

# **A STUDY ON PERSONAL VALUES AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS IN KOLKATA DISTRICT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Personal values, which guide our behaviour and decisions, are crucial for students' academic and personal growth. This study examines the personal values of higher secondary students in Kolkata District, looking at how gender and family type influence these personal values. We surveyed 250 students using the Personal Value Questionnaire (PVQ-DP, 2013) and analyzed the data with descriptive and parametric tests. The findings show that while male students have slightly higher personal values than female students but the difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, no major differences were found among the students who come from nuclear and joint families. These results highlight the strong cultural and educational influences in Kolkata, creating a consistent value system among students. Understanding these values is important for educators and policymakers to develop inclusive and effective educational strategies. By promoting values like honesty, responsibility, and respect, we can help all students thrive academically and personally.

**Keywords:** Personal values, Higher secondary students, Gender differences.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Personal values are the core beliefs that shape how we think, behave, and make decisions (Rokeach, 1973). They reflect what we consider important and act as benchmarks for judging our actions and those of others (Schwartz, 1992). These values are influenced by our family, culture, education, and personal experiences, remaining fairly consistent over time and affecting everything from our daily routines to major life decisions (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). The study of personal values among higher secondary level students is gaining considerable attention due to its profound impact on their academic and personal growth (Schwartz, 2012). Personal values, which guide individuals' behaviors and decision-making processes, are especially crucial during adolescence—a time marked by identity formation and increasing independence (Rokeach, 1973). In Kolkata District, understanding these

values can offer valuable insights into the cultural and educational influences shaping the youth (Mukherjee, 2018). Values are essentially enduring beliefs about what is important in life, influencing how we act and make decisions (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). For students in higher secondary education, this stage represents a critical juncture where they make significant life choices, heavily influenced by their personal values (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Research shows that these values are shaped by various factors, including family, school environment, and broader societal norms (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004).

Kolkata, with its rich cultural heritage and renowned educational institutions, presents a unique context where the values instilled in students may differ significantly from other regions (Ghosh, 2009). This regional specificity calls for a focused study to understand the unique value systems among Kolkata's youth. Previous research has highlighted that Kolkata's social and cultural context—a blend of traditional and modern influences—plays a crucial role in shaping students' values (Banerjee, 2011). Thus, this study aims to explore the personal values of higher secondary level students in Kolkata District, particularly it explores how these values are influenced by their socio-cultural environment and educational experiences.

Understanding the personal values of students in this demographic area can provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and parents (Feather, 1995). This understanding can aid in designing educational programs that resonate with students' values, thereby enhancing their engagement and motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Additionally, recognizing the predominant values among these students can help address issues related to moral and ethical education, which are increasingly important in today's complex and rapidly changing world (Nucci, 2001). Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of the personal values among higher secondary level students in Kolkata District.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Developing an understanding of the personal values of students at the higher secondary level in Kolkata District is crucial for various reasons. Personal values significantly influence students' behaviors, decisions, and overall development (Schwartz, 2012). Understanding these values enables educators and policymakers to develop impactful educational programs and interventions that are customized to address the distinct needs and values of these students (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Examining individual values with regard to gender is crucial as it illuminates potential disparities among male and female (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Gender-specific analysis can inform the creation of educational methods that target any

discrepancies and guarantee that both male and female students receive the necessary assistance to flourish academically and personally (Rokeach, 1973). This can result in fairer educational results and contribute to gender parity in schools (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Furthermore, analyzing personal values in relation to family structure, such as nuclear or joint families, can provide insights into how family dynamics impact the formation of personal values (Schwartz, 1992). Understanding the dynamics of family can assist educators and counselors in providing more effective support to students by taking into account their family backgrounds, as family has a significant impact on the development of personal values (Ghosh, 2009). This study is especially noteworthy for its possible influence on moral and ethical education. Amidst the fast-paced and ever-evolving modern society, where students are exposed to diverse influences, it is crucial to strengthen their personal beliefs in order to provide guidance for their actions and choices (Nucci, 2001). By comprehending the prevailing principles held by these students, educators can incorporate teaching that is founded on values and is consistent with their cultural and social surroundings. This will encourage the growth of moral character and the practice of ethical conduct (Feather, 1995). Furthermore, this research can enhance the field of educational psychology by offering empirical evidence on the moral principles and beliefs of teenagers within a particular cultural context (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). This data is significant for making cross-cultural comparisons and gaining insights into how cultural and geographical factors impact the development of values (Schwartz, 2012). By enhancing global understanding of adolescent development, this can provide valuable insights for international educational practices and policy (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Studying personal values among higher secondary level students in Kolkata District is essential for enhancing educational practices, implementing gender and family-sensitive strategies, strengthening moral and ethical education, and gaining a deeper understanding of adolescent development in diverse cultural contexts.

### **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- I. The current study was delimited to only one district of West Bengal i.e., Kolkata.
- ii. The present study was delimited to only 250 higher secondary level students who were considered as a sample.
- iii. The present study was delimited to only two independent or demographic variable i.e., gender and family type.
- iv. Only descriptive and parametric tests were used to show the real nature of the data and the research process.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To know the current status of personal value among higher secondary level

students in Kolkata district.

2. To examine the personal values among students concerning gender.
3. To examine the personal values among students concerning family type.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

**H01:** There exists no significant mean difference in personal values among students by gender.

**H02:** There exists no significant mean difference in personal values among students by types of family.

## METHOD

The main purpose of the study is to find out the present state of personal value among higher secondary level students in Kolkata district of West Bengal. To achieve the objective of this study, a cross-sectional survey design was employed. The population of the study consisted of higher secondary school-going adolescents in Kolkata district, West Bengal, and only 250 samples of higher secondary school-going adolescents were randomly selected. In this study, personal value was regarded as the dependent variable, which was demographic or independent variable such as gender and types of family.

## TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The personal value Questionnaire (PVQ-DP, 2013) developed by Dr. Archana Dubey and Mahendra Patidar's is highly reliable and standardised multilingual measuring tools were utilised to assess personal values among higher secondary level students. This tool has 30 items with three (3) options, in total 90 options.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics representing personal values on basis of their gender.**

| <i>Independent Variables</i> | <i>Category</i> | <i>Number of Students</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Sd</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Gender</i>                | Male            | 121                       | 94.1        | 5.19      |
|                              | Female          | 129                       | 94.0        | 4.97      |
| <i>Types of Family</i>       | Nuclear Family  | 122                       | 92.0        | 5.50      |
|                              | Joint Family    | 128                       | 92.0        | 4.58      |

**Figure 1: Showing gender wise mean distribution.**

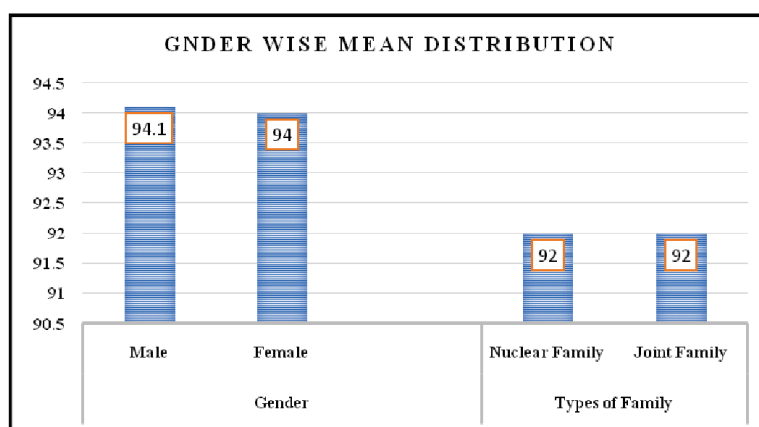


Table 1 and figure 1 show that the mean score of gender and types of family concerning personal values among students. Gender wise mean score of male students ( $m=94.1$ ) have showed higher personal values than the mean score of female students ( $m=94$ ). On the other hand, the mean scores of personal values of the students from nuclear and joint family suggests that, on average, the type of family does not have significant impact students' performance.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Figure 2 : Representing Independent sample t-test based on gender.**

| <i>Dependent Variable</i> | <i>Independent Variable</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Std. error Diff.</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Personal Value</i>     | Gender                      | 0.114    | 0.643                   | 248       | 0.909          | *NS > 0.05     |
|                           | Types of Family             | 1.57     | 0.639                   | 248       | 0.118          | *NS $P > 0.05$ |

\*NS= Not Significant

Table 2 shows the computed value of the independent samples t-test comparing the mean scores of gender and types of family among students with respect to personal values. Gender wise personal values were found to be statistically not significant [ $t(248) = 0.114$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ] and the null hypothesis was failed to reject. On the other hand, types of families were to be statistically not significant [ $t(248) = 1.57$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ] and the null hypothesis was failed to reject. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

### MAJOR FINDING

1. The present status of personal values among higher secondary level students in Kolkata district was found to be 94.02.
2. Male students showed higher personal values than female students but the differences were found to be statistically not significant.
3. Students who come from nuclear and joint family both are average personal values but the differences were found to be statistically not significant.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of personal values among students revealed significant insights into their current status and variations based on gender and family type. Firstly, the overall mean values indicate a consistent pattern of personal values across the student population, suggesting a shared cultural and educational influence prevalent in Kolkata.

The main focus area of the present study was to investigate the current state of personal values among higher secondary level students in Kolkata district with special reference to gender and types of family. Findings of the study showed that male students showed higher personal values than female students, similar results were found in several other researches also (Luciani et al., 2020; Tunc et al., 2018; Fatoki, 2016; Ardenghi, 2021). Male students have shown stronger personal values than female students because cultural expectations and social norms often emphasize traditional male roles. This can lead to a greater focus on values like responsibility and discipline for males. Again, result revealed that there was no significant difference of gender and types of family among students in personal values, similar results were found in different researches (Prince-Gibson, 1998; Batz-Barbarich, 2018).

In conclusion, the study on personal values among higher secondary students in Kolkata District shows that male students have slightly higher personal values than female students, but the difference isn't significant. Similarly, students from nuclear and joint families show no major differences in their values. These results highlight the strong cultural and educational influences in Kolkata that create a consistent value system among students. For educators and policymakers, this understanding is crucial for developing inclusive educational strategies that support all students. Emphasizing on shared values like honesty, responsibility, and respect can help every student to get success both academically and personally.

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