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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF AN EMOTIONALLY SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' ATTENTION, REGULARITY, ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND LEARNING MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Emotional experiences in the classroom shape how students engage with learning, yet few studies have examined several student outcomes together at the secondary level. This study investigated how an emotionally supportive classroom environment is related to students' attention, regularity of attendance, academic success and learning motivation. A quantitative, descriptive-correlational survey design was adopted. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, 200 students from grades 9 and 10 were selected from a population. The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and Pearson correlations. The results showed that students perceived their classrooms as highly supportive and reported high levels of attention, regularity, academic success and motivation. Emotional support was positively and significantly related to all four outcomes, with the strongest links to attention, motivation and academic success and a somewhat weaker link to regularity. The findings suggest that warm, respectful and responsive teaching goes hand in hand with learners who are more attentive, more regular, more successful and more motivated. Because the design is correlational, the results indicate association rather than causation. The study recommends professional development for teachers in emotional support and longitudinal, multi-source research to test the direction of these relationships.

1. Introduction

In addition to being academic spaces, classrooms are also emotional ones. Students spend many hours each day in rooms where they are either applauded or corrected, included or ignored, encouraged or shamed. These experiences have an impact on how they act, think, and feel about school. Emotion and cognition are no longer seen as distinct systems in contemporary research, which demonstrates that emotions influence what students observe, remember, and persevere through challenging tasks (Pekrun, 2006; Pessoa, 2008). In light of this, educational scholars and school administrators are increasingly concerned about the emotional environment that peers and teachers foster. According to Pianta et al. (2008) and Jennings & Greenberg (2009), an emotionally supportive classroom is one where students feel welcomed and respected, feel free to express themselves

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and make mistakes, receive considerate feedback from their teachers, and feel like they are part of a collaborative learning community. These environments are created by regular encounters rather than specialized programs: a teacher who observes a quiet student, carefully corrects an incorrect response, or acknowledges effort in addition to results all contribute to the learning environment. According to self-determination theory, these relationships are important because they fulfilll the fundamental psychological need for relatedness, which is the foundation of healthy motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The current study is especially interested in four outcomes. Since information cannot be digested or stored if it is not attended to, attention is the key to learning. A clear behavioral indicator that a student is willing to be present and involved is regularity, which is defined here as constant and on-time attendance. Academic achievement is measured by how well students finish assignments, comprehend material, and meet their goals; learning motivation provides the drive and focus that sustain these efforts. Although prior research suggests that engagement and achievement are associated with positive teacher-student relationships (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Roorda et al., 2011).

The current investigation is motivated by several gaps. First, secondary classrooms in crowded, examination-driven systems have received relatively little attention because the majority of the research on emotional environment comes from elementary schools or settings with small classes and well-resourced teacher training. Second, to the best of the author's knowledge, comparatively few research have looked at motivation, academic performance, attention, and regularity all at once within a single framework, which restricts knowledge of the extent to which emotional support is important across behavioral, cognitive, and motivational domains. Third, the emotional aspect of teaching is often overlooked in school improvement talks that focus on curriculum content and test scores.

1.1 Research Objective

To investigate the extent to which an emotionally supportive classroom environment is associated with secondary school students' attention, regularity of attendance, academic success and learning motivation.

1.2 Research Question

To what extent is an emotionally supportive classroom environment related to secondary school students' attention, regularity of attendance, academic success and learning motivation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing an Emotionally Supportive Classroom Environment

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System, which identifies positive climate, the absence of negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for students' perspectives as the fundamental elements of emotionally supportive teaching, provides the most systematic description of the concept of emotional support in classrooms (Pianta et al., 2008). Respect for student perspectives refers to being adaptable and willing to value what students think and care about; teacher sensitivity refers to being aware of and promptly responding to students' academic and emotional needs; and positive climate refers to obvious warmth, enjoyment, and courteous communication. Reyes et al. (2012), observed that more pleasant climates were linked to increased student engagement and accomplishment. They also defined emotional climate in terms of the quality of interactions between teachers and students. An early conceptual foundation for these concepts is provided by attachment theory. Bowlby (1969), made the case that children learn and explore more confidently when they have a stable foundation. Later researchers expanded this idea to include teachers, who can act as trustworthy role models in the classroom (Roorda et al., 2011).

2.2 Emotional Support and Attention

The long-held belief that emotion merely obstructs thought has been undermined by

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neuroscientific research. According to Pessoa (2008), emotional states influence perception, attention, and memory rather than just interfering with them since emotion and cognition are intricately linked in the brain. In the classroom, a student who feels safe can focus more on the subject, whereas a student who fears mockery or severe criticism is likely to focus on self-defense. Reyes et al. (2012), demonstrated that students in emotionally positive classes were more engaged in learning, a concept that frequently includes sustained attention, and Fredrickson's (2001), explanation of positive emotions supports this perspective by connecting them with broader attention and more flexible thinking. Nevertheless, direct measures of attention in relation to classroom emotional support remain uncommon, and many studies infer attention from the wider notion of engagement.

2.3 Emotional Support and Regularity of Attendance

Punctuality and attendance are typically regarded as behavioral markers of participation. Skinner and Belmont (1993) discovered that children' later behavioral and emotional engagement was predicted by teacher involvement, and that involved students in turn received more supportive treatment from instructors, suggesting a reciprocal process. According to Wentzel (1997), pupils were more driven to pursue social and academic objectives in the classroom when they thought their teachers cared. Affective teacher-student relationships are linked to school involvement, including its behavioral forms, according to a meta-analysis by Roorda et al. (2011). From a developmental standpoint, Eccles and Roeser (2011), contended that adolescents flourish in school settings that meet their requirements for autonomy, respect, and supportive relationships; a bad fit leads to disengagement. These studies suggest that students who feel valued have more reason to attend school regularly, although attendance also depends on family, health and economic circumstances that the classroom cannot control.

2.4 Emotional Support and Academic Success

Relationships between teachers and students and achievement are linked by a large body of research. Early teacher-child connections predict behavioral and academic results up to the eighth grade, especially for children who were already at risk, according to research by Hamre and Pianta (2001). Learner-centered teacher-student connections, characterized by traits like warmth and empathy, were linked to favorable cognitive and affective outcomes (Cornelius-White's, 2007). According to Roorda et al. (2011), connections with engagement were stronger than those with success, indicating that emotional support may primarily affect grades through intermediary pathways including motivation, attention, and effort. The same conclusion is drawn from research on social and emotional learning. According to Durlak et al. (2011), kids who participated in well-designed programs saw improvements in their academic performance, with an average gain of almost eleven percentile points on achievement assessments when compared to comparison groups. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), teachers' social and emotional competency contributes to the supportive classroom environments where kids thrive.

2.5 Emotional Support and Learning Motivation

The result that seems to be most directly affected by the emotional atmosphere is motivation. While Ames (1992), contended that classroom structures that prioritize effort, learning, and improvement over social comparison foster mastery-oriented motivation, Ryan and Patrick (2001) discovered that early adolescents who felt their teachers were encouraging mutual respect reported higher motivation and engagement. Wentzel (1997), found a similar relationship between student motivation and perceived instructor compassion. These results are easily explained by self-determination theory since supportive teachers foster intrinsic motivation by meeting students' demands for relatedness and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

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3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational survey design was used in the investigation. Because the goal was to characterize students' views and results as they occur in real classrooms and investigate their relationships without changing any variables, this design is appropriate for the study problem.

3.2 Population

The population was made up of all students enrolled in grades 9 and 10 at the participating public secondary schools in the city of Faisalabad. Students at this level were selected because their examination-focused education places significant demands on motivation and concentration, and because adolescence is a time of increased sensitivity to social interactions and school atmosphere (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

To ensure that the sample reflected the population's makeup, proportionate stratified random sampling was employed, with gender and grade as the strata. Random numbers applied to school enrollment lists were used to choose individuals within each stratum. A total of 200 students were included in the sample. The analysis included all 200 completed questionnaires that were received.

3.4 Research Tool

The Emotionally Supportive Classroom Environment and Student Outcomes Questionnaire was a structured, self-administered survey used to gather data. Emotionally Supportive Classroom Environment (8 items), Attention (6 items), Regularity (5 items), Academic Success (5 items), and Learning Motivation (6 items) were the five sub-scales with a total of 30 items, along with a demographic section.

3.5 Data Analysis

SPSS was used to enter and analyze the data. The demographic profile was described using frequencies and percentages; means and standard deviations were computed for each item and sub-scale; and Pearson product–moment correlations were computed to investigate the associations between emotional support and the four outcome variables. Equal-interval cut-offs of 0.80 were used to interpret mean scores: very low (1.00–1.80), low (1.81–2.60), moderate (2.61–3.40), high (3.41–4.20), and very high (4.21–5.00). Cohen's standard standards of approximately.10 (small).30 (medium), and.50 (big) were used to describe correlation strength.

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4. Data Analysis and Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 200)

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	104	52.0
	Female	96	48.0
Grade	Grade 9	98	49.0
	Grade 10	102	51.0
Age	14 years or below	41	20.5
	15 years	78	39.0
	16 years	67	33.5
	17 years or above	14	7.0
Locality	Urban	112	56.0
	Rural	88	44.0

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the 200 participants. The sample was nearly balanced by gender, with 104 male students *(52.0%)* and 96 female students *(48.0%)*. Grade 10 students accounted for *(51.0%)* of the sample and grade 9 students for *(49.0%)*. The largest age group was 15 years *(39.0%)*, followed by 16 years *(33.5%)*, while only *(7.0%)* were 17 years or older. A majority of respondents *(56.0%)* came from urban localities and *(44.0%)* from rural localities.

Table 2

Item-wise Descriptive Statistics for Emotionally Supportive Classroom Environment (N = 200)

Code	*Statement*	*M*	*SD*	*Level*
ESC1	*My teachers treat students with warmth and respect.*	*4.11*	*0.86*	*High*
ESC2	*I feel safe expressing my opinions in class without fear of ridicule.*	*3.78*	*0.97*	*High*
ESC3	*My teachers notice when students are upset or struggling.*	*3.70*	*0.96*	*High*
ESC4	*My teachers respond to my mistakes in an encouraging way.*	*3.80*	*0.92*	*High*
ESC5	*Students in my class are kind and cooperative toward one another.*	*3.78*	*0.93*	*High*
ESC6	*I can approach my teachers with personal or academic problems.*	*3.56*	*0.89*	*High*
ESC7	*My teachers praise students' efforts and not only their marks.*	*3.72*	*0.93*	*High*
ESC8	*There is a strong sense of belonging among students in my classroom.*	*3.92*	*0.88*	*High*
	Overall ESCE scale	*3.80*	*0.66*	*High*

Table 2 presents the item-wise results for emotionally supportive classroom environment. The overall scale mean was *(M=3.80, SD = 0.66)*, which falls in the high range. The highest-rated statement was ESC1 ("My teachers treat students with warmth and respect." *(M = 4.11, SD = 0.86)*, whereas the lowest-rated was ESC6 *(M = 3.56, SD = 0.89)*. All 8 items fell within the high range. Students were most positive about the warmth and respect shown by teachers, and least positive about approaching teachers with personal or academic problems, which suggests that

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respectful treatment is more common than close, confiding relationships.

Table 3
Item-wise Descriptive Statistics for Attention (N = 200)

Code	Statement	M	SD	Level
ATT1	I can concentrate on the teacher's explanation throughout the lesson.	3.70	0.89	High
ATT2	I am rarely distracted by things happening outside the lesson.	3.38	0.99	Moderate
ATT3	I keep my focus on classroom tasks until they are finished.	3.66	0.89	High
ATT4	I listen carefully when teachers and classmates are speaking.	3.80	0.94	High
ATT5	My mind rarely wanders to unrelated thoughts during lessons.	3.34	1.03	Moderate
ATT6	I can quickly regain my focus when I lose concentration.	3.68	0.97	High
	Overall Attention scale	3.59	0.69	High

Table 3 presents the item-wise results for attention. The overall scale mean was (M=3.59, SD = 0.69), which falls in the high range. The highest-rated statement was ATT4 ("I listen carefully when teachers and classmates are speaking." (M = 3.80, SD = 0.94), whereas the lowest-rated was ATT5 (M = 3.34, SD = 1.03). Students found it easier to listen carefully to teachers and classmates than to keep their minds from wandering, and the two statements on outside distraction and mind-wandering were the only ones in this scale rated at the moderate level.

Table 4
Item-wise Descriptive Statistics for Regularity (Attendance and Punctuality) (N = 200)

Code	Statement	M	SD	Level
REG1	I attend school every day unless I am seriously unwell.	4.15	0.80	High
REG2	I reach school on time in the morning.	4.08	0.81	High
REG3	I rarely miss lessons without a valid reason.	3.97	0.92	High
REG4	I look forward to coming to school.	3.67	0.98	High
REG5	I rarely leave class early or skip periods.	4.06	0.82	High
	Overall Regularity scale	3.99	0.59	High

Table 4 presents the item-wise results for regularity (attendance and punctuality). The overall scale mean was *(M=3.99, SD = 0.59)*, which falls in the high range. The highest-rated statement was REG1 ("I attend school every day unless I am seriously unwell." *(M = 4.15, SD = 0.80)*, whereas the lowest-rated was REG4 *(M = 3.67, SD = 0.98)*. All 5 items fell within the high range. Daily attendance and punctuality were rated highest, while the statement about looking forward to coming to school received the lowest rating, which indicates that attending regularly is somewhat more common than enjoying school.

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Table 5
Item-wise Descriptive Statistics for Academic Success (N = 200)

Code	Statement	M	SD	Level
ACS1	I regularly complete my homework and assignments.	3.74	0.98	High
ACS2	I am satisfied with my results in class tests and examinations.	3.54	1.02	High
ACS3	I understand most of what is taught in class.	3.80	0.93	High
ACS4	My marks have improved over the past year.	3.66	0.93	High
ACS5	I achieve the grades that I set as my personal targets.	3.47	0.90	High
	Overall Academic success scale	3.64	0.71	High

Table 5 presents the item-wise results for academic success. The overall scale mean was *(M=3.64, SD = 0.71)*, which falls in the high range. The highest-rated statement was ACS3 ("I understand most of what is taught in class." *(M = 3.80, SD = 0.93)*, whereas the lowest-rated was ACS5 *(M = 3.47, SD = 0.90)*. All 5 items fell within the high range. Students felt that they understood most of what was taught, but were less certain that they achieved the grades they had set as personal targets.

Table 6
Item-wise Descriptive Statistics for Learning Motivation (N = 200)

Code	Statement	M	SD	Level
MOT1	I enjoy learning new things at school.	3.94	0.79	High
MOT2	I study because I find the subjects interesting.	3.80	0.89	High
MOT3	I put in extra effort even when a task is difficult.	3.71	0.92	High
MOT4	I feel confident that I can succeed in my subjects.	3.78	0.86	High
MOT5	I set learning goals for myself.	3.74	0.90	High
MOT6	I want to continue my education beyond this level.	4.13	0.80	High
	Overall Motivation scale	3.85	0.60	High

Table 6 presents the item-wise results for learning motivation. The overall scale mean was (M=3.85, SD = 0.60), which falls in the high range. The highest-rated statement was MOT6 ("I want to continue my education beyond this level." (M = 4.13, SD = 0.80), whereas the lowest-rated was MOT3 (M = 3.71, SD = 0.92). All 6 items fell within the high range. The wish to continue education beyond the present level was the strongest motivational statement, while willingness to put in extra effort on difficult tasks was comparatively weaker.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of the Study Variables (N = 200)

Variable	Items	M	SD	A	Level
Emotionally Supportive Classroom Environment	8	3.80	0.66	.87	High
Attention	6	3.59	0.69	.82	High

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Variable	Items	M	SD	A	Level
Regularity (Attendance and Punctuality)	5	3.99	0.59	.70	High
Academic Success	5	3.64	0.71	.80	High
Learning Motivation	6	3.85	0.60	.78	High

Table 7 shows that all five sub-scales were rated in the high range, with means between *(M3.59 and 3.99)*. Regularity had the highest mean *(M = 3.99)*, followed by learning motivation *(M = 3.85)* and the emotionally supportive classroom environment *(M = 3.80)*. Attention had the lowest mean *(M = 3.59)*. Standard deviations ranged from *(0.59 to 0.71)*, indicating moderate dispersion around the means. Cronbach's alpha ranged from *(.70 to .87)*, so every sub-scale met the .70 benchmark, although the regularity scale, at .70, was at the lower boundary and should be interpreted with some caution.

4.4 Relationships among the Study Variables

Table 8

Pearson Correlations among the Study Variables (N = 200)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. ESCE	—				
2. Attention	.52***	—			
3. Regularity	.38***	.15*	—		
4. Academic success	.50***	.26***	.20**	—	
5. Motivation	.52***	.39***	.26***	.24***	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 8 reports the Pearson correlations. Emotionally supportive classroom environment was positively and significantly related to every outcome: attention *(r = .52)*, regularity *(r = .38)*, academic success *(r = .50)* and learning motivation *(r = .52)*. By Cohen's benchmarks, the associations with attention, academic success and motivation were large, while the association with regularity was medium. Correlations among the four outcome variables were positive but small to medium *(r = .15 to .39)*, suggesting that they are related but distinct aspects of student functioning.

5. Discussion

The findings show that all four outcomes were positively correlated with students' high perceptions of their classrooms' emotional support *(M = 3.80)*. This pattern is in line with the theoretical prediction that emotional climate simultaneously affects behavioral, motivational, and cognitive functioning (Pekrun, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Approaching instructors with personal issues received the lowest endorsement on the emotional-support scale, while warmth and respect from teachers received the highest. This discrepancy reflects the Classroom Assessment Scoring System's contrast between a welcoming environment and really sensitive, responsive instruction and may indicate that students find it easier to receive warmth than to start intimate talks (Pianta et al., 2008).

One of the greatest correlations found was between emotional support and attention *(r =.52)*. The notion that positive emotional states extend attention (Fredrickson, 2001) and the evidence that emotionally positive classrooms promote engagement (Reyes et al., 2012) are all consistent with the idea that emotion and

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cognition are interconnected rather than separate (Pessoa, 2008). Distraction and mind-wandering were the weakest items, while attentiveness had the lowest mean of all the outcomes (*M = 3.59*). Thus, a supportive environment is beneficial but insufficient; task design, instructional timing, and the physical setting are probably also important.

The association between regularity and emotional support was the lowest (*r =.38*), although having the highest mean. A reasonable argument is that classroom atmosphere can only account for a portion of the difference in attendance because factors outside the classroom, such as family duties, health, distance, and economic situations, influence attendance. This view supports the finding that attendance is one outward manifestation of behavioral engagement that is impacted by teacher-student connections (Roorda et al., 2011; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Academic success was strongly correlated with emotional support (*r =.50*), which is consistent with research showing that supportive social and emotional environments enhance academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011) and that positive teacher-student relationships are linked to achievement (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). It is noteworthy that this correlation was similar to those for motivation and attention because Roorda et al. (2011) observed lower links with achievement than with engagement. One explanation could be that the study's accomplishment scale measured students' perceived success, which is probably more in line with their emotional school experience than externally judged grades. Additionally, the weak associations between academic achievement and the other outcomes imply that focus, regularity and motivation are only some of the routes through which emotional support might operate; testing such mediation requires a different design.

The idea that motivation is extremely responsive to the quality of classroom connections is supported by the equally significant association with learning motivation (*r =.52*) (Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Wentzel, 1997). According to the self-determination theory, teachers who are kind, courteous, and supportive foster a sense of belonging and competence in their students, which sustains intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Supportive classrooms may also help students envision their own learning futures, as seen by the result that students' desire to continue their education obtained the highest motivation rating.

6. Conclusion

This study looked at how secondary school students' focus, consistency, academic achievement, and motivation to learn were related to an emotionally supportive learning environment. All five dimensions were assessed highly by students, and emotional support was positively and significantly correlated with every outcome, most strongly with academic performance, motivation, and attention, and more modestly with regularity. These results provide a response to the research question by demonstrating that students who believe their classrooms are friendly, courteous, and responsive are also more likely to be successful, attentive, and driven to learn. The findings support the claim that learning is influenced by the emotional context in which it takes place (Pekrun, 2006; Roorda et al., 2011). The results should be interpreted as evidence of association rather than proof of influence in the causal sense because the design was correlational. Nevertheless, they provide educators, administrators, and legislators with a solid justification for treating emotional support as a fundamental component of successful instruction and for funding the professional growth and educational strategies that support it. To elucidate the direction and mechanisms of these interactions, longitudinal, multi-source research are advised.

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