

Thriving Through Culture Shock: The Psychological and Adaptive Challenges of First-Year Nursing Students

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Abstract. First-year nursing students experience a demanding transition period, encountering culture shock due to academic rigor and unfamiliar expectations. Culture shock impacts an individual's psychological well-being and ability to adapt to the rigorous demands of nursing school. This study investigated the relationship between the level of culture shock and the adaptation and psychological well-being of first-year nursing students at a selected university in Quezon City. The study employed a descriptive correlational design to investigate the interplay between culture shock, student adaptation, and psychological well-being. A pre-screening form identified eligible individuals and was selected randomly using purposive sampling. A sample of 285 first-year nursing students consented and completed the questionnaire. All adapted instruments were presented on a 5-point Likert scale and were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the relationships between the variables. The study's findings showed a significant positive correlation with a statistical value of $r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$, meaning that as culture shock increased, adaptation also increased. On the other hand, a significant positive correlation between culture shock and psychological well-being was found, with a statistical value of $r = 0.520$, $p < 0.001$, which suggests that as culture shock increases, psychological well-being increases as well. The study reported a moderate level of culture shock among first-year nursing students, emphasizing the importance of support programs, tailored methods, and accepting settings to aid adaptation and psychological well-being of the nursing students.

Keywords: Culture; Culture shock; Nursing; Student adaptation; Psychological well-being.

1.0 Introduction

The nursing program is widely recognized and regarded as one of the most competitive health-related fields in the Philippines, requiring more than interest and passion. Nurses must possess exceptional interpersonal abilities, sharp analytical thinking, and the ability to function efficiently in high-pressure situations (Sajili, 2023). Additionally, nursing education is a rigorous and demanding process to equip individuals with the skills necessary to provide excellent patient care. Due to the high competitiveness of the nursing program, student's qualifications are determined by their performance. Furthermore, in the first year of college, nursing students encountered numerous and diverse challenges, particularly as they transitioned from being high school students to college students. These challenges include academic, personal, socioeconomic, language barriers, and clinical

challenges (Mudaly, 2023). Difficulties like these cause significant distress for student nurses, leading to potential course failure and/or complete dropout from the Higher Education Institution (HEI). In a study by Allaili et al. (2021), culture shock occurs when students tasked with navigating social and academic realms independently find themselves in unfamiliar or foreign environments, coming across foreign cultural practices in various societal and academic environments. As noted by Raco (2018), students who experience culture shock find it difficult to acquire information since they must acclimate to a new, unfamiliar setting. Culture shock is a natural part of change and adaptation, especially in nursing. By acknowledging its existence and being mindful of the emotions involved, nursing students can better manage their reactions and develop strategies to overcome challenges more effectively.

The primary goal of this study is to examine the correlation between the intensity of culture shock and the adaptation and mental well-being of first-year nursing students at a specific university in Quezon City. Additionally, the investigators suggested that it is imperative to discern any disparities in the level of culture shock among these students based on their respective school origins. This comprehension is crucial to facilitate the smooth adjustment of future nursing students and foster their familiarity with the nursing environment. Lastly, it allowed the investigators to develop well-informed recommendations, such as expanding the student orientation program with a more comprehensive and extended duration, to address the identified issue effectively.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive correlational design to investigate relationships between culture shock, student adaptation, and psychological well-being among first-year nursing students while gathering data without variable manipulation. This design choice enabled researchers to employ descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze patterns and relationships between variables, aiming to inform support programs for nursing students' transition.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was carried out at a private, non-religious university founded sixty-one years ago in Quezon City, Philippines.

2.3 Research Participants

The respondents for this study were First-year Nursing students enrolled at a University in Quezon City for the academic year 2023-2024. Out of 550 first-year Nursing students enrolled during the midyear semester, 285 students consented to participate in the study and completed the questionnaire. The study utilized a purposive sampling technique, selecting respondents who met specific inclusion criteria to ensure relevant and targeted data collection. The criteria required that participants be First-year Nursing students enrolled in the midyear semester of the academic year 2023-2024 in the designated locale during data gathering. Participants were required to be between 18 and 23 years of age, enrolled as regular students, have graduated from Senior High School, and provide informed consent by agreeing to the terms and conditions set forth by the investigators.

2.4 Research Instrument

A socio-demographic questionnaire was used to solicit the age, sex, province of origin, senior high school strand, type of student educational institution last attended, location of the previous school, and experience for at least 6 months of hybrid or face-to-face classes before entering college. In addition to the socio-demographic questionnaire, three (3) instruments were utilized in this study. The first instrument is the Measurement of Culture Shock originated by Mumford (1998), cited in the study of Almkudat and Karadag (2024). It was employed to gauge the extent of culture shock experienced by the participants. The Measurement of Culture Shock questionnaire had 12 items on a five-point Likert scale. Under the measurement of culture shock are questions regarding 'core' culture shock and interpersonal stress. The Cronbach alpha from the pilot study was 0.736. Another instrument that was used to determine the first-year nursing student's adaptation will be adapted from the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989), cited in the study of Dominguez-Lara et al. (2019) entitled "Internal Structure of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) in first-year university students." Moreover, the questionnaire for the students' adaptation contained 27 items that have four

parts: (1) academic adaptation, (2) social adaptation, (3) institutional adaptation, and (4) personal-emotional adaptation. The Cronbach alpha from the pilot study was 0.802. Finally, the third instrument used to assess the psychological well-being of first-year nursing students will be based on the Six Factor Model of Psychological Well-being developed by Ryff (1989) and cited in Martinez and Tiamzon's (2022) study. The original questionnaire, which includes 18 items rated on a seven-point Likert scale, will be adapted to a five-point Likert scale for this study. The questionnaire covers autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance. The Cronbach alpha from the pilot study was 0.823.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

A preliminary screening was conducted to identify first-year nursing students who met the specific inclusion criteria to participate in the study. Participants were chosen using a purposive sampling method through invitations distributed through their university email, containing a brief study overview and a link to a Google Forms questionnaire. Participants obtained the terms and conditions and consent forms when they accessed the questionnaire and continued with the survey. Participants were requested to complete a socio-demographic questionnaire, providing information on their age, gender, previous educational background, and other relevant details. Upon completion, participants submitted their responses through Google Forms.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The investigators presented the details about the study's background, significance, duration, and potential advantages and drawbacks to the participants to ensure they could make an informed decision before consenting. Additionally, the consent form features the investigators' contact details for any inquiries. It indicates that involvement is optional, and participants may exit the study anytime.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age. Out of the 285 respondents, 182 are 19 years old (63.86%), 54 are 18 years old (18.95%), and 46 are 20 years old (16.4%). In Aloka's (2023) research of freshmen at a public institution, age greatly affected adjustment processes, with younger students having higher obstacles than their older counterparts. This emphasizes the relevance of age in adjusting to university life since older students often have superior adjustment mechanisms.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the demographic profile of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18	54	18.95%
19	182	63.86%
20	46	16.14%
21	1	0.3%
22	1	0.3%
23	1	0.3%
Sex		
Male	54	18.95%
Female	231	81.05%
Province of Origin		
NCR (National Capital Region)	136	47.72%
Region IV-A (Calabarzon)	59	20.7%
Region III (Central Luzon)	41	14.39%
Senior High School Strand		
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)	221	77.54%
HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences)	8	2.81%
GAS (General Academic Strand)	19	6.67%
ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management)	13	4.56%
Type of Educational Institution Last Attended		
Private	241	84.56%
Public	44	15.44%
Location of Senior High School		
Inside NCR	206	72.28%
Outside NCR	79	27.72%
Experienced of Hybrid or Face-To-Face Classes		
Yes	277	97.19%
No	8	2.81%

Table 1 also presents the respondents' demographic profile regarding sex. Most of the nursing students gathered were 231 female respondents (81.05%), while were 54 male respondents (18.95%). The results show that the majority of respondents from the data gathered are female nursing students since long-held societal and cultural conventions equate nursing with feminine attributes like empathy and caring (Liu & Li, 2017; Prosen, 2022). These stereotypes are maintained by media representations and deeply ingrained societal views that regard nursing as a typically feminine occupation. Furthermore, family and social pressures play an important role, with many female students urged or pushed to seek a career in nursing by their families and peers.

In addition, a recent report from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) indicates that were 101,574 students enrolled in nursing programs nationwide (Yang, 2022). Moreover, social, cultural, and educational factors contribute to the low number of male student nurses. The current patriarchal structure continues to hinder men's opportunities in nursing, which is typically seen as a female-dominated profession. This view is reinforced by media representations and long-held cultural norms that equate nursing with feminine characteristics. As a result, male students frequently encounter challenges and prejudice, feeling compelled to continuously prove themselves by displaying characteristics like strength and leadership (Liu & Li, 2017; Prosen, 2022).

On the other hand, regarding the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their province of origin, most of the respondents gathered are from the National Capital Region (NCR), with 136 respondents (47.72%). The distribution also includes lesser numbers from several locations around the Philippines, emphasizing the study's scope and the participants' diverse geographic backgrounds. The NCR is home to several public and private preschools, elementary and secondary schools, and the most prestigious university schools in the Philippines. Given the tremendous value that Filipinos place on education, these schools draw numerous migrants from various regions (Basa, et al., 2009; Manalo et al., 2021). Moreover, NCR is also an area for professional development across several industries, including healthcare. The city's business network improves employment prospects and allows networking opportunities, making it excellent for driven students seeking an array of career pathways and educational opportunities (Business Diary Philippines, 2020).

The frequency distribution of respondents by their Senior High School Strand also revealed a predominant preference for the STEM strand, with 77.54% (221 out of 285) of students enrolled. Based on the study of Malaga and Oducado (2021), when first-year nursing students were grouped according to their senior high school strand, there was a significant difference in their academic achievement ($p=0.000$) and academic self-regulated learning ($p=0.045$). The STEM graduates' academic performance and self-regulated learning were significantly higher than those of non-STEM completers. This implies that compared to their non-STEM peers, nursing students with prior STEM education may benefit from learning styles and academic achievement advantages. Considering that STEM graduates show notably higher academic performance and self-regulated learning, the preference for the STEM strand suggests that students may be looking for the academic benefits linked to STEM education. The high number of students in the STEM strand corresponds with findings that those with a STEM background generally perform better academically and have more effective learning styles, which likely influences their choice to pursue this strand in senior high school.

The table above also displays the distribution of respondents by the type of educational institution they last attended. The data indicates that a significant majority, 84.56% (241 respondents), attended private institutions, while only 15.44% (44 respondents) attended public institutions. Private and privately owned and funded schools often offer advantages compared to public schools (Allianzcare, n.d.). Moreover, according to the study by Orbeta and Paqueo (2022), private schools' increased freedom in curriculum design and extracurricular programs enables them to do better than public schools in various aspects. This corresponds with the large number of respondents opting for private education, suggesting that private schools' perceived advantages and flexibility make them a popular choice among students.

Moreover, the frequency distribution of respondents based on the location of their senior high school revealed that the majority, 72.28% (206 respondents), attended schools within the National Capital Region (NCR). In comparison, 27.72% (79 respondents) attended schools outside the NCR. The research conducted by Brownie et al. (2023) underlines how living circumstances and access to possibilities for higher education impact the

geographic location of students' learning. Attending school in a remote or rural location may influence one's decision about which higher educational institution to attend, but it does not necessarily impact program completion or academic success. On the other hand, program completion and achievement in higher education are highly impacted by commute time and distance. With 72.28% of respondents having attended schools within the National Capital Region (NCR), it is clear that location significantly influences educational choices. This supports the idea that being closer to higher education institutions impacts where students decide to study. It also highlights the importance of commute time and distance, suggesting that students in the NCR benefit from shorter commutes and better educational opportunities than those outside the NCR.

Furthermore, Table 1 also reveals that 97.19% (277 respondents) had at least six months of hybrid or in-person classes before starting college, while only 2.81% (8 respondents) did not. Wahid et al. (2023) found that students perceive in-person learning as notably more effective and efficient than other methods. This preference likely stems from the direct interaction with instructors, immediate feedback, and the structured environment that traditional classrooms provide. However, the study also highlights that a blended learning approach combining in-person and online elements could be a compelling alternative. This hybrid approach can cater to diverse learning styles and needs, making education more adaptable and inclusive. Chin and Jung (2020) and Lee et al. (2020) found that nursing college students who are highly committed to learning and receive education through mixed methods and online learning show enhanced academic performance, better adaptation to college life, and higher satisfaction levels. Moreover, this highlights that students who have had these experiences are well-prepared to adjust to college environments that incorporate both in-person and online elements, demonstrating the readiness promoted by hybrid learning approaches.

3.2 Level of Culture Shock Experienced by First-Year Nursing Students

In terms of Core Culture Shock

Table 2 shows the "core" culture shock of first-year nursing students, with an overall mean score of 3.07, which is verbally interpreted as "Moderate," indicating a modest amount of "core" culture shock among first-year nursing students. Among all the questions, "Do you feel generally accepted by the local people in the new culture?" has the highest mean of 4.13 with a verbal interpretation of "High." These findings indicate first-year nursing students experienced moderate "core" culture shock. These findings are consistent with various points made in the literature. According to Lovin et al. (2023), the crisis phase occurs when people must adjust to new circumstances for an extended period, resulting in frustration, perplexity, and homesickness. The moderate levels of core culture shock observed in the study are consistent with this phase since the students are neither fully integrated nor upset. They endure a moderate culture shock that does not considerably interfere with their everyday functioning or adapting process.

Table 2. The core culture shock of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Do you feel the strain from the effort to adapt to a new culture?*	2.33	High
2. Have you been missing your family and friends back home?*	2.28	High
3. Do you feel generally accepted by the local people in the new culture?	4.13	High
4. Do you ever wish to escape from your new environment altogether?*	3.47	Low
5. Do you ever feel confused about your role or identity in the new culture?*	3.14	Moderate
6. Have you found things in your new environment shocking or disgusting?*	2.99	Moderate
7. Do you feel helpless or powerless when coping with the new culture?*	3.18	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.07	Moderate

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

In contrast to Allaili et al. (2021) assertion that people experiencing culture shock feel less confident, worthless, afraid, and isolated, the findings show that first-year nursing students do not overwhelmingly want to leave their new environment. This implies that they may face difficulties but are not overwhelmed or pressured to leave their new surroundings. Overall, the findings indicate that first-year nursing students experienced a moderate level of core culture shock, as evidenced by a sense of acceptance and manageable challenges. This is consistent with the literature's emphasis on the ability to adapt and thrive despite initial discomfort.

Interpersonal Stress

Table 3 shows the interpersonal stress of first-year nursing students. The respondents displayed an overall mean score of 3.20 and a verbal interpretation of "Moderate," indicating moderate interpersonal stress among first-year nursing students. Among all the questions, the statement, "When talking to people, can you make sense of their gestures or facial expressions?" scored the highest mean of 4.24 with a verbal interpretation of "Very High." These findings explain that first-year nursing students are experiencing a moderate stress level. They may encounter stressful situations that do not positively or negatively affect them. In contrast to the claims of Reisinger (2009) stated that students who experience culture shock may feel pressure, and social interaction could be hard for them. However, the findings revealed that students easily understood verbal cues, which are essential factors in avoiding misunderstandings and relationships with other people. In addition, it was also found that students have a low level of suspicion or mistrust among the people they are with, which means the student also feels secure and accepted in the environment despite being in a new environment.

Table 3. The interpersonal stress of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Do you feel anxious or awkward when meeting local people?*	2.63	Moderate
2. When talking to people, can you make sense of their gestures or facial expressions?	4.24	Very High
3. Do you feel uncomfortable if people stare at you when you go out?*	2.38	High
4. When you go out shopping, do you feel as though people may be trying to cheat you?*	3.58	Low
5. Are you finding it an effort to be polite to your hosts?	3.15	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.20	Moderate

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

In these findings, it is evident that interpersonal stress moderately affects a student's culture shock level. According to Pedersen (cited in the study of Furnham, 2019), several variables influence the occurrence of culture shock, including interpersonal aspects such as communication skills, past cross-cultural experience, personal character such as independence or tolerance, and access to resources. Reactions to cultural shocks differ from person to person, ranging from complex to moderate reactions. Similarly, the influence of cultural shocks on a person varies, with some appearing rapidly and others appearing gradually (Andani, 2018). Furthermore, the student's previous cross-cultural experiences and personal characteristics, such as tolerance and independence, are likely to play an essential role in mitigating the impacts of culture shock. Access to resources, especially support services provided by educational institutions, helps alleviate the interpersonal stress associated with culture shock. Overall, the findings emphasized the significance of a supportive and welcoming atmosphere in reducing the impacts of cultural shock on first-year nursing students. This observation aligns with the literature emphasizing the complexities of culture shock and the different factors that can influence its impact on students.

Table 4. Overall level of culture shock of first-year nursing students

Level of Culture Shock	Reference Range	Mean	Frequency
Very High	4.21 - 5.00	4.43	9
High	3.41 - 4.20	3.71	81
Moderate	2.61 - 3.40	3.01	139
Low	1.81 - 2.60	2.34	56

Table 4 shows the level of culture shock experienced by first-year nursing students. These findings revealed that a significant portion of the population experienced high culture shock. This indicates that some students may find it difficult to adapt and adjust to their new environment. This coincides with findings from Aryani et al. (2021), "Culture Shock Communication of University Students from Outside of Madura," in which those experiencing culture shock may struggle to adapt and find physical or mental comfort. Various factors, such as cultural disparities, attitudes, languages, social settings, climate, cuisine, attire, and living habits, collectively contribute to students' challenges during this transition. Also, many students experienced a moderate culture shock, as revealed in the findings. This explains that these students still experience difficulties adapting to the new culture, yet they can manage it without disrupting their daily activities.

In contrast to the claims of Burns (1996), a person who experiences culture shock will have difficulty in expressing their feelings and thoughts. However, based on the indicators, students find communication easier, whether

verbal or non-verbal, making navigating the new environment more tolerable. According to Allaili et al. (2022), it emphasized that overcoming culture shock is indeed necessary. In addition, it expounds the claim that culture shock could indicate an individual not being ready to undergo changes and transitions, which are naturally occurring in the nursing profession. Thus, these results provide the basis for creating focused assistance plans that vary according to each student's unique needs and help them adjust effectively. Therefore, the thorough information offered in this study provides an essential foundation for comprehending and resolving the culture shock that first-year nursing students encounter when they adjust to college life, underscoring the necessity of comprehensive and individualized support strategies.

The overall mean score for the Measurement of Culture Shock is 3.13. This suggests that these students generally experience a moderate level of culture shock. Considering the demographics of the chosen population, these students come from various regions of the country, which justifies the occurrence of culture shock. As Jafarov (2022) expressed, while some cultures may be similar, others can be very different and contradictory. Also, as educational institutions adapt their teaching methodologies to meet the evolving demands of the labor market, students may encounter unfamiliar academic environments and social dynamics, potentially exacerbating culture shock as mentioned by Rojas (2016). According to the study, most of the respondents came from private institutions prior to college. This makes the students somewhat familiar with navigating university life, thus explaining the moderate level of culture shock existing among the population.

This finding aligns with a study conducted by Hasibuan (2014) found that 69.4% of 85 students experienced a moderate level of culture shock. Hasibuan explained that culture shock exists within students due to the strain of adjusting to and blending into a new environment. Indicators such as acceptance and understanding of behavioral cues further elaborate on this phenomenon, making it a subtle but significant issue.

3.3 First-Year Nursing Students' Adaptation

In terms of Academic Adaptation

Table 5 shows that the respondents displayed an overall mean score of 3.59, indicating a high level of academic adaptation among first-year nursing students. The statement "I have been keeping up to date on my academic work" had the highest arithmetic mean score of 4.42 and verbal interpretation of "Very High," indicating that most first-year nursing students agree that they have been keeping up with their academic responsibilities.

Table 5. Academic adaptation of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.	4.42	Very High
I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.	3.47	High
I enjoy writing papers for courses.	3.20	Moderate
I am not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.*	3.27	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.59	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

Hussain and Shen's study (2019) highlighted the significance of readiness factors such as pre-departure preparedness and on-campus orientation in facilitating academic adjustment. For nursing students, this could involve understanding academic rigor and expectations about nursing education. Demiral Yilmaz et al. (2020) stated that familiarity with academic standards and cultural norms is essential for managing academic responsibilities effectively. This finding collectively suggests that while first-year nursing students generally adapt well academically, a significant challenge is related to their enjoyment of writing papers. The high overall mean score indicates strong adaptation to academic responsibilities.

In terms of Institutional Adaptation

Table 6 shows the respondents displayed an overall mean score of 4.57, indicating a high level of adaptation to institutional factors among first-year nursing students. The statement, "I expect to stay at this college for a bachelor's degree," had the highest arithmetic mean score of 4.82, with a verbal interpretation of "Very High," indicating that most first-year nursing students expressed their strong confidence in their intention to complete their degree at their current college and highlight a positive outlook and commitment towards their academic journey. Insights from Ricks and Warren (2021) on the transition experiences of first-generation college students emphasize the broader influence of social and support networks on students' adjustment to college, including their engagement with academic work. Addressing these factors could enhance students' satisfaction with

academic tasks and contribute to their overall adaptation and success in nursing school. Therefore, creating a supportive academic environment that promotes institutional adaptation and satisfaction with academic work is essential for enhancing students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Table 6. Institutional adaptation of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I know why I am in college and what I want.	4.56	Very High
I am pleased now about my decision to go to college.	4.69	Very High
I expect to stay at this college for a bachelor's degree.	4.82	Very High
I am enjoying my academic work at college.	4.11	High
Lately, I have been giving much thought to transferring to another college.*	4.66	Very Low
I find myself considering taking time off from college and finishing later.*	4.60	Very Low
Overall Mean	4.57	Very High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

These findings collectively suggest that while first-year nursing students generally demonstrate strong adaptation to institutional factors, there is an opportunity further to enhance their satisfaction and enjoyment of academic tasks. Enhancing this could improve overall adaptation to college life and enhance academic success. Studies underscore the significance of innovative teaching methods and fostering a strong commitment to learning to enhance students' academic performance and adaptation to college. Additionally, prioritizing a supportive academic environment that addresses institutional adaptation and satisfaction with academic tasks is crucial for optimizing students' overall success and learning experiences in nursing school.

In terms of Social Adaptation

Table 7 shows that first-year nursing students had an overall mean score of 4.10, indicating a "High" level of social adaptation. The statement "I have some good friends or acquaintances at college with whom I can talk about any problems I may have" had the highest mean score of 4.31 with a verbal interpretation of "Very High," indicating that most first-year nursing students felt they had very high levels of supportive social relationships at college.

Table 7. Social adaptation of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I am adjusting well to college.	4.00	High
I have several close social ties at college.	4.09	High
I have some good friends or acquaintances at college with whom I can discuss problems.	4.31	Very High
I am quite satisfied with my social life at college.	4.00	High
Overall Mean	4.10	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

A study of first-year students in Ireland by McLean et al. (2022) found that both genders reported moderate peer assistance, while those with higher levels reported reduced stress. Another study measured perceived social support among nursing students by Hamaideh et al. (2024) and reported high levels of social support. This study demonstrated that friends were the most important source of social support, followed by significant others and family members. However, students reported lower satisfaction with the statements "I am adjusting well to college" and "I am quite satisfied with my social life at college," with a mean score of 4.00. Park and Hong (2021) found that challenges remained despite positive correlations between social support and college adjustment. These findings could be proven by the study of H. Lee et al. (2022), which found that nursing students could more easily adjust to college life by learning how to build social support, self-efficacy, and problem-solving skills. In addition, a study by Jennifer Jothi Mary et al. (2020) found that 9% of first-year nursing students transitioning to college had good social support, 83% had moderate social support, and only 8% had poor social support.

In terms of Personal-Emotional Adaptation

Table 8 showed that first-year nursing students had an overall mean score of 2.71, indicating a "Moderate" level of personal-emotional adaptation. The statement "I have given much thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counseling Services Center or a psychotherapist outside of college" had the highest mean score of 3.56, interpreted as "Low," suggesting that most students did not consider seeking help.

Table 8. Personal-Emotional adaptation of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.*	2.82	Moderate
I am finding academic work at college difficult.*	2.48	High
Lately, I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.*	2.72	Moderate
I have felt tired much of the time lately.*	1.92	High
Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.*	2.49	High
I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.*	3.07	Moderate
I have been having a lot of headaches lately*	2.77	Moderate
I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counseling Services Center or from a psychotherapist outside of college.*	3.56	Low
I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.*	2.97	Moderate
I have been getting angry too easily lately.*	3.03	Moderate
I haven't been sleeping very well.*	2.14	High
Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.*	2.44	High
I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in college.*	2.85	Moderate
Overall Mean	2.71	Moderate

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

Cankaya and Duman (2010), cited in the study of Linden and Stuart (2020), found that lower year levels were less likely to seek psychological assistance. Özdemir et al. (2023) also noted that female students were more open to seeking help, while males faced higher social stigma. Conversely, the statement “I have felt tired much of the time lately” had the lowest mean score of 1.92, indicating frequent fatigue, which could be due to academic and clinical responsibilities or environment adjustment in college. This aligns with Isac and Abraham (2020), who linked excessive fatigue to academic pressures. Additionally, studies by Demiral Yilmaz et al. (2020) and Francisco (2020) emphasized the importance of coping strategies in addressing fatigue and emotional challenges, while Alharthi (2019) highlighted the role of positive peer relationships in psychological adjustment.

Table 9 presents the adaptation levels of first-year nursing students. These findings suggest that most first-year nursing students adapted well, though not as exceptionally as those in the very high category. These students were likely managing their new responsibilities and challenges effectively, although there may still be areas for improvement in their adjustment process.

Table 9. Level of student adaptation to college

Level of Student Adaptation	Reference Range	Mean	Frequency
Very High	4.21 - 5.00	4.41	21
High	3.41 - 4.20	3.75	128
Moderate	2.61 - 3.40	3.10	126
Low	1.81 - 2.60	2.43	10

These findings are relevant as Gause et al. (2024) noted that, in contrast to other first-year courses, the transition from primary to higher education is perceived as more difficult and challenging during the first year of nursing school. This insight is aligned with the current investigation such that even though most students were managing their transition effectively, the difficulty of this transition is evident as only a minority were adapting exceptionally well. This indicates that some students find the transition more difficult and may need additional support, further emphasizing the challenging nature of the first year in nursing school. According to a Van Tuan (2020) study, first-year students' academic performance is mostly determined by their ability to adapt to learning activities. The researcher concluded that helping students succeed requires an awareness of their adaptability levels. The researcher's conclusion is reflected in the findings. By identifying the levels of adaptation among first-year nursing students, targeted support can be developed for those with low to moderate adaptation levels to enhance their academic performance and overall success.

The overall mean score of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire was 3.46, with a verbal interpretation of relatively high levels of adaptation among first-year nursing students. This score indicates that these students generally adapt to college life, performing well across academic, social, institutional, and personal-emotional domains. While they encounter some challenges, these do not significantly hinder their adjustment. Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Model emphasizes that individuals interact with their environment (both internal and external) to maintain balance and adapt to stimuli. According to this model, environmental changes stimulate adaptive responses, allowing individuals to grow, develop, and enhance their well-being. In the context of the overall mean

score of SACQ, Roy's model suggests that first-year nursing students actively respond to new challenges and stimuli in their college environment, reflecting a solid level of adaptation. This high score indicates that these students effectively engage with their environment to maintain balance and support their personal growth and well-being. Wahid et al. (2023) support this finding by highlighting that students with prior hybrid or face-to-face learning experience reported higher effectiveness and engagement in such settings might find it easier to adapt to college life, which often incorporates both traditional and online elements.

This finding aligned with previous studies that emphasized the relevance of psychological well-being, control of stress, and confidence in oneself during this transitional period (Hughes et al., 2020). Additionally, Hussain and Shen (2019) underscored the significance of support systems and readiness factors in facilitating academic adjustment. He and Xu (2022) highlighted the impact of well-designed introduction courses on students' college transitions and academic adaptation. Furthermore, Datu and Buenconsejo (2021) provided insights into how motivation and self-efficacy beliefs were crucial for academic adaptation and overall performance. These elements contributed to the high adaptation levels observed among first-year nursing students, as reflected in their overall mean score.

3.4 First-Year Nursing Students' Psychological Well-Being

In terms of Self-Acceptance

As shown in Table 10, self-acceptance achieved a mean score of 3.80, reflecting a high level of self-acceptance. According to Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being scales, a high self-acceptance score suggests that first-year nursing students hold a positive view of themselves, recognizing and embracing various aspects of their identity, including strengths and weaknesses. Arslan and Coskun (2022) mentioned that when students feel valued and accepted in their school community, they are more likely to feel motivated and supported to tackle academic challenges, leading to greater resilience and buoyancy.

Table 10. Self-acceptance of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I like most parts of my personality.	3.97	High
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	3.99	High
In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements.*	3.45	Low
Overall Mean	3.80	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

The psychological well-being (Self- Acceptance) statement "When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far" achieved the highest mean of 3.99, with a verbal interpretation of a high level of psychological well-being, suggesting that first-year nursing students feel satisfied with their accomplishments and view their current life experiences positively. According to Roy's Self Concept Model under Self Concept Mode, the Personal Emotional Dimension of Adaptation is centered on the emotional response and coping mechanisms individuals utilize to deal with stressors. Similarly, research conducted by Monika et al. (2023) discovered that when adolescents experience elevated psychological and subjective well-being, they often demonstrate enhanced academic performance, improved social abilities, and superior physical and emotional health.

In terms of Purpose in Life

According to the results, Purpose in Life has a mean score of 3.71, which is a verbal interpretation of a high level. Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being scales revealed that individuals with high scores for purpose in life possess clear goals and a sense of direction. They perceive meaning in their current and past experiences, believing that this imparts purpose and establishes aims and objectives for living.

Table 11. Purpose in life of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Some people wander through life, but I am not one of them.	3.65	High
I sometimes feel as if I have done all there is to do in life.*	3.84	Low
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.*	3.65	Low
Overall Mean	3.71	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

According to Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Model, as the environment evolves, individuals can persist in growing, developing, and enriching the significance of life for everyone.

In terms of Environmental Mastery

Handling the possibilities and requirements of one's surroundings to achieve personal needs and skills is a vital element of effective environmental management. Considering a mean score of 3.63, first-year nursing students are considered to have a high degree of competence when managing everyday tasks and taking advantage of chances in their environment (see Table 12). This result corresponds with the findings of Mustafa et al. (2020), who observed that moderate to high psychological well-being promotes improved social environment adaptation and community integration. Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being scales revealed that a high degree of environmental management reflects an individual's competence in navigating their surroundings. They efficiently handle various external activities, utilize available opportunities effectively, and can select or shape their environment to align with personal needs and values.

Table 12. Environmental mastery of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
The demands of everyday life often get me down.*	2.93	Moderate
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	4.11	High
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.	3.84	High
Overall Mean	3.63	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

First-year nursing students presented a variety of responses on various aspects of psychological well-being as measured by the statement, "The demands of everyday life often get me down." The score for thoughts of disappointment regarding life successes was 2.93, with a verbal interpretation of a moderate level of psychological well-being. This suggests that the respondent may encounter stress and feel overwhelmed at times, meaning they might feel down at times but are not necessarily in distress. Similarly, Sister Roy's Self Concept Model mentioned that the emotional dimension of adaptation is connected to self-concept because most people's emotional response is usually linked to how they view themselves and their capacity to cope with challenges. On the other hand, the statement "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live." achieved an average score of 4.11, with a verbal description of a high level of psychological well-being, suggesting that first-year nursing students feel a strong sense of control and command over their lives.

In terms of Personal Growth

As shown in Table 13, an average of 4.52 is a very high level for personal growth. This is an encouraging finding, suggesting that first-year nursing students experience ongoing development, embrace new experiences, and recognize growth in self-knowledge and effectiveness over time. Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being scales defined a high level of personal growth as having a continuous sense of development, viewing oneself as evolving and receptive to new experiences. They feel a sense of realizing their potential and notice improvements in themselves and their behavior over time. This aligns with Rapuano's (2019) study, which showed a positive correlation between academic success and psychological well-being across various domains. The high score suggests that these students are making the most of their nursing education's opportunities for learning and growth.

Table 13. Personal growth of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	4.82	Very High
I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life long ago.*	4.11	Low
I think having new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world is important.	4.62	Very High
Overall Mean	4.52	Very High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

The average score for the statement "For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth." was 4.82, revealing that the students had made significant personal progress. The very high personal growth scores may also indicate that these students are capable of dealing with academic stress and adapting to a new settings. Indreswari et al. (2021) investigated the inverse relationship between psychological well-being and academic burnout, highlighting how well-being acts as a protective factor in alleviating stress and improving

adaptation to academic pressures. In the statement "I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago," students scored an average of 4.11, indicating a tendency toward resignation or a lack of proactive engagement in personal development activities. Doğanülkü's (2024) research suggests that persons with lower levels of proactive activity may struggle to adapt to life transitions and problems.

In terms of Positive Relations with Others

As shown in Table 14, positive relationships with others have a mean score of 3.91, which means that the average score suggests that first-year nursing students have a high level of positive relationships with others. Ryff (1989) suggested that a high level signifies nurturing, fulfilling, and trusting connection with others. They possess a strong capacity for empathy, affection, and closeness, recognizing the mutual exchange in human relationships. As also noted by Mustafa et al. (2020), moderate to high levels of psychological well-being influence students to adapt effectively to those around them and their community.

Table 14. Positive relations with other of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
People would describe me as giving and willing to share my time with others.	4.28	Very High
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.*	3.94	Low
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.*	3.51	Low
Overall Mean	3.91	High

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

The statement, "People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others," achieved the highest mean of 4.28, with a verbal interpretation of a very high level of psychological well-being. This indicates that others view first-year nursing students as generous in dedicating their time to others and helping those in need. Similarly, Arslan and Coskun (2022) mentioned that a sense of inclusion fosters positive student interactions, contributing to better social functioning and overall well-being.

In terms of Autonomy

The average score for autonomy, as seen in Table 15, indicates a mean of 3.29, representing that first-year nursing students have a moderate level of autonomy. This implied that although these students display a certain level of independence, they also clearly care about the social expectations and opinions of others. Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being scales indicated that high autonomy levels signify being self-governing and self-reliant. Individuals with high autonomy can withstand social pressures to conform and make independent choices. Conversely, those with low levels of autonomy are often preoccupied with the expectations and judgments of others, depending on external opinions to make significant decisions.

Table 15. Autonomy of first-year nursing students

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they differ from how most other people think.	3.94	High
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	3.62	High
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.*	2.30	High
Overall Mean Score	3.29	Moderate

Note: Items marked with (*) are reverse-scored.

Psychological well-being statement, "I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think," scored an average of 3.94, reflecting a high level of confidence in their own opinions among the students. In line with Mustafa et al. (2020) discovered that students who have a greater sense of autonomy in their learning generally outperform their peers academically, highlighting the significance of autonomy in improving educational achievements. Furthermore, the statement "I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions" gathered a mean of 2.31 with a verbal interpretation of a high level of psychological well-being, implying that first-year nursing students are persuaded through the value of confidence in others, potentially viewing strong opinions as a sign of knowledge or expertise.

The number of first-year nursing student respondents is a total of 285. The mean was used to interpret psychological well-being, while the frequency shows the total number of students per category. The overall mean of psychological well-being is 3.81, with a verbal interpretation of "High.". This means that first-year nursing students have highly positive emotions, a sense of purpose, and adaptability.

Table 16. Level of psychological well-being

Level of Psychological Well-being	Reference Range	Mean	Frequency
Very High	4.21 - 5.00	4.44	59
High	3.41 - 4.20	3.80	172
Moderate	2.61 - 3.40	3.17	54

These findings are similar to the research conducted by Franzen et al. (2021); results show that higher scores in academic satisfaction were associated with Psychological well-being, while lower scores were strongly associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. In the study of Indreswari et al. (2022), individuals with good psychological well-being can deal with pressure consciously, have no academic worries, and adapt to difficult situations. These results provide a basis for an increase in psychological well-being that positively affects other aspects contributing to satisfaction. Therefore, through this information put forward by the study, enhancing the psychological well-being of first-year nursing students could contribute to the initiatives that promote psychological well-being and social connections that help manage expectations and promote positive learning to first-year nursing students.

3.5 Relationship Between First-Year Nursing Students' Level of Culture Shock and Adaptation to College

Pearson's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the relationship between first-year nursing students' level of culture shock and their student adaptation. Table 17 showed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$) between culture shock and student adaptation. As first-year nursing students experienced higher levels of culture shock, they also tended to show higher levels of adaptation to their student roles. Although statistically significant, the correlation coefficient 0.592 revealed a moderately strong positive relationship. This suggested that as the intensity of culture shock experienced by first-year nursing students increases, their level of adaptation to the student role tends to increase, and other factors likely also play significant roles in determining student adaptation levels.

Table 17. Relationship between first-year nursing students' level of culture shock and their adaptation to college

Students' Adaptation to College	Culture Shock		Decision
	Pearson's r	0.592	Reject H_0
	p-value	< 0.001	Significant

It was stated that one factor being investigated in student adaptation is social adaptation. In Roy's Adaptation Model, one of its modes is interdependence mode, where behaviors are associated with interdependent relationships. It focuses on how an individual gives and receives love, respect, value, and security in nurturing relationships. Both McLean et al. (2022) and Hamaideh et al. (2024) observed that nursing students with substantial social support experienced lower stress levels and highlighted the positive impact of robust support systems on reducing stress. These statements provide credibility to the positive relationship between culture shock and student adaptability to college. This high degree of social support promotes a nurturing atmosphere, allowing students to develop resilience and effective coping techniques, resulting in a better adaptation to college life despite facing cultural shock. In conclusion, Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient analysis showed a substantial positive association ($\rho = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$) between culture shock and student adaptation among first-year nursing students. Furthermore, the findings align with Adler's perspective, implying that culture shock promotes personal growth and cultural learning, increasing students' resilience and cross-cultural understanding. Therefore, educators and administrators should facilitate support mechanisms such as orientation programs and cultural sensitivity training to help students adapt and improve their educational experience.

3.6 Relationship Between First-Year Nursing Students' Level of Culture Shock and Psychological Well-Being

The relationship between first-year nursing students' level of culture shock and their psychological well-being was evaluated using Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient. The gathered data were normally distributed with a Shapiro-Wilk p-value of 0.101 for Culture Shock and 0.329 for Psychological Well-Being. Table 18 shows a statistically significant positive correlation between culture shock and psychological well-being, with $r = 0.520$ with $p < 0.001$, indicating a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that psychological well-being also tends to increase as culture shock increases.

Table 18. Relationship between First-Year Nursing Students' Level of Culture Shock and their Psychological Well-being

Psychological Well-being	Culture Shock		Decision
	Pearson's r	0.520	Reject H_0
	p-value	< 0.001	Significant

As stated by Mulyadi et al. (2024), students who successfully adapt to a new culture tend to exhibit better academic performance and psychological well-being, demonstrating enhanced coping mechanisms to navigate the challenges associated with their new environment. According to Roy's model, individuals strive to maintain a balance by responding to environmental stimuli through adaptive or maladaptive responses. Successful adaptation, supported by strong coping strategies, results in enhanced psychological well-being and academic performance. This model aligns with the finding that students who effectively adjust to cultural changes experience better psychological well-being.

The moderate correlation ($r = 0.520$), indicates that although culture shock significantly impacts psychological well-being, it is just one of several factors that affect the overall psychological condition of first-year nursing students. The low p-value ($p < 0.001$) confirms the importance of this relationship, highlighting the need to consider culture shock in initiatives designed to support these students. In conclusion, a notable positive correlation exists between first-year nursing students' experience of culture shock and their psychological well-being. While culture shock impacts psychological adaptation, other factors contribute significantly. Callista Roy's Adaptation Model offers a useful framework for understanding this relationship, demonstrating how adaptive responses to environmental changes, such as culture shock, can improve psychological well-being.

4.0 Conclusion

Analyzing the relationship between culture shock and student adaptation revealed a statistically significant positive correlation among first-year nursing students. Although the correlation is moderate, it highlights the significance of culture shock in the adaptation process. It acknowledges that additional factors play a crucial role in students' adjustment to college life. Notably, the impact of social support is emphasized, as research indicates that robust social networks can alleviate stress and improve coping strategies among nursing students. These findings support the notion that, despite the difficulties of culture shock, it contributes to personal development and resilience. The findings have shown a weak positive relationship between culture shock and psychological well-being. The challenges of adjusting to a new environment lead to a positive psychological outcome when seen in a positive outlook. Students with higher psychological well-being handle culture shock more effectively and perceive it as a learning opportunity contributing to their growth and development. Furthermore, an effective adaptation wherein students manage to adapt to cultural changes experiences improved psychological well-being as well as better academic performance.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

All authors contributed to the conceptualization of the work. FMNC, MSDC, and CMFC obtained approval from the ethics committee to ensure compliance with ethical standards. GMC, JDGVC, and DFCC engaged experts to validate the questionnaire, ensuring its reliability for accurate data collection. JDGVC led the data analysis, applying rigorous methods to ensure data integrity. Each author contributed to drafting the manuscript, with CMFC, MKJSC, FHCC, and CRDC carefully revising it to enhance clarity and impact. Finally, all authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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