

Effect of Family Climate on the Adjustment of Children with Special Needs

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ABSTRACT

The present research work was undertaken to study the effect of family climate on the adjustment of children with special needs. For this purpose, sample consisting of 75 children with special needs was drawn and descriptive survey method was followed. It is indicated by the findings of the present study that family climate has significant impact on the school adjustment of the children with special needs. The study also stressed on the fact that there should be a healthy and productive environment in families, schools. The study further discusses that parental involvement has beneficial effect on school adjustment of the children with special needs.

Keywords: Family climate, school adjustment, children with special needs

Concept of disability has been defined differently by various authors across the world. Disability has different connotations across the nations and it has been defined differently in legal, political and social viewpoints. There are different terms like handicapped, disabled, impaired and children with special needs are used frequently for the children having disability. However, children with special needs is a broader term which also include those children who are "at-risk" for disabilities such as those who have developmental delays, may not have specific diagnoses, but are assessed as requiring special services, support and monitoring. All children, including children with special educational needs, have right to education according to their needs. In India, as per census 2011, about 2.21% of population is disabled and disability has increased from 219.07 lakh (in 2001) to about 268.10 lakh in 2011. This gives an idea that a large section of the society is suffering from one or other type of disability. These people are encircled by number of problems and their educational requirements are different from normal school children. The educational planning for them should meet their

special needs. There should be an individualized education programmes for CWSNs according to their needs and degree of impairment. They need cooperation, guidance and consultation of their parents and teacher. They require special attention and assistance of specially trained teachers to make them learn. Their problems are often multi-dimensional and influenced by various factors like age of onset of disability, severity of disability, external environment, support of the family and availability of support services etc.

Family is the most important agency for nurturing child and shaping his/her personality. It provides the foundation to the development of personality. Family environment has most profound effect on child development among all other environmental factors. As per Sagar and Kalpan (1972) views, home is the first school for a child and mother is the first teacher. Psychologists, sociologists, educationists, all agree that the family has the most important influence on the development of the child. Family climate leaves a marked impression on the development of behaviour patterns of the children. The word climate is more comprehensive one which

includes within itself the word environment. The human elements surrounding the child constitute the environment. It embraces the social, physical and emotional activities of the family. All these combined together constitute the family climate. The family environment and school environment have frequently been connected in the exploratory writing to psychosocial and behavioural adjustment issues in the adolescent period.

Children who show poor adjustment at school mostly belong to a group who are experiencing mismatch between family and school environment. The term adjustment means the ability of an individual to accommodate in new environment. As per Momroe (1990), adaptation denotes the results of equilibrium, which may affect the overall success of an individual. Individual has to struggle to survive in his or her social and physical environment. Adjustment is a state of harmonious relationship where the needs of the individual on the one hand and the claims of environment on the other hand are fully satisfied. A stable and well-adjusted student is expected to perform satisfactorily in his studies because he may enjoy confidence of teachers and also have faith in them. An educationally adjusted pupil is regular in studies and other school activities. Margetts (2003) presented a study on personal, family and social influences on children's early school adjustment. In this study, the influence of many personal, family characteristics, societal trends, contextual and life experiences on the adjustment in school were studied. It was recommended that child's personal characteristics, family and school factors in the first year of their schooling significantly influence different social, behavioural and academic aspects of adjustment. Sharma, Payal & Bala (2005) carried out a study on school adjustment of physically challenged institutionalized children in the age group of 13 to 17 Years.

In this study, the school adjustment of physically challenged was explored and the results revealed that the most of the children showed good adjustment in school environment. Ravindranadan and Raju (2007) conducted a study on adjustment and attitude of parents of children with mental retardation and the objective was to understand the level of adjustment and attitude of parents of children with mental retardation. It was found

that parental religion, income, and education did not have any significant influence on adjustment variables, and change in parental attitude among different religious groups was observed. Raju and Rahamtulla (2007) presented a study on adjustment problems (family, social, academic, financial and emotional) among school students. The results revealed that adjustment of school children is primarily dependent on the school variables and the type of management of the school.

Significance of the Study

The rationale of the study was to find the effect of family climate on school adjustment of the children with special needs. In family climate, the role of parents is the most influential factor in the overall development of the children. Students having good climate at home as well as school prove to be good in their academic achievement whereas students having poor family environment are poor in their academic achievement. Loving, nurturing homes provide opportunities for growth and bonding where children thrive. The review of related literature pertaining to educational aspirations and school adjustment provide indication that actions, behaviour, adjustment and personality development of the student is largely dependent on family climate and discipline structure. Student's adjustment, skill and outlook of life are also dependent on family climate. Institutional climate or environment and other conditions prevailing in school may affect student's self-disclosure pattern and show them the path of life as environment is a forceful factor to develop certain personal characteristics among individuals. The home is truly the greatest socializing agency in all contemporary cultures. Actually, it is a family setting where the child normally experiences the first and most vital impact of his cultured world.

The present investigation aims at exploring how school adjustment of students is related to the family climate. Various studies have been conducted to understand factors influencing school adjustment of a child. However, there is hardly any study undertaken to understand the impact of family climate on the school adjustment of special needs children. This study is useful for the teachers and parents in understanding the role of family climate on the school adjustment.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the family climate and adjustment level of the children with special needs.
- To study the effect of family climate on the adjustment of the children with special needs
- To study the relationship between educational adjustment and family climate.
- To study the relationship between social adjustment and family climate.
- To study the relationship between emotional adjustment and family climate.

Hypothesis of the Study

To achieve the above said objectives following null objectives were framed:

- There is no significance effect of family climate on the adjustment of the children with special needs.
- There is no significant relationship between educational adjustment and family climate.
- There is no significant relationship between social adjustment and family climate.
- There is no significant relationship between emotional adjustment and family climate.

Method

Descriptive method of research was employed for the present study. Out of two variables, family climate was taken as independent variable while adjustment was taken as dependent variable. This study was conducted on a sample of 75 special needs children studying in Govt. and private schools situated in Sonapat district, Haryana. The sample was drawn randomly.

Description of the Tools

Family Climate Scale (FCS)

The researchers have used Family Climate Scale (FCS) to study the family climate of the students of special needs. This was constructed and standardized by Dr. Beena Shah. The test comprises 90 statements out of which 48 statements are negative and 42 statements are positive. It usually takes 35 to 40 minutes for an individual to answer 90 statements. An individual has to answer by selecting one option out of the three options given with each statement

i.e. Always, Sometimes and Never. The positive total score indicated favourable family climate whereas negative total score indicated unfavourable family climate of the child.

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS)

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), developed and standardized by A.K.P. Sinha and K.P. Singh was used to know adjustment of the students. It covers three areas viz. emotional, social and educational adjustment of school students. Total adjustment score are obtained as sum of scores in all the three areas. There are 60 items in the inventory in total and 20 items in each area of adjustment. This is printed in Hindi therefore, useful to students who are Hindi speaking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Table 1 shows r-value 0.324, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is significant effect of family climate on school adjustment of the children with special needs. Hence, null hypothesis stating, "There is no significant impact of family climate on school adjustment of the children with special needs", was not accepted at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Shows the effect of family climate on school adjustment of children with special needs

No. of Variables	No. of Students	Mean	Correlation	Remark
Family Climate Scale	75	100.50	0.324	Significant *
School Adjustment	75	22.15		

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 indicated there is positive correlation between family climate and educational adjustment. The r-value for educational adjustment and family climate came out to be 0.316 which indicated that there is positive correlation between family climate and school adjustment of the children with special needs. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between family climate and educational adjustment was not accepted.

Further the r-value for social and emotional adjustment came out to be 0.022 and 0.077 respectively. Hence, null hypothesis 3 and 4 were

accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that family climate has maximum influence on educational adjustment of the special educational needs children.

Table 2: Shows correlation between family climate and emotional, social & educational adjustment

Adjustment Level	No. of Student	Mean	Correlation	Remark
Educational	75	11.21	0.316	Significant
Social	75	11.2	0.020	Not Significant
Emotional	75	7.21	0.077	Not Significant

The results of the study are in accordance with study conducted by Desforges & Abouchaar (2003). The researchers observed positive relationship between parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment in schools. In another related study, Sharma, Payal & Bala (2005) revealed that the most of the children were in the category of well adjusted in school environment. Aggarwal (2013) conducted a study on correlation of family climate and academic achievement of secondary school students. The results of this study revealed that the secondary school girls have slightly better family climate and show better academic achievement than secondary school boys and there is a significant positive and moderate correlation between the family climate and academic achievement of secondary school students. This study can have following implications:

1. The findings of the present study will be beneficial to psychologists and research scholars in the discipline of education and development of children. The study will promote educational facility of special children.
2. This study reveals that there should be healthy and productive climate in the families and schools.

From the present paper, it can be concluded that the family climate of special needs children has positive and significant impact on adjustment. Hence, family

climate is one of the strongest influential factors determining the adjustment of the students with special needs. The adjustment of school children is mainly determined by the type of environment in which they are living. So, the environment should be good & productive.

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