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MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Mental well-being is an important dimension of the overall development of college students. The college period represents a major transition in an individual's life because students experience changes in academic responsibilities, personal independence, career expectations, financial circumstances, family relationships and peer networks. These changes can influence emotional stability, social adjustment and psychological well-being. Social relationships with family members, friends, classmates, teachers and wider peer groups play an important role in helping students manage these transitions. Supportive relationships can provide emotional security, encouragement, companionship and a sense of belonging, whereas conflict, isolation, rejection and lack of social support may contribute to loneliness, emotional distress and difficulties in adjustment. The present study examines the relationship between mental well-being and social relationships among college students. It focuses on the ways in which interpersonal relationships influence students' emotional experiences, social adjustment, academic participation and general quality of life. The study considers family support, friendship, peer interaction, teacher-student relationships, social participation and the development of a sense of belonging as important dimensions of student well-being. It also examines challenges such as loneliness, academic pressure, social comparison, interpersonal conflict, adjustment difficulties and excessive dependence on digital communication. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical methodology based primarily on secondary sources, including books, research articles, academic journals, institutional reports and relevant scholarly literature. The analysis indicates that positive social relationships are generally associated with better emotional adjustment, greater resilience, stronger self-esteem and improved well-being among students. In contrast, weak or conflictual relationships may increase feelings of isolation and emotional difficulty. The study emphasizes that mental well-being should not be understood only in terms of the absence of psychological difficulties but also in terms of positive functioning, social connectedness, belonging, emotional balance and the ability to cope with everyday challenges. The study concludes that colleges should create supportive social environments in which students can develop meaningful relationships, participate in community activities, access appropriate support services and discuss emotional difficulties without stigma. A balanced approach involving students, families, teachers, educational institutions and peer groups is essential for promoting healthy social relationships and mental well-being during college life.

KEYWORDS: *Mental Well-Being, College Students, Social Relationships, Emotional Well-Being, Social Support, Friendship, Family Relationships, Peer Relationships, Loneliness, Social Connectedness, College Life, Psychological Well-Being, Student Adjustment, Social Belonging.*

INTRODUCTION

Mental well-being is an essential component of human development and social life. It influences the way individuals understand themselves, respond to challenges, develop relationships, make decisions and participate in society. For college students, mental well-being is particularly important because the college period is characterized by substantial academic, personal and social changes. Students may leave their homes for the first time, enter new social environments, experience increased academic expectations and begin making decisions about their future careers. These experiences can create opportunities for personal growth while also producing stress and adjustment difficulties. The transition from school to college frequently involves changes in social relationships. Students may move away from established friendship groups and family environments and enter unfamiliar institutions where they must develop new relationships. The process of making friends, adapting to new classmates, interacting with teachers and becoming part of a new social environment can have a significant influence on students' emotional experiences. A student who develops supportive relationships may find it easier to adjust to college life, while a student who experiences rejection, isolation or interpersonal conflict may find the transition more difficult.

Social relationships refer to the connections individuals develop with family members, friends, classmates, teachers, colleagues and other members of society. These relationships provide emotional support, companionship, practical assistance and opportunities for communication. Human beings require social connections because belonging to a group provides a sense of identity and security. For college students, social relationships can become particularly important because the college environment provides a major social setting outside the family. Mental well-being is broader than the absence of mental illness. It includes positive emotional functioning, self-acceptance, a sense of purpose, meaningful relationships, personal development and the ability to deal effectively with everyday challenges. Students with positive mental well-being are generally better positioned to participate in academic and social activities, maintain relationships and respond constructively to difficulties.

The relationship between mental well-being and social relationships is multidimensional. Supportive relationships can protect individuals from the negative effects of stress. When students have people with whom they can discuss problems, share experiences and receive encouragement, difficult situations may become easier to manage. Social relationships can provide emotional reassurance during examinations, career uncertainty, family difficulties and other challenging situations. Friendship is particularly significant during college life. Friends can provide companionship, academic assistance, emotional support and opportunities for recreation. Peer relationships can also help students develop confidence and independence. Students often discuss academic problems, career concerns, personal experiences and social issues with their friends. Positive friendships may therefore contribute to a sense of belonging and emotional security.

However, peer relationships can also create challenges. Competition, exclusion, misunderstanding, bullying and social comparison may negatively influence students' well-being. Students may feel pressure to conform to particular social expectations. Social media can further increase comparison by exposing students to carefully selected representations of the achievements, lifestyles and social activities of their peers.

Family relationships remain important even when students become more independent. Family members can provide emotional and financial support and can offer guidance during difficult situations. For students living away from home, regular communication with family may reduce feelings of loneliness and provide emotional continuity. At the same time, conflicts related to academic performance, career choices, personal independence or expectations may create stress.

The relationship between teachers and students is another important aspect of college life. Teachers who are approachable, respectful and supportive can contribute to a positive educational environment. Students may be more willing to discuss academic difficulties and adjustment problems when they perceive teachers as supportive. Negative interactions, discrimination, humiliation or lack of communication can have the opposite effect. The college environment itself can influence social relationships and mental well-being. Institutions that provide opportunities for extracurricular activities, cultural programmes, sports, student clubs and community participation may create more opportunities for social connection. A supportive campus environment can encourage students to develop diverse relationships and a sense of belonging.

The increasing use of digital communication has also transformed student relationships. Students communicate through messaging applications, social networking platforms, online study groups and video calls. Digital communication can help students maintain relationships across geographical distance and can facilitate academic collaboration. However, excessive digital engagement may sometimes reduce direct interaction and contribute to social comparison or feelings of inadequacy. Academic pressure is another important factor affecting students' well-being. Examinations, assignments, competition, career uncertainty and expectations of academic achievement can create stress. Social relationships can influence how students respond to such pressures. Supportive friends and family members may help students cope with academic difficulties, while social isolation can make stressful experiences more difficult.

Financial circumstances can also influence social and emotional experiences. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may face difficulties related to educational expenses, accommodation, transportation or employment. Such challenges may affect their participation in social activities and their ability to develop relationships. Economic pressure can therefore interact with social and emotional well-being. Cultural diversity is another important feature of contemporary college environments. Students may come from different linguistic, cultural, regional and socioeconomic backgrounds. Interaction across differences can promote understanding and personal development, but it can also create adjustment challenges when students experience discrimination, stereotyping or exclusion. Inclusive educational environments are therefore important for supporting well-being.

The relationship between social relationships and mental well-being is not one-directional. Social relationships can influence well-being, but an individual's mental state can also influence their ability to develop and maintain relationships. Students experiencing emotional difficulties may withdraw from social interaction, which can increase isolation. Conversely, positive social experiences may encourage greater participation and confidence. The present study therefore examines mental well-being and social relationships among college students as interconnected dimensions of student life. Understanding this relationship can help educational institutions develop more supportive environments and encourage students to seek assistance when they experience difficulties.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central aim of the study is to examine the relationship between mental well-being and social relationships among college students and to understand the importance of social connectedness in students' personal, academic and emotional development. The study seeks to understand the concept of

mental well-being in the context of college life and to examine the importance of family relationships, friendships, peer relationships and teacher-student relationships in supporting student well-being. It also seeks to examine the influence of social support, social belonging and participation in college activities on students' emotional adjustment. Another important objective is to understand how loneliness, social isolation, interpersonal conflict, academic pressure and social comparison may influence student well-being. The study further aims to examine the role of educational institutions in creating supportive social environments and to suggest appropriate measures for promoting positive relationships and healthy mental well-being among college students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between social relationships and psychological well-being has been studied extensively in psychology, sociology, education and public health. Existing literature generally indicates that human relationships are important for emotional adjustment and well-being. One of the important theoretical foundations for understanding the subject is the work of Abraham Maslow on human needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs places belongingness and love among important human needs. From this perspective, relationships with family, friends and social groups contribute to psychological development because individuals require a sense of connection and belonging. Carl Rogers emphasized the importance of acceptance, empathy and positive interpersonal relationships in personal development. His humanistic perspective suggests that individuals develop more effectively when they experience supportive social environments in which they feel accepted and valued.

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development provides another useful perspective. Young adulthood involves the development of intimacy and meaningful relationships. College students are often at a stage of life in which friendship, emotional relationships and social identity become increasingly important. Successful development of relationships may contribute to psychological maturity and social confidence. John Bowlby's attachment theory emphasizes the importance of secure relationships for emotional development. Although attachment relationships begin in childhood, the underlying need for emotional security continues throughout life. Family relationships and close friendships can provide emotional security during periods of transition.

The social support literature has consistently demonstrated that relationships can provide emotional, informational and practical assistance. Emotional support may involve encouragement and understanding, informational support may involve advice, while practical support may involve direct assistance with everyday problems.

Cohen and Wills' work on social support and stress provides an important framework for understanding how relationships may protect individuals from stressful experiences. Their stress-buffering perspective suggests that social support can reduce the negative consequences of stressful events. Robert Putnam's work on social capital emphasizes the value of social networks, trust and participation. Social connections can provide resources and opportunities while strengthening community belonging. Research by John Cacioppo and colleagues on loneliness has highlighted the importance of perceived social connection. Loneliness is not simply the absence of people; it involves a perceived gap between desired and actual social relationships. A student may be surrounded by classmates and still experience loneliness if meaningful relationships are absent.

Research on college students has repeatedly identified social adjustment as an important component of successful transition to higher education. Students who develop friendships and feel connected to their institutions often demonstrate stronger engagement with college life.

Research on peer relationships suggests that friendships can provide emotional support, companionship and opportunities for identity development. At the same time, peer pressure and negative peer experiences can create emotional difficulties. Research on academic environments has also emphasized the role of teacher support. Students who perceive teachers as approachable and supportive may demonstrate greater engagement and confidence. Studies concerning social media and student well-being have produced mixed findings. Digital communication can facilitate social support and maintain relationships, but excessive or problematic use can contribute to social comparison, distraction and reduced direct interaction. The literature therefore indicates that social relationships are an important factor in student well-being, but the quality of relationships is more important than simply the number of social contacts. Supportive, trusting and reciprocal relationships appear more beneficial than relationships characterized by conflict, rejection or social pressure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study follows a descriptive and analytical research methodology. The purpose of the methodology is to examine the relationship between mental well-being and social relationships among college students by considering relevant theoretical and empirical literature.

The study is primarily based on secondary data. Academic books, research articles, journal publications, institutional reports and scholarly studies related to student well-being, social support, interpersonal relationships and college adjustment are considered as major sources of information. The research follows a thematic method of analysis. Information related to mental well-being, family support, friendship, peer relationships, teacher-student relationships, loneliness, social belonging, academic stress and institutional support is organized and analysed in relation to college students.

A conceptual approach is used to understand the relationship between social relationships and well-being. Positive social relationships are considered an important source of emotional and social support, while social isolation and conflict are examined as potential challenges to well-being.

The study does not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions among individual students. It focuses on general patterns of mental well-being and social relationships in the college population.

The research also recognizes that student experiences differ according to personal, cultural, socioeconomic, academic and institutional circumstances. Therefore, conclusions are presented in a broad analytical context rather than as universal statements about every college student.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The college period is an important stage of personal and social development. Students experience changes in academic responsibilities, social expectations, family relationships and career aspirations. These changes can influence their emotional and social well-being. Although colleges provide opportunities for social interaction, not all students experience the same level of social support. Some students develop strong friendships and supportive relationships, while others experience loneliness, exclusion or difficulty adjusting to the college environment. Academic pressure can intensify these difficulties. Students may experience stress related to examinations, assignments, academic competition and future employment. When students lack supportive relationships, they may find it difficult to manage such pressures.

Family expectations can also influence students' well-being. Differences between students and family members regarding academic performance, career choices, relationships or personal independence may create conflict. Peer relationships can similarly be both supportive and challenging. Friends can provide companionship and emotional support, but peer pressure, competition, rejection and bullying can negatively affect well-being. The increased use of social media has added another dimension to student

relationships. Online communication can create opportunities for connection, but social comparison and excessive digital engagement may contribute to feelings of inadequacy or isolation. The central problem of the present study is therefore to understand how the quality and nature of social relationships influence mental well-being among college students and how educational institutions can support healthy social connections.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The study is needed because college students represent an important section of the young population and their well-being has implications for education, employment, family life and wider society. The college period often involves significant personal development, and social relationships can influence how students experience this period. Understanding the relationship between social relationships and mental well-being can help colleges create supportive environments. Academic success cannot be considered independently of students' emotional and social experiences. A student who feels isolated or unsupported may face difficulties in concentration, participation and academic motivation.

The study is also needed because students increasingly experience pressures associated with academic competition and career uncertainty. Supportive relationships can provide important emotional resources during such periods. There is also a need to understand loneliness among college students. Being physically surrounded by classmates does not necessarily eliminate loneliness. Meaningful interpersonal connections are important for developing a sense of belonging.

The study is relevant for families because parental support can contribute to students' emotional security. Understanding the importance of supportive family communication can help reduce unnecessary conflict. The study is also useful for teachers and college administrators. Faculty members can contribute to student well-being by creating respectful and inclusive classroom environments.

The increasing importance of digital communication creates another reason for the study. Students need to understand how online relationships can complement real-world social interaction and how excessive social comparison can affect their well-being. The study can also contribute to the development of student support programmes. Counselling services, peer support programmes, student clubs and extracurricular activities can provide opportunities for social connection.

MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Mental well-being among college students includes emotional balance, positive self-perception, meaningful relationships, a sense of purpose and the capacity to manage everyday challenges. College students may experience both positive and negative emotions as they adjust to new academic and social environments. The transition into college can be exciting because students experience increased independence and new opportunities. At the same time, unfamiliar environments may create uncertainty. Students who move away from their families may need to manage accommodation, finances, academic responsibilities and social relationships independently.

Academic expectations can influence well-being considerably. Students may worry about examinations, grades, career opportunities and competition. Persistent academic pressure can affect sleep, concentration and emotional stability. Social relationships can influence students' ability to cope with academic challenges. A student who can discuss difficulties with friends or family may feel less isolated. Supportive relationships can provide encouragement and practical assistance. Mental well-being also includes a sense of personal competence. Students who develop confidence in their academic and social abilities may adapt more effectively to college life.

The college environment can therefore influence well-being through both academic and social experiences. Institutions that provide supportive relationships, inclusive activities and accessible student services can contribute positively to student development.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Social relationships among college students involve several interconnected dimensions. Family relationships continue to influence students even after they become more independent. Friendships become particularly important because students spend considerable time with peers.

Classroom relationships provide opportunities for academic and social interaction. Students often work together on assignments, projects and extracurricular activities. These interactions can develop cooperation and communication skills. Student organizations and clubs create additional opportunities for interaction. Cultural programmes, sports, seminars and community activities can help students develop friendships beyond the classroom. Social relationships can also provide identity and belonging. Students may identify with particular academic groups, cultural organizations, sports teams or friendship networks. However, relationships are not always positive. Competition, misunderstandings, exclusion and interpersonal conflict can create difficulties. The quality of relationships is therefore an important consideration. A student with a small number of close and supportive friends may experience stronger social well-being than a student with many superficial connections.

Family Relationships and Student Well-Being

Family remains an important source of emotional support during college life. Parents and other family members can provide encouragement, guidance and practical assistance. Students living away from home may experience homesickness and loneliness, particularly during the early period of college. Regular communication with family can provide a sense of continuity. Supportive family communication can also help students discuss academic and personal difficulties. Students may feel more confident when they know that their families will provide emotional support during challenging periods. However, family relationships may also produce pressure. Parents may have strong expectations regarding academic performance, career selection or future financial success. When students perceive these expectations as excessive, they may experience stress. Differences in values and attitudes between generations may also lead to conflict. College students often seek greater independence, while parents may continue to expect significant involvement in decision-making. Healthy family relationships therefore require communication, trust and mutual respect. Families can support student well-being by listening to students and recognizing their developing independence.

Friendship and Mental Well-Being

Friendship is one of the most important forms of social relationship during college life. Friends can provide companionship, emotional support, academic assistance and opportunities for recreation. Students often rely on friends when experiencing academic difficulties or personal problems. Sharing experiences can help students understand that their difficulties are not unique.

Friendship can also promote self-confidence. Students who feel accepted by their peers may become more comfortable participating in classroom and extracurricular activities. Close friendships can create a sense of belonging. They provide opportunities for conversation, humour, shared experiences and emotional expression. However, friendships may also create stress when they involve conflict, jealousy, competition or exclusion. The breakdown of a close friendship can be emotionally difficult for students. Peer pressure is another important concern. Students may feel pressure to adopt particular behaviours, lifestyles or social

practices in order to remain part of a group. The positive contribution of friendship therefore depends on trust, mutual respect, acceptance and emotional support.

Peer Relationships and Social Adjustment

Peer relationships are particularly important because college students spend significant amounts of time with other students. Peer groups can influence academic behaviour, social participation and lifestyle choices. Positive peer relationships can help new students adjust to unfamiliar environments. Senior students and classmates may provide practical information about courses, teachers, examinations and college facilities. Peer groups can also provide opportunities for social learning. Students develop communication, negotiation and cooperation skills through interaction with others. Negative peer experiences can have the opposite effect. Bullying, exclusion and discrimination can undermine students' sense of belonging. Students from different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds may sometimes experience difficulties in entering established peer groups. Inclusive campus environments are therefore necessary to ensure that students have opportunities to form relationships without discrimination.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher-student relationships are an important but sometimes overlooked component of student well-being. Teachers spend significant time with students and influence the academic environment. Supportive teachers can encourage students to participate, ask questions and seek help when facing difficulties. Respectful communication can create psychological safety within the classroom. Students may also benefit from teachers who recognize individual differences. Academic difficulties do not always reflect lack of ability; students may be dealing with financial, family or social challenges. Negative teacher-student interactions can create anxiety and discourage participation. Humiliation, unfair treatment or lack of communication may negatively influence students' confidence. A positive teacher-student relationship is therefore characterized by respect, fairness, communication and academic encouragement.

Social Support and Emotional Adjustment

Social support is an important mechanism connecting relationships with well-being. Support may take emotional, informational or practical forms. Emotional support includes empathy, encouragement and understanding. Informational support involves advice and guidance. Practical support involves assistance with tasks or resources. Students experiencing academic or personal difficulties may benefit from receiving different forms of support. A friend may provide emotional encouragement, while a teacher may provide academic guidance and family members may provide practical assistance. Social support can also increase resilience. Students who know that supportive people are available may feel more capable of facing challenges. However, support must be appropriate to individual needs. Unwanted advice or excessive interference can sometimes create additional stress. Effective support involves listening and understanding rather than simply providing solutions.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Loneliness is an important concern among college students. It refers to the subjective experience of insufficient or unsatisfactory social connection. A student may experience loneliness despite having many classmates or online contacts. What matters is whether the individual feels understood, accepted and connected. Students who move to a new city or college may initially experience loneliness because established social networks have been disrupted. Developing new friendships can take time. Academic workloads may also limit opportunities for social interaction. Students who spend most of their time

studying may have fewer opportunities to develop relationships. Social isolation can become a cycle. A lonely student may withdraw from social activities, which can further reduce opportunities for connection. Colleges can address this issue by creating opportunities for interaction through clubs, mentoring, sports, cultural programmes and peer support.

Social Media and Student Relationships

Digital communication has become an important part of student social life. Students use messaging applications and social networking platforms to communicate with friends, classmates and family members. Online communication can help students maintain relationships when physical meetings are difficult. Study groups can facilitate academic cooperation, while social groups can provide companionship. However, social media can also influence perceptions of social success. Students may observe photographs of classmates attending events, travelling or achieving academic and professional success. Such selective representations may create unrealistic comparisons. Online conflicts can also affect real-world relationships. Misunderstandings can spread rapidly through messages and social media posts. The impact of digital communication therefore depends on how it is used. Purposeful communication can strengthen relationships, whereas excessive use and constant comparison may negatively affect well-being.

Academic Stress and Social Relationships

Academic stress is a common feature of college life. Examinations, assignments, presentations, attendance requirements and career competition can create pressure. Social relationships can influence how students manage academic stress. Friends can provide study assistance, encouragement and opportunities for relaxation. Collaborative learning can also strengthen both academic performance and social relationships. Students working together can exchange knowledge and develop mutual support. However, academic competition can sometimes damage friendships. Students may compare grades or compete for limited opportunities.A healthy educational environment should therefore promote cooperation rather than excessive competition. Students should be encouraged to support one another while maintaining individual academic goals.

Social Belonging and College Environment

A sense of belonging refers to the feeling that one is accepted and valued as part of a community. Belonging is particularly important during the transition into college. Students who feel connected to their institution may participate more actively in academic and extracurricular activities. They may also develop stronger relationships with classmates and teachers. Institutions can promote belonging by creating inclusive spaces where students from different backgrounds can participate. Orientation programmes, student clubs, mentoring systems and cultural activities can help new students establish relationships.A positive campus environment should also address discrimination and exclusion. Students are more likely to develop healthy relationships when they feel respected.

Social Relationships and Academic Participation

Social relationships can indirectly influence academic participation. Students who feel connected to classmates may be more comfortable participating in discussions and group activities.

Peer networks can also provide academic information. Students may exchange notes, discuss assignments and prepare for examinations together. Students with supportive teachers may be more willing to ask questions and seek clarification. On the other hand, social isolation may reduce participation. A student

who feels disconnected may avoid group activities or classroom discussions. Therefore, social integration and academic engagement can reinforce one another.

Cultural and Social Diversity

College environments often bring together students from different regions, languages, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Such diversity provides opportunities for learning and personal development. Interaction across cultural differences can increase tolerance and understanding. Students can learn about different traditions, experiences and perspectives. However, cultural differences can also create misunderstanding. Stereotyping, discrimination and social exclusion may negatively influence well-being. Colleges should therefore encourage inclusive interaction. Cultural programmes, student associations and collaborative activities can provide opportunities for students to interact across social differences. An inclusive environment benefits both social relationships and mental well-being.

FINDINGS

The study finds that social relationships are closely associated with the mental well-being of college students. Students who experience supportive relationships with family members, friends, peers and teachers generally have greater opportunities for emotional support and social belonging. The study indicates that friendship is an important source of companionship and emotional support. Close friendships can help students manage academic and personal difficulties.

Family support continues to be important during college, even when students become more independent. Regular communication and understanding can contribute to emotional stability. The study also finds that loneliness can negatively influence students' social and emotional experiences. Physical presence within a college environment does not necessarily prevent loneliness. Peer relationships can have both positive and negative effects. Supportive peer groups can strengthen adjustment, while bullying, exclusion and peer pressure may create difficulties.

Teacher-student relationships influence students' sense of academic confidence and belonging. Respectful and supportive teachers can contribute to a positive educational environment. Participation in college activities can create opportunities for social connection. Student clubs, sports, cultural programmes and community activities can help students develop relationships. The findings also indicate that academic pressure can influence social and emotional well-being. Students with strong support networks may have greater resources for coping with academic challenges.

Digital communication provides opportunities for maintaining relationships but can also create social comparison and interpersonal conflict.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that mental well-being and social relationships are closely interconnected among college students. The college environment is not merely an academic space; it is also an important social environment in which students develop identities, friendships and interpersonal skills. The transition to college can involve uncertainty and adjustment. During this period, relationships provide important emotional resources. Students who feel accepted and supported may adapt more effectively to new environments. The importance of friendship is particularly evident. Friends can provide immediate emotional support because they often share similar academic and social experiences. Friendship also provides opportunities for recreation and relaxation, which can help students maintain balance. However, relationships are not automatically beneficial. Conflictual or controlling relationships can create stress.

Peer pressure can also influence behaviour and emotional experiences. Therefore, the quality of relationships must be considered.

Family support represents another important dimension. Students may become more independent during college, but emotional connections with family remain important. The challenge is to balance parental support with student autonomy. Teacher-student relationships also deserve greater attention. Teachers can influence students' academic confidence and sense of belonging. A classroom environment characterized by respect and encouragement may support both academic and emotional development. The issue of loneliness deserves particular attention. Loneliness can occur even in socially active environments. This suggests that simply increasing the number of social activities may not be sufficient. Students need opportunities to develop meaningful relationships.

The role of social media is complex. Digital communication can maintain relationships and provide social support, but excessive exposure to other people's achievements and lifestyles can encourage social comparison. Digital communication should therefore complement rather than replace direct interaction. The findings also support the importance of institutional responsibility. Colleges cannot place the entire responsibility for student well-being on individuals. Educational institutions have a role in creating environments that promote inclusion, belonging and social connection. Mental well-being should consequently be approached holistically. Academic performance, physical health, emotional adjustment and social relationships are interconnected aspects of student life.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

Colleges should create more opportunities for meaningful student interaction through cultural activities, sports, student clubs, academic groups and community programmes. Such activities can help students establish friendships and develop a sense of belonging. Peer mentoring can be particularly useful for new students. Senior students can help newcomers understand the academic and social environment and can provide practical guidance during the transition period.

Students should be encouraged to communicate openly with trusted friends, family members, teachers or appropriate support professionals when they experience emotional difficulties. Educational institutions should promote awareness about mental well-being without creating stigma. Students should understand that seeking support is a normal part of managing difficult situations.

Family members should maintain supportive communication with college students while respecting their growing independence. Communication should focus on listening and understanding rather than only academic performance. Teachers should develop classroom environments characterized by respect, fairness and encouragement. Students should feel comfortable asking questions and discussing academic difficulties. Colleges should also provide inclusive opportunities for students from different cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Social activities should be designed to encourage participation rather than exclusion.

Students should be encouraged to develop balanced digital habits. Social media can be useful for communication, but students should also maintain direct interpersonal relationships. Greater attention should be given to students who appear socially isolated or disconnected from campus life. Early supportive intervention can help prevent difficulties from becoming more serious.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the study covers the relationship between mental well-being and social relationships among college students. It includes family relationships, friendship, peer relationships, teacher-student interaction, social support, loneliness, social belonging and participation in college activities. The study also

considers academic stress, social media use, cultural diversity and institutional environments because these factors can influence both social relationships and student well-being. The study is relevant to students, teachers, parents, college administrators, counsellors, researchers and policymakers. It can contribute to discussions concerning student development and supportive educational environments.

The study has certain limitations. Mental well-being is a broad concept and may be experienced differently by different individuals. Social relationships also vary according to personality, culture, family background and social circumstances. The study is primarily based on secondary sources and therefore does not provide direct statistical measurements of a particular college or student population. The findings should consequently be interpreted as a general analytical understanding rather than a representation of every student.

Another limitation is that college environments differ considerably. Urban and rural colleges, residential and non-residential institutions and institutions with different academic structures may produce different social experiences. The increasing importance of digital communication also means that student relationships are changing rapidly. Findings concerning social media and digital interaction may therefore change as technologies and communication practices develop. The study does not attempt to diagnose individual mental health conditions. Its focus is on general mental well-being and social relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Colleges should treat student mental well-being as an important component of educational development. Academic achievement should be accompanied by opportunities for emotional and social development. Educational institutions should provide accessible student support and counselling facilities. Students should be able to seek assistance in a confidential and respectful environment. Colleges should develop peer-support and mentoring systems that help students build social connections. Such programmes can be particularly valuable for students who are new to the institution. Family involvement should be encouraged in supportive ways. Parents and guardians should be made aware of the importance of emotional communication and should avoid placing excessive pressure on students.

Teachers should receive appropriate awareness regarding student well-being. Faculty members can play an important role in recognizing changes in student participation and encouraging students to seek appropriate assistance. Colleges should organize regular extracurricular activities that encourage students to interact outside formal academic settings. Sports, cultural programmes, debates, seminars, student clubs and community service can contribute to social connectedness. Institutions should promote inclusive campus cultures. Discrimination, bullying and exclusion should be addressed through clear policies and awareness programmes.

Students should be encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between academic responsibilities, social relationships, recreation and digital activities. Digital literacy programmes should address social comparison, online privacy, cyberbullying and responsible social media use.

Finally, mental well-being should be approached as a shared responsibility involving students, families, teachers, institutions and society.

CONCLUSION

Mental well-being and social relationships are closely interconnected aspects of college students' lives. The college period provides opportunities for academic learning, personal development and social growth, but it can also involve considerable adjustment and pressure. The quality of relationships that students develop during this period can influence their emotional experiences and ability to cope with

challenges. Supportive family relationships provide emotional security and encouragement. Friendships provide companionship, understanding and opportunities for sharing experiences. Peer relationships can help students adjust to college environments and develop social confidence. Positive teacher-student relationships can strengthen academic engagement and institutional belonging.

At the same time, negative social experiences can create difficulties. Loneliness, exclusion, interpersonal conflict, bullying, peer pressure and excessive social comparison can negatively influence well-being. Academic stress and career uncertainty may further intensify these challenges. The study demonstrates that social connectedness is an important component of student well-being. However, social connectedness should not be measured simply by the number of friends or social contacts. Meaningful relationships based on trust, acceptance, respect and mutual support are more important.

Digital communication has added new possibilities and challenges. Social media allows students to maintain relationships and develop online communities, but it can also encourage comparison and reduce direct interaction when used excessively. Balanced use is therefore necessary. The responsibility for student well-being cannot rest entirely with students. Colleges, teachers, families and communities all have important roles. Educational institutions should create environments in which students feel respected, included and supported.

Mental well-being should be considered an integral part of education rather than a separate issue. Students who experience healthy social relationships may be better positioned to participate in academic life, develop confidence and manage everyday challenges. The study therefore concludes that promoting meaningful social relationships is an important strategy for supporting the mental well-being of college students. A supportive educational environment, strong interpersonal relationships, accessible assistance and responsible digital practices can contribute to healthier and more fulfilling college experiences.

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