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Analyzing Students' Perspectives About School and Respect for Social Rules

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Abstract: *The main purpose of the study was to analyze students' perspectives about school and respect for social rules. The objectives of the study were (a) to review the impact of respecting social rules on the overall environment of the school, and (b) to examine students' perceptions about school and respect for social rules. The study was descriptive in nature while a quantitative research approach was used to analyze the perspective of students about school and respecting social roles. The Population of the study consisted of all the secondary school students of the Government sector situated in Urban and Rural Areas of Punjab Province, which is the largest Province of Pakistan with respect to the population of the country. The study presented has delved into the multifaceted world of altruism, unveiling the profound impact of acts of kindness on individuals and their communities.*

Key Words: Students' Perspectives, School and Respect for Social Rules

Introduction

Background of the Study

The growing inequalities among countries, economic crises around the globe, climate change and conflict are some of the main challenges that emerged largely in the second decade of the 21st century (Sayed & Badroodien, 2016). Considering the contemporary scenarios, the need is to have more cohesive societies which arise and promote social cohesion. It is the top agenda of the world that influences all aspects of life including socio-economic development. Social

and economic development is affected and influenced by social cohesion by promoting and fostering cohesiveness within society (Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett, & Njozela, 2018). More recently the world has agreed upon Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the year 2015 which is a clear reflection of the commitment towards more cohesive societies and cohesive world (Lim et al., 2016). This is the transformed and aspiring agenda and framework that can address and resolve the issues of climate change, poverty and inequality, social and economic inclusion, equity and access to quality education (Sayed

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& Badroodien, 2016). Social Cohesion has appeared as a very important and critical concept in the recent era, almost in all parts of the globe and in every field of life because of escalated tension in society, targeting minorities, increased crime rate, violation of human rights and above all the huge occurrence of conflict are the results of the absence of social cohesion (McLean, 2009). It is being debated and deliberated at every forum in the context of conflict management and resolution, peacebuilding and harmony initiatives and most importantly for its benefits for the entire globe. During the 1980s governments and international institutions, policymakers started to adopt social cohesion as the chief policy goal and agenda (Burns et al., 2018).

Social Cohesion is not a new concept; it is usually traced to the work of sociologists of the 19th century like Emile Durkheim but it has been discussed and pondered for the last 30 years. Social Cohesion is not an easy and straightforward concept to define as some are of the view that Social Cohesion is considered a vague concept and can be understood in the scenarios and results where societies are not cohesive than by going through multiple definitions. As Samuel, Alkire, Zavaleta, Mills, and Hammock (2017) and (Balkan & Adalier, 2011) says social cohesion is considered to be the capacity of individuals to establish good relations with his/her surrounding and continue such relations. While Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development argues that a Cohesive society strives for everyone's welfare, combat marginalization and exclusion, foster a sense of belonging, uphold trust, and provide members with opportunities for social mobility (Co-operation & Development, 2011). United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has also introduced social cohesion in its work around the globe and holds the view that social cohesion can be seen through two lenses: the first one focuses on minimizing disparities, inequality, and social exclusion, while the second one emphasizes fostering social links and bonds. McLean (2009) and J Jenson (2015) presented and elaborated on social

cohesion by conducting a review of theory, policy and literature. They discussed belonging as one domain, inclusions as the second, participation as the third domain, and recognition and legitimacy fifth and sixth domains respectively.

Education is supposed to contribute towards social cohesion in four basic ways. Firstly, schools need to inculcate an understanding of basic principles of good citizenship and also realize the consequences if these rules are not abided by and followed. Secondly, schools must offer opportunities and experiences consistent with these basic principles of good citizenship that reduces differences and brings them together with people of various ethnicity and background. Thirdly, schools are considered to be open to all and provide opportunities to all students without any discrimination or segregation. Lastly, schools must build a shared understanding of citizenship and incorporate the concerns of diverse groups (Heyneman, 2010). While discussing how education affects social cohesion (Colenso, 2005) used three lenses for this purpose. The first lens is about seeing the ways in which education may influence social cohesion by various means including formulation of the policy, chalking our plans, and managing education by ensuring participation and transparency. The second lens discusses the equality and equity of opportunities: how social cohesion is affected by the sharing of educational resources, creating educational opportunities and ensuring outcomes outreach. The final lens throws light on the development of certain competencies and how these can affect social cohesion. Hence schools and school activities have a very critical and fundamental role in the development of opportunities, knowledge and skills among students and paving the way for a cohesive school environment in particular and societies at large.

Schools offer many opportunities and create an environment of learning and interaction among students. As rightly argued by J. Simeonsson (2001) schools establish a primary environment for education and

citizenship. Hence, these calls for the participation and involvement of students in the activities which are offered by schools. Considerable pieces of evidence are available in the form of various research that higher participation levels in school activities provided positive outcomes for the school environment and social cohesion(J. Simeonsson, 2001). These outcomes may include higher rates of retention and continuity, improved academic performance and lesser chances of delinquency (Hawkins & Weis, 2017). Participation in school activities not only bring positive outcome but also proves itself a shield against negative outcomes. (Finn, 1989) argues that full involvement in the educational and social life of the school serves as a safeguard against unfavourable results. School activities may be defined as any activity which is offered and organized by schools within and outside the schools ranging from classroom teaching to school trips. The school activities can be divided into six categories (1) social; (2) recreational; (3) communal; (4) creative; (5) civic; and (6) academic (J. Simeonsson, 2001). There is no considerable data available with regard to the role of school activities in various positive outcomes, especially the promotion of social cohesion in the Pakistani context. Although some research has been done for example Teachers Governance Factors and Social Cohesion: Insights from Pakistan they concluded that teachers' recruitment was aimed at quality teachers but this was implemented in a way that could not ensure the inclusion aspect(Halai & Durrani, 2016).

The term "social cohesion" has a wide range of definitions, and an even greater range of indicators are purportedly linked to social indicators. It is also debatable whether social cohesion should be studied at the level of people, small communities, cities, regions, or even entire nations. An examination of the literature also reveals that social cohesion is a multifaceted and multilevel notion (Friedkin, 2004). Schiefer and Van der Noll (2017) presented three border dimensions of social cohesion through a critical review of the literature: (1) social relations, (2) belonging, and (3) orientation towards the common good.

While discussing and summarizing the orientation towards the common good they presented two components: solidarity and compliance with social rules. Compliance with social rules may be defined as the individual's willingness to accept and respect the legitimacy of the social rules of the group.

How can we foster, promote and sustain social cohesion? These are the strategic considerations for all of us, especially for those who are more concerned with education. Most significantly the role of education, as a social institution, cannot be undermined as schools are preparing the upcoming generations for the future. There are several ways in which education serves as a socializing force for the better. Civic virtues can be instilled early on through education, which can lower the price of enforcing good social norms. When applied in a school setting we may say that respecting and complying with school rules has a very significant impact on the overall environment of the school and promote the feeling of safety in the school. As rightly concluded by Cohen et al., 2009 students who comply with the school rules enjoy a feeling of safety. Apart from the feeling of safety, compliance and following school rules also include dissemination of information about rules, acceptance and confidence in the school rules by students and teachers and most importantly the consistency in the responses to the violation and breakage of the school rules.

Current Research

The statement of the problem in a research study is a critical component that outlines the specific issues or questions the research aims to address. In the context of analyzing students' perspectives about school and respect for social rules, the statement of the problem might look something like this: In contemporary society, the educational environment plays a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes, behaviours, and understanding of social rules. The school serves not only as an institution for academic learning but also as a microcosm of the broader society, where students are exposed to and interact with various social norms and rules. It

is essential to explore and understand students' perspectives regarding school and their respect for social rules both within the educational setting and in the larger context of society. Students' perceptions of school rules can significantly impact their overall school experience, including their engagement, motivation, and sense of fairness within the educational environment. It is imperative to investigate how students perceive the rules and regulations in their school and how these perceptions influence their attitudes and behaviours. Understanding how students perceive disciplinary actions, authority figures (e.g., teachers, administrators), and the enforcement of rules in school is essential. This research aims to explore students' experiences with discipline and authority and how these experiences shape their attitudes towards authority figures and rule compliance. Beyond the school environment, students are exposed to a wide range of social rules and norms in society. This study seeks to examine how students understand and respect these broader social rules, exploring whether their experiences in school have an impact on their adherence to societal norms. The development of a respectful and responsible citizenry is a fundamental goal of education. Investigating how students' perspectives about school rules and their respect for social rules correlate with their social and moral development is a key focus of this research. Demographic factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, and cultural context may influence students' perspectives on school and social rules. This study will explore potential variations in perspectives based on these factors. By addressing these problems, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into the complex interplay between students' perceptions of school, their respect for social rules, and their broader social development. These findings can inform educational policies and practices designed to create positive school environments and promote responsible citizenship in the larger society.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study: (a) to
review the impact of respecting social rules on the overall environment of the school; (b) to examine students' perceptions about school and respect for social rules and (c) to recommend measures for schools to promote respect for social rules among students.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions of the study:

1. What is the impact of respecting social rules on the overall environment of the school?
2. How are students perceived about school and respect for social rules?
3. What are the strategies to promote respect for social rules among students?

Method

The nature of the study was descriptive while a quantitative research approach was used to analyze the perspective of students about school and respecting social roles. The Population of the study consisted of all the secondary school students of the Government sector situated in Urban and Rural Areas of Punjab Province, which is the largest Province of Pakistan with respect to the population of the country. It consists of approximately 53% of the total population of Pakistan as per the 6th Population Census 2017 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2019). The probability sampling method was used to draw a sample which according to Connoly (2007) serves as the foundation of all statistical tests. The sample was taken from Punjab Province by using the Multistage Cluster Sampling technique. Punjab province was divided into three regions i.e. (i) North region, (ii) Central region and (iii) Southern region. From each region, two districts were selected as sample of the study and each was included in the study as the district (starta) were spread geographically, thus making the sample spread, large and ideally representative of the population as Best

and Kahn (2003) argues that the sample would be large enough to represent the population. From each district 4 urban and 4 rural schools were randomly selected with Male and Female division and the Christian school were included in the study, where Christian community school is available. Similarly, 16 Students (8 science and 8 Humanities Students) from each school were drawn randomly. On the base of extensive literature review and objectives of the study researcher developed research instruments keeping in view and adopting the Fraser's Framework of the three dimensions of social justice i.e. Redistribution, Recognition , Representation and Novelli's Fourths dimension Reconciliation (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, & Smith, 2015), Jensen's five dimensions of Social cohesion i.e. belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy (Jane Jenson, 2010), the Scanlon-Monash Index (SMI) of Social cohesion i.e. belonging, Social Justice and equity, Political participation, Acceptance and Rejection, legitimacy, and worth (Markus, 2014), Bertelsmann Foundation's Social Cohesion Radar i.e. Resilient Social Relations, Emotional Connectedness and Focus on the Common Good (Dragolov, Ignácz, Lorenz, Delhey, & Boehnke, 2013), SCORE Index i.e. Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (Burns et al., 2018), Kenyan National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)'s Social Cohesion Index i.e. Prosperity, Equity, Peace, Diversity, Identity and Trust (NCIC, 2014), Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)'s Social Cohesion Barometer i.e. Economic Domain, Socio-Cultural Domain and Civic Domain (Struwig et al., 2012) and Afrobarometer: Social cohesion Across Africa i.e. Conflict and Crime, Democracy, Elections,

Gender Equality, Governance, Identity, Macroeconomics and Markets, Political Participation, Poverty, Public Service, Social Capital and tolerance(Langer, Stewart, Smedts, & Demarest, 2016).

Data Analysis and Results

The researcher had personally collected data from the sample of the study and prior consent was taken from the respondents and institution before embarking upon data collection. Data analysis is a critical phase in a study on Analyzing Students' Perspectives about School and Respect for Social Rules. It involves processing and interpreting the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and insights. The researcher has ensured that the data is free from errors, missing values, and inconsistencies and assigned numerical codes or categories to variables, such as types of school activities, demographic information, and respecting social rules measures. After numerical coding, the researcher computed basic descriptive statistics. Look for data points that fall significantly outside the expected range. The study included qualitative data (e.g., interview transcripts). Presented the key findings of the data analysis in a clear and concise manner, using tables, figures, and narratives. Provided interpretations of the data, explaining what the findings mean in the context of the study's objectives and hypotheses. The practical implications of the findings for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in Punjab's secondary education system were mentioned at the end of each table in the data analysis. Summarized the main findings and their significance in relation to the study's objectives.

Table 1

My belongings were stolen at the school

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	184	24.0		
Rarely	336	43.8		
Sometimes	28	3.6	2.37	1.134
Very often	220	28.6		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 1 describes about steeling of students belonging in school. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the perception of students towards respecting social rules. The data table shows, that 28.6 per cent of students responded that they very often 3.6 per cent responded that sometimes their belongings are stolen in the school, 43.8 rarely and 24.0 responded they their belongings are stolen in the school. The mean score of the statement 2.37 shows the inclination toward agreement with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the students are of the opinion that their belongings are stolen in the school. The standard deviation value of the table is .793. In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the participants agreed that their belongings were stolen in the school which indicates the disrespect of social rules.

Table 2

I feel safe in the school

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	66	8.6		
Rarely	26	3.4		
Sometimes	238	31.0	3.36	.903
Very often	438	57.0		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 2 describes a feeling of safety. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the perception of students towards a feeling of safety in school. The data table shows 57.0 per cent students responded that they very often 31.0 per cent responded that sometimes they feel safe in the school, 433.4 rarely and 8.6 responded they never feel safe in the school. The mean score of the statement 3.36 shows the inclination toward agreement with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the students are of the opinion that they feel safe in the school. The standard deviation value of the table is .903. In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the participants.

Table 3

My schoolfellows bully me

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	156	20.3		
Rarely	134	17.4		
Sometimes	352	45.8	2.58	.989
Very often	126	16.4		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 3 describes bullying practices in school by their schoolfellows. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the perception of students towards bullying in the school and respecting social rules. The data table shows, that 16.4 per cent of students responded that they are very often while 45.8 per cent responded that sometimes they are bullied by their school fellows, 17.4 rarely and 20.3 responded they are never bullied by their schoolfellows. The mean score of the statement 2.58 shows the inclination toward agreement with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the students are of the opinion that they are bullied by their schoolfellows. The standard deviation value of the table is .989. In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the participants agreed that they are bullied by their schoolfellows.

Table 4

My schoolfellows beat me physically

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	350	45.6		
Rarely	110	14.3		
Sometimes	220	28.6	2.06	095
Very often	88	11.5		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 4 describes about students are beaten by their school fellows. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the perception of students towards physical mistreatment in the school and respecting social rules. The data table shows, that 11.5 percent of students responded that they very often 28.6 percent responded that sometimes they are not physically beaten by their school fellows, 14.3 rarely while 45.6 responded they are never physically beaten by their school fellows. The mean score of the statement 2.06 shows the inclination toward neutrality with the statement. This suggests that half of the students are of the opinion that they were physically beaten by their school fellows and half of the participants were of the opinion that they were not physically beaten by their school fellows. The standard deviation value of the table is .095. In conclusion, it can be said that half of the participants agreed that they are physically beaten by their schoolfellows

Table 5

I do bully whenever someone bullies me

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	266	34.6		
Rarely	240	31.3		
Sometimes	166	21.6	2.12	1.024
Very often	96	12.5		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 5 describes bullying practices in school by students. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the opinion of students towards response if they are bullied bullying in the school and respecting social rules. The data table shows, that 12.5 per cent of students responded that they do very often while 21.6 per cent responded that sometimes they do bully whenever someone bullies them, 17.4 rarely while 20.3 responded they never do bully whenever someone bullies them. The mean score of the statement 2.12 shows the inclination toward agreement with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the students are of the opinion that they do bully whenever someone bullies them. The standard deviation value of the table is 1.024. In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the participants agreed that they do bully whenever someone bullies them.

Table 6

I do hit physically whenever someone physically beats me

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Never	184	24.0		
Rarely	366	47.7	2.21	.987
Sometimes	92	12.0		

Scale	Frequency	Per cent	Mean	S.D
Very often	126	16.4		
Total	768	100.0		

Table 6 describes bullying practices in school by students. The main purpose of asking this question was to know the opinion of students towards response if they are physically hit in the school and respecting social rules. The data table shows, that 16.4 per cent of students responded that they very often while 12.0 per cent responded that sometimes they do hit physically whenever someone physically beats them, 47.7 rarely while 24.0 responded they never do hit physically whenever someone physically beats them. The mean score of the statement 2.21 shows the inclination toward agreement with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the students are of the opinion that they do bully whenever someone bullies them. The standard deviation value of the table is .987. In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the participants agreed that they do bully whenever someone bullies them.

Discussion

Schools are institutions that play a pivotal role in shaping the personalities and attitudes of the young generation. They are expected to provide a safe environment for learning and personal growth. However, sometimes the social environment in schools may be marred by incidents like theft, bullying, and physical assault. How students respond to these events and the reasons behind such actions require a closer look.

The act of stealing someone's belongings is not only a violation of the school's code of conduct but also a breach of trust among peers. Such incidents can have profound effects on a student's sense of security and belonging. When a student's belongings are stolen in school, it raises questions about the overall security infrastructure and the moral compass of students (Smith, 2018). It also underscores the importance of cultivating a sense of responsibility and respect for others' belongings among students. A feeling of safety is foundational for effective learning. A secure environment promotes trust, reduces anxiety, and fosters positive interactions among students (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). However, bullying and physical assault are significant threats to this sense of security. While a student may feel generally safe in school, specific incidents can quickly shatter this perception. Bullying is a pervasive problem in many schools, with long-term effects on victims, bullies, and bystanders alike (Olweus, 1993). It can lead to mental health issues, low self-esteem, and even suicidal thoughts in extreme cases. "I do bully whenever someone bullies me." - Retaliation can sometimes be seen as a defence mechanism. However, counter-bullying doesn't solve the problem but only perpetuates the cycle of negativity and aggression (Salmivalli, 2010). Physical violence in schools, like being beaten by school fellows, is an extreme form of aggression that poses immediate safety concerns and long-term psychological impacts (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). "I do hit physically whenever someone physically beats me." - While self-defence is a natural instinct, retaliation can escalate conflicts and often leads to more significant harm for both parties involved. It is essential to promote conflict resolution skills and a zero-tolerance policy for violence in schools (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). A respectful, safe, and supportive school environment is crucial for students' well-being and academic success. Addressing issues of theft, bullying, and physical assault is not only a matter of disciplinary action but also requires fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and understanding.

Conclusion

The incidents of theft, bullying, and physical violence within the school environment highlight the importance of instilling a strong sense of respect for social rules among students. A safe and supportive school atmosphere is essential not only for academic

growth but also for the emotional and psychological well-being of students. When belongings are stolen, it is not just a material loss but a breach of trust that can disrupt the sense of security in school. These incidents necessitate not only disciplinary actions but also education on the values of empathy, responsibility, and respect for personal property. Feeling safe in school is a fundamental right for every student. Bullying and physical violence erode this sense of safety, leading to a toxic environment that hinders learning and personal development. It is incumbent upon schools to implement anti-bullying programs, encourage open communication, and provide support to both victims and perpetrators to break the cycle of aggression. Responding to bullying or physical violence with retaliation perpetuates a cycle of harm. Instead, schools should focus on teaching conflict resolution skills and promoting a culture of empathy and understanding. By addressing the root causes of aggression and providing counselling and support when needed, schools can create an environment where students feel safe, respected, and empowered to resolve conflicts peacefully. Fostering respect for social rules is not just about enforcing regulations but about nurturing a culture of respect, empathy, and responsibility in schools. By doing so, we can ensure that schools become spaces where every student can thrive academically and emotionally, free from the shadow of theft, bullying, or physical violence.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and results of the study following were the recommendations:

- In order to prescribe standards of acceptable behaviour, schools should emphasize respect for social rules and make efforts to enhance the awareness level of students about social rules.
- Considering the importance of respecting social rules and following them schools should include special topics in the curriculum on civic education.
- The introduction of civic and ethical education should be part of the curriculum
- There should be a mechanism to acknowledge and appreciate the good behaviour of students and respect social rules.
- Schools should clearly articulate and display social rules in prominent places.
- Schools should develop a clear policy of the school with regard to respect for social rules not only by students but by all the human resources of the school.
- For further research and work, the effectiveness of respecting social rules on the academic achievement of students should be investigated
- Similarly, the impact of respecting social rules on the outside school life of the students should be explored.
- Schools should develop respecting social rules policy by involving students through their participation in consultation and finalization process.

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