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A Comparative study of personal and parental factors among undergraduate students of state agricultural universities of India

Lopamudra Mohapatra*  and Sukhdeep Kaur Mann 

Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India



ABSTRACT

Higher education has undergone significant changes with emphasis of the researchers to understand the factors influencing personal and academic development of the students. Among these factors, personal and parental factors play a significant role in shaping students motivation, approach towards learning and their performance. So, the current study was planned to examine and compare the personal and parental factors influencing undergraduate student's academics across six State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in India. A descriptive and comparative study design was used, with data collected from 600 respondents using a structured interview schedule. In this study, statistical analysis such as mean, standard deviation and Tukey's test was used. The findings revealed that there was significant variation among the universities in engagement in leisure time activities, participation in extracurricular activities, parental expectation, parental pressure, parental rewards and punishments. Mostly it was seen that students had moderate level of personal and parental factors. CSAUAT and PJTSAU students reported comparatively higher parental pressure, whereas OUAT had a more balanced academic environment. The findings emphasized the need for tailored interventions by educators and policymakers to enhance student support systems and academic outcomes in agricultural education.

Keywords: Personal factors, Parental factors, Interview schedule and State agricultural university.

Introduction

In recent years, the higher education has seen tremendous changes, with a greater focus on comprehending the numerous factors that influence students' academic and personal growth (Shawwa 2015). Among these factors, personal and parental factors have been identified as important drivers of students' behaviour, academic performance, motivation and overall well-being (Al Husaini 2022). The need to comprehend these factors is even more important in the context of agricultural education, as graduates of agricultural universities are being trained for critical roles in maintaining sustainability, food security and rural development.

A student's success and educational experience are greatly influenced by personal factors like social connections, study habits, participation in extracurricular activities and health condition (Chohan and Khan 2010). Similarly, parental factors also have a significant impact on how students develop their objectives, discipline and coping strategies. These factors include parental engagement, expectations, pressure, rewards, punishments and emotional support. Likewise, the socioeconomic, cultural and institutional environments can have a significant impact on these (Sirin 2005).

India, with a wide range of educational options has several State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) that cater to students from various geographical areas, cultural backgrounds and communities. Understanding how personal and parental factors vary among undergraduates in these universities can provide

valuable insights for educators, counsellors and policymakers may develop focused interventions that improve student educational outcomes and support services. By finding significant variations and patterns, the research aims to inform policy decisions and add to the larger discourse on student development in agricultural education in order to improve student experiences in higher education institutions.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in six State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of India. From each zone, one university was selected. The selected universities were Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat (Assam) from north east zone, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUAT), Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) from central zone, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology (MPUAT), Udaipur (Rajasthan) from west zone, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar (Odisha) from east zone, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana (Punjab) from north zone and Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), Hyderabad (Telangana) from south zone. From each university, one College of Community science and one College of Agriculture were purposively selected for the study. Thus, a total of twelve colleges were selected for the study. From each college, fifty undergraduate students from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year were randomly selected, resulting in 600 students as total sample. In this study, Descriptive and comparative survey research design was used to examine and compare the personal and parental factors influencing students. Personal factor included six variables i.e., good health condition, planned study habits, engagement in leisure time activities, mass media exposure, ability to adapt academic situations and participation in extra-curricular activities.

*Corresponding Author: Lopamudra Mohapatra

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Parental factor further included five variables *i.e.*, involvement of parents, parental expectation, parental pressure, parental reward and parental punishment. For each factor, statements were prepared and the responses were recorded on five-point continuum *i.e.*, always, often, sometimes, rarely and never with the score assigned as 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. Data were collected with self-structured interview schedule. The data was compiled and analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to yield the relevant information related to the objective. The data was analysed with the statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation and Tukey's test.

Results and Discussion

This part consists of the comparison of personal and parental factors across the universities. The analysis of the following factors has been discussed below:

Comparisons of undergraduates of state agricultural universities based on personal factors

Personal factors have a significant impact on student's learning behaviours, adaptability and overall academic performance, which in turn shapes their academic goal orientation. The present study analysed six key personal factors among respondents of six universities and presented it in Table 1.

It was found out that student's good health condition is a fundamental factor that affects their concentration, learning efficiency and academic engagement. The overall mean score for good health condition across all universities was 3.36, indicating that respondents generally had a moderate to good perception of their health status. Among the universities, OUAT displayed the highest score ($\bar{x}=3.45$) whereas, AAU had comparatively lower score ($\bar{x}=3.25$). The Tukey's test depicted no significant difference among the universities about the health condition. Similarly no significant difference was seen in the planned study habits of the respondents among the six universities. It was inferred that the overall mean score for planned study habits was 3.28, reflecting a moderate level of study discipline among respondents. PAU ($\bar{x}=3.34$) and OUAT ($\bar{x}=3.34$) both had the highest mean scores, indicating slightly better planned study habits among respondents compared to other universities. In contrast, MPUAT recorded relatively lower mean score of 3.17 among the universities.

Table 1: Comparisons of undergraduates of state agricultural universities based on personal factors $n=600$

Personal factors	PAU (n ₁ = 100)	OUAT (n ₂ = 100)	PJTSAU (n ₃ = 100)	AAU (n ₄ = 100)	MPUAT (n ₅ = 100)	CSAUAT (n ₆ =100)	Total (n= 600)
Good health condition	3.33±0.55 ^a	3.45±0.66 ^a	3.33±0.58 ^a	3.25±0.53 ^a	3.38±0.41 ^a	3.42±0.50 ^a	3.36±0.55
Planned study habits	3.34±0.53 ^a	3.34±0.68 ^a	3.30±0.70 ^a	3.21±0.66 ^a	3.17±0.72 ^a	3.29±0.73 ^a	3.28±0.67
Engagement in leisure time activities	3.23±0.49 ^a	3.17±0.41 ^a	3.20±0.57 ^a	3.15±0.54 ^{ab}	2.95±0.54 ^b	3.16±0.45 ^a	3.14±0.51
Mass media exposure	2.86±0.66 ^a	2.87±0.53 ^a	2.92±0.59 ^a	2.98±0.65 ^a	2.85±0.59 ^a	2.94±0.46 ^a	2.90±0.58
Ability to adapt academic situations	3.28±0.51 ^a	3.25±0.57 ^a	3.19±0.61 ^a	3.06±0.56 ^a	3.21±0.59 ^a	3.21±0.42 ^a	3.20±0.55
Participation in extra-curricular activities	2.66±0.93 ^c	2.63±0.78 ^c	3.12±0.85 ^a	2.81±0.75 ^{bc}	3.08±0.66 ^{ab}	2.76±0.73 ^c	2.86±0.81

Mean score range (1-5)

Engagement in leisure time activities showed significant variations across universities. The balanced approach taken by students from PAU, PJTSAU, and OUAT suggested that they keep their academic focus while participating in leisure activities. However, MPUAT students reported the relatively lower level of participation, which may be a result of either a greater preference for other academic or personal commitments or a lack of leisure activities. According to the findings of the mass media exposure, students at each university showed comparatively similar exposure related to academics.

In engagement in leisure time activities, the overall mean score was 3.14, suggesting that students were moderately engaged in recreational activities. In this, PAU recorded the highest mean score of 3.23 followed by PJTSAU ($\bar{x}=3.20$). On the other hand, MPUAT had relatively lower mean score of 2.95, indicating that students in this university might have fewer opportunities for leisure time activities. By applying Tukey's test, it was depicted that there were significant difference among the universities in which MPUAT was significantly different from the other universities. Mass media exposure included access to educational resources through television, newspapers and digital platforms was analysed in the present study. The findings revealed that there were no significant variations among the universities. The overall mean score for mass media exposure was 2.90, indicating that respondents had a moderate level of engagement with mass media for academic purpose. Among the universities, the highest mean score was recorded by AAU ($\bar{x}=2.98$) whereas, MPUAT had the relatively lower mean score of 2.85. From the Table 1, it was seen that the overall mean score for ability to adapt in academic situations was 3.20, inferring that a medium level of adaptability among students. PAU had the highest mean score of 3.28 whereas, AAU had comparatively lower mean score of 3.06. The participation in extra-curricular activities contributed to students' overall development by enhancing their overall skills. The result found significant variations among the universities with overall mean score for participation in extracurricular activities was 2.86. The data indicated moderate level of involvement of the respondents in extracurricular activities. Among the universities, PJTSAU had the highest mean score of 3.12, whereas OUAT had comparatively lower mean score of 2.63.

The comparison of personal factors among students across various universities revealed notable variations in areas such as good health condition, planned study habits, engagement in leisure activities, mass media exposure, ability to adapt academic situations and participation in extra-curricular activities. In good health condition, significant variation was not found across the universities with students having moderate level of health condition. This suggests that although they generally maintain good health, some students may experience minor health issues. Similar level of planned study habits was seen across the universities with marginal variations.

This implied that students' media consumption patterns were largely consistent across universities, suggesting that students mostly use mass media for entertainment purpose rather than academic improvement. Similarly, in ability to adapt academic situations, all the universities showed similar level of adaptability with marginal variation. Participation in extracurricular activities showed significant differences across universities. It also revealed that students from PJTSAU participated in extracurricular activities more frequently, which may indicate that students in this university may have more opportunity and facilities to participate in extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, OUAT and PAU students showed comparatively lower levels of participation, indicating that in these universities, academic commitments may have taken more seriously over extracurricular involvement. Similar results were found in study conducted by Dudeja and Balda (2019) and Prashar and Singh (2021).

Comparisons of undergraduates of state agricultural universities based on parental factors

Similarly the parental factors also had significant impact on students' academic goal orientation by influencing their motivation, expectations and overall learning styles. This study examined five key parental factors to assess their impact on students across six universities.

The findings brought to light about the level of parental involvement and the differences observed across universities. From the Table 2, it was depicted that parental involvement had the overall mean score of 3.28. This indicated a moderate level of parental involvement among the universities. By applying Tukey's test, no significant difference among the universities had been inferred. OUAT recorded comparatively higher mean score of 3.38, indicating relatively higher parental involvement in students' academic activities. In contrast, MPUAT had comparatively lower mean score of 3.19 among the universities, indicating comparatively lesser parental involvement in students' academics. Likewise, parental expectations factor displayed the highest overall mean score among all universities of 3.62. CSAUAT reported the highest mean score of 3.80. Whereas, OUAT had comparatively lower mean score of 3.49 among the universities, though it still reflected relatively high expectations. Students who have high parental expectations are frequently inspired to succeed academically, but too high expectations can also cause stress and strain. From the data, it

was also seen that there were significant differences among the universities and parental expectation of CSAUAT was significantly different from OUAT.

Students' learning experiences can be greatly impacted by parental pressure, which included high academic expectations, performance comparisons and academic demands of parents. In parental expectations, it was also found that there were significant differences among the universities with overall mean score of 3.26, indicating a moderate level of parental pressure across universities. CSAUAT had the highest mean score of 3.35, which was significantly different from OUAT ($\bar{x}=3.10$). Excessive parental pressure can cause anxiety and lower academic engagement, but moderate parental pressure can be motivating for the students. Similarly, students' motivation and goal orientation can be strengthened by parental rewards, which included praise for academic accomplishments, material incentives and verbal support. The overall mean score for parental rewards was 3.12 among the universities. The findings also depicted that there was significant difference across the universities where OUAT had the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=3.31$) and AAU had the relatively lower mean score of 2.88 among universities. Out of all the parental factors, parental punishment which included punitive measures taken in response to academic performance had the lowest mean scores ($\bar{x}=2.28$) in overall. This implied that parents' disciplinary actions against their children for their academic performance were often minimal among the agricultural universities. A significant difference was seen among the universities where, MPUAT had the highest mean score of 2.57, suggesting a relatively higher perception of punishment among students in this university. On the other hand, OUAT had the comparatively lower mean score of 2.00, suggesting that students from this university experienced the least academic related punishment.

Table 2: Comparisons of undergraduates of state agricultural universities based on parental factors

Parental factors	PAU (n ₁ = 100)	OUAT (n ₂ = 100)	PJTSU (n ₃ = 100)	AAU (n ₄ = 100)	MPUAT (n ₅ = 100)	CSAUAT (n ₆ =100)	Total (n= 600)
Involvement of Parents	3.27±0.73 ^a	3.38±0.78 ^a	3.34±0.80 ^a	3.20±0.70 ^a	3.19±0.72 ^a	3.32±0.68 ^a	3.28±0.74
Parental Expectation	3.59±0.68 ^{ab}	3.49±0.63 ^b	3.69±0.63 ^{ab}	3.58±0.59 ^{ab}	3.55±0.61 ^{ab}	3.80±0.56 ^a	3.62±0.62
Parental Pressure	3.30±0.59 ^{ab}	3.10±0.54 ^b	3.35±0.70 ^{ab}	3.22±0.61 ^{ab}	3.19±0.67 ^{ab}	3.40±0.49 ^a	3.26±0.61
Parental Reward	3.24±0.77 ^{ab}	3.31±0.81 ^a	3.20±0.72 ^{ab}	2.88±0.74 ^c	3.16±0.70 ^{abc}	2.95±0.47 ^{bc}	3.12±0.72
Parental Punishment	2.26±1.06 ^{abc}	2.00±0.77 ^c	2.37±1.04 ^{ab}	2.04±0.96 ^{bc}	2.57±0.75 ^a	2.45±0.83 ^a	2.28±0.93

Mean score range (1-5)

The findings of the study reported that the influence of parental factors on the academic goal orientation of students varied significantly across the universities. In the results it was found out that among all the universities parents had medium level of parental involvement with slight variations. On the other hand, Parental expectations were high across all universities, with CSAUAT and PJTSU students reporting the highest expectations. This implied that parents in these universities give academic success a lot of importance. Because these university students came from mostly low income families so, their parents might have high expectations from them. In the study, all universities reported parental pressure while CSAUAT and PJTSU students reported comparatively higher levels. This implied that students might feel more pressure to live up to parental academic standards. On the other hand, students from OUAT and MPUAT felt relatively less pressure, suggesting that their parents were taking a more forgiving and balanced approach. There were differences in how different universities used rewards as a motivating strategy. OUAT and PAU students felt that their parents gave them more rewards for academic success, which could be a strong motivator to keep up good

grades. In contrast, students from AAU and CSAUAT reported lesser instances of parental rewards, which may indicate that other types of motivation, including academic expectations or self-driven learning might be more important in these universities. With only slight differences, the perception of parental punishment was relatively low across all universities. Parents at MPUAT and CSAUAT had a stricter approach on academic performance, as seen by the slightly higher experience of parental disciplinary actions reported by students from these universities. In contradictory to that students from OUAT and AAU felt that their parents punished them relatively less, which may indicate that their parents are more understanding or encouraging when it comes to academic difficulties. A similar kind of finding was reported by Nanda and Ganguli (2021) and Menon *et al* (2024).

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of personal and parental factors across six State Agricultural Universities revealed that undergraduates had moderate level of personal and parental factors with significant variation in engagement in leisure time activities, participation in extra-curricular activities, parental

expectation, parental pressure, parental reward and parental punishment. In CSAUAT and PJTSAU, students' parents had comparatively higher parental pressure than other universities. Conversely, OUAT students reported relatively lower level of parental pressure and punishment indicating a balanced and supportive academic environment. Overall, the study highlighted about the variation of personal and parental factors across the universities in shaping the student's academic performance and overall well-being.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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