

## Social-Emotional Learning and Its Role in Influencing Institutional Stress among Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

*Institutional stress is experienced by adolescents when they find difficulty in adjusting to the school curriculum and school environment. Stress encountered by an individual in difficult settings causes uneasiness and tension. Therefore, an effort should be made to provide a positive environment to students in school for their overall development. Thus, the present research was conducted to know the influence of social-emotional learning on institutional stress among adolescents residing in joint and nuclear families. 500 adolescents from government schools constituted the sample of the study. Scale of Institutional Stress (SIS) by Bisht (2005) was used to determine the level of institutional stress among adolescents. The results of the study illustrated that more number of adolescents from nuclear families significantly reported low level of institutional frustration and average level of institutional pressure and institutional anxiety. Also, adolescents from joint families experienced significantly more frustration, pressure, anxiety in institutional settings and thus, encountered more institutional stress. Further, social-emotional learning had significant positive correlation with overall institutional stress in adolescents from joint families. In nuclear families, self-management dimension had significant positive correlation with institutional conflict dimension of institutional stress.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Institutional stress, Anxiety, Social-emotional learning, Family structure

### INTRODUCTION

Stress is one of the most perilous phenomena of the current era and it has an effect on each and every person in every part of their life. Stress varies in the intensity and mainly depends on the person's state of mind. It entails anxiety and causes nervousness which results in troubles (Kumar, 2015). Institutional

stress occurs as a product of troubles faced in the institution's setting which could result in situation for instance, academic failures, jam-packed time table, insufficient accommodation in and around the institution, problems from teachers and never-ending distraction of academic schedule (Adesola & Arowolo, 2014).

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In school, adolescents' generally face so many storms and stressful circumstances which have an effect on their behaviour (Gerry et al., 2004). In modern days, there has been budding alarm that more and more adolescents are disturbed, distressed, and demotivated to learn (Cohen, 2001). The way out from this dilemma can be by providing adolescents with positive learning environments that will help them to learn and further build up social-emotional learning competencies (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Research has shown that students with strong social-emotional learning competencies contribute to a positive school environment since, they are capable of solving conflicts peacefully and adhere to positive behavioral norms (Melnick et al., 2017).

A research done by Zins et al. (2003) suggested that social-emotional learning programs resulted in better outlook of school as considerate, more positive attitudes toward school and learning, higher educational aspirations, greater trust and respect for teachers, improved coping with school stressors, fewer absences and suspensions, maintained or improved attendance and more classroom participation and higher engagement. This means that SEL had an effect on stress experienced by adolescents in institutional settings.

#### Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess and compare the level of institutional stress among adolescents residing in joint and nuclear families.
- ii. To know the influence of social-emotional learning on institutional stress among adolescents residing in joint and nuclear families.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Locale:** The study was conducted in government schools of Ludhiana, Punjab.

**Sample:** In order to attain the objectives of the present research, 500 adolescents studying in 7th and 8th grades of eight government schools were randomly chosen to accomplish the criterion of 500 adolescents. Equal stratification of the sample was done on the basis of family structure i.e. 250 adolescents

belonging to joint families and 250 adolescents belonging to nuclear families.

**Research instruments:** Out of the 13 sub-scales in Bisht Battery of Stress Scales developed by Bisht (2005), Scale of Institutional Stress (SIS) was used in the present study to determine the level of institutional stress among adolescents.

**Techniques of analysis:** For the purpose of data analysis, frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Z-test, student's t-test, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation were used.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 1. Assessment of institutional stress among adolescents as per their family structure

The interpretation of data in table 1 illuminates the frequency distribution of adolescents across different dimensions of institutional stress with reference to family structure. The analysis of data based on family structure of adolescents observed that more than half of the adolescents from nuclear families (1.96;  $p < 0.05$ ) differ significantly at low level of institutional frustration. On another note, non-significant differences were noted at average level (40.00%) and high level (16.00%) wherein adolescents residing in joint families outweighed adolescents from nuclear families.

The depiction of data under institutional conflict dimension reflected non-significant differences with regards to family structure across all the levels but the analysis of data reflected that majority of the adolescents from nuclear families (66.80%) were found to be at average level of institutional conflict as compared to adolescents living in joint families. Moreover, an equal percentage of adolescents (17.60%) from both the families fall in the category of low level, whereas more number of adolescents from joint families (16.80%) were noticed at high level when compared with their counterparts.

The pattern of data depicted for institutional pressure dimension of institutional stress observed significant differences with respect to family structure at all the levels

wherein at low level (2.54;  $p < 0.05$ ) and high level (2.33;  $p < 0.05$ ), more proportion of adolescents from joint families whereas at average level (4.24;  $p < 0.01$ ), higher percentage of adolescents from nuclear families represented these levels as compared to their counterparts.

The distribution of data on institutional anxiety dimension ascertained significant difference with respect to family structure at average level wherein higher proportion of adolescents from nuclear families (2.05;  $p < 0.05$ ) signified this level. Moreover, non-significant differences were observed at low level (34.80%) and high level

(17.60%) of institutional anxiety wherein adolescents from joint families outnumbered adolescents living in nuclear families.

The representation of data under overall institutional stress disclosed non-significant differences with respect to family structure at all the levels. It was further indicated that higher proportion of adolescents from nuclear families were found to be at low level (46.80%) and average level (42.00%), whereas more number of adolescents living in joint families (16.40%) were at high level of overall institutional stress as compared to their counterparts.

**Table 1: Per cent distribution of the adolescents as per their family structure across different dimensions of institutional stress**

Dimensions of Institutional Stress	Levels	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)		Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)		Z-value
		f	%	f	%	
Institutional Frustration	Low	110	44.00	132	52.80	1.96*
	Average	100	40.00	92	36.80	0.73
	High	40	16.00	26	10.40	1.85
Institutional Conflict	Low	44	17.60	44	17.60	0.00
	Average	164	65.60	167	66.80	0.28
	High	42	16.80	39	15.60	0.36
Institutional Pressure	Low	116	46.40	88	35.20	2.54*
	Average	85	34.00	132	52.80	4.24**
	High	49	19.60	30	12.00	2.33*
Institutional Anxiety	Low	87	34.80	75	30.00	1.14
	Average	119	47.60	142	56.80	2.05*
	High	44	17.60	33	13.20	1.36
Overall Institutional Stress	Low	105	42.00	117	46.80	1.08
	Average	104	41.60	105	42.00	0.09
	High	41	16.40	28	11.20	1.68

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level

## 2. Comparison of institutional stress among adolescents as per their family structure

Data portrayed in the table 2 highlights the difference in the mean scores of the adolescents across different dimensions of institutional stress in relation to family structure. It was depicted from the data that as per family structure, statistically significant differences had been accounted for institutional frustration (3.70;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional pressure (2.23;  $p < 0.05$ ) and institutional anxiety (2.27;  $p < 0.05$ ) with mean

scores higher for adolescents from joint families in all the three mentioned dimensions when compared with adolescents from nuclear families. Thus, it could be inferred that adolescents living in joint families had more frustration, pressure and anxiety in institutional settings. The finding of the study is supported with earlier research done by Sandal et al. (2017) who found that the level of anxiety in school was more among adolescents residing in joint families.

Though, institutional conflict dimension reported non-significant difference but the mean score pattern predicted that adolescents from joint families (mean= 26.16) had more conflicts related to institutions than adolescents from nuclear families.

Furthermore, significant difference in the overall institutional stress (2.76;  $p < 0.01$ ) was observed wherein adolescents from joint

families (mean= 130.41) undergo more stress related to institutions as compared to adolescents from nuclear families. This may be due to the reason that nuclear families provide for the financial stability and educational demands of the adolescents in school which reduces the stress in institutions or school (Kumar, 2011).

**Table 2: Comparative mean scores ( $\pm$ SD) of the adolescents as per their family structure across different dimensions of institutional stress**

Dimensions of Institutional Stress	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)		Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)		t-value
	Mean	$\pm$ SD	Mean	$\pm$ SD	
Institutional Frustration	38.06	20.63	31.58	18.38	3.70**
Institutional Conflict	26.16	11.74	24.42	10.17	1.77
Institutional Pressure	32.52	17.41	29.31	14.65	2.23*
Institutional Anxiety	33.59	18.13	30.09	16.24	2.27*
Overall Institutional Stress	130.41	65.19	115.46	55.16	2.76**

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level

### 3. Correlation between different dimensions of social-emotional learning and institutional stress among adolescents as per their family structure

The description of data in the table 3 illustrates the correlation analysis between five dimensions of social-emotional learning and four dimensions of institutional stress among adolescents with reference to family structure. The examination of data among adolescents from joint families reflected that self-awareness dimension of social-emotional learning was significantly positively correlated with all the dimensions of institutional stress viz. institutional frustration ( $r = 0.27$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional conflict ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional pressure ( $r = 0.28$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and institutional anxiety ( $r = 0.27$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Correspondingly, self-management dimension had significant positive association with institutional frustration ( $r = 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional conflict ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ),

institutional pressure ( $r = 0.26$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and institutional anxiety ( $r = 0.23$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

A parallel trend was noted for relationship management dimension wherein significant positive correlation was observed with institutional frustration ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional conflict ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional pressure ( $r = 0.26$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and institutional anxiety ( $r = 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the data depicted that responsible decision making dimension was significantly positively related with institutional frustration ( $r = 0.19$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional conflict ( $r = 0.19$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional pressure ( $r = 0.24$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and institutional anxiety ( $r = 0.20$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

Similarly, overall social-emotional learning had significant positive relationship with institutional frustration ( $r = 0.24$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional conflict ( $r = 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), institutional pressure ( $r = 0.28$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and institutional anxiety ( $r = 0.25$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

Therefore, it could be deduced that adolescents living in joint families, who were able to understand and manage their emotions, thoughts, relations with people, decisions derived from pragmatic appraisal and possessed good social-emotional learning competencies, were likely to experience frustration, pressure and anxiety in school environment and had conflicts in following the rules of institutions.

Also, the data illustrated that overall social-emotional learning ( $r = 0.26$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as its four dimensions viz. self-awareness ( $r = 0.27$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), self-management ( $r = 0.24$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), relationship management ( $r = 0.24$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and responsible decision making ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) were found to be significantly positively related with overall institutional stress. Thus, these results suggest that adolescents from joint families, who

comprehended and regulated themselves, their relations, decisions and possessed good social-emotional learning competencies, tended to encounter stress in institutional settings which disturbs the academic course.

The interpretation of data among adolescents from nuclear families reflected that self-management dimension of social-emotional learning was found to be significantly positively correlated with institutional conflict ( $r = 0.14$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). So, it could be inferred that when adolescents residing in nuclear families were competent in regulating their emotions and thoughts in productive ways then, they were likely to have conflicts regarding institution's rules. Further, other dimensions and overall social-emotional learning had non-significant association with overall institutional stress and its dimensions.

**Table 3: Correlation between different dimensions of social-emotional learning and institutional stress among adolescents as per their family structure**

Dimensions of Institutional Stress	Joint Families (n <sub>1</sub> = 250)						Nuclear Families (n <sub>2</sub> = 250)					
	SA (r)	SoA (r)	SM (r)	RM (r)	RDM (r)	Overall SEL (r)	SA (r)	SoA (r)	SM (r)	RM (r)	RDM (r)	Overall SEL (r)
Institutional Frustration	0.27**	0.11	0.22**	0.21**	0.19**	0.24**	0.02	0.005	0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.02
Institutional Conflict	0.21**	0.08	0.21**	0.21**	0.19**	0.22**	0.08	-0.01	0.14*	0.12	0.09	0.10
Institutional Pressure	0.28**	0.11	0.26**	0.26**	0.24**	0.28**	0.09	0.04	0.11	0.10	0.05	0.10
Institutional Anxiety	0.27**	0.10	0.23**	0.22**	0.20**	0.25**	-0.009	-0.04	0.01	0.008	-0.04	-0.01
Overall Institutional Stress	0.27**	0.11	0.24**	0.24**	0.21**	0.26**	0.04	-0.004	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.05

Note: \*Significant at 5% level, \*\*Significant at 1% level; r= correlation coefficient; SA= Self-Awareness; SoA= Social Awareness; SM= Self-Management; RM= Relationship Management; RDM= Responsible Decision Making; SEL= Social-Emotional Learning

## CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to know the influence of social-emotional learning on institutional stress among adolescents residing in joint and nuclear families. It was found that more number of adolescents residing in nuclear families significantly reported low

level of institutional frustration and average level of institutional pressure and institutional anxiety. Also, adolescents residing in joint families experienced significantly more frustration, pressure, anxiety in institutional settings and thus, encountered more institutional stress. Further correlation analysis

revealed that social-emotional learning and its dimensions i.e. self-awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision making was found to be significantly positively correlated with institutional frustration, institutional conflict, institutional pressure and institutional anxiety dimensions as well as overall institutional stress in adolescents residing in joint families. In nuclear families, self-management dimension had significant positive correlation with institutional conflict dimension of institutional stress. The results of the study would be useful for teachers, principals and other school personnel in formulating strategies for providing positive conducive environment in school settings to develop social-emotional learning competencies among adolescents which would eventually reduce stress encountered by adolescents in school environment.

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