A COMPARISON OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL CLIMATE OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The socio-emotional climate of schools plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic, social, and emotional development. This study examines and compares the socio-emotional climate of government and private schools to identify the differences in the quality of social and emotional interactions within these institutions. A sample of 300 students, comprising 200 from government schools and 100 from private schools, was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a standardized socio-emotional climate scale developed by Dr. Renuka Kumari and Smt. Rajni Bhargava in 1994., and statistical techniques, including t-tests, were employed for analysis. The findings reveal significant differences in the socio-emotional climate of government and private schools. Private schools demonstrated a more positive socio-emotional climate, with higher mean scores in both social and socio-emotional dimensions, while emotional climate showed no significant difference between the two types of institutions. The results suggest that private schools excel in creating an environment that fosters better social interactions and integrated socio-emotional development, likely due to superior resources, smaller class sizes, and greater parental involvement. Conversely, government schools face challenges in these areas, which may impact students' overall development. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing the socio-emotional climate in government schools through targeted interventions such as teacher training, social-emotional learning programs, and improved infrastructure. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for policymakers and educators to focus on bridging the gap between government and private schools to ensure holistic development and equity in educational opportunities.

Keywords: socio-emotional climate, government schools, private schools, social interactions, emotional support, student development

INTRODUCTION

The socio-emotional climate of a school is a crucial factor influencing students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall personal development. It encompasses the quality of social interactions, emotional support, and the relational dynamics between students, teachers, and the broader school community. Schools are not merely institutions for academic instruction; they are social and emotional ecosystems where students develop critical life skills, build relationships, and learn to navigate complex social environments. Therefore, the socio-emotional climate serves as a foundation for fostering a conducive environment for holistic student growth.

The type of school—government or private—plays a significant role in shaping the socio-emotional climate. Government schools often face challenges such as limited resources, larger class sizes, and inadequate infrastructure, which can negatively impact the social and emotional interactions within the school community. In contrast, private schools generally have access to better resources, smaller class sizes, and higher parental involvement, which are conducive to creating a more supportive and enriching socio-emotional environment. These differences highlight the need to explore and compare the socio-emotional climates of government and private schools to understand their implications for student development.

Research has shown that a positive socio-emotional climate is linked to improved academic achievement, enhanced social skills, and better emotional regulation among students. Social interactions, peer relationships, and teacher-student connections are integral components of this climate, contributing to students' sense of belonging and self-esteem. Emotional support within schools helps students manage stress, build resilience, and develop emotional intelligence. When these social and emotional dimensions are integrated effectively, they create a socio-emotional climate that fosters personal and academic success.

The current study aims to compare the socio-emotional climate of government and private schools to identify differences in social and emotional dimensions across these two types of institutions. By analysing the key components of the socio-emotional climate—social climate, emotional climate, and overall socio-emotional climate—this research seeks to provide insights into the strengths and challenges of both government and private schools. The findings of this study will have implications for educators, policymakers, and school administrators, offering strategies to enhance the socio-emotional climate of schools and promote equitable student development.

This study is particularly significant in the context of the growing recognition of the role of socio-emotional learning (SEL) in education. Understanding the disparities in the socio-emotional climate of government and private schools can help bridge the gap and ensure that all students, regardless of the type of institution they attend, benefit from a supportive and nurturing school environment.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The socio-emotional climate of a school directly influences the holistic development of students, shaping their academic, emotional, and social trajectories. It is well-documented that a positive school environment fosters a sense of belonging, reduces behavioural problems, and enhances students' ability to manage emotions and establish healthy relationships. However, significant disparities exist between the socio-emotional climates of government and private schools due to differences in resources, infrastructure, and the quality of teacher-student interactions. These disparities often lead to unequal opportunities for student growth and development. Government schools, particularly in developing regions, face several challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, limited funding, and insufficient teacher training, which may hinder the creation of a nurturing socio-emotional environment. On the other hand, private schools, with their smaller class sizes, better infrastructure, and higher levels of parental engagement, are generally better equipped to provide a positive socio-emotional climate. These differences raise critical questions about equity in education and the quality of schooling across different types of institutions. This study addresses the gap in understanding how the socio-emotional climate varies between government and private schools and its implications for students. While prior research has explored the significance of social and emotional learning (SEL), limited attention has been given to the comparative analysis of the socio-emotional climates in government and private schools, particularly in the Indian context. Given the increasing emphasis on socio-emotional learning as a key component of education, this study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the strengths and weaknesses of socio-emotional climates in both types of schools. By identifying the differences in socio-emotional climates, this research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and administrators to design interventions aimed at improving the socio-emotional environment of schools. It highlights the need to allocate resources effectively, implement socio-emotional learning programs, and train teachers to create supportive and inclusive school environments. This study is significant not only for improving individual schools but also for contributing to broader educational reforms that

promote equity and inclusivity in schooling. The findings of this research will pave the way for developing strategies to enhance the socio-emotional climate in government schools, ensuring that all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, have access to a nurturing and supportive educational environment.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The social climate of a school refers to the quality of interpersonal relationships among students, teachers, and administrators, as well as the overall sense of community within the school. Research by Anderson (1982) emphasized that a positive social climate fosters collaboration, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging, which significantly enhances students' academic performance and emotional well-being. A study by Johnson and Stevens (2001) found that schools with a strong sense of community tend to exhibit lower dropout rates and higher student satisfaction levels. Moreover, social climate influences students' peer relationships, disciplinary practices, and school engagement, as highlighted in the work of Freiberg and Stein (1999). However, disparities in the social climate between government and private schools have been noted, often attributed to differences in resources, teacher-student ratios, and parental involvement. The emotional climate of a school pertains to the emotional tone and atmosphere, shaped by interactions, attitudes, and behaviours within the school community. It is influenced by the quality of relationships, teacher empathy, and the level of emotional support provided to students. Hamre and Pianta (2001) argued that a positive emotional climate enhances students' ability to regulate emotions, develop resilience, and build healthy relationships. Similarly, Roeser et al. (2000) highlighted that emotionally supportive schools contribute to students' mental health and reduce anxiety and stress. Government and private schools may differ in their ability to create an emotionally supportive environment, with private schools often benefiting from smaller class sizes and access to better resources. The socio-emotional climate combines the social and emotional aspects of the school environment, focusing on how these dimensions interact to influence students' overall development. According to Zins et al. (2004), a positive socio-emotional climate enhances students' social skills, emotional intelligence, and academic achievement. Collaborative activities, effective communication, and emotionally intelligent teachers play a critical role in creating a supportive socio-emotional climate. Studies by Wentzel (1998) and Jennings & Greenberg (2009) suggest that socio-emotional learning (SEL) programs are effective in improving the socio-emotional climate, particularly in schools with diverse student populations. The integration of SEL programs is often more prominent in private

schools, which may explain their stronger socio-emotional environments compared to government schools. Several studies have compared the social, emotional, and socio-emotional climates of government and private schools. Findings by Pandey and Sharma (2015) indicate that private schools often outperform government schools in these dimensions due to better infrastructure, teacher training, and parental involvement. On the other hand, government schools face challenges such as larger class sizes, limited resources, and less parental engagement, which impact their overall school climate. However, studies also highlight that government schools can bridge these gaps through targeted interventions, such as teacher training programs, community engagement, and the implementation of socio-emotional learning frameworks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the social climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.
2. To study the emotional climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.
3. To study the socio-emotional climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H$_0$1. There exists no significant difference in social climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.

H$_0$2. There exists no significant difference in emotional climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.

H$_0$3. There exists no significant difference in socio-emotional climate of Private Schools and Government Schools.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The population for this study constitutes senior secondary school students studying in rural as well as urban Government and Private Schools of Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh. Sample was drawn by following random sampling techniques. The sample of the study consists of 300 senior secondary school students.

Tool for Data Collection

Socio-Emotional School Climate Inventor developed by Dr. Renuka Kumari and Smt. Rajni Bhargava in 1994 was used for collection of data from sampled students.

Statistical Techniques Used

To find the significant difference in social, emotional and socio-emotional climate of senior secondary school students studying in Government and Private Schools t-test was used.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table-1

't' Value Showing Significance of Difference in Mean Scores of Socio-Emotional Climate of Government Schools and Private Schools Students

Dimension	Government Schools (N=200)		Private Schools (N=100)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Social Climate	20.66	5.398	24.70	4.791	6.596**
Emotional Climate	26.75	4.995	27.32	4.890	0.987
Socio-Emotional Climate	47.14	9.248	52.02	8.786	4.232**

** Significant at 0.01 Level

The analysis of the dimensions of social climate, emotional climate, and socio-emotional climate reveals key insights into the differences between government and private schools. In terms of **social climate**, private schools (M = 24.70, SD = 4.791) outperform government schools (M = 20.66, SD = 5.398) significantly, with a **t-value of 6.596**, indicating a highly significant difference at the 0.01 level. This suggests that private schools provide a more positive and supportive social environment for students compared to government schools.

For **emotional climate**, the mean scores for private schools (M = 27.32, SD = 4.890) and government schools (M = 26.75, SD = 4.995) are relatively close, and the **t-value of 0.987** indicates no statistically significant difference. This implies that both types of schools offer similar levels of emotional support and interaction for students, highlighting no advantage for either in this dimension.

Lastly, the **socio-emotional climate** shows a significant difference between the two types of schools. Private schools (M = 52.02, SD = 8.786) scored higher than government schools (M = 47.14, SD = 9.248), with a **t-value of 4.232**, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that private schools create a more favourable socio-emotional environment, combining social and emotional factors, than government schools.

Overall, the results emphasize that private schools excel in fostering a better social and socio-emotional climate, while the emotional climate remains similar across both government and private schools.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that private schools are better equipped to nurture a positive social and socio-emotional climate, which plays a vital role in shaping students' overall well-being and interpersonal skills. However, the lack of difference in emotional climate suggests that emotional support systems in both government and private schools are relatively comparable, pointing to a shared emphasis on fostering emotional stability among students. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators to focus on improving the social and socio-emotional aspects in government schools to ensure holistic development of students.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

➢ Government schools should focus on creating a more supportive and engaging social environment by encouraging collaborative activities, fostering positive student-teacher relationships, and promoting a sense of community. This can be achieved through extracurricular programs, peer mentoring initiatives, and increased teacher training on fostering inclusivity and social engagement.

➢ To improve the socio-emotional climate in government schools, administrators can implement structured programs that integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum. These programs should focus on teaching students' interpersonal skills, empathy, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation.

➢ Private schools, despite their higher scores, should also continue to innovate and expand socio-emotional initiatives to maintain and further enhance their favourable environment.

➢ As emotional climate shows no significant difference between government and private schools, both institutions can further strengthen emotional support systems by providing access to trained school counsellors, organizing mental health awareness programs, and creating safe spaces where students can freely express their emotions.

➢ The government should allocate more resources to schools to reduce the gap between government and private institutions in terms of infrastructure, class size, and teacher-

student ratios, as these factors may significantly influence social and socio-emotional climates.

➢ Schools should involve parents and the local community in creating a positive climate. Workshops for parents on supporting their children's emotional and social needs can complement school-based initiatives.

➢ Teachers in government schools should receive regular training in social and emotional teaching strategies to enhance their ability to build strong connections with students and create a supportive classroom atmosphere. Private schools should also provide similar training to sustain their positive environment.

➢ Educational policymakers should develop and implement guidelines to ensure that both social and socio-emotional development are prioritized in school programs. Regular assessments of the school climate should be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

➢ Schools should encourage peer-led clubs and activities that foster teamwork and emotional support among students. Such initiatives can significantly enhance the overall climate of the school.

By implementing these suggestions, government schools can improve their social and socio-emotional climate, while both types of schools can further strengthen their focus on holistic student development.

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