



The Impact of Academic Jealousy and Self-Esteem on Psychological Well-Being of Tribal College Students

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ARTICLE INFO

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Dates:

Received: 06-10-2025

Accepted: 14-10-2025

Published: 15-10-2025

Keywords:

Academic jealousy, self-esteem, psychological well-being, tribal college student

How to cite:

Upadhyay, A., Tripathy, P.K. (2025), The Impact of Academic Jealousy and Self-Esteem on Psychological Well-Being of Tribal College Students *Mind and Society*, 14(3):8-19
doi: 1056011/mind-mri-14320252

Abstract

In today's educational environment, tribal college students frequently encounter particular difficulties, including academic jealousy and erratic self-esteem, which can have a direct impact on their psychological well-being. In the tribal setting, where peer competition, cultural shifts, and scarce resources can exacerbate emotional and academic stress, these elements become especially crucial. The current study examines the predictive significance of academic jealousy and self-esteem on psychological well-being among tribal college-going students in the Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh, which has important ramifications for the students' mental health and general academic adjustment. Purposive sampling was used to choose 100 tribal college students for the study sample from the Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. The self-constructed scale of Academic Jealousy in the tribal context, the cultural adaptation of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Singh & Yadav (2024), and the cultural adaptation of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale by the researcher were among the standardized instruments used. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data using SPSS. The results showed that psychological well-being was strongly and negatively predicted by academic jealousy ($\beta = -.407$, $p < .001$), accounting for 16.6% of the variation. In contrast, self-esteem only accounted for 3.4% of the variation and had a weak positive association with psychological well-being ($r = .184$, $p < .05$). However, its regression analysis revealed no significant predictive potential ($\beta = .184$, $p = .066$). These results show how academic jealousy negatively affects tribal students' psychological well-being and imply that, despite its relationship, self-esteem is not a reliable indicator of psychological well-being among tribal students. The findings highlight the significance of lowering academic jealousy while fostering supportive learning environments that promote positive self-perceptions in order to enhance the psychological well-being of tribal students in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

In India, tribal populations—often referred to as Scheduled Tribes (STs)—are officially recognized as indigenous or ethnic groups under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution (Kumar et al., 2015). In many Indian contexts, the term "tribal" (or "adivasi") usually refers to groups that share one or more characteristics, such as socioeconomic backwardness, geographical isolation, unique cultural and linguistic practices, and limited integration with mainstream institutional arrangements (Sahu, 2017). According to the 2011 census, there are 10.43 crore tribal people in the nation, making up 8.6% of the overall population (Chantia & Misra, 2015). Tribal students are those

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belonging to these communities who are engaged in formal education, from primary through higher/college levels. Many are first-generation college students, coming from under-resourced, remote areas where educational infrastructure, family educational background, and economic opportunities are often limited (Jabbar et al., 2024).

From the dawn of humanity, some feelings and behaviors have existed. Among them, jealousy is definitely one. Even though jealousy is seen as a psychological problem and a source of mistrust, evolutionary psychologists have proposed that jealousy maintains love and has a structure that develops over time (Demirtas, 2004). Jealousy is described as a "negative attitude when someone shows superiority or thinks that a loved one is interested in someone else, envy, annoyance" by the Turkish Language Association (TDK, 2011). It is well known that Lewin (1948) conducted the first theoretical investigation into jealousy, an emotion or behavior that often emerges, particularly in the relationships of married couples. Pines (2016) characterized jealousy as a reaction to a risk factor that might cause a valued relationship to fail or end. In a relationship, jealousy is the emotional condition brought on by the partner's relationship with someone else (Buunk & Bringle, 1987; White, 1981), as well as the feelings of rage, discontent, and anxiety brought on by the partnership's decline or termination (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996). According to some definitions, jealousy is the response to the prospect of a partnership ending because of a rival in a marriage or emotional relationship (Buunk et al., 1996; Mathes & Severa, 1981). Conversely, Freud offered four distinct explanations for the origins of jealousy (Pines, 2016): the self-indulgence of feeling accountable for losing oneself, the sadness of the fear of losing a loved one, the painful awareness that we could not have everything we desired, and the feelings of envy for successful opponents. It displays jealousy toward prosperous rivals. In Turkish, "envy" and "jealousy" are typically understood to signify the same thing. These two ideas are employed for opposite reasons, though. The Turkish Language Association (2011) claims that the more common way to show envy is to say "not standing." The main definition of envy is the deprivation of the person who has something and the wish for something that is in the possession of someone else but not in their own. The dread of losing something that already exists is the expression of jealousy (Özdemir, 2018).

Academic jealousy is generally defined as a person's negative emotional response to their peers' academic achievements, frequently involving feelings of insecurity, jealousy, and self-comparison in the educational context (Smith & Kim, 2007). It has been characterized as a negative social feeling that damages connections with others in academic contexts, erodes motivation, and heightens animosity (Parrott, 1991; Rentzsch & Gross, 2015). According to Koçak (2019), academic jealousy is a painful emotional response that occurs when a student believes that their own status or self-worth is in danger due to a peer's academic success. It typically manifests as jealousy, resentment, aggressive comparison, or attempts to minimize another's accomplishments. In educational settings, jealousy is linked to anxiousness, rumination, and decreased academic satisfaction (Salovey & Rodin, 1984). It can jeopardize not just academic achievement but also psychological well-being if it persists (Mousa et al., 2019). According to Massé & Gagné's (2002) research, students who were able to differentiate themselves from their peers were jealous of their peers' social and academic accomplishments, which depended on their intellect or academic success. According to Rentzsch et al. (2015), students who have high academic self-esteem become hostile toward others, particularly in settings where competition is fierce. In their scientific articles explaining work behaviors that go against productivity, Taştan & Küçük (2019) point out that jealousy is one of the factors affecting productivity. They claim that social comparison, particularly between individuals, reveals feelings of envy and stimulates feelings of inadequacy in the individual. According to Üçok (2019), this emotion resulting from social comparisons makes people more anxious about maintaining their achievement, afraid of new actions that the institution will find admirable, and concerned about their standing and desire for a higher place.

Self-esteem is the subjective assessment of one's own worth as a person (Donnellan et al., 2011; MacDonald & Leary, 2012). "Self-esteem is a positive and negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, self," according to Rosenberg (1965). It might mean two different things: that a person with high self-esteem believes that he or she is "very good," and that he or she believes that he or she is "good enough." Thus, a person may feel inferior to

others based on certain self-established standards, but regard themselves as superior to the majority of others. "Favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self" is how he defined self-esteem. It's important to remember that self-esteem does not always correspond to one's actual skills and aptitudes or even one's perceived value by others. Additionally, self-esteem is sometimes defined as the "feeling that one is 'good enough,'" therefore, people who have high self-esteem do not necessarily think they are better than other people (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem is commonly understood to represent a person's whole assessment of their own value, taking into account both their positive and negative self-perceptions (Rosenberg, 1965; Baumeister et al., 2003). As stated by the American Psychological Association (Vanbuskirk & Goldman, 2023), a high sense of self-esteem is important since it is a prerequisite for good mental health and well-being. Living a flourishing life is significantly impacted by it. It gives a person confidence in their skills and the drive to exercise them, eventually leading to fulfillment and a positive view of life. Self-esteem entails sentiments of respect and approval for oneself, as opposed to the excessive self-aggrandizement and self-regard that define narcissistic people (Ackerman et al., 2011). Low self-esteem has been repeatedly connected to social disengagement, anxiety, and depression, while high self-esteem has been positively correlated with psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and resilience (Orth & Robins, 2014; Mann et al., 2004). It affects how students view obstacles, failures, and peer comparisons in the classroom and serves as a safeguard for preserving mental and emotional well-being. According to Donnellan et al. (2005), students who have high self-esteem are more resilient to stress and are more likely to develop flexible coping mechanisms.

Psychological well-being includes positive functioning, self-acceptance, autonomy, and the ability to cope with life's challenges; it is not just the absence of mental disease (Ryff, 1989; WHO, 2001). Higher psychological well-being among students has been typically associated with improved academic achievement, more effective coping mechanisms, and more positive social connections (Mustafa et al., 2020). According to Kumar & Mukharjee (2017), psychological well-being is a crucial factor in determining academic

perseverance and personal development for tribal students, who frequently encounter particular sociocultural and structural obstacles such as educational marginalization, cultural disruption, and restricted access to resources. Since academic jealousy leads to social conflict and negative self-assessments, and because self-esteem influences how social comparisons are interpreted, both concepts are rationally positioned as significant indicators of tribal students' psychological well-being.

Research suggests that academic jealousy has been closely linked to students' mental health and overall psychological well-being. Fazaldad et al. (2020) examined 200 Pakistani university students to see whether perceived jealousy, subjective happiness, and self-esteem were associated. They discovered that self-esteem and subjective happiness were positively related, but jealousy and subjective happiness were significantly negatively associated. Additionally, the negative impact of jealousy on subjective happiness was mitigated by strong self-esteem, which acted as a buffer. This showed that while strong self-esteem might operate as a protective factor, jealousy—similar to academic jealousy—may lower well-being (or happiness). Tatik & Ayyıldız (2023) used qualitative interviews to investigate academic jealousy among postgraduate students. Participants expressed jealousy over peer competitiveness, publications, promotions, and other things. It was said that jealousy hurts people, causing mental distress, social exclusion in academic settings, and negative consequences on a personal and institutional level. Isolation and reports of "harm to individuals" imply that academic jealousy has detrimental effects on psychological well-being. Peer jealousy among university students was examined by Okur & Ummet (2025), who developed the Peer Jealousy Scale. It found that higher levels of jealousy were linked to maladaptive outcomes and poorer interpersonal relationships, both of which are known correlates of psychological well-being. This suggests that jealousy (in peers or academics) is related to areas that are known to underlie well-being (social connection, emotions, behavior). According to Nogueira & Sequeira (2024), social support, academic life satisfaction, and high academic achievement were all highly favorable indicators of psychological well-being. On the other hand, there was an adverse association between

variables like vulnerability and low academic life satisfaction. Distress would probably be exacerbated by low contentment and comparison with others, which frequently serves as the foundation for jealousy. Given that well-being was strongly correlated with outcomes related to academic self-evaluation (achievement, success in comparison to peers), academic jealousy may serve as a negative predictor of well-being through comparable mechanisms. According to research, people's psychological well-being has been continuously linked to their level of self-esteem, which affects their emotional stability, level of life satisfaction, and general mental health. Ryff's (2013) multifaceted model of psychological well-being emphasizes self-evaluation and self-acceptance as essential elements. These dimensions include autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance. Global self-esteem and these PWB categories consistently show moderately positive relationships in empirical studies employing Ryff scales, indicating a substantial association between self-esteem and eudaimonic components of well-being (e.g., self-acceptance, mastery). According to Ryff, self-esteem has been more closely associated with certain aspects of well-being (autonomy, positive relationships, and self-acceptance) than with others (autonomy). According to Adak et al. (2024) cross-sectional survey of college-aged tribal students in West Bengal, there is a significant positive correlation between psychological well-being and self-esteem. This means that tribal students who have higher levels of self-esteem also have higher scores on measures of well-being, such as emotional and social functioning. Self-esteem was therefore a significant protective factor for tribal students' psychological well-being, indicating that academic jealousy may indirectly lower psychological well-being if it erodes self-esteem. According to Heine and colleagues (1999), cultural differences exist in the significance and intensity of explicit self-esteem. Some East Asian collectivist samples exhibit distinct patterns (self-criticism occasionally co-exists with adaptive performance) or lower relationships between explicit self-esteem and well-being. As a warning against assuming universal effect sizes or equivalent mechanisms in all groups, this implies that cultural context might attenuate or modify the relationship between self-

esteem and psychological well-being. The association between psychological well-being and self-esteem was evaluated by Singhal & Prakash (2021), who additionally looked at whether self-esteem is a major predictor of psychological well-being among college students in India. It was found that psychological well-being and self-esteem had a significant positive relationship and that self-esteem was a strong predictor of psychological well-being, according to regression analysis. There was no discernible gender-based variation in the psychological well-being and self-esteem of college students, indicating a substantial shift in Urban India toward equal chances and resources for male and female students. Hence, healthy self-esteem development is essential for improving college students' good mental health outcomes since self-esteem is a major driver of psychological well-being. Kernis et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between self-esteem level and stability and scores on Ryff's (1989) multidimensional measure of psychological well-being. They found that higher self-esteem was linked to greater well-being than lower self-esteem.

Research indicates that while self-esteem contributes positively to improving psychological well-being, academic jealousy may harm students' psychological well-being by magnifying negative self-perceptions (Rentzsch et al., 2015; Orth et al., 2012). Nevertheless, few studies have particularly looked at these factors among tribal college students, who are a vulnerable and lesser-studied group in higher education. The purpose of this study is to look into how academic jealousy and self-esteem predict the psychological well-being of college-going tribal students. This study examines these connections to shed light on how positive self-perception and negative academic emotions interact to impact psychological well-being in a culturally diverse population.

Rationale of the Study

A review of existing literature reveals that the impact of academic jealousy on psychological well-being has been extensively examined in Western countries, consistently demonstrating a significant negative association between academic jealousy and the psychological well-being of college students as, academic jealousy has been associated with negative emotional effects, such as stress, anxiety, and decreased psychological well-being,

especially in academic settings (Parrott & Smith, 1993; Smith & Kim, 2007). Similarly, the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being has been extensively studied in the previous literature. The results generally point to a strong positive relationship in which greater self-esteem predicts greater life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Diener & Diener, 1995; Orth et al., 2012; Sowislo & Orth, 2013). However, self-esteem may not always be a reliable indicator of well-being across populations, though, as some research has also found lower or inconsistent correlations (Baumeister et al., 2003; Schimmack & Diener, 2003; Humphrey, 2004). Despite this, relatively little research has looked at the relationship between academic jealousy and self-esteem as predictors of psychological well-being, particularly in marginalized groups like Indian tribal college students, whose sociocultural and educational experiences diverge greatly from those of the general population. The current study intends to fill this knowledge vacuum by examining the effects of academic jealousy and self-esteem on the psychological well-being of Indian tribal college students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the predictive role of academic jealousy in psychological well-being among tribal college students.
2. To study the predictive role of self-esteem in psychological well-being among tribal college students.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Academic jealousy would be a significant predictor of psychological well-being among tribal college students.

H2: Self-esteem would be a significant predictor of psychological well-being among tribal College students.

METHOD

Research Design

The study employs a descriptive survey method and a correlational research methodology. A thorough description of the traits of the population or phenomenon being studied is given by descriptive research. A kind of non-experimental

research is correlational research, which measures two or more variables and assesses the statistical correlations between them without trying to control or influence unrelated variables. The current study measures academic jealousy, self-esteem, and psychological well-being among tribal college students in order to assess the direction and strength of their relationships and to gain an understanding of how these psychosocial factors are related in an authentic learning environment.

Sample

Purposive sampling was employed to collect data from tribal college students in the Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. The sample comprised 100 students, aged between 18 and 25 years, who were enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs across the districts of Anuppur, M.P.

Measures

Academic Jealousy Scale

Academic Jealousy was assessed using the Academic Jealousy Scale, a self-constructed scale within the tribal perspective, as no standardized scale was available for measuring the construct in the tribal context. The scale was designed on the framework of the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale by Pfeiffer and Wrong (1989), incorporating three dimensions- cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components- originally applied to interpersonal relationships but meaningfully extended to the academic domain, where students face peer comparisons, competition, and recognition disparities. The final tool consisted of 28 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency, with the overall scale demonstrating excellent reliability ($\alpha = .942$). The subscales' reliability was also satisfactory, with the emotional dimension (10 items) yielding $\alpha = .890$, the behavioral dimension (10 items) yielding $\alpha = .853$, and the cognitive dimension (8 items) yielding $\alpha = .842$. These results confirm that the scale provides a reliable measure of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of academic jealousy. In addition to statistical reliability, the scale was evaluated for face validity through expert judgement and item relevance, further supporting its appropriateness for assessing academic jealousy in tribal college students.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The tribal students' self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in Hindi (RSES-H) by Singh & Husain (2024), a cultural adaptation of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1979). The scale contains 10 items with a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Scoring is done in the positive direction for the positively worded items (5 items) and in the reverse direction for the negatively worded items (5 items). A total score ranges from 10 to 40 points, with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of self-esteem. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$), with positive self-esteem $\alpha = .77$ and negative self-esteem $\alpha = .75$ (George & Mallery, 2003). Construct validity was established by correlating RSES-H with the Satisfaction with Life Scale- Hindi (SWLS-H), where a significant positive correlation ($r=.57$) confirmed the scale's convergent validity.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale

Psychological well-being was assessed using Ryff's Psychological Well-Being 18-item scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff et al., 1995), which was culturally adapted into Hindi by the researcher, for tribal college students. The scale consists of 18 items that were translated into Hindi by the researcher using the translation and back translation processes to ensure linguistic and cultural appropriateness for tribal students. The tool measures core aspects of well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. A seven-point Likert scale was used to rate the items, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). The scale demonstrated internal consistency reliability, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with an overall value of .538, indicating a moderate but satisfactory level of internal consistency among the items. The scale also showed good face validity, making it suitable for use in the tribal student population.

Procedure

Before the start of the data collection process, written approval was obtained from the tribal college students. Participants received written and verbal explanations of the study's goals, purpose, and confidentiality. After obtaining their permission

to participate in the study, data collection was conducted. To guarantee comfort and clarity, a sufficient rapport was built with the participants before the scales were administered. After that, the modified and translated scales were used, and the results were gathered. The questionnaires were scored using the normal scoring methods that were specified for each scale.

RESULTS

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-20) was used to statistically analyze the collected data for descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation, and regression analysis to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Table 1 : Correlation Analysis of Academic Jealousy and Self-Esteem with Psychological Well-Being

	Academic Jealousy	Self-Esteem
Psychological Well-Being	-.407***	.184

Note- ***Correlation is significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed) **Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results of the correlation analysis between academic jealousy and self-esteem with the psychological well-being in shown in Table 1. The results reveal that academic jealousy is significantly negatively associated with psychological well-being ($r = -0.407$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that high levels of Academic jealousy are linked to poorer psychological well-being. Self-esteem also exhibited a weak positive association with psychological well-being ($r = 0.184$); however, it is non-significant, suggesting that those with high self-esteem experience slightly greater psychological well-being. Hence, the study found that academic jealousy negatively impacts psychological well-being more than self-esteem among the tribal college students.

Table 2: Regression analysis of Academic Jealousy as a predictor of Psychological Well-Being among Tribal College Students

Predictor	β	R^2	F	p
Academic Jealousy	-.407	.166	19.440	.000

Table 2 depicts that academic jealousy is a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being with a coefficient value (β) of $-.407$ ($F = 19.440$, $p < .000$) showing a moderate negative relationship, i.e. higher academic jealousy is linked with lower psychological well-being among tribal college students and also academic jealousy explains 16.6% variance ($R^2 = .166$) in psychological well-being, meaning that approximately 16.6% variations in tribal college students psychological well-being can be statistically explained by their level of academic jealousy. This result indicates that academic jealousy is a significant predictor of psychological well-being among the tribal college students; hence, the first hypothesis stating that academic jealousy would be a significant predictor of psychological well-being among tribal college students has been accepted.

Table 3: Regression analysis of Self-Esteem as a predictor of Psychological Well-Being among Tribal College Students

Predictor	β	R^2	F	p
Self-esteem	.184	.034	3.450	.066

Table 3 shows that self-esteem, the second predictor of psychological well-being, has a coefficient (β) value of .184, indicating a positive but weak predictive connection. The model explains 3.4% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = .034$), meaning that 3.4% of the variance in tribal college students' psychological well-being can be statistically explained by their level of self-esteem. The F-value is 3.450, with a p-value of .066, somewhat higher than the standard significance criterion ($p < .05$). These findings suggest that, while self-esteem contributes favorably to psychological well-being, its influence in this model is not statistically significant; thus, it should be considered with caution, and therefore, the second hypothesis of the study has been rejected.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated how academic jealousy and self-esteem relate to psychological well-being among tribal college students in Anuppur, Madhya Pradesh. According to the results, academic jealousy is a significant predictor that accounts for roughly 16.6% of the variance in psychological well-being and has a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being

($r = -0.407$, $p < .001$). Self-esteem, on the other hand, only accounted for 3.4% of the variance and had a slight positive correlation ($r = 0.184$, $p < .05$), but its predictive capacity was not statistically significant ($p = .066$). Therefore, in the tribal students' context, academic jealousy seems to play a stronger and more robust role than self-esteem. Overall, the findings accepted the first hypothesis by confirming that academic jealousy significantly predicts and negatively correlates with psychological well-being among the tribal college-going students of India, while the second hypothesis was refuted, as self-esteem did not emerge as a significant predictor of psychological well-being in this population.

The results of this study contribute to the expanding body of research that examines how psychological factors affect the well-being of tribal college-bound students by offering insightful information on the relationship between academic jealousy, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. The findings indicate a significant negative correlation between academic jealousy and psychological well-being. Previous literature supports that jealousy has been associated with several negative mental health factors. Okur & Ümmet's (2025) mixed-methods study on university students' jealousy towards peers showed that it was linked to mental problems, emotional discomfort, and lower socio-psychological functioning. Peer or academic jealousy was linked to lower subjective well-being and interpersonal issues in student populations. This study offers concrete proof that jealousy had a negative correlation with measures of well-being in peer and academic settings. Envy, a notion strongly connected to jealousy, has been shown in extensive longitudinal studies to predict poorer mental-health outcomes. According to Mujcic and colleagues (2018), there was a strong inverse relationship between emotions of social comparison and well-being, with higher levels of envy linked to lower life satisfaction and worse psychological ill-health over time. Limited educational opportunities and low resources in tribal cultures often accentuate upward social comparisons, leading students to feel inadequate and resentful of peers who perform better academically. The conclusion that academic jealousy, a domain-specific type of envy, can jeopardize psychological well-being has been

supported broadly by this study. According to an empirical study by Xiang and colleagues (2020), jealousy both directly and indirectly raises the risk of depressive symptoms, as jealousy can worsen loneliness and diminish well-being by destroying peer relations and decreasing perceived social support. Such jealousy erodes mental health by producing negative emotions like anxiety, resentment, and frustration. The mediation results demonstrate distinct processes via which jealousy impairs subjective well-being, and these mechanisms are very likely to be responsible for academic jealousy in student environments (e.g., jealousy → worse social ties/less resilience → lower well-being). Carraturo et al. (2023) review synthesized evidence that jealousy and upward social comparison were associated with lower subjective well-being and depressive symptoms, particularly in younger samples and students who are exposed to comparisons often (e.g., academic ranking contexts, social media). According to the review, there were continuous negative correlations between jealousy and well-being across research, which lends credence to the moderately detrimental effect of academic jealousy shown in the current tribal group. Fazal Dad et al. (2020) found that jealousy harmed peer relationships and academic performance in a student sample and had a negative correlation with subjective happiness and self-esteem, especially in competitive learning environments where students' sense of competence is at risk. In line with our conclusion that students who experience more academic jealousy have worse psychological well-being, the results indicate that students' academic jealousy was associated with reduced psychological well-being and impaired social functioning.

The second hypothesis stated that self-esteem predicts psychological well-being. The findings indicate that self-esteem has a favorable but limited impact on psychological well-being. This suggests that people with higher self-esteem may have slightly better well-being, but the effect is insufficiently strong to be considered statistically significant in this study of tribal students. In tribal cultures, communal relationships, cultural values, and a sense of collective belonging frequently have a greater influence on identity and self-esteem than do individual assessments of oneself. According to earlier studies, social harmony, interdependence, and group cohesion were more important for well-

being in collectivist societies than individual self-esteem (Diener et al., 2003; Joshanloo & Weijers, 2014). This could help to explain why, among indigenous students, self-esteem—while marginally positive—does not significantly predict psychological well-being. Self-esteem may not have as much of an impact on tribal students' psychological well-being as the academic difficulties they experience, such as scarce resources, language problems, and cultural adjustment to mainstream educational environments. According to research, structural injustices and external stressors frequently predict well-being among underprivileged or minority student groups more so than individual characteristics like self-esteem (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). In individualistic Western cultures, self-esteem has been demonstrated to be a more reliable indicator of psychological well-being than in marginalized or collectivist populations (Diener & Diener, 1995; Joshanloo, 2013). This cultural diversity implies that although self-esteem is a generally desired quality, its influence on well-being varies depending on the cultural or socioeconomic context. Overall, while self-esteem is beneficial, its impact is limited when compared to other elements influencing psychological well-being among the tribal college-going students' population.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the influence of academic jealousy and self-esteem on the psychological well-being of tribal college students. The findings indicate that academic jealousy has a pronounced negative effect among tribal college-going students of Indian origin, suggesting that students who frequently compare themselves to peers and experience jealousy are more likely to have reduced psychological well-being. Conversely, self-esteem showed only a weak and non-significant positive association with psychological well-being, indicating that, while self-esteem may contribute to better outcomes, its impact is limited in the tribal context. These findings suggest that academic jealousy exerts a stronger influence on students' psychological well-being than self-esteem, emphasizing the need to recognize jealousy as a critical psychosocial factor within tribal educational settings. However, the study is limited by its relatively small and homogeneous sample

size (100 students), reliance on self-report measures, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings and limit the ability to draw causal conclusions. Despite these limitations, the findings have significant ramifications for academic institutions and policymakers, emphasizing the need for interventions including counseling services, peer support programs, and culturally sensitive initiatives to lessen academic jealousy and promote well-being. To better understand how jealousy and self-esteem interact with other cultural and contextual factors influencing psychological well-being, future research should look at these linkages using mixed-method techniques, longitudinal designs, and bigger and more diverse tribal groups.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research have a number of implications for educational policy and practice. First, programs designed to lessen academic jealousy can help tribal college students develop a more positive emotional environment. Counseling programs that are sensitive to cultural differences should emphasize peer cooperation over rivalry. Second, in order to boost students' self-confidence and academic engagement, educators and administrators might incorporate self-esteem development modules. Lastly, to ensure equal opportunity for mental health and academic success, policy initiatives must give priority to inclusive education models that address the emotional and social hurdles specific to tribal learners.

Declarations and Statements

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this publication. The study received no external funding and was conducted following institutional ethical guidelines, with informed consent obtained from all participants. All authors contributed to the design, analysis, and writing of the paper and approved the final version. Data supporting the findings are available on reasonable request. The authors gratefully acknowledge the participants and institutional support during the research process.

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