

Psycho-social climate of school as a correlate of moral values among school children

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to assess the correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among school children. The present study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The respondents of the study were school going children (aged 10-12 years) randomly selected from Government High School and Senior Secondary Schools located in rural and urban areas of Ludhiana district. To assess the psycho-social climate of school of the selected respondents the School Environment Inventory (SEI) by K.S Mishra was used. For assessment of moral values among children Moral Value Scale (MVS) (Gupta and Sen, 1971) was used. It was observed that all the dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school were positively significantly correlated with total moral values but the dimension of rejection and control had negative correlation with moral values. The correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school with moral values was observed to be statistically significant among rural and urban children as well as among boys and girls, in positive direction indicating that perceived psycho-social climate of school is a positive correlate of moral values among children.

INTRODUCTION

Moral values and foundations are the soul of any society. Moral values are the product of our social environment. A value pattern is a group of associated values. A person has some desires and need i.e money, power, food security, happiness, wealth, recognition, approval, adventure and peace. The most powerful desire becomes his values. The word 'moral' comes from the Latin word 'mos' which means custom, practice; rule a way of accomplishing things. Therefore, it has come to mean, "belonging to manner and conduct of men", pertaining to right and wrong, and good in conduct. Morality is the internalisation of ideals, virtues and values

sanctioned by the society which become an integral part of the individual self through the process of development. It is the sum total of an individual's way of behaving that is judged through person's ethical rightness or wrongness (Sinha and Verma, 1992). It plays important role in shaping the personality features of the individual. Morality has two principal meanings: In its "descriptive" sense, morality refers to personal or cultural values, codes of conduct or social mores that distinguish between right and wrong in the human society. In its "normative" sense, morality refers directly to what is right and wrong, regardless of what specific individuals think (Gert and Bernard, 2008). Morality is inferred from a person's intrinsically motivated resistance to temptation and from

his guilt feelings that follows acts of transgression when he understands and also accepts prevailing standards of morality of the specific society (Kohlberg, 1963). School is the primary setting where individual first encounter the world of work.

Schools is the vital force in child's affecting development his motivation to learn the modes of remembering, reasoning, problem solving, social and moral understanding. School put emphasis on developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence. In school the most important factor is the atmosphere existing there.

School environment is a powerful force and plays a pivotal role in the all-round development of the child. A good school climate has been found to predict not only superior academic achievement but also positive self-esteem.

The school environment can have a dramatic impact on how children perceive. It can affect mood, motivation, creativity and productivity of children positively or negatively. A school's environment is the thread that connects the multitude of activities on a campus. In many respects this thread is almost invisible, yet everyone experiences its influence. The psycho-social school environment encompasses the attitudes, feelings, and values of students and staff. Physical and psychological safety, positive interpersonal relationships, recognition of the needs and success of the individual, and support for learning are all part of the psycho-social environment (Nazir and Seema, 2012).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The sample consisted of 200 school going children (100 rural and 100 urban) in the age group of 10-12 years, belonging to the rural and urban area of Ludhiana district. The sample was randomly selected from four

Government High Schools and Senior Secondary Schools located in rural and urban areas of Ludhiana district. From each school a sample of 50 children equally distributed over two sexes (25 boys and 25 girls) was selected. To assess the psycho-social climate of school of the selected respondents the School Environment Inventory (SEI) by K.S. Mishra was used. For assessment of moral values among children Moral Value Scale (MVS) (Gupta and Sen, 1971) was used.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Correlation between dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among Boys:

Analysis given in the Table 1 illustrates the correlation of various dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school and dimensions of moral values in boys. The dimensions of perceived psycho-social school climate *i.e.* 'creative stimulation' ($r=0.202$; $P<0.05$), 'cognitive encouragement' ($r=0.234$; $P<0.05$) and 'acceptance' ($r=0.257$; $P<0.05$) had a positive significant correlation with total moral values whereas 'permissiveness', 'rejection' and 'control' had non-significant correlation.

Further, the table gives a picture of correlation between dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school and dimensions of moral values. The matrix depicts that 'creative stimulation' ($r=0.417$, $P<0.01$) had a positive significant correlation with 'truthfulness'. Similarly 'cognitive encouragement' had positive significant correlation with 'honesty' ($r=0.197$, $P<0.05$). The dimension of psycho-social climate 'acceptance' had positive significant correlation with 'resistance to

Perceived psycho-social climate	Moral values				
	Truthfulness	Honesty	Resistance to stealing	Resistance to cheating	Total
Creative stimulation	0.417**	0.076	0.066	0.098	0.202*
Cognitive encouragement	0.133	0.197*	0.122	0.025	0.234*
Acceptance	0.042	0.000	0.229*	-0.031	0.257*
Permissiveness	-0.110	0.278**	0.241*	-0.130	-0.088
Rejection	-0.406**	-0.188	0.061	0.090	-0.178
Control	-0.030	-0.235*	0.045	0.064	-0.156
Total	0.063	0.268**	0.185	-0.034	0.214*

* and ** indicate significance of values at $P=0.05$ and 0.01 , respectively

stealing' ($r=0.229$; $P<0.05$). The dimension 'honesty' ($r=0.278$; $P<0.01$) and 'resistance to stealing' ($r=0.241$; $P<0.05$) had positive significant correlation with 'permissiveness'. 'rejection' ($r=-0.406$; $P<0.01$) had a significant negative correlation with 'truthfulness'. Similarly 'control' ($r=-0.235$; $P<0.01$) had showed negative correlation with 'honesty'. Further, the total perceived psycho-social climate of school had positive correlation (0.214 ; $P<0.05$) with the 'honesty'. The above results were supported by the study which states that there was a significant correlation between school environment and moral values.

Correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among girls :

Correlation between various dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school with moral values in girls is presented in the Table 2. Data revealed that 'creative stimulation' ($r=0.217$; $P<0.01$), 'cognitive encouragement' ($r=0.286$; $P<0.01$) and 'acceptance' dimension of psycho-social climate ($r=0.244$; $P<0.01$) had a positive significant correlation with total moral values whereas 'rejection' had significant negative correlation ($r=-0.288$; $P<0.01$) with total moral values.

The matrix further reveals the correlation between various dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school with dimensions of moral values. 'creative stimulation' was positively and significantly correlated with 'truthfulness' ($r=0.299$; $P<0.01$) and 'honesty' ($r=0.202$; $P<0.05$) which depicts that, the girls who perceive their psycho-social school environment in positive way were more 'trustworthy' and 'honest'. Similarly 'cognitive encouragement' (0.277 ; $P<0.01$), 'acceptance' ($r=0.346$; $P<0.01$) and 'control' ($r=0.368$; $P<0.01$) had a positive correlation with the 'truthfulness'. Further, the tables shows that 'rejection' had a negative

and significant correlation with 'honesty' ($r=-0.417$; $P<0.01$) similarly 'control' had a negative and significant correlation with resistance to cheating ($r=-0.199$; $P<0.01$). Total psycho-social climate of school had a significant positive correlation ($r=0.251$; $P<0.05$) with 'truthfulness'. It is apparent from the data that the whole perceived psycho-social climate of school had positive but no significant correlation with the moral values in girls. Manor (1987) found that the school is a very powerful agent in the process of socialization and development of the future citizen in society, the importance of both school environment and the school congruence with their students plays a very important role in value formation.

Correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among rural respondents:

Table 3 depicts the correlation between various dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values in rural area. The dimensions of 'creative stimulation' ($r=0.231$; $P<0.05$) and 'cognitive encouragement' ($r=0.243$; $P<0.05$) was positively and significantly correlated with total moral values except one dimension *i.e.* 'control' ($r=-0.280$; $P<0.05$) which had significant negative correlation with total moral values. All the other dimensions of psycho-social climate had non-significant but positive correlation with moral values.

The matrix further indicated a positive and significant correlation of 'creative stimulation' with the all dimensions of moral values *i.e.* 'truthfulness' ($r=0.319$; $P<0.01$), 'honesty' ($r=0.024$; $P<0.05$), 'resistance to stealing' ($r=0.198$; $P<0.05$) and 'resistance to cheating' ($r=0.216$; $P<0.05$). The inference could be drawn from above results that if children of rural area are provided positive psycho- social climate in school this could help to enhance their moral values. Similarly

Table 2 : Correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among girls

Perceived psycho-social climate	Moral values				
	Truthfulness	Honesty	Resistance to stealing	Resistance to cheating	Total
Creative stimulation	0.299**	0.202*	0.072	0.047	0.217*
Cognitive encouragement	0.277**	0.134	0.055	0.133	0.286**
Acceptance	0.346**	0.120	0.096	0.120	0.244*
Permissiveness	0.029	0.021	-0.164	-0.072	0.043
Rejection	-0.147	-0.417**	0.144	-0.154	-0.288**
Control	0.368**	-0.146	-0.132	-0.199*	-0.039
Total	0.251*	0.138	0.154	-0.083	0.201**

* and ** indicate significance of values at $P=0.05$ and 0.01 , respectively

‘cognitive encouragement’ showed a positive and significant correlation with ‘truthfulness’. But ‘rejection’ ($r=-0.204$; $P<0.05$) had negative and significant correlation with ‘truthfulness’. Also, dimension ‘control’ had negative correlation with all the dimensions of moral values *i.e.* dimension ‘honesty’ ($r=-0.220$; $P<0.05$), ‘resistance to stealing’ ($r=-0.205$; $P<0.05$) and ‘resistance to cheating’ ($r=-0.212$; $P<0.05$). Overall psycho-social climate had positive significant correlation with moral values ($r=0.243$; $P<0.05$). So, it could be concluded that teacher’s behaviour plays an important role in development of children’s moral judgment. There also exists a significant difference between children of rural and urban school environments on all the dimensions of school climate. The results consistent with the findings of Sarma and Swamy (2012) who also observed that the total school environment, creative stimulation of school environment, cognitive encouragement of school environment, permissiveness factor of school environment, acceptance factors of school environment effects the total creative thinking, originality and fluency factors of creative thinking of the students. While rejection and control factors of the school environment also effect the originality and fluency factors of the creative thinking of student. Findings are also supported

by Chaudhary and Kaur (1992) who found significant correlation between scores of moral judgement and teacher behaviour.

Correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among urban respondents:

Analysis given in the Table 4 illustrates the correlation between various dimensions of perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among urban respondents. The ‘rejection’ dimension of perceived psycho-social climate of school ($r=-0.454$, $p<0.01$) was negatively and significantly correlated with total moral values. As far as correlation between the dimensions of psycho-social climate of school and dimensions of moral values is concerned, the dimension ‘creative stimulation’ had a positive and significant correlation with ‘truthfulness’ ($r=0.244$; $P<0.01$) and ‘resistance to stealing’ ($r=0.219$; $P<0.05$), whereas similar results were also seen in the dimensions, ‘cognitive encouragement’ ($r=0.238$; $P<0.05$) and ‘acceptance’ ($r=0.199$; $P<0.05$) which were positively correlated with ‘resistance to stealing’. Similarly ‘permissiveness’ was found to have a significant positive correlation with dimensions of moral values. Furthermore, results indicated a negative and significant correlation of

Table 3 : Correlation between perceived psycho-social climate of school and moral values among rural respondents

Perceived psycho-social climate	Moral values				
	Truthfulness	Honesty	Resistance to stealing	Resistance to cheating	Total
Creative stimulation	0.319**	0.024*	0.198*	0.216*	0.231*
Cognitive encouragement	0.199*	0.238*	0.221*	0.213*	0.243*
Acceptance	0.141	0.002	0.221*	0.061	0.063
Permissiveness	0.056	0.056	0.083	0.072	0.014
Rejection	-0.204*	0.106	0.095	0.091	0.078
Control	-0.021	-0.220*	-0.205*	-0.212*	-0.208*
Total	0.184	0.225*	0.007	0.009	0.243*

* and ** indicate significance of values at $P=0.05$ and 0.01 , respectively

Table 4 : Correlation between perceived psychosocial climate of school and moral values among urban respondents

Perceived psycho-social climate	Moral values				
	Truthfulness	Honesty	Resistance to stealing	Resistance to cheating	Total
Creative stimulation	0.244*	0.085	0.219*	0.147	0.165
Cognitive encouragement	0.018	0.127	0.238*	0.180	0.090
Acceptance	0.010	0.080	0.199*	0.077	0.065
Permissiveness	0.228*	0.221*	0.202*	-0.034	0.077
Rejection	-0.395**	-0.544**	-0.319**	-0.196*	-0.454**
Control	0.232*	-0.234*	-0.162	0.095	-0.121
Total	0.094	0.300**	0.024	0.031	0.207*

* and ** indicate significance of values at $P=0.05$ and 0.01 , respectively

'rejection' with all the dimensions of moral values *i.e.* 'truthfulness' ($r=-0.395$; $P<0.01$), 'honesty' ($r=-0.544$; $P<0.01$), 'resistance to stealing' ($r=-0.319$; $P<0.01$) and 'resistance to cheating' ($r=-0.196$; $P<0.05$). Also, 'control' ($r=0.232$; $P<0.05$) showed positive correlation with 'truthfulness', though all other dimensions are negatively correlated.

Overall moral values had positive and significant correlation with 'honesty' ($r=0.300$; $P<0.01$). The total dimensions of moral values and psycho-social climate of the school had a significant positive correlation ($r=0.207$; $P<0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that boys and girls had comparable attitude towards their school environment. The results revealed that urban respondents perceived their school climate more controlled and on the other hand, rejection also had shown negative effect on the moral values of children. These results are supported by the study of Sharma (2008) who stated that creative stimulation, cognitive environment dimensions, permissiveness dimensions of school environment effects the creativity of school children to a certain extent.

Conclusion:

It was observed that psycho-social climate of school had positive and significant correlation with moral values. From the above results, it can be interpreted that better the quality of school environment higher will be the moral values. Research has shown that in schools where students perceive a better structured school, fair discipline practices, and more positive student-teacher relationships, the "probability and frequency of

subsequent behavioural problems" is lower. Furthermore, it was also found that when students perceived teacher-student support and student-student support, these perceptions were positively associated with self esteem.

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