



Understanding the School Climate Contributions to Students' Socialization

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Abstract

The objective of research study was to analyze the relationship between school climate and students' socialization at public secondary schools of the province of South Punjab. Schooling life may play an important role regarding students' socialization. But certain factors of school related to physical, social, and learning environment are being ignored that enriches the socialization process of students. The study was quantitative in nature, and correlational research design was used. Population of the study was students of Grade 10 from public high schools of South Punjab Province. Sampling was carried out using multi-stage sampling. The sample size of the study was n=419 including (52% male and 48% female students). Data was analyzed through SPSS. It was found that was a significant positive relationship between school climate and students' socialization. School management should take steps to enhance students' socialization with the positive role of school climate.

Keywords: School Climate, Secondary Level of Education, Students' Socialization

1. Introduction

Socialization may play an important role in an individual's development, shaping their understanding of the world and how they relate to others. Through socialization, people learn societal norms, beliefs, attitudes, and values, which are essential for functioning within a community (Berg, 2022). The process of socialization begins from an early age and continues throughout one's life. It occurs through various means, such as family interactions, education, peer relationships, and involvement in social groups or communities. By engaging in conversations with others, individuals can express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns, which often leads to problem-solving and emotional support (Gupta, 2016). The socialization process usually more takes place in schooling life. Children who attend schools often spend more attention on participating in desired activities, engaging themselves in social interactions, and participating in different tasks that are associated with the role of students (Kaufman, 2000). Students spend most of the time of day at school which affects their socialization process through the development of cognitive and social-emotional learning (Durlak, 2011 & Luminita, 2022). School climate is a multi-dimensional construct. It is connoted as the "value of school life" and the quality of social relationships (Cantero, 2016 & Ebbert, 2021). It refers to the social character of a school in the shape of mutual relationships among students and teachers. Furthermore, it includes the learning and teaching process, values and norms, and practices regarding students' social development (Olsen, 2018).

A positive school climate is associated with several benefits, including improved student engagement, reduced incidents of bullying and violence, increased student motivation, and enhanced teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. On the other hand, a negative school climate shows adverse consequences including reduced academic performance, elevated absenteeism, and a rise in dropout rates. To foster a positive school climate, educational leaders and policymakers often implement evidence-based practices and interventions. These may include promoting inclusivity, supporting social-emotional learning programs, providing professional development for teachers to improve classroom management and positive discipline strategies, and involving students and parents in decision-making processes (La Salle, 2018).

2. Literature Review

The literature offers promising evidence that a positive school environment is associated with improved social learning, reduced absenteeism, better conduct, and higher academic achievements among students (Durlak, 2011). Two comprehensive meta-analyses, involving a total of 265 research reports, investigated the effects on students in six key areas: social and emotional skills, self and peer attitudes, pro-social behavior, behavior problems, emotional well-being, and academic achievement. The findings from these studies indicate that creating a positive school environment and integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) can yield positive outcomes in the lives of young people (Weissberg, 2017). Different Studies revealed that when the socialization of children increases, they also get the confidence and capabilities required to make relations in their surroundings, make solutions to problems, and handle challenges (Parlakian, 2003). According to Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a large-scale data study that found that SEL-guided children have good opinions about school and have improved average 11th percentile points on a standard achievement exam when compared to those who did not. The study also suggests that school administrators (such as educators and student consultants) may effectively execute these school-based programs and that these programs can be paired with traditional teaching methods. A research study was conducted by Ku and Hu (2001) to analyze the effects of teacher-student interaction on students' socialization. It was found that students' socialization increased due to effective interaction among teachers and students.

Previous studies have emphasized the significance of school climate in influencing students' academic performance at a national level (Naila, 2014; Dulay, 2017 & Jabeen, 2022). In a research study conducted by Dagnew (2014) in Bahir Dar Secondary Schools, Ethiopia, the influence of school climate on the academic accomplishments of students was investigated. Data was collected using the School Climate Questionnaire with a Likert scale having 05-points with 31 items. The data analysis employed various statistical tools such as standard deviation, mean, percentage, and correlation of the Pearson coefficient. The findings of the study revealed a correlation between academic success and several elements of school climate,

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including relationships between teachers and students, relationships among students, school administration, and school academic alignment.

Maxwell (2017) investigated how school climate influences the academic success of students. The research revealed a noteworthy link between the school environment and students' academic performance. In Pakistan, some research has explored the socialization process of students (Urusa, 2016). However, there is a notable gap in research regarding the connection between school climate and students' socialization at a national level. To address this knowledge gap, the researcher has developed the study titled "Understanding the School Climate Contributions on Students' Socialization" as an initial step to explore this relationship.

3. Material and Methods

The study was carried out through a quantitative approach, and correlational research design. The population of the study was all male and female students of public secondary schools studying in class 10 in session 2020-21 of the South Punjab province, including three divisions i.e. Bahawalpur, Multan, and DG Khan (N = 195827). Sampling was carried out using multi-stage sampling. From each division of South Punjab province, 01 district was selected using simple random sampling. Thus 03 districts that were 20% of the population were selected. At the second stage, using stratified random sampling, each district was divided into two strata. i.e. rural and urban schools. There were 08 public secondary schools selected from rural and urban areas with a ratio of 04 schools from each stratum. Thus, 24 public secondary schools were selected as samples from 03 districts. At the third stage, each stratum was divided into two sub-strata i.e. girls' schools and boys' schools. 02 boys and 02 girls' public secondary schools were selected from each stratum using stratified random sampling. At the fourth stage, students from each school of class 10 were chosen after assigning them roll numbers. 28 students of even roll numbers of class 10 were selected from each school using simple random sampling. Thus 672 students were taken as a sample. After data screening, the final sample remained at 419.

Table 1: Adequacy of Sample Size

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.948
	Approx. Chi-Square	27074.843
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	2556
	Sig.	.000

Table 1 shows that the sample size is sufficient because the value of KMO is .948, which is higher than the threshold value of 0.50. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant because the significant value is .000 (0.05), which denotes that there is a correlation between the items.

4. Instrumentation

Two research instruments were adapted. The first questionnaire was the School Climate Student Questionnaire (SCSQ)" developed by Dr. Georgia Pashiardi, and "Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ)" developed by CASEL (2008). Both questionnaires were translated into the Urdu language for a better understanding of students. Data was collected through the survey-type method. The researcher collected data through personal contact with students. Surveys containing the demographic and main understudy variables were distributed to the 672 respondents, and the researcher received 524 responses. Thus return rate remained at 77%. After data screening, total sample size was 419 students of class 10 in secondary schools of South Punjab.

Table 2: Detail of School Climate Student Questionnaire (SCSQ)

Factors	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
Physical Environment	06	.948	.045	-1.315
Social Environment	08	.934	-.766	-1.373
Learning Environment	20	.911	-.258	1.19
Overall	34	.772	-.263	-.660

Table 2 presents the details of the School Climate Survey Questionnaire (SCSQ), which comprises three factors: physical environment, social environment, and learning environment of the school. The questionnaire includes a total of 34 items, with 6 items related to the physical environment, 8 items to the social environment, and 20 items to the learning environment. To assess the internal consistency of the SCSQ, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated, yielding values of .948 for the physical environment, .934 for the social environment, .911 for the learning environment, and an overall scale value of .772. These values fall within the accepted range of (.70 to .95), indicating a satisfactory level of reliability for the questionnaire. The values of skewness and kurtosis lie between the recommended range of -2 and +2 for skewness and -7 and +7 for kurtosis (Bryne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). Thus, the data fulfilled skewness and kurtosis based assumption of normal distribution.

Table-3 provides the details of the Social Emotional Competency Questionnaire (SECQ), which encompasses five factors: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. The questionnaire comprises a total of 25 items, with 5 items dedicated to each factor. To assess the internal consistency of the SECQ, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated, resulting in values of .904 for self-awareness, .920 for social awareness, .929 for self-management, .908 for relationship management, .901 for responsible decision-making, and an overall

scale value of .838. These values fall within the accepted range of (.70 to .95), indicating a satisfactory level of reliability for the questionnaire. These values fall within the accepted range of (.70 to .95), indicating a satisfactory level of reliability for the questionnaire. The values of skewness and kurtosis lie between the recommended range of -2 and +2 for skewness and -7 and +7 for kurtosis (Bryne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). Thus, the data fulfilled skewness and kurtosis based assumption of normal distribution.

Table3: Detail of Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ)

Factors	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Awareness	05	.904	.057	-1.202
Social Awareness	05	.920	.152	-1.257
Self-Management	05	.929	-.031	-1.454
Relationship Management	05	.908	.117	-1.207
Responsible Decision Making	05	.901	-.068	-1.222
Total	25	.838	.165	-.961

5. Results and Discussion

Table 4: Students’ Perception about Effectiveness of School Climate

Factors	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Physical Environment	419	1.00	5.00	3.1	1.315
Social Environment	419	1.00	5.00	3.5	1.062
Learning Environment	419	1.00	5.00	3.4	1.192

Table 4 describes the students’ perception of the effectiveness of school climate and its components. The students who responded to questionnaire were 419. On each item of the given scale, each respondent could receive a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 5. For each scale, the minimum score was 3. A score of 3 or more was regarded as high, and a score of three or less as low. The mean score shows that school climate was better including physical environment (M = 3.02, SD = 1.31), social environment (M = 3.51, SD = 1.06), and learning environment (M = 3.12, SD = 1.19).

Table 5: Students’ Perception about Students’ Socialization

Factors	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Self-Awareness	419	1.00	5.00	2.5	1.17
Social Awareness	419	1.00	5.00	2.7	1.15
Self-Management	419	1.00	5.00	2.8	1.20
Relationship Management	419	1.00	5.00	2.6	1.21
Responsible Decision-Making	419	1.00	5.00	2.3	1.10

Table-5 describes the students’ perception about students’ socialization. The students who responded to questionnaire were 419. On each item of the given scale, each respondent could receive a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 5. For each scale, the minimum score was 3. A score of 3 or more was regarded as high, and a score of three or less as low. The mean score shows that socialization process of students was not good in term of self-awareness (M = 2.5, SD = 1.17), social awareness (M = 2.7, SD = 1.15), self-management (M = 2.8, SD = 1.20), relationship management (M = 2.6, SD = 1.21), and responsible decision making (M = 2.3, SD = 1.10).

Table 6: Levels of Students’ Socialization (n=419)

Sr.no	Score	Level of Students’ Socialization	N	Percentage
1.	Up to 112	Below Average	146	35%
2.	113-125	Average	139	33%
3.	126-150	Above Average	134	31%

Table-6 presents the levels of Students' Socialization observed in public secondary schools of South Punjab. The assessment of students' socialization levels was divided into three categories: below average, average, and above average. Scores ranging from up to 112 were categorized as below average, scores between 113 and 125 were considered average, and scores between 126 and 150 were classified as above average. The results revealed that the majority of students (35%) were classified in the below-average category, while 33% fell into the average category, and 31% were placed in the above-average category. It shows that the level of students’ socialization was not better at the secondary level of education in public secondary schools of south Punjab.

Table-7 presents the findings regarding the relationship between school climate factors and students' socialization in public secondary schools of South Punjab. The Pearson correlation coefficient values indicate that there was a significant positive correlation between physical environment ($r = .292^{**}$, $p = .000$), social environment ($r = .226^{**}$, $p = .000$), and learning environment ($r = .196$, $p = .000$) in relation to students' socialization. Consequently, it can be concluded that was a robust and

significant relationship between the physical environment, social environment, and learning environment in promoting students' socialization in public secondary schools of South Punjab.

Table 7: Relationship between School Climate and Students' Socialization

School Climate	Mean	S.D	Students' Socialization	
			Pearson-r	p-value
Physical Environment	3.02	1.31	.292**	.000
Social Environment	3.51	1.06	.226**	.000
Learning Environment	3.12	1.19	.196**	.000

**P< 0.01, *P< 0.05

Table 8: Contribution of School Climate in Students' Socialization (n=419)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B (Coefficient)	t	Sig.	R Square
School Climate	Students' Socialization	.320	14.270	.000	.203

**P< 0.01, *P< 0.05

Table-8 shows the impact of school climate on students' socialization. The R Square value (.203) indicates that the independent variable, which is school climate, positively influences 20.3% of the variance in students' socialization at public secondary schools in South Punjab. Additionally, the Beta value ($\beta=.320$, $p=**.000$) is statistically significant at the **P< 0.01 level, indicating a strong and significant relationship between school climate and students' socialization.

5.1. Discussion

The discussion section presents a comparison of the results of the study at hand with the results of previous research studies. The purpose of the research study was to explore the effectiveness of school climate, and level of socialization of secondary school students. Furthermore, the study was carried out to ascertain the relationship between the socialization of students and the school climate at secondary schools in Punjab. The population of the study was the students studying in class 10th of government high schools in Punjab. 419 students were taken as a sample of the study. The results of the study highlighted that there was a significant positive relationship between school climate and students' socialization. The results revealed that a one-unit increment in school climate can bring 20.3% positive change in the socialization of students. The school climate including learning, physical, and social environment was better than schools. However, the level of students' socialization was not better including awareness of themselves, knowledge about others, managing relations, and ability to plan and make decisions wisely. The findings of this study aligned with previous research conducted by Dwyer, and Osher (2000), which concluded that when students feel socially and physically safe in their school environment, they are more likely to exhibit appropriate behavior. The social environment of the school, including school rules and norms, contributes to students' ability to behave properly within the school setting. Additionally, the physical environment, encompassing the school building and practices, helps prevent any issues within the school. The findings also aligned with the results of the National Institute of Mental Health (2010). The children who are in school and are socially and emotionally healthy are more self-assured, and outgoing, and maintain positive relationships with their peers. They are also better able to handle challenges and have strong language and communication skills. Furthermore, the findings of the study also aligned Other studies by Cohen & Pickeral (2007) and Durlak (2011) also support the idea that a positive school climate plays a crucial role in enhancing the socialization of students in schools and promoting a conducive environment for teaching and learning. These findings highlight the importance of fostering a safe and supportive school climate to enhance students' behavior and overall academic experience. The findings of the study at hand also showed the association between school climate and its factors and students' socialization in public secondary schools of South Punjab. It was found that there was a significant and positive connection between the physical environment, social environment, and learning environment with students' socialization. The findings of the study aligned with the previously conducted research studies (Pashiardi, 2008; Naila, 2014; Shazina, 2016 & Mantz, 2017).

6. Conclusion

The study has provided an affiliation between school climate and students' socialization process. It was concluded that school climate was better in term of physical environment, social environment, and learning environment. Moreover, level of students' socialization was not better including awareness of themselves, knowledge about others, managing relations, and ability to plan and make decisions wisely at secondary schools of Punjab. Furthermore, there was a significant positive relationship between school climate and students' socialization. The results revealed that a one-unit increment in school climate can bring 20.3% positive change in the socialization of students. There should be steps taken by the school management including teachers to enhance the level of socialization of students through the positive role of school climate. Seminars and workshops should be arranged at the school level in this regard.

6.1. Recommendations

- ✓ There should be steps taken by the school management to enhance students' socialization with positive role of school climate in the shape of physical environment, social environment, and learning environment.
- ✓ The schools' administration should take step to improve level of students' socialization n term of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision making.

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