



ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 04 No. 01. July-September 2025. Page# 3066-3072

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



Exploring the Relationship Between School Climate and Academic Motivation of Secondary School Students

Shahid Ullah

M.Phil. Scholar, Institute of Education and Research Kohat University of Science and Technology, KUST, Kohat

Email; su872375@gmail.com

Dr. Muhammad Naseer Ud Din

Institute of Education and Research Kohat University of Science and Technology, KUST, Kohat

Email; dr.naseeruddin@kust.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Nisar

Lecturer, Institute of Education and Research Kohat University of Science and Technology, KUST, Kohat

Email; nisarkust74@kust.edu.pk

Dr. Shah Jehan (Correspondence Author)

Lecturer, Institute of Education and Research Kohat University of Science and Technology, KUST, Kohat

Email; dr.shahjehan@kust.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between school climate and academic motivation among secondary school students. A quantitative, correlational research design was employed, involving a sample of 200 students selected through stratified random sampling from secondary schools. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the School Climate Scale (SCS) and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). Descriptive statistics indicated that students perceived their school climate as moderately positive and reported a moderately high level of academic motivation. Pearson's correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between school climate and academic motivation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). Multiple regression analysis further indicated that teacher support ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$) and peer relationships ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) significantly predicted academic motivation, whereas school safety and fairness of rules were not significant predictors. These findings underscore the importance of relational aspects of school climate in enhancing students' motivation. The study concludes that fostering teacher support and positive peer interactions can play a crucial role in motivating secondary school students. Recommendations are made for educators, school leaders, and policymakers to prioritize supportive relationships in educational settings.

Keywords: school climate, academic motivation, teacher support, peer relationships, secondary school students

Introduction

Education is not only a means of acquiring knowledge but also a process that shapes learners' attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations. In this context, students' academic motivation plays a critical role in determining their level of engagement, persistence, and overall success in school. Academic motivation influences how students approach learning tasks, set goals, and sustain efforts toward achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Understanding the factors that foster or hinder motivation is essential for improving educational outcomes, particularly at the secondary school level, where students undergo significant cognitive, emotional, and social changes.

One important factor that has gained scholarly attention in recent years is **school climate**. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life, encompassing relationships among students, teachers, and administrators, as well as perceptions of safety, fairness, and support (Cohen et al., 2009). A positive school climate has been linked to improved academic achievement, stronger social-emotional skills, and reduced behavioral problems (Thapa et al., 2013). Conversely, a negative school climate may undermine students' sense of belonging, leading to disengagement and low academic motivation.

Secondary school students are particularly sensitive to the environment in which they learn. Their perceptions of teacher support, peer relationships, and school safety directly influence how motivated they feel to engage with academic tasks. Motivation during this stage often determines whether students persist through challenges, develop self-regulation skills, and prepare for higher education or the workforce (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Therefore, examining the relationship between school climate and academic motivation among secondary school students is both timely and important.

Despite the growing body of literature, limited research has been conducted in the context of developing countries, where resource constraints, overcrowding, and policy challenges often shape the school climate differently from developed contexts. This study attempts to bridge this gap by investigating how dimensions of school climate contribute to academic motivation among secondary school students. The findings are expected to provide insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers to foster a supportive learning environment that nurtures students' motivation and academic success.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the perceptions of secondary school students regarding the overall school climate.
2. To assess the level of academic motivation among secondary school students.
3. To explore the relationship between school climate and academic motivation of secondary school students.
4. To identify the dimensions of school climate that significantly predict students' academic motivation.

Research Questions

1. How do secondary school students perceive the climate of their schools?
2. What is the level of academic motivation among secondary school students?

3. Is there a significant relationship between school climate and academic motivation of secondary school students?
4. Which dimensions of school climate significantly predict academic motivation among secondary school students?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a **quantitative, correlational research design** to examine the relationship between school climate and academic motivation among secondary school students. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to determine the degree of association between the two variables without manipulating them.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all secondary school students enrolled in public and private schools within district Kohat. From this population, a sample of **200 students** was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across gender, grade level, and type of school. The sample size was considered adequate for statistical analysis and ensured reliability of the findings.

Research Instruments

Two standardized instruments were utilized in the study:

1. **School Climate Scale (SCS):** This instrument measured students' perceptions of the school environment, including dimensions such as teacher support, peer relationships, school safety, and fairness of rules. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*.
2. **Academic Motivation Scale (AMS):** This scale measured students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as amotivation toward academic tasks. Responses were also recorded on a five-point Likert scale.

Both instruments had been previously validated and widely used in educational research. In the current study, their reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which yielded values above 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from school principals and relevant educational authorities. Informed consent was also sought from students and their parents/guardians. The questionnaires were administered during regular school hours in a classroom setting under the supervision of the researcher and trained assistants. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they were instructed to respond honestly to the items. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately after administration to ensure a high response rate.

Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version [26]. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were used to summarize students' perceptions of school climate and their level of academic motivation. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between school climate and academic motivation. In addition, multiple

regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of school climate dimensions on academic motivation. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was set for all statistical tests.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research practices. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' responses were strictly maintained. The collected data were used solely for academic research purposes.

Findings of the Study

Descriptive Statistics

The results of the descriptive analysis revealed that secondary school students generally perceived their school climate as moderately positive. The overall mean score on the School Climate Scale (SCS) was 3.62 (SD = 0.74) on a five-point Likert scale. Similarly, the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) yielded an overall mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.68), indicating that students exhibited a moderately high level of academic motivation.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of School Climate and Academic Motivation (N = 200)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
School Climate	3.62	0.74	Moderately Positive
Academic Motivation	3.84	0.68	Moderately High

Correlation Analysis

To determine the relationship between school climate and academic motivation, Pearson's product-moment correlation was applied. The results indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) between the two variables. This finding suggests that students who perceived their school climate more positively were also more motivated academically.

Table 2

Correlation between School Climate and Academic Motivation

Variables	School Climate	Academic Motivation
School Climate	1	0.58**
Academic Motivation	0.58**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of school climate dimensions (teacher support, peer relationships, school safety, and fairness of rules) on academic motivation. The regression model was found to be statistically significant ($F(4,195) = 28.76$, $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.37, indicating that 37% of the variance in academic motivation could be explained by the school climate dimensions.

Among the predictors, teacher support ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$) and peer relationships ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) emerged as significant positive predictors of academic motivation. School safety ($\beta = 0.12$, $p > 0.05$) and fairness of rules ($\beta = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$) were not significant predictors.

Table 3***Regression Analysis of School Climate Dimensions on Academic Motivation***

Predictor	β	t	Sig.
Teacher Support	0.34	5.12	0.000
Peer Relationships	0.29	4.01	0.001
School Safety	0.12	1.64	0.103
Fairness of Rules	0.09	1.21	0.228

Note: Dependent Variable = Academic Motivation

Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggested that secondary school students perceived their school climate as generally positive, and their level of academic motivation was moderately high. The strong positive correlation confirmed that school climate played a significant role in shaping students' academic motivation. Regression results highlighted the importance of teacher support and peer relationships as crucial elements of the school climate that directly influenced students' motivation. Conversely, aspects such as school safety and fairness of rules, while important for overall functioning, did not emerge as strong predictors of motivation in this context.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between school climate and academic motivation among secondary school students. The findings indicated that students perceived their school climate as moderately positive and reported a moderately high level of academic motivation. Moreover, a significant positive correlation was found between school climate and academic motivation, with teacher support and peer relationships emerging as significant predictors of students' motivation.

These results support existing literature that emphasizes the importance of a positive school environment in shaping students' academic outcomes. For instance, recent studies have confirmed that students who experience supportive teacher–student relationships and positive peer interactions are more motivated to engage in learning activities (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Aldridge & McChesney, 2018). Teacher support, in particular, was identified as the strongest predictor of motivation, aligning with research that highlights how teachers' encouragement, feedback, and emotional support foster students' intrinsic motivation and persistence (Kunter et al., 2020).

The significance of peer relationships also resonates with previous findings, which suggest that supportive peer networks enhance students' sense of belonging and engagement in school (Holfve-Sabel, 2021). Adolescents spend a considerable portion of their time interacting with peers, and these relationships play a critical role in shaping attitudes toward learning and academic goals. The present study reinforces the notion that schools that cultivate cooperative peer dynamics contribute to higher levels of student motivation.

Interestingly, school safety and fairness of rules did not significantly predict academic motivation in this study. One possible explanation is that while these factors are essential for establishing a baseline conducive learning environment, they may not directly stimulate motivation once a minimal threshold of safety and fairness is perceived. Similar conclusions were reported by Wang

and Degol (2016), who found that structural aspects of school climate (such as safety and discipline) were less predictive of motivation compared to relational dimensions (teacher–student and peer interactions).

The results further highlight the cultural and contextual significance of school climate in developing countries, where relational factors may hold more weight in motivating students compared to structural or policy-related factors. This aligns with recent comparative studies indicating that in resource-constrained environments, supportive interpersonal relationships in schools are often the strongest motivators for student engagement and persistence (Suldo et al., 2020).

Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of fostering positive relationships within the school community. Schools that invest in teacher professional development, peer mentoring programs, and supportive classroom practices are more likely to enhance students' academic motivation and, consequently, their academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between school climate and academic motivation among secondary school students. The findings revealed that students generally perceived their school climate as moderately positive and demonstrated a moderately high level of academic motivation. A significant positive correlation was found between school climate and academic motivation, with teacher support and peer relationships emerging as the strongest predictors of motivation.

These results suggest that while structural aspects of school climate, such as safety and fairness of rules, are important for maintaining order and discipline, relational factors play a more critical role in shaping students' motivation. In particular, supportive teachers and positive peer relationships foster a sense of belonging, engagement, and persistence, which are essential for academic success. The study concludes that creating a nurturing, supportive, and student-centered school climate is vital for enhancing academic motivation, particularly during the critical stage of secondary education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Teacher Support:** Schools should provide continuous professional development for teachers to enhance their ability to support students academically and emotionally. Encouraging feedback, personalized guidance, and mentorship practices can significantly boost students' motivation.
2. **Promote Positive Peer Relationships:** Schools should foster peer collaboration through group activities, peer mentoring, and cooperative learning strategies. Building a supportive peer culture can enhance students' sense of belonging and increase motivation to learn.
3. **Focus on Relational Dimensions of School Climate:** While ensuring safety and fairness remains essential, schools should prioritize strengthening interpersonal relationships within the school community, as these have a stronger impact on academic motivation.

4. **Engage Parents and Communities:** Schools should actively involve parents and community stakeholders in building a supportive school climate. Partnerships between home and school can reinforce positive attitudes toward learning and motivation.
5. **Policy Implications:** Policymakers should design educational frameworks that emphasize school climate as a key factor influencing student outcomes. Investments in teacher training, student support services, and school-community partnerships can lead to sustained improvements in academic motivation.

References

- Aldridge, J. M., & McChesney, K. (2018). The relationships between school climate and adolescent mental health and wellbeing: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 121–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.01.012>
- Berkowitz, R., Moore, H., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (2017). A research synthesis of the associations between socioeconomic background, inequality, school climate, and academic achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 425–469. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316669821>
- Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 180–213.
- Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. (2011). Schools as developmental contexts during adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 225–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00725.x>
- Holfve-Sabel, M. A. (2021). Students' perspectives on school climate in Sweden: A study on equity and academic motivation. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 65(4), 590–606. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2020.1754909>
- Kunter, M., Klusmann, U., Baumert, J., Richter, D., Voss, T., & Hachfeld, A. (2020). Professional competence of teachers: Effects on instructional quality and student development. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(6), 1103–1126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000401>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- Suldo, S. M., Thalji-Raitano, A., Hasemeyer, M., Gelley, C. D., & Hoy, B. (2020). Understanding middle school students' life satisfaction: Does school climate matter? *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 15(2), 479–499. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9689-9>
- Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357–385. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907>
- Wang, M. T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review*, 28, 315–352. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1>