

## Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being and Parenting Styles in Relation to Academic Performance among the Higher Education Students of Poumai Naga Tribe

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### ABSTRACT

Study about gender difference on the dimensions of psychological well-being is necessary so as to focus on overall healthcare of men and women. The gender stereotype is a prevalent fact in every society. Besides visible bodily differences certain characteristics are attributed to men while some other traits are attributed to women. The goal of the present study was to look at the gender gap among Poumai higher education students in different components of psychological well-being as elaborated by Carol Ryff. The other objectives of the study were to examine the relationship between the academic achievement of the students and three different parenting styles as expansively detailed by Diana Baumrind. A total of 122 college students (male=58, female=64) from four colleges of Senapati district, Manipur took part in the present study with ages ranging from 19-22 years. Parental Authority Questionnaires of Buri, J. as well as Ryff's Scale of Psychological well-being were used. We used t-test for the analysis. The findings were analyzed and discussed further. The limitations of the results and the implications for future scope and directions were also discussed.

**Keywords:** *College Students, Psychological Well-Being, Parenting, Gender Difference, Academic Performance.*

Psychological well-being among the higher education students is one of the important issues that have been receiving a lot of attention, particularly with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the entire population in the world without exception and put unbearable psychological strain on people from all walks of life. Many people experienced mental health issues such as a sense of helplessness and a heightened magnitude of anxiety, fear and uncertainty in the face of this awful ordeal (Ho, Chee & Ho, 2020). Studying the gender difference on the different dimensions of psychological well-being of the college students during this pandemic is important to focus

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the overall healthcare of male and female students which will motivate to promote further research.

Men and women are complementary to each other and yet basically they are different. Different theories have been discussing and trying to explain the gender similarities and differences for many decades. Research on gender difference is an important aspect as it contributes not only in determining health issues but also in issues of socialization of children such as styles of parenting. Males and females differ not only physiologically but also psychologically as well. Gender stereotypes suggest that men and women have vast differences in their interests, behavioral tendencies, attitudes and inclinations. Women are stereotypically considered to be more emotional but research shows that differences between males and females with regard to being emotional, are minor and trivial in many cases. Nevertheless, gender differences in psychological dimension though small, are important and cannot be considered insignificant (Hyde, 2014). Most of the studies on gender difference in psychological well-being, and academic performance in relation to different parenting styles are mostly done in the Western society while no such study has been done in this aspect among the Poumai Naga tribe in Manipur. Hence exploring the Psychological well-being and looking into the differences between men and women is interesting and essential in order to take up any intervention that may be required in this field.

Studies revealed that psychological well-being (PWB) of the individuals and parenting styles are interconnected (Yerdaw& Rao, 2018). Moreover, the attitudes and the behavior patterns of the parents influence the PWB of the individuals. Further it is observed that individuals perceive mothers' and fathers' parenting styles differently which contribute differently to the psychological adjustment as well (Li & Meier, 2017). Parenting continues to be a relevant topic and there is no exhaustion in the study the impact of different parenting practices. Often due to changing life styles in the society as well as generation gaps and other cultural nuances, effective parenting has become more difficult and demanding. Nevertheless the friendly and positive rapport between the parent and child was observed as contributing to the cognitive development of the child (Ashraf, Fatiana, Khan, Asif, & Ashraf, 2020).

### ***Study Background***

The Poumais are one of the main Naga tribes in Manipur, India. They are predominantly settled in the district of Senapati, Manipur, though a few Poumai villages are also found in other regions and even in Phek district of Nagaland (Puo, 2009). The Poumai Naga culture is collectivistic and the society is patriarchal in nature (Aveivey, 2019). It is fascinating to understand the psychological well-being of the Poumai students, their academic performance in relation to different parenting styles. Hence the present study endeavored to look at the gender difference in the different dimensions of psychological well-being such as autonomy, personal development, life purpose, healthy interpersonal relationships, environmental competence, and acknowledgement of self as elaborated by Carol Ryff. It also attempted to study the academic achievement of the higher education students in relation to Baumrind's (1991) description of parenting styles: authoritative, permissive and authoritarian.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Gender difference in Psychological well-being*

Study concerning gender difference on the various dimensions of Psychological well-being (PWB) is indispensable so as to focus on overall healthcare of men and women. For decades it is observed that numerous researchers were fascinated with the questions of gender difference in psychological well-being (Roothman, Kirsten, & Wissing, 2003; Perez, 2012). But in spite of several studies done, research reported no conclusive outcomes on the difference in PWB between men and women. Taking into consideration the conventional gender roles is relevant because men and women vary in various dimensions of psychological well-being. It is reported that individuals who have the self concept of both the characteristics of men and women have higher well-being (Matud, López-Curbelo, & Fortes, 2019).

Well-being is viewed and understood from different perspectives. One such viewpoint is hedonic approach wherein pleasure, fulfillment and happiness are considered as subjective well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In contrast, some other authors examined well-being through eudaimonic approach which focused on positive life experiences and developing one's true potentials without being free from pains and struggles of every day's life (Perez, 2012). In other words, psychological well-being is not just the absence of pains and illnesses but the overall capacity of the individual to develop and grow progressively in the midst of challenges and pain (Ryff, Radler, & Friedman, 2015).

The research results of Li, Kao, & Wu, (2015) using factorial invariance showed gender differences in the six dimensions of PWB. According to their finding, women scored higher than men in dimension of positive relation with others. The results also indicated that males scored significantly higher in autonomy and self-acceptance than their female counterparts. But Ryff & Keyes (1995) found no gender difference in the individual's capacity to manage the environment and in continued efforts towards personal growth. Perez (2012) also noted contrasting results on gender difference in different dimensions of PWB.

Another study on PWB of college students by Ludban & Gitimu (2015) pointed out that there was statistically significant gender difference in the score of the four components of Psychological well-being, i.e. the mean scores of the women were higher in personal development, healthy interpersonal relationships, a sense of purpose in life, and acknowledgement of self than the mean scores of men. However, no significant gender difference was found between women and men in the dimensions of environmental mastery in the given situation and autonomy.

Research findings showed gender difference in PWB but with no conclusive results in the six dimensions of PWB between men and women (Matud, López-Curbelo, & Fortes, 2019). Nevertheless, one consistent finding on gender difference in the six dimensions of PWB between men and women is that, men outperform women in terms of self-acceptance and autonomy, while women outperform men in terms of personal development and good relationships with others (Matud, López-Curbelo, & Fortes, 2019; Ryff, & Keyes, 1995). Exploring the gender difference of the different dimensions of PWB and differentiating them between men and women facilitate in dealing understanding more effectively the needs of individual person (Perez, 2012).

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### *Parenting and Academic performance*

Academic performance refers to the end product of learning generated by the students. Positive parent-child relationship is vital and the parenting style used by the parents is one of the factors that affect the academic achievement of the children (Candelanza, Buot, & Merin, 2021). Unlike in the past, the modern lifestyle makes parenting more complex with multiple tasks undertaken by parents. Under such circumstances spending quality time with the children remains an ideal to be achieved (Seth & Asudani, 2013). Both the father and mother influence the development of the child positively and negatively through their parenting styles, attitudes and behaviors. It is observed that the mothers' parenting style is more important than the parenting style of the father in the academic performance of the children (Yang & Zhao, 2020). More than the parents' actual behavior, the attitudes and emotional expressions perceived by the children leave huge impact on the developmental process and growth of the children (Kassa & Rao, 2019; Craig, 2006; Finley & Schwartz, 2006).

Baumrind (1991) favored authoritative parenting over lenient and dictatorial parenting. Likewise, Kenney, Lac, Hummer, Grimaldi, & La Brie (2015) also contended that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are unhelpful in the management and control of the given situation, making the individuals incompetent and less healthy in their coping skills of everyday life. Further, authoritarian parenting style is linked with behavior problems like depression as well as lower psychological well-being. Boys whose parents are authoritarian tend to have greater conduct problems and are more vulnerable towards peer pressure, delinquency and are adversely affected academically than girls.

Many studies in the western individualistic culture favored authoritative parenting style to authoritarian or permissive styles. However cultural difference in academic performance of the children is noticed in relation to various styles of parenting. The authoritarian upbringing style seemed to be beneficial to the individualistic society of the West (Baumrind, 1971)) while the interdependent culture such as Asian families seemed to support authoritarian parenting style (Chao, 1994; Piquart & Kauser, 2018). The effective and appropriate parenting practice in some cultures may be obsolete and outdated in another culture. As a result it is important to consider the perception of the meaning of authoritarian parenting style in the context of interdependent and collectivistic cultural point of view including the Asian families (Checa & Abundis-Gutierrez, 2018). Research findings remain evasive and did not arrive at consistent results. At times contradictory results across cultures were also observed (Kordi & Baharudin, 2010).

Thus, the review of literature has helped us to understand the key concepts and meaning of the present study. It has been observed that there is scarcity of literature and research studies of the target sample population. The current research is enabling and leading the researcher to study and correlate the different aspects under study.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is quantitative in nature, and across-sectional survey design was used. The quota sampling method was adopted for data collection. 328 students responded to the research questionnaires. After eliminating the incomplete data the sample consisted of 122 Poumai college students (males = 58 and females = 64) belonging to the age group of 19-22 years. The participants were from four colleges of Senapati district, Manipur.

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### Research Objectives

- To study the differences in psychological well-being between male and female Poumai college students.
- To investigate the association between the parenting style of the mother and the academic performance of Poumai college students.
- To investigate the association between the parenting style of the father and the academic performance of Poumai college students.

### Measuring Tools

The current study attempted to assess the difference in PWB among males and females and their academic performance in relation to different parenting styles. Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale and Parenting Authority Questionnaires (PAQ) by Buri, J. were used to achieve the above objectives. Structured questionnaires which included demographic information such as gender, academic marks obtained, and type of family, among others were used.

Ryff's scale of psychological well-being (1998), a well-validated measuring tool, measures the six components of PWB. It has a high internal consistency, ranging from 0.83 to 0.91. The participants scored the 42 PWB items on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 (1= strongly disagree; 6=strongly agree). Buri, J. (1989) created the Parental Authority Questionnaires (PAQ), which is a psychometrically sound and valid instrument which has Cronbach coefficient values ranging from .74 to .87. The tool measures three different parenting styles namely, authoritative, permissive and authoritarian. The responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree).

### Procedure

The present research examined the difference in the PWB of male and female students as well as their academic performance arising from different parenting styles. Initially all the college Principals were contacted over the phone and then met with them personally prior to the data collection. They were especially cordial and encouraging towards the study. The college students were enthusiastic and responsive as the researcher introduced the concepts and its importance. The participants were assured of anonymity as well as confidentiality which were strictly followed. The students cooperated very well and willingly participated in the study. No incentives were offered for participating in the study.

## RESULTS

To analyze the data we used SPSS 20.0 version. Descriptive analysis was used to study the results. The gender difference was analyzed using t-test. The p-value of <0.05 and <0.01 were taken as statistically significant. The result of the gender difference in PWB among the Poumai college students is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Difference in PWB components between male (M) and female (F) college students (n=122)**

PWB components	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Autonomy	M	58	27.6379	4.98664	3.854	0.000**
	F	64	24.8281	4.04167		
Environmental mastery	M	58	27.4138	4.82695	2.283	0.024*
	F	64	25.6719	4.33536		

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Personal growth	M	58	31.0345	4.04781	.015	0.982
	F	64	31.0156	4.97451		
Positive relations with others	M	58	30.4138	4.66429	.694	0.822
	F	64	30.2188	4.88752		
Purpose in life	M	58	31.2586	4.57514	.631	0.533
	F	64	30.7813	3.77741		
Self acceptance	M	58	28.2759	4.65208	2.292	0.024*
	F	64	26.5781	4.79022		

\*5%, \*\* 1% significance indicators; M: Male; F: Female

Table 1 shows difference in psychological well-being between male (m=58) and female (f=64) Poumai college students (n=122) as determined by t-test. From the results it is observed that male students scored higher mean scores in all the six components of the psychological well-being than the female students.

**Table 2: Parenting style of Mothers and academic performance of the college students**

		Mothers' Parenting style		
		Authoritative	Permissive	Authoritarian
Academic Performance of the students	Correlation	0.230	0.318	0.260
	p - Value	0.152	0.021*	0.004**

\*5%, \*\* 1% significance indicators

Table 2 indicates the correlation between academic performances of the Poumai college students and the Mothers' parenting styles. The correlation coefficient academic performance and permissive mothers' parenting style is 0.318 which is statistically significant at 5% level (p=0.021). Similarly, authoritarian mothers' parenting style and the correlation coefficient academic performance is 0.260 which is also statistically significant at 1% level (p=0.004). However, authoritative mothers' parenting style and the correlation coefficient academic performance is 0.230 and p= 0.152 and is not statistically significant.

**Table 3: Parenting style of Fathers and academic performance of the college students**

		Fathers' parenting style		
		Authoritative	Permissive	Authoritarian
Academic Performance	Correlation	0.112	0.231	0.216
	p - Value	0.218	0.047*	0.017*

\*=significant at 5%

Table 3 shows the Fathers' parenting style and the academic performance of the college students. The correlation coefficient academic performance and authoritative parenting style is 0.112 and p=0.218. However, the correlation coefficient academic performance and Fathers' permissive style is 0.231 which is statistically significant at 5% level (p=0.047). Similarly, the relationship between Fathers' authoritarian parenting style and the correlation coefficient academic performance is 0.216 and is statistically significant at 5% level (p = 0.017).

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The principal aim of the study at hand was to identify the higher education students' psychological well-being as well as to examine their academic performance in relation to the different parenting styles. The collected data were computed, analyzed and interpreted. It is

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observed from the present study that there are differences in the six dimensions of PWB measures among the male and female students. Exploring the gender differences in PWB is essential and crucial as men and women are different and their needs are not the same (Perez, 2012). Men are considered to be strong and dominant, tough and competitive as well as protective. On the other hand women are looked upon as tender and nurturing, submissive and dependent, and more wordy and expressive in comparison to men. Gender stereotype which is a prevalent reality in every culture is observed in the current study as well.

The present study results indicated that female participants had lower mean scores than male participants in all the six dimensions of PWB (Table 1). Nevertheless, the males reported significantly higher mean scores only in three dimensions, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery and self-acceptance.

The results of the current study (Table 1) showed that there was statistically significant difference on the dimension of autonomy between the males and females with  $t=3.854$  and  $p=0.000$ . Here autonomy is referred to as the individual's capacity to live by one's own standard and convictions without being compliant to the pressure of the group or the society. The finding is in consonant with the past findings (Matud, López-Curbelo, & Fortes, 2019; Perez, 2012; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This difference signifies that male students experience more autonomy, and are more self-determined and independent from conventional beliefs than the female students. It is also in line with the patriarchal culture of the Poumai Nagas (Aveivey, 2019). As noticed in Table 1 the females mean score of autonomy is significantly lower than that of the male counterparts, the result is again in line with the community gender stereotype where a female is looked upon as more dependent and conforming to the social pressures.

Likewise, it is observed that there was significant difference in the mean scores between males and females in the dimension of environmental mastery (Table 1) with  $t=2.283$  and  $p=0.024$  which is in consonant with the findings of Karasawa, et. al, (2011). However, the finding is not in consistent with some findings like Perez (2012) where no significant gender difference in the PWB dimension of environmental mastery was found. Environmental mastery is explained as the capacity of the individual person to manage and control the demands of the given circumstances. The current finding indicated that male students score more in environmental mastery. It then follows that male students are more competent in managing the complex situation than the female students.

Self-acceptance is another dimension of the PWB where gender difference was statistically significant ( $t=2.292$ ,  $p=0.024$ ). The results of the present research indicated that Poumai male students scored significantly higher in the mean scores of self-acceptance than the female students which is in consistent with the earlier studies (Karasawa et al., 2011; Ludban & Gitimu, 2015). In the present study self-acceptance is referred to the capacity to accept self and others with positive attitude towards life. The individuals incorporate and accept well all the good and not so good experiences of the past lives. The findings imply that the Poumai Naga male students feel more contented and happier with themselves than the female students. In general females tend to be more conscious and critical about the physical body than the males. Negative body perception by females might have added to the result of current study i.e. females showed lower mean scores in the dimension of PWB self-acceptance than the male students.

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On the other hand there was no statistically significant gender difference among the students in the mean scores of three PWB dimensions: personal growth, purpose in life as well as positive relations with others (Table 1). Therefore, it can be observed that Poumai Naga college students, irrespective of gender have similar experiences in the above three dimensions of psychological well-being.

The relationship between students' academic performance and the parenting styles of Mothers and Fathers which were statistically significant are demonstrated in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively. The findings revealed that there is positive relationship between academic performance and Mothers' permissive style which is statistically significant at 5% level ( $p=0.021$ ). In the same way authoritarian parenting style of Mothers in relation to academic performance was highly significant at 1% level (0.004). However authoritative parenting style and the correlation coefficient academic performance was not statistically significant ( $p=0.152$ ). Similarly, the relationship between academic performance of the college students and the authoritative parenting style of the Fathers was not statistically significant ( $p=0.218$ ). In contrast, the relationship between academic performance and permissive style of parenting of the Fathers was found to be positive and is statistically significant at 5% level ( $p=0.047$ ). Likewise, it is observed that there was positive relationship between academic performance and Fathers' authoritarian style since it is statistically significant at 5% level ( $p=0.017$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that in a collectivistic culture such as Poumai Naga culture the academic performance of the college students is positively related with authoritarian parenting style as well as permissive parenting style of both mothers and fathers. In contrast, authoritative parenting style of both mothers and fathers and the correlation coefficient academic performance are not statistically significant.

Parenting style is one of the factors that affect the academic achievement of the children (Candelanza, Buot, & Merin, 2021). The outcomes of the current research are in consistent with the findings of Kordi & Baharudin (2010) and Chao (1994) which indicated that authoritarian parenting style predicted academic achievement among the Asian families. However, it is not in consistent with the results of Seth & Asudani (2013) where they argued that permissive parenting style does not help in academic achievement the students. Unlike the individualistic culture of Western countries where authoritative parenting is considered as positively associated with academic achievement (Pinquart, 2016), authoritarian parenting style was significantly related to academic achievement in the collectivistic culture like in Asian context (Dornbusch et. al, 1987). Parents' attitude and their involvement in the children's studies also have significant influence on the academic achievement. Hence it can be concluded that academic performance of students in relation to different parenting styles vary according to the cultural milieu of the society. The same parenting styles may be evaluated differently in another culture (Kordi, & Baharudin, 2010).

### ***Limitations and Future Recommendations***

It is a cross-sectional study and the sample is limited to a small number. The present study has been conducted only for the college going students against many other youths of the same age. Taking into consideration such other factors as educational qualification of the parents and the economic status of the family would definitely add greater significance in understanding the psychological well-being as well as the academic performance of the Poumai Naga college students.



## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the current study revealed differences in the six dimensions of PWB among the male and female college students. Furthermore, the findings showed that different parenting styles have significant role in the academic performance of the students. Although Baumrind (1971) favored authoritative parenting style as the ideal, yet results of studies from different cultural backgrounds including the present study indicated otherwise. It can be recorded that most of the studies on PWB and academic performance in relation to different parenting styles are done in the individualistic Western society while no such study has been carried out in this aspect among the Poumai Naga tribe in Manipur. Results of gender differences in PWB would help the target group in developing their potential as well as self-actualization because men and women contribute uniquely in the society. The study definitely added to the broader knowledge of the psychological well-being of the college students as well as different parenting styles in relation to academic performance among the Poumai Naga college students in Manipur. The current study would definitely motivate the younger generation in the region for further research. This research hopes to throw some light in the perception and understanding of the Poumai Naga higher education students in a systematic and scientific manner.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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