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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTAL PRESSURE IN SHAPING ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT BIHAR

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescence is a formative developmental stage where external factors, particularly family dynamics such as parental pressure, significantly influence psychological and subjective well-being. In India, the socio-cultural emphasis on academic achievement often intensifies such pressure, but localized evidence, especially from regions like Muzaffarpur, Bihar, remains scarce.
Objective: To examine the influence of parental pressure on the psychological and subjective well-being of adolescents in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, and to assess perceptual differences based on gender.
Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 400 adolescents (200 males, 200 females), aged 15–21 years, using three standardized instruments: the Parental Pressure Scale (PPS), Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), and Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWBS). Descriptive statistics, t-tests, Pearson correlations, and linear regression analyses were performed using SPSS software.
Results: Findings indicated moderate to high parental support (Mean PPS = 138.1), relatively high psychological (Mean PWBS = 187.0) and social well-being (Mean SWBS = 191.15). Males reported significantly higher social well-being ($p = 0.023$), while no significant gender differences were found in psychological well-being or perceived parental pressure. Regression analysis revealed that perceived parental support is a strong predictor of psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.361$) and a moderate predictor of social well-being ($R^2 = 0.115$).
Conclusion: Parental expectations play a vital role in shaping adolescent mental health. While support can foster resilience and emotional health, excessive academic pressure may diminish subjective well-being. Gender differences in social well-being highlight the need for gender-sensitive parental engagement strategies.

Keywords: Parental Pressure, Adolescents, Psychological Well-Being, Subjective Well-Being, Gender Differences, Bihar, Resilience

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of transformation in life. It's the period of time when a person reaches physical and psychological maturity and learns different societal ideals. In terms of academic achievement, sexual maturity, interpersonal interactions (with classmates, instructors, caretakers, and other family members), and financial concerns, teenagers are likely to encounter a variety of difficulties and stressful situations. All of these have a detrimental effect on their psychological health and make them more prone to adopting high-risk behaviors (such as drug misuse, suicidal thoughts, criminality, etc.) (Molyneux, 2020). According to the World Health Organization, mental health issues are expected to affect one in six adolescents. Furthermore, the bulk of mental health problems go untreated and untraced, with half of all troubles arising during the 14-year-old stage of adolescence (Maerlender and Bray, 2024).

One trait that makes it easier to deal with a variety of life's challenges is resilience. According to its definition, resilience is "the ability of individuals to find the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being as well as the ability of individuals and groups to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways when they are exposed to significant adversity" (Biswas et al., 2022). " Since resilience enhances good mental health indicators while mitigating negative ones, it has been seen that teenagers with greater resilience scores reported fewer incidences of mental health-related concerns (Ziaian et al., 2012; Konaszewski et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to maintain greater resilience levels throughout adolescence in order to shield them from issues linked to mental health. Conversely, self-esteem is a perceived outline of one's own strengths and weaknesses. According to published research, resilience is directly correlated with self-esteem, which in turn promotes good psychosocial functioning (Jongen et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2018). Age, gender, ethnicity, school type, place of residence, birth order, physical activity status, academic performance, time spent with parents, family type, physical or mental abuse, etc., were the other factors that were found to influence the resilience level of adolescents (Adeyera et al., 2020; Namy et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2019).

Adolescents, particularly those enrolled in school, share the highest demographic dividend (1/5th), and as a confined audience, they provide us a distinctive chance to act collectively for the promotion of health. It was discovered that resilience, a trait that helps people cope with hardships and maintain their mental health, was not sufficiently studied, particularly in the Indian setting. Furthermore, resilience is a flexible concept. It can be learnt and taught. Children's and adolescents' mental health has been shown to improve with resilience-focused therapies (Fenwick-Smith et al., 2018; Dray et al., 2017). Therefore, its different determinates are justified for all of these baseline resilience level identifications. The purpose of the research is to look at how parental pressure affects the psychological and subjective health of teenagers in Bihar's Muzaffarpur area. This study looks at the intricate relationship between parental expectations and teenage mental health in an effort to provide practical advice that may guide practices, policies, and interventions meant to support balanced parenting styles and improve the wellbeing of adolescents.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Prasad and Ahmad (2020) investigated how stress influences young people's mental health in the Madhubani area of North Bihar, India. A sample of one hundred young adults (both male and female), was selected at random from the neighborhoods of various Madhubani towns, and was considered for the study. The investigation goal was to understand how perceived stress levels and mental health correlate in the specific sample group. Perceived stress data were collected from youth using the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988), the Mental Health Scale data were collected from the same youth. The results reflected a negative relationship between perceived stress factors and mental health of youth. Youth in Madhubani district males scored higher on the measure of mental health compared to the females, indicating a significant difference between each group. The authors discussed the potential reasons for the current differences in the findings during apportionment of evidence, and highlighted the need for recent action in the region. The report stressed the importance of tackling the mental health challenges that young people in the region of North Bihar, face.

Das (2024) examines the link between a person's feeling of well-being and a number of social environment-related elements, including as peer relationships, parental relationships, and the sense of support that one receives from friends, neighbors, and community institutions. Data from India's Young Lives Study was used for the study. A sample of 894 individuals between the ages of 21 and 22 was included in the final analysis. The findings of the research, which were derived using an ordinal logistic regression model, showed that perceived assistance from friends ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.000$) and government agencies ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.001$) significantly increased subjective well-being. Stated differently, those who felt more supported by their friends and government agencies also tended to feel more well-off. Additionally, a strong positive correlation was found between youth's subjective well-being and ongoing education ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = 0.009$). According to these results, youth social support organizations that provide them a chance to interact with others in their neighborhood may improve their general wellbeing.

Ghatak et al. (2021) describe the challenging circumstances and obstacles of putting a mentorship model into practice in Bihar, one of India's most economically and educationally disadvantaged states. In addition to giving socially disadvantaged kids the tools and resources they need to be aware of and deliberately interact with their own identities, belief systems, and social norms, the mentoring approach aims to help them develop critical thinking abilities. The study clarifies the many social and structural constraints imposed on young girls and how schools, families, and communities

interact with the concepts of young girls' autonomy and agency by thoroughly documenting the circumstances and implementation issues. In addition to the findings of a baseline survey that was completed by 700 respondents from the 10 intervention sites, the study makes use of the first field observations that were taken during the implementation of the first and second modules of the model.

The causative relationship between PEE and teenagers' subjective well-being (SWB) as well as the moderating effect of perceived academic demands were examined by Lu et al. in 2021. Although we presented strong evidence for a positive causal relationship between PEE and teenage SWB, we also discovered that this relationship is negatively moderated by the perceived academic pressure of adolescents. This suggests that academic pressure may lessen the positive effects of PEE on teenage SWB. Furthermore, PEE may influence adolescent SWB through enhanced family resources, better family relationships, and higher adolescent aspirations associated with higher PEE, as evidenced by the fact that its benefits are greater for female adolescents and those from migrant, one-child, and non-poor families.

Examining topics including self-control, parent-child conflict, and subjective well-being, Jiang et al. (2022) explore the impact of academic pressure on problem behavior in teenagers as well as the possible connections between these and academic pressure. The fifth wave of the China Family Panel Studies (2017–2018) provided the data. LISREL8.8 software was used to evaluate the data of 2,465 teens between the ages of 10 and 15. The findings indicate that teenagers' aberrant conduct is favorably impacted by academic pressure. According to the mediation paradigm, self-control and parent-child conflict directly mediate the relationship between teenage behavioral issues and academic pressure. Academic pressure and problem conduct in teenagers are significantly mediated by parent-child conflict, self-control, and subjective well-being. Therefore, it is essential to further strengthen people's capacity to maintain self-control, foster or develop adolescents' character strengths, foster a harmonious family environment, lower the likelihood of parent-child conflict, and improve teenagers' subjective well-being in order to lower the risk of such issues.

Using self-efficacy and learning engagement as mediating factors, Yin et al. (2025) examine how parental educational aspirations affect teenagers' subjective well-being. A sample of 1170 teenagers with a mean age of 13.91 years (SD = 0.777) was chosen in April 2024 from four middle schools in Shandong Province. Structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 24.0 and SPSS 24.0 was used to analyze the data. The study's main conclusions were as follows: (4) Self-efficacy and learning engagement jointly functioned as serial mediators between parental educational expectations and adolescents' subjective well-being. (1) There was a significant and positive correlation between parental educational expectations and adolescents' subjective well-being. (2) Self-efficacy mediated the relationship between parental educational expectations and adolescents' subjective well-being. (3) Learning engagement also mediated the relationship between parental educational expectations and adolescents' subjective well-being. These results provide important new information on the variables affecting teenagers' subjective well-being and suggest possible avenues for improvement. They have important theoretical and practical ramifications for comprehending and enhancing teenage wellbeing.

Mehrotra and Ullah (2024) predict how teenagers' subjective well-being would be affected by perceived parental participation and academic pressure. Finding significance in life serves as a protective factor and has a favorable impact on suicide prevention. This highlights how important it is to find the preventative factor, which is why the subjective well-being of teenagers was investigated. The participants in this comparable correlational research are teenagers enrolled in school and college (N: 210). Three accurate and reliable scales are administered as part of the data collecting process, along with voluntary response sampling. A statistical software for social science (version 2.0) is used to make inferences. The findings showed that although parental participation has a positive correlation with teenagers' subjective well-being, perceived parental academic pressure has a negative correlation. Regression analysis also shows that the family structure has no significant impact on the two components, and that the only significant predictor of teenagers' subjective well-being is perceived parental academic pressure. In order to improve the effectiveness of suicide prevention programs, this research emphasizes the increased need of establishing a strong framework as soon as feasible.

The longitudinal development of teenage subjective well-being (SWB) in terms of life satisfaction and despair was examined by Shek and Liang, L. Y. (2018). We looked at how various sociodemographic traits, personal traits, and family traits affected these two SWB elements both immediately and over time. A 6-year longitudinal research included 28 secondary schools and 3328 Hong Kong pupils. Over the course of the six years, pessimism progressively climbed whereas teenage life satisfaction exhibited a downward tendency. While gender, mother-child relationship qualities, positive identity, and spirituality predicted improvements in life happiness over time, resilience, social competence,

family functioning, and father-child relational qualities were significant predictors of life satisfaction at the beginning position. Spirituality and family functioning were the longitudinal predictors of hopelessness during the adolescent period, while gender, family intactness, resilience, social competence, and father-child and mother-child relational qualities were significant correlates at the initial slope. Although the current research demonstrated that several Western results may be duplicated in a Chinese setting, other new and perplexing discoveries need further investigation.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study utilizes a hypothesis testing, cross-sectional survey design. It aims to study the influence of parental pressure on subjective and psychological well-being of adolescents and study perceptual differences based on gender. A deductive, analytical and, theoretical approach was adopted to focus on measurable variables to produce reliable statistics.

3.2. STUDY AREA

The research provided data in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, India. Given the district's diversity in adolescents and accessibility for large-scale data collection from urban and semi-urban schools and colleges, the Muzaffarpur region was chosen.

3.3. SAMPLE SIZE

The total sample size comprised 400 adolescents, divided equally across gender:

- **Male respondents**: 200
- **Female respondents**: 200

3.4. SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA

1) Inclusion Criteria:

Adolescents aged 15-21 years

This survey is open to adolescents who are currently enrolled in school or undergraduate study

Must be residents of Muzaffarpur district

Understood parent/guardian consent & willing to give informed consent

2) Exclusion Criteria:

Adolescents aged below 15 and above 21 years

Person has never been or is not currently enrolled in school

Questionnaire was incompletely filled out or omitted.

3) Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected through structured self-report questionnaires. The data were almost exclusively derived from face-to-face delivery of printed survey tools in classroom/institutional contexts. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were assured that participation was voluntary and completely confidential.

4) Demographic Information

The sample participants represented a varied sample of adolescents and young adults across various age categories, with the majority of participants being in the late teenage years. The study included respondents from both genders and from differing educational levels, as there were secondary and undergraduate students. The study had respondents attending from arts, science, commerce, technical education, and for the demographic provided a rich context to better understand psychological and social well-being spanning from many varied contexts.

5) Measurement Instruments Utilized

In order to gather data on the core psychological constructs of interest, three standardized psychological instruments were utilized:

- **Parental Pressure Scale (PPS):** A 38-item instrument for measuring perceived parental expectations, parental control, and parental dominance.
- **Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS):** A 50-item instrument for measuring contentment, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations.
- **Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWBS):** A 55-item instrument for measuring life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect.

Participants completed the instruments individually under the supervision of the researchers, there was as little distraction as possible, and each participant received the same instructions to ensure fairness. Additionally, responses were collected anonymously in an effort to reduce bias and promote honest responses.

6) Secondary Sources

In addition to primary data, secondary data consisting of academic literature, peer-reviewed journals, and academic books were also surveyed to support the analysis, and to offer a theoretical foundation for the study.

3.5. PROCEDURE

The study was carried out among students from different institutions. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from school authorities, and consent was obtained from every participant. An explanation of the study was provided to respondents, who were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were ensured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and asked to be independent and honest without fear of feeling judged or of getting a "penalty" for responses.

All selected students were convened into their respective classrooms where the standardized tools were administered in a structured manner and supervised by the researcher who was present for clarification and ensured no one could see anyone else's responses. Each participant completed the Parental Pressure Scale, Psychological Well-Being Scale, and Subjective Well-Being Scale in a single sitting. Upon completion, the questionnaire was collected, coded, and compiled for analysis.

3.6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data collected was entered into SPSS software and the analysis was conducted. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were calculated for the demographic profile and scale overall scores. Inferential statistics were conducted to test the research hypotheses, including independent samples t-tests for assessing gender differences, Pearson correlation was conducted to assess relationships between variables, and linear regression analysis to assess the predictive effect of parental pressure on psychological and subjective well-being. All inferential statistics were assessed at a level of significance of .05.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 provides the distribution of participants by age group. with 63 respondents (31.5%) being 18 years old, while another 58 respondents (29.5%) were 17 years old, and 21.5% (43 respondents) were 19 years old.

Moreover, together, these three age categories account for more than 80% of the sample, suggesting that most individuals represented in this study are aged 17 to 19 years. Unlike younger respondents: 15 years old (7.5%) and 16 years old (8.0%), 20 years old (0.5%) and 21 years old (1.5%) were the smallest groups representing older youth. Overall, Table 1 showed that the sample is aligned to the targets of the research, which were largely targeted to the adolescent and early adult population, often experiencing shifts in available opportunities with respect to education, social identity, and psychological development.

Age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percent

15	30	7.5
16	32	8
17	118	29.5
18	126	31.5
19	86	21.5
20	2	0.5
21	6	1.5

Figure 1

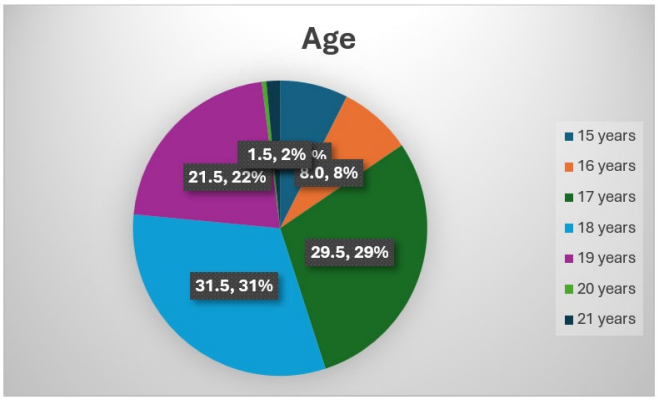

Figure 1 Age distribution

Table 2 indicates equal gender representation in this respondents sample. There were 400 respondents total, comprised of 200 males (50.0%) and exactly 200 females (50.0%). This ratio of male to female respondents was achieved with perfect equal distribution.

The equal representation of genders enables us to make unbiased comparisons of male and female respondents across the measures of psychological and social well-being, as well as improves the reliability of any statistical tests, particularly gender analysis using statistical tests such as t-tests, since the conclusions drawn regarding differences between genders is not skewed by meaningfully unequal sample sizes.

Gender distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percent
female	200	50.0
Male	200	50.0

Figure 2

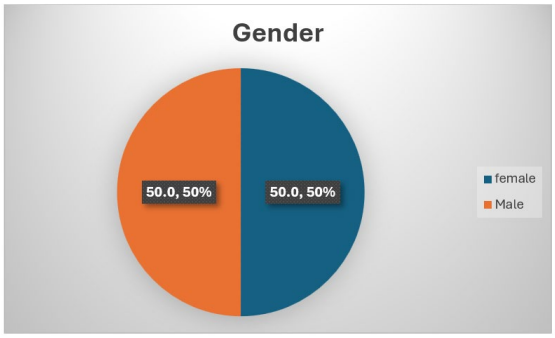

Figure 2 Gender distribution

Table 3 shows the educational qualifications of the 200 respondents. Most respondent reported their highest qualification as Intermediate qualification (12th grade) at 46.5% (n = 186). Next came 21.0% (n = 84) holding the Bachelor of Arts (BA) qualification, then 13.5% (n = 54) holding Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA).

The other qualifications included 11.0% (n = 44) reporting the least 10th grade qualification, 7.0% (n = 28) reporting the Bachelor of Science (BSc), a minority 1.0% (n = 4) reporting they hold a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom).

The distribution in educational profile does support a reasonably diverse profile though still predominantly intermediate qualification. This also suggests that a major portion of the respondents come from a young group that are still in or recently finished higher secondary education, which may affect their knowledge, attitudes, and exposure to psychological and social well-being.

Education Distribution

Education	Frequency	Percent
10th	44	11.0
BA	84	21.0
BCA	54	13.5
BCOM	4	1.0
BSC	28	7.0
INTER	186	46.5

Figure 3

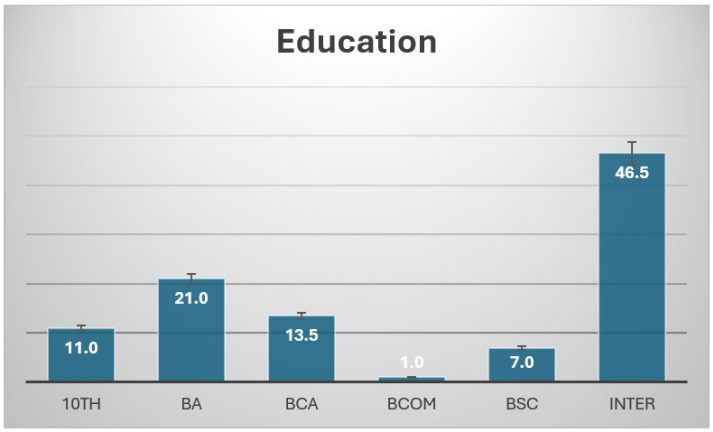

Figure 3 Distribution on the basis of Education

Table 4 illustrates that the academic stream in which respondents are enrolled. Most of the study participants, 52.5% (n = 210) came from the arts stream. This was followed by a group from science at 21.0% (n = 84) and 13.5% (n = 54) respondents were from technical education backgrounds. There were 11.0% (n = 44) respondents who indicated they were enrolled in all subjects, or multiple streams, indicating a more general or interdisciplinary curriculum. There were also 2.0% (n = 8) respondents whose educational experiences came from the commerce stream.

This distribution illustrates that there was a dominant representation from non-technical, humanities influenced fields and thus indirectly shaped the participants perspectives or views regarding social and psychological well-being and access to supportive forms of educational resources.

Stream Distribution

Stream	Frequency	Percent
All sub	44	11.0
Arts	210	52.5

Commerce	8	2.0
Science	84	21.0
Technical	54	13.5

Figure 4

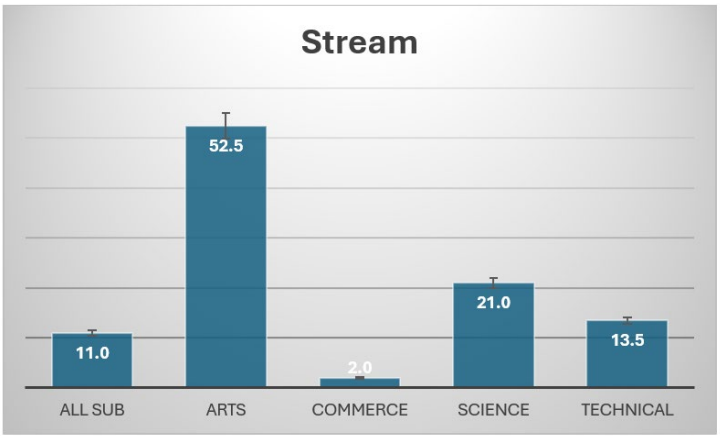

Figure 4 Distribution on the basis of stream

Table 5 presents a descriptive statistical summary of three key psychological measures that were evaluated in this current study: Perceived Parental Support (PPS), Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), and Social Well-Being Scale (SWBS). These psychological measures give us an overview of the general mental and social health of the sample, as well as their perceived relationship with parenting figures.

For the Perceived Parental Support (PPS) scores among the 400 participants, a range of scores was identified with a low score of 88 and a high score of 197. The mean score was 138.10 with a standard deviation of 18.43. This means that the average participant perceived moderate to high levels of parental support. The range and standard deviation also show variations among respondents' experiences of parental support.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) revealed scores that fell into a range of 132 to 243 for scores. The mean was 187.00 and the standard deviation was 23.64. This data provides indication that most participants are reporting a relatively high level of psychological well-being, however, the variation in the mean and standard deviation also suggests that although many scored high, a sizeable portion of the sample may have experienced relatively lower well-being.

The subjective Well-Being Scale (SWBS) yielded scores with a range from 122-239, a mean of 191.15 and a standard deviation of 24.617. This data suggests that participants generally reported a good level of social functioning and capability to connect with their community or peer group. And again, the variability in the scores speaks to more or less social integration and satisfaction with that belonging.

Overall, the descriptive statistics presented for the PWBS and SWBS suggest that the participants, as a group, find themselves in a relatively healthy psychological and social environment which can be partially influenced by perceived parental support. The descriptive statistics provide a strong foundation for a more in-depth inferential analysis to ascertain the strength and nature of relationships, to be explored among these variables.

Descriptive Statistics (PPS, PWBS, SWBS)

Scale	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PPS	400	88	197	138.1	18.43
PWBS	400	132	243	187	23.64
SWBS	400	122	239	191.15	24.617

Table 6 presents the output from independent samples t-tests that were conducted to compare the mean scores of male and female participants on three key variables: (1) Social Well-Being Scale (SWBS), (2) Psychological Well-Being scale (PWBS), and (3) Perceived Parental Support (PPS). The goal is to find whether gender as a variable makes a statistically significant difference in these psychosocial outcomes.

In the case of the Social Well-Being Scale (SWBS) male participants had a higher mean score (195.10) than female participants (187.19). The independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between male and female participants ($t = 2.296$, $df = 398$, $p = 0.023$), which suggests that male respondents had significantly better perceived social well-being than female respondents. The average difference in male and female participant's perceived SWB mean scores was 7.91 points.

For Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) parameters, males had a mean score of 189.92 whereas females had a mean of 184.07. Non-significant differences between genders ($t = 1.759$, $p = 0.08$) suggested that males seemed to have the best psychological well-being, but the difference was far too weak to conclude at the 5% level.

To summarize the Perceived Parental Support (PPS), males and females had nearly identical mean scores of 138.00 and 138.19, respectively. The t-value was –0.073 with a p-value of 0.942, showing no statistically significant differences between the genders in regards to perceived parental support suggesting both male and female respondents felt equally supported by their parent.

In conclusion, statistically significant gender differences were only apparent in terms of social well-being, with male participants scoring higher than females. Psychological well-being consisted of a non-significant trend higher among males, whereas perceived parental support seemingly experienced the same among genders.

Gender Comparison Table (T-Test)

Scale	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total SWBS	195.1	187.19	2.296	398	0.023	7.91
Total PWBS	189.92	184.07	1.759	398	0.08	5.85
Total PPS	138	138.19	-0.073	398	0.942	-0.19

5. DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics demonstrate that the vast majority of respondents were 17–19 years old (84% of the sample), and the participants had equal representation of gender with varied educational backgrounds in arts, science, commerce, and technical streams. The credentials of the chosen demographic features offer significant insights into parental influence regarding late adolescents. This was recognised by Jaafar (2022), who operated in Klang Valley and found equal representation to validate comparisons regarding parenting perceptions, or Soenens et al. (2025)'s views about adolescence being a salient period for perceived parenting approaches and peer influences.

Overall descriptive results exhibited moderated to high levels of perceived parental support (PPS mean = 138.10) and high levels of psychological (PWBS mean = 187.00), and social well-being (SWBS mean = 191.15). In line Zhu and highlight Shaik, (2021), these findings reflect strong positive correlation of parental support and adolescent personal well-being. Furthermore, Soenens et al. (2024) noted that high parental perceived autonomy support relates with an adolescent's psychological adjustment, affirming the significance of parental support for mental health measures.

T-test analysis showed that the social well-being in males was significantly higher than females ($t = 2.296$, $p = 0.023$), and both psychological well-being and perceived parental support showed no significant gender difference. This finding was similar to a Spanish study by Peng et al. (2021) which found that males had higher social well-being, and no gender differences in perceptions of parenting. Regression analyses showed that parental support is a strong predictor of psychological well-being ($R = 0.601$, $R^2 = 0.361$), and a moderate predictor of social well-being ($R = 0.339$, $R^2 = 0.115$).

6. CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the importance of parental pressure and parental support to the mental and emotional wellness of adolescents in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. outcomes reflect that adolescents reported support from parents that were mostly moderate to high in perceived levels of support; though this perceived support did psychologically impact

adolescents at various levels of different dimensions measured in our research. For example, male adolescents reported significantly higher levels of social well-being, whereas psychological well-being and parental support were consistent across gender. This study also calls for parental education and mental health literacy programs, designed for families, especially in semi-urban Indian settings, schools and other sources like counselors, and community organizations can create conditions for parental involvement from the perspective of adolescent agency and autonomy. Future research is also needed to investigate the longitudinal impact of parental influences and explore the geographic vastness to provide better generalizability.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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