Investigating the Role of School Climate in Predicting Social Competence of girl High School Students in Dezful city in the School Year 2019-2020

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Abstract: *The study was conducted to investigate the role of school climate in predicting the social competence of girl high school students in Dezful in the school year 2019-2020. The study sample included 381 female students who were selected by cluster sampling method and a descriptive-correlation design was employed in this study. The data collection tools included two questionnaires: School Climate (CSCI, 2009), and Social Competence by Felner et al. (1990). The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency table, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regression). The school is a real field in which competencies such as the spirit of cooperation and interaction are formally transmitted to students. Social competence seems to evolve in the developmental process, and adult social behaviours are rooted in the socialization process of childhood. The results of Pearson correlation test of the showed that there is a significant relationship between school climate and social competence and its components (Cognitive, Behavioural, Emotional and Motivational skills) at the significance level of 0.01.The results of regression analysis indicated that the school climate can predict social competence and its components.*

Introduction

Human beings are social beings and in order to have a social life, they must experience the process of socialization. In this process, the acquisition and application of social skills and proper communication and interaction with others, are among the main components of social development, especially for children and adolescents (Cartledge & Milburn, 1985). Social competence seems to evolve in the developmental process, and adult social behaviors are rooted in the socialization process of childhood (Nowicki, 1997; Parker & Asher, 1987). It can be said that social competence is the most important aspect of one's personality development during adolescence (Miller, 2006). The school is a real field in which competencies such as the spirit of cooperation and interaction are formally transmitted to students. At school, students are also educated and prepared to grasp and absorb social morality, behaviors, and habits that help the style of competence (Ahmadi, 2005). In this research, the researcher tries to examine one of the most significant factors affecting social competence, namely school climate, seeking a scientific answer to this question: "what is the role of school climate in predicting the social competence of female high school students in Dezful city in the school year 2019-2020?"

Literature Review

Abbaspour (2016) in a study titled "investigating the effect of participatory learning on social competence of male and female high school students in Bonab city" concluded that the participatory learning method has been able to improve students' social adequacy beliefs on behavioral, cognitive, emotional and motivational components. Yarahmadian (2012) examined the effect of social adequacy training program on personal and social abilities and general health of first grade high school girls in Tehran. In this study, 30 students from District 14 of Education in Tehran were selected by convenience sampling method and randomly assigned into the experimental and control groups. The social adequacy training program was presented to the experimental group in ten 105-minutes sessions. The results

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indicated the effectiveness of the experimental intervention, confirming the implementation of the social adequacy training program improved personal and social abilities of the students in the experimental group in cognitive, behavioral, emotional and motivational dimensions. The results of Magdalena's study (2012) titled "Social and emotional competence as a predictor of school adjustment" emphasize that a high level of school adjustment is related to the level of development of social abilities and capacities and plays an important role in progress and adaptation at school. Mouris (2008), determining the relationship between social competence and academic performance of high school students, found that the higher the social competence, the lower the dropout rate. According to Zins et al. (2004), basic skills for success include cognitive and metacognitive skills such as goal setting, memory skills, social skills such as interpersonal skills, and self-management skills such as increased attention, motivation, anxiety management and finally creating optimism.

Theoretical Framework
School Climate
Assessing and defining school climate has always been a challenge because over time people might have a different perception (positive or negative) of it. Here are some views about school climate:

> **A.** Halpin's Theory: In his study of school climate, Halpin pointed to eight characteristics, attributing four of them (emphasis on production, keeping distance, observance, and influence) to the principal's behavior and the rest (lack of enthusiasm, intimacy, spirit, prevention) to teachers' behavior.
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> **B.** Kraft's theory: according to Kraft, School climate is a term used to describe how people feel about their school and there are ten factors that should be considered in this regard, which are: supportive environment, motivation, student-centeredness, positive expectations, feedback, rewards, family feeling, closeness to parents and community, communication, progress and trusting one another.
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> **C.** Williams' theory (1989): He believes that while examining teachers' perceptions of the school climate, indicators such as teacher-student relationship, safety and maintenance, management, students' academic orientation, students' behavioral values, guidance and counseling, peer relationships, parent and community and school relationships, educational management and student activities should be considered.

Social Competence
There are different views about social competence. Here, some of them are presented:

- Putnam suggests that social competence reflects adjustment to family, school, and work. And through social adjustment, social competence can be assessed (Ridal,1997).
- Malti and Perren (2011) believe that social competence is defined as the ability to achieve individual goals while maintaining positive social relationships. More specifically, social competence is a set of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and motivational skills needed for successful psychosocial adjustment, which enables individuals to achieve their goals by considering the goals and needs of others and meet their own needs.
- Rubin & Rose-Krasnor (1992) consider social competence as the ability to achieve individual goals in social interaction, while maintaining positive relationships with others at all times and in all situations.

Felner's Four-Dimensional Model of Social Competence
One of the models can be used to teach social skills to children and adolescents is Felner's four-dimensional model of social competence. In this model, Felner, Lease, and Phillips (1990) introduce four categories of skills and abilities.

- **Cognitive Skills** include information treasury, information processing skills, decision-making ability, efficient and inefficient beliefs, and documentary styles.
- **Behavioral Skills** include negotiation, adopting a view, adaptive assertiveness, gaining support or information, conversational skills to initiate and maintain social interactions, knowledge learning skills, and friendly behavior with others (DuBois & Felner, 1990).

- **Emotional Skills** include establishing a positive constructive bond with others, building and expanding trust and mutual supportive relationships, identifying and responding appropriately to emotional signals in social interactions, and playing an empathetic role; such emotional competencies are needed for establishing effective and emotion-based relationships with others (DuBois & Felner, 1990).
- **Motivational Skills** include the value structure of the individual, the level of moral development and their sense of effectiveness and control, and finally their sense of self-efficacy (Felner et al., 1990).

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence of the female high school students in Dezful city.
2. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence cognitive skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.
3. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence behavioral skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.
4. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence emotional skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.
5. **Five:** There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence motivational skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Research Methodology

The statistical population of the study consisted of all female high school students in Dezful city (6550 students) in the school year 2019-2020. A sample of 381 female high school students was selected using multi-stage cluster sampling method based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Thus, given the statistics of female high school students in Dezful city from the Department of Education, 6 high schools were randomly selected and then in proportion to the desired number, 12 classes were finally selected as the sample and questionnaires were distributed among them.

Data Collection Tool

First, note taking was used to collect the research data, and then two questionnaires of School Climate (CSCI,2009) and Social Competence by Felner et al. (1990) were distributed among the subjects.

School Climate Questionnaire The Comprehensive School Climate Scale (CSCI), from the electronic database of the Center for Social and Emotional Education, 2009, has 70 items and 4 subscales: security, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, and institutional environment. The scoring method of this questionnaire is based on the Likert scale, which includes items from strongly disagree(1) to strongly agree(4). Scores range from 70 to 280. Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the school climate scale, and the internal consistency coefficients of the total scale0/93, security0/74, teaching and learning0/91, interpersonal relationships0/91, and institutional environment0/83 were calculated.

Social Competence Questionnaire which is based on Felner's four-dimensional model (1990), is for adolescents. There are 47 questions based on the seven-point Likert scale, which includes options from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine its reliability and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.88. In addition to alpha coefficient, test-retest reliability has also been used. The correlation coefficient between the two implementation and retesting was obtained as (R = 0.899).

Conducting the Research

The required permissions were obtained and necessary coordination were made with the relevant authorities according to the previous planning. The sample members (students) attended in the appropriate place, then the researcher provided necessary explanations on how to complete the questionnaires, and finally thanked the female high school students for their cooperation.

Methods and tools for data analysis

Quantitative data of this research were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as calculation of frequency, percentage, etc. and inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation and regression by SPSS software.

Research Findings

Investigating Descriptive Indicators of the Research Variables

▪ **Descriptive findings related to the students' scores in the school climate scale:**

The mean total score of school climate was 198.84, and given to the theoretical mean of the questionnaire (188), students' perception of the school climate is higher than the average. The range of theoretical variations of the questionnaire is between 70 and 490. In this study, the range of the total scale score was between 128 and 260, which indicates a moderate perception. According to the amount of standard deviation (10/16), it is obvious that the dispersion of scores among the sample group is high.

▪ **B: Descriptive findings related to the students' scores in the social competency scale:** The mean score of students in social competence was equal to 192.15. Considering that the theoretical mean of the questionnaire is equal to 188, we conclude that the average social competence of the sample group is higher than the mean. The minimum possible score for the total score of social competence was 121 and the maximum was 296, which indicates high dispersion of the scores and hence the standard deviation was equal to 12.86. In the case of components, the mean score of cognitive skills was 14.89, which was slightly higher than the theoretical mean of 14 points. Behavioral skills' mean score was 189.98, which was much higher than the theoretical mean of 136. The mean score of emotional skills was 15.18, which was higher than the theoretical mean of 14. Finally, the mean score of motivational skills was 33.13, which was higher than the theoretical mean of 28.

Findings Related to the Research Hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis and determine the relationship.

Table (1): Correlation coefficients between the school climate and the total score of social competence of the students in the sample group (n = 381)

Criterion variable (score social competence)		predictor variable (school climate)
Meaningful level	Coefficient value (r)	
0.001	0.760	score school climate

The results from investigating the research's first question presented in the table1, show that the correlation between the school climate total score and the social competency score is r = 0.760, at the significance level of 0.01. Based on the coefficient of determination (r2), 57.76% of students' social competence can be explained according to the school climate.

Also, regression method was used to investigate the multiple relationship.

Table (2): Results of regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationships of school climate total score with social competence of students in the sample group (n=381)

Significance level	T	B	B	R^2	R	F	Predictive
0.001	-6.804	---	-116.38	0.641	0.801	*52.389	Constant number
0.003	3.665	0.231	0.283				school climate score

*P<0.01

As for the value of F, which was equal to 52.389, the regression model was significant (p <0.01).This model had the ability to predict 64.1% of the social competence variance of the students in the sample group based on the school climate total score. According to the standard beta values, and the total score of "school climate" was ($\beta = 0.231$). According to the results, the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

2. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence cognitive skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis and determine the relationship.

Table (3): Correlation coefficients between the school climate and cognitive skill score of social competence of students in the sample group (n = 381)

Criterion variable (social competency cognitive skills score)		predictor variable (school climate)
Significance level	Coefficient value (r)	
0.001	0.519	score the school climate

The results from investigating the research's second question presented in the table, show that the correlation between the school climate total3score and the social competency cognitive skills score is r = 0.519, at the significance level of 0.01. Based on the coefficient of determination (r2), 26.94% of the cognitive skills of students' social competence can be explained according to the school climate.

Also, regression method was used to investigate the multiple relationship.

Table (4): Results of regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationships of school climate total score with the social competence cognitive skills of students in the sample group (n=381)

Significance level	T	B	B	R^2	R	F	Predictive
0.515	0.651	---	1.32	870.2	90.51	*76.089	Constant number
0.016	2.417	0.247	0.022				school climate score

*P<0.01

As for the value of F, which was equal to 76.089, the regression model was significant (p <0.01). This model was able to predict 28.7% of the variance of social competence cognitive skills of the students in the sample group based on the total score of school climate. According to the standard beta values, it was found that the beta value was significant for the school climate and the total score of "school climate" was (β = 0.247). According to the results, the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

3. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence behavioral skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis and determine the relationship.

Table (5): Correlation coefficients between the school climate and behavioral skill score of social competence of students in the sample group (n = 381)

Criterion variable (social competency behavioral skills score)		predictor variable (school climate)
Significance level	Coefficient value (r)	
0.001	0.476	score school climate

The results from investigating the research's third question presented in the table5, show that the correlation between the school climate total score and the social competency behavioral skills score is r = 0.476, at the significance level of 0.01. Based on the coefficient of determination (r2), 22.66% of the behavioral skills of students' social competence can be explained according to the school climate.

Also, regression method was used to investigate the multiple relationship.

Table (6): Results of regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationships of cshool climate total score with the social competence behavioral skills of students in the sample group (n=381)

Significance level	T	B	B	R^2	R	F	Predictive
0.007	2.691	---	39.457	0.296	0.544	*69.283	constant number
0.425	0.719	.081	0.061				School climate score

*P<0.01

As for the value of F, which was equal to 69.283, the regression model was significant (p <0.01). This model was able to predict 29.6% of the variance of social competence behavioral skills of the students

in the sample group based on the total score of school climate. According to the standard beta values, the total score of "school climate" was ($\beta = 0.081$). According to the results, the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

4. **Four:** There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence emotional skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis and determine the relationship.

Table (7): Correlation coefficients between the school climate and emotional skill score of social competence of students in the sample group (n = 381)

Criterion variable (social competency emotional skills score)		predictor variable (school climate)
Significance level	Coefficient value (r)	
0.001	0.454	score school climate

The results from investigating the research's fourth question presented in the table7, show that the correlation between the school climate total score and the social competency emotional skills score is r = 0.454, at the significance level of 0.01. Based on the coefficient of determination (r2), 20.61% of the emotional skills of students' social competence can be explained according to the school climate.

Also, regression method was used to investigate the multiple relationship.

Table (8): Results of regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationships of school climate total score with the social competence emotional skills of students in the sample group (n=381)

Significance level	T	B	B	R^2	R	F	Predictive
0.003	3.004	---	4.539	0.224	0.474	*54.627	constant number
0.110	1.604	0.171	0.013				school climate score

*P<0.01

As for the value of F, which was equal to 54.627, the regression model was significant (p <0.01). This model had the ability to predict 22.4% of the variance of the social competence emotional skills of students in the sample group based on the total score of school climate. According to the standard beta values, the total score of "school climate" was ($\beta = 0.171$). According to the results, the fourth hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

5. There is a relationship between the school climate and the social competence motivational skills of the female high school students in Dezful city.

Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis and determine the relationship.

Table (9): Correlation coefficients between the school atmosphere and motivational skill score of social competence of students in the sample group (n = 381)

Criterion variable (social competency motivational skills score)		predictor variable (school atmosphere)
meaningful level	Coefficient value (r)	
0.001	0.549	score school atmosphere

The results from investigating the research's fifth question presented in the table9, show that the correlation between the school climate total score and the social competency motivational skills score is r = 0.549, at the significance level of 0.01. Based on the coefficient of determination (r2), 30.14% of the motivational skills of students' social competence can be explained according to the school climate.

Table (10): Results of regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationships of school climate total score with the social competence motivational skills of students in the sample group (n=381)

Significance level	T	B	B	R^2	R	F	Predictive
0.001	-3.320	---	-17.067	0.337	0.581	*94.465	constant number
0.157	1.418	0.141	0.038				school climate score

*P<0.01

As for the value of F, which was equal to 94.465, the regression model was significant (p <0.01). This model was able to predict 33.7% of the variance of the social competence motivational skills of students in the sample group based on the total score of school climate. According to the standard beta values, the total score of "school climate" was (β = 0/141). According to the results, the fifth hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of Pearson correlation test of the five hypotheses showed that there is a significant relationship between school climate and social competence at the significance level of 0.01. Therefore, with a 99 percent confidence level it can be said that the more favorable the school climate, the more likely it is that students will increase their social competence. And the results of the regression testing of the five hypotheses showed that the school climate can predict and explain the social competence of the sample group.The results ofthe five hypotheses are consistent with the findings of domestic and foreign researchers such as Abbaspour (2016) ,Magdalena(2012) ,Yarahmadian (2012),Mouris (2008), Zins et al (2004), etc. Interpretation of findings indicate that the first formal institution in social education, which is in fact the most important and effective educational institution, is the school. At school, cognitive, educational, social, behavioral and moral skills are learned. Acquiring such skills are made possible through interaction with teachers, peers, and curricula; so school plays an important role in shaping adolescents' attitudes, beliefs, values, competencies, social, and moral norms.

Research Suggestions

Given the increasing importance of social competence in learners and the school's role and contribution as one of the centers affecting the behavior of children and adolescents in this regard, it is necessary to study the school climate specifically in line with today's world developments. it is suggested that: 1) Other objective methods than questionnaires be used to assess school climate in predicting social competence;2)Parents should know about the concept of school climate and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to promote and maintain a positive climate in order to increase students' success, and their personal and social competencies.3)It is suggested that school counselors and educational psychologists design and present educational programs based on Felner's four-dimensional skills of social competence (in the form of textbooks, lectures, question and answer sessions, plays, wall newspapers, etc.) in student communities.

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