al., 2015; Shensa et al., 2020). According to (Cohen and Janicki-Deverts, 2009; Umberson and Montez, 2010) perceived interpersonal support and social bonds are positively related to mental and physical healing. College belongingness may indirectly impact students' physical well-being. When students feel a strong sense of belonging, they are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and seek social support, which can positively influence physical health.

A parallel pattern was noticed for tangible support whereas it was also found to be significant positive association

was seen with emotional well-being ( $r=0.23$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.27$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), social well-being ( $r=0.37$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), spiritual well-being ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), self-awareness ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and physical well-being ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, this implies that when students perceived higher levels of materialistic support, they were more likely to perform better in all the dimensions of well-being. Tangible support, such as financial assistance or access to resources, can help alleviate financial stress among students. When students have their basic needs met and do not have to worry excessively about finances, they can focus more on their studies and overall well-being. Moreover, a significant positive correlation existed between overall interpersonal support and four dimensions of the well-being index viz. emotional well-being ( $r=0.21$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), psychological well-being ( $r=0.24$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), social well-being ( $r=0.40$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and self-awareness ( $r=0.15$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

Also, overall interpersonal support ( $r=0.31$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) as well as all its two dimensions of interpersonal support i.e. belonging support ( $r=0.35$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and tangible support ( $r=0.30$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) were found to be significantly positively correlated with overall well-being index. The positive correlation between the dimensions of interpersonal support and the overall well-being index highlights the importance of interpersonal support in promoting students' well-being. When students feel a sense of belonging and receive tangible assistance from others, they are more likely to experience a higher level of well-being. A similar findings reported by Friedlander et al. (2007) who found that a higher level of interpersonal support was related to better well-being. There was a significant relationship between the quality of interpersonal support and well-being during the transition and throughout the university year. A positive association between perceived interpersonal support and psychological well-being, which allows it to be seen as a valuable protective mechanism that can improve psychological well-being by maintaining positive emotional feelings and reducing the stress level of university students (Chu et al., 2010; Thoits, 2011; Liu et al., 2014).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Interpersonal support plays a significant role in the well-being of university students, particularly second-year students who perceived higher levels of overall interpersonal support; it indicated that they had a strong network of supportive relationships. Male students who perceived more interpersonal support tended to have better psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being than their counterparts. Male students can contribute to better psychological well-being, including improved self-confidence, a more positive outlook, and greater resilience in facing challenges.





## 5. REFERENCES

- Asghar, A., Masood Shah, A., Ali Hussain, A., Tahir, A., Asghar, H., 2019. Frequency of pre-obesity and obesity in medical students of Karachi and the predisposing lifestyle habits. *Cureus* 11(1), 1–9.
- Batchelor, R., Pitman, E., Sharpington, A., Stock, M., Cage, E., 2020. Student perspectives on mental health support and services in the UK. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 44(4), 483–497.
- Beiter, R., Nash, R., McCrady, M., Rhoades, D., Linscomb, M., Clarahan, M., Sammut, S., 2015. The prevalence and correlates of depression, anxiety, and stress in a sample of college students. *Journal of Affective Disorders* 7(173), 90–96.
- Bewicka, B., Koutsopouloub, G., Milesc, J., Slaad, E., Barkhame, M., 2010. Changes in undergraduate students' psychological well-being as they progress through university. *Studies in Higher Education* 35(6), 1–14.
- Biro, E., Adany, R., Kosa, K., 2011. Mental health and behaviour of students of public health and their correlation with social support: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health* 11(1), 1–8.
- Blanco, C., Okuda, M., Wright, C., Hasin, D.S., Grant, B.F., Liu, S.M., 2008. Mental health of college students and their non-college-attending peers: results from the national epidemiologic study on alcohol and related conditions. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 65(12), 1429–37.
- Bowman, N.A., 2010. Development of psychological well-being among first years college students. *Journal of College Student Development* 51(2), 180–200.
- Cage, E., Jones, E., Ryan, G., Hughes, G., Spanner, L., 2021. Student mental health and transitions into, through and out of university: student and staff perspectives. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45(8), 1–14.
- Chavajay, P., 2013. Perceived social support among international students at a US university. *Psychological Reports* 112(2), 667– 677.
- Chouhan, V.L., Sharma, V., 1971. Manual for well-being index scale. agra: national psychological corporation.
- Chu, P.S., Saucier, D.A., Hafner, E., 2010. Meta-analysis of the relationships between social support and well-being in children and adolescents. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 29(6), 624–645.
- Cleary, M., Walter, G., Jackson, D., 2011. “Not always smooth sailing”: mental health issues associated with the transition from high school to college. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 32(4), 250–254.
- Cohen, S., Janicki-Deverts, D., 2009. Can we improve our physical health by altering our social networks? *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 4(4), 375–378.
- Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., Hoberman, Marmelstein, R., 1985. A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 24(4), 385–396.
- Daracai, M., 2012. Social correlates of psychological well-being among undergraduate students in Mysore city. *Social Indicators Research* 114(2), 567–590.
- Davy, C., Dobson, A., Lawrence-Wood, E., Lorimer, M., Moores, K., Lawrence, A., 2012. The middle east area of operations (meao) health study: prospective study report. Adelaide: University of Adelaide 280(2), 112482.
- Eisenberg, D., Hunt, J., Speer, N., Zivin, K., 2011. Mental health service utilization among college students in the United States. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 199(5), 301–308.
- Fagan, R.W., 1994. Social well-being in university students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 23(2), 237–248.
- Friedlander, L.J., Reid, G.J., Shupak, N., Cribbie, R., 2007. Social support, self-esteem, and stress as predictors of adjustment among first-year undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development* 48(3), 259–274.
- Gardner, A.A., Webb, H.J.A., 2019. Contextual examination of the associations between social support, self-esteem, and psychological well-being among Jamaican adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Society* 51(5), 707–730.
- Gillard, S., 2019. Peer support in mental health services: where is the research taking us, and do we want to go there? *Journal of Mental Health* 4(28), 341–44.
- Glozah, F.N., 2013. Effects of academic stress and perceived social support on the psychological wellbeing of adolescents in Ghana. *Open Journal of Medical Psychology* 2(4), 143–150.
- Guo, H., Kitcharoen, P., Phukao, D., Poopan, S., 2022. The causal relationship between social support and psychological well-being among undergraduate students in North China. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion* 11(1), 1–16.
- Islam, M.S., Akter, R , Tajuddin Sikder, T, Griffiths M.D., 2020. Weight-related status and associated predictors with psychological well-being among first-year university students in Bangladesh: A pilot study. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* 20, 1354–1369.
- Karaca, A., Yildirim, N., Cangur, S., Acikgoz, F., Akkus, D., 2019. Relationship between mental health of nursing students and coping, self-esteem and social support. *Nurse Education Today* 76, 44–50.
- Khairani, A.Z., Shamsuddin, H., Izazol Idris, I., 2019. Improving Psychological well-being among undergraduates: how creativity in learning can

- contribute? *Malaysian Journal of Communication* 35(2), 346–360.
- Khallad, Y., Jabr, F., 2016. Effects of perceived social support and family demands on college students' mental well-being: A cross cultural investigation. *International Journal of Psychology* 51(5), 348–355.
- King, C., Heo, J., Lee, J.W., Hji-Avgoustis, S., Lee, S., 2020. Subjective well-being, activity types, and social context in undergraduate students' daily experiences: an experience sampling study. *College Student Journal* 54(1), 106–116.
- Kleiman, E.M., Riskind, J.H., 2013. Utilized social support and self-esteem mediate the relationship between perceived social support and suicide ideation: a test of a multiple mediator model. *Crisis the Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention* 34(1), 42–49.
- Kong, F., You, X., 2013. Loneliness and self-esteem as mediators between social support and life satisfaction in late adolescence. *Social Indicators Research* 110(1), 271–279.
- Kong, F., Zhao, J., You, X., 2012. Social support mediates the impact of emotional intelligence on mental distress and life satisfaction in Chinese young adults. *Personality and Individual Differences* 53(4), 513–517.
- Lipson, S.K., Lattie, E.G., Eisenberg, D., 2019. Increased rates of mental health service utilization by US college students: 10-year population-level trends. *Psychiatric Services* 70(1), 60–63.
- Liu, H., Li, S., Xiao, Q., Feldman, M.W., 2014. Social support and psychological well-being under social change in urban and rural China. *Social Indicators Research* 119(2), 979–996.
- Marrero, R.J., Carballeira, M., 2010. The role of optimism and social support on subjective well-being. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health* 33(1), 39–46.
- Mishra, S., 2020. Social networks, social capital, social support and academic success in higher education: A systematic review with a special focus on 'underrepresented' students. *Educational Research Review* 29, 1–24.
- Oriol-Granado, X., Mendoza-Lira, M., Covarrubias-Apablaza, C.G., Molina-López, V.M., 2017. Positive emotions, autonomy support and academic performance of university students: the mediating role of academic engagement and self-efficacy. *Journal of Psychodidactics* 22(1), 45–53.
- Panahi, S., Yunus, A.S.M., Roslan, S., 2013. Correlates of psychological well-being amongst graduate students in Malaysia. *Report and Opinion* 5(8), 39–49.
- Pinquart, M., Sorensen, S., 2001. Gender differences in self-concept and psychological well-being in old age. *The Journals of Gerontology Series b: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 56(4), 195–213.
- Pittman, L.D., Richmond, A., 2007. Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: the importance of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education* 75(4), 270–290.
- Poots, A., Cassidy, T., 2020. Academic expectation, self-compassion, psychological capital, social support and student wellbeing. *International Journal of Educational Research* 99, 1–9.
- Poudel, A., Gurung, B., Khanal, G.P., 2020. Perceived social support and psychological wellbeing among Nepalese adolescents: The mediating role of self-esteem. *BMC Psychology* 43(8), 1–8.
- Reeve, K.L., Shumaker, C.J., Yearwood, E.L., Crowell, N.A., Riley, J.B., 2013. Perceived stress and social support in undergraduate nursing students' educational experiences. *Nurse Education Today* 33(4), 419–424.
- Ruini, C., Ottolini, F., Rafanelli, C., Tossani, E., Ryff, C.D., Fava, G., A., 2003. The relationship of psychological well-being to distress and personality. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 72(5), 268–275.
- Santini, Z.I., Koyanagi, A., Tyrovolas, S., Mason, C., Haro, J.M., 2015. The association between social relationships and depression: a systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders* 175, 53–65.
- Sarokhani, D., Delpisheh, A., Veisani, Y., Sarokhani, M.T., Esmaelimanesh, R., Sayehmiri, K., 2013. Prevalence of depression among university students: a systematic review and meta-analysis study. *Journal of Depression Research and Treatment* 2013(2), 1–7.
- Shensa, A., Sidani, J.E., Escobar-Viera, C.G., Switzer, G.E., Primack, B.A., Choukas-Bradley, S., 2020. Emotional support from social media and face-to-face relationships: associations with depression risk among young adults. *Journal of Affective Disorders* 260, 38–44.
- Sherbourne, C.D., Stewart, A.L., 1991. The MOS social support survey. *Social Science and Medicine* 32(6), 705–714.
- Stebbleton, M.J., Soria, K.M., Huesman, R.L., 2014. First-generation students' sense of belonging, mental health, and use of counseling services at public research universities. *Journal of College Counselling* 17(1), 6–20.
- Subhaluksuksakorn, P., Sinjariyanon, W., Pimsaran, R., 2016. Gender difference in underweight, overweight and obesity among first-year students of Suranaree University of Technology. *Journal of the Medical Association of Thailand* 99(7), 24–29.
- Swenson, L.M., Nordstrom, A., Hiester, M., 2008. The role of peer relationships in adjustment to college. *Journal of College Student Development* 49(6), 551–567.



- Tanwar, R., 2013. Porter's generic competitive strategies. *Journal of Business and Management* 15(1), 11–17.
- Terzi, S., 2008. The relationship between psychological hardness and perceived social support of university Students. *Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Journal* 3(29), 1–11.
- Thoits, P.A., 2011. Mechanisms linking social ties and support to physical and mental health. *Journal Health Social Behaviour* 52(2), 145–161.
- Torales, J., Barrios, I., Samudio, A., Samudio, M., 2018. Self-perceived social support in medical students of the National university of Asunción, Paraguay. *Journal of Medical Education* 19(5), 313–317.
- Umberson, D., Karas Montez, J., 2010. Social relationships and health: a flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S) 54–66.
- Vungkhanching, M., Tonsing, J.C., Tonsing, K.N., 2017. Psychological distress, coping and perceived social support in social work students. *British Journal of Social Work* 47(7), 1999–2013.
- Wood, R.L., Hausman, L.R., MSchofield, J.W., 2008. Sense of belonging as a predictor of intentions to persist among African American and white first-year students. *Research in Higher Education* 48(7), 803–839.
- Ye, J., Yeung, D.Y., Liu, E.S.C., Rochelle, T.L., 2019. Sequential mediating effects of provided and received social support on trait emotional intelligence and subjective happiness: a longitudinal examination in Hong Kong Chinese university students. *International Journal of Psychology* 54(4), 478–486.
- Yildirim, I., Genctanirim, D., Yalcin, I., Baydan, Y., 2008. Academic achievement, perfectionism and social support as predictors of test anxiety, *Journal of Education* 34(34), 287–296.
- Zhang, Y., Chen, M., 2018. Character strengths, strengths use, future self-continuity and subjective well-being among Chinese university students. *Frontiers in Psychology* 9, 1040–1054.