



## Dynamics of Social Interaction on Psychological Well-Being among College Students

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**Abstract.** Social interaction plays an important role in improving students' psychological well-being, especially in higher education environments. This study aims to analyze the effect of social interaction on students' psychological well-being. The research method used is quantitative, with a population of 240 students and a sample of 142 students. The sample was selected through a simple random sampling technique, and analyzed using a simple linear regression analysis technique. The results of the study showed a significant relationship between social interaction and psychological well-being, with a regression coefficient value of 0.254 and a p value <0.001, indicating a significant effect on the variable. The implications of this study indicate the importance for educational institutions to pay attention to aspects of social interaction in order to improve students' psychological well-being and develop beneficial social support during the study period.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Well-being; Social Interaction; Students*

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## Introduction

Students are required to successfully make major changes and adapt to the existing social environment. This success is influenced by the level of psychological well-being, where psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept that refers to a positive psychological condition characterized by feelings of satisfaction, happiness with life, and functioning effectively (Yuliani & Negeri, 2018). Individuals with good psychological well-being consistently show better physical health, including a stronger immune system (Indah Roziah Cholilah & Anugrah Sulistiyowati, 2022). In addition, according to (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), psychological well-being is related to various important aspects of life, such as leadership, workplace success, and academic achievement. The six main components of psychological well-being include autonomy, life purpose, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, self-acceptance, and personal growth (Ryff, 1995; Yuliani & Negeri, 2018).

The characteristics of individuals who have psychological well-being can be seen from various theoretical perspectives, such as Rogers' view of a fully-functioning person, Allport's concept of maturity which describes a person as being able to overcome life's challenges, Jung's concept of individuation and Maslow's view of self-actualization, which emphasizes the importance of the process of unifying various aspects of self to achieve higher self-awareness (self-actualization). This is also in line with Erikson who described individuals achieving integrity versus despair (Halim & Dariyo, 2016). Optimistic psychological well-being plays a very important role in creating a good quality of life. It is expected that people who experience optimal psychological well-being will be able to live fully, with mental and physical health contributing to a sense of satisfaction in life. People can experience complete health when they achieve balanced psychological well-being.

Students who have high levels of psychological well-being are generally better able to adapt, cope with stress, and reach their full potential (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Noviasari & Dariyo, 2016). Low psychological well-being among students is associated with bad behavior, life dissatisfaction, and increased risk of suicide (Khoirunnisa & Rosiana, 2023). Based on the results of distributing problem disclosure instruments to 50 accounting education students in the 2018/2019 batch at the Indonesian Education University, data showing that 64.44% felt anxious when they had to argue, 53% felt feelings of fear, shyness and confusion easily, 51% felt afraid of not being able to meet parents' expectations, 42.22% often daydreamed or fantasized 44.44% experienced feelings of inferiority, and 33.33% felt less open to others (Kurniasari et al., 2019). It illustrates how important psychological well-being is for students. Apart from having an impact on academic achievement, it also affects the overall quality of life of students. Thus, attention to

students' psychological well-being is crucial to ensure they can cope well with campus life and achieve a healthy balance between academic and personal life.

Social interaction theory develops by emphasizing that individuals not only interact but also interpret and give meaning to the symbols they exchange during the interaction process (Rochmahwati & Listyani, [2016](#)). (Ahmadi, [2008](#)) states that role-playing and introspection are important processes in social interaction, which help individuals develop their own opinions and understand the perspectives of others. For interaction to take place well, two conditions must be met, namely communication and social contact (Puji Lestari et al., [2013](#)). Meanwhile, individual well-being can be improved through meaningful and positive social relationships. According to Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, [2000](#)), well-being can be achieved when a person fulfills three basic needs, namely connectedness with others, competence, and autonomy.

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between students' psychological well-being and social activities. For example, a study (Salami, [2011](#)) found that students who participated in social activities reported higher levels of psychological well-being. Furthermore, research conducted by (Lubis, [2024](#)) provided results that students who are active in humanitarian activities have high psychological well-being. Research by (Zahrah & Sukirno, [2022](#)) aimed to explore the relationship between academic stress, social support, and the psychological well-being of santri. In addition, research by (Pluut et al., [2015](#)) found that participation in social activities can improve psychological well-being, suggesting that positive social interactions and involvement in the community have a significant impact on individual well-being. Thus, it can be concluded that constructive social interactions not only enrich life experiences but also play an important role in improving one's psychological well-being.

Constructive social interactions not only enrich life experiences but also play an important role in improving one's psychological well-being. In this context, positive social interactions can create a sense of connectedness and emotional support, which are key factors in mental health. Research shows that individuals who have strong social relationships tend to experience lower stress levels, fewer depressive symptoms, and higher levels of happiness (Cohen & Wills, [1985](#)). Constructive social interactions can enhance a sense of identity and purpose in life. When individuals are involved in supportive communities or social groups, they can find meaning in their lives and feel more connected to others. This is in line with the basic needs theory (Deci & Ryan, [2000](#)), which states that the need for social relationships is one of the three basic psychological needs essential for achieving well-being.

In addition, positive social interactions can also contribute to the development of social and emotional skills, which are important for dealing with life's challenges. Through these interactions, individuals learn to empathize, communicate effectively, and manage conflict, all of

which contribute to improved psychological well-being (Goleman, [1995](#)). Thus, it is important to encourage and nurture constructive social interactions in daily life, whether within family, friends, and communities. As strong and cohesive communities are more resilient and able to overcome obstacles, this benefits society as a whole.

In the context of higher education, attention to students' psychological well-being is a very important aspect to pay attention to. The demanding academic environment often burdens students with various pressures, both in terms of academic, social, and emotional. In addition, social barriers, such as difficulties adapting to a new environment or problems in relationships between students, can also worsen students' psychological conditions. These pressures can have a negative impact on their psychological well-being if not managed well. Thus, understanding the factors that influence this well-being is crucial to understanding and managing the psychological well-being of university students. Due to the importance of social interactions in students' lives, this study aimed to explore the extent to which social interactions could influence students' psychological well-being. By identifying and analyzing this relationship, it was hoped that this research provided a deeper perspective on strategies that can be implemented to improve students' psychological well-being, as well as create a more supportive academic environment. This research was not only expected to fill a gap in the existing literature but also provide practical recommendations for educational institutions to pay attention to aspects of social interaction as part of efforts to improve students' psychological well-being.

### **Methods**

Research using quantitative methods by collecting data from research and evaluating data in the form of numbers (Jannah, [2018](#)). In this study, psychological well-being was the dependent variable (Y), while social interaction was the independent variable (X). A total of 142 active students majoring in "X" were selected as the research sample from a population of 240 students, which was determined using Isaac & Michael's table with a 5% error rate. The population consisted of 190 females (79.2%) and 50 males (20.8%), calculated from the data of active students. The sampling technique used in this study was simple random sampling with the help of the Microsoft Excel program to randomly select samples in the sampling unit.

The Google Form application was used to collect research data online which contained a questionnaire and was sent by the researcher to respondents (Pasaribu et al., [2022](#)). This study used two psychological instruments as data collection tools. The instrument for social interaction variables was adapted from (Lestari et al., [2013](#)) with 12 items measuring indicators of social contact and communication. The Likert scale used in this instrument contained four responses:

“very appropriate”, ‘appropriate’, ‘not appropriate’, and ‘very inappropriate,’ which were divided into favorable and unfavorable categories.

The psychological well-being variable was measured through an instrument adapted from (Ryff, 1995) and (Yuliani & Negeri, 2018), with dimensions including positive interpersonal relationships, independence (autonomy), personal development (personal growth), self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life. There were 42 items in the psychological well-being instrument. The Likert scale used for this instrument had five responses: “strongly agree,” ‘agree,’ ‘neutral,’ ‘disagree,’ and ‘strongly disagree,’ which were also categorized into favorable and unfavorable components.

The reliability and validity of the items of both measuring instruments showed adequate results. The social interaction variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.721, which indicated that this instrument was consistent in measuring aspects of social interaction, with item correlations moving from 0.625-0.739. This correlation range indicated that each item in the instrument had a good contribution to the overall measurement of the variable. Meanwhile, for the psychological well-being variable, the Cronbach's Alpha value obtained was 0.939, with item correlations ranging from 0.318 to 0.715. The high-reliability value indicated that this instrument was consistent in measuring aspects of psychological well-being although there were some items with lower correlations, the overall instrument remained reliable in this study.

After the data was collected, statistical analysis was carried out in several stages. First, descriptive analysis was used as a form of general description of the characteristics of respondents. Then, a normality test was conducted to ensure that the data met the normal distribution assumptions required in regression analysis. Finally, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test how social interaction influenced psychological well-being in college students, as well as to assess the role of social interaction in predicting psychological well-being.

## **Results**

### **Respondents Characteristics**

The characteristics of respondents collected at the time of data collection included distribution based on age and gender. The characteristics of respondents can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1.  
Respondents Characteristics

Categories measured	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18 years old	40	15.7%
19 years old	147	56.98%
20 years old	56	22%
21 years old	9	3.5%
22 years old	2	0.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	53	20.8%
Female	202	79.2%

Source: Data from this study, JASP. 2024.

The age data above shows that 15.7% of respondents were 18 years old, 56.98% were 19 years old, 22% were 20 years old, 3.5% were 21 years old, and 0.8% were 22 years old. Most of the research respondents showed gender data where 79.2% (190) were female, and a small portion of 20.8% (50) were male.

### Descriptive Statistics

In descriptive statistics, the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values were used to provide an overview of the data obtained. The results of descriptive statistical tests in this study were calculated using the JASP application. The results can be seen in Table 2:

Table 2.  
Descriptive Statistics Results

	N	M	SD	Min	Maks
<b>Social Interaction</b>	142	39.479	4.024	31.000	48.000
<b>PWB</b>	142	152.127	16.313	104.000	188.000

Source: Data from this study, JASP. 2024.

In this study, there were 142 valid respondents, with descriptive statistical analysis calculated using JASP. The social interaction variable yielded a mean score of 39.479, with a standard deviation of 4.024. The data illustrated that most respondents had a mostly constant level of social interaction with minimal fluctuation. The minimum score was 31, and the maximum score was 48. Thus, the level of social interaction of respondents varies. Meanwhile, the psychological well-being variable had an average score of 152.127 with a standard deviation of 16.313. This value indicated that there was more variation. With a minimum score of 104 and a maximum score of 188, the psychological well-being variable showed a fairly wide range, indicating that respondents had varying levels of psychological well-being.

### Normality Testing

The normality test is required to test the assumption that the data is normally distributed, as the requirement for regression analysis.

Table 3.  
Normality Test Results

Variable	Test	P-Value	Description
<b>Social Interaction</b>	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.231	Normal
<b>PWB</b>	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.939	Normal

Source: Data from this study, JASP. 2024.

The table presents the Kolmogorov-Smirnov testing result, which determines whether the data was normally distributed. The social interaction variable has a p result of 0.231 ( $p > 0.05$ ), and the PWB variable p result is 0.939 ( $p > 0.05$ ). From these results, it is concluded that the data distribution was normal.

### Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis about the effect of social interaction on psychological well-being in students, a simple linear regression analysis was used. The test result can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4.  
Hypothesis Test Results - Social Interaction and PWB Variables

Research Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	%
Social Interaction*PWB	0.254	25,4%

Source: Data from this study, JASP. 2024.

The hypothesis test resulted in an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.254, showing that social interaction (dependent variable) contributed 25.4% to psychological well-being (independent variable).

Table 4.  
Anova Test Result

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>M<sub>1</sub></b>	Regression	9515.686	1	9515.686	47.565	< .001
	Residual	28008.032	140	200.057		
	Total	37523.718	141			

Source: Data from this study, JASP. 2024.

The results of ANOVA analysis showed that the regression model that included social interaction variables significantly influenced psychological well-being variables in students, indicated by an F-value of 47.565 and a p-value of <0.001. Thus, this variable was statistically significant.

Table 5.  
Result of Variable Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
<b>M<sub>0</sub></b>	(Intercept)	152.127	1.369	-	111.124	<.001
<b>M<sub>1</sub></b>	(Intercept)	71.535	11.746	-	6.090	<.001
	Social Interaction	2.041	0.296	0.504	6.897	<.001

Source: Data from this study, *JASP*, 2024.

Based on this table, the coefficient of the social interaction variable is 2.041, with a regression coefficient value of 2.041, indicating a positive result. This shows that the direction of the influence of social interaction variables on psychological well-being is positive or unidirectional. Thus, if social interaction increases, psychological well-being will also increase.

### Discussion

The results showed that students who gain high scores in social interaction tended to have higher psychological well-being. On the other hand, students who gain low scores in social interaction often have poor psychological well-being. It was consistent with several ideas and previous studies that highlighted the value of healthy social relationships in improving psychological well-being (Sinaga, [2024](#)).

The human desire to connect with others and be accepted in their social environment could be fulfilled with healthy interpersonal interactions. Students can benefit from positive social interactions in several ways including increased self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and emotional support. Good social interactions can also help individuals grow in empathy, social caring, and communication skills, all of which can improve elements of psychological well-being, including self-acceptance, autonomy, and purpose in life (Adi, [2022](#)). In addition to feeling connected, students who participated in positive social interactions also got emotional support which can be a source of fortitude in the face of adversity. Thus, constructive social interactions can help children grow in empathy, social awareness, and communication skills-which is ultimately very good for their psychological well-being (Tsabita et al., [2021](#)).

Students can develop extensive social networks on campus by participating in study groups or student clubs (Maulana et al., [2023](#)). In addition to increasing a sense of connection and belonging, this also makes social resources and support more accessible which can improve psychological well-being (Rahama & Izzati, [2021](#)). Participating in social activities provides more opportunities for students to learn from classmates, discuss points of view, and gain broader knowledge, which can improve psychological well-being (Maulana et al., [2023](#)). Positive social interactions can also assist individuals in developing interpersonal skills and social awareness, both of which are crucial for future academic and career success. Participating in social activities



helps develop the skills needed to cooperate, communicate clearly, and have empathy for others (Pluut et al., [2015](#)).

Several grand theories can be the basis of research on the relationship between student's psychological well-being and the dynamics of their social interactions. Among them is Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), which emphasizes the importance of relationships and social interactions for personal psychological well-being. RCT highlights that relationships that empower and support one another are the ideal environment for human development. People with strong and high-quality social networks tend to be happier, especially university students (Jordan, [2010](#)). College students will be happier if they get enough social support from the environment, friends, and family (Thoits, [2011](#)).

Social identity theory also advanced our knowledge of how social group attachment and personal identification affect well-being. Students' well-being will be higher when they feel involved and part of the campus community (Indra Setiawan et al., [2022](#)). In addition, resilience theory serves as an important foundation. A person's ability to adjust and survive in the face of adversity or stress is the main focus of this idea. Students with strong resilience are usually better equipped to maintain their well-being in the face of social and academic demands (Hertinjung et al., [2022](#)).

This was in line with other studies that showed that social engagement has an impact on psychological well-being (Salami, [2011](#)). Social interaction can at least be one of the strategies to help students' psychological well-being, although it is not the only aspect that affects it. Research by (Pluut et al., [2015](#)) found that participation in social activities could improve psychological well-being, suggesting that positive social interactions and involvement in the community have an impact on individual well-being. In addition, research (Utami, [2024](#)) showed that social interactions among student groups have a major role in shaping students' growing social awareness. Students who engage in inclusive and positive social interactions are more likely to understand social concern, have more empathy, and participate in social activities.

Related to psychological well-being, this research explained how achieving optimal psychological well-being could be facilitated by pleasant social interactions within student groups. Good interpersonal relationships have a good impact on psychological well-being because they can satisfy the basic human desire for relationships and a sense of belonging (Chairunnisa et al., [2024](#)). Psychological well-being factors related to life goals and personal development can be supported by social care and involvement in social activities that arise from positive social relationships. A socially conscious mindset and empathy developed from social interactions can support aspects of psychological well-being including autonomy and self-acceptance (Distina, [2019](#)).

Based on the results of this study, it is known that the social interaction aspect had a significant effect on students' psychological well-being. This is in line with research findings showing that the social interaction aspect of social support, including communication and social contact, has a major influence on psychological well-being (Rahama & Izzati, [2021](#)). This illustrates the importance of social relationships in everyday life, especially for students in personal and academic contexts (Santoso, [2023](#)).

Social interactions can provide positive emotional support, help, and feel more connected (Rahama & Izzati, [2021](#)). As well as being an important tool for forming relationships, social interaction is vital for university students to help them develop a sense of belonging and community. Positive social relationships among college students help them feel part of their environment, thus reducing loneliness and increasing self-confidence (Sari & Zaini, [2024](#)). Social relationships provide students with emotional support that can serve as a stress reliever and improve their ability to cope with adversity (Hidayat & Darmawanti, [2022](#)). In addition to improving interpersonal skills, social activities such as study groups and student activity units can improve academic interest and learning goals (Maulana et al., [2023](#)).

Building a supportive community requires the development of empathy and social care, both of which can be aided by inclusive and constructive social interactions (Wisnata, [2024](#)). To create healthy and beneficial social interactions, effective communication is important. Positive social relationships and interactions can potentially improve students' psychological well-being in the long term (Chairunnisa et al., [2024](#)).

Overall, the results of this study showed the importance of constructive and good social interactions in supporting students' psychological well-being. To support healthy social interactions on campus, academic communities and universities should consider this. Thus, students can maximize their psychological well-being during higher education and be prepared to face future obstacles.

### **Conclusion**

This finding showed that students' psychological well-being was influenced by social engagement. In other words, students who had more social interactions tended to show higher psychological well-being. This result showed a positive correlation between the two variables and confirmed that social engagement significantly impacted students' psychological well-being, which answered the problem formulation. Thus, to improve their psychological well-being, students should engage in greater social engagement. Based on these findings, initiatives should be taken to develop more social interactions on campus. Student clubs, study groups, and social gatherings are just a few examples of positive social interactions that universities can actively

develop. Students could gain empathy and social awareness, create a network of friends, and experience a deep sense of community in an academic setting.

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