SCHOOL CLIMATE AND STRESS COPING STRATEGIES
OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dr. S. Arockia Elizabethine Josephine,
Assistant Professor, Stella Matutina College of Education, Chennai

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to find out the significant difference among high school students in their School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Medium of Instruction and Type of Management. Survey method was adopted for the study. The sample consists of 500 high school students (IX and X Standard) in and around Chennai district. Simple Random Sampling Technique was used. Perceived School Climate Scale (1993) developed by the Centre for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) and Stress Coping Strategies Questionnaire constructed by Investigator were used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics, Differential Analysis and Correlation Analysis were used to analyze the data. The analysis of the data revealed that there is significant relationship and differences were found in student’s Self-Efficacy and its dimensions and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Medium of Instruction and Type of Management.

Introduction

Education and training plays a vital role in supporting the individual and society to develop their social, economic and cultural aspects, as well as in promoting the development of human capital that is essential for economic growth. Modern education, schools in particular, aims to commune knowledge, skills and behaviour required by young people in order to become efficient in society. Basically, schools are institutions where students learn to value what society wishes them to contribute to their encroachment and development. The school should become a safe and positive place which assumes the role of a facilitator in the learning process promotes positive relationships and helps students be better equipped to face the challenges in front. The school climate could have a positive impact on the student or it could simply turn itself into a barrier to learning. It could otherwise delay or facilitate the academic potential in each and every student. Thus school climate influences the stress coping strategies of school students.
Need for the Study

School climate has often been described as the “quality and character of school life”, together with both social and physical aspects of the school, that can positively promote behaviour, school achievement, and the social and emotional development of students. Stress coping is an individual’s adaptation to the environment, meaning an individual’s efforts to maintain control over events. Poor teacher and peer relationships, a lack of peer support, bullying, victimisation, and higher safety concerns are connected to decline in psychological adjustment such as self-esteem, and emotional health problems such as symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendency. School climate is not only imperative for promoting mental and emotional wellbeing among adolescents but also positive behavioural change. School climate factors of feeling safe at school, feeling connected to school, and peer support are all protective of mental and emotional wellbeing over the transition period while connectedness to teachers is protective of emotional wellbeing.

Essentially, school systems are designed to develop the competence of students so they are more capable of controlling their environment. The school acts as the individual’s developmental engine. From the learner’s perspective, the school places one constantly into situations with which one must cope. A student can view everyday school life in one of two ways: 1) as a positive challenge which encourages the student to test his/her abilities and perform better, or 2) as a threat which creates fear, anxiety, and stress. It is well known that students’ academic success and school behaviour are influenced by many factors such as the students’ abilities or socioeconomic background. Also, pedagogical beliefs have their own role to play. Autonomy means that a student feels him/herself as an agent of his/her actions. If the learner is forced to perform compulsory tasks and has no chance to choose them, his/her autonomy is decreased. Hence the most important conclusion is that the school climate parameters, especially the school value system and teachers’ attitudes toward students as perceived by the latter, influence students’ optimistic acceptance of life, their psychological and physiological well-being, and academic success. So the investigator has taken up this present study for investigation.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the relationship between School Climate of high school students and their Stress Coping Strategies.
To ascertain whether there is any difference among high school students in their School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Medium of Instruction.

To ascertain whether there is any difference among high school students in their School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Type of Management.

Hypotheses

H.1. There is significant relationship between School Climate of high school students and their Stress Coping Strategies.

H.2. There is no significant difference among high school students in their School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Medium of Instruction.

H.3. There is no significant difference among high school students in their School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies based on their Type of Management.

Method: The researcher adopted the survey method to study the School Climate and its dimensions and Stress Coping Strategies of high school students.

Population and Sample: The population for the present study consisted of the high school students in and around Chennai district. 500 high school students (IX and X Standard) were taken for this investigation.

Tools: Perceived School Climate Scale (1993) developed by the Centre for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) and Stress Coping Strategies Questionnaire constructed by Investigator.

Data Analysis:

Table 1. Pearson Correlation Co-efficient between School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Climate on Stress Coping Strategies</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Support</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.283**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.233**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Autonomy Climate</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.219**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Consistency in School Rules</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.132**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall School Climate</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.314**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Denotes significant at 1% level

a. Correlation Co-efficient between School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies

The correlation co-efficient between Teacher Support and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.283, which indicate 28.3 percentage positive relationships between Teacher Support and
Stress Coping Strategies; Peer Support and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.233, which indicate 23.3 percentage positive relationships between Peer Support and Stress Coping Strategies; Student Autonomy Climate and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.219, which indicate 21.9 percentage positive relationships between Student Autonomy Climate and Stress Coping Strategies; Clarity and Consistency in School Rules and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.132, which indicate 13.2 percentage positive relationships between Clarity and Consistency in School Rules and Stress Coping Strategies; and Overall School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.314, which indicate 31.4 percentage positive relationships between Overall School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies and all these socio psychological variables are significant at 1% level.

**Table 2. Summary of Results of School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies with respect to Medium of Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamil Mean</td>
<td>Tamil SD</td>
<td>English Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>103.87</td>
<td>18.73</td>
<td>97.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Coping Strategies</td>
<td>104.51</td>
<td>10.04</td>
<td>101.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. ** denotes significant at 1% level
2. * denotes significant at 5% level

**b. School Climate based on Medium of Instruction**

From the Table 2, it can be observed that the mean score of Overall School Climate of Tamil Medium students (103.87) is higher than the English Medium students (97.51). The t-value calculated for the Overall School Climate with respect to Medium of Instruction reveals that the students studying in Tamil and English Medium differ significantly among each other at 0.01 level.

**Table 3. Summary of Results School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies with respect to Type of Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Type of Management</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Government - Aided</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall School Climate</td>
<td>102.26b (18.62)</td>
<td>101.67b (16.48)</td>
<td>96.82a (13.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Coping Strategies</td>
<td>103.74b (10.25)</td>
<td>102.55b (10.40)</td>
<td>101.84a (10.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD  
2. ** denotes significant at 1% level. 
3. * denotes significant at 5% level. 
4. Different alphabet among Type of Management denotes significant difference at 5% level using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT)

c. School Climate based on Type of Management

From the Table 3, it can be observed that the mean score of Overall School Climate is more or less same for the Government (102.26) and Government-Aided School (101.67) students and the same is low for the Private School students (96.82).

The F-ratio calculated for the Overall School Climate with respect to Type of Management reveals that the students studying in different managements differ significantly at 0.01 level and in the dimension Clarity and Consistency in School Rules the students studying in different school managements differ significantly at 0.05 level.

Further, analysis of differences between the individual groups tested through Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) reveals that in the overall School Climate Government and Government-Aided School students differ significantly from the Private School students. However, students studying in Government and Government-Aided Schools do not differ.

Findings

1. The correlation co-efficient between Overall School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies is 0.314, which indicates 31.4 percentage positive relationships is available between overall School Climate and Stress Coping Strategies.

2. The mean score of Overall School Climate of Tamil Medium students (103.87) is higher than the English Medium students (97.51). The Overall School Climate with respect to Medium of Instruction reveals that the students studying in Tamil and English Medium differ significantly among each other at 0.01 level.

3. The mean score of Overall School Climate is more or less same for the Government (102.26) and Government-Aided School (101.67) students and the same is low for the Private School students (96.82). The Overall School Climate with respect to Type of Management reveals that the students studying in different managements differ significantly at 0.01 level and in the dimension Clarity and Consistency in School Rules the students studying in different school managements differ significantly at 0.05 level.
Educational Implications

School climate is the factor which plays an important role in the stress coping of adolescents. Management should appoint an academic counsellor to monitor and categorise the performance of the students. It should convene a meeting comprising Class teacher, Counsellor, Parents to discuss the overall performance of the students and should provide proper class room, rest room facilities to ensure comfort stay of the students in the school. Management should organise health check-up campaigns to address health issues of students and adolescent age problems. Management should conduct and organise events through NSS, NCC, Sports, and Social Clubs to promote extra-curricular activities for students to develop their over-all personality. Management should monitor the teacher – student relationship through proper feedback system. This will help both students and teacher to control their behaviour in the classroom which ensures stress-free academic climate.

Conclusion:

The present study provides significant information pertaining to the relationship between stress coping and school climate among students. This finding further supports the importance of recognizing the stress coping strategies, not to let the problems affect students’ health. Parents and educators should be aware of the importance of stress coping and existence of psychological problems during adolescent period so that these problems might be under control. It is also seen that this study is of great relevance in the field of adolescent stress coping and in maintaining their mental health.

References


