

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL TIES AND LIFESTYLE BEHAVIORS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: ROLE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AS A MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to examine the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies, and lifestyle behaviors of university students. It was hypothesized that there is a relationship between social ties, lifestyle behaviors, and self-management strategies as well as the mediating role of self-management strategies between the relationships. Data from (N=300) students in the age range 18-35 years were gathered from private universities of Lahore Pakistan through the purposive sampling technique. Social connectedness scale revision (Richard et al., 2001), Lifestyle behavior survey (Chopra et al., 2020), and Scale of coping (Hamby et al., 2013) were used in the study for data collection. For analysis, Pearson Moment Correlation, Independent sample t-test, Mediation analysis and Analysis of Variance were used. A significant positive relationship was found between social ties, self-management, and lifestyle behaviors of university students. The findings showed that self-management strategies significantly mediated between social ties and lifestyle behaviors. Universities can work on the wellness programs that incorporate self-management strategies, social support, and healthy lifestyle behaviors and can also provide accessible mental health resources, like counselling services and online support groups.

Keywords: Social ties, Lifestyle behaviors, Self-management strategies, and University students..

INTRODUCTION

The importance of overall well-being has become increasingly evident in recent years, with rising concerns about mental health issues, chronic disease, and social isolation. Students can promote their general well-being holistically by comprehending the intricate relationships between social ties, lifestyle behaviors and self-management strategies (Zsido et al., 2022).

Social ties are the sensation of association and appreciation with others, which is fundamental for human flourishing and progression. It helps people in seeing the glow and build relationships with others (Curren & Ryan, 2020). It is an indirect way which influences people's approach, pleasure, and wisdom. Forming a sensation of social ties are an essential piece of human life and

that can work on different features of mental success (Bencsik, 2024). The level of coordination in informal communities, the social associations that are expected to be steady, and the opinions and insights of support availability held by the individual being supported are the three important components of social ties (Tierney et al., 2022).

Lifestyle behaviors are a clear way of behaving or specific trademark that can improve or hurts physical, social and mental, prosperity now and coming down the line for people (Boris et al., 2021; Darrin et al., 2021). People's true capacity and their working are not entirely set in stone by the decisions an individual makes about their lives in view of their lifestyles (Kai et al., 2020; Tom et al., 2021). Lifestyle behaviors are organized into two chief general classes that are: Lifestyle supporting behaviors and Lifestyle damaging behaviors (Slavich, 2020). Lifestyle supporting behaviors are essentially the positive exercises that help the individual and lead to great well-being. Lifestyle damaging behaviors are those activities that are finished by people which can fabricate the bet of disorder, whether the individual is being familiar with the connection between the activities and infection (Baz et al., 2023). These exercises don't add to great physical and psychological wellness including unseemly dietary patterns, sleep, alcohol use, hygiene, less physical activity and sexual activities, etc. (Ntoumanis et al., 2020).

Self-management strategies indicate to the specific methodologies which are involved by people in various conditions which change throughout the timeframe, and are additionally obligated to the evoked circumstances (Gosak et al., 2022). Active self-management strategies like coordinating, taking a specific action, looking for help, positive reappraisal of the circumstance, or affirmation (Freire et al., 2020). Avoidant ways of dealing with stress are those which incorporate scholarly and social frameworks used to evade the troubling situation, like an obstacle, denial, and living in a dream (Amanvermexz et al., 2023).

There is a notable gap in understanding how social ties influence lifestyle behaviors and self-management strategies. The role of social ties in shaping these intentions remain unclear. Furthermore, the importance of self-

management strategies is not well understood. By keeping these gaps in mind, the current study was designed. The theoretical framework of the study was deal with the PERMA model which is developed by Seligman (2019). Model represents five basic essential components that are; Positive emotion, commitment, positive relationship, significance and accomplishment. A key aspect of overall well-being is positive relationships, which are fundamental component of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2019). However, despite the significance of positive relationships, Theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1991) which is based on these concepts: behavioral objective, attitude, personal standards, social customs, perceived supremacy and perceived behavioral mechanism. Theory suggests that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, personal standards, and social norms. The coping circumplex model by Stanistawski (2019) model is grounded on eight self-management strategies and made a circumplex: positive profound adapting, proficiency, critical thinking, and distraction with the issue, pessimistic adapting, vulnerability, issue avoidance, and separation.

Literature Review

Socially tied individuals and networks were more joyful and better and were well ready to assume responsibility for their lives and find solutions for the issues they face (Yogesh & Andres, 2021). A low degree of social ties was decidedly related to unpleasant life occasions and self-harmful considerations (Crudgington et al., 2023). Students have a more noteworthy feeling of social ties, significantly better associations with the employees, and less pressure connected with their faculty when contrasted with the students who joined no gatherings (Collie, 2023). Further, discoveries demonstrated that investing energy with loved ones, assignment task, everyday errands, and messing around reduced the stress (Ellis et al., 2020). Individuals kept up with cultural separation to safeguard their actual well-being and guarantee that they can socially be associated with others to keep their mental wellbeing (Margolis & Lyubomirsky, 2020). University students who carried out modified self-management methodologies and kept themselves occupied in different activities

including high impact exercise, strolling, planting and followed their everyday existence interests, savoured their distressing time and revered hopeful impact (Replenishes et al., 2020). University students were taken part in various exercises and adapted best by utilizing entertaining images with others (Garfin, 2020; Caubergher et al., 2020). College understudies zeroed in on profound and issue based survival methods for managing distressing occasions in their lives (Baloch et al., 2021). Individuals utilized strict and dynamic adapting to help the humanity (Salman et al., 2020; Munawar & Choudhry, 2021).

A solid way of life included diet, actual work, smoking status, and stress. Diet was estimated utilizing great dietary patterns, like eating natural product, vegetables, and grains. Examination of the eating routine area showed that there was no genuinely huge distinction in dietary propensities between the genders. This outcome showed that the males and females have practically similar dietary tendencies. This indicates that the dietary habits were not influenced by gender (Laura et al., 2020). People have various mentalities related to lifestyle behaviors, and accepted practices with respect to bodyweight vary by orientation (Zhang et al., 2023). Ladies are bound to submit to class standards which influence their actions toward diet, active work and healthy lifestyle. For ladies, especially in higher socio economic status, being 'smart' is exceptionally alluring. They were likewise bound to make their way of life changes to keep up with or accomplish their ideal weight, frequently encountering more prominent prevailing difficulties to do such (Razzaq et al., 2024).

Students of different university levels had same lifestyle behaviors, active work and sedentary way of behaving may have been definitely affected (Mi et al., 2020). Jerre Mae et al. (2020) revealed positive changes in the lifestyle behaviors of students after the education given to them to build their healthy lifestyle behaviors. Student's healthy lifestyle status was shaky in view of the health lifestyle Screen evaluation device; and general attributes, for example, age and grade level (Jarvis, 2023).

Rationale of the research

University students face numerous challenges that can impact their well-being and academic success. The transition to university life, academic pressures, and social adjustments can lead to feelings of loneliness, anxiety and stress (Arora and Gray, 2020). Maintaining social connections, seeking support from peers and faculty, and cultivating social possessions are crucial for university students' prosperity. Poor or absent social affiliations can significantly influence students' academic performance, mental health and overall well-being. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how university students utilize self-management strategies to cope with the challenges of university life and maintain their lifestyle and social connections.

Aims of the research

The main aim of the research was to examine the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of university students. Whether self-management strategies mediate the relationship between social ties and lifestyle behaviors of university students. The current study also aims to address the gaps by exploring the relationship between social ties, lifestyle behaviors, and self-management strategies, and examining how these factors collectively impact overall well-being. By investigating these relationships, this study seeks to contribute to the development of effective strategies that promote overall well-being and mitigate the risk of mental and physical health problems.

Hypothesis

1. There was likely to be a relationship between social ties, self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of university students.
2. Self-management strategies mediates the relationship between social ties and lifestyle behaviors of university students.
3. There was likely to be gender differences in terms of lifestyle behaviors of university students.
4. There was likely to be educational differences in terms of lifestyle behaviors of university students.

Method

Correlational research design was used to examining the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of university students.

Sample and sampling techniques

A sample of N= 300 both male and female university students were chosen through purposive sampling technique from various private universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Students who were enrolled in regular programs and attend university five days in a week were selected. Students who were able to read and understand English and must have 12 years of educational background were included in the research. Students who were living in hostels and had any type of physical issue were omitted from the research.

Assessment Measures

Written consent was taken from the students, time for completing the questionnaire was informed. Demographic information sheet was framed to figure out student's age, gender, education, birth order, marital status etc.

Social connectedness scale revised version was used to measure social ties of university students and it was created by Lee et al., 2001. It's a 6 point Likert scale based on 20 items, from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (slightly disagree), 4(slightly agree), 5(agree), and 6(strongly agree). 0.94 was the alpha coefficient which showed very good internal reliability. Higher scores on the scale showed a strong sense of social ties of university students.

Lifestyle behavior questionnaire was used to measure the lifestyle behaviors of university students. In 2020, Chopra et al. developed the scale, a five-point Likert scale that ranges from (1) significantly increased to (2) slightly increase to (3) grossly similar to (4) slightly decreased to (5) significantly decrease. Scale has 20 items and overall scale alpha coefficient was .72.

For analyzing self-management strategies of university students coping scale was used which was created by Hamby et al., 2013. A 13 items scale which contains of 2 subscales appraisal (items 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7) and behavioral (items 8,9,10,11,12,and 13). The behavioral subscale had a coefficient alpha of .75, while the appraisal subscale had a coefficient alpha of .89. With a coefficient alpha of .90, the scale was based on responses on a Likert scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being false, 2 being partially true, 3 being somewhat true, and 4 being mostly true.

Procedure

First of all, permission was taken from the ethical board to conduct the study. Then, scale was assembled into one survey after the permission from authors. Every scale used in the study was cultural fair. A demographic survey included individual information of the students was used. Sample of (N= 300) university students were taken. Every student was given a scale and a sheet with demographic information. After explaining the study's purpose, written consent was obtained from them. They were advised that the information they will give will be kept confidential and will used only for research purposes. They were permitted to leave the research anytime without any penalty. 10-15 minutes were taken to complete the studies. The collected data was entered into the SPSS version 21 for further analysis.

RESULTS

The aim of the current study was to examine the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of university students. Cronbach's alpha was run on the scales to find out the reliability of data. For analysis the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, mediation, Independent Sample T-test and one way ANOVA were administered.

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of the Scales and Subscales.

Scales	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Social connectedness	70.48	11.92	20-120	.73
Lifestyle behaviors	51.86	10.84	20-100	.80
Coping strategies	34.94	7.59	13-37	.83
Appraisal	18.89	4.49	7-28	.77
Behavioral	16.05	3.88	6-24	.69

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation.

Table 1 showed the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficient of measures used in study i.e. Social connectedness scale, lifestyle

behaviors and coping strategies. All the scales revealed good reliability coefficient.

Table 2: Correlation between Demographic Characteristics, Social Ties, Self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of University Students.

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Age	300	23.66	3.77	-	.26**	.80**	.03	.03	.19**
2.Gen	300	1.50	.50	-	-	.19**	-.08	-.10	.11**
3.Edu	300	1.47	.77	-	-	-	.31**	.03	.20**
4.ST	300	51.26	10.64	-	-	-	-	.22**	.20**
5.SMS	300	34.94	7.59	-	-	-	-	-	.16**
6.LSB	300	51.71	13.80	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. Edu= Education; ST= Social Ties; LSB = Lifestyle Behavior; SMS = Self-Management Strategies; **p < 0.01.

Table 2 uncovered the results of correlation analysis that there was a significant positive connection between demographics characteristics, social ties, self-management strategies and lifestyle behaviors of university students at 0.01 level of

significance. The relationship showed that university students had strong social ties with others, adapted diverse self-management strategies to deal the tough time of their lives in universities and focused properly on the healthy lifestyle behaviors, so they can handle the crisis definitely in a positive manner.

Table 3: Mediation Analysis between Social Ties and Lifestyle Behaviors through Self-management Strategies (N=300)

Antecedent	Consequent					
	SMS (M)			LSB (Y)		
	β	SE		β	SE	
Constant	25.08***	2.57***		33.72***	4.12***	
ST (X) a	.13***	.03***	c'	.16***	.05***	
SMS (M)	-	-	b	.16***	.08***	
	R ² = .04			R ² = .05		
	F(1,298) = 15.10, p < .000			F(2,297) = 9.23, p < .000		

Note: β = standardized regression coefficient
 The result of table 3 revealed that indirect effect of social ties on lifestyle behaviors through self-management strategies was

significant, $\beta = .02$, 95% CI [.00, -.05]. Hence, self-management strategies significantly mediated between social ties and lifestyle behaviors of university students. (See Figure 1).

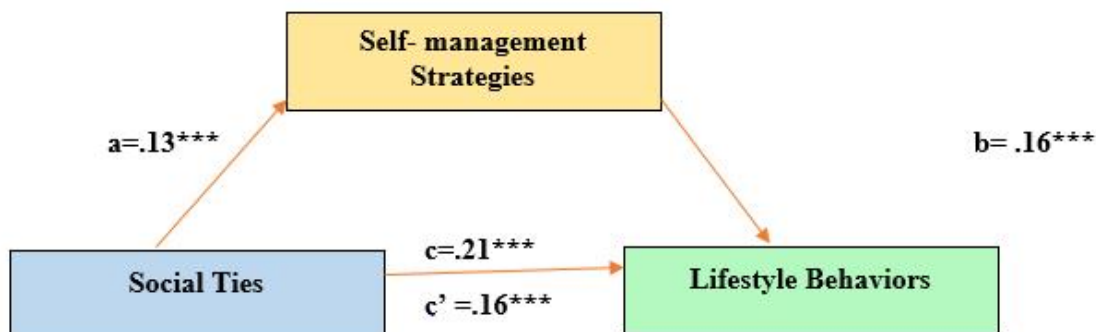


Figure 1: Self-Management Strategies as a mediator

A pictorial representation of Figure 1 presented the results and showed partial

mediation. Results indicated that self-management strategies significantly mediated

between social ties and lifestyle behavior of university students.

The significant mediation effect of self-management strategies indicated that the relationship between social ties and lifestyle behaviors was partially mediated by self-

management strategies. In other words, social ties not only directly influenced lifestyle behaviors but also indirectly influenced lifestyle behaviors through the development of effective self-management strategies.

Table 4: Self-management Strategies by University Students (N=300)

Activities	f	%
Digital Activities	46	15.3
Physical activities	39	13
Social activities	19	6.3
Meditation	32	10.7
Humour	22	7.3
Work	45	15
Study	47	15.7
Sleep	26	8.7
Others	24	8

Note. f = Frequency; % = Percentage

Table 4 revealed the results of descriptive statistics and it indicated the percentages and frequencies of self-management strategies used by university students. 15% of university students included themselves in advanced digital exercises which remember posting for virtual entertainment stages, web-based informing, video calls, and computer games. 13 % of university students liked to include themselves in proactive tasks like going outside for a walk, doing family errands, cultivating, swimming, work out, and so on 6 % of students went for eating out, group study, raising funds, movie night, and so on. 11% adjusted various sorts of reflection to keep their mind and body healthy. 7% of university students fostered a comical inclination during distressing times which constructed their flexibility as well as

worked on their psychological and actual wellbeing. 15% of students kept themselves occupied in their work-life which expanded their work efficiency. 16% of students focused in studies which worked on their scholastic execution, time on task, and diminished issue conduct. 9% of university students liked to take a decent rest while sleeping which successfully dealt with their viewpoints and feelings. Results showed that 8% of university students kept themselves occupied in various different activities, such as cooking, art, cleaning, publishing content to a blog, and so forth. Findings revealed that university students adapted different self-management strategies including digital activities, physical activities, social activities, meditation, humour, work, study, sleep and etc. (See figure 2).

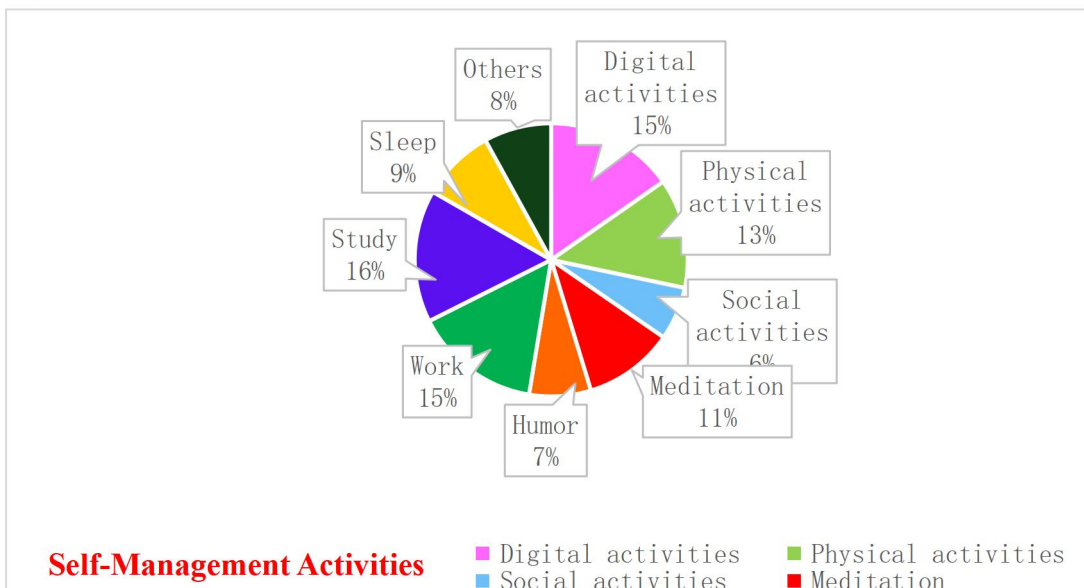


Figure 2: Self-Management strategies

A graphical portrayal of self-management strategies utilized by university students. University students adapted different self-management strategies. Study revealed that university students employed a diverse range of self-management strategies to cope with stress and anxiety including digital, physical and social activities. Additionally, students

practiced mindfulness and relaxation techniques and found humour in little things as coping mechanism. Furthermore, many students engaged themselves in work, study or different hobbies to feel focused. Overall, the findings highlighted the creative and diverse ways in which university students managed stress and maintained well-being.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-Test Comparing Gender Differences in terms of Lifestyle Behaviors (N=300).

Variable	Men (n=150)		Women (n=150)		t(298)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
LSB	52.14	10.12	50.38	11.10	2.00	.15	-.65	-4.17	0.1

Note. CI= Confidence Interval; LL= Lower Limit; UL= Upper Limit; LSB =Lifestyle Behaviors

Table 5 showed the results of independent sample t-test and showed non-significant gender differences in terms of lifestyle

behaviors. No significant differences were found between men and women in terms of their lifestyle behaviors of university students. Both men and women adapted same lifestyle behaviors. Though small effect size was noted.

Table 6: One Way ANOVA Comparing Lifestyle Behaviors and Education of University Students (N=300)

Variable	UG (n=212)		G (n=35)		PG (n=53)		F(2,297)	p	Partial η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
LSB	51.07	10.96	54.57	10.50	49.86	9.05	2.19	.11	.01

Note. M=Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; UG= Under Graduate; G= Graduate; PG= Post Graduate.

Table 6 indicated results of One Way ANOVA and it revealed that education of university students varies in three groups $F(2, 297) = 2.19, p > .11, \eta^2 = .01$. No massive contrasts were found among the groups. Students of different educational levels have similar

lifestyle behaviors. Correspondingly, variability on the scores of education was accounted with small effect size.

DISCUSSION

This research was aimed to examine the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies, and lifestyle

behaviors of university students. A significant positive relationship was found between social ties, self-management strategies, and lifestyle behaviors of university students. Over the past few decades, significant evidence has shown that social ties were positively and causally related to mental health and better crisis management (Bavel et al., 2020; Bryce, 2020; Holt-Lunstad, 2022). Therefore, emotional maintenance behaviors, including diverse self-management strategies and instrumental help from significant others, empathy, positive coping help, and strong social connections from similar others, should be more effective in reducing stressors' physical and emotional effects and act as buffers against the crisis, which in return helps in its management. By taking part in various self-administration systems, individuals experience development and inspiration in connections by feeling encouraged and energized, i.e., learning, actual well-being, social improvement, and emotional well-being. Findings were supported by Seligman's (2019) PERMA model. Model stands for five simple vital elements, and one of the main elements was positive relationships, and that domain represented the social ties. Online various activities empower individuals to learn, create, and define new objectives. Through activities via the Internet, allowing them to experience successful at life and push forward, rather than being stuck (Lim & Rasool, 2022). Empirical research has found that individuals can utilize the Internet to define objectives and master new information and abilities that enhance their own lives (Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). Social activities were another central element to improving mental health that help cope with the difficult situations in life. Moreover, mediation, humour, and other activities like engaging in favourite hobbies can enrich a person's daily lives which in turn allowed them to experience prosperity at home (Chang et al., 2022).

The second hypothesis was that self-management strategies mediate the relationship between social ties and lifestyle behaviors of university students. Results revealed that self-management strategies significantly mediated between social ties and lifestyle behaviors of university students. This hypothesis was also supported by earlier

research. Pigaiani et al. (2020) conducted an online survey and examined the mediating role of coping strategies of Italian students in lifestyle behaviors and family relationships, and they predicted changes in subjective well-being. Results revealed that the majority of students plan their daily life, participate in organized activities, and develop new interests, which positively mediates their lifestyle behaviors and family relationships, thus revealing adaptive coping strategies (Garfin, 2020; Cauberghe et al., 2020). At home, despite difficulties staying home and experiencing problems including self-isolation and arguments, a relevant proportion of students shared their feelings and reassessed their family ties, which helped them to improve their social relationships (Leal Filho et al., 2021). In terms of social and university engagement, almost all students kept in touch with their partners, friends, and teachers. Commitment to online learning held up well, but students expressed concerns about the educational path. Changes in subjective well-being and anxiety symptoms were frequently reported. Several factors predicted changes in emotional well-being, including adaptive coping strategies (physical activity, participation in different activities, and school-related behaviors (fear of negative educational outcomes) (Almendingen et al., 2021).

In a complex social network of family, peers, school, local area, media, and other social impacts, creating self-administration abilities during immaturity was fundamental. In the first place, family and related social circumstances firmly impact kids' prosperity and capacities up to youth, with long-haul impacts all through their lives. Second, urban cooperation and commitment were significant parts of students' social new development and individual fulfillment (Wang et al., 2022), as they steadily became more engaged with the bigger social climate looking for a feeling of local area. The latter required a new balance of parent-child relationships among students and the impact on their lifestyle behavior and well-being (Takhayneh et al., 2022). Third, much of the development of students was taking place in virtual spaces since the opportunities and risks of the Internet had been discussed for the last 30 years as a tool for establishing and maintaining social ties. Fourth, acquiring health-related skills and

resources laid the foundation for students' physical and mental health, helping them cope with the crisis they came across in any span of their lives (Li et al., 2023).

The third hypothesis stated that there were likely to be gender differences in terms of lifestyle behaviors of university students. No significant differences were found regarding the lifestyle behaviors of university students and they both adapted healthy lifestyles. Although people had various approaches and decisions with regards to healthy lifestyle behaviors. This was due to interactions between social determinants and biological factors, including gender stereotypes, social stigma, social autonomy, and differences and roles (Ali et al., 2022). Therefore, biases were expected to appear in the context of adopting different lifestyle practices to cope. Therefore, male college students tend to choose sports activities in their spare time. Also, students engage in an average of 40 minutes of physical activity per day, with men significantly more than women, while women place greater emphasis on other social activities and personal hobbies, adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors (Rodriguez-Besteiro et al., 2021). Furthermore, the reason for the lack of significant gender differences was that both male and female students adhere to COVID 19 social distancing and health-related rules such as staying home, wearing masks, and avoiding crowded areas etc. (Galasso, 2020; Nazir et al., 2025).

The fourth hypothesis stated that there were likely to be educational differences in terms of lifestyle behaviors of university students. However, the results revealed no significant educational differences in terms of lifestyle behaviors of university students. Research from the past demonstrated that there was no genuinely tremendous contrast in a solid way of life with the extended period of study (Hanawai et al., 2020). Regardless, the covid-19 pandemic had forced a gigantic close-to-home weight on university students at every scholarly level and compromised their psychological wellness because of a worldwide pandemic bringing disturbing results at individual and collective levels. However, various variables added to the better administration of different circumstances, like positive coping styles, adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors, and

social help, which bring about a feeling of belongingness in students (Yu et al., 2020). A great degree of information about any traumatic situation and its control was kept in an example of university students. Most of the students did not modify their dietary and lifestyle habits, while most of the sample reported a decrease in physical activity. However, the students showed an increased awareness of control measures, which led to a better way of life to better deal with the difficult situation (Galle et al., 2020; Jia et al., 2022).

By filling in the knowledge gaps regarding how social ties influence lifestyle behaviors and self-management strategies, the current study advances the theories already in place. This current study specifically builds on the PERMA model (Seligman, 2019) by emphasizing the role that social ties play in fostering wholesome relationships and well-being. The current study also adds to the theory of planned behavior illuminating the influence of social relationships on behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Lastly, this study supports the Coping Circumplex Model by shedding light on the significance of self-management strategies in overcoming challenges (Stanistawski, 2019)

CONCLUSION

This recent study was led to examine the relationship between social ties, self-management strategies, and lifestyle behaviors of university students. In conclusion, in order to prevent university students from developing psychological and health-related issues, better self-management strategies, strong social ties, and healthy lifestyle behaviors should be taken into account and thoroughly worked upon to cope. Early intervention is also essential in promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and self-management strategies among university students, especially during the transition to university life. Moreover, through technology such as online platforms and mobile apps, which can definitely play an important role in supporting well-being of students by providing convenient online resources for stress management and healthy lifestyle behaviors.

IMPLICATIONS

The study highlighted several implications for promoting student well-being. Universities can work on the wellness programs that incorporate self-management strategies, social support, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Universities can also provide accessible mental health resources, like counselling services, faculty trainings, peer support initiatives, hotlines, and online support groups. Furthermore, universities can foster partnerships with community organizations, engage parents and families, and create a supportive environment. Additionally, regular assessment and evaluation of support group services can help identify best practices and areas for improvement. Universities can promote students well-being and overall quality of life by implementing these strategies.

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STATEMENT ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest.

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