



Research Article

INCIDENCE OF WALL -WRITING AMONG SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MENTAL HEALTH, CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Wall writing is a common practice found in almost all the educational institutions. Most of the writings found in the desks, laboratories even in the books and notebooks consist of drawings, lines, cutting of desks with sharp knives and several other objectionable items spoil the decency of the educational institutions. This kind of practice is a clear indication of undesirable symptomatic behavior of children involving a number of factors namely, personal limitations, inhibitions, defective classroom learning environment, etc. The present paper is an attempt to study the school management practices and classroom learning climate that may lead to wall writing practices among school children. For the study 10 schools (5) Government and (5) private schools will be selected. Schools were further classified in four categories based on wall writing practices. Total 100 teachers consisting of 10 in each category of schools will be selected. From the select schools a sample of 120 students consisting of 30 in each group will be drawn. A self structured questionnaire on classroom learning climate was developed to collect the relevant information. Further, school survey was conducted to collect information regarding wall writing in the select schools. The study is expected to throw light towards several hidden facets of personality which may be used for proper training and transformation of these tender minds.

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INTRODUCTION

Wall writing is a common practice found in all educational institutions. Students irrespective of age and gender indulge into the practice of drawing different pictures, writing statements in the walls, desks, lavatories and even in the books and copies used by them. Almost all the schools whether government or private face the incidence of wall writing from a little to a large amount. Children from a tender age were fond of scribbling on the walls. Toddlers love the sound of a pounding crayon and the magic of their markings on unsuspecting walls. They experience joy from the feel of the motion and surprising appearance of the lines. However, this practice often lead to damage to a wall and may be a cause of anger for the adult caregivers. The child may be guided to learn to care for things and to be careful about where they make the marks. Learning to care for things can be an important habit which needs to be instilled from the early formative years.

Vandalism tends to be a crime mainly committed by juveniles. Dr. Jeffery Chase, a license clinical psychologist and psychology professor at Radford University in Radford, Va., says many times people, especially children and adolescents, will use vandalism to vent. "Vandalism to me is basically anger," Chase says. "It can be displacement-displacement in the technical sense is that (vandals) wish to do something against a more threatening object or individual, so they vent their anger on something safer." A large proportion of adolescents engage in some form of problem behavior, placing them at increased risk for school failure, involvement in the criminal justice system and health problems. Problem behavior is of particular concern in middle school, where a contagious youth culture of academic negativism and misconduct can thwart learning and disrupt the school routine. However, there is theoretical and empirical evidence that changes in the way middle grade schooling is conducted can promote academic achievement, improve school conduct and mediate the initiation of problem behavior.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the incidence of wall-writing prevalent in the select secondary schools.

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- To study the relationship between school management type (government/private) and the volume of wall-writing in schools.
- To find out the relationship between classroom learning climate and the volume of wall-writing.

Hypotheses

- High volume of wall-writing is more in government schools than in private schools.
- School and classroom learning climate is unhealthy in those schools which show high volume of wall-writing.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The study is based on descriptive survey method.

Sample

For the study 10 schools (5) Government and (5) private were selected. Schools were further classified in four categories based on wall writing practices. Total 100 teachers consisting of 10 in each category of schools were selected. From the select schools a sample of 120 students consisting of 30 in each group were drawn. The groups are as follows:

- HVWGS- High volume of writing government school.
- LVWGS- Low volume of writing government school.
- HVWPS- High volume of writing private school.
- LVWPS- Low volume of writing private school.

Tools used

To measure the classroom learning climate a questionnaire was developed and standardized by the investigator. It consists of nine statements, each consisting of four to five responses pattern rated into 5 point rating scale. The reliability of the tool was found as 0.80 by test retest technique.

Procedure of data collection

Interview with the selected teachers were held to know some basic indication of healthy school climate, that is effective learning of students (achievement) and personal job satisfaction of school staff, good innovation, feeling of confidence and improved relationship with peers. Indication of unhealthy school climate is made by evidence of job dissatisfaction and conformity among staff members.

Information about classroom learning climate was gathered by a standardized questionnaire. The data so gathered were subjected to statistical analysis (critical ratio value).

Findings

From the study it was found that most of the writings consist of drawings, lines and cuttings of desks with sharp knives and several other matters which confront with the decorum of the educational institution. In few schools the volume of such activities was so high that the schools had to white wash the walls and replace the badly damaged desks. In course of field study it was learnt that this practice of children did not come to halt even after strict measures were enforced by the school authorities.

Varieties of writings found in all the schools were classified under the following categories:

- Lines:** Among the writings mainly straight lines were drawn haphazardly in the desks. The lines are found drawn intersecting each other in different points and these take the form of geometrical design. These are drawn mainly by pins and instrument box.
- Drawings:** The drawings engraved in the desk and wall consist mainly of plant, flower, animal, man, houses etc.
- Cutting of desk:** Most of the desks are found cut by using sharp knives and geometrical instrument. Some make holes in it, and some write their own names.
- Own name:** Names writing, probably their own names is their regular habit. Names are written with pen and other sharp instruments.
- Humorous comments:** In some of the desks amusing comments on their teachers and friends were nicely written in poetic language with pen and pencil.
- Distortion:** Students take pleasure by distorting the images of great men depicted in their text-books by way of putting moustache in ladies and gents who do not have any or by other means.
- Controversial/un-parliamentary language:** These are found written mainly in the walls of lavatories/washrooms or rest rooms by using pencil and chalk.

Among the writings classified above the most serious type is obscene language, which is an early symptom of delinquency. The school authorities must notice these incidents with proper attention and take steps for their behavior modification.

It may be stated that practice of this nature is definitely a clear reflection of undesirable symptomatic behavior of children, which involves a number of factors, one of which may be assumed as school and class-room learning climate. These two determinants show how a pupil grows socially and academically. If the atmosphere of the school and the class-room do not provide encouragement, respect and emotional support, it is likely that students will lose motivation to perform at a level that is commensurate with their abilities. Hence, it is sometimes helpful to explore the learning environment of the school and classroom to determine if students are supplied with an environment that promotes academic achievement and sound mental health. It is vital information for diagnosis and remedying the problems of children who are experiencing school failure and showing pre-delinquency symptoms.

There can be little question that in those schools where the professional climate is not conducive to promoting self-esteem and productivity, pupils' adjustment and achievement will be affected and these are reflected as a form of wall-writing.

The Table-1 shows the Mean, SD and CR value of the scores of four groups of students on classroom learning climate-

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SFD	CR
HVWGS	30	28	10.5	2.68	
LVWGS	30	20.2	7.8		3.99
HVWPS	30	34.3	9	2.42	
LVWPS	30	24	6.2		4.26
Govt(H+L)	60	24.5	9.2	2.17	2.14
Pvt(H+L)	60	29.15	7.6		

From the result of statistical analysis (Table-1) following conclusion can be drawn-

- There exist significant mean difference between HVWGS group and LVWGS group i.e. wall writing are

more in those government schools where there is unhealthy learning climate.

2. There is also significant mean difference between HVWPS and LVWPS groups i.e. wall-writing is more in those private schools where there is lack of healthy classroom learning climate.
3. There is significant difference between government groups (60) and private groups (60) i.e. learning climate is healthier in government schools than private schools.

From the interview with teachers the following conclusions can drawn about the school climate:

School climate is comparatively healthier in government schools than the private schools. Professional climate, material facilities are not conducive in government schools where student's adjustment and academic achievement have been affected for academic and social growth. Further, the academic performance of the students of the select government secondary schools was not satisfactory in the last five years in HSLC examination.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

It has already been mentioned that academic achievement of children are generally poor in those schools where there is lack of healthy school and classroom learning climate. In this respect teachers were found lacking innovation, and dissatisfied with their job. Such teachers are definitely casual in their duties and lacking the sense of purpose and dedication to their duties. They also pay less significance to the problems of children and finish their duties simply by instruction in the classroom which is reported as lifeless and boring. It doesn't evoke any joyful learning in the class. There is also high teacher student ratio in the class i.e. it is about 1:60. This shows that students are not well looked after and properly guided. Further, teachers are also not well informed and well trained regarding behavior problems of children. Though the teachers training institutions are imparting the knowledge of child psychology, mental hygiene, juvenile delinquency or problem behavior of children but there is an urgent need for more exposure towards the day to day classroom problems faced by the teachers in the educational institutions. The children being frustrated developed tendency of emotional tension and they want to release it by way of wall-writing in different forms.

Wall-writing is found more in the schools having poor facilities like poor condition of building, poor accommodation, poor maintenance of school compound etc. In such schools it is expected that students will develop a destructive attitude and low aesthetic values and sense of decency. Children feel pride in studying in a well maintained school and try to identify themselves, whereas poorly maintained school building makes bad impact on their behavior. Children like to preserve new or decent things, or try to destroy the old or indecent one which may be one of the causes of more wall-writing practice in poorly maintained schools.

The study indicates that government school children are more used to wall-writing. Their emotional needs are not fulfilled; as such they take pleasure in malpractices to overcome the feeling of mental anxiety and frustration. They develop a

passive feeling of inferiority, unworthiness and guilt. As a consequence they resort to destructive and undesirable activity. Wall-writers do not have a comfortable identity with a worthy life role, feeling of self-acceptance, sense of belongings to school, home, teachers and group. Being frustrated they come to think of themselves of incapable of creative and productive work. In all these problems teachers' unscientific handling of children and faulty pedagogical approach make their classroom learning climate a bored and joyless and to express their feelings they resort to practice of wall-writing as a way catharsis.

Remedies

In order to promote a healthy learning environment it is important to inculcate good human values among children. Learning to care for things can be an important habit that is consistent with caring for people. In this regard teachers play an important role by preventing vandalism by attending to the reasons for their behavior-

1. Talking with the students- Talking and discussing with the students about caring for others' property guidance about the importance of caring for property that belongs to others may go a long way in ensuring the security of public property.
2. Examine the students' motivation- Understanding why the students damaged or destroyed property may help to figure out how to keep them away from repeating the same act. Trying to identify student's motivation by taking note of what triggers their behavior.
3. Be sure of student's guilt before accusing them. If we falsely accuse them of having engaged in offensive behavior we risk alienating them and perhaps incurring wrath.
4. Require the student to make amends. However, in devising this remedy it is better to consider the nature of the damage and the age of the student, and make the student fit for the offence.
5. Developing an attitude of respect for school property. It is suggested to demonstrate how the school property is valued through our actions like decorating the rooms, arrange books and furniture of the rooms etc.
6. Recognize and praise students who treat property with care. It is expected that praise and recognition for careful handling materials will motivate the students.
7. Giving the students a sense of belongingness in school. Students will be less likely to damage school property if they feel a sense of ownership and pride in the school. Activities like planting a garden, decorating the school walls, painting walls that have been defaced.
8. Make the students responsible for specific school property and display trust in their ability to care for school property.

CONCLUSION

Scribble on the walls is a common practice found in the educational institutions. Institutions irrespective of their management type face the malpractice of wall scribbling by the students. The nature of classroom climate, effective classroom teaching and a careful handling of the pre-adolescent children may help in overcoming many of the malpractices and vandalism among the students. Besides that strict rules of monitoring and supervision of students may go a

long way in solving the issue of wall-writing and create an atmosphere of faith, discipline and belongingness towards the institution.

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