



Influence of Parental Behavior and Economic Challenges on the Psychological Tendencies and Dropout Rates of Secondary School Students in Rural Communities of Nadia District

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Abstract

Parental behavior and socio-economic constraints play crucial roles in shaping the psychological well-being and educational trajectories of adolescents (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Steinberg, 2014). This paper investigates how parental support, communication patterns, and disciplinary practices interact with economic challenges to influence the psychological tendencies and dropout rates of secondary school students in Nadia District. Using a mixed-method design, both quantitative and qualitative insights were gathered to analyze how family background, financial constraints, and emotional environments affect students' attitudes toward schooling (Das & Sarkar, 2021; Roy & Ghosh, 2020). The findings reveal that negative parental behavior, coupled with poverty-induced stress, significantly contributes to low academic motivation, anxiety, and school discontinuation (UNESCO, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The study underscores the urgent need for targeted parental awareness programs and socio-economic support interventions to mitigate dropout risks (Banerjee & Mukherjee, 2020).

Keywords: *Parental Behavior, Economic Challenges, Psychological Tendencies, Dropout, Secondary Education, Nadia District*

Introduction

The issue of school dropout continues to challenge the educational system in India, particularly in rural and semi-urban regions. In the context of West Bengal's Nadia District, dropout rates among secondary school students have remained a persistent concern despite government initiatives. Educational discontinuation is often linked not only to financial hardships but also to the socio-emotional environment created within families (**Choudhury, 2019**). Parental behavior—ranging from nurturing support to neglectful attitudes—plays a decisive role in shaping children's psychological health, motivation, and persistence in education (**Banerjee & Mukherjee, 2020**).

Economic challenges exacerbate these issues by creating conditions of stress, early entry into the labor force, and prioritization of household survival over education (**Das & Sarkar, 2021**). This study examines the combined impact of parental behavior and financial hardships on the psychological tendencies of secondary students, which, in turn, determine their likelihood of dropping out.

Rationale of the Study

Education is universally recognized as a vital tool for social mobility, empowerment, and economic development. However, dropout at the secondary level continues to obstruct educational progress in many developing regions. In Nadia District, the dropout problem is particularly alarming, as socio-economic deprivation and family-related challenges combine to push students out of the schooling system. Studies have shown that parenting styles and parental involvement strongly influence adolescents' psychological development, motivation, and persistence in education (**Baumrind, 1991; Hill & Tyson, 2009**). Negative parental behaviors such as neglect, authoritarianism, and lack of communication often lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and disengagement from schooling (**Ryan & Deci, 2017; Roy & Ghosh, 2020**).

On the other hand, economic hardship is a powerful structural determinant of dropout. Financial stress, poverty, and child labor are frequently identified as the leading causes of educational discontinuation in South Asia (**UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2020**). Adolescents in low-income families often prioritize wage-earning over learning, further weakening their psychological resilience (**Mukhopadhyay, 2017; Das & Sarkar, 2021**). Since parental behavior and economic conditions are interdependent, their combined influence on psychological tendencies and dropout requires deeper exploration in the local context of Nadia District. This rationale establishes the need to investigate how family environment and economic challenges interact to shape the educational outcomes of adolescents.

Significance of the Study

This study holds multiple academic, policy, and social implications. First, it contributes to the growing body of literature on educational psychology by highlighting the mediating role of

psychological tendencies—such as motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem—in the relationship between parental behavior and dropout (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Steinberg, 2014). Unlike earlier studies that examined parental or economic factors in isolation, this research explores their intersectional impact within a specific regional context.

Second, the study provides practical insights for policymakers and educators. By identifying how negative parental practices and poverty-induced stress jointly accelerate dropout, it emphasizes the importance of integrated interventions that include parental awareness programs, counseling services, and financial aid schemes (Banerjee & Mukherjee, 2020; Jha & Jhingran, 2020). These findings can guide government schemes such as scholarships, mid-day meals, and community awareness drives to target dropout-prone groups more effectively.

Finally, the research has strong social significance. It sheds light on the lived experiences of adolescents in Nadia District, a region where cultural, economic, and educational challenges intersect. The study provides an evidence base for teachers, parents, and community leaders to collaborate in reducing dropout and promoting holistic adolescent development (Choudhury, 2019; Meher & Mishra, 2019).

Review of Literature

Author(s) & Year	Objective of the Study	Key Findings / Contributions	Relevance in the Present Study
UNESCO (2021)	To report global and regional causes of school dropout.	Poverty accounts for nearly 60% of secondary school dropouts in South Asia.	Provides international evidence that economic hardship is a major dropout factor, relevant to Nadia's context.
Roy & Ghosh (2020)	To study socio-economic stress and parenting outcomes in West Bengal.	Economic struggles amplify parental stress, often manifesting in negative behavior toward children.	Shows how local socio-economic pressures in Nadia affect parental behavior and student outcomes.
Kundu (2018)	To investigate the influence of parental awareness on school attendance in India.	Lack of parental awareness about education leads to irregular attendance and eventual school withdrawal.	Directly relates to Nadia District, where parental neglect contributes to secondary-level dropout.
Mukhopadhyay (2017)	To explore poverty and child labor in Bengal.	Financial crises force families to engage children in wage labor, disrupting education.	Explains how economic hardship in Nadia leads to dropout through child labor.
Ryan & Deci (2017)	To examine intrinsic motivation and psychological well-	Parental criticism or neglect reduces intrinsic motivation, causing low	Explains the psychological tendencies (low self-

	being.	self-esteem and academic helplessness.	esteem, anxiety) that mediate dropout in Nadia.
Steinberg (2014)	To examine the impact of parenting styles on adolescent development and resilience.	Authoritative parenting fosters resilience, lowers dropout risks, and improves adolescent well-being.	Suggests that parental behavior in Nadia District strongly shapes students' psychological tendencies.
Hill & Tyson (2009)	To analyze the role of parental involvement in middle school education.	Positive parental communication and monitoring significantly predict student engagement and academic success.	Highlights that supportive parental involvement can protect students in Nadia District from dropout risks.

Research Gap

Despite extensive research on parental behavior, economic challenges, and adolescent educational outcomes, most studies have examined these factors separately, without exploring their **combined influence** on students' psychological tendencies and dropout rates (Hill & Tyson, 2009; UNESCO, 2021). While studies in India, such as Kundu (2018) and Roy & Ghosh (2020), highlighted the effects of parental awareness and socio-economic stress, they lacked **region-specific focus** on districts like Nadia, where cultural and economic conditions interact uniquely. Moreover, limited research has addressed the **psychological mediators**—such as motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety—linking family environment and dropout (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Meher & Mishra, 2019). Most prior studies also relied on either qualitative or quantitative methods, with very few employing **mixed-method approaches** to capture both statistical trends and students' lived experiences. Therefore, this study fills a critical gap by investigating the interactive effect of parental behavior and economic challenges on psychological tendencies and dropout among secondary school students in Nadia District, using a mixed-method design to provide actionable insights for parents, schools, and policymakers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of **parental behavior** on the psychological tendencies (motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety) of secondary school students in Nadia District.
2. To analyze the effect of **economic challenges** on students' educational continuity and dropout rates.
3. To explore the **relationship between psychological tendencies and dropout rates**, considering the combined impact of parental behavior and economic challenges.

Research Questions

1. How does parental behavior affect the psychological tendencies (motivation, self-esteem, anxiety) of secondary school students in Nadia District?

2. What is the impact of economic challenges on students' educational continuity and dropout rates?
3. How are psychological tendencies related to dropout rates when considering the combined influence of parental behavior and economic challenges?

Hypotheses (H₀)

1. **H₀₁**: There is **no significant relationship** between parental behavior and the psychological tendencies of secondary school students in Nadia District.
2. **H₀₂**: Economic challenges have **no significant effect** on the dropout rates of secondary school students.
3. **H₀₃**: Psychological tendencies do **not mediate** the relationship between parental behavior, economic challenges, and dropout rates.

Methodology

Research Design

The study followed a descriptive and analytical design with a mixed-method approach.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of all secondary school students in Nadia District. Using stratified random sampling, **250 students** (130 boys and 120 girls) from government and private schools were selected.

Tools used in the study

Tool	Year / Source	Purpose / Application	Method of Administration	Validity Test	Reliability	Statistical Analysis Applied
Parental Behavior Scale	Adapted 2025, from Baumrind (1991) and Hill & Tyson (2009) with cultural modifications	Measures parenting styles, parental support, communication, and disciplinary practices as perceived by students	Self-report questionnaire with 20 items; Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)	Content validity ensured by expert review from 5 educational psychologists; pilot study with 30 students for face validity	Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$ (pilot study)	Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation, Regression
Economic Challenge Checklist	Developed 2025 by researcher (based on UNESCO, 2021; Mukhopadhyay, 2017)	Assesses household financial constraints, need for child labor, access to educational resources	Structured checklist; self-report by students and interviews with parents; 15 items	Content validity established through literature review and expert panel; pilot study for feasibility	Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$	Percentage analysis, Correlation with dropout, Regression
Psychological Tendency	Adapted 2025 from Ryan &	Measures students' self-	Self-report questionnaire;	Validated by 5 experts in		

Inventory	Deci (2017) and Roy & Ghosh (2020)	esteem, motivation, and anxiety related to academics	Likert scale 1–5; 25 items divided into 3 subscales	educational psychology; pilot-tested on 30 students		
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Limitations

- ❖ The study is limited to **250 secondary students** in Nadia District, so findings may not generalize to other regions.
- ❖ **Self-reported data** may be influenced by bias.
- ❖ **Cross-sectional design** prevents establishing long-term causality.
- ❖ Cultural adaptations of tools may still cause **interpretation differences**.

Delimitations

- ❖ Focused only on **secondary school students** (Classes IX–XII).
- ❖ Only **parental behavior, economic challenges, and psychological tendencies** were studied.
- ❖ Limited to **selected schools** and **specific instruments**.

Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1 / Research Question 1

Influence of parental behavior on psychological tendencies (motivation, self-esteem, anxiety).

- ❖ Students reporting **supportive and encouraging parental behavior** showed higher **motivation and self-esteem** (Mean = 4.2, SD = 0.53) than those with neglectful or authoritarian parents (Mean = 2.8, SD = 0.61).
- ❖ Students experiencing **negative parental behavior** exhibited higher levels of **academic anxiety** (Mean = 3.9, SD = 0.58).
- ❖ **Correlation analysis:** Positive parental behavior correlated positively with motivation/self-esteem ($r = 0.63$) and negatively with anxiety ($r = -0.59$).
- ❖ **Interpretation:** Supportive parenting enhances psychological well-being, while negative parenting increases anxiety and reduces engagement in schooling.

Objective 2 / Research Question 2

Effect of economic challenges on educational continuity and dropout rates.

- ❖ Around **62% of students** reported that financial difficulties affected their school attendance; **28%** were engaged in part-time work.
- ❖ Students from low-income families showed **low motivation and academic helplessness** (Mean = 2.9, SD = 0.65).
- ❖ **Regression analysis:** Economic challenges significantly predicted dropout probability ($\beta = 0.54$).
- ❖ **Interpretation:** Financial hardship disrupts school continuity and negatively impacts psychological tendencies, increasing dropout risk.

Objective 3 / Research Question 3

Relationship between psychological tendencies and dropout considering parental behavior and economic challenges.

- ❖ Students with **both negative parental behavior and economic hardship** had the **highest dropout risk** (38%) compared to students facing only one factor.
- ❖ Students with **supportive parents and moderate economic conditions** had lower dropout probability (12%).
- ❖ **Multiple regression:** Parental behavior and economic challenges together explained 58% of the variance in dropout rates ($R^2 = 0.58$).
- ❖ **Interpretation:** Psychological tendencies mediate the effect of family environment and economic challenges on dropout. Students facing combined risk factors are most vulnerable.

Overall Interpretation

- ❖ Positive parental behavior improves **motivation and self-esteem** and reduces anxiety.
- ❖ Economic challenges negatively affect **school attendance and persistence**, leading to higher dropout.
- ❖ Psychological tendencies mediate the influence of parental behavior and economic stress on dropout.
- ❖ Students exposed to **both negative parental behavior and financial hardship** are at the **highest risk** of dropping out.
- ❖ Interventions addressing **family support, psychological guidance, and financial assistance** are essential to reduce dropout rates.

Hypotheses testing and Analysis

Null Hypothesis (H ₀)	Statistical Test Used	Test Result / Value	Decision	Interpretation
H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between parental behavior and psychological tendencies.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.63, p < 0.01$	Rejected	There is a significant positive relationship between supportive parental behavior and students' motivation/self-esteem and a negative relationship with anxiety. Supportive parenting improves psychological tendencies.
H₀₂: Economic challenges have no significant effect on dropout rates.	Simple Linear Regression	$\beta = 0.54, p < 0.01$	Rejected	Economic challenges significantly predict dropout rates. Students facing financial difficulties have higher likelihood of discontinuing school.
H₀₃: Psychological tendencies do not	Multiple Regression /	$R^2 = 0.58, p$	Rejected	Psychological tendencies partially mediate the effect of

mediate the relationship between parental behavior, economic challenges, and dropout rates.	Mediation Analysis	< 0.01		parental behavior and economic challenges on dropout. Students with low motivation, self-esteem, or high anxiety are more vulnerable to dropping out.
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Research Findings

1. Influence of Parental Behavior on Psychological Tendencies:

- Supportive and authoritative parental behavior significantly **enhances motivation and self-esteem** among secondary school students.
- Negative or neglectful parental behavior increases **academic anxiety** and reduces engagement in school.
- Hypothesis testing confirmed a **significant relationship** between parental behavior and psychological tendencies ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$).

2. Impact of Economic Challenges on Dropout Rates:

- Financial difficulties, including lack of resources and involvement in part-time work, significantly **increase dropout risk**.
- Students from economically disadvantaged families displayed **lower motivation** and higher academic helplessness.
- Regression analysis showed that **economic challenges significantly predict dropout** ($\beta = 0.54, p < 0.01$).

3. Role of Psychological Tendencies in Dropout:

- Psychological tendencies (motivation, self-esteem, anxiety) **mediate** the relationship between parental behavior, economic challenges, and dropout.
- Students facing **both negative parental behavior and economic hardship** are most vulnerable to school discontinuation.
- Multiple regression indicated that parental behavior and economic challenges together explained **58% of the variance in dropout rates** ($R^2 = 0.58$).

4. Combined Influence of Parental Behavior and Economic Challenges:

- Students with supportive parents and moderate economic conditions exhibited the **lowest dropout probability (12%)**, while students facing both risk factors had the **highest dropout rate (38%)**.
- Findings highlight the importance of **family support, psychological guidance, and financial assistance** in reducing school dropout.

Positive parental behavior and better economic conditions contribute to **healthy psychological tendencies**, which in turn reduce dropout rates. Interventions addressing **parental awareness, psychological well-being, and financial support** are critical to improve secondary education retention in Nadia District.

Conclusion

The study on the *Influence of Parental Behavior and Economic Challenges on the Psychological Tendencies and Dropout Rates of Secondary School Students in Nadia District* reveals that both **family environment** and **financial conditions** play a critical role in shaping students' psychological well-being and educational continuity. Supportive parental behavior significantly enhances motivation and self-esteem while reducing academic anxiety, whereas negative parenting increases the risk of school disengagement. Economic challenges, including financial hardship and child labor, directly impact dropout rates and indirectly affect psychological tendencies. Psychological factors mediate the influence of parental behavior and economic stress on dropout, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to prevent school discontinuation. Overall, students exposed to both negative parental behavior and financial stress are most vulnerable to dropout, highlighting the urgency for targeted interventions.

Suggestions

- ❖ **Parental Awareness Programs:** Conduct workshops and training sessions for parents to encourage supportive parenting practices.
- ❖ **Psychological Support:** Introduce counseling services and peer-support groups in schools to address motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety issues.
- ❖ **Financial Assistance:** Strengthen scholarships, mid-day meal schemes, and financial aid to reduce economic barriers.
- ❖ **School Engagement Strategies:** Implement mentorship and after-school programs to enhance student engagement, especially for at-risk students.
- ❖ **Community Involvement:** Encourage community participation in monitoring and supporting children's education to mitigate dropout risks.

Recommendations

▪ **Enhancing Parental Support:**

Since supportive parental behavior improves motivation and self-esteem, schools and local education authorities should organize **parental guidance workshops** to promote positive communication, encouragement, and effective discipline strategies.

▪ **Addressing Economic Challenges:**

Economic hardship significantly increases dropout rates. Implement **financial assistance programs**, scholarships, mid-day meals, and educational resource support for students from low-income families.

▪ **Psychological Interventions:**

Students experiencing high anxiety or low motivation require **school-based counseling and mentoring programs** to improve psychological resilience and academic persistence.

▪ **Targeting High-Risk Students:**

Students exposed to **both negative parental behavior and financial difficulties** are at the highest risk of dropout. Schools should **identify and monitor at-risk students** through regular assessments and provide **personalized interventions**.

▪ **Holistic Approach:**

Combine parental awareness initiatives, financial aid, and psychological support programs to **simultaneously address family, economic, and emotional factors**, thereby reducing dropout and improving student well-being.

▪ **Community and Policy Support:**

Encourage **community involvement** and **policy-level interventions** to create a supportive ecosystem for adolescents, including partnerships with NGOs, local councils, and government programs targeting education retention.

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