

A Quantitative Pilot Study on the Impact of Family Support on Students' Mental Health and Well-Being

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100400585>

Received: 25 April 2026; Accepted: 30 April 2026; Published: 19 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of family support in influencing university students' overall well-being, particularly in terms of mental health, academic performance, and social well-being. Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression are increasingly prevalent among students, making family support an important factor to consider. The study focuses on three main types of family support which is emotional, financial, and practical support, as well as family communication styles. The objectives of this study are to measure the impact of family support on academic performance, evaluate the effect of family communication on emotional well-being, and identify the relationship between family support and students' social well-being. The findings indicate that financial support helps reduce academic-related stress, allowing students to focus better and achieve improved academic outcomes. In addition, open and supportive family communication, along with consistent emotional support, enhances emotional resilience and reduces the risk of mental health problems. However, excessive family pressure and ineffective communication can negatively affect students' well-being. In terms of social well-being, family support contributes to better interpersonal relationships and a stronger sense of belonging, although not all students experience the same level of impact. Based on Social Support Theory, this study highlights that family support serves as a crucial protective factor in helping students cope with academic and life challenges. Therefore, strengthening family involvement through awareness programs and collaboration with educational institutions is essential to enhance students' overall well-being and success.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is one of the most important factors influencing life quality and satisfaction. Poor mental health is a complex and widespread psychological issue among university undergraduates in industrialized and developing countries. Various psychological and psychiatric research undertaken in many industrialized and developing nations over the last several decades have found that university students had a higher prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression (SAD) than the general population. It is well documented that SAD, as a multi-factorial illness, causes personal, health, societal, and occupational concerns that can both directly and indirectly impair quality of life. The level of stress reported in self-administered exams and surveys is inversely connected to life satisfaction and well-being.

In today's environment, depression among college students has become a prevalent concern. According to studies, one of the leading reasons of depression among college students is family connection issues such as indifference and conflict. As a result, researching the impact of family relationships on college students has

become an increasingly significant topic. Family is the most fundamental unit of human civilization, and family relationships are critical to a person's growth, development, and mental health. However, in modern culture, there are some issues with many family relationships, such as parents being too preoccupied with work to pay attention to their children's development, a lack of family affection, a conflict between husband and wife, and so on. These issues may have a negative impact on college students' mental health, potentially leading to depression.

The impact of family support on students' mental health is an important field of study, especially given the increasing mental health difficulties faced by adolescents and young adults. Family support includes emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from family members, which has been consistently associated to better psychological well-being in students. According to research, higher levels of perceived family support are associated with better mental health outcomes for students, such as lower anxiety and depression and increased general well-being.

College students are a special group, which is in a transition period, transforming from teenagers to adults. During this period, college students need to face various difficulties and challenges, such as academic pressure, social pressure and employment pressure. If both in and under the pressure of family relationship problems, these difficulties and challenges will become more difficult. Therefore, it is very necessary to understand the influence of family relations on the depression tendency and formulate effective educational measures to protect the mental health of college students.

Several studies have explored the critical role of emotional well-being as a mediator in the relationship between family support and psychological health. For instance, Selly (2023) further supports this notion by indicating that students who receive consistent emotional and psychological support from their families are better equipped to manage stress, cope with academic pressures, and navigate social challenges, ultimately leading to improved psychological well-being. These studies collectively emphasize the pivotal role of emotional well-being as a bridge that connects family support to overall mental health, particularly in the context of students' lives, where both academic and personal stresses are prevalent. The findings also suggest that fostering a supportive family environment may not only enhance emotional well-being but also serve as a protective factor against the development of mental health issues, thus contributing to a more resilient student population.

Problem Statement

The connection between family support and students' mental health is a critical area of study that has garnered increasing attention in recent years, yet there remains a limited understanding of how different forms of family support such as emotional, financial, and practical and affect students' mental well-being. While family support is often recognized as a pivotal factor in promoting positive mental health outcomes, the complexities of how various types of support influence students' mental health remain underexplored. Emotional support from family members, for example, can provide students with a safe and nurturing environment, offering reassurance and validation during times of academic and personal stress (Selly, 2023). Financial support, particularly in the context of tuition, living expenses, or access to mental health resources, can alleviate financial stress and reduce the pressure students may face in managing their education and personal lives (Mendez, 2021). Practical support, such as assistance with daily tasks or time management, also plays a significant role in reducing the burden students experience, allowing them to focus on academic performance and self-care (Kim & Lee, 2023).

Research consistently shows that emotional and practical support from family members can act as a protective buffer against the effects of stress, anxiety, and mental health struggles. The importance of family in providing a foundation of stability and emotional resilience cannot be overstated. Family members who offer empathy, encouragement, and consistent emotional support help their children navigate the pressures of school and personal life, which can otherwise lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Roberts et al., 2017). However, despite the significant role that family support plays in mitigating stress, many students report feeling isolated or unsupported by their families. This lack of sufficient support can exacerbate pre-existing mental health issues, making students more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and academic stress (Barlow et al., 2022). Furthermore, students who lack adequate family support may struggle with feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and diminished academic motivation, which can compound their mental health challenges and hinder their overall well-being.

The rising prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents and young adults is a growing concern, as these issues not only affect students' psychological well-being but also have a profound impact on their academic performance and social development. As mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and stress become more prevalent in student populations, the role of family support becomes even more crucial in providing resilience against these difficulties. Studies have shown that students with strong familial support systems are more likely to exhibit better mental health outcomes and academic performance, as they have a reliable source of encouragement and resources to navigate stressful periods (Smith et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of promoting family involvement in mental health support, as a solid family network can significantly buffer students from the negative effects of mental health issues.

Despite the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of family support, there is still much to learn about the specific ways in which different forms of support influence mental health outcomes, particularly regarding anxiety, depression, and stress levels. For instance, while emotional support is commonly associated with improved mental well-being, the impact of financial and practical support in reducing mental health risks has not been as extensively studied. More research is needed to explore how family dynamics, including communication patterns and family cohesion, interact with students' mental health, and how these forms of support contribute to their ability to cope with academic pressures and personal challenges (Deater-Deckard et al., 2020). Understanding the nuanced role of family support in mental health is essential for developing targeted interventions and strategies that can effectively address the mental health crisis among students and promote their overall well-being.

By identifying and categorizing the types of support that are most beneficial, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how family dynamics contribute to mental health outcomes in students. This research will focus on how perceived support or the lack thereof affects mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and stress. This research seeks to answer critical questions about the role of family in students' mental well-being and academic performance, providing valuable insights that could inform interventions and strategies to strengthen family support systems for students in need.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on mental health and well-being among students, offering evidence-based recommendations for improving family support structures that can positively influence students' mental health and academic success.

Research Objectives

1. To measure the impact of family support towards academic performance in students.
2. To evaluate the effect of family communication style on student's emotional well-being.
3. To assess the influence of family support on student's social well-being.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Family Support on Students' Academic Performance

Majority of respondents most strongly agree with the statement "My family provides adequate financial support for my education" with the amount percentage strongly in agreement of 49.1%. This financial support alleviates many of the financial barriers that often discourage students from pursuing higher education, such as tuition costs, textbooks, and living expenses. By reducing financial stress, students are able to focus more on their studies and engage in campus life, which significantly improves their chances of academic success and graduation.

The fewest respondents strongly agree with the statement "I never feel pressured by my family to achieve specific academic outcomes" with the amount percentage substantially in accord of 12.7%. A study by the American Psychological Association (2022) found that rising parental expectations and criticism are linked to an increase in perfectionism among college students, which can have damaging mental health effects.

The Effect of Family Communication Style on Student's Emotional Well Being

The family communication style significantly influences students' emotional well-being, shaping their psychological development and overall mental health. Various studies have highlighted the critical role that communication patterns within families play in fostering emotional resilience and well-being among children and adolescents. Research by Abdullah and Salim indicates that families employing an authoritative parenting style, characterized by high conversation orientation, positively impact children's empathy and emotional well-being. This communication pattern encourages open dialogue and emotional expression, which are essential for developing emotional intelligence and resilience in children. Similarly, Axpe et al. (2019) found that families with a predominance of affective communication styles contribute to better emotional adjustment among adolescents, suggesting that the quality of parental communication is crucial for emotional development.

Moreover, the dynamics of family communication can either enhance or hinder children's emotional well-being. Furthermore, the impact of family communication extends to conflict resolution and emotional expression. The open communication within families can facilitate better emotional coping strategies, thereby enhancing children's ability to manage stress and emotional challenges. Conversely, problematic communication styles, such as avoidance or aggression, can exacerbate emotional difficulties and lead to increased anxiety and depression among adolescents (López-Martínez et al., 2019).

This relationship suggests that fostering a supportive and communicative family environment is vital for promoting emotional health in children and adolescents. In conclusion, the evidence strongly supports the notion that family communication styles significantly affect students' emotional well-being. Open, supportive, and empathetic communication fosters emotional resilience, while controlling or negative communication can lead to emotional distress. Therefore, promoting healthy communication patterns within families is essential for enhancing the emotional well-being of students.

Majority of respondents strongly agree with the statement "I feel supported by my family during stressful times" with a strong agreement rate of 36.4%. This suggests that a significant portion of individuals rely on their family for emotional and practical support during difficult periods, highlighting the importance of family dynamics in coping with stress. The sense of family support can be a critical factor in helping individuals navigate personal and academic challenges, especially in the context of education and mental health. Research consistently emphasizes the positive role that family support plays in coping with stress. According to a study by Hammen (2020), individuals who receive strong emotional and practical support from their families tend to exhibit better psychological resilience during stressful situations. The emotional comfort provided by family members can buffer the negative effects of stress and contribute to improved mental health outcomes.

The lowest percentage of respondents strongly agree with the statement "The communication style in my family is clear and effective" with a rate of 29.1%. This suggests that while some individuals perceive clear and effective communication within their families, a significant portion may struggle with family communication dynamics. Communication within families plays a critical role in emotional well-being, relationship quality, and problem-solving abilities. When family members cannot effectively communicate, it can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and emotional distress, which can ultimately affect overall family functioning and individual mental health. A study by McKinnon and Murphy (2021) found that families with poor communication often experience heightened levels of conflict and emotional distress. Effective communication styles, such as active listening and open dialogue, were associated with better conflict resolution skills and healthier family environments. In contrast, families with unclear communication struggled with misunderstandings that could undermine relationships.

The Influence of Family Support on Student's Social Well Being

The influence of family support on students' social well-being is a critical area of research that underscores the importance of familial relationships in shaping the social experiences and emotional health of students. Family

support encompasses various dimensions, including emotional, informational, and practical assistance, all of which contribute significantly to a student's social well-being.

Research indicates that strong family support is positively correlated with enhanced social well-being among students. For instance, Mofatteh (2021) highlights that a supportive social network, particularly from family, can mitigate stress, anxiety, and depression among university students, thereby fostering better social and emotional well-being Mofatteh. This finding is supported by Jehangir (2022), who found that perceived online social support from family significantly predicts psychological well-being, particularly during transitional phases such as entering university. The buffering effect of family support during stressful transitions is crucial, as it helps students navigate challenges more effectively, leading to improved social interactions and emotional stability. Moreover, Bailey et al. (2019) emphasize that family, alongside friends and school personnel, serves as a key source of social support for students.

Their study reveals that the amount of support received from family is positively associated with subjective well-being, suggesting that students who feel supported by their families experience lower levels of academic stress and higher overall well-being (Bailey et al., 2019). This aligns with the findings of Dewi et al. (2021) who also report a significant positive influence of family social support on subjective well-being, reinforcing the idea that family dynamics play a vital role in students' social health. Additionally, Selly's research indicates that family social support is a crucial factor affecting psychological well-being, suggesting that the emotional backing provided by family members can significantly enhance students' social experiences (Selly, 2023). This is further corroborated by Khallad and Jabr, who found that higher levels of perceived support from family and friends are associated with lower levels of depression and stress among college students, highlighting the protective role of family support in mental health.

Furthermore, the importance of family support is echoed in the work of Schnettler et al. (2018) who conducted an exploratory study that revealed a direct relationship between family support and subjective well-being among university students. Their findings suggest that students who receive adequate emotional and social resources from their families report higher levels of well-being. This is particularly relevant in the context of the challenges faced by students, where family support can act as a buffer against negative experiences. In conclusion, the evidence strongly supports the assertion that family support significantly influences students' social well-being. The emotional, informational, and practical support provided by families fosters a sense of security and belonging, which is essential for students to thrive socially and emotionally. Therefore, enhancing family support systems should be a priority for educational institutions aiming to improve student well-being.

The highest percentage of respondents strongly agree with the statement, "My family participates in activities together such as birthday celebrations" with 41.8% expressing strong agreement. This indicates that a significant number of participants perceive their family as actively engaging in shared activities, fostering togetherness and strengthening family bonds. Family participation in activities, such as birthday celebrations, plays a vital role in strengthening family cohesion and creating lasting memories. According to Fiese and Tomcho (2020), family rituals, including birthday parties and holidays, provide opportunities for family members to bond, create shared traditions, and reinforce family values. Such activities are crucial in maintaining a sense of connectedness among family members, which contributes to the overall well-being of both children and adults in the family.

The statement "I believe my social well-being is improving because of my family" received the lowest percentage of strong agreement, with only 14.5% of respondents expressing strong agreement. This suggests that, while some individuals may feel that their family contributes positively to their social well-being, a substantial portion does not perceive the same level of impact or improvement in this regard. A study by Deater-Deckard et al. (2020) found that students who feel supported by their families exhibit higher levels of social well-being. These individuals tend to have better interpersonal relationships and greater self-esteem, which are key components of overall social well-being. However, for some, family relationships may not provide the same benefits, potentially explaining why a smaller percentage might report improvements in their social well-being due to family support.

Application of The Theories

According to Social Support Theory, social interactions and support networks are extremely important in an individual's well-being, especially during times of stress or adversity. This hypothesis proposes that having access to supportive relationships, whether through emotional comfort, concrete aid, informative direction, or a sense of belonging, can improve one's mental and physical health. It highlights the value of social ties in mitigating the negative consequences of stressful experiences and building resilience.

In the context of this study, family support serves as a vital form of social support that significantly influences a student's overall well-being. A strong support system within the family provides encouragement, motivation, and practical assistance that help students navigate academic and personal challenges. When students receive emotional comfort, academic guidance, and financial or logistical support from their families, they are more likely to experience reduced stress levels, improved self-confidence, and better academic performance. Conversely, the absence of family support can lead to increased anxiety, lower self-esteem, and difficulty in coping with challenges.

To effectively enhance the overall well-being of students, the role of family support plays a central and crucial part. Given that students spend a significant amount of time with their families, the influence of family dynamics, including emotional, social, and financial support, can have a profound effect on their mental health, academic success, and social development.

Suggestions And Discussion

First and foremost, as explored by scholars such as Kim and Lee (2023), it is essential to increase awareness about the importance of family support in student well-being. This paper acknowledges the significant role that family involvement in education and emotional support plays in promoting students' mental health and academic performance. According to the framework proposed by Roberts et al. (2017) and Mendez (2021), consistent family engagement is key to helping students navigate academic stress and emotional challenges. When families provide a strong foundation of emotional encouragement, students are more likely to demonstrate resilience and exhibit improved well-being across various domains, including academic achievement, mental health, and social relationships. This paper suggests that educational campaigns and awareness programs should focus on empowering parents and families with tools and strategies to support their children more effectively, both academically and emotionally.

Furthermore, this paper advocates for integrating targeted family support programs within educational settings. Research by Barlow et al. (2022) highlights that students with strong family backing are more likely to feel secure and motivated, which directly correlates to better overall well-being. By fostering a collaborative environment between schools and families, students are provided with consistent reinforcement both at home and in their learning environments. Programs that promote open communication and provide parents with the resources to effectively support their children's needs can significantly enhance the student's ability to thrive. Additionally, promoting awareness of the crucial role that family support plays in maintaining a healthy balance between academic pressures and social-emotional development could empower students to better manage their well-being.

Lastly, this paper proposes that social platforms and educational initiatives should emphasize the impact of family support on student outcomes, fostering a broader cultural shift that prioritizes family engagement. Studies show that students who perceive their families as emotionally supportive are more likely to develop positive self-esteem, build better social relationships, and cope with challenges more effectively (Smith et al., 2022). By leveraging modern communication tools such as social media, educational institutions can share valuable insights on how family involvement influences student well-being, encouraging both parents and students to strengthen their family bonds and engage in supportive, meaningful ways.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the significant role of family support in shaping students' overall well-being, with a focus on how emotional, academic, and social backing from family members can positively influence various aspects of students' lives. The research findings emphasize that strong family support systems contribute to enhanced

academic performance, better mental health, and stronger social relationships. Students who perceive their families as emotionally supportive are better equipped to manage stress, build resilience, and navigate challenges during their academic journey. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of consistent family engagement in educational settings, as it promotes an environment of encouragement and understanding, which leads to improved student outcomes.

The evidence gathered highlights the need for more targeted interventions, educational programs, and awareness campaigns that emphasize the value of family involvement in students' lives. By fostering stronger family-school partnerships and providing resources to empower parents, educational institutions can help enhance students' well-being and overall success. The study also reveals that students who experience a balance of academic, emotional, and social support from their families are more likely to develop a sense of security, self-worth, and motivation, all of which contribute to their holistic development.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of family support and student well-being. By highlighting the pivotal role that family plays in fostering a healthy and supportive environment for students, this study offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and families themselves. Understanding the profound impact of family support can guide the development of programs and strategies designed to strengthen family involvement in students' academic and personal lives.

For educators and schools, this study provides a clear rationale for implementing initiatives that encourage greater family engagement. Whether through parent-teacher collaborations, family support workshops, or resources aimed at equipping parents with the tools to provide better emotional and academic support, the findings suggest that such efforts are critical to improving student outcomes.

For policymakers, the research reinforces the need to create supportive educational environments that acknowledge and incorporate family involvement as a key factor in student success. Additionally, the study is significant in raising awareness about the importance of social-emotional well-being in academic settings and advocates for systemic changes that prioritize the holistic development of students.

Lastly, for families, the study encourages reflection on the positive influence they can have on their children's academic and emotional health. By understanding the positive correlation between family support and student well-being, families can become more proactive in offering the necessary support that fosters their child's success and overall happiness.

Ultimately, this research underscores that family support is not just a supplementary factor but a fundamental component of students' well-being, and its integration into educational practices can have long-lasting positive effects on students' academic performance and mental health.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study is funded by a Matching Grant between Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka and Universiti Islam Melaka (Grant Number: GST/NAT 2024/1-2).

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