School Climate: Promoting the Positive Dimensions of Students’ Emotional Well-Being

Presented By:
Shay M. Daily, MPH, MCHES, Sabena Thomas, MA, Megan L. Smith, PhD., Alfgeir L. Kristjansson, PhD., & Michael J. Mann, PhD.
Introduction

Background
We know student emotional well-being is linked to academic success.¹

Emotional well-being may be indicated through a positive school climate (SC).²

SC represents the environmental atmosphere of the school that includes the norms, values, practices, and relationships within a school setting.³,⁴
Knowledge gap
The relationship between SC and indicators of “whole child” to foster student wellness is relatively unexplored.

Study purpose
The purpose was to investigate the relationship between SC and self-reported mental/emotional health indicators: life satisfaction, self-esteem, problem-focused coping.
School Climate Measure

SC1: Student-Teacher Relationships (8-items, $\alpha = .93$)
SC2: Order and Safety (6-items, $\alpha = .89$)
SC3: Student Engagement (6-items, $\alpha = .88$)
SC4: Physical Environment (4-items, $\alpha = .95$)
SC5: Academic Support (4-items, $\alpha = .84$)
SC6: Parental Involvement (3-items, $\alpha = .90$)
SC7: School Connectedness (3-items, $\alpha = .84$)
SC8: Perceived Exclusion/Privilege (3-items, $\alpha = .90$)
SC9: Social Environment (2-items $\alpha = .88$)
SC10: Academic Satisfaction (2-items $\alpha = .74$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Style Scale</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to talk to teachers</td>
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Assessment

School Climate Measure

SC1: Student-Teacher Relationships: Teachers understand my problems.
SC2: Order and Safety: The rules of the school are fair.
SC3: Student Engagement: Females and males are treated as equals at school.
SC4: Physical Environment: My school is neat and clean.
SC5: Academic Support: I feel that I can do well in this school.
SC6: Parental Involvement: My parents/caregivers are involved in school activities.
SC7: School Connectedness: My schoolwork is exciting.
SC8: Perceived Exclusion/Privilege: At my school, the same person always gets to help the teacher.
SC9: Social Environment: I am happy with the kinds of students who go to my school.
SC10: Academic Satisfaction: I am happy about the amount of homework I have.
Student Well-being

Life Satisfaction (6 – items, $\alpha =$)\(^6\)
- 7-Point Likert Style Scale (*Terrible* to *Delighted*)
- Ex: I would describe my satisfaction with my school experience as

Self-Esteem (6 – items, $\alpha =$)\(^7\)
- 4-Point Likert Style Scale (*Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*)
- Ex: I take a positive attitude toward myself

Problem Focused Coping (5 – items, $\alpha =$)\(^8\)
- 4-Point Likert Style Scale (*I don’t do this at all* to *I do this a lot*)
- Ex: When I’m stressed or anxious…
  - I think hard about what steps to take
Sample, Procedures and Analyses

Participants
A purposive sample of students from 26 schools and 3 counties in West Virginia using paper and web-based collection.

Middle school:
- 6,472, response rate: 84.2%, 49.3% female, 76.5% Caucasian

High school:
- 7,379, response rate: 74.0%, 50.5% female, 76.5% Caucasian

Statistical Analyses
Multiple Linear Regression was used to assess relationships between study variables
## Findings

### Middle School Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Problem Focused Coping (β)</th>
<th>Self-Esteem (β)</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction (β)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC1: Teacher Relationships</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC2: Order &amp; Discipline</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC3: Student Engagement</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC4: Physical Environment</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC5: Academic Support</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC6: Parental Involvement</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.09**</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC7: School Connectedness</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC8: Exclusion/Privilege</td>
<td>-.03*</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>.12**</td>
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<td>R²</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.24</td>
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**p < .01, * p < .05**
Findings – Middle school

Middle School - variance explained
- Life satisfaction: 24%
- Self-esteem: 27%
- Problem-focused coping: 21%

Middle School – standardized β (p <.05)
- Academic support: .16 to .22 - all outcomes
- Student engagement: .12 to .17 – all outcomes
- Parental involvement: .09 to .14 - all outcomes
- Student-teacher relationships: .06 to .14 - all outcomes
- Order & safety: -.11 - self-esteem
# Findings

## High School Students

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<th>Life Satisfaction (β)</th>
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<td>.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC2: Order &amp; Discipline</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
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<td>SC3: Student Engagement</td>
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** p < .01, * p < .05
Findings – High school

**High school - variance explained**
- Life satisfaction: 24%
- Self-esteem: 22%
- Problem-focused coping: 16%

**High school – standardized β (p <.05)**
- Academic support: .14 to .17, all outcomes
- Student engagement: .12 to .17, all outcomes
- Parental involvement: .09 to .14, all outcomes
- Student-teacher relationships: .10 to .11, all outcomes
- Order & safety: -.08, self-esteem
Discussion

SC dimension that demonstrated the strongest associations:
- Academic support
- Student engagement
- Parental involvement
- Student-teacher relationships
Findings suggest a positive SC is likely to contribute to positive indicators of emotional health.

Certain aspects of SC may be particularly important for schools to develop in order to educate the whole child.
Implications

School personnel may benefit from considering different aspects of school climate between middle and high school students when considering which constructs are most useful for improving school climate.

Middle schools may benefit from strategies related to student-teacher relationships that enhance academic support when designing school climate that impact early adolescents development and learning.

High school students may benefit more from support directly related to the academic tasks at hand.
Acknowledgements

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References


