

Perception of Adolescents about the Socio-emotional School Environment

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ABSTRACT The period of adolescence is marked by storm and stress. Most of the adolescent social, emotional development is influenced by the family, teachers, peers and environmental conditions. The present study is aimed at studying the perception of socio-emotional climate of school environment by adolescents. The study was conducted over a sample of 300 adolescents studying in 8th and 9th standards. From government school, one hundred and fifty (75 boys and 75 girls) and from private school, 150 (75 boys and 75 girls) were included in the sample. Socio-emotional School Climate Inventory was used to measure socio-emotional school climate. The results revealed that most of the respondents perceived their school climate as favorable to highly favorable. Respondents from private school had better perception of social climate as well as socio-emotional climate of schools against the government schools respondents. Government schools were perceived better for emotional climate of schools.

INTRODUCTION

Environment is complex and consists of many contexts such as school, home and community. All of these contexts have an impact on the development and must be taken into consideration when identifying factors that inhibit or support social and emotional development. In the changing scenario, children and adolescents spend a significant part of their life in school. This makes the school environment a common point of entry to provide services to children across many age groups (Farmer et al. 2003).

The environment in which the learner is living is an important factor which influences the learning of an individual. The learner interacts with the environment and is influenced by the environment. Organizational climate is assumed to have some effect upon the success of a school in accomplishing its objectives. The school is a place where the children are 'planted' to grow.

An individual's knowledge as well as attitude greatly depends upon the environmental situations in which he is nurtured and brought up. Francis (2001) concluded that students and teachers are fully conscious about environmental hazards, which adversely affect the educational achievement and learning of the students.

"School climate" is what the teachers perceive feel, and think best describes educational environment. The "climate" of an educational environment "hits one" the moment one steps onto the school premises. It influences the be-

havior of the members of the organization and reflects the characteristics of the organization. This section of the chapter gives studies related to school climate and its impact on children. Haskett and Kirstner (1991) revealed that abused children experienced disturbed social interactions outside the home environment, despite involvement in a day care setting that provides alternative peer and adult role models.

Katyal and Vasudevan (1998) studied the effects of socio- personal factors on academic stress among adolescents and believed that on excellence educational environment and multiplied parental expectations have given a rise to academic stress and strain. Further, it was revealed that special personal factors like joint family, non-working mothers, and fathers in business, low parental education and family income also act as adverse stressors. The emotional climate in home and schools play a role in a child's emotional growth. Children growing in environments that are abusive, troubled are at risk of poor social-emotional development (Thompson and Happold 2002).

School climate influences our socio-emotional development. The school having poor socio-emotional school climate leads to continuous tensions and conflicts among the teachers, between the head of the institution and teachers which is directly or indirectly passed on to the students. Improvement in school environment motivates the student to acquire higher moral values and academics performance. Successful schools ensure that all students master reading,

writing, math and science. However, most educators, parents, students, and the public support a broader educational agenda that involves enhancing students' social-emotional competence, character health and civic engagement. The present paper focused on the socio-emotional climate of existing school's.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of adolescents in the age group of 13-14 years and gender.

Sample Size

For selected the sample thirty schools of Hisar city from Haryana state, that is, 15 government (Haryana board affiliation) and 15 private (CBSE affiliation) schools. From each school, 5 boys and 5 girls were selected using proportionate random sampling method. Hence from all the 30 selected schools, there were 150 boys and 150 girls (300 sample) having 13-14 years of age hundred.

Sampling Techniques and Tools for Data Collection

Random sampling technique was employed for the adolescents. Socio-emotional School Climate Inventory developed by Sinha and Bhargava (1994) was used to measure socio-emotional school climate.

The inventory measures three dimensions viz. warmth and support, structure, and autonomy of school environment. There is no right or wrong answer. This inventory has been designed to evaluate student's perception towards school climate.

Data Collection

The data were collected with the help of self-prepared questionnaire for general information of respondents and standardized tests were used for the collection of data regarding school climate of the children. Principals of selected schools were contacted personally to get permission for conducting the research. Date and time of visit was finalized for each school well in advance.

The class teachers of selected classes of different schools were given prior information for the date and time of visit. The children were explained about importance and objectives of the study in the beginning. The data for independent and dependent variable were collected in group situation by using the developed schedule and standardized inventories. At a time one, schedule/inventory was given to the selected children. They were asked to read the instructions given in the inventory carefully before filling it.

The data was collected from all the 300 respondents and then the data was pooled and tabulated by the statistical techniques such as frequency, mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Personal profile of children under the present study considered the information with regard to some important ecological variables, viz., age, gender, present educational standard and ordinal position of the respondents.

Table 1 indicates that the most of the respondents were between 14 to 15 years of age, from both the school category as well as of the total sample. The sample equally represents both the sexes as per the requirement of the study. The table further highlights that 84 per cent respondents of private school were studying in the 9th standard against 42.67 per cent of government school respondents. Out of the total sample 63.33 per cent were in 9th standard followed by 36.67 per cent in the 8th standard.

Regarding the ordinal position of the children among their siblings the data highlighted that the high percentage of sample was first born in all three categories (Government and private) followed by second, third and fourth born.

The main variables considered for the socio-economic profile of the children under the present study were caste, family type, number of children, family size, parent's occupation and education and monthly family income. Data in Table 2 indicates that the highest percentage of respondents from both the schools belonged to middle caste (nearly 40.00%), followed by low caste in government schools (35.33%) and high caste in private schools (35.33%). Regarding family size, the data indicated that majority of the respondents of private schools came from nuclear family (89.33%) with small family size

Table 1: Personal profile of the adolescents

S. No.	Variables	Type of school		Total N=300f (%)
		Government n= 150f (%)	Private n= 150f (%)	
1.	Age			
	13 years to <14 years	59(39.33)	60(40.00)	119(39.67)
	14 years to <15 years	91(60.67)	90(60.00)	181(60.33)
2.	Gender			
	Male	75(50.00)	75(50.00)	150(50.00)
	Female	75(50.00)	75(50.00)	150(50.00)
3.	Educational Standard			
	8 th standard	86(57.33)	24(16.00)	110(36.67)
	9 th standard	64(42.67)	126(84.00)	190(63.33)
4.	Ordinal Position of the Child			
	First born	45(30.00)	65(43.33)	110(36.67)
	Second born	41(27.33)	59(39.34)	100(33.33)
	Third born	38(25.33)	24(16.00)	62(20.67)
	Fourth or later born	26(17.33)	2 (1.33)	28 (9.33)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

(49.33%). In contrast, 56 per cent respondents from government schools belonged to nuclear family with large family size (49.33%). Figure for the total sample revealed that highest percentage of respondents were from nuclear family system (72.67%) with medium family size (40.67%).

Regarding the number of children in family, nearing 80 per cent of government school respondents had three and above number of children against the respondents of private schools, having two to three children in their families (88.00%).

The table further highlights the data related to occupation of fathers and it reveals that out of the total sample, near about 50 per cent fathers were in service followed by business (25.66%). Comparatively the data indicated that 63.33 per cent fathers of private school's respondents were in service followed by business. In contrast almost 50 per cent fathers of government school's respondents were engaged in agriculture work or labour and the rest 50 per cent were in service or had their own business. Regarding mother's occupation, nearing 60 per cent mothers in all the three categories were housewives. None of the mother of private school's respondents was in labour or agriculture work. Comparatively a higher percentage of mothers of private school respondents (25.33%) were in service against 2.67 per cent mothers of government school respondents. The educational status of respondent's fathers highlighted that almost 97 per cent fathers of private school respondents were graduate and above, against almost 90 per cent of government

school respondents who were qualified ranging from 5th standard to 12th standard.

Further the data regarding the maternal education indicated that 61.33 per cent of government school respondent's mothers were illiterate, followed by 22.67 per cent educated up to 5th standard. In contrast, none of the mothers of private school respondents were in these two categories, which highlight that maternal education of private school respondents was comparatively better. Income of the family indirectly speaks of the personal and social profile of the respondents. The data in the table shows that 60 per cent respondents of government schools had their monthly family income below Rs. 5,000, followed by 35.33 per cent having income up to Rs. 10,000. In contrast 98 per cent respondents of private school had income more than Rs. 10,000 to 15,000 and above.

To get a comparative picture of the school climate of different schools on the basis of existing facilities, the categories of perception of respondents were formed on the basis of actual achieved score in Table 3.

Data regarding the social climate of the schools highlighted differences in the perception of respondents from both the schools. A slightly higher percentage (45.33%) of private school's respondents perceived the social climate of their schools as favorable against 40 per cent of government school's respondents. Equal percentages of respondents were having neutral perception of social climate in all the three categories. Further percentage of the respondents having unfavorable perception was slightly higher for the government school's respondents

Table 2: Socio-economic profile of the adolescents

S. No.	Variables	Type of school		Total N=300f (%)
		Government n= 150f (%)	Private n= 150f (%)	
1.	<i>Caste</i>			
	Low	53(35.33)	34(22.67)	87(29.00)
	Middle	62(41.33)	63(42.00)	125(41.67)
	High	35(23.34)	53(35.33)	88(29.33)
2.	<i>Family Type</i>			
	Nuclear	84(56.00)	134(89.33)	218(72.67)
	Extended	66(44.00)	16(10.67)	82(27.33)
3.	<i>Family Size</i>			
	Small	16(10.67)	74(49.33)	90(30.00)
	Medium	60(40.00)	62(41.33)	122(40.67)
	Large	74(49.33)	14 (9.34)	88(29.33)
4.	<i>No. of Children</i>			
	Single child	1 (0.66)	7 (4.67)	8 (2.67)
	Upto 2 children	25(16.67)	76(50.67)	101(33.67)
	Upto 3 children	61(40.67)	56(37.33)	117(39.00)
	Upto 4 children	39(26.00)	11 (7.33)	50(16.67)
	Upto 5 children	24(16.00)	0 (0.00)	24 (8.00)
5.	<i>Father's Occupation</i>			
	Labour	32(21.33)	0 (0.00)	32(10.67)
	Service	48(32.00)	95(63.33)	143(47.67)
	Business	25(16.67)	52(34.67)	77(25.66)
	Agriculture	45(30.00)	3 (2.00)	48(16.00)
6.	<i>Mother's Occupation</i>			
	Labour	21(14.00)	0 (0.00)	21 (7.00)
	Service	4 (2.67)	38(25.33)	42(14.00)
	Business	0 (0.00)	19(12.67)	19 (6.33)
	Agriculture	35(23.33)	0 (0.00)	35(11.67)
	Housewife	90(60.00)	93(62.00)	183(61.00)
7.	<i>Father's Education</i>			
	Illiterate	9 (6.00)	0 (0.00)	9 (3.00)
	Primary class	24(16.00)	0 (0.00)	24 (8.00)
	Middle class	40(26.67)	0 (0.00)	40(13.33)
	10+2 standard	69(46.00)	4 (2.67)	73(24.33)
	Graduation	8 (5.33)	26(17.33)	34(11.34)
	Post-graduation	0 (0.00)	63(42.00)	63(21.00)
	Certificate / diploma etc.	0 (0.00)	57(38.00)	57(19.00)
8.	<i>Mother's Education</i>			
	Illiterate	92(61.33)	0 (0.00)	92(30.67)
	5 th primary class	34(22.67)	0 (0.00)	34(11.33)
	8 th middle class	24(16.00)	7 (4.67)	31(10.33)
	10+2 standard	0 (0.00)	40(26.67)	40(13.33)
	Graduation	0 (0.00)	62(41.33)	62(20.67)
	Post-graduation	0 (0.00)	27(18.00)	27 (9.00)
	Certificate / diploma etc.	0 (0.00)	14 (9.33)	14 (4.67)
9.	<i>Family Monthly Income</i>			
	Below Rs. 5,000	90(60.00)	0 (0.00)	90(30.00)
	Rs. 5001 to 10,000	53(35.33)	3 (2.00)	56(18.67)
	Rs. 10,001 to 15,000	4 (2.67)	51(34.00)	55(18.33)
	Rs. 15,001 and above	3 (2.00)	96(64.00)	99(33.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

against private school's respondents. Regarding the emotional climate of the school, the data indicated that higher percentage of the private school's respondents were having a neutral perception (48.67%) followed by favorable (37.33%) and unfavorable (14.00%). Slightly higher percentage of government schools re-

spondents' (23.33%), against private schools, perceived emotional climate of the school as unfavorable.

Regarding the socio-emotional climate, the differences were clear and the data highlighted that 56 per cent respondents of private schools had favorable perception against 32 per cent of

Table 3: Perception of socio-emotional school climate on the basis of achieved scores

S. No.	Level of school Climate	Type of school		Total N=300f (%)
		Government n= 150f (%)	Private n= 150f (%)	
A.	<i>Socio-emotional Climate</i>			
	Favorable (58-66)	48(32.00)	84(56.00)	132(44.00)
	Neutral (49-57)	80(53.33)	53(35.33)	133(44.33)
	Unfavorable (40-48)	22(14.67)	13(8.67)	35(11.67)
B.	<i>Social Climate</i>			
	Favorable (31-35)	60(40.00)	68(45.33)	128(42.67)
	Neutral (26-30)	57(38.00)	57(38.00)	114(38.00)
	Unfavorable (20-25)	33(22.00)	25(16.67)	58(19.33)
C.	<i>Emotional Climate</i>			
	Favorable (28-31)	48(32.67)	56(37.33)	104(34.67)
	Neutral (24-27)	67(44.67)	73(48.67)	140(46.66)
	Unfavorable (20-23)	35(23.33)	21(14.00)	56(18.67)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

government school's respondents, whereas, 53.33 per cent respondents of government schools had neutral perception against 35.33 per cent of private school's respondents. Out of the total sample, almost equal percentage of respondents had neutral and favorable perception of socio-emotional climate of their school.

Data in Table 4 gives mean differences in perception of the socio-emotional school climate on the basis of gender and depicts that no significant differences, were found in the perception of boys and girls for social, emotional and socio-emotional climate of their schools. Further, the mean values elucidate table reveals the mean that girls perceived the social and socio-emotional climate as more favorable than that

of boys, except emotional climate, where the perception of boys was slightly more favorable.

The mean values and standard deviation depicting the perception of respondents from government and private schools have been given in Table 5. The data revealed that there were significant differences in the social climate of government and private schools having $Z=2.00^*$ at 5 per cent level of significance. Further no significant differences were observed in the emotional climate and socio-emotional climate of two types of schools. On the basis of mean, the data highlighted that the private schools had comparatively better social as well as socio-emotional climate, whereas, emotional climate of both the schools was almost same.

Table 4: Mean differences in socio-emotional school climate on the basis of gender N=300

S. No.	Level of school Climate	Gender		'Z' Value (X,±SD)
		Boys n= 150 (X,±SD)	Girls n= 150 (X,±SD)	
A.	Socio-emotional climate	54.78±5.35	55.14±5.04	0.59
B.	Social climate	28.94±3.87	29.51±3.62	1.30
C.	Emotional climate	25.86±3.12	25.63±3.17	0.63

Table 5: Mean differences in the socio-emotional school climate of government and private schools N=300

S. No.	Level of School Climate	Type of School		'Z' Value (X,±SD)
		Government n= 150 (X,±SD)	Private n= 150 (X,±SD)	
A.	Socio-emotional climate	54.52±5.69	55.39±4.64	1.44
B.	Social climate	28.79±4.00	29.66±3.45	2.00*
C.	Emotional climate	25.77±3.16	25.73±3.14	0.08

*Significant at 5 % level

DISCUSSION

Adolescence is that period where the crisis of identity is enhanced when the referred is considered neither as an adult nor a child. It is well documented that children who exposed to violence and/or maltreated often have difficulties negotiating their environments (Mazza and Overstreet 2000; Becker and Luther 2002; Rosenthal 2000). School is the primary environment in which all children must negotiate and function.

The developmental psychopathology approach is helpful to understanding ways in which the school context may support and enable optimal youth development, specifically development that leads to positive academic outcomes. The school setting has the potential to provide services that may have a positive impact on overall academic achievement as well as the emotional development of students. However, it is critical to note that teachers would have to play an expanded role in the lives of the students they teach in order for social-emotional needs to be addressed in schools. It is seen that irrespective of the type of school, most of the schools have favorable to highly favorable social and socio-emotional school climate. Nearly 1/4th of the respondents perceived that emotional climate of the schools as unfavorable. Comparatively, the private school's respondents had better perception of social, emotional and socio-emotional climate. School wise there were no significant differences in the emotional and socio-emotional climate of government and private schools, whereas, for social climate significant differences were found. Singh and Chhikara (2005) found that the social environment of urban schools was comparatively better than rural schools. Perception of boys and girls was same for the socio-emotional climate and its aspects and these results get support from the study of Nath (2008) who reported that there were no significant differences in the attitude of tribal boys and girls of tribal schools towards their school environment. The reasons which may be attributed to these results perceiving favorable to highly favorable socio-emotional school climate may be that now a days there is a competition amongst the schools to attract more number of the students. The attraction can only be created by providing quality facilities for the over all development of the child in all spheres,

that is, not only education but also extra curricular activities. Comparatively the private schools offer more facilities than government schools for their survival, which improves the perception of students toward the school environment of private schools. The government of Haryana, during the past few years has also tried its best to provide maximum facilities to retain the students but still it is comparatively of low level than that of private schools. The results also get support from the study of Saikia and Goswami (2008a) who reported significant differences in the school environment of rural and urban area, where urban schools were reported to be superior in school climate. The justification for the results showing better emotional climate in government schools may be that in government schools the teachers due to their permanent jobs do not pressurize the children for high achievement and hence maintain close emotional relations with children so that dropping rate is reduced. Whereas, in private school, teachers and authorities are often encourage the children for high academic performance and also to participate in co-curricular activities, so that the school gets public recognition. The results get strength from the study of Saikia and Goswami (2008b) which reported that students of government schools perceived the climate as more familiar and closed against the students of private school where the school climate was rated as more dominant.

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