



## Family Environment and Psychological Well-Being Among Private College and Government College Students

### KEYWORDS

Family Environment, Psychological Well-being, College Students, Gender

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### ABSTRACT

*This is an exploratory study that aimed to examine the differences in family environment and psychological well-being among private college and government college students of Bangalore. The sample for the study consisted of 60 male and 60 female degree students (average age=19 years.) Simple Random sampling procedure was used for the study. The sample was administered the Family Environment Scale by Vohra and the Psychological Well-Being Scale by Sisodia and Choudhary. Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used to study the interactive effects of gender and nature of institution on different areas of family environment and psychological well-being. The findings reveal that, private college students have better family environment in different areas than government college students; Female college students were found to have better family environment in different areas than male students; and Interactive effects of gender and nature of institution were found to be significant on the areas of cohesion, independence, moral orientation, organization and recreational orientation. The findings also reveal that, in the area of psychological well-being, female students had higher Satisfaction, Efficiency, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations than male students. However, male students and female students did not differ significantly in the area of Sociability; and Significant interactive effects of gender and nature of institution were found on Efficiency and Sociability and not on the areas of Satisfaction, Mental Health and interpersonal Relations of psychological well-being.*

### Introduction:

#### Family Environment:

Family environment is the first and perhaps the most enduring context for growth. Family environment lays the foundation in identifying with models, accepting values, playing out family roles, developing affection, and eventually distinguishing one's own values and goals from those held by other family members. One central part of life after childhood is discovering all those motives, values and beliefs that were not accepted within the boundaries of one's family (Newman & Newman, 1981).

Different family environments vary in many aspects such as the parents' level of education, economic status, occupational status, religious background, attitudes, values, interests, parents' expectation for their children, and family size among others. The phrase "Family Environment" refers to all the entities, forces and conditions in the home which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally. Late adolescence is a phase of life when students face many psychological and social problems especially due to the family and/or peer pressure of acceptance and the academic stress. They also feel confused with the values of the family as well as the values followed by the peer group. The burden of coping with the stress leads to anxiety and a feeling of insecurity.

The dimensions of family environment studied in this research are Competitive Framework, Cohesion, Expressiveness, Independence, Moral Orientation, Organization, Recreational Orientation based on the Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Vohra (1998).

#### Psychological Well-being:

Well-being is one of the most important goals which individuals as well as societies strive for. The term denotes that something is in a "good state". The concept of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989) is based on the premise that "being well" encompasses a range of characteristics

and perceptions; that is, positive functioning constitutes much more than one's current level of happiness.

In this study, five major components of psychological well-being are studied based on the Psychological Well-being Scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2005). They are: Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations.

#### Need for the Study:

Family environment is a broad construct that includes many areas. If the family environment is conducive, then there would scope for overall development of an individual, including psychological and psychosocial development. Adolescence and young adulthood are very crucial periods of development. Hence, any deficits or problems in the family environment could have adverse effects on them, such as depression, anti-social tendencies, substance abuse or psychological distress, etc. to name a few. Therefore, their psychological well-being is also another important factor that needs to be considered. Also, many socio-cultural and socio-economic factors contribute to family environment and psychological well-being. The role of these factors and their differences can be understood partly by considering the nature of institution, such as government colleges and private colleges; because, it is generally presumed that students of government colleges hail from lower socioeconomic strata and students of private colleges hail from middle to upper socioeconomic strata of society. Also, not many studies have explored family environment and psychological well-being among private college students and government college students; hence, there arises a need to study these variables.

#### Objectives:

- To study the family environment among private college and government college students
- To study the psychological well-being among private college and government college students

- To study the gender differences in family environment among private college and government college students
- To study the gender differences in psychological well-being among private college and government college students
- To study the interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on family environment among private college and government college students
- To study the interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on psychological well-being among private college and government college students

**Hypotheses:**

- There is no significant difference in the different areas of family environment among private college and government college students
- There is no significant difference in the different areas of psychological well-being among private college and government college students
- There is no significant gender difference among private college and government college students in different areas of family environment
- There is no significant gender difference among private college and government college students in different areas of psychological well-being
- There is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on different areas of family environment among private college and government college students
- There is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on different areas of psychological well-being among private college and government college students

**Research Design:**

Ex-post facto, which is exploratory in nature. It is also a comparative study.

**Variables:**

**Dependent variables:** Family Environment and Psychological Well-being

**Independent variables:** Gender and Nature of Institution, i.e. Private College and Government College

**Sample:**

The sample for this study comprised of a total of 120 students, viz. 60(30 males and 30 females) degree students of private colleges and 60 (30 males and 30 females) degree students of government colleges, from urban setting with an average of 19 years. Degree students are those studying in in any under-graduate course such as B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., B.B.M., B.C.A., etc. Simple Random Sampling procedure was used to draw the sample for the study.

**Tests used:**

**1.The Family Environment Scale (FES):** designed and developed by Vohra(1998). It includes 98 statements and the number of items for each dimension is divided equally, and each statement has two possible answers. It can be administered from 10 years of age and above, through adulthood, and it can be administered individually or large groups at one time. The reliability and validity of FES have been found to be adequate. Internal consistency, test-retest reliabilities and split-half reliabilities were for each of the areas. For validity, factorial validity co-efficients were calculated.

**2. Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB):** Scale developed by Sisodia and Choudhary(2005). It consists of 50 statements and includes five areas – satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relationship, with 10 items in each area. The PWB Scale is a reliable and valid tool. The test-retest reliability was .87 and internal consistency was .90. The external criterion validity co-efficient obtained was .94.

**Procedure:**

The principals/heads of three private and three government colleges in Bangalore were approached to obtain the authorization to conduct the study. After obtaining the permission, tenmales and tenfemales from each college were randomly selected. The purpose of the study was briefed and rapport was established. Socio-demographic details were collected in the data sheet prepared, and was followed by the instructions separately to answer the two questionnaires. The subjects and the principals of the respective colleges were thanked for their co-operative participation.

**Analyses of Results:**

The obtained scores were analyzed using SPSS to compute descriptive statistics and Two-way ANOVA to study the differences and interactive effects of gender and nature of institution on Psychological Well-being and different areas of Family Environment.

**Table 1**

Summary of Two-Way analysis of Variance for different areas of family environment between gender and Nature of Institution

Source	Dependent Variable	Mean Squares	df	F
Gender	Competitive Framework	40.83	1	18.36**
	Coherence	43.20	1	23.00**
	Expressiveness	33.07	1	11.83**
	Independence	22.53	1	10.05**
	Moral Orientation	34.13	1	16.49**
	Organization	9.63	1	5.36*
	Recreational Orientation	9.63	1	5.002*
Nature of Institution (NI)	Competitive Framework	246.53	1	110.87**
	Coherence	240.83	1	128.26**
	Expressiveness	249.40	1	89.23**
	Independence	252.30	1	112.59**
	Moral Orientation	235.20	1	113.68**
	Organization	258.13	1	143.82**
	Recreational Orientation	202.80	1	105.30**
Gender X Nature of Institution	Competitive Framework	.002	1	.001 NS
	Coherence	17.63	1	9.39**
	Expressiveness	2.40	1	.86 NS
	Independence	8.53	1	3.80*
	Moral Orientation	8.53	1	4.12*
	Organization	7.50	1	4.17*
	Recreational Orientation	8.53	1	4.43*

\*\* P<0.01; \*P<0.05; NS: Not significant

An inspection of Table-1 reveals that the 'F' ratios for gender in the areas of Competitive Framework, Coherence, Expressiveness, Independence, and Moral Orientation are statistically significant at 0.01 levels; and the 'F' ratios in the areas of Organization and Recreational Orientation are

statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant gender difference among private college and government college students in different areas of family environment, is disproved and rejected.

The 'F' ratios for nature of institution in the areas of Competitive Framework, Coherence, Expressiveness, Independence, Moral Orientation, Organization and Recreational Orientation are statistically significant at 0.01 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant difference in the different areas of family environment among private college and government college students", is disproved and rejected.

On the interactive effect of gender and nature of institution, the 'F' ratios in the areas of Competitive Framework and Expressiveness are not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the sub-hypotheses stated as "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of competitive framework in family environment" and "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of Expressiveness in family environment" are proved and accepted. However, the 'F' ratio in the area of area of Coherence is statistically significant at 0.01 levels and the F ratios in the areas of Independence, Moral Orientation, Organization and Recreational Orientation are statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on different areas of family environment among private college and government college students", is disproved and rejected.

**Table 2**

Summary of Two-Way Analysis of Variance for different areas of Psychological Well-Being between gender and Nature of Institution

Source	Dependent Variable	Mean Square	df	F
Gender	Satisfaction	658.008	1	49.63**
	Efficiency	418.133	1	25.35**
	Sociability	54.675	1	2.40 NS
	Mental Health	246.533	1	9.06**
	Interpersonal Relations	634.800	1	26.69**
Nature of Institution (NI)	Satisfaction	18.408	1	1.38 NS
	Efficiency	50.700	1	3.07 NS
	Sociability	1.408	1	.06 NS
	Mental Health	1.200	1	.04 NS
	Interpersonal Relations	2.700	1	.114 NS
Gender X Nature of Institution	Satisfaction	3.675	1	.27 NS
	Efficiency	145.200	1	8.80**
	Sociability	95.408	1	4.20*
	Mental Health	34.133	1	1.25 NS
	Interpersonal Relations	2.133	1	.09 NS

\*\* P<0.01; \*P<0.05; NS- Not Significant

Table-2 indicates that the 'F' ratios for gender in the areas of Satisfaction, Efficiency, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations of Psychological well-being are statistically significant at 0.01 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant gender difference among private college students and government college students in different areas of psychological well-being", is disproved and rejected. However, the 'F' ratio in the area of Sociability is not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the sub-

hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant gender difference among private college students and government college students in the area of sociability in psychological well-being", is proved and accepted.

For the nature of institution, the 'F' ratios in the areas of Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations of Psychological well-being are not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as "there is no significant difference between private college and government college students in different areas of psychological well-being", is proved and accepted.

On the interactive effect of gender and nature of institution, the 'F' ratios for Satisfaction, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations are not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the sub-hypotheses stated as "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of satisfaction in psychological well-being", "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of mental health in psychological well-being", and "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of interpersonal relations in psychological well-being", are proved and accepted. In the area of Efficiency, the obtained F ratio is statistically at 0.01 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of efficiency in psychological well-being" is disproved and rejected. In the area of Sociability, the F ratio is statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, the null hypothesis stated as, "there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the area of sociability in psychological well-being" is disproved and rejected.

The results indicate that there is a significant gender difference among private college and government college students in the different areas of family environment and psychological well-being. There is also a significant difference between private college and government college students in different areas of family environment. However, there is no significant difference between private college and government college students in psychological well-being. There is a significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the areas of cohesion, independence, moral orientation, organization and recreational orientation in family environment. However, there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the areas of competitive framework and expressiveness in family environment.

The findings of this study, with respect to family environment, are similar to the past studies of Shivane (2011) on Mental Health and Family Environment of tribal and urban Secondary Students, which showed that there was a significant difference between tribal and urban students in family environment in terms of expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control. This is substantiated by a study conducted by Kumar, Lal & Rajbala (2011) which revealed that there is a significant difference between high and low academic achievement groups on family environment.

#### Conclusions:

- Private college students have significantly better family environment than government college students, and female college students have significantly better family

environment than male college students

- Interactive effects of gender and nature of institution have been found to be significant on the areas of cohesion, independence, moral orientation, organization and recreational orientation of family environment among private college and government college students. However, there is no significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the areas of competitive framework and expressiveness
- Competitive framework of family environment is significantly higher in private college students than government college students, and female students have higher competitive framework when compared to male students
- Cohesion in family is significantly higher for private college students than government college students, and it is higher in female students than male students
- Expressiveness is significantly higher among private college students than government college students and it is higher in female students than male students
- In the area of Independence, private college students have significantly higher than government college students and it is higher in female students than male students
- Moral orientation is significantly higher in private college students than government college students and it is higher in female students than male students
- In the area of Organization in the family, private college students have significantly higher organization than government college students and it is higher in female students than male students
- Recreational Orientation is significantly higher in private college students than government college students and it is higher among female students than male students
- Private college students and government college students do not differ significantly in the different areas of psychological well-being
- Significant gender differences exist among private college and government college students in the different areas of psychological well-being
- Female students have significantly higher Satisfaction, Efficiency, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations than male students. However, male students and female students do not differ significantly in the area of Sociability
- Significant interactive effects of gender and nature of institution have not been found on the areas of Satisfaction, Mental Health and interpersonal Relations of psychological well-being among private college and government college students. However, there is a significant interactive effect of gender and nature of institution on the areas of Efficiency and Sociability of psychological well-being among private college and government college students

#### Implications:

- The results help in identifying problems in the family and understanding their causes, and can be used for counseling & guidance, especially among government college students
- The findings can also be applied to develop life skills training modules focusing on enhancing the family environment among government college students
- The findings can be used to make qualitative analyses of the factors contributing to the psychological well-being and enhancing them
- The findings can be useful for counseling the students, parents and teachers

#### Limitations:

- The study has not considered the influence of other factors such as social environment and college environment that contribute to psychological well-being
- The study has compared the differences in family environment and psychological well-being among college students and it has not considered the relationship between the two variables and the influence of one variable on the other
- The sample is restricted to urban background

#### Scope for further research:

- The study can be further extended to study the effects of social support systems and family environment on psychological well-being
- The study can be widened to examine the relationship between teaching methodology or college environment, parental occupation, role of siblings on family environment and psychological well-being

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