

Understanding Students' Attitudes Toward Undergraduate Colleges Education in the Hill District of Manipur

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Abstract: A student's overall personality and development are significantly shaped by their attitudes. Attitude influences learning, academic achievement, habit formation, interests, and various psycho-physical dispositions. It also determines behaviour toward objects, ideas, situations, and people, thereby guiding one's approach to life. The degree of success a learner attains in academic activities depends largely on their attitudes and level of interest, both temporary and sustained. The present study examines differences in attitudes between male and female undergraduate students toward colleges in Ukhrul District under Manipur University. It also compares the attitudes of students from different academic streams studying in selected colleges of the district. To address these objectives, two null hypotheses were formulated. The study employs the Normative Survey Method to collect data from government, private, and aided general colleges in Ukhrul District. Documentary analysis further supports the interpretation of findings. The population comprises all undergraduate students enrolled in general degree programmes across the district. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, revealing variations in student attitudes across colleges and academic sessions.

Keywords: Students' Attitude, Undergraduate Colleges, Ukhrul District, Manipur University.

Introduction

Education is vital in life; it is as old as the human race. Man goes on to acquire education in one form or another from birth to death. It is a never-ending cycle of inner evolution and development. Education helps develop thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, intelligence, and attitudes in man. The primary purpose of education is to modify the child's behaviour by developing desirable attitudes according to the requirements and expectations of society.

Behaviour is comprised of many attributes, and one of these vital attributes is attitude. An individual's behaviour significantly relies upon one's attitude towards things, concepts, persons, objects, and aims of life in his environment. The nature of attitudes influences the entire personality and development of the child. Learning a subject, attaining academic pursuits, and acquiring habits, interests, and other psycho-physical dispositions are all affected by attitudes. The degree of success a learner can attain in his learning activities depends significantly upon his attitude and his temporary and persistent interest.

Attitudes can wield a potent influence on an individual. They act as both the cause and the result of behaviour. They are personal and associated with feelings connected with the individual's experiences. They represent how one feels, thinks, talks, or acts in any situation. A variety of patterns are included in an individual's exhibition of attitudes. There are attitudes towards health, life, people, new positions, music and art, work, the role of government, religion, and many more. The educative process influences these attitudes through both planned and unexpected experiences.

Since developing and shaping attitudes is one of the most critical functions of the school, attention should be given to studying their general nature and dynamic aspects. Attitudes are generally regarded as enduring thoughts, modifiable by experiences and persuasion, and learned rather than innate. They are also seen as predispositions to action. They are formed as a result of similar learning experiences. For the most part, an individual's attitude becomes habitual and is displayed by him in one form or another in day-to-day living. The qualities of attitudes vary in intensity depending on the strength of the stimulation and the person's physical, mental, or emotional state.

Attitude is a fundamental psychological tendency of one's behaviour, determining whether one is good or bad, social or unsocial, negative or positive towards life and everything. Attitudes develop through intellectual, biological, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual elements derived from experiences of achievement and failure. Therefore, they are considered essential motivators of behaviour and influence all human values.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the differences between the attitudes of male and female undergraduate students toward the existing colleges in the selected institutions of Ukhrul District under Manipur University.
2. To compare the attitudes of undergraduate students from the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams studying in the selected colleges of Ukhrul District under Manipur University.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference in the attitudes of female and male students towards education who are presently studying in the existing undergraduate colleges of Ukhrul District under Manipur University.
2. There exists no significant difference in the attitudes of college students among the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams who are studying in the selected colleges of Ukhrul District under Manipur University.

Significance of the Study

We can frequently observe that students take up higher studies with little interest or approach it casually. Moreover, only a few institutions in India provide quality inputs to develop learning skills among students. Compared to developing and developed countries, higher education in India requires substantial improvement. While only about 13 percent of students in India pursue higher education, the percentage ranges from 28 to 90 percent in many other countries.

There is a growing demand for institutions to provide quality education and regularly revise their syllabi to help students adapt to changing conditions. At the same time, efforts must be made to guide and mentor both students and parents to cultivate and sustain interest in higher education.

The present study attempts to determine students' attitudes toward higher education. Higher education is the apex of the educational system and serves as a vital agency for the social, cultural, economic, and intellectual development of society. A society's human resource development is possible only through a strong and effective higher education system. As an important part of higher education, college education holds a significant place in society. Education without higher education is like a person without a head.

In the context of Manipur, the condition of higher education particularly college education has been deteriorating in recent years due to administrative, psychological, cultural, and law-and-order challenges. Students' attitudes have also been changing rapidly, requiring urgent attention. If not addressed, the quality of college education may decline further in the coming years. Therefore, studying college students' attitudes is necessary to understand the status of youth in society. The findings of this study may help reveal the nature of the current higher education system in general studies.

Table No. : 1 List of Colleges Located in Ukhrul District, Manipur December 2022

Sl. No.	Name of the College	Location	Type of Administration	Year of Establishment
1	Pettigrew College	Maizailung, Somsai	Government	1981
2	Alice College	Mission compound, Ukhrul	Private	2014
3	Sentinel College	Phunreitung, Ukhrul Manipur	Private	2013
4	St. Joseph College	Ukhrul Town	Private	2015

The results can also benefit teachers, principals, administrators, educational planners, curriculum framers, and other higher education authorities by helping them understand the present condition of college education in the state, as well as the attitudes of college students.

Examining students' attitudes toward college education at the general studies level in Manipur is particularly important today. The overall situation of higher education, especially at the college level, has become alarming due to various psycho-social factors and law-and-order issues. The decline in college-level education over the past decades is closely linked with the attitudes of students studying in general education colleges. The present study attempted to explore the attitudes of students toward undergraduate colleges in the Ukhrul District of Manipur.

Methodology

In the present study, the investigator used the Normative Survey Method to collect reliable data from different colleges in Ukhrul District, Manipur, in order to determine students' attitudes toward education and their attitudes toward science among undergraduate students. Inferential statistical methods will be used for analyzing the collected data.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprises students enrolled in general education colleges in Ukhrul District that are affiliated with Manipur University. This population includes all undergraduate students in general education streams in the district.

From this population, the investigator selected a sample of 199 college students from three colleges, using a simple random sampling technique based on stream-wise enrolment and gender distribution.

Source: College Development Council, Manipur University (2020)

Tools Used

Two standardized tools were used in the present study:

1. Attitude Scale Towards Education (ASTE) developed by Dr. L. S. Chopra. This scale consists of 22 statements scored on a two-point scale: *Strongly Agree* and *Strongly Disagree*.
2. Science Attitude Scale (SAS) developed by Dr. Avinash Grewal, containing 20 items scored on a five-point scale: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Undecided*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*.

Treatment of Data

The data collected from undergraduate students through the Attitude Scale Towards Education (ASTE) and the Science Attitude Scale (SAS) were treated and analysed using the **t-test** to address the research questions.

Delimitations of the Study

1. The study is confined to students enrolled in the following three selected colleges of Ukhrul District affiliated with Manipur University:
 - a) Pettigrew College, Mazailung, Somsai
 - b) Sentinel College, Phungreitung
 - c) St. Joseph College, Ukhrul Town
2. The study is limited to students enrolled in the **year 2021**.

3. The study is confined to students of **general undergraduate classes** in the three selected colleges of Ukhrul District, Manipur.

Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis and Interpretation of Objective No. 1

Table No. 1.1 Indicating the Level of Attitude Towards Education of Undergraduate Students in Ukhrul District under Manipur University			
Sl. No	Level of Attitude Towards Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Most Favourable	02	01
2	Highly Favourable	81	40.7
3	Above Average Favourable	89	44.7
4	Average/Moderate Positive	24	12.1
5	Unfavourable	03	1.5
6	Highly Unfavourable	00	00
7	Most Unfavourable	00	00
Total		199	100

“To find out the differences between the attitudes of male and female college students who are studying at present towards the existing undergraduate colleges in Ukhrul District under Manipur University”.

From Table 1.1, it is observed that 1% of the students exhibit a *Most Favourable* attitude towards education, while 40.7% demonstrate a *Highly Favourable* attitude. A majority of the students (44.7%) fall under the *Above Average Favourable* category, which is the highest among the seven categories. Additionally, 12.1% of the students show an *Average/Moderate Positive* attitude, and 1.5% display an *Unfavourable* attitude towards education. Notably, none of the students reported either a *Highly Unfavourable* or *Most Unfavourable* attitude.

Thus, the findings indicate that most undergraduate students in the colleges of Ukhrul District possess an above-average favourable attitude towards education.

**significant at 0.05 level*

Table No.1.2 Indicating t-table for Students' Attitude Towards Education with respect to their Gender							
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean S.E.	t-value	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)**
Male	71	17.38	2.481	0.294	0.763	197	0.447
Female	128	17.66	2.533	0.224			

From Table 1.2, it is observed that the number of male participants is 71, while the number of female participants is 128. The mean attitude score for male students is 17.38, whereas that of female students is 17.66. The standard deviations for males and females are 2.481 and 2.533, respectively. The Standard Error of the Mean is 0.294, and the degree of freedom is 197. The calculated t-value is 0.763 with a corresponding p-value of 0.447. Since the p-value exceeds the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there

is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female college students towards education in the undergraduate colleges of Ukhrul District.

Analysis & Interpretation of Objective no. 2

"To make a comparative study of the attitudes of college students of Arts, Sciences and Commerce who are studying in the selected colleges of Ukhrul District under Manipur University".

Table No.: 2.1 Indicating the t-table For Students Attitude Towards Education with respect to their Stream in Undergraduate Colleges of Ukhrul district							
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean S.E.	t-value	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)**
Arts	151	17.75	2.491	0.203	1.86	197	0.064
Science	48	16.98	2.514	0.363			

From Table 2, it is observed that out of the total 199 participants, 151 students (75.88%) belong to the Arts stream, while 48 students (24.12%) are from the Science stream. There are no participants from the Commerce stream, as none of the undergraduate colleges in Ukhrul District offer Commerce courses.

**Significant at 0.05 level*

From Table 2.1, it is observed that the number of Arts student participants is 151, while Science student participants number 48. The mean score of Arts students is 17.75, whereas the mean score for Science students is 16.98. The standard deviations for Arts and Science students are 2.491 and 2.514, respectively. The Standard Error of Mean is 0.203, and the degree of freedom is 197.

Based on the findings, the significance (p) value is 0.064. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of Arts and Science undergraduate students towards education in the colleges of Ukhrul District.

Table No.: 2 Indicating the Number of Students in Arts, Sciences and Commerce who are Studying in the Selected Colleges of Ukhrul District		
Stream	Frequency	Percentage (%age)
Arts	151	75.88
Science	48	24.12
Commerce	00	00
Total	199	100

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study indicate that students presently studying in undergraduate colleges of Ukhrul District exhibit above-average favourable attitudes towards education. The analysis further reveals that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female students towards education and science. Similarly, no significant difference was found between the attitudes of Arts and Science students towards education in the undergraduate colleges. Additionally, the study highlights that the enrolment rate in the Arts stream is considerably higher than that in the Science stream.



Suggestions for Further Study

- a. The study can be extended to all undergraduate colleges in Manipur.
- b. Similar research can be conducted in professional colleges in Manipur.
- c. The study can be replicated on a larger population covering a wider geographical area.
- d. Research can be carried out in colleges affiliated with other universities.
- e. The study can also focus on different levels of education to explore attitudes more broadly.

Conclusion

The current state of general college education in Manipur is in a critical condition due to various administrative, social, and academic factors. There exists a general negative attitude among students toward higher education, primarily due to its perceived lack of applicability in their lives and careers.

It is therefore imperative to improve undergraduate colleges of general studies to foster favourable and positive attitudes among students. Higher education plays a key role in the development of both individuals and society, and strengthening its quality and relevance is essential for the holistic progress of the youth and the community at large.

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