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POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR DEVELOPING MORAL VALUES

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Abstract:

This study looks at how a student's school environment affects their moral values. At a time when society is facing a decline in values and growing problems, it's important to understand how these environments help shape students' behavior and character. The study employs a survey research method involving a sample of 1,446 students from 20 higher secondary schools, selected using stratified random sampling. Two tools were utilized: the Test for Moral Values among School Students (TMVSS), developed by the investigator, and a standardized school Environment Inventory (SEI). The research focused on six components of moral values— Personal, Academic, Social, Aesthetic, Humanitarian, and Religious—and examined how these varied across different levels of school environments (classified as High, Moderate, and Low climate). Data analysis revealed that students from high school climate environments scored significantly higher in Personal, Social, Aesthetic, Humanitarian, and Religious values compared to their counterparts in moderate and low climate schools. However, academic values did not show significant variation across school climate categories. Findings suggest that a positive school climate, characterized by supportive teacher-student relationships, ethical modeling by staff, and co-curricular engagement, has a substantial influence on students' moral development. The study underlines the critical role schools and families play in shaping well-rounded, morally responsible individuals. Educational implications include the integration of value education into school curricula, targeted interventions in low school climate settings, and the continuous assessment of school moral climate.

Keywords: *School climate, Moral values.*

Introduction:

In the words of Dewey, "the value means primarily to price, to esteem, to appraise and to estimate". It means the act of achieving something, holding it, and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and amounts of values as compared with something else. Values are regarded as desirable, important, and held in high esteem by a particular society in which a person lives. Thus, values give meaning and strength to a person's character by occupying a central place in his life. Values reflect one's personal attitudes and judgments, decisions and choices, behavior and relationships, dreams and vision. They influence our thoughts, feelings and actions. They guide us to do the right things. But values may differ from one society to another.

Values in our education are a hotly debated subject nowadays. This is because of the chaotic conditions observed in almost all spheres of our life. It is conjectured, not without reason, that this chaos is mainly due to a lack of values in the education being imparted in India. If contemporary education is to be value-based, it can never be done without the teachers themselves understanding, appreciating, and upholding the life-sustaining moral values. Unless these values find their way into the life of students, education will lose its significance and will not fulfil its function of endowing the students with a vision to live by and with the ideals to work for. Therefore, in contrast to the cherished goals of democracy, socialism, humanism, and secularism, it is essential that our education system should evolve a new positive morality, which could effectively be built into the school curriculum.

The importance of life should not be taught, but should be trained. Today, Education has become just a nine-letter word as a superior term in the dictionary. Moreover Education system has become a business where it is treated like any other profession. The problem is also with us. It is we who make the society. If we improve ourselves, we can improve our society. No one is born a criminal or a spoiled person. It's the environment that is diverting the child from taking the right path. Good teachers can bring change with good Education imparted to the students.

Positive school Climate:

Positive school climate is strong relationships. When you walk into a school with a positive climate, you see students and staff who are caring, respectful, and committed to their communities. School leaders and staff foster caring and respectful behavior by attending to moral and social development. The degree to which this happens depends in large part on whether all school adults, not just teachers and administrators but secretaries, lunch staff, sports coaches, and other staff, commit to the importance of moral and social development and establish norms and guidance for interacting with students.

Make a **positive interpersonal relationship:**

Teachers usually believe that they have positive relationships with their students, but few take regular opportunities to truly reflect on those relationships, to access students' perceptions of them, and how they might be enhanced. Teacher-student relationships will improve in schools that expect and provide more opportunities for teachers to be intentional about their relationships with students and committed to growing them over time.

Expect school staff to model moral and ethical behaviour:

Teachers and other staff are models for students, whether they realize it or not. They don't choose whether they are influencing students' moral and social development but they can choose how they do so. To be positive role models, staff need to commit to the ongoing development of their own moral and social capacities. Many adults don't see themselves as moral and social works in progress. They see their qualities as set in stone- they don't think about becoming more fair or generous or better able to learn from multiple perspectives.

Teachers a role models :

Teachers must educate their students on the importance of selecting the appropriate company. They must also show excellent examples to the learners. It is often said that morality is fostered by good example. It is also said

that evil is fostered by bad example. Teachers must ensure that their students learn to use their skills independently. Individuals can be coached not only in skills and expertise but also in domain-specific self-efficacy and self-regulation.The most successful students learn to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies they use to solve problems and, when necessary, alter their strategies for success.

Review of Literature:

In a 2024 study, Aldridge and McLure examined the impact of school climate within church-based schools on students' moral identity development and hope for the future. Surveying 1,080 students across two schools, the authors found a direct, positive relationship between school climate factors and both moral identity and hope. Notably, moral identity also served as a mediator, strengthening the influence of school climate on students' future outlook. This suggests that cultivating a supportive and values-rich environment can significantly shape both moral self-concept and optimism among adolescents.

Another relevant study, though broader in scope, is by Gálvez-Nieto et al. (2022), who explored how school climate indirectly affects adolescents' personal values through their attitudes toward authority. Using structural equation modeling with a large sample of 2,683 students, the study revealed that a positive school climate fosters respectful attitudes toward authority figures, which in turn are linked to stronger personal values. Altogether, both studies underscore that a positive, relationally rich school climate supportive of moral identity and social respect plays a crucial role in moral development and value formation in students.

Objectives of the Study:

To find out the level of selected Components of Moral Values on different classification of School Climate among the higher secondary students.

Hypotheses of rhe Study:

There will be no significant difference in the Mean Value for the components of Moral Value on different levels of School Climate among Higher Secondary Students in Chennai city.

Methodology of the Study: The present study belongs to Survey Research. The variables used in this study are: Moral Values and School Climate.

a) **Population of the Study:**

The total number of Higher Secondary students studying in Chennai city is the population of the study. There are 460 Higher Secondary Schools in Chennai City.

b) **Size of the Sample:**

Based on the stratified Random Sampling Technique, the investigator selected 20 schools. The higher secondary students studying in 20 schools were 1446 students, out of which 810 are Male Students and 636 are female students.

c) **Tools Used:**

For the present study, two Tools were used. They were i) Test for Moral Values among School Students (TMVSS) developed by the Investigator and another standardized tool, namely the School Environment Inventory (SEI).

The investigator decided to have only three minimum and 6 maximum situational test items for each value. Thus, the revised draft of the Tool TMVSS consisted of 50 situational test items for 12 values under 6 sub-classifications, which had four alternatives in each item.

Table 1. List of Values expected for school students under different classification

S.No.	Values	No. items included	Total items
A	Personal Values	01-07	07
1	Simplicity	01-03	03
2	Self-discipline	04-07	04
B	Academic Values	08-15	08
3	Responsibility	08-12	05
4	Curiosity	13-15	03
C	Social Values	16-23	08
5	Service	16-19	04
6	Co-operation	20-23	04
D	Aesthetic Values	24-35	11
7	Honesty	24-29	06
8	Tolerance	30-34	05
E	Humanitarian Values	35-43	09
9	Brotherhood	35-39	05
10	Compassion	40-43	04
F	Religious Values	44-50	07
11	Faith in God	44-47	04
12	Forgiveness	48-50	03
Total		50	50

The Table 1 shows that there are six components of Moral Values, under which each component has two values. It also revealed the number of items included in the Questionnaire and its total items.

Table 2. Number of Items Included under Different Situations

S. No.	Type of Situations	No. of items included	Scores
1	Family situation	07	07
2	Classroom situation	14	14
3	School situation	07	07
4	Social situation	22	22
	Total	50	50

From Table 2, it was noticed that out of 50 situational test items selected, there were 7 family situations, 14 classroom situations, 7 school situations, and 22 social situations.

Description of School Environment Inventory (SEI):

The School Environment Inventory (SEI) is a standardized tool designed to measure the psycho-social Climate of Schools as perceived by the pupils. It provides a measure of the quality and quantity of the cognitive,

emotional, and social support that has been available to the students during their school life in terms of teacher-pupil interactions. SEI has items belonging to six dimensions of the School environment.

The six dimensions are- (A) Creative Stimulation, (B) Cognitive Encouragement, (C) Acceptance, (D) Permissiveness, (E) Rejection, and (F) Control. Twenty items belong to the Creative Stimulation dimension, while each of the remaining five dimensions has ten items belonging to it.

Analysis of the Moral Values of the Students with different School Climates in total:

This section deals with the 't' test analysis between the Mean Scores of the Moral values of the Students with respect to the School Climate of the Students. In this section, the three categories of School Climates, such as High, Moderate, and Low School Climates, were taken for analysis. The Scores of various components of Moral values, such as Personal Value, Academic Value, Social Value, Aesthetic Value, Humanitarian value, and Religious Value, were also analyzed with respect to the different classifications of the School Climates.

Table 3. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Personal Value among Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	78.59	20.07	2.39*
MSC	877	75.66	20.34	
MSC	877	75.66	20.34	1.17**
LSC	179	77.53	19.27	
LSC	179	77.53	19.27	0.60**
HSC	390	78.59	20.07	

It is understood from the Table 3 that the 't' value 2.39 is significant and the 't' values 1.17 and 0.60 are Not Significant at the 0.05 level. From the results, it is revealed that the Mean Scores of Personal values of the Students among the High School Climate School are higher than the Students of Moderate and Low School Climate. At the same time the Mean Scores of Personal values among the Students of Moderate and Low School Climates are found to be similar.

*Significant at 0.05 Level **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

Table 4. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Academic Value among Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	71.95	21.60	0.93**
MSC	877	70.73	21.50	
MSC	877	70.73	21.50	1.01**
LSC	179	68.93	22.73	
LSC	179	68.93	22.73	1.52**
HSC	390	71.95	21.60	

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It is found from Table 4 that the 't' values 0.93, 1.01, and 1.52 are Not Significant at the 0.05 level. From the results, it is understood that the Academic values among the Students of High, Moderate, & Low School Climate Schools are found to be similar.

*Significant at 0.05 Level **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

Table 5. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Social Value among Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	73.90	21.74	2.13*
MSC	877	71.08	21.74	
MSC	877	71.08	21.74	1.34**
LSC	179	68.67	22.94	
LSC	179	68.67	22.94	2.62*
HSC	390	73.90	21.74	

It is seen from Table 5 that the 't' values 2.13 and 2.62 are Significant, whereas 1.34 is Not Significant at the 0.05 level. While analyzing the results, it is revealed that the Social values among the Students of High School climates are Significantly Higher than the Students of Moderate and Low School Climates and Social values among the Students of Moderate and Low School climates are found to be similar.

*Significant at 0.05 Level   **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

Table 6. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Aesthetic Value among   Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	74.11	20.03	2.47*
MSC	877	71.01	21.80	
MSC	877	71.01	21.80	2.04*
LSC	179	67.30	24.10	
LSC	179	67.30	24.10	3.53*
HSC	390	74.11	20.03	

 *Significant at 0.05 Level **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

It can be observed from Table 6 that the 't' values 2.47, 2.04 and 3.53 are Significant at the 0.05 level. It is revealed from the results that the Aesthetic values among the Students of High School Climate are higher than Students of Moderate and Low School Climate School students. And the Aesthetic values among the Students of moderate and low School Climate are found to be similar.

Table 7. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Humanitarian Value among   Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	73.88	21.56	2.54*
MSC	877	70.46	23.44	
MSC	877	70.46	23.44	0.96**
LSC	179	68.59	25.15	
LSC	179	68.59	25.15	2.58*
HSC	390	73.88	21.56	

 *Significant at 0.05 Level **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

It is observed from Table 7 that the 't' values 2.54 and 2.58 are Significant and the value 0.96 is Not Significant at the 0.05 level. The result reveals that the Humanitarian values among the Students of High School Climate are Significantly Higher than the Students of Moderate and Low School climates and the Humanitarian values among the Students of Moderate and Low School Climates are similar.

Table 8. 't' Values between the Mean Scores of Religious Value among   Students with respect to different classifications of School Climate

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
HSC	390	75.98	23.85	1.27**
MSC	877	74.12	24.75	
MSC	877	74.12	24.75	2.15*
LSC	179	69.73	25.28	
LSC	179	69.73	25.28	2.85*
HSC	390	75.98	23.85	

The above Table 8 shows that the 't' values 2.15 and 2.85 are Significant, whereas the value 1.27 is Not Significant at the 0.05 level. It is understood from the results that the Religious values among the Students of High and Moderate School Climate are higher than the Students of Low School Climate, and at the same time, the Religious values among the Students of Moderate and Low School Climate are found similar.

*Significant at 0.05 Level **Not Significant at 0.05 Level

Findings of the Study:

Personal values of Students among the High School Climate are higher than the of students in Moderate and Low School Climates, and the Personal values among Students of Moderate and Low School Climates are found to be similar.

Among the Students of High, Moderate, and Low School Climate the Personal values are higher than all other components of Moral Values, and at the same time, Personal Values and the Religious values among the High and Moderate School Climate students are similar.

The **Academic values** among the Students of High, Moderate & Low School Climate Schools are found to be similar.

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Academic Values are lower than the Personal values among Low, Moderate and High School Climate Students, whereas Academic Values are lower than the Religious Values among the Moderate School Climate Students, and all the values of the components of Moral Values among all the students are similar.

The **Social values** among the Students of High School Climate are Significantly Higher than the Students of Moderate and Low School Climates and Social values among the Students of Moderate and Low School climates are found to be similar.

Among the Low, Moderate, and High School Climate students, the Social values are lesser than the Personal Values, and the Religious values are higher than the Social Values among the Moderate School Climate students, whereas all other values of the components of the Moral Values are similar, irrespective of the School climate.

The **Aesthetic values** among the Students of High School Climate are higher than Students of Moderate and Low School Climate School students. And the Aesthetic Values among the students of moderate and Low schools are found to be similar.

Among the High, Moderate, and Low School Climate students, the Aesthetic values are lesser than the Personal values and also lesser among the Moderate School Climate students about the Religious Values, whereas all the other values of the components of the Moral Values are similar irrespective of the School Climates.

Humanitarian values among the Students of High School Climate are Significantly Higher than the Students of Moderate and Low School climates, and the Humanitarian values among the Students of Moderate and Low School Climates are similar.

Among the Students of High, Moderate, and Low School Climates, the Humanitarian values are lower than Personal Values and also lower than the Religious Values among the Moderate School Climate students, whereas all the other values of the components of the Moral Values are similar irrespective of the School Climates.

Religious values among the Students of High and Moderate School Climate are higher than the Students of Low School Climate, and at the same time, the Religious values among the Students of Moderate and Low School Climate are found to be similar.

Among the High School Climate students, the Religious values are better than the Academic Values and are lower than the Personal Values among the Low School Climate students, whereas among the Moderate School Climate students, the Religious Values are higher than the Academic, Social, Aesthetic, and Humanitarian values. And all the other values of the components of the Moral Values are similar, irrespective of the School climate.

Discussion:

The following discussion is on the comparison of various components of Moral Values in School Climate. Further analyzing the finding, it shows that the Personal, Social, Aesthetic, Humanitarian, and Religious values are high in High School and Moderate School Climate. Analytically, the reasons could be that Personal Values: self-disciplinary activities inculcated by the teachers through mass drill, scout classes, cleaning the campus and classroom might have helped to develop a systematic approach and simplicity. Social Values: Club Activities organized by the school might have helped to create oneness, cooperation, goodwill, and a helping nature.

Aesthetic Values: Cultural Programme, School Assembly Programme, and Sports could have developed Fair-Play, Aesthetic Sensitivity. Humanitarian Values: Brotherhood and oneness might have been instilled in students through celebrating national festivals and international days. Religious Values: Values such as Faith in God and forgiveness are put forth to the students through prayers, scriptures, hymns, and celebrating Religious festivals.

Educational Implication:

The educational implication of the study is that the development and strengthening of healthy Moral value systems among students should be a very important function of the Higher Secondary schools, which would help in solving problems of student unrest and discipline. The Parents, Teachers, School Administrators, and Educational Policy Makers should keep in mind when they design the curriculum with the view of making education a forceful tool for the cultivation of Moral Values.

The education of values should permeate the entire school life, comprising teaching of different Subjects and Co-Curricular activities. Value education may be introduced in the lower school climate. It is the responsibility of the planners of Value Education to ensure that its goals are realistic, its content relevant, its tools and techniques effective, its curricular activities innovative, and its co-curricular activities develop an integrated personality of the individual's life.

Conclusion:

Comparing the Personal and Religious values, the Academic, Social, Aesthetic, and Humanitarian Values are less in both School climates. This can be corrected in the schools by providing a good atmosphere and effective Co-Curricular Activities to the students so that they will know and inculcate better Academic, Social and Aesthetic, and Humanitarian Values. Assigning welfare work in the schools can bring out the spirit of service.

Through Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities like Team Work, Cultural Programme, Club Activities, Science Exhibition, Publication of Magazine, values of Co-operational, and Tolerance Discourse can be brought to the lives of political and Religious leaders and can bring out values like spirit of Brotherhood and Honesty, and can create zeal, curiosity, and responsibility.

While schools are certainly not the only place where students develop moral and social capacities, they are one of the most important settings, in part because they are rich with opportunities for discussion and interaction. School adults can and do play a vital role in these interactions.

Conduct regular assessments of school values and climate:

Just as staff need information about how students are progressing academically, they need to understand where the school and its students stand when it comes to moral values, norms of kindness and respect, relationships, and commitment to meeting all students' social and emotional needs. Students' surveys on these topics are vital. Students' surveys on these topics are vital. Students, after all, are those with the most wisdom about their social environment.

Schools should collect data, for example, about whether and where students feel emotionally and physically safe and unsafe, whether there are adults they can consult if they feel harassed or isolated, and whether they view the

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school community as caring about them and others. With this information, staff are better informed to allocate resources accordingly and make changes where necessary.

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