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Impact of School Environment on Mental Health and Vocational Interests of Class IX Students

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Abstract – The present study was conducted to know the effect of school environment on the mental health and vocational interests of IX class students. The sample of the study was 200 students from government school (100 students)and private schools (100 students) of Chandigarh. The researcher made use of the following tools for the present study: (i) School Environment Inventory (S.E.I.) by Mishra (2000), (ii) Mental Health Battery (M.H.B.) by Singh & Gupta, and (iii) Vocational Interest Record by Kulshreshtha (1977). The findings of the study revealed that the difference between the school environment of government and private schools is not significant. Apart from this, it revealed that the mental health of students of private and government schools is different from each other.

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INTRODUCTION

In the age of rapid growth and development of industrial civilization, neglect of basic human values and cut throat competition for acquiring maximum wealth and material facilities, the thing which is mostly desired in all the societies of the world is the need of preserving the mental health of the individual. Mental health is the health of one's mind, which can prove potent determinant of one's integrated personality and balanced behaviour identified on the basis of the level of his adjustment to self, others and environment. The acquisition of such personality is indeed a great asset and privilege for a normal individual. Mental health is a global term which refers to that condition of an individual which results from the normal organization and functioning of his mind. Like physical health, mental health is also an aspect of the totality of an individual. Possessing good mental health, an individual can adjust properly to his environment and can make the best effort for his own, his families and society's betterment and progress. Educational environment possesses the potentiality of stimulating on stratifying the students to develop their power of analysis, conceptual thinking and critical evaluation. School, therefore, is a vital life-giving environment to the extent that it brings into the life of its students an abiding love and appreciation for all that is the best and most significant in national and human life.

Kapoor (1997) sates "Mental health education consists of: (a) Brain and behaviour, (b) Psychological and Emotional Development, (c) Common psychological problems in youth and families, (d) Successful coping strategies, (e) Risk factor, and (f) How and where to seek assistance.

Kumar (1991) defined mental health as an index which shows the extent to which a person has been able to meet the environmental demands- social, emotional and physical. However, when he finds himself trapped in a situation, he does not have matching, coping strategies to deal with it effectively, he gets himself mentally stressed.

The mental health of an individual depends on hereditary factors, physical factors, social factors and satisfaction of basic needs.

School environment

Human beings are always immersed in social environment. It not only changes the very structure of the individual or just compels him to recognize facts, but also provides him with a readymade system of rings. Two environments, home and school, share an influential space on child's life., The school is the m0ost important experience in the process of child development next to home. When the child enters the school arena, he/she is presented with new opportunities in terms of socialization and cognitive development. These opportunities are provided in different measures in school and may have a direct impact on cognitive and affective development of students. School environment may be defined as a measure of the quality and quantity of cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the students during their school life in terms of teacher-pupil interactions. It implies all the circumstances, people, things and events that are around pupils at school, which influence their lives. It includes sum total of all social, moral, economic, physical and intellectual factors which influence the

development of the individual and contribute to the teaching learning situations.

According to Sweeney (1988) "School environment is the term used to describe how pupils feel about the school".

Creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, permissiveness, acceptance, rejection and control are the six components of the school environment.

Vocational interest

A good school environment implies good education and opportunities for development. It is through good education that the child's inherited traits change and his powers developed. Before making suitable changes in the child's school environment, it is essential to understand the child's interest. In every stage of development, some important characteristics manifest themselves. It is only on the basis of these features that the environment of the school can be modified and made suitable. The nature of career pattern is thus determined by the individual's school environment.

Vocational interest of students play a very important role in the decision making for future occupational life. Every year a number of students take matriculation examination. Some of them join college for higher studies and the rest enter into some kind of vocation. Their choice of vocation depends on their vocational interest. Vocational interest means the interest preference or liking pertaining to different vocations and activities. Vocational interest is defined as one's pattern of preferences, aptitudes, likes and dislikes preferred in any manner wisely or unwisely by self or by any source for a given vocational area or vocation.

Ram (1990) defines vocational interest as a capacity for achieving the interest in any occupation is the measure of vocational interest.

Mohan & Gupta (1990) studied factors related to the choice of vocational courses. Significant factors identified by them are interests, motivation, personal concerns, value, level of self-concepts, attitudinal aspects, career maturity and future prospects, etc.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the mental health of boys of government and private schools.
2. To study the mental health of girls of government and private schools.
3. To compare the mental health of boys and girls.
4. To study the relationship of mental health of students with school environment.
5. To compare the school environment of government and private school students.
6. To study the vocational interests of boys of government and private schools.
7. To study the vocational interests of girls of government and private schools.
8. To study the vocational interests of boys and girls.
9. To study the relationship of vocational interests of students with school environment.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be significant difference between mental health of boys of government and private schools.
2. There will be significant difference between mental health of girls of government and private schools.
3. There will be significant difference between mental health of boys and girls.
4. There will be significant relationship of school environment with mental health of students.
5. There will be significant difference in the school environment of government and private schools.
6. There will be significant difference between the vocational interests of boys of government and private schools.
7. There will be significant difference in the vocational interests of girls of government and private schools.
8. There will be significant difference between the vocational interests of boys and girls.
9. There will be significant relationship between the vocational interests of students with school environment.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The method used for conducted the present study was descriptive survey method.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample of study constituted 200 students of government and private schools of Chandigarh of class IX. 100 students were taken from government schools and 100 were taken from the private schools. An effort was made to include equal number of boys and girls from both government and private schools.

Tools used

1. School Environment Inventory (S.E.I.) by Mishra (2000).
2. Mental Health Battery (M.H.B.) by Singh & Gupta.
3. Vocational Interest Record by Kulshreshtha (1977).

Statistical techniques employed

In the present study, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and t-test were employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 1: Mean differentials of mental health of boys of government and private schools.

Areas of Mental Health	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Emotional Stability (ES)	Govt.	8.58	1.691	2.96	0.01
	Pvt.	7.50	1.95		
Over-all Adjustment (OA)	Govt.	24.08	4.308	.677	Not significant
	Pvt.	23.46	4.832		
Autonomy (AY)	Govt.	9.08	2.05	1.446	Not significant
	Pvt.	9.62	1.66		
Security- Insecurity (SI)	Govt.	7.54	1.73	3.55	0.01
	Pvt.	8.78	1.76		
Self-Concept (SC)	Govt.	7.82	1.76	.921	Not significant
	Pvt.	8.16	1.93		
Intelligence (IQ)	Govt.	12.92	5.26	3.43	0.01
	Pvt.	18.28	3.39		

Table 1 shows the mean differentials of mental health of boys of government and private schools. The table clearly depicts that the t-value of boys on MHB with regard to ES, SI and IQ is 2.96, 3.55 and 3.43 respectively, i.e. greater than the table value, i.e. 2.63 at 98 degree of freedom at 0.01 level of significance respectively. Therefore, it is significant at 0.01 level. So, it can be said that the difference between the mental health of boys of government and private schools. But the t- value for OA, AY and SC is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. It can be said that the difference between the mental health of boys of government and private schools is not significant. Hence, the hypotheses "There will be significant difference between the mental health of boys of government and private schools" is partly accepted.

Table 2: Mean differentials of mental health of girls of government and private schools

Areas of Mental Health	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Emotional Stability (ES)	Govt.	7.56	1.77	1.444	Not significant
	Pvt.	8.16	2.34		
Over-all Adjustment (OA)	Govt.	24.30	3.73	.494	Not significant
	Pvt.	23.90	4.35		
Autonomy (AY)	Govt.	10.10	1.95	.438	Not significant
	Pvt.	9.92	2.16		
Security- Insecurity (SI)	Govt.	7.42	2.22	3.219	0.01
	Pvt.	8.92	2.43		
Self-Concept (SC)	Govt.	8.56	2.10	.474	Not significant
	Pvt.	8.76	2.11		
Intelligence (IQ)	Govt.	15.72	3.995	5.472	0.01
	Pvt.	19.44	2.67		

Table 2 shows the mean differentials of mental health of girls of government and private schools. It is evident from the table that the t-value with regard to SI and IQ is significant at 0.01 level. So, it can be said that the difference between the mental health of girls of government and private schools are significant. Also it is clear that the t-value with regard to ES, OA, AY and SC is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, it can be said that the difference between the mental health of girls of government and private schools is not significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the hypotheses "There will be significant difference in the mental health of girls of government and private schools" is partly accepted.

Table 3: Mean differentials of mental health of boys and girls.

Areas of Mental Health	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Emotional Stability (ES)	Govt.	8.04	1.895	.638	0.01
	Pvt.	7.86	2.09		
Over-all Adjustment (OA)	Govt.	23.77	4.57	.542	Not significant
	Pvt.	24.10	4.03		
Autonomy (AY)	Govt.	9.35	1.88	2.376	0.05
	Pvt.	10.01	2.04		
Security- Insecurity (SI)	Govt.	8.16	1.85	.033	Not significant
	Pvt.	8.17	2.44		
Self-Concept (SC)	Govt.	7.99	1.844	2.397	0.05
	Pvt.	8.66	2.099		
Intelligence (IQ)	Govt.	15.6	5.16	3.071	0.01
	Pvt.	17.58	3.86		

Table 3 shows the mean differentials of mental health of boys and girls. It is evident from the table that the t-value of boys and girls on MHB with regard to IQ is 3.071, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. So, it can be said that the difference between the mental health of boys and girls is significant. But the t-values of boys and girls with regard to ES, OA and SI is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, it can be inferred that the hypotheses "there will be significant difference between the mental health of boys and girls" is partly accepted.

Table 4: Correlation between the components of mental health with components of school environment

	ES	OA	AY	SI	SC	IQ
Creative stimulation (CRS)	-.085	.062	.014	.111	.055	.249**
Cognitive encouragement (COE)	-.024	.081	.013	.186**	.092	.335**
Acceptance (ACC)	.000	.092	.033	.110	.045	.187**
Permissiveness (PER)	-.078	.059	.030	.083	.083	.127
Rejection (REJ)	-.069	-.225**	-.083	-.129	-.037	-.225**
Control (CON)	.043	.023	.034	.035	.008	.232**

Table 4 shows the correlation between the components of school environment with the components of mental health. It is evident from the table that the correlation value of CRS on SEI with regard to ES, OA, AY, SI and SC on MHB is negative and not significant at 0.01 level of significance. On the other hand the correlation value of CRS with regard to IQ is significant at 0.01 level. This shows that CRS of SEI has impact on intelligence component of mental health.Similarly it is evident from the table that COE, ACC of SEI has impact on the intelligence component of mental health. On the other hand, the table values reveal that PER of SEI has no impact on mental health. Hence, the hypotheses " There will be significant impact of school environment on mental health of students" is partly accepted.

Table 5: Mean differentials of school environment of students in government and private schools

Areas of Mental Health	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
Creative stimulation (CRS)	Govt.	53.44	11.44	1.636	Not significant
	Pvt.	55.67	7.41		
Cognitive encouragement (COE)	Govt.	27.21	7.15	4.697	0.01
	Pvt.	31.68	6.28		
Acceptance (ACC)	Govt.	26.05	5.915	2.545	0.05
	Pvt.	27.98	4.75		
Permissiveness (PER)	Govt.	24.97	5.85	2.72	0.01
	Pvt.	27.03	4.82		
Rejection (REJ)	Govt.	19.41	7.606	.155	Not significant
	Pvt.	19.27	4.896		
Control (CON)	Govt.	25.00	6.74	3.215	0.01
	Pvt.	27.64	4.689		

Table 5 shows the mean differentials of school environment of government and private school students. It is evident from the table that the t- value of school environment of government and private schools on SEI with regard to COE, PER and CON is significant at 0.01 level of significance. So, it can be said that the difference between school environment of government and private schools are significant. But the t- value of school environment of government and private schools with regard to CRS and REJ is not significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, it can be said that the difference between the school environment of government and private schools are not significant. Hence, the hypotheses "There will be significant difference between school environment of government and private schools" is partly accepted.

Table 6: Comparison of mean differentials of boys and girls in different vocational interest areas.

Variables	M_1	M_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-value
Literary	9.07	8.61	2.872	2.482	1.212
Scientific	11.71	11.37	2.819	3.129	.807
Executive	12.11	10.55	2.803	3.073	3.751**
Commercial	9.11	7.92	2.386	2.729	3.282**
Constructive	7.36	9.33	2.414	3.528	4.608**
Artistic	11.31	9.77	2.509	3.384	3.655
Agriculture	7.86	8.52	2.843	2.969	1.606
Persuasive	9.91	9.30	2.547	2.525	1.701
Social	8.88	10.62	2.208	2.940	4.733**
Household	10.98	11.89	2.839	2.913	2.237**
VI Total	98.30	97.88	9.821	10.125	.298

** Significant at 0.05 level

M_1 = mean scores of boys in different vocational interest areas.

M_2= mean scores of girls in different vocational interest areas.

SD_1= standard deviation of boys in different vocational interest areas.

SD_2= standard deviation of girls in different vocational interest areas.

Table 6 shows the comparison of mean differentials of boys and girls in different vocational interest areas. The table clearly depicts that the boys show vocational preferences in Scientific, Executive and Household areas while the girls show vocational preferences in Scientific, Executive, Household and Social areas. It is evident from the table that the values 3.751, 3.282, 4.608, 3.655, 4.733 and 2.237 are significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypotheses "There will be significant difference between the vocational interest of boys and girls" is not accepted.

Table 7: Comparison of mean differentials of boys of government and private schools in different vocational interest areas.

Variables	M_1	M_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-value
Literary	9.50	8.64	3.046	2.648	11.507
Scientific	11.42	12.00	2.696	2.935	1.029
Executive	12.28	11.94	2.642	2.972	0.605
Commercial	9.06	9.16	2.280	2.510	-0.209
Constructive	8.04	6.68	2.285	2.369	2.922**
Artistic	10.64	11.98	2.570	2.281	2.758**
Agriculture	8.16	7.56	2.860	2.822	1.056
Persuasive	10.34	9.48	2.182	2.823	1.704
Social	8.64	9.12	2.211	2.201	1.088
Household	9.84	12.12	2.368	2.833	4.366**
VI Total	97.92	98.68	10.439	9.253	-0.385

**Significant at 0.05 level

M_1 = mean scores of boys of government school.

M_2= mean scores of boys of private school.

SD_1= standard deviation of boys of government school.

SD_2= standard deviation of boys of private school.

Table 7 shows comparison of mean differentials of boys of government and private schools in different vocational interest areas. From the table it can be concluded that the boys of government schools show maximum preferences in scientific, executive, persuasive and artistic areas whereas the boys of private schools show maximum preferences ion scientific, executive, household and artistic areas. t-values in the table highlight that the values 2.922, 2.758 and 4.366 are significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypotheses “There will be significant difference between the vocational interests of boys of government and private schools” is not accepted.

Table 8: Comparison of the mean differentials of girls of government and private schools in different vocational interest areas.

Variables	M_1	M_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-value
Literary	8.26	8.96	2.155	2.748	-1.417
Scientific	10.80	11.94	3.207	2.972	-1.844
Executive	11.94	9.16	2.972	2.510	5.053**
Commercial	9.16	6.68	2.510	2.369	5.081**
Constructive	6.68	11.98	2.369	2.281	11.397**
Artistic	11.98	7.56	2.281	2.822	8.612**
Agriculture	7.56	9.48	2.822	2.823	-3.401**
Persuasive	9.48	9.12	2.823	2.201	0.711
Social	9.12	12.12	2.201	2.833	-5.913**
Household	12.12	11.66	2.833	3.001	0.788
VI Total	97.10	98.66	9.637	10.630	-0.769

** Significant at 0.05 level (2.98)

M_1 = mean scores of girls of government school.

M_2= mean scores of girls of private school.

SD_1= standard deviation of girls of government school.

SD_2= standard deviation of girls of private school.

Table 8 shows the comparison of mean differentials of girls of government and private schools in different vocational interest areas. The table depicts that the girls of government schools show maximum preferences in scientific, executive, household and artistic whereas girls of private schools show maximum preferences in scientific, constructive, household and social areas. The t-values show that the values 5.053, 5.081, 11.397, 8.612, -3.401 & -5.913 are significant at the 0.05 level.Hence, the hypotheses “There will be significant difference between the vocational interests of girls of government and private schools” is not accepted.

Table 9: Coefficient of Correlation in the vocational interest areas and school environment areas.

	AA	B	CC	D	EE	F	School Environment
L	-.085	.180*	-.078	.126	.056	-.055	.023
SC	-.122	-.166*	-.126	-.024	-.027	-.040	-.140*
E	-.104	-.051	-.137	-.045	-.060	-.108	-.132
C	-.101	-.072	-.058	.008	.001	-.062	-.082
CO	.133	.047	.121	.081	.022	.095	.133
A	-.015	-.068	-.016	-.021	-.014	-.082	-.053
AG	-.036	.023	.052	.053	.089	-.062	.022
P	-.091	-.080	-.097	-.037	.098	-.013	-.067
S	.086	.050	.008	.001	.032	.041	.063
H	.112	.066	.020	-.062	-.015	-.038	.039
Vocation	-.057	-.022	-.084	.023	.048	-.093	-.053

*Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 9 shows the mean differentials in the vocational interest areas and school environment areas. It can be concluded from the table that there is significant correlation between cognitive encouragement and literacy (vocational interest). Also there is significant correlation between the cognitive encouragement and scientific area. And rest there is no correlation in any other areas. The t-values show that the value -.140 is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the hypotheses "There will be significant difference in the vocational interest of the students in relation to their school environment" is not accepted.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study are likely to prove of immense importance to educational thinkers, teachers, psychologists, parents and others who are concerned with the sphere of education. It will guide the teachers, parents and the school administrators in organizing proper programmes for giving required guidance to the students for proper choice of the vocation on the basis of their interest area. Apart from this, it will help the teachers in organization of various activities for proper mental growth of the students. The present study lays emphasis on the provision of proper and balanced school environment so as to develop healthy vocational interest in the students and also for proper development of their mental health.

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