

Social Skills in Elementary Students: The Role of Attitude to School and School Environment

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Abstract

Background: Formation of social skills in elementary students is usually dependent on several factors, which need to be identified for the improvement of school outputs. The purpose of this study was to predict social skills of students based on attitude towards school and school environment.

Methods: A descriptive-correlational method was used. The statistical population consisted of all high school female students in Qazvin in the academic year 2018-2019. Using cluster sampling, 240 students were selected as the sample. The tools included Delaware School Climate, Gresham and Elliot's Social Skills, and McCook and Siegel's Attitude to School questionnaires. To analyze the data, some descriptive and inferential statistics were used for multivariate analysis of variance and structural equation modeling.

Results: The findings showed that "responsibility" (22.03), "attitude toward teacher and class" (35.42), and "student-teacher relations" (21.35) had the highest mean in public schools. Furthermore, in non-public schools, "responsibility" (22.24), "motivation/self-regulation" (51.90) and "student-teacher relations" (25.15) had the highest mean. In addition, there was a positive correlation between some "school climate" dimensions and "attitude to school" and "social skills", by $P=0.001$ (cooperation=0.023, assertiveness=0.012, accountability=0.0001, participation=0.020, self-control=0.024). The highest effect belonged to "cooperation" and "responsibility", and the lowest effect pertained to "sympathy". There was no significant difference between public and non-public schools regarding "communication" ($P=0.021$) and "cooperation" ($P=0.0154$). Moreover, "school environment" was different in school type ($P=0.001$), but "attitude to school" did not differ significantly ($P>0.05$).

Conclusions: Based on the results, it could be said that the association between school environment and attitude to school can be an important factor in dealing with social skills; therefore, to improve students' social skills, it is recommended that the educational planners pay more attention to the quality of schools' environment and attitude to school.

Keywords: Social skills, Attitude to school, School environment, Elementary student

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1. Introduction

Proper socialization of students has always been one of the supreme goals of the education system. Comparing these goals with what is actually going on in schools leads to the investigation of school climate and students' attitudes towards it. Because school environment is one of the most important factors affecting the adolescents' social development, it is necessary to pay more attention to the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the students along with their education years.

School experiences and the interactions of students can affect their social lives, hence the necessity of careful planning, proper goal-setting, and continuous effort to strengthen and train students' social skills is essential.

Additionally, the evolution of human developmental

stages depends on social skills. In fact, once individuals acquire social skills, they can perform better in their lives. Training and utilization of social skills play an essential role in people's mental health, particularly when they are at an appropriate developmental stage (1). Proper social behaviors and other adaptive skills form the basis of personal and social adjustment in life.

Social skills have a variety of functions: they result in social acceptance, prevent disturbing social situations, and represent a set of capabilities to cope with the daily needs of a social environment. Individuals who fail to develop appropriate social skills are exposed to negative consequences, including peer rejection, emergence of psychological disorders, school dismissal, isolation, crime, and poor academic performance (2).

To attain optimum results in life, people need specific skills in areas such as math, literacy, and living itself. However, these skills do not guarantee

successful outcomes if there is a lack of proper social skills. Appropriate social skills enable adolescents to have positive and strong relationships with their peers and achieve success in a variety of settings such as school and workplace (3). Students with stronger social skills are more likely to be accepted by peers, develop friendships, build stronger relationships, be seen as effective problem solvers, show more interest in school, and have a better educational performance. Effective social and communication skills are essential for a successful life.

Various institutions such as schools are involved in the development of social skills. School climate is defined as the quality and characteristics of a school which affect the attitudes, behaviors, and performance of each individual in contact with school; it is the result of the interactions and relationships among the school's internal groups, namely learners, teachers, administrators, and other staff. In schools and other educational systems, attention to climate, particularly social climate, is of great importance because it can affect the learning experiences and personality of the learners.

In general, the school principal is the most important influence on its climate because of their authority and power whereas teachers are the creators of the class climate. Whether being aware or not, a teacher, in addition to directly or indirectly transmitting information, plays a role in shaping the students' attitudes and developing their social skills through their interactions with learners. Natural reinforcements such as attention and positive feedback are factors effective in creating a healthy attitude in students (4).

Immersion of schools in educational competitions leads to neglecting the impact of the school environment and climate on students' attitudes towards school. On the other hand, there is an increase in the teachers' complaints about the growing anti-social behaviors of aggression and impulsivity in high school students. One problem that is felt in Iranian schools, including those in Qazvin, is that despite extensive lessons and class hours, they have overlooked the impact of school climate and its effects on students' social education because of the extensive emphasis on the educational dimensions. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard, and we were not able to find any studies that directly addressed the relationship between school climate and attitude towards school in public and private schools. Accordingly, this study can be a starting point for further research in this area.

2. Objectives

The purpose of this study was to predict the social skills based on attitude to school, school environment, and school type. In fact, the present study attempted to identify the effect of "attitude to school" and "school environment" on the formation of students' social skills. Comparisons were further drawn between public and non-public schools in the context of research variables.

3. Methods

The current study employed a descriptive-correlational method based on multivariate regression analysis.

3.1 Participants

The statistical population consisted of all high school female students in grade 11 in Districts of 1 and 2 in Qazvin, Iran. Based on cluster sampling method, eight schools (four from District 1 and four from District 2) were randomly selected. Of the four schools in District 1, two were public and two were private; the same process was applied to District 2. Afterwards, one class was randomly selected from each school. Overall, 240 students (120 students from public schools and 120 students from private schools) were selected as the sample in the academic year of 2018-2019. From each field, humanities, mathematics, and applied sciences, 80 students participated in the study, comprising a total of 240 students. The respondents volunteered to participate in the study and were assured that the study results would be kept confidential. In the process of completing the questionnaire, the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study whenever they desired. They all cooperated very well.

3.2 Instruments

The research tool consisted of the following three questionnaires:

3.2.1 School Attitude Assessment:

This questionnaire is comprised of 35 items (questions) and five factors or subscales (5). The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify students who are capable of learning educational subjects but are in fact unsuccessful students. The purpose is to identify the discrepancies between what is expected of low-performance students and their actual progress. However, this difference should not be due to learning

disabilities (5). This questionnaire is rated based on a 7-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, slightly disagree, disagree, and completely disagree. These choices were assigned 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively.

This questionnaire was translated into Persian by Ghadampour and colleagues (6) and its validity and reliability were confirmed in the mentioned research and in the study by Mesrabadi (7). In the present study, the reliability associated with the subscales of the "School Attitude" questionnaire was determined based on the internal consistency (alpha) as follows: "Attitude toward Teacher and Class" subscale: 0.88; "Motivation/Self-regulation": 0.91; "Attitude toward School": 0.88; "Self-concept Perception": 0.81; "Goal Evaluation": 0.87.

3.2.2. Delaware School Climate Questionnaire:

This questionnaire was designed at the University of Delaware, USA, and validated by Bear and colleagues (8). The tool assesses the school climate mostly for the purpose of measuring structural dimensions and social support. The questionnaire has teacher, parent, and student versions. The student version has two special versions of first grade through fifth grade and fifth grade through twelfth grade. In this study, the latter version was employed. The "School Climate Questionnaire" is a 23-item tool rated based on a 4-point Likert scale, including strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Its variations range from 23 to 92 and items 9, 18 and 23 are reverse scored. In this questionnaire, the higher the score, the better the school climate will be. The questionnaire has five subscales, namely teacher-student relations, student-student relations, fairness of school rules, school safety, and loving school. The study of Bear and co-workers (8) indicated the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (SRMR=0.001, CFI=0.001, RMSE: 0.001, df=0.23). In the present study, the reliability coefficients of this questionnaire based on internal consistency (alpha) were 0.88, 0.84, 0.54, 0.84, and 0.70 for the teacher-student relations, student-student relations, and fairness in school rules, school safety, and loving school, respectively. Also, in the study of Bear and colleagues (8), the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire for the fifth and sixth grades were 0.2 and 0.2, respectively, and the total reliability coefficient for all the sections was 0.92. Another research (9) calculated the reliability of the student version at 0.91. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed for the first time in Iran by Imamgholivand and the co-workers (10).

3.2.3. Social Skills Questionnaire:

This scale was updated by Gresham and colleagues (11). The student version has 75 items, 46 of which measure the students' social skills while other items assess problematic behaviors. In this study, the section on social skills was used. The questionnaire has seven subscales: communications, participation, empathy, assertiveness, self-control, accountability, and cooperation. Likert-based scoring includes incorrect, somewhat correct, correct, and completely correct. The scores range from 46 to 184: scores from 46 to 70 indicate social skills much lower than average, 70-85 show average to low, 85-115 imply average, 130-155 indicate above-average, and scores ranging from 130 to 180 show social skills well above the average. The clinical score for social skills is 46, which is the minimum score for social skills (11). Gresham and co-workers (11) estimated the validity and reliability of the new version to be much higher than the old version. Flowers (12) reported 0.82 internal reliability coefficient for the questionnaire, and the total reliability coefficients of the scale using test-retest and Cronbach's alpha were 0.81 and 0.95, respectively. In the study of Whitcomb and Merle (13), the internal consistency coefficient of the student form varied from 0.70 to 0.95 and the test-retest reliability coefficient ranged between 0.59 and 0.81. The questionnaire's reliability was 0.91 in Denham's study (14), and in the study performed by Newgent and colleagues (15), the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients in the pre-test and post-test stages were 0.80 and 0.87, respectively.

In the present study, the internal consistency coefficients related to the subscales of the Social Skills questionnaire were 0.63, 0.68, 0.65, 0.70, 0.72, 0.71, and 0.77 in communication, cooperation, assertiveness, accountability, empathy, participation, and self-control subscales, respectively. Also, in another research, the researchers investigated the tool and got the high validity (16).

In addition, the content validity of the Persian version of the School Climate and Social Skills questionnaires was confirmed by seven faculty members of Yazd University of Education and Psychology. The final text was distributed among five target groups to evaluate the reliability of the Iranian version. The data were analyzed by SPSS software version 19. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyze the validity of the SAAS-R questionnaire. The results showed that by omitting three questions from the whole questionnaire and the factor analysis of the rest of the questions and

rotating the results by the five-component Varimax method, the number of these components and the high-factor questions with these components were consistent with the main questionnaire (17).

3.3. Statistical Analysis:

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive characteristics of the whole sample were presented in the research variables and matrix for the correlation between the variables for public and private schools. Pearson correlation coefficient, multivariate regression in the context of structural equation modeling, and multivariate analysis of variance were further performed. In this regard, subscales of social skills had a dependent role and those of school climate and attitudes to school had an independent role. To compare the relationship between variables based on public and private schools, the Chi-squared test was used in the context of structural equation modeling. Multivariate analysis of variance was utilized to compare the mean of individuals in different variables based on an intergroup factor of school type. The analysis was performed with LISREL software version 8.72.

In addition, the students were explained about the objectives of the study, the confidentiality of information, and the total procedure of the research. Next, students who were willing to participate completed the questionnaires. The participants filled out consent forms prior to answering the questions. Participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous, and the study procedure posed no harm to the participants. Therefore, the study was compatible with the ethical guidelines.

Data were collected following the project approval by the Research Council of the faculty of Psychology and Education, Kharazmi University.

4. Results

In this study, 240 students (120 students from public schools and 120 students from private schools) were selected as the sample in the academic year of 2018-2019. From each major, humanities, mathematics, and applied sciences, 80 students participated in the study, comprising a total of 240 students.

Due to the large number of variables, multivariate regression analysis was used to answer the first hypothesis of the study. To this end, social skills

subscales (communication, collaboration, assertiveness, accountability, empathy, participation, and self-control) had a dependent role, and subscales of school climate (student-teacher relations, student-student relations, fairness in rules, safety at school, and loving school) and attitude to school (attitude to teacher and class, motivation/self-regulation, attitude to school, academic self-perception, and goal evaluation) had an independent role. The results of the analysis showed that none of the independent variables had a significant relationship with the "relationship" variable ($P > 0.05$). (Very small P value was considered as $P \leq 0.01$).

In the independent variables, there was a significant relationship between the two variables of "attitude to teacher and class" and the "motivation / self-regulation" and "cooperation": ($P < 0.05$). In other words, except for the two variables of attitude to class and teacher and motivation / self-regulation, cooperation variables did not have an effective role in the prediction of other variables. These two variables accounted for approximately 31% of the variance in the "cooperation" variable, and according to the standard coefficients, both had a similar share; however, "motivation / self-regulation perception" had a slightly stronger role. "Assertiveness and accountability" variables had a significant positive relationship with the "motivation / self-regulation" variable.

"Participation" had a significant positive relationship with "attitude to teacher and class", and "empathy" had a significantly positive association with the "goal evaluation". Moreover, there was a significantly positive relationship among "self-control", "motivation/self-regulation", and "student-student relations". Together, these two variables (that is, "motivation/self-regulation", and "student-student relations") accounted for about 16% of the variance in "self-control", and according to the standard coefficients, both had a similar share in this regard (Table 1).

Using the Chi-squared test, the variables were further compared based on public and private schools; based on the results, when the path coefficients of the relationship between the variables were assumed to be different, the Chi-squared difference was limited to a model in which the relationship between the variables was estimated at 72.72 with 72 degrees of freedom, which was not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationship between independent and dependent variables based on public and private schools was not statistically significant.

Table 1: Standard coefficients of multivariate regression analysis of "Social Skills" through independent variables

	Dependent Independent	Communication	Cooperation	Assertiveness	Accountability	Empathy	Participation	Self-control
	Attitude to teacher and class	0.21	0.24(0.023)*	0.18	0.09	0.13	0.27 (0.020)*	0.05
	Motivation/self-control	0.07	0.27(0.002)*	0.25(0.012)*	0.38 (0.0001)*	-0.09	0.16	0.22(0.024)*
Attitude to School	Attitude to school	-0.11	-0.19(0.046)*	0.00	-0.08	-0.03	-0.04	-0.02
	Academic self-control	0.04	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	0.04	0.02	0.10
	Goal evaluation	0.04	0.04	0.02	-0.05	0.20 (0.039)*	-0.04	-0.14
	Student-teacher relations	0.17	0.14	-0.03	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.03
	Student-student relations	0.09	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.07	0.12	0.20(0.007)*
School Climate	Fairness in rules	-0.02	0.08	-0.08	0.06	0.00	-0.02	0.14
	Safety at school	0.00	0.00	-0.02	0.02	0.02	-0.06	-0.07
	Loving school	-0.03	0.09	-0.04	0.00	0.03	0.02	-0.11
	R ²	0.16	0.31	0.14	0.26	0.09	0.15	0.16

"Attitude to School" and "School Climate" *For significance coefficient, the exact P values are reported in parentheses

Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance was used because attitude to school has five subscales (attitude to teacher and class, motivation/ self-regulation, attitude to school, academic self-perception and goal evaluation) and there is an inter-group factor called "school type" with two modes. The results of multivariate analysis of variance regarding "attitudes toward school" showed that based on the Boxes M test, the assumption of covariance matrix similarity between the two groups was not established ($F_{15,77.229952}=3.806$, $P=0.0001$). Thus, the Oillias trace test was used instead of the Wilks Lambda multivariate test. Based on this test, "school type" (public/private) affects the linear combination of attitude variables ($2\eta=0.151$, $P=0.0001$, $F_{(5,235)}=8.362$). Results of the analysis of variance in all "attitude to school" variables showed that school type not only affected motivation / self-regulation ($P < 0.05$), but also had a significant effect on other variables. "School type" explained 9.5% of the variance in "attitude to school", 12% of the variance in "attitude to teacher", 6.1% of the variance in "academic self-perception", and 0.04% of the variance in "goal evaluation" (Table 2).

Regarding the variable of "attitude to school", the highest mean score belonged to the "motivation / self-regulation" in private schools, and the lowest mean score pertained to the "attitude to school" in public schools. Finally, it can be concluded that the mean score of private schools was higher than that of public schools (Table 3).

In addition, multivariate analysis of variance was used for deep analysis because again there was an intergroup variable called "school type" and there was a number of dependent variables related to "school climate". The results of the multivariate analysis of variance showed that, according to the Boxes M test, the same assumption of covariance matrix is between the two groups ($F_{(15,2280066.632)}=1.371$, $P=0.151$). Wilks Lambda showed that the linear combination of "school climate" was significantly different from "school type", with about 17% of the variance caused by "school type" ($F_{5,234}=9.393$, $P=0.001$, $2\eta=0.167$). The results of analysis of variance regarding each variable of "school climate" revealed a significant difference between the two school types, except for the "student-student relations". In this regard, about 14% of the "student-teacher relations" dispersion, 5.2% of the "fairness of the rules" dispersion, 7.8% of the "safety at school" dispersion and 7.7% of "loving school" dispersion was associated with the "school type" (Table 4).

The highest mean score belonged to the "student-teacher relations" in "private school" and the lowest was related to the "school safety" in "public school". Finally, it can be concluded that the mean of private schools was slightly higher than that of public schools (Table 5).

Furthermore, the results of the Boxes M test showed that the covariance matrix of "social skills"

Table 2: Results of multivariate analysis of variance on “attitude to school” based on “school type”

Source of variations	Variable	ss	df	MS	F	Sig
School type	Attitude to teacher and class	1478.346	1	1478.346	25.084	0.001
	Motivation/self-regulation	310.977	1	310.977	3.396	0.067
	Attitude to school	1558.285	1	1558.285	32.446	0.001
	Academic self-perception	426.050	1	426.50	15.416	0.001
	Goals evaluation	264.671	1	264.671	10.011	0.002
Error	Attitude to teacher and class	14085.629	239	58.936	-	-
	Motivation/self-regulation	21887.064	239	91.578	-	-
	Attitude to school	11478.313	239	48.026	-	-
	Academic self-perception	6605.70	239	27.636	-	-
	Goals evaluation	6318.823	239	26.439	-	-

Table 3: Mean scores of “attitude to school” in public and private schools

Variable	School type	Mean	Standard error
Attitude to teacher and class	Private	40.375	0.70
	Public	35.421	0.70
Motivation/self-regulation	Private	51.900	0.90
	Public	49.628	0.90
Attitude to school	Private	27.367	0.60
	Public	22.281	0.60
Academic self-perception	Private	35.767	0.50
	Public	33.107	0.50
Goals evaluation	Private	31.608	0.50
	Public	29.512	0.50

Table 4: Results of multivariate analysis of variance regarding “school climate” based on “school type”

	Variable	ss	df	MS	F	Sig
School type	Teacher-student relations	870.204	1	870.204	38.717	0.001
	Student-student relations	24.067	1	24.067	2.712	0.001
	Fairness in rules	75.938	1	75.938	12,938	0.001
	Safety at school	101.400	1	101.400	22.655	0.001
	Loving school	155.204	1	155.204	19.814	0.001
Error	Teacher-student relations	5349.292	238	22.476	-	-
	Student-student relations	2111.867	238	8.873	-	-
	Fairness in rules	1396.858	238	5.869	-	-
	Safety at school	1065.250	238	4.476	-	-
	Loving school	1864.292	238	7.833	-	-

Table 5: Mean scores of “school climate” in public and private schools

Variable	School type	Mean	Standard error
Teacher-student relations	Private	25.158	0.40
	Public	21.350	0.40
Student-student relations	Private	11.133	0.30
	Public	10.500	0.30
Fairness in rules	Private	11.658	0.20
	Public	10.533	0.20
Safety at school	Private	9.726	0.20
	Public	8.425	1.20
Loving school	Private	11.550	0.30
	Public	9.942	0.30

variables in the two school types was statistically identical ($F(28, 197380.181) = 0.774, P = 0.796$). Based on the results of the Wilks Lambda test, about 1% of the variance in the linear combination of “social skills” variables could be explained by “school type” ($F(7, 232) = 2.511, P = 0.017, \eta^2 = 0.07$). The analysis of variance of each variable revealed a difference only in “communication” and “cooperation” while there was no difference between the two types of schools regarding other variables. Therefore, about 2.2% of the variance in “communication” and 2.4% of the variance in “cooperation” resulted from school type (Table 6).

The highest mean belonged to the “accountability” variable in private schools and the lowest pertained to the self-control variable in public schools. In conclusion, the mean of private schools was slightly higher than that of public schools (Table 7).

5. Discussion

The results showed a positive relationship between “school climate”, “attitude to school”, and “social skills” of high school female students in Qazvin, Iran. The collaboration variable had a significant relationship with “attitude to teacher and class” and “the motivation/ self-regulation”. Both “assertiveness” and “accountability” variables had a significantly positive relationship with the “motivation / self-regulation” variable. In other words, the two variables accounted for about 31% of the variance in the “cooperation” variable; also, based on standard coefficients, both had a similar share in this regard, although the “motivation / self-regulation” had a slightly stronger relationship.

The highest impact of the independent variables of “school climate” and “attitude to school” was on the variables of “cooperation” and “accountability” and the

Table 6: Results of multivariate analysis of variance regarding “social skills” based on “school type”

Source of variations	Variable	ss	df	MS	F	Sig
School type	Communication	44.204	1	44.204	5.376	0.021
	Cooperation	66.150	1	66.150	5.961	0.015
	Assertiveness	14.017	1	14.017	1.067	0.303
	Accountability	3.267	1	3.267	0.289	0.591
	Empathy	6.667	1	6.667	0.643	0.423
	Participation	0.038	1	0.038	0.002	0.961
	Self-control	18.704	1	18.704	1.453	0.229
Error	Communication	1956.958	238	8.223	--	-
	Cooperation	2641.183	238	11.097	-	-
	Assertiveness	3125.567	238	13.133	-	-
	Accountability	2686.839	238	11.290	-	-
	Empathy	2465.983	238	10.361	-	-
	Participation	3796.258	238	15.951	-	-
	Self-control	3063.292	238	12.871	-	-

Table 7: Means of “social skills” in private and public schools

Variable	School type	Mean	Standard Error
Communication	Private	20.34	0.30
	Public	19.48	0.30
Cooperation	Private	21.85	0.30
	Public	20.80	0.30
Assertiveness	Private	19.46	0.30
	Public	19.95	0.30
Accountability	Private	22.24	0.30
	Public	22.00	0.30
Empathy	Private	18.84	0.30
	Public	18.50	0.30
Participation	Private	19.73	0.40
	Public	19.70	0.40
Self-control	Private	16.78	0.30
	Public	16.22	0.30

lowest impact was on the variable of “empathy”. This means that the more positive the “attitude to school” and “school climate”, the greater the “cooperation” and the “accountability”. This finding is consistent with the philosophical theory of constructivism and Bandura’s theory of social development, which holds that individuals learn through experiences and communication and interaction with the environment and others. Accordingly, the quality of interactions in school can modify the experiences of the students and develop their social skills.

Among the independent variables, the “motivation / self-regulation” had the most effect on the “social skill” variable. This means that a student who is motivated enough to learn and, with respect to his or her regulated behaviors, strives to achieve learning goals has higher social skills. This finding is in line with the study of In H and colleagues (16), which showed a significantly positive relationship between the components of school climate and students’ social skills. The only difference is that in the current study, “student-student relations” had the highest impact on social skills while in the study of In H and colleagues (16), teacher-student relations had the most effect on the development of social skills.

In their research, Myles and Simpson (18) pointed out the positive relationship of school climate and the development of students’ social skills, which is in line with the results of the present study. Feldman and co-workers (19) also showed that students’ beliefs about social skills had a significantly positive relationship with their attitudes towards school and a negative relationship with aggression. The present study further underscored the significantly positive relationship between attitude to school and students’ social skills. Martinez (20) concluded that teachers’ behavior affected students’ social and emotional learning, which is in accordance with our findings, emphasizing the teacher-student relations as an influencing variable on the development of social skills. Väyrynen and colleagues (21) also reported that Finnish and Russian teachers supported the development of social skills; however, their educational choices were influenced by their personal style. The results of the present study showed that the behavior of teachers, as class leaders, had a significantly positive impact on students’ social skills. In this regard, no discordant studies were observed.

The other finding indicated a significant difference between “attitudes toward school”, “school climate”, and the development of “social skills” in the students of

public and private schools. Daraee and colleagues (22) showed that the social skills of the gifted students of private and public schools were significantly different from each other. However, there was no significant difference between the students of public and private schools regarding the subscales of appropriate social skills, antisocial behaviors, aggression, impulsive behavior, and high self-esteem and self-confidence. Nonetheless, there was a significant difference between these students concerning the relationship with peers, a finding in agreement with the results of the present study. Only regarding “student-student relations” was there no significant difference between public and private schools. Esmailpur and Maleki (23) concluded that private school students were superior to public school students concerning irregular participation in social activities and gifted school students were superior to public, and private school students in terms of obedience. There was no difference between public and private school students regarding the other six components.

The other finding showed that the type of school not only affected the “motivation/self-regulation” variable, but also affected the school attitude. This means that the attitude towards school was different between public and private schools, with the mean of private schools being higher.

Finally, in this study, we found that there was no difference between public and private schools regarding students’ social skills, and the type of school was affected only by the two variables of communication and cooperation. The results of Esmailpur and Maleki (23) are consistent with the present study while Daraee and colleagues (22) reported certain differences between public and private schools regarding the development of social skills in some variables, so that, in this respect, it is consistent with the results of the present study.

6. Conclusion

Analysis of the results of the fourth hypothesis concerning each variable of school climate showed that except for the student-student relations, there was a significant difference between the two types of school regarding all variables. Therefore, the results of the fourth hypothesis showed that school climate differed in public and private schools although the mean of private schools was higher than that of public schools. Overall, there was no difference between public and private schools regarding students’ social skills, and the type of school was affected only by the two variables of

communication and cooperation.

In general, according to the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made:

- Given the significant relationship of school climate and attitude to school with students' social skills, it is necessary to design and plan a management system to promote social climate based on favorable human relationships.

- Considering the impact of positive attitudes towards teacher and class as well as the strong influence of motivation and self-regulation on promoting the collaboration aspect of students' social skills, it is proposed that in their relationships with students, teachers have a positive attitude and intimacy and increase students' motivation to participate in class learning and school activities.

- Based on the superiority of private schools' self-regulation, student-teacher relations, and accountability variables over public schools, more attention should be paid to these factors in improving the management and administration of public schools.

- Regarding the unsatisfactory status of attitude to school, safety at school, and self-control in public schools, it is recommended that close attention be paid to these components in public school management and administration.

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