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Research Paper

Academic Achievement and Psychological Well-Being in Pre-Service Teachers in Manipur: A Null Relationship

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between academic achievement and psychological well-being (PWB) among pre-service teachers in Manipur, India, using the **Psychological Well-Being Scale** (Sisodia & Choudhary, 2023). The 50-item scale, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree), demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with **test-retest reliability (r = 0.87)** and **internal consistency (0 = 0.90)**. The scale assessed five PWB subscales: **life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations.** An **independent samples** t-test compared PWB scores between **high achievers** (n=376) and **low achievers** (n=175) based on academic performance. Results revealed no statistically significant differences in any PWB subscale: **Life Satisfaction** (t = 1.156, p = 0.248, Cohen's d = 0.11). **Efficiency** (t = 1.494, p = 0.136, d = 0.14). **Sociability** (t = 0.501, p = 0.616, d = 0.05). **Mental Health** (t = 0.421, p = 0.674, d = 0.04). **Interpersonal Relations** (t = 1.031, p = 0.303, d = 0.10). **Cohen's d effect sizes** (range: 0.04 to 0.14) confirmed **negligible practical** significance, with 90% overlap between groups. These findings suggest that **academic achievement is independent of psychological well-being** in this population, possibly due to cultural buffering (e.g., community support) or **non-academic sources of fulfillment**. The study highlights the need for **culturally contextualized well-being assessments** in teacher education research.

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, Academic achievement, Pre-service teachers, Independent t-test, Effect size*

The relationship between **psychological well-being (PWB)** and **academic achievement** has been widely studied in Western educational contexts, with mixed findings. While some studies reported positive correlations between life satisfaction and grades (r = 0.22; Lewis et al., 2011), others found null or negative effects in collectivistic cultures (d = -0.03; Wong et al., 2006). For pre-service teachers – a population facing unique stressors during training- this relationship remains understudied, particularly in non-Western settings like India, most particularly Manipur. This study investigated

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whether PWB predicts academic achievement among pre-service teachers in Manipur, India, using a culturally adapted **Psychological Well-Being Scale** (Sisodia & Choudhary, 2023).

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Prior research suggested that **self-efficacy** (**efficiency**) strongly predicted achievement in Western samples (d = 0.59; Richardson et al., 2012). **Mental health** correlates negatively with grades in high-stress environments (d = -0.42; Durlak et al., 2011). **Cultural values** moderate these links with collectivist societies (Diener et al., 2003).

The present study examined whether there was a positive relationship of academic achievement with each of the five subscales of psychological well-being based on the following research question:

Research Question

"Does psychological well-being – comprising life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations – significantly predict academic achievement among pre-service teachers in Manipur, India?"

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Sampling

The study was a cross-sectional design, in which 551 pre-service teachers (female = 384, male = 167) from 8 private teacher education institutes across the valley districts of Manipur, who enrolled in a 2-year B.Ed. The programs during 2023-2024 were selected through convenience sampling. Written informed consent was obtained and anonymity ensured.

Instrument

Psychological Well-Being Scale (Sisodia & Choudhary, 2023) was used for the study. The scale consists of 50 items on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree), with 5 subscales – Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations. The test-retest reliability of the scale was r = 0.87 over 4 weeks and Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$ (total scale).

Academic Achievement

High and low achievers were categorized using a median split of aggregate marks (%) from participants' final BA/B.Sc. exams (Median = 63%). Students scoring above the median were classified as high academic achievers; others as low achievers.

Demographic data was collected via an **information schedule** attached to the questionnaire, covering gender, socioeconomic status, academic records, name of institutes, among others.

Procedure

The PWB Scale was administered in classroom settings across teacher education institutes. Instructions were provided verbally and in writing to ensure uniform understanding. Participants were given about 20-30 minutes to complete the scale, with monitoring to prevent discussion.

Statistical Analysis

Independent t-tests were performed to compare the PWB subscale between high/low achievers (median-split GPA). Besides, Cohen's d quantified effect sizes for significant differences.

All statistical analyses (t-tests and effect sizes) were performed manually using standard computational formulas, with cross-checking in Microsoft Excel to minimize errors. Groups were created via median split of GPA, and Cohen's d was calculated to quantify effect sizes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1: Academic achievement and components of psychological well-being of student-teachers

Components of psychological well-being	Academic achievement		t-test	d.f.	p-value
	Low Mean ± S.D.	High Mean ± S.D.			
Satisfaction	36.23 ± 5.48	36.85 ± 6.02	1.156	549	0.248
Efficiency	38.02 ± 5.77	38.81 ± 5.76	1.494	549	0.136
Sociability	35.53 ± 5.52	35.78 ± 5.44	0.501	549	0.616
Mental health	31.25 ± 5.86	31.02 ± 6.21	0.421	549	0.674
Interpersonal relation	38.06 ± 5.33	38.59 ± 5.62	1.031	549	0.303
Global Psychological Well-being	179.09 ± 21.59	181.04 ± 22.52	0.956	549	0.339

The results indicated no significant relationship between academic achievement and any of the five psychological well-being (PWB) subscale, with life satisfaction ($t = 1.156$, $p = 0.248$); efficiency ($t= 1.494$, $p = 0.136$); sociability ($t = 0.501$, $p = 0.616$); mental health ($t = 0.421$, $p = 0.674$); and interpersonal relations ($t = 1.031$, $p = 0.303$). Besides, the global PWB score also showed no significant differences, with low achievers: $M = 179.09$, $\pm SD = 21.59$; while high achievers: $M = 181.04$, ± 22.52.

Table 2: Cohen's d Effect Sizes for each 5 subcomponents of psychological well-being (PWB)

Psychological Well-Being Subscale	Low Achievers (M)	±SD	High Achievers (M)	± SD	Mean Differences	Pooled SD	Cohen's d (Effect Size)
Life Satisfaction	36.23	± 5.48	36.85	± 6.02	+ 0.62	5.76	0.11 (Negligible)
Efficiency	38.02	± 5.77	38.81	± 5.76	+ 0.79	5.77	0.14 (Negligible)
Sociability	35.53	± 5.52	35.78	± 5.44	+ 0.25	5.48	0.05 (Negligible)
Mental Health	31.25	± 5.86	31.02	± 6.21	- 0.23	6.04	-0.04 (Negligible)
Interpersonal Relations	38.06	± 5.33	38.59	± 5.62	+ 0.53	5.48	0.10 (Negligible)
Global PWB	179.09	± 21.59	181.04	± 22.52	+ 2.04	22.06	0.09 (Negligible)

The results showed all Cohen's d effect sizes were negligible (d < 0.20), confirming all differences were statistically non-significant (p > 0.05), with Effect Sizes (d) ranging from -0.04 to + 0.14, all negligible per Cohen (1998). The global differences of +2.04 reflect trivial, non-systematic variation, rather than a true relationship.

DISCUSSION

1. Life Satisfaction:

When comparing the mean scores of low academic achievers (M = 36.23, SD = 5.48) and those of higher achievers (M = 36.85, SD = 6.02), there was no significant relationship between life satisfaction and academic performance, as indicated by an independent t-test, with p-value 0.248.

The result was consistent with some studies (Ng et al., 2015; Tian et al., 2014). Ng et al. (2015) found no direct relationship between life satisfaction and GPA because life satisfaction was buffered by external factors (e.g., friendship) unrelated to grades. Tian et al. (2014) found no link in Chinese adolescents, as academic success was culturally obligatory, not a source of happiness.

2. Efficiency:

No significant relationship between efficiency and academic achievement, with low achievers M = 38.02, SD = 5.77, and high achievers M = 38.81, SD = 5.76, at > 0.05 (p-value 0.136). The result was in agreement with some prior studies; for example, Suldo et al. (2009) found no correlation between efficiency-related results and academic performance in pre-service teachers because intrinsic motivation and teacher mentorship outweighed family-driven achievement pressure. Similarly, Moos and Moos (1994) found in a meta-analytic review no consistent link between the efficiency subscale and academic achievement in teacher education students, as family environment's impact diminishes in adulthood, as peer and institutional influences dominate. A similar finding was also reported by Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) no association between pre-service teachers' self-reported organizational efficiency and practicum grades, as classroom success relied more on adaptability than pre-planned efficiency.

Duckworth et al. (2019) found no direct link between behavioral efficiency (task/completion) and grades, for achievement depended more on sustained effort (grit) than efficiency alone. Multon et al. (1991) found a weak/non-significant correlation (r = .08) between general self-efficacy (efficiency) and grade, as domain-specific academic self-efficacy mattered, but global efficiency did not.

3. Sociability

We found no significant relationship between sociability and academic achievement, with M = 35.53, SD ± 5.52 (low achievers) and M = 35.78, SD ± 5.44 (higher achievers) (>0.05). The present result was consistent with Murray and Greenberg (2000), in which no relationship was found between family sociability and pre-service teachers' grades, as professional training environment (e.g., practicum feedback) dominated over family socialization effects. Similarly, Moos and Moos (1994) found no consistent link between family sociability and academic outcomes across 12 studies because family sociability mattered only for young children, not adolescents/adults.

4. Mental Health

This study indicated no significant relationship between mental health and academic achievement, with the mental health mean scores being 31.25 and standard deviation of ± .586 (low achievers) and 31.02, and standard deviation + 6.21 (high achievers) at p-value 0.674.

Similar results were found by some studies; for example, no significant association between depressive symptoms and GPA among education majors, with high achieving students with depression may compensate through perfectionism (Eisenberg et al., 2009); anxiety levels showed no correlation with academic grades in pre-service teachers because teacher training programs may select for individuals who perform academically despite anxiety (Klassen & Chiu, 2011); no longitudinal relationship between psychological distress and GPA changes, as students develop coping strategies that mitigate mental health impacts on academic (Conley et al., 2014); mental health symptoms unrelated to academic performance in education students because cultural factors may lead to compartmentalize emotional distress (Wong et al., 2006).

5. Interpersonal Relations

Like other subscales discussed above, no significant relationship between interpersonal relations and academic achievement among pre-service teachers in the present study, with low achievers (M = 38.06, SD + 5.33) and high achievers (M = 38.59, SD + 5.62), p-value 0.303. Similar results were reported by some studies; for example, Chen and Gregory (2009) found no significant correlation between the quality of parent-child relationships and GPA among college-level education majors. Emerging adulthood independence may reduce the family relationship's impact on academics. Wentzel and Caldwell (1997) found that peer popularity and friendship quality showed null effects on academic achievement in late adolescents because social and academic spheres may operate independently during transitional periods. Quatman et al. (2001) also found no association between romantic relationship quality and academic performance, as cognitive-emotional separation may help maintain academic focus. Roorda et al. (2011) also found null effects in 30% of analysed studies on teacher-student relationship quality and achievement, as relationship effects may be moderated by student age and subject matter.

Cohen's d Effective Sizes

Cohen's d interpretation: 0.20 = Small, 0.50 = Medium, and 0.80 = Large (Cohen, 1988).

Subscales' Effect Sizes (Cohen's d)

The present results indicated small Cohen's d effect sizes of all five subscales of PWB, ranging from -0.04 to + 0.14 all negligible. In **Life Satisfaction**, the effect size was 0.11 as against Cohen's 0.20 (Small), but some other studies found a positive or negative relationship. For example, Lewis et al. (2011) found d = +0.28 for life satisfaction predicting GPA in adolescents. Becker et al. (2017) d = 0.22 (privileged students with high life satisfaction showed a lower achievement motivation-negative relationship). For **Efficiency**, we found that among the five subscales, the largest d = 0.14 (negligible) in efficiency. Richardson et al. (2012) found a positive relationship, with d = +0.59 for academic self-efficacy predicting college grades. Similarly, Multon et al. (1991) found d = +0.47 (stronger academic self-efficacy – higher GPA) from their meta-analysis of 39 studies. For **Sociability**, we found d = 0.05 (negligible), but Wentzel and Caldwell (1997) found a positive relationship among U.S. adolescents, with a small effect size of d = +0.21 (the

better peer acceptance, the better the grades). However, Eisenberg et al. (2009) found a negative relationship, d = 0.15 social over-engagement- lower GPA in college in U.S. undergraduates. For **Mental Health**, we found the smallest effect size of d = -0.04 (negligible) from the five subscales. The same effect size of d = -0.04 (non-significant) (for mental health difficulties and academic attainment) was found by Deighton et al. (2019). In Hong Kong, Wong et al. (2006) found the smallest d = -0.03 (non-significant) in mental health. In a meta-analysis, Durlak et al. (2011) found a negative relationship, with d = -0.42 (depression/anxiety-lower achievement). In contrast, Gutman and Vorhaus (2012) found a positive relationship, d = + 0.31, for emotional well-being predicting achievement. And finally, for **Interpersonal Relations**, we found d = 0.10 as against Cohen's d 0.20 (Smallest). Some studies found a negative relationship, in which romantic relationship-lower GPAs in adolescents in U.S. high schoolers (d = -019) (Quatman et al., 2001). Mc Cormick et al. (2013) found a negative relationship, with d = +0.007 (non-significant) for teacher-student relationship quality and achievement.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between academic achievement and five dimensions of psychological well-being (life satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations) among 551 pre-service teachers in Manipur (384 female, 167 male). The key findings revealed:

i) **No significant Differences Exist:** Independent samples t-tests showed no statistically significant differences ($p>0.05$) between high and low academic achievers on any of the five psychological well-being subscales or the global well-being score.

ii) **Consistent Patterns Across Domains (Subscales):** All psychological well-being measures indicated remarkably similar mean scores between high and low achievers, with trivial effect sizes, indicating no significant relationship between academic achievement and any of the subscales statistically and practically.

Implications

i) **Cultural Context Matters:** The present null findings that there was no significant relationship between academic achievement and all subscales of psychological well-being align with research in **collectivist cultures** where academic achievement may be less central to overall well-being (Diener et al., 2003). If so, the sources of psychological well-being (PWB) beyond academic achievement for pre-service teachers, especially in collectivist cultures like Manipur, may often be influenced by **non-academic factors,** such as – **family bonds:** close-knit family relationship, buffering stress and providing emotional security (Diener et al., 2003); **peer networks:** strong friendship and mentor relationships, enhancing belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); **teaching practicum:** real-world classroom experiences often provide fulfillment beyond grades (Woolfolk Hoy, 2005); **intrinsic motivation:** passion for teaching (not grades) sustains well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

ii) **Professional Implications:** For teacher educators, these results indicate that academic performance alone may not reflect pre-service trainees' overall psychological well-being. Teacher education institutions should consider holistic assessment approaches that value non-academic aspects of development, such as empathy building, organization of community development programs, and co-curricular activities.

iii) **Theoretical Contribution:** The present findings challenge universal assumption about the achievement-wellbeing relationship, supporting contextual models that account for cultural and developmental factors (Chen, 2017) using such models as '**Bioecological Model'** (Bronfenbrenner, 2005); **'Integrative Model for Minority'** (Garcia Coll et al., 1996); **'Cultural-Historical Activity Theory'** (CHAT; Engestrom, 2001); **'Culturally Responsive Teaching Framework'** (Gay, 2010); '**Indigenous Psychology Approach'** (Kim & Berry, 1993).

Finally, the study's robust sample size (N = 551) and consistent null results across multiple well-being dimensions strengthen confidence in these conclusions. However, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, and the specific cultural context suggests cautious generalization to other populations, but it could be safely generalized to the whole pre-service teachers undergoing their 2-year B.Ed. programs in the teacher education institutions in the valley of Manipur. Further research is, however, called for to verify the present findings. Future research should explore qualitative aspects of how pre-service teachers in **collectivist cultures** like Manipur maintain well-being regardless of academic standing.

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Conflict of Interest

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