

## Positive Schooling and Subjective Well-Being of Pakistani Children (A Qualitative Study)

Mariyam Akram

COMSATS Institute of Information and Technology, Lahore

Shabbir Ahmad Rana

Govt. M.A.O. College, Lahore

The purpose of the present study was to explore the role of positive schooling in the personality development and enhancement of the subjective well-being (SWB) of Pakistani children. The purposive sampling strategy was used to collect the data from 16 participants selected from five schools. The sample consisted of 8 children (4 boys & 4 girls) studying in class 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and the parents of these children (4 mothers & 4 fathers). On the basis of pilot study, two semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted for children and parents separately. The basic objectives of study were to know about children and parents opinion about their schools and to investigate the role of schooling in the personality development and SWB of children. The information obtained from the participants was audio recorded and transcribed. Data was analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Themes that emerged in IPA were interactive class environment, proficient teaching staff, and students overall satisfaction with schools, effects of schooling on cognition, behavior, and social skills of children. These effects were all positive in nature and are considered contributing factors in the personality development of children that contribute significantly in enhancing the subjective well-being of the children. Results of the present study regarding the importance of positive schooling in the life of Pakistani children are compared with the western researches.

**Keywords:** positive schooling, Pakistani children, Personality development, subjective well-being, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

After parenting, schools are considered as the second most important place for children to achieve sense of belongingness, safety, self-assurance, enthusiasm and willpower (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005). Putman, Handler and Luiselli (2003) defined schooling as a place to interrelate with compassionate people he can trust and a protected environment with an apparatus to be a creative citizen, practice advanced lifetime knowledge and work towards achieving lifetime goals. Merrell (2002) also supported the fact that schools must offer societal and emotional involvement beside scholastic education. Many researchers have proved that the success of schooling depends a lot on the social framework in child's living which includes his family, peer group, cultural background and teacher-child relationship (Jahangir & Tahir, 1999; Nichols, 2008; Ryan, 2001; Sharp, 1989).

Similarly, peer relations have revealed to be essential throughout the school progressive phase and play direct role in the educational process through instructional measures such as joint learning and peer coaching. It has been empirically proved that children having good friends are contented, develop more optimistic attitudes towards their school and also exhibit greater achievement in academic performance across the school years than who lack friendships (Fuligni, Eccles, Barber, & Clements, 2001; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996). Along with peers and parents, the cultural surroundings of child has also immense value in his schooling, as there are children with different cultural backgrounds, viewpoints, and standards. Different studies show that schooling will be most valuable when methods of instruction are well-

matched with child's cultural background (Slaughter-DeFoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, & Johnson, 1990).

It has been empirically investigated that there are many factors related to schooling like school environment, relation with teacher, peer relationship, type of friendship, academic expectations and many others that affect the personality growth of child. These factors directly or indirectly have influence on the subjective well-being of children. Subjective well-being involves satisfaction, hope, optimism, happiness, love, interpersonal skills, vocational capacity, future mindedness, wisdom, tolerance, civilization, responsibility and many relating factors which are empirically shown to be influenced and nourished by schooling of a child (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Diener, 1984; Snyder & Lopez, 2007).

Subjective well-being (SWB) may be defined as peoples belief of living correctly, whether they enjoy their lives, or others important to them believe they are living well (Diener & Suh, 2000). SWB includes different phenomenon like people's response to different emotions, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Moreover, people from different cultures vary at the level of SWB in similar situation (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). SWB is influenced by many factors like job satisfaction, objective and subjective conditions, income, gender, age, self-esteem, education, social relations and many others (Diener, 1984). SWB is determined by the large number of variables that can be conceptualized at several levels of analysis but only few variables were empirically tested. So, it can also be said that SWB represents the degree to which people are achieving values they hold dear within society.

An individual's sense of belongingness with each relationship has both positive and negative psychological and academic effects. The effect of schooling on the SWB of children have been examined in relevance to teachers, peers, and friends and found that each relationship plays a specific role in fulfilling a child's sense of belonging. Schooling plays very important role in the subjective well-being of children which has been studied by different

---

Mariyam Akram, Lecturer, Department of Humanities, COMSATS Institute of Information and Technology, Lahore; Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Rana, Associate Professor, Postgraduate Department of Applied Psychology, Govt. M.A.O. College, Lahore.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mariyam Akram, Lecturer, Department of Humanities, COMSATS Institute of Information and Technology, Lahore. Email: mary.ravian@live.com

researchers in different ways (Baker & Maupin, 2009; Gilman, 2001; Epstein & McPartland, 1976; Birch & Ladd, 1997).

Different studies have shown that feeling a sense of belonging with peers has an influence on academic achievement (i.e., Fuligni, Eccles, Barber, & Clements, 2001), whereas feeling a sense of belonging with teachers promotes academic engagement (i.e., Nichols, 2006; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Researches were also conducted on student's satisfaction with school environment and their academic performance and personality development (i.e., Anderman, 2003; Birch & Ladd, 1997). These researches clearly indicate that schooling influences children in many ways and effects of schooling have been manifested in many ways. Literature has shown that positive school context is considered as a place to promote children's well-being and socio-cultural adaption (Baker & Maupin, 2009).

Significant relationship between school satisfaction and positive and negative trait affect has also been carried out by Karatzias, Power and Swanson (2002). Ladd, Buhs and Seid (2000) research findings underscore the importance of affective reactions of students to schooling in relation to their academic success. The influence of social environments, such as family, peers and school has been investigated on an individual's development and it has been concluded that adolescent's cognitive development needs both cognitive stimulating interaction and emotional support (Powers, Hauser, Schwartz, Noam, & Jacobson, 1983; Sroufe, Cooper, & DeHart, 1996). It has been seen that the home atmosphere is one of the contributor in child's intellectual abilities and considered as a significant feature allied to the school performance. Moreover, the research done by Bullock and Dishion (2002) and Christenson and Sheridan (2001) revealed that children's adjustment to school and their academic performance is linked with different aspects of family like number of parents or other adults at home, family structure constancy, relation with parents and other family members, and degree of parental support for academic achievement.

Previous literature revealed that education play a prime role in overall personality development of children including mental, spiritual, social, emotional and cultural components. According to Psychosocial effects of existing educational system in Pakistan (2010), Pakistan is passing through a period of value crises as its social life at present is full of corruption, violence, cynicism, hypocrisy, exploitation, disparity and disruption and much of the blame for this sorry state of affairs is being put on the present system of education, which is divorced from the realities of life cultural heritage and human values. The literacy rate in Pakistan is increasing but schooling quality of Pakistan is declining with the passage of time as it is all about rote learning rather than reasoning and real life implementation (Saigol, 1994). In Pakistan, the quality of teachers is not up to the mark also known as poor and several researches showed that teachers have little or no effect on the education provided to children (Bregman & Mohammad, 1998; Kizilbash, 1998). So, in the present situation dynamic changes in education system of Pakistan are expected that may help in breaking the barriers, providing sense of cooperation and sharing as well as sharpening social sensitivity (Psychosocial effects of existing educational system in Pakistan, 2010).

#### *Rationale of the study*

Nature of schooling has a considerable effect on the various aspects of child's personality (i.e., sense of belonging, socialization, self-efficacy, identity formation, academic engagement and, subjective well-being, etc). Keeping in view the importance of schooling in children personality development, much work has been

done in the West, but less work has been carried in this area in Pakistan. This qualitative study has been planned to investigate the parents' and children opinion about their schools and the role of schooling in the personality development of children.

#### *Objectives*

1. To find out opinion of the children about their school.
2. To explore the parents opinion about the school of their children.
3. To investigate the effects of schooling on the personality development and subjective well-being of school going children.

#### *Research Questions*

- 1- How does schooling affect the subjective wellbeing of children?

### *Methodology*

#### *Research Design*

Qualitative research design has been used in this study. Qualitative Research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998).

#### *Sample*

The total sample consisted of 16 participants, including 08 school going children (4 boys and 4 girls) and the parents of these 08 children (4 mothers and 4 fathers). The children were selected from five schools studying in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class. Their age ranged from 13-15 years. They were selected by purposive sampling and were approached randomly. The inclusion criteria was that all the children/students in that school for at least five years, having both parents alive and belonging from middle socioeconomic families.

#### *Assessment Tool*

##### *Semi-Structured Interview*

Semi-structured interview was adopted as an assessment tool of this study. As the aim of this work was to comprehend the subjective opinion of parents and children and it is considered as the most valuable tool to uncover the lives of people prior to technical justifications. Qualitative interviewing is an adventure as the way we interview depends on what we want to know and is a process of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). According to Gubrium and Holstein (2001), the respondent's experience has many assets and meanings and the qualitative interview can explore these assets and their collective association.

Initially, the pool of 63 questions was formulated by reviewing the previous literature, already constructed questionnaires, and natural observation of children. The questions were intended to find out the schooling system of children, parents awareness about schooling and the effect of schooling on the personality of their children. The list of questions was given to four experts (two teachers of psychology and two practicing child psychologists) and

they were briefed about the purpose of the study and were requested for their opinion and expert comments regarding the appropriateness and suitability of the questions regarding the objective of the study. They were requested to give their feed back within a week. When the researcher and the supervisor met them on the date of appointment, they pointed out few related and overlapping questions, and thus those questions were merged together. They also advised us to re-phrase few questions, few close ended questions were changed into open ended and few were marked as 'not so important'. On the basis of the commonality in their suggestions, the questionnaire was reduced to twenty nine questions. The interview schedule was again discussed with the same experts and after final review, a semi structured interview consisting of 29 questions were finalized. A pilot study was conducted, in which two students and their parents were interviewed. After which few changes and revisions were further made in the schedule. Some overlapping and related questions were merged together, some less important questions were removed, and some important questions were also added. Finally, two questionnaires consisting of most relevant questions (17 each) were formulated for students and parents separately. It is important to mention that at first the questionnaire was developed in English language, but later it was translated into Urdu language also for the convenience of participants. Some of the questions asked from parents and children are as follows:

Which type of changes you can observe in your child after schooling?

Can you please tell the things you find best in your school?

#### *Procedure*

The participants of study were eight school going children (4 boys and 4 girls) and their parents (4 mothers and 4 fathers). At first, the permission letter was collected from concerned department for data collection and then school administrations were asked for permission to interview their students. Twelve schools did not allow interviewing their students but five schools cooperated and permitted to interview, only if their names would be kept confidential. With due permission of school administration, 24 participants (13 students & 11 parents) were approached but only 22

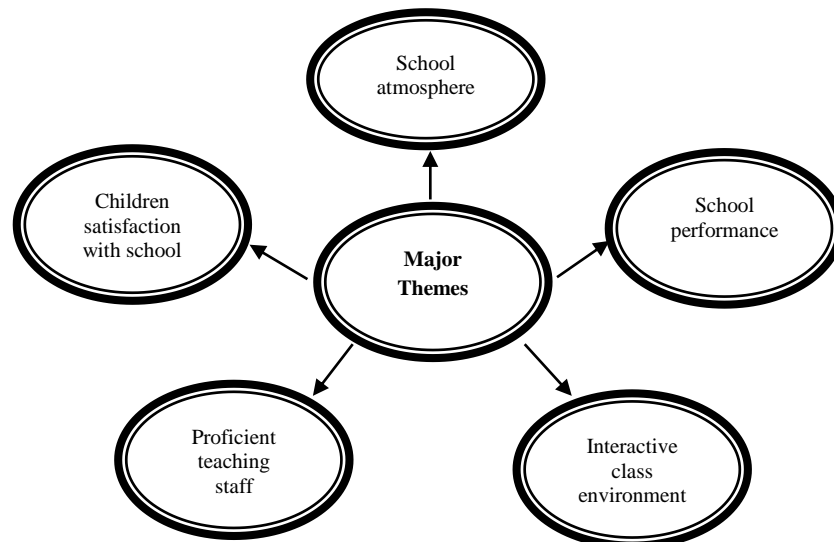
were willing to participate and they were briefly informed about the purpose of the study and asked for their willingness to participate in the study and they were also assured about the confidentiality of their responses and no exploitation of this data. After their informed consent, students and parents were requested to be honest in their answers. Interview was taken from each participant by the same researcher and voice recorder was used for interview recording. The average time taken by participants was 35 minutes. Interview started with the demographic information of participants and then questioning started from general to specific questions related to topic. Twenty-two individuals were interviewed but 06 interviews were not included as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The major problems in data collection were approaching the fathers of students and comforting participants to be truthful in their responses.

#### *Data Analysis*

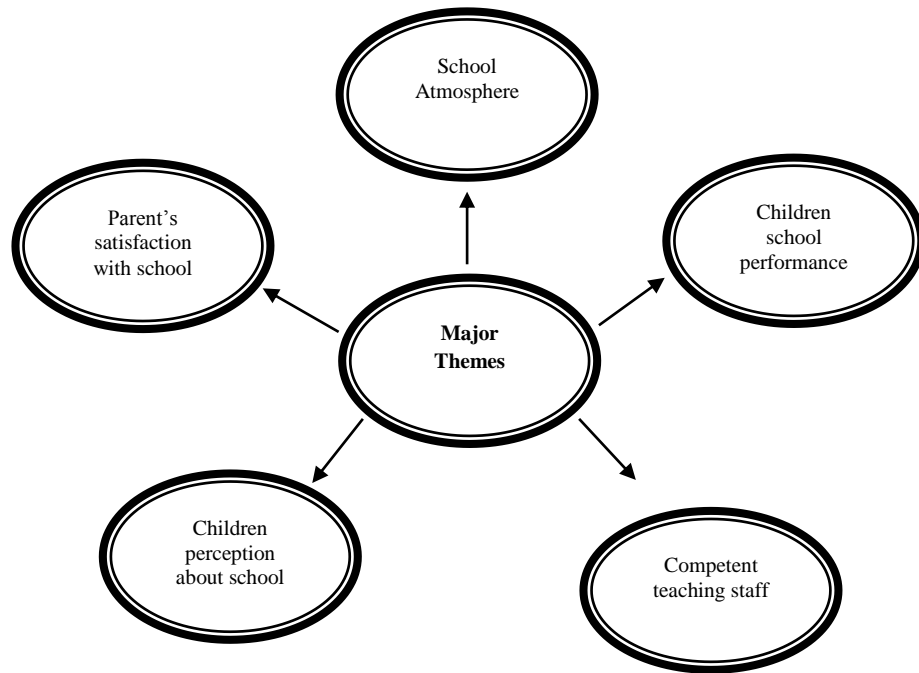
After interview recordings were transcribed into written text. The data were then analyzed by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) can be defined as an idiographic approach, which aims to offer insights into how do people make sense of their experiences in a given context (Heron, 1996). Smith and Osborn (2003) stated this two fold method as a dual hermeneutic, as the participants try to make sense of their world, and on the same time the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of his world. IPA started with assortment of data through some questions in consideration. Themes were allocated to the collected data, and then categories were formed from these codes to make them workable.

#### *Results*

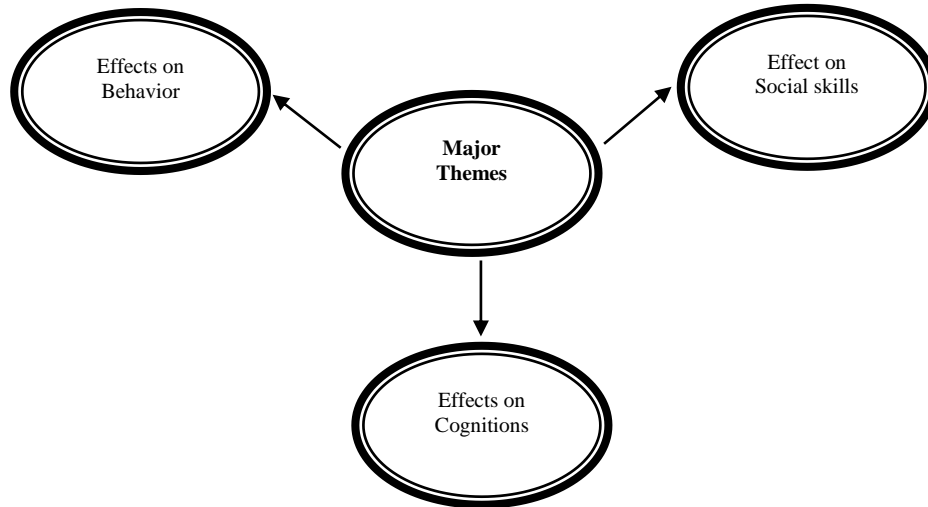
On the basis of semi structured interviews with children and parents, main theme and their sub-themes were extracted which resulted into a logical framework to analyse results efficiently. The first objective of the study 'the opinion of children about their schools' resulted in five major themes as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Showing Five Major Themes Derived from the Opinion of Children about Their School.



**Figure 2.** Showing Five Major Themes derived from Parents Opinion about Their Childrens' School.

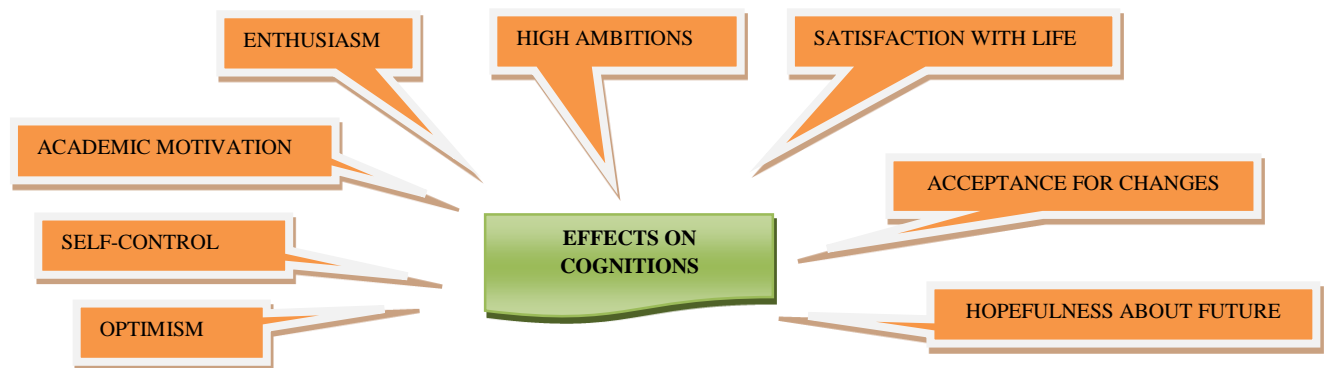


**Figure 3.** Figure showing Three Major themes of Effects of Schooling on Children Personality.

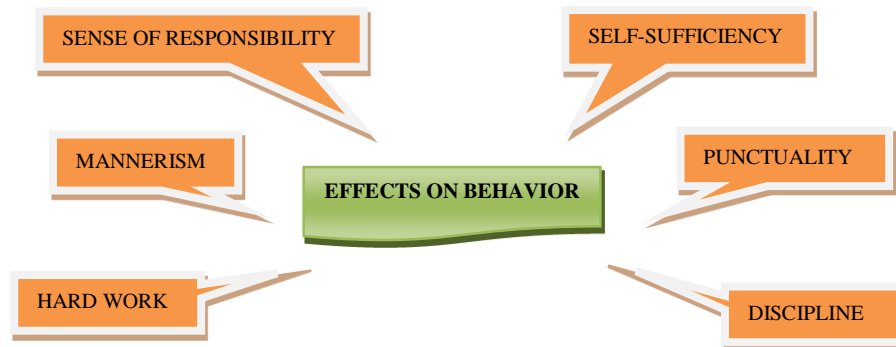
The responses of the students were analyzed and “school atmosphere, school activities, interactive class environment, proficient teaching staff, and children satisfaction with school” emerged as main themes. The school atmosphere consisted of school environment, architecture, cleanliness, rules and regulations, and behavior of administration, and most of the students showed satisfaction in all regards. Almost every student reported his/her studies in satisfactory manner and told that they have improved in their studies and co-curricular activities as a relaxing activity in their hectic routine. Every student was happy about his classroom environment and mentioned their teachers as competent having

qualities as well-educated, experienced, knowledgeable, hardworking, cooperative, encouraging, well-prepared, lenient, and command on their subjects as well as biased. Students claimed to enjoy their time at school than home and were found excited about going to school. Students were satisfied with their school in studies but few of them were not satisfied with atmosphere of school.

The second objective ‘The opinion of parents about the school of their children’ resulted into five major themes and they were ‘school atmosphere, child school performance, competent teaching staff, child perception about school, and parent’s satisfaction with school’ as presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 3a** Figure showing Effects of Schooling on Cognitions of Children.



**Figure 3b** Figure showing Effects of Schooling on Behavior of Children.



**Figure 3c.** Figure showing Effects of Schooling on Social Skills of Children.

Almost every parent reported to be satisfied with all them and the compulsory rules and regulations indicated by parents were proper uniform, discipline, punctuality and regularity in school. Students are also encouraged to follow these rules and regulations. All the parents were happy with their children academic performance and mentioned the betterment in their children academics in this school so far. Some of the parents stated that there are bunch of co-curricular activities in the school but children don't get time to

participate due to their board exams burden. Although few of them reported their children as good in co-curricular activities as well and find it refreshing activity for their children. Parents also said that according to children, their teachers are really appreciative as they considered teachers as the strength of the school. Furthermore, as children speak up their whole day activities of school at home, so parents concluded that almost every child like to be at school and have adjusted very well. Mostly students do not seem to complaint

about their schools and never thought seriously about leaving their school which shows their satisfaction about school. Finally parents showed their satisfaction with school by saying that they chose this school because of its fame in good educational background and they are happy with their decision. Parents stressed that schools have changed study habits of their children and enhanced their academic skills. Parents feel that their children have become responsible and confident in being at present school.

The third major objective of the study was 'Effects of schooling on subjective well-being of children' which was analyzed by combining the opinion of children and their parents, resulted in to three major themes as shown in Figure 3.

Schooling effects have been categorized into three major themes namely effects on cognitions, effects on behavior and effects on social skills. Due to their significant importance in the present study, these effects were further explored and described in figures 3a, 3b, and 3c.

Figure 3a highlights effects on cognitions that further consisted of academic motivation, enthusiasm, optimism, self-control, high ambitions, acceptance for changes and satisfaction with life so far along with hopefulness about future. Figure 3b highlights effects on behavior of children which further consisted of discipline, punctuality, self-sufficiency, mannerism, sense of responsibility, and hard-work. Moreover, Figure 3c highlights effects on social skills which further consisted of confidence, obedience, co-operation, mutual interaction, cheerfulness, friendliness, expressiveness, maturity, and initiation as its key components.

### Discussion

The results of present study were divided into three parts by keeping in view the objectives of the study. This study highlights the opinion of students and their parents regarding the effect of schooling on the personality development and subjective well-being of children. It primarily focuses on things children learn from their school directly or indirectly and how these learnings effect the subjective well-being of children. The in-depth interviews were conducted with students and their parents regarding their schooling and elaborated the effects of schooling on children.

The qualitative in-depth investigation revealed that school has great impact on the students though it is school environment, teachers, class-fellows, and other relating factors. When students were asked regarding their school one of them said, *"School atmosphere is really nice and people are good. It's very polite as well as strict and worth to be in it. At times we encounter people who are not that good but overall it's very nice"*. Furthermore, students were also questioned regarding their participation in co-curricular activities, its importance for them and their studies as well. Some of the schools were lacking co-curricular activities, especially physical ones and had total ignorance towards physical activity of students, whereas others gave equal importance to studies as well as co-curricular activities. Another student told, *"I am position holder in class and give equal time to studies and co-curricular activities as well. Except sports we have many other activities to perform like Debates, Arts, Quiz, Naat recitation, translation and sometimes science fare is arranged. I do take part in all activities except for debate."* In contrast, one more student claimed, *"There are very few co-curricular activities in our school like trips, quizzes and farewells. But I don't take much part in them as I like to be with my books and along with this I am very much worried about my exams and result."* Moreover, Wenzel and

Watkins study in 2002 concluded that child get encouragement to build his own ideas when he is given activities to perform in collaborative atmosphere.

When students were asked regarding their classroom environment, all the students were happy about it as they mentioned their class atmosphere as friendly, interactive, united, helpful, noisy and having good bonding. Some of the participants commented, *"My class environment is very nice... as my class is like a group and we all are friends.... Although, I am not much expressive in class, but now I have changed a lot, I speak up to teachers when necessary but not that much..."* Another student claimed, *"I like the class most, as we all are friends, help each other in studies and play together. Class fellows at times misbehave but if seen in totality its worth being a part of."* Almost all the children had good comments about their class fellows and environment, and their likeness about class fellows enhanced their favorability for their schools. This has been reciprocally proven by some researchers e.g., Ghaith, 2003; Finnan, Schnepel, & Anderson, 2003; whose researches showed positive schooling as a factor promoting cooperation, group cohesion, mutual respect, trust and learning climate. The negative results of lack of interaction with peer group and inability to achieve approval and friendship leads to social behavioral problems (Dodge, 1983).

Furthermore, interviews resulted in a fact that teaching staff proficiency also enhanced the sense of belongingness, affiliation, efficiency, and competency of school and all the participants reviewed teachers as being competent and well educated with pleasant personality. One of the student mentioned that *"Teaching method of teachers is really good as they are co-operative and always well-prepared for their lecture.....here teachers always encourage class participation and do not teach us from just one textbook, but guide us by means of different contexts like daily life and general examples, to make things more understandable for us..... even if we do not score well in tests, they guide us appropriately and make us work hard for next test...."*. In contrast, two of the participants reported their teachers as competent but biased as well. They reported that *"teachers teach really well but the only problem with them is that they don't treat every student equally but give more importance to their favorite ones. But fortunately every teacher is not biased only few of them having differential student appraisal."* Results revealed that teachers have great impact on children as they teach children about different aspects of life like initiation, social competition, confidence, acceptance of different situations, fighting for survival and honesty with oneself and others around. Nichols (2006) study supports the findings that child relationship with teacher and his peer group plays an important role in his sense of belongingness with his institution.

When it came to explore the children satisfaction with school, five students had good impression of their schools in their studies and environment as well but three of them had less satisfaction with their school environment but they were really relaxed about their studies. As they admitted that their schools got good teaching staff and it is enhancing their knowledge. As one of the student shared that *"I go to school happily, I like to study and play with my friends; at times I want to take a leave from school to take rest, but then I think that when it would be our last day at school, we would not like to go home as I am in the present school from many years. I like my school a lot; teachers are the best feature of this school as all of them are really good and treat us well. I have learnt a lot from this school."* But those students who were not satisfied with

their school environment, they were very much in favor of its studies as one of them reported as *"I come just because I don't want to stay back in studies, and when we don't get any free time to chitchat or play we get bored. Atmosphere of school is not that good, so if my friends don't come school I also take a leave. Teachers are good but not students..."*

So, the interviews of children when seen in totality depicts that some schools encourage climate as being flexible and children of these schools have great sense of belongingness for their schools as they feel comfortable and secure in their school environment. However, those students who presented their schools atmosphere as being rigid showed less association with their school. Unfavorable environment of schools obviously affect the performance of students but here it was seen that it has negative effect but less. Most of the participants were satisfied with the overall role of the school as they had a realization that nothing can be perfect and a person should learn to survive in every situation.

In addition, the parents opinion regarding the effects of schooling was also explored through in-depth interview. Initially parents were inquired regarding the school atmosphere of their children and one of the father claimed that *"The reputation of this school is really good... we liked its studies and rule and regulations as the environment of the school is really disciplined and organized... cleanliness is also maintained here which is ignored by many other schools"*. Mostly parents had no complaints regarding the schooling of their children as they mentioned that they inquired a lot before sending their children to their schools. However, parents mentioned that school atmosphere has vast effect on their children as they spend most of their time in the school. It was also prominent that those children who claimed school atmosphere as rigid, their parents also displayed same but the difference was that parents did not show any such dislike for that. Although, parents displaying school with flexible atmosphere had bit of problem with school atmosphere as their was lack of discipline in their children.

Parents also said that according to children, their teachers are really appreciative as they considered teachers as the strength of the school. Furthermore, parents concluded that their children have adjusted very well in school and do not seem to complaint about their schools. Finally, parents stressed that schools have changed study habits of their children and enhanced their academic skills. Parents feel that their children have become responsible and confident in being at present school.

Moreover, student's participation in school activities was also inquired and one of the mother told that *"One of us always come for parent-teacher meeting and ask about my daughter's progress in studies, she is a position holder and teachers always praise her.... she is also good in co-curricular activities and administration always encourage participation for mental and physical well-being of children"*. Moreover, two parents appreciated the lack of co-curricular activities in schools, as father of one student notified that *"mostly my wife goes to school to keep a check on my son school performance and we are satisfied with studies as almost all the teachers praise him and he is very active in class participation. Quite few co-curricular activities are practiced in this school, which is good for children as they wholly focus on their studies, with no distraction"*. Interestingly, parents pay more attention on their children grades and interest in studies rather than the physical activities for children.

Parent's perception about teachers was the result of their meeting and whatever child told about his teachers. Statements of parents showed that their satisfaction with teaching faculty is mostly reliant

on what they teach their children. Six parents mentioned that their children have always praised their teachers as they find teachers as hard-working, well-educated, cooperative, experienced and friendly. One of the father told that *"me and my wife have good experience with my daughter's teachers as they sound well-educated and well-mannered as well. They pay attention to our issues or complaints and try their level best to facilitate us by resolving our issues"*. One of the mother notified that *"I dint find anything bad in the teachers of my daughter, as they pay attention to children and knows the strengths and weaknesses of their students"*. Moreover, one mother estimated the teachers of child on the basis of his studies as she claimed that *"I am not familiar with the way of teaching but the knowledge my son pick from them is good so I can say that teachers are good, he is satisfied with them and so am I. He is bright student, he complains only if teachers are not competent or they encourage rote learning"*.

Seven out of eight parents told that their children feel good about their schools and like their school a lot. One of the fathers reported his child satisfactory perception about school as, *"He says that he does not want to leave this school, at times if we say that you are becoming careless in your studies we are thinking to change your school, he tells that I would work even harder but please don't change my school, I love my school. I learn a lot there"*. In contrast, one of the fathers showed the dislike of child for her school, as *"she has not adjusted till now because she does not like conservative environment of school and weak interaction between students and teachers. The only reason she is still in that school is my wish and good results displayed by her school students"*. Overall response of some parents about their children point of view for school matched their children responses.

Moreover, parents claimed a great deal of satisfaction with schooling of their children and the learning and personality grooming of their children. One of the parents reported his 100% school satisfaction as, *"the school atmosphere is really organized and my son has become quite disciplined and now don't make delays in his work as he used to before. I have never thought about changing this school as the atmosphere, grooming of children and their personality development is going well here"*. In addition, two parents reported their satisfaction with their child progress in studies but were not much satisfied with school environment. They displayed that child learns certain unacceptable things from their peer group which is not favorable in their family set up. One of the mothers reported that: *"parents send their children to educate in the school, if you think about the school it is very good but the background of the students also count a lot. Academics of schools is really good but the environment is not much favorable in personal grooming of the children as they are learning aggression, impulsive behaviors and certain other negative things"*. In contrast, one of the parents gave his point of view that what child learns depends on him; we cannot blame his teachers or institution for his failure. So the interviews of parents when seen in totality showed that though govt. or private schools they chose for their children, schools had been proven to be mostly good in regard to their children studies and social skills as well. The fact is that, though school is good or bad it has effect on children personality growth.

Schooling effects on the subjective well-being of children have been categorized into three major themes namely effects on cognitions, effects on behavior and effects on social skills. Many researchers conducted researches on the effects of schooling on children and showed that positivity in school climate leads to optimal learning.

*Effects on cognitions* embrace the development of mental functioning and thinking pattern of children after joining their present schools. According to most of the children, after being in present school they feel many positive changes in themselves. These effects are considered to be positive in nature to great deal, which showed that children have learnt great deal of positivity from school which, if remains, would be long lasting.

One of the students reported that, *"I learnt to maintain my position in the class and to have a healthy competition with my class fellows. I am satisfied with my life, I am managing my life very well as I take out time for cricket, gaming, and studies as well and I am hopeful to choose any good field for me in the future"*. The present statement of student shows that he is academically motivated, satisfied with his life, and hopeful about his future. These were the positive changes that child has gone through. Whereas, another student mentioned that, *"I want to be in police so that I can help people. Overall I am satisfied and happy with my life, and never take much tension"*. Here the child is enthusiastic about his future plans and seems to have pleasant life as he is satisfied with his overall life and his access to life also shows that he has great self-control and he can easily accept changes as he told that he don't get tensed that frequently. Quite similar results have been seen by analyzing other six students. Out of eight, six students reported to be academically motivated, having high aims, being satisfied with their lives and are hopeful for their bright future. Whereas along with these effects, three out eight also seemed to show acceptance for changes brought by life, having self-control and being high spirited.

The response of one of the parents which showed the effects of schooling on their children's cognition were; *"now he likes to study and determined to do something good.... He takes things positively and thinks a lot about his future and plans many things. He has emotional control on oneself and always stays in good mood.... He evaluates the situation and then do work... I am happy with the physical and social development of my children and I believe his future is bright"*. This verbatim showed that parents have also seen the ambitiousness, motivation of children for their academics, can adapt changes for survival, have control on oneself, satisfied with life and hopeful for bright future of their children. They also gave credit to the schools for bringing such a good change in their children. Alike these responses of parents, almost five parents reported their children as being academically motivated, hardworking, satisfied with life as well as hopeful about future. Moreover, only few (2-3) parents said that their children are enthusiastic, optimistic and highly ambitious now after being in this school.

Furthermore, the effects of schooling on the behavioral patterns of children included many characteristics which were concluded by the interviews of children and their parents. Almost six students reported that they have learnt discipline, punctuality and hard work from their schools. One of them reported that: *"in my school discipline and punctuality are really important, which is my habit now and I feel that after joining this school I have become hardworking than before"*. Whereas, out of eight only three students reported self-sufficiency, and sense of responsibility along with discipline, punctuality and hard-work. One of the students reported her experience as *"I have learnt to be on time and work in a disciplined manner but being in this school also made me hardworking so that I cannot rely on others and work independently"*. Parent's in contrast to children displayed six type of behavioral changes in children. They reported discipline,

punctuality, self-sufficiency, mannerism, sense of responsibility and hard-work in children in past 5+ years schooling. Two of them reported behavioral changes as *"after joining this school my daughter has made rules and regulations for herself, as she has divided her time in all the daily routine things. She has started studying with great indulgence and due to competition in class; she is all into it to do her level best"*. Another parent stated that *"he is quite responsible now and try to achieve every little thing and do her work always on time. She is very particular about cleanliness and also manages her things at home"*. Five parents declared their children as being disciplined, self-sufficient, hard-working and having sense of responsibility. Moreover, only three parents reported their children as punctual and well-mannered now. This showed that parents keep an eye on what children have learnt from their schools and how they are acting on it.

In addition to effects on cognitions and behaviors, student's social skills were also affected by the schooling as school is the first place where they learn themselves how to interact with new people themselves. Most of the changes declared by children and their parents were related to their social skills. As the school is a first place where child socialize himself, so the most of the changes that children and parents demonstrated were in children social skills and relationships. Mostly participants reported the learning of good deeds from school setup like child being confident, hardworking, academically motivated, highly ambitious, being responsible and many others. The interpretation of interviews showed that most of the changes children have gone through are social ones. Almost all the students reported changes in their social relations and skills. Some of the responses of children were *"I have learnt self-confidence and respect of elders from school. I am friendly with my class fellows and we help each other in the hour of need. At first I was shy but now I can easily initiate conversation with anyone, and I stay in good and fun loving mood and now I have learnt to have control on myself according to the situations"*. Similarly the other student said *"Mostly I am happy and then I talk a lot.... In these six years of schooling, I have gained confidence, talk a bit more than before to express my thought where needed and also learnt to bear stuff as well as also learnt that people are not same they differ internally and not to trust everyone. Now, I feel that I am better than what I was before. I am satisfied with my life and I know that I can take a lot out of my life and progressing towards my social life betterment as I had not been much social person"*. More than half students claimed themselves as being more confident, cooperative, friendly, cheerful, and more expressive than before in these years of schooling. They reported that their schooling has made them more socially acceptable. Furthermore, only four students reported to be more interactive, obedient and initiative in their social dealings.

Analysis of parents interviews showed that children have become socially more responsible and active after being in their schools. As depicted in such responses, it has been seen that five parents reported their children as being more confident, more expressive, cheerful and mature as they were before. And only few parents (2-3) reported obedience, mutual cooperation, friendliness, initiation and mutual interaction in children. Interviews interpretation showed a great deal of effect on children socially. When asked from parents about the changes in children after being in this school they gave more examples of changes in child regarding their social skills. Some of the responses of parents are *"my son does not talk much but when he talks he is confident"*; *"he is not much social and don't like to meet people much but now stays in good mood and witty. I guess schooling has at least 90% effect on social exposure of*



children, which is prominent in my son". One of the mother described effect of school on social skills of her daughter as "she got confidence from this school, few years back she lacked confidence. Now she don't hesitate much to meet new people and also try to be social and chit chat with her age mates". Six children became more confident than before as they mentioned themselves as being very shy and the similar was mentioned by parents as well.

To sum up, it was found that children were well adjusted in their schools and enjoyed their school life. They had learnt many good things which they believe would be helpful in their future lives. Furthermore, parent's also seemed satisfied with their children academics and personality growth which they attributed to the schools of their children. Consequently, positive schooling seemed to have several important effects on children personality, namely effects on cognitions, behavior and social relations. These effects included confidence, obedience, acceptance for change, mutual respect, self-efficiency, optimism, enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, etc. It is important to note that all these effects are considered to be positive effects in the field of positive psychology.

Children and their parents view about the changes that occurred in child personality due to cognitive, behavioral and social skill changes were quite similar and many researches support these results. Like researches conducted by Osterman (2000) and Blum, McNeely, and Rinehart (2002) concluded that open, compassionate, secure and participatory climate of school promote student attachment to school and is proved to be institution of societal, emotional and educational learning.

### Conclusion

The overall opinion of the children and parents about the schools was positive in nature as it appeared that children learnt many positive aspects from school, i.e., confidence, discipline, hard work, mutual respect, self-control, adaptation, hopefulness, academic motivation, social interaction, which according to the field of positive psychology are the important ingredients of SWB. In short, positive schooling significantly contributes in enhancing the subjective well-being of the children.

### Limitations

The first limitation seems to be that students interviewed were of 13-15 years, and were studying in 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> class. Students of other age levels and classes should also be included in further studies in this area. Another limitation was students were selected by administration of school rather than researcher that can lead to contamination effect. Lack of teacher's point of view also seems to be another major limitation of this study.

### Suggestions

It is recommended that in future studies opinion of the teachers should also be sorted out to get more information about the working of schools and about the personality of the students. Another suggestion is that quantitative method may also be used for this study for investigating the effect of other related variables as well. A gender-wise comparison could also be made to see which school environment is more favorable for child personality growth. Students with low and high socio-economic status may also give good piece of information.

### Implications

The theoretical implication of this study rests in its eastern contribution to the field of educational, developmental and positive psychology. As far as practical implication is concerned the researcher believes that this study can be useful for students, parents, teachers, school administration, school counselors and developmental and positive psychologists. It is helpful for students and parents to make them aware of importance of co-curricular activities and studies in their further life and effects of schooling on their subjective well-being. Teachers may get awareness about the importance of their teaching style, appraisal in class, classroom atmosphere and command on subject they teach as well as how their way of interaction with child can improve their personality and enhance the subjective well-being of children. It can also be helpful for school administration to see how they should set up their curricular and school environment, which can enhance their children learning process as well as positive personality growth. School counselors can make school administration and parents aware of positive and negative effects of schooling and how it can be made better. Developmental and positive psychologists can keep the importance of schooling in their mind and can help parents and children in enhancing the subjective well-being of children.

### References

- Anderman, L. H. (2003). Academic and social perceptions as predictors of change in middle school students' sense of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 72, 5-22.
- Baker, J. A., & Maupin, A. N. (2009). School satisfaction and children's positive school adjustment. In R. Gilman, E. S., Huebner, & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools* (pp. 189-196). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology*, 35 (1), 61-79.
- Blum, R. W., McNeely, C. A., & Rinehart, P. M. (2002). *Improving the odds: The untapped power of schools to improve the health of teens*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Center for Adolescent Health and Development.
- Bregman, J., & Mohammad, N. (1998). Primary and secondary education: Structural issues. In P. Hoodbhoy, *Education and the State: Fifty years of Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Bullock, B. G., & Dishion, T. J. (2002). Sibling collusion and problem behavior in early adolescence: Towards a process model for family mutuality. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 30 (2), 143-153.
- Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *School and families: Creating essential connections for learning*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Cohen, J. (2001). Social and emotional education: Core principles and practices. In J. Cohen (Ed.), *Caring classrooms/intelligent schools: The social emotional education of young children*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Creswell, W. J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, 542-575.
- Diener, E., & Suh, E. (Eds.) (2000). *Culture and subjective well-being*. Cambridge Massachusetts, USA: MIT Press.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subject

- ive well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276-302.
- Dodge, K. (1983). Behavioral antecedents of peer social status. *Child Development*, 54, 1386-1399.
- Epstein, J. L., & McPartland, J. M. (1976). The concept and measurement of the quality of school life. *American Educational Research Journal*, 13, 15-30.
- Finnan, C., Schnepel, K., & Anderson, L. (2003). Powerful learning environments: The critical dodge link between school and classroom cultures. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk*, 8 (4), 391-418.
- Fulgini, A., Eccles, J., Barber, B., & Clements, P. (2001). Early adolescent peer orientation and adjustment during high school. *Developmental Psychology*, 37 (1), 28-36.
- Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95 (1), 148-162.
- Ghaith, G. (2003). The relationship between forms of instruction, achievement and perceptions of classroom climate. *Educational Researcher*, 45 (1), 83-93.
- Gilman, R. (2001). The relationship between life satisfaction, social interest, and frequency of extracurricular activities among adolescent students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30, 749-767.
- Goldstein, S., & Brooks, R. (Eds.) (2005). *Handbook of resilience in children*. New York: Springer.
- Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (2001). *Handbook of interview research: Context & method*. London: Sage.
- Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative Inquiry: Research into the human condition*. London: Sage.
- Hoge, D. R., Smit, E. K., & Hanson, S. L. (1990). School experiences predicting changes in self-esteem of sixth and seventh-grade students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 117-127.
- Jahangir, S. F., & Tahir, S. A. (1999). Parental acceptance rejection and schooling status: Contributory factors to self-concept development of a child. *Pakistan Journal Psychological Research*, 14 (3-4), 105-114.
- Karatzias, A., Power, K. G., & Swanson, V. (2002). Bullying and victimization in secondary schools: Same or separate entities? *Aggressive Behavior*, 28, 45-61.
- Kizilbash, H. H. (1998). Teaching teachers to teach. In P. Hoodbhoy, *Education and the State: Fifty years of Pakistan* (pp. 102-135). Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Ladd, G. W., Buhs, E., & Seid, M. (2000). Children's initial sentiments about kindergarten: Is school liking an antecedent of early classroom participation and achievement? *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 46, 255-279.
- Ladd, G. W., Kochenderfer, B. J., & Coleman, C. C. (1996). Friendship quality as a predictor of young children's early school adjustment. *Child Development*, 67 (3), 1103-1118.
- Merrel, K. W. (2002). Social-emotional intervention in schools: Current status, progress, and promise. *School Psychology Review*, 31, 143-147.
- Najaka, S. S., Gottfredson, D. C., & Wilson, D. B. (2002). A meta-analytic inquiry into the relationship between selected risk factors and problem behavior. *Prevention Science*, 2, 257-271.
- Nichols, S. (2008). An exploration of students' belongingness beliefs in one middle school. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 76, 145-169.
- Nichols, S. L. (2006). Teachers' and students' beliefs about student belonging in one middle school. *Elementary School Journal*, 106 (3), 255-271.
- Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 323-367.
- Powers, S. I., Hauser, S. T., Schwartz, J. M., Noam, G. G., & Jacobson, A. M. (1983). Adolescent ego development and family interaction: A structural-developmental perspective. In H. D. Grotevant, & C. R. Cooper (Eds.), *Adolescent development in the family: New directions for child development* (pp. 5-25). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Psychosocial effects of existing educational system in Pakistan. (2010). Retrieved December 27, 2010, from <http://viewstonews.com/index.php/psychosocial-effects-of-existing-educational-system-in-pakistan>.
- Putnam, R. F., Handler, M. W., & Luiselli, J. K. (2003). Positive schools: An approach to school discipline. *Psychiatric Services*, 54 (7), 1039.
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ryan, S. (2001). *Effects of family structure history and poverty on adolescent emotional health*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Washington, DC.
- Saigol, R. (1994). *Locating the self*. Lahore: ASR.
- Shaghnessy, J. J., Zechmeister, E. B., & Zechmeister, J. S. (2003). *Research methods in psychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Slaughter-Defoe, D. T., Nakagawa, K., Takanishi, R., & Johnson, D. J. (1990). Toward cultural/ecological perspectives on schooling and achievement in African- and Asian-American children. *Child Development*, 61, 363-383.
- Smith, J. A. & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology*. London: Sage.
- Sroufe, L. A., Cooper, R. G., & DeHart, G. B. (1996). *Child development: Its nature and course* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. L. (2007). *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*. USA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tharp, R. G. (1989). Psycho-cultural variables and constants: Effects on teaching and learning in schools. *American Psychologist*, 44, 349-359.
- Torney-Purta, J. (2002). The school's role in developing civic engagement: A study of adolescents in twenty-eight countries. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6 (4), 203-212.
- Tsai, J. L., Knutson, B., & Fung, H. H. (2006). Cultural variation in affect valuation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 288-307.
- Wentzel, K. R., & Watkins, D. E. (2002). Peer relationships and collaborative learning as contexts for academic enablers. *School Psychology Review*, 31 (3), 366-367.

Received July 8, 2012

Revision Received July 19, 2013