

# Evaluation of Psycho-Social Environment of Army Public Schools and Private Schools in Rawalpindi – A Comparative Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The objectives of the study was to determine the existing psychosocial environment of Army Public Schools at Rawalpindi; in order to identify the gaps and provide viable recommendations for improvement.

**Study Design:** Cross-sectional mix-method study

**Place and Duration of Study:** This study was conducted at the AFGMI, National University of Medical Sciences (LUMS), Rawalpindi from February 2020 to August 2020.

**Materials and Methods:** The cross-sectional mix-method study was carried out with 486 participants (teachers & staff) from APS and high end private schools located in Rawalpindi district, using universal sampling technique. WHO designed Psycho-social Environment (PSE) questionnaire with Likert scale 1 to 4, covering 7 quality areas was used. Using SPSS version 23 mean and standards deviations for the responses as well as Pearson correlation was used to find the relation between two. P value less than 0.001 was considered significant.

**Results:** Out of 486 participants, 420 were from APS, while 66 from private schools with female to male ratio of 71% to 29% respectively. There was significant difference in quality area 1 - Providing a Friendly, Rewarding and Supportive Atmosphere ( $p < 0.001$ ) with private schools having mean score of  $62.56 \pm 8.80$ , while APS schools secured  $58.79 \pm 7.42$ . There was statistically no significant difference between APS and private schools in other quality areas 2-7. In terms of overall percentage comparison, private schools reported slightly better psychosocial environment of schools than APS.

**Conclusion:** The findings highlighted a need to improve psychosocial environment of schools in terms of providing friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere in school.

**Key Words:** Psycho-Social Environment, Army Public Schools, Private Schools

**Citation of article:** Kahloon OI, Omer Z, Khan MH, Riaz HB, Muhammad AI. CDO. Evaluation of Psycho-Social Environment of Army Public Schools and Private Schools in Rawalpindi – A Comparative Study. Med Forum 2023;34(5):139-144.

## INTRODUCTION

The public health program has quickly converted from a bio-medical framework of healthiness and disease to a socio ecological model that untangles the fundamental connection amid environment & health in the modern era. While during the last 50 years there were great improvements in health and life expectancy of children but their emotional working or psychological health have not improved to a comparable extent. The school provides an ideal platform to achieve both health and educational consequences.<sup>1</sup>

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Received: January, 2023

Accepted: March, 2023

Printed: May, 2023

The psychological environment of the schools shapes the development of children and contribute to their positive adjustment. School settings offer an environment of growing self-reliance and esteem among them.<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has developed a framework of child-friendly, rights-based educational systems and talks about impact of personal and social environment of schools. The objectives of the framework are to promote the learning and development of students and improve the sense of belongingness and quality of life of students.<sup>3</sup>

The psycho-social profiling of school raised awareness of teachers, staff and administrators to know to what extent they are contributing to create the positive school environment, what are the gaps in the existing school system and what changes at school level can be made to create and promote friendly school atmosphere<sup>4</sup>. The last five decades have seen implausible yet cynical developments in the field of somatic wellness and life prospect of teenagers but correspondingly, improvements in children's emotive working or psychological well-being has been quite dismal too.<sup>5</sup>

It is estimated that around 13% of global disease weight is primarily due to psychological conditions and more or less 75% of this percentage, are located in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). It comprises psychological syndromes (expressive/emotive disorders, substance and material exploitation, alcohol abuse, schizophrenia, dementia, schizotypal and delusions) and nervous system conditions (convulsions, periodic head pain, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson’s disease).

Psychological fitness of adolescents is an indispensable field of wellbeing trepidation internationally. With nearly around 4million attempts occur for suicide globally, approximately ninety thousand (accounting 23% of total suicide) or many more youngsters are becoming victims of suicide, terming it as second next recorded cause of deaths in the teenagers.

Psychosocial environment of a school hinges on to a large extent on the policies and assertiveness of the staff. A positive environment at school setting can augment societal and expressive happiness and promotes learning. A child-friendly school prizes learning and promotes collaboration rather than rivalry, facilitates compassionate, open communications and opinions the delivery of creative prospects as important. The aim of the research work was to improve the psychosocial environment in Army Public Schools. A constructive, helpful and optimistic learning atmosphere in a class is remarkably significant because it capitalizes on pupils learning by identifying the gaps in the existing psychosocial environments of Army Public Schools in Rawalpindi and provide viable recommendations for improvement.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This descriptive cross-sectional research using non probability convenient sampling was conducted amongst the students from army public schools and some private schools in Rawalpindi for one year.

A sample size of 486 participants was used which was calculated using WHO formula. All the managerial stake holders including teachers, school heads, section heads & teachers would be included in the study. Firstly, the data concerning demographic and other associated variables e.g. gender, age, schools types & socio-economic status of respondents was collected, then WHO developed Psycho-Social Environment (PSE) profile questionnaire.<sup>12</sup> was used which was divided into 7 quality zones each suggesting a key part of a healthy psycho-social setting at educational setup, comprising of questions about environment, learning, violence, victimization, working on innovative ideas,

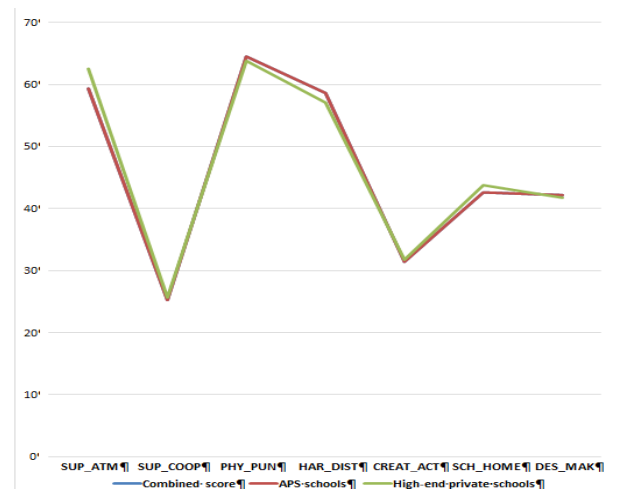
parents’ involvement, participation and decision making capabilities. The Cronbach alphabet of each area is around 0.92. AFGMI (Armed Forces Post Graduate Medical Institute) provided ethical approval for the study. Informed consent was taken from all participants prior to data collection. Each inquiry is rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 4, with 1 amounting to lowermost while 4 being the uppermost grading of community and passionate consideration.

Numerical data SPSS v.21 was used for analyzing quantitative data. Quantitative variables were evaluated and analyzed through calculation of mean and Standard Deviation (SD) & mean were used to analyze quantitative variables while categorical results were analyzed in the form of frequencies and percentages. Independents sample t-test was employed to associate the psycho-social environment of both school systems.

**RESULTS**

**Table No.1: Frequency (f) and percentages (%) of study participants (N=486).**

Variable	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent %
School	Girls Wings	155	43.4
	Boys Wings	135	37.8
	Co-ed	66	18.5
Teacher’s Gender	Female	342	70.4
	Male	139	28.6
School type	Army Public schools	420	86.4
	High-end private school system	66	13.6



**Figure No.1: Comparison across schools**

**Table No. 2: Average of all Schools Respondents Regarding Psychosocial Environment**

S.#	Quality areas	Army Public Schools				Civilian Schools		
		Chaklala Cantt	Ordnance Road	Humayun Road	Fort Road	Froebels	DHAI	Roots Intl
1	Provision of a supportive, friendly and rewarding environment	59.11	55.85	60.77	58.20	59.65	69.40	55.85
2	Supporting Active Learning and Cooperation	26.36	24.13	25.69	24.61	24.53	28.94	23.55
3	Forbidding violence and corporeal punishment	68.81	63.43	66.81	62.16	61.43	74.55	55.42
4	Not accepting discrimination, harassment and bullying	59.562	58.61	61.62	56.80	57.12	67.85	47.69
5	Appreciating the development of creative activities	31.36	31.55	33.07	30.14	32.40	34.39	29.13
6	Involving parents for connecting home and school life	43.88	42.61	43.90	40.28	44.93	48.30	39.00
7	Encouraging equal chances and participation in decision-making	41.22	41.48	43.28	42.30	43.31	45.13	37.52

**Table No. 3: Scoring the profile**

S. #	Quality areas	Army Public Schools			Civilian Schools		
		Respondent Score (A)	Total number of items	Avg	Respondent's Score (A)	Total number of items	Avg
1	Provision of a supportive, friendly and rewarding environment	16755	18	930.83	3128	18	173.78
2	Supporting Active Learning and Cooperation	7491	8	936.37	1333	8	166.63
3	Forbidding violence and corporeal punishment	18944	20	947.2	3638	20	181.9
4	Not accepting discrimination, harassment and bullying	19738	18	1096.5	3368	18	187.11
5	Appreciating the development of creative activities	8774	10	877.4	1746	10	174.6
6	Involving parents for connecting home and school life	16236	13	1248.9	2582	13	198.62
7	Encouraging equal chances and participation in decision-making	10944	13	841.84	2128	13	163.69

**Table 4: Comparison of consolidate percentages of quality areas of PSE – Army Public Schools Vs Civilian Schools**

S. #	Quality areas	Army Public Schools	Civilian Schools
1	Provision of a supportive, friendly and rewarding environment	55%	66%
2	Supporting Active Learning and Cooperation	56%	63%
3	Forbidding violence and corporeal punishment	55%	67%
4	Not accepting discrimination, harassment and bullying	65%	71%
5	Appreciating the development of creative activities	52%	66%
6	Involving parents for connecting home and school life	74%	75%
7	Encouraging participation and equal chances in decision making	50%	62%

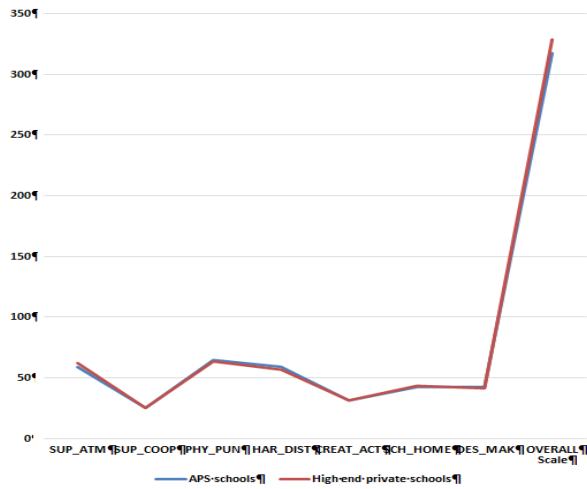


Figure No.2: Mean difference across gender

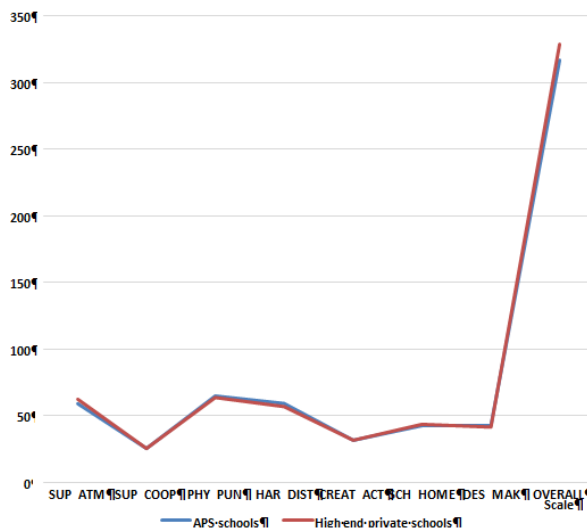


Figure No.3: Mean difference across schools

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explore, compare and improve the psychosocial atmosphere of military and civilian educational institutes located in Rawalpindi district. Youngsters spend a significant amount of their time in school and the physical and psychosocial scopes of schools are imperative for their wellbeing. The school environment comprises of both psychosocial and physical modules.

Teenagers and youngster’s psychological wellbeing development is fundamental essential component in the growth of the community and nation state. The finding of present study based on the perspectives of private and army public school teachers identified that there are policies present in the school, however systematic implementation is required. The results identified that

there are strict policies in place in army public school systems and teachers are also familiar with those policies. But in private school systems there is a lack of awareness regarding policies to make healthy environment of schools. Also, teachers are more stressed out and their focus is on the academic of students.<sup>6</sup> Other than absence of strategies, psychological wellbeing mindfulness and compelling school-based intercession advances prosperity in kids and teenagers in the schools. In any case, present discoveries recognized that the greater part of the instructors are uninformed about the aversion of socio-emotional and conduct issues at beginning stages.

Moreover, school assumes a noteworthy job in effective usage of healthy administrations to create socio-emotional abilities in addition to constructive conduct. The discoveries featured that instructors and school backing is fundamental for the viable execution of school-based psychological wellness intercessions. Present investigation outcomes are predictable with the conclusion of previously done researches<sup>6</sup>, successful and efficient mediation based on schools depends with respect to school command and authority and receptiveness of school towards psychological health services.

Educators draw attention to the absence of school offices, inflexible examination framework, absence of participation of parents, contribution in exercises and heavy workload on instructors as hindrances in fruitful usage of school-based psychological wellness program. A comparative report bolstered these elements ruin the viable program execution.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, current investigation additionally recognized school arrangements and conventional school rehearses as obstructions in the usage of school-based mediation. The school disciplinary practices, school exercises or testing needs, were distinguished as school-based mediation execution boundaries.<sup>9</sup> Besides, accessibility of assets is significant for the powerful execution of intercessions in school setting. The shortage of assets to address kids and young people psychological well-being is challengeable circumstance and it go about as a boundary to compelling mediation usage.<sup>10</sup> Present investigation likewise emphasized the absence of assets as a boundary in compelling usage of school-based mediation.

Work trouble, absence of instructor's information and absence of educator practice make issues in tending to youngsters and juvenile's socio – passionate and conduct issues. In past investigations<sup>4,5</sup>, featured that various educators experience absence of training, absence of learning and abilities, and absence of assets to recognize and oversee kids and young people with socio-passionate and conduct issues. Furthermore, the significance of educators preparing to advance a

positive psycho emotional state in school going kids has also been noticed.<sup>8</sup>

For youngsters & teenager's emotional well-being advancement, cooperation of guardians, educator and companions is important. In school setting, educators give scholastic instruction and just as illuminate their folks about their exhibition for better results. Moreover, for the powerful results parent's collaboration with instructors is vital.<sup>11</sup> In the present examination, instructors referenced that guardians don't approach educators to check and adjust about their kid's execution and conduct at school. Educators face hardships in trying to connect with guardians in psychological well-being intercession<sup>12</sup>

Supportive instructors assume a vital job in the effective usage of school-based mediation in light of the fact that prepared educators actualize the intercession exercises and models in homeroom settings. Strong instructor builds up a communitarian situation to advance psychological wellbeing and socio-passionate learning.

The current research work highlighted that there are striking differences exist between the private schools' system and army public school system regarding the knowledge of psychosocial environment of school and implementation of policies to maintain a healthy environment. Army public school system has strict policies in place, they are continuously training their teachers and building their capacity on how to deal with children. They have proper check and balance system in place and orders are passed from higher authorities to the individual schools.

On the other hand, private school systems are more towards increasing their enrollment rates, treating children as a source of their income and all of their focus is on high achievements in terms of grades. Children have more behavioral and psychological issues in private schools but teachers do not have sufficient trainings to deal with those.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study demonstrate that the psychosocial school environments of Army Public Schools in Rawalpindi are comparable in all quality areas with reputable private schools in Rawalpindi including supporting cooperation and active learning; forbidding physical punishment and violence; not tolerating bullying and harassment; valuing the development of creative activities; connecting school and home life and promoting equal opportunities and participation. However, comparison of teachers' report from Army Public School with reputed private schools revealed a friendlier, rewarding and supportive

atmosphere in private schools as compared to the Army Public Schools in Rawalpindi.

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**Conflict of Interest:** The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

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