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A STUDY TO ASSESS SOCIAL INTERACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS AT AL-BERUNI INSTITUTE OF NURSING HYDERABAD

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Abstract

Background: Psychological well-being is an important aspect of overall health, especially among nursing students who face both academic and clinical stress. Social interaction is considered a key factor that may influence mental health by providing emotional support and a sense of belonging.

Objective: To assess social interaction and psychological well-being, and to determine the relationship between these variables among undergraduate nursing students at Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, Hyderabad.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study design with a quantitative approach was used. The study was conducted from January 2026 to March 2026. A total of 169 undergraduate nursing students were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured adopted questionnaire, including the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were applied.

Results: The findings revealed that 36.1% of participants had moderate psychological well-being, 34.3% had high well-being, and 29.6% had low well-being. Correlation analysis showed a very weak positive relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being (Pearson's $r = 0.049$, $p = 0.524$; Spearman's $r = 0.058$, $p = 0.458$), which was not statistically significant. Similarly, the Chi-square test indicated no significant association between the variables ($p > 0.05$).

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Conclusion: The study suggests that psychological well-being is influenced by multiple factors beyond social interaction, such as academic stress, clinical workload, and personal coping strategies.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

The Meaning of Psychological Well-Being: When we talk about being healthy, we often only think about our bodies. But according to the World Health Organization (WHO), real health means being completely well in your body, mind, and social life. In university life, Psychological Well-Being (PWB) is a very important concept. It basically means that a student feels happy, is satisfied with their life, and can do their daily tasks effectively. It is not just about a single feeling; it includes things like having a purpose in life, being independent, growing as a person, and having good relationships with others. Researchers have found that when students have high PWB, they even have a stronger immune system and better physical health.

Why Nursing Students Face More Stress: Nursing students are in a very unique and difficult position. They are not just students; they are also training to be health professionals. This is sometimes called a "double risk" because they have to handle tough exams and clinical training in hospitals at the same time. In the hospital, they face very heavy workloads and sad situations like patient suffering and death. Because of these pressures, nursing students often suffer from more anxiety, stress, and depression than students in other fields. Studies show that in some places, more than half of nursing students report feeling these mental health struggles.

The Power of Social Interaction:

To handle all this pressure, Social Interaction acts like a protective shield or "buffer". Social interaction is more than just talking; it is a process where students connect with each other and give meaning to their communication. When students have good relationships with their peers and teachers, they feel a "Sense of Belonging". This feeling of being accepted and supported by the university community helps them stay mentally strong and reduces their stress.

The Danger of Loneliness and Social Anxiety:

However, not every student finds it easy to make friends. Some students feel Social Interaction Anxiety, which is a fear of meeting or talking to others. When students cannot connect with others, they start feeling Loneliness. Loneliness is now a major public health concern because it leads to deep sadness and even a risk of suicide. For nursing students, feeling isolated can make them feel very tired and lose interest in their studies.

Why This Study is Important at Al-Biruni Institute:

Every institute is different because of its culture and environment. Past research shows that even though the first year of college is the most vulnerable time for students to lose their identity,

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students in their final years can also face different kinds of stress. By assessing social interaction and psychological well-being at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing in Hyderabad, we can understand what specific challenges these students are facing. This study will help the institute create better counseling programs and social activities so that students can balance their studies and their personal happiness.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This study aims to assess the social life and mental well-being of undergraduate nursing students at Al-Biruni Institute, focusing on their social interactions and level of life satisfaction.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To check the state of social interaction among the students by looking at how they communicate and keep in contact with the people around them.
2. To assess the level of psychological well-being in these nursing students to find out how satisfied and mentally healthy they feel during their time at the institute.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the current status of social interaction among undergraduate nursing students at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, Hyderabad?
2. What are the levels of psychological well-being among the undergraduate students at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, Hyderabad?

1.5 Justification

Nursing students are in a double risk situation because they must simultaneously handle the demands of being a student and the pressures of being a health professional. They often experience higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to students in other academic fields because of rigorous study requirements and the challenges of clinical training. These unique pressures, such as dealing with patient suffering, death, and a heavy workload, can significantly damage their psychological well-being if they are not supported. Social interaction is a vital tool for these students because it creates a sense of belonging and provides the emotional support needed to stay resilient. However, recent studies show that over 58% of nursing students report varying degrees of loneliness, which is a major predictor of mental health struggles. Furthermore, many students suffer from social interaction anxiety, which makes it difficult for them to build warm relationships or ask for help when they are stressed. While international research has explored these topics, the specific social and psychological status of students at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing is not yet fully understood. This study is justified because assessing the current levels of social interaction and well-being is the necessary first step to help the institute develop better counseling and support systems for its students. By identifying those who are struggling, the

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institute can provide a quick diagnosis and treatment to prevent a decline in student health and academic performance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because there is very little research on the social interaction and psychological well-being of nursing students in the Pakistani context. By conducting this research at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, we will provide baseline data that can be used for future studies and interventions. The findings will help the institute's management understand the current mental health status of their students and identify areas where professional counseling or social support is needed. Furthermore, the results can inform the development of student wellness programs and institutional policies that promote a healthy balance between academic work and personal life. Ultimately, this research benefits the healthcare system by ensuring that future nurses are mentally healthy and well-equipped to provide quality care to their patients.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a multidimensional construct that describes an individual's ability to feel satisfied with life, function effectively, and engage positively with various life challenges. For university students, particularly those in nursing programs, maintaining optimal well-being is not just a personal goal but a professional necessity, as it directly impacts their academic achievement and future leadership in healthcare. Research consistently indicates that students with high levels of psychological well-being possess stronger physical health and more robust immune systems, whereas low well-being is associated with academic burnout, poor behavioral choices, and an increased risk of severe mental distress.

Nursing students are frequently identified as a uniquely vulnerable group because they face a "double risk" situation, acting simultaneously as intensive academic learners and frontline health professionals in training. This dual responsibility exposes them to clinical stressors such as patient suffering, death, and professional image concerns, which can significantly deteriorate their mental health if not addressed through institutional and social support systems.

Social interaction serves as a fundamental mechanism for fostering this well-being, defined as the process through which individuals interpret symbols and build meaningful connections within their environment. In the context of higher education, positive social engagement ranging from peer relationships to student-teacher interactions is a significant predictor of life satisfaction and emotional stability. When students participate in constructive social activities, they develop a "sense of belonging," which helps them feel accepted, respected, and supported within their institution. This sense of belongingness acts as a catalyst for well-being, fulfilling the basic psychological need for relatedness, which is essential for personal growth and autonomy. Conversely, barriers to interaction, such as intense academic competition or feelings of inferiority, can lead students to withdraw socially, further undermining their self-efficacy and mood.

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The quality of social interaction is often measured through the perception of social support, which refers to the belief that one is cared for by a reliable social network of family, friends, and significant others. For nursing students, perceived social support (PSS) acts as a critical "buffer" against the rigors of their training. Studies have verified that students who report high levels of social support are better equipped to endure negative life events and adapt to the stressful requirements of clinical practice. This relationship is partly explained through neurobiological pathways; specifically, feelings of being supported activate a "soothing system" within the brain's emotion-regulatory network, promoting contentment and feelings of safety. Furthermore, social support is positively linked to self-compassion and a healthy professional self-concept, both of which are central to ensuring that future nurses remain committed to their profession despite the challenges they encounter.

However, the lack of positive social interaction frequently manifests as loneliness, which has emerged as a major public health concern in nursing education. Loneliness is not merely the absence of people but a distressing discrepancy between a person's desired and actual social connections. Recent data indicates that approximately 58.6% of nursing students experience varying degrees of loneliness, which is often a separate psychological construct from anxiety and depression but remains tightly linked to them. It is important to differentiate between social loneliness, which arises from an inadequate broad social network, and emotional loneliness, which is the absence of close, intimate attachment. Longitudinal research from 2026 suggests that emotional loneliness is a more robust predictor of psychopathological symptoms like fatigue, insomnia, and depressive mood than social loneliness.

In the local context of Pakistan, nursing students face unique sociocultural challenges that can impact their social integration and psychological health. Regional studies, such as the 2024 research by Naz et al. on nursing students in Lahore, have identified perceived social support as a vital predictor of resilience and well-being within our specific healthcare environment. Despite their theoretical knowledge of health, many students struggle to apply coping strategies in their daily lives due to time constraints, workload, and social isolation. Academic methodologies, such as high-stakes exams and oral presentations, are consistently reported as high sources of stress that can lead to social dysfunction and anxiety.

Ultimately, the existing literature highlights that social interaction is not just a social preference but a psychological necessity for students at institutions like the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing. By understanding the dynamics of social support and its influence on psychological well-being, educators can develop better peer-mentoring programs and counseling interventions. Addressing the gaps in social connectivity will not only improve the quality of life for individual students but also ensure the development of a stable, resilient, and sustainable nursing workforce for the future.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

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This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design with a quantitative research approach to assess the social life and mental well-being of undergraduate nursing students at Al-Biruni Institute, focusing on their social interactions and level of life satisfaction.

3.2 Study Setting and Duration

The research was conducted at the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing in Hyderabad over a defined period from January 2026 to March 2026.

3.3 Study Population

The study population consisted of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, including individuals from all four academic years (1st to 4th year). Both male and female students were eligible to participate, ensuring gender representation across the sample. The target population consisted of undergraduate nursing students currently enrolled at the Al-Biruni Institute. The total number of students was 300.

3.4 Sample Size

To make sure the results are accurate, the sample size was calculated using the Raosoft online sample size calculator with the following parameters:

- Total Population: 300
- Margin of Error: 5%
- Confidence Level: 95%

The recommended minimum sample size for this study is 169 participants.

3.5 Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants, and a total of 169 students were included in the study. The inclusion criteria comprised students who were currently enrolled in the program, willing to participate voluntarily, and present at the time of data collection.

Inclusion Criteria:

- All students who were studying in Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing Hyderabad.
- Students who were willing to participate.
- Those students who were present.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Students who were absent during any phase of the study.

3.6 Research Tools (Questionnaires)

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Data were collected using a structured, adopted questionnaire divided into three sections:

- **Section A: Socio-Demographic** – This section collects basic information about the participants, such as their age, gender, academic year, residence type, economic status, and parenting background.
- **Section B: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)** – To assess social interaction through the lens of social support, the MSPSS was used. It consists of 12 items that measure support from three sources: Family, Friends, and Significant Others. The MSPSS is a highly validated tool showing strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.85 to 0.91.
- **Section C: WHO (Five) Well-Being Index (1998 Version)** – To assess the level of psychological well-being, the WHO-5 Well-Being Index was used. This is a short, 5-item scale that asks students about their feelings over the last two weeks (e.g., feeling cheerful, calm, and active). This tool is globally recognized for its high sensitivity in screening mental health, with a Cronbach's alpha value often exceeding 0.80.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the proposal underwent approval from the principal of the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, Hyderabad. The participants were explained about the study's objectives, and their cooperation was requested. Written and verbal consent was obtained from those who agreed to take part. Questionnaires were then distributed as online questionnaires to the students.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were calculated to summarize the demographic data and response patterns. Chi-Square test was used to examine the levels of social interaction and well-being among the students, with a p-value less than 0.05 considered statistically significant.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

- **Official Permission:** Before starting data collection, formal permission was taken from the Principal and management of the Al-Biruni Institute of Nursing, Hyderabad.
- **Informed Consent:** Every student was clearly told about the purpose and goals of the research. They only took part after they understood the study and signed a consent form.
- **Freedom to Withdraw:** Participation was completely voluntary. Students were told that they could leave the study at any time without giving a reason or facing any penalty.
- **Privacy and Anonymity:** To protect the students' identity, no names or roll numbers were written on the questionnaires. All information was kept strictly confidential and used only for this research.

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- **No Risk of Harm:** The study was designed to be safe. It did not involve any physical or mental risk to the students, as the assessment was purely for academic improvement.

RESULTS

Table 4.1: Total Number of Participants and Missing Values (N = 169)

Description	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Valid Responses	169	100%
Missing Responses	0	0%
Total	**169**	**100%**

The table indicates that a total of 169 participants were included in the study. All responses were complete, with 100% valid data and no missing values (0%). This shows that the dataset is complete and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable / Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age of Participants		
Age 20–25	132	78.1
Age 26–30	26	15.4
Age 31–35	5	3.0
Age Above 35	6	3.6
Gender of Participants		

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Variable / Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	149	88.2
Female	20	11.8
Academic Year		
First Year	56	33.1
Second Year	22	13.0
Third Year	40	23.7
Fourth Year	51	30.2
Type of Residence		
Home with family	80	47.3
Hostel	58	34.3
Rented room/apartment	31	18.3
Economic Status		
Lower economic status	24	14.2
Middle economic status	134	79.3
Upper economic status	2	1.2
Prefer not to say	9	5.3
Attitude of Parent		
Authoritative parents	96	56.8

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Variable / Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Democratic parents	62	36.7
Unconcerned parents	11	6.5

The demographic profile shows that most participants were aged 20–25 years (78.1%) and the majority were male (88.2%). Most students were from the first year (33.1%) and fourth year (30.2%). Regarding residence, almost half lived with their families (47.3%), followed by hostel residents (34.3%). The majority of participants belonged to middle economic status (79.3%). In terms of parental attitude, more than half reported authoritative parenting style (56.8%). Overall, the sample mainly represents young, male nursing students with middle socioeconomic background.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Participants According to Level of Social Support

Level of Social Support	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low	8	4.73%
Moderate	67	39.64%
High	94	55.62%

The findings indicate that more than half of the participants (55.62%) reported a high level of social support, which suggests that most students have strong social connections and support systems. A considerable proportion (39.64%) experienced a moderate level of social support, indicating an average level of interaction and assistance from peers, family, or others. However, a very small percentage (4.73%) reported low social support, highlighting that only a few students may be at risk of social isolation or lack of support.

Table 4.4: Wellbeing Level of Respondents

Wellbeing Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low	50	29.6%
Moderate	61	36.1%

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Wellbeing Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
High	58	34.3%

The table shows the distribution of respondents based on wellbeing level. Most respondents (36.1%) reported a moderate level of wellbeing, followed by 34.3% with high wellbeing, while 29.6% had low wellbeing. This indicates that the majority of participants fall in the moderate to high wellbeing category, suggesting an overall satisfactory level of wellbeing among respondents.

Table 4.5: Tests of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	p-value
Age of participant	.512	169	.000
Gender of student	.376	169	.000
Academic year of student	.810	169	.000
Type of residence	.768	169	.000
Economic status	.578	169	.000
Attitude of parents	.711	169	.000
Social Support	.923	169	.000
Wellbeing Level	.976	169	.005

All variables show p-values less than 0.05, indicating that the data is not normally distributed. Based on the Shapiro-Wilk test results, none of the variables follow a normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests are recommended for further analysis.

DISCUSSION

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The present study was conducted to assess the relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being among undergraduate nursing students. The findings of this study revealed that there was no statistically significant association between social interaction and psychological well-being ($p = 0.514$). This suggests that, within this sample, social interaction alone did not have a measurable impact on the psychological well-being of nursing students.

The demographic characteristics of the participants provide important context for understanding the results. The majority of respondents were young adults aged 20–25 years (78.1%), and most participants were male (88.2%). This indicates that the sample was highly concentrated in a specific age group and gender, which may have influenced the findings. Previous research suggests that psychological well-being can vary across age groups and gender, and a more balanced sample might produce different results. Additionally, most students belonged to the first and fourth academic years, which may reflect varying levels of academic stress and clinical exposure.

In terms of living arrangements, nearly half of the participants lived with their families (47.3%), while others resided in hostels or rented accommodations. Family support is generally considered an important factor in enhancing psychological well-being. However, in this study, despite a significant proportion of students living with their families, no strong association was found between social interaction and well-being. This finding may indicate that the quality of interaction is more important than the mere presence of social contact.

Furthermore, the majority of participants belonged to a middle socioeconomic status (79.3%), and more than half reported having authoritative parents (56.8%). Authoritative parenting is typically associated with positive psychological outcomes, including better emotional regulation and coping skills. However, the lack of a significant relationship in this study suggests that other factors may play a more dominant role in determining students' psychological well-being.

The results of the normality test indicated that all variables were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), which justified the use of non-parametric statistical tests. Additionally, the reliability analysis showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.791, indicating that the research instrument had acceptable internal consistency. This strengthens the credibility of the data collected in this study.

One important methodological issue that may have influenced the results is related to the Chi-square test assumptions. A large proportion of cells (65%) had expected counts less than 5, which violates the assumptions of the Chi-square test. As a result, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as this limitation may reduce the accuracy and reliability of the statistical conclusions.

In contrast to the findings of this study, several recent studies have reported a significant positive relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being. For instance, Dong et al. (2024) found that social support and resilience significantly improve students' psychological well-being. Similarly, Jameel et al. (2024) reported that social support plays a crucial role in enhancing mental health among university students. Another study by Zhang et al. (2025) highlighted that a sense of belonging and social interaction are strongly associated with improved well-being. These differences may be due to variations in sample characteristics, cultural context, or measurement tools.

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The inconsistency between the current findings and previous studies may also suggest that psychological well-being is a complex and multidimensional construct influenced by various factors beyond social interaction. Factors such as academic pressure, clinical workload, financial stress, personal coping strategies, and emotional resilience may have a stronger impact on students' mental health. Nursing students, in particular, face unique challenges due to the demanding nature of their education and clinical responsibilities.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study was conducted to find out whether there is any relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being among undergraduate nursing students. The results of the study showed that there was no significant relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being. This means that simply having social interaction does not necessarily improve or strongly affect the psychological well-being of nursing students in this study. It suggests that mental well-being is influenced by many other factors such as academic pressure, clinical work, stress, personal life, and coping abilities. So, psychological well-being cannot be explained by only one factor like social interaction.

Recommendations

- Nursing institutes should pay more attention to students' mental health and arrange proper support systems.
- Workshops on stress management and coping skills should be arranged regularly for students.
- Teachers and faculty members should try to create a friendly and supportive environment for students.
- Peer support groups should be encouraged so students can share their problems and reduce stress.
- Future researchers should include a larger sample size so results can be more accurate and generalizable.
- Different research methods should also be used in future studies to better understand this topic.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size was limited to 169 students, which may not represent all nursing students.
- The study was conducted at one setting only, so results cannot be applied to all institutions.
- The design of the study was cross-sectional, so it cannot show cause and effect relationship.
- Some statistical assumptions were not fully met, which may have affected the results.
- Data was collected through questionnaires, so there is a chance of honest or response bias from participants.

Strengths of the Study

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- All 169 participants fully completed the questionnaire, so there was no missing data.
- The research tool was reliable, with a good Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.791.
- The study included different demographic factors, which gave a better understanding of the participants.
- Proper statistical analysis was used to analyze the data.
- This topic is very relevant, especially for nursing students who often face stress during their studies and clinical practice.

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