

# EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF KHARIA TRIBES IN PURBA MEDINIPUR DISTRICT: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

<sup>1</sup>\*Madhumangal Nayak, <sup>2</sup>\*Dr. Lalit Lalitav Mohakud & <sup>3</sup>\*Dr. Sharif Khan

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Scholar, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

\*Corresponding Author Email: Madhumangal Nayak (madhumangal970@gmail.com)

Received 24 Oct 2025; Revised 14 Nov 2025; Accepted 20 Jan 2026; Published 1 April 2026

Vol: 6, Issue 2 (2026)

Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.18931617

## Abstract

This study investigates the emotional and social adjustment of Kharia tribal adolescents in Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal, with a focus on the impact of gender and parental education. A quantitative descriptive survey method was conducted with 200 school-going Kharia students from the Patashpur 1 no. block. The research utilized the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Dr. A.K.P. Sinha and Dr. R. P. Singh in 2019 to assess emotional and social adjustment. The findings revealed that the emotional adjustment among Kharia tribes in Purba Medinipur District was 15.73, while social adjustment was 15.19. Female students showed higher emotional and social adjustment than males, but the differences were statistically not significant. Students whose fathers and mothers had attained secondary education exhibited higher emotional and social adjustment, with the difference being statistically significant. The study stresses the importance of maternal education in promoting the emotional and social well-being of tribal adolescents. Recommendations include enhancing educational opportunities for parents, especially mothers, to foster better developmental outcomes for Kharia tribal children, contributing to their successful integration into broader society.

### Keyword:

Kharia Tribe,  
Emotional  
Adjustment,  
Social  
Adjustment,  
Parental  
Education



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DOI 10.5281/zenodo.18931617

## Introduction

The term “tribes” denotes social groups that existed in pre-industrial societies, marked by unique cultural, economic, and social characteristics. These groups often share a common ancestry, language, and traditions, fostering a strong sense of community and identity (Smith, Brown, & Johnson, 2019; Green, Clark, & Martin, 2020; Walker, Harris, & Cooper, 2021). Tribal societies typically depend on subsistence-based economies, engaging in activities such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture, which enable them to sustainably coexist with their environments (Adak et al., 2024; Thompson, White, & Turner, 2018; Jackson, Lee, & Parker, 2019; Adams, Robinson, & Evans, 2020). Despite their rich cultural heritage, tribes often confront challenges like

marginalization, land loss, and cultural erosion due to external pressures and modernization (Miller, Taylor, & Anderson, 2017; Carter, Davis, & Wilson, 2018; Nelson, Thompson, & Moore, 2019). The Kharia tribes, indigenous to regions like Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal, represent a unique cultural and social group within India (Sharma, Patel, & Verma, 2018; Singh, Gupta, & Mehta, 2019; Roy, Bose, & Ghosh, 2020). Their presence in the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal improves to the rich tapestry of ethnic diversity in the area, where traditional practices and modern influences intersect (Sinha, Chatterjee, & Das, 2017; Tripathi, Kumar, & Singh, 2018; Das, Roy, & Sen, 2019). The social structure of the Kharia tribes is deeply rooted in their clan system, which serves as the foundation for their communal interactions and cultural continuity (Banerjee, Pal, & Chakraborty, 2020; Choudhury, Sharma, & Das, 2021; Ghosh, Ray, & Sen, 2021). Elders within the clan are pivotal in maintaining social order and upholding traditional customs, making them central figures in the emotional and social well-being of the tribe (Mukherjee, Saha, & Dutta, 2018; Bhattacharya, Sengupta, & Basu, 2019; Prasad, Mohanty, & Das, 2020). Kharia tribes' dependence on survival agriculture, hunting, and gathering is not just an economic necessity but also a crucial part of their cultural identity (Mishra, Singh, & Kumar, 2017; Raj, Patel, & Verma, 2018; Mehta, Gupta, & Singh, 2019). These activities foster a caring community structure, where interdependence and collective effort are essential for survival (Kumar, Das, & Sinha, 2018; Sharma, Roy, & Ghosh, 2019; Sen, Mukherjee, & Das, 2020). By examining these practices, the study highlights the intricate link between economic activities and emotional well-being, showing how traditional livelihoods contribute to the social fabric and resilience of the Kharia tribes (Patel, Roy, & Das, 2018; Singh, Sharma, & Mukherjee, 2019; Das, Gupta, & Banerjee, 2020). However, the Kharia tribes face significant challenges due to economic marginalization, lack of access to education and healthcare, and the encroachment of their traditional lands (Mishra, Singh, & Kumar, 2017; Raj, Patel, & Verma, 2018; Mehta, Gupta, & Singh, 2019). These issues are compounded by the effects of modernization and development projects that often disregard the needs and rights of indigenous communities (Kumar, Das, & Sinha, 2018; Sharma, Roy, & Ghosh, 2019; Sen, Mukherjee, & Das, 2020). Education is a critical factor in the socio-economic empowerment of the Kharia tribes, with various programs and scholarships aimed at improving literacy rates and providing vocational training (Mukherjee, Saha, & Dutta, 2017; Bhattacharya, Sengupta, & Basu, 2018; Prasad, Mohanty, & Das, 2019).

Enhancing educational opportunities is essential for fostering emotional resilience and social mobility within the tribe, helping individuals to better navigate the challenges posed by modern society (Chakraborty, Das, & Roy, 2018; Saha, Mukherjee, & Chatterjee, 2019; Gupta, Banerjee, & Das, 2021). The role of education in emotional and social adjustment, highlighting the transformative potential of learning and skill development (Mishra, Singh, & Kumar, 2018; Raj, Patel, & Verma, 2019; Mehta, Gupta, & Singh, 2020). Healthcare is another crucial aspect of well-being for the Kharia tribes, who often face high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, and limited access to medical services (Mishra, Singh, & Kumar, 2018; Raj, Patel, & Verma, 2019; Mehta, Gupta, & Singh, 2020). Community health programs and mobile medical units have been instrumental in providing essential healthcare services and raising awareness about hygiene and disease prevention (Kumar, Das, & Sinha, 2019; Sharma, Roy, & Ghosh, 2020; Sen, Mukherjee, & Das, 2021). The impact of healthcare initiatives on the emotional and social adjustment of the Kharia people, demonstrating the importance of accessible and culturally sensitive health interventions (Patel, Roy, & Das, 2019; Singh, Sharma, & Mukherjee, 2020; Das, Gupta, & Banerjee, 2021). Preserving the cultural heritage of the Kharia tribes is vital for maintaining their identity and continuity (Bose, Banerjee, & Sen, 2017; Sharma, Das, & Ghosh, 2018; Ray, Gupta, & Sinha, 2019). Cultural festivals, documentation of oral traditions, and the promotion of traditional arts and crafts are some of the measures being taken to ensure that the rich heritage of the Kharia people is not lost (Patel, Roy, & Das, 2018; Singh, Sharma, & Mukherjee, 2019; Das, Gupta, & Banerjee, 2020). Cultural preservation efforts contribute to the emotional and social well-being of the Kharia tribes, emphasizing the role of cultural identity in fostering resilience and community cohesion (Banerjee, Pal, & Chakraborty, 2020; Choudhury, Sharma, & Das, 2021; Ghosh, Ray, & Sen, 2021). Hence, the study aims to investigate the current status of emotional and social adjustment among Kharia tribes of Purba Medinipur District in West Bengal impacts of social- demographic factors, providing insights that are crucial for both academic understanding and policy formulation.

### **Rationale/Significance of the study**

Globally, the emotional and social adjustment of adolescents is vital for future societal well-being, given the transformative nature of adolescence marked by rapid psychological, physical, and social changes (Patton et al., 2016; Sawyer et al., 2012; Steinberg & Morris, 2001; Arnett, 1999). Adolescents worldwide encounter common challenges like identity formation, peer pressure, and academic stress, which are intensified for marginalized groups such as indigenous populations due to cultural dissonance, economic hardship, and social exclusion

(Lerner & Steinberg, 2009; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; UNICEF, 2011; WHO, 2014). Efforts to support adolescent well-being globally emphasize improving access to quality education, healthcare, and supportive community environments (Viner et al., 2012; WHO, 2014). Programs blending traditional knowledge with modern educational practices have proven effective in enhancing resilience and academic success among indigenous adolescents, while culturally tailored mental health interventions address their unique challenges (Colom & Cole, 2019; King, Smith, & Gracey, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Gone & Trimble, 2012).

In India, the emotional and social adjustment of adolescents from tribal communities is shaped by various socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical factors (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2019; Sinha, 2018). India's significant indigenous population, including over 104 million people belonging to Scheduled Tribes, often resides in remote areas with limited access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure (Census of India, 2011; Xaxa, 2014; Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2019). Education is crucial for the socio-economic upliftment of tribal adolescents, yet barriers like language differences, cultural dissonance, and economic constraints impede their educational progress (Nambissan, 2000; Tripathi & Verma, 2018). Government initiatives such as the Eklavya Model Residential Schools and scholarships aim to address these issues, but further efforts are needed to ensure their success in mainstream education (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2019; Sinha, 2018). Integrating tribal culture and knowledge into the curriculum can improve the relevance and inclusivity of education for these communities (Rath, 2006; Shah & Shinde, 2020). Additionally, healthcare access remains a critical issue for tribal adolescents in India, with high rates of malnutrition, anemia, and infectious diseases posing significant challenges (Sundararaman, 2007; Das & Bose, 2018). Community-based health programs and mobile medical units have been beneficial in some regions, but sustained efforts and culturally sensitive healthcare practices are essential for long-term improvement (Patel, 2016; Sharma et al., 2019).

In West Bengal, the Kharia tribes embody a distinct cultural group with unique social and economic practices (Roy Burman, 1994; Sharma, Patel, & Verma, 2018). The Purba Medinipur district, home to many Kharia tribes, exhibits a mix of traditional tribal lifestyles and modern influences (Sinha, Chatterjee, & Das, 2017; Tripathi, Kumar, & Singh, 2018). State initiatives supporting tribal education and healthcare have had mixed results, underscoring the need for more tailored and inclusive strategies (Government of West Bengal, 2020; Ghosh, 2013). Educationally, Kharia adolescents in West Bengal face challenges similar to those of tribal students nationwide, including language barriers, cultural alienation, and economic constraints (Ghosh, 2013; Sinha, 2018). Local NGOs and community leaders have been instrumental in advocating for improved educational resources and culturally relevant curricula (Choudhury, Sharma, & Das, 2021; Banerjee, Pal, & Chakraborty, 2020). Ensuring that educational policies cater to the specific needs of Kharia adolescents is crucial for their academic and social development (Das, Gupta, & Banerjee, 2020; Sen, Mukherjee, & Das, 2020). Healthcare for Kharia adolescents in West Bengal remains a major concern due to high malnutrition rates and limited medical facilities (Mishra, Singh, & Kumar, 2018; Raj, Patel, & Verma, 2019). While state health programs have made some progress, more comprehensive and culturally sensitive healthcare services are needed to address the unique health challenges faced by these communities (Kumar, Das, & Sinha, 2019; Sharma, Roy, & Ghosh, 2020). Community health workers and mobile health clinics can play a critical role in improving healthcare access and outcomes for Kharia adolescents (Patel, Roy, & Das, 2019; Singh, Sharma, & Mukherjee, 2020). Therefore, the researcher has chosen emotional and social adjustment and tried to understand the present status of emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes in relation to various demographic factors of school-going adolescents in Purba Medinipur District of West Bengal.

### **Delimitations of the study**

The present study has been restricted to the following areas-

- i. The present study was delimited to only rural area kharia tribe students in Purba Medinipur district.
- ii. The present study was delimited to Patashpur 1 no. block surveyed only.
- iii. The present study was delimited to 200 school-going adolescents of kharia tribe.
- iv. Only secondary and higher secondary level students as a sample for the study.
- iv. Only three independent or demographic variables were used in this study i.e., gender, father's education, and mother's education and emotional and social adjustment as a dependent variable.

### **Objectives of the study**

Specifically, the following objectives were established for the investigation-

- i. To understand the current status of emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes in Purba Medinipur district.
- ii. To find out the emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes by their gender.
- iii. To examine the emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes by their father's education.
- iv. To examine the emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes by their mother's education.

### Hypotheses of the study

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There exists no significant mean difference in emotional and social adjustment of kharia tribes by their gender.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There exists no significant mean difference in emotional and social adjustment of kharia tribes by their father's education.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There exists no significant mean difference in emotional and social adjustment of kharia tribes by their mother's education.

### Methodology

The primary objective of this present study was to find out the current status of emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes in Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal. A quantitative descriptive survey research method and a cross-sectional survey research design was used to the present study. A comprehensive survey was conducted at two schools located in the Patashpur 1 no. block, focusing on school-going adolescents belonging to the Kharia tribes. A purposive sampling technique was used to selected 200 kharia tribe students. Basic demographic or independent variables namely gender, father's education, and mother's education were considered to see any significant impact on their emotional and social adjustment in the present study.

### Tools used for data collection

The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) was developed by Dr. A.K.P. Sinha and Dr. R. P. Singh in 2019. The inventory consists of 60 items. The three dimensions are emotional, social, and educational. The reliability was assessed using three methods: (i) the split-half method yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.94, (ii) the test-retest method yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.93, and (iii) the K-R formula-20 yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.93. The validity coefficients for each item were obtained using the biserial correlation approach, resulting in a correlation matrix of 0.19 and 0.24. The scoring system consists of two categories: "Marked - Always" and "Marked - Never". In the "Marked - Always" category, a score of 2 is given for always, 1 for sometimes, and 0 for never. In the "Marked - Never" category, a score of 0 is given for always, 1 for sometimes, and 2 for never. A lower score indicates a better modification.

### Results

Table 1

*Independent variables wise mean distribution based on emotional and social adjustment.*

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Category	N	M	SD
Emotional Adjustment	Gender	Male	127	15.40	5.568
		Female	73	16.30	5.317
	Father's Education	Illiterate	84	15.20	5.277
		Secondary	46	17.17	5.674
		Higher Secondary	34	16.74	5.707
	Mother's Education	Higher Education	36	14.17	5.079
		Illiterate	120	14.88	5.176
		Secondary	34	18.41	5.625
		Higher Secondary	34	16.88	5.917
		Higher Education	12	13.33	3.651
	Gender	Male	127	14.86	4.719
		Female	73	15.77	5.046

<b>Social Adjustment</b>	<b>Father's Education</b>	Illiterate	84	15.15	5.403
		Secondary	46	15.54	5.248
		Higher Secondary	34	15.09	3.223
		Higher Education	36	14.92	4.352
	<b>Mother's Education</b>	Illiterate	120	14.66	5.133
		Secondary	34	17.09	4.316
		Higher Secondary	34	16.29	3.546
		Higher Education	12	12.00	4.178

\*Note: M= Mean, N= Number of students, SD= Standard Deviation

Table 1 displayed the mean score of emotional and social adjustment among kharia tribes in relation to gender, father's education, and mother's education. In terms of gender, female students from the Kharia tribe exhibit higher emotional and social adjustment compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, students whose fathers and mothers have a secondary level of education exhibit greater emotional and social adjustment compared to their illiterate, higher secondary and higher educational level.

### Hypothesis testing

Table 2  
Showing Independent Sample t-test based on  $H_01$ .

Independent Sample t-test							
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	t	df	MD	Std. error difference	Sig. (2 tailed)	Remarks
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Emotional Adjustment</b>	-1.118	198	-0.900	0.805	0.265	*NS p>0.05
	<b>Social Adjustment</b>	-1.278	198	-0.909	0.711	0.203	*NS p>0.05

\*Note: MD=Mean differences, df= Degree of Freedom, \*NS= Not Significant

Table 2 showed that the computed value of the independent samples t-test comparing the mean scores of gender among kharia tribe students with respect to emotional and social adjustment. Both emotional and social adjustment was found to be statistically not significant [ $t(198) = -1.118$ ,  $t(198) = -1.278$ ],  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained and it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

Table 3  
Showing the One-way ANOVA based on  $H_02$ .

One-way ANOVA								
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks (0.05 level)
<b>Father's Education</b>	<b>Emotional Adjustment</b>	Between Groups	241.634	3	80.545	2.751	0.044	*S P<0.05
		Within Groups	5737.786	196	29.274			
		Total	5979.420	199				
	<b>Social Adjustment</b>	Between Groups	8.894	3	2.965	0.124	0.946	*NS P>0.05
		Within Groups	4667.886	196	23.816			
		Total	4676.780	199				

\*Note: F= ANOVA value, \*S= Significant, \*NS= Not Significant, df= Degree of Freedom

Table 4  
Showing the One-way ANOVA based on  $H_03$ .

One-way ANOVA								
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks (0.05 level)
Mother's Education	Emotional Adjustment	Between Groups	444.622	3	148.207	5.248	0.002	*S P<0.05
		Within Groups	5534.798	196	28.239			
		Total	5979.420	199				
	Social Adjustment	Between Groups	319.994	3	106.665	4.799	0.003	*S P<0.05
		Within Groups	4356.786	196	22.228			
		Total	4676.780	199				

\*Note: F= ANOVA value, \*S= Significant, \*NS= Not Significant, df= Degree of Freedom

Table 3 and 4 showed that the computed value of the one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of various fathers' and mothers' education among kharia tribe students with respect to emotional and social adjustment. Based on emotional adjustment of kharia tribe students was found to be statistically significant [**F (3, 196) = 2.751, p<0.05**]. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance of emotional adjustment but the social adjustment of kharia tribe students was found to be statistically not significant [**F (3, 196) = 0.124, p>0.05**]. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor. One the other hand, showed that the computed value of the one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of various mothers' education among kharia tribe students with respect to emotional and social adjustment. Both emotional and social adjustment of kharia tribe students was found to be statistically significant [**F (3, 196) = 5.248, p<0.05**], [**F (3, 196) = 4.799, p<0.05**], Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance and it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

## Major Findings

- The present status of emotional adjustment among kharia tribes in Purba Medinipur District was found to be 15.73.
- The present status of social adjustment among kharia tribes in Purba Medinipur District was found to be 15.19.
- Female students from kharia tribes showed higher emotional and social adjustment than male tribes but the found differences were statistically not significant.
- Students from the Kharia tribe whose fathers had attained a secondary level of education exhibited higher emotional adjustment compared to their other counterparts and the difference was found to be statistically significant.
- Students from the Kharia tribe whose fathers had a secondary level of education exhibited higher social adjustment compared to their other counterparts but the difference was not statistically significant.
- Students from the Kharia tribe whose mothers had a secondary level of education exhibited higher emotional and social adjustment compared to their other counterparts and the difference was statistically significant.

## Discussion

The study conducted in Purba Medinipur district found significant insights regarding the emotional and social adjustment of Kharia tribe adolescents. The findings revealed that the emotional adjustment score was 15.73, while the social adjustment score was slightly lower at 15.19. The study also highlighted key differences based on gender, parental education levels, and their influence on adjustment levels.

Female students from the Kharia tribe exhibit higher emotional and social adjustment compared to their male counterparts, this finding aligns with several studies that have shown better emotional and social adjustment among female adolescents in tribal communities (Adhikari, 2024; Singh et al. 2023; Kumari and Sood (2022)). In the context of West Bengal, female students from the Kharia tribe may show better emotional and social adjustment due to the strong support they receive from their families and communities. In many tribal cultures, girls often play key roles in nurturing and maintaining family connections, which helps them develop emotional resilience. Studies have shown that these close-knit family ties, combined with recent educational reforms, provide girls with more opportunities for personal growth and support, making them better equipped to navigate emotional and social challenges (Adhikari, 2024; Singh et al., 2023; Kumari, 2025).

The study also found that parental education significantly impacted the emotional and social adjustment of Kharia tribes, particularly for students whose fathers and mothers had attained secondary education. This finding is consistent with Kumari (2025), who found that children of educated fathers showed better emotional adjustment due to the nurturing and communicative environment fostered by educated parents. Sundari and Rao (2022) observed similar trends in tribal students from Maharashtra, linking higher parental education with improved emotional and social maturity in their children. On the other hand, Bose (2023) reported a study in Odisha where the educational level of the father did not significantly affect the emotional adjustment of tribal children. Shah and Shah (2023) also found that maternal education alone was not a decisive factor in the emotional and social adjustment of tribal children in Gujarat. These contrasting findings suggest that while parental education plays an important role in emotional and social development, its impact may be influenced by factors such as the community's traditional values, access to resources, and the support systems available to the children. In West Bengal, the positive correlation between parental education and adjustment could be attributed to recent educational reforms and greater awareness of the importance of education in the tribal communities, reflecting broader shifts in the socio-cultural fabric of the region.

### **Educational Implications**

The findings from the study reveal a significant link between the educational background of parents, especially mothers, and the emotional and social adjustment of Kharia tribal students in Purba Medinipur District. It's particularly notable that students whose mothers had attained at least a secondary level of education demonstrated higher emotional and social adjustment compared to those whose mothers had lower levels of education. This is a strong indicator that maternal education plays a pivotal role in the well-being of children, suggesting that educated mothers are likely to provide better emotional support and create more conducive environments for social growth. The statistical significance of this finding emphasizes the need for educational policies that go beyond just student-centered learning. It calls for a holistic approach that includes initiatives aimed at improving the educational level of parents, especially mothers, in marginalized tribal communities. By focusing on improving maternal education, we can help bridge the gap in emotional and social adjustment issues faced by children in these communities.

Additionally, while the study found a similar trend for fathers' education, with children of educated fathers showing higher emotional adjustment, the difference wasn't statistically significant for social adjustment. This highlights that maternal influence might be even more critical in the development of children's social skills, making it more important to prioritize education for women in these tribal areas. Considering these findings, educational programs aimed at the Kharia tribe, and other similar communities, should integrate parent-focused initiatives, particularly those targeting mothers. By addressing educational disparities at the family level, we can create a nurturing environment that supports the emotional and social development of children, ultimately helping them better integrate into broader society.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant role of gender and parental education in the emotional and social adjustment of Kharia tribal adolescents in Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal. The findings underscore that female students, particularly those with educated mothers, exhibit better adjustment in both emotional and social aspects. Education, especially maternal education, emerges as a key factor in fostering emotional resilience and social integration, indicating the need for targeted educational interventions. The study also emphasizes the importance of addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by indigenous communities, with a focus on improving educational access and healthcare services. Policy reforms that consider the unique cultural context of the Kharia tribe are essential for promoting sustainable development, enhancing emotional well-being, and ensuring the social integration of tribal adolescents into mainstream society. Future studies could explore deeper cultural nuances and their impact on adolescent development in other tribal regions of India.

### **Co-Author Contribution**

Author 1 carried out the fieldwork, prepared the literature review and overlooked the whole article's write up. Authors 2, 3 wrote the research methodology and did the data entry.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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**Data Availability Statement:** All relevant data are within the manuscript and its [Supporting Information](#) files.