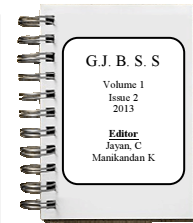




# Guru Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Volume 1 Issue 2 (April – June, 2013)

ISSN: 2320-9038 www.gjbss.org



## School Engagement of Secondary School Students in Kerala

Vijayakumari, K\* & Manikandan, K\*\*

\*Associate Professor, Farook Training College, Calicut, Kerala

\*\*Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Calicut, Kerala

### Abstract

Received: 30 April 2013  
Revised: 15 May 2013  
Accepted: 26 May 2013

#### Keywords:

School Engagement, Sex,  
Type of management.

School engagement is the students' relationships with teachers, peers, rules, and their involvement in extra-curricular activities and curriculum and instruction. Influence of School engagement can be found in participation in school activities, reactions to people and the environment, and the desire to complete tasks and acquire skills. The present study focuses on finding out the main and interaction effects of sex and type of management on different dimensions of school engagement. The study was conducted on 523 secondary school students from Government, Aided, Unaided and Tribal schools of Kerala and data was collected using a Five point Likert type scale on School Engagement. Results of Two Way ANOVA revealed that main and interaction effects of sex and type of management on School Engagement are significant.

© 2013 Guru Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences

The most important social investment of any nation is that in the field of education as it determines the quality of the human resources the nation have. Education is not the process of filling the minds of children with information, but it is the process of character making, life making and man making. Recognising the relevance of public education, Government of India had successfully implemented Universalisation of Elementary Education and Right to Education Act. The next step in this direction is universalisation of secondary education and efforts are being made in this aspect.

School is the place where special, planned, organized environment is provided with specific learning activities and social life. A sense of belongingness and participation is an essential school outcome to be achieved by the learners. School plays a central role in the daily life of many children and these children view schooling as a powerful tool for their well being in a long run. But some students feel school life as meaningless and they believe that school success has nothing to do with their future life. This may lead to gradual withdrawal from school activities; development of disruptive behaviours and negative attitude towards teachers and other students. Meeting the needs of such children who have become disaffected from school is one of the major challenges faced by today's teachers and school administrators.

The disposition of an individual to learn, work with others and function in a social institution is known as engagement. It is expressed in student's feelings that they belong at school and make them participate in school activities. School engagement can be considered as a multi factor entity. The three dimensions of school engagement are Behavioral, Cognitive and Emotional. Behavioral engagement means participation or involvement in academic, social and/or extracurricular activities. It has been defined in several ways. Some experts focus on positive conduct, such as following the rules, adhering to classroom norms, and the absence of disruptive behaviors such as skipping school or getting in trouble (Finn, Pannozzo & Voelkl, 1995; Finn & Rock, 1997). Some other researchers defines behavioral engagement as participation in classroom learning and academic tasks, and include behaviors such as persistence, effort, attention, and asking questions (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).



Cognitive engagement is a psychological investment in learning, a desire to go beyond the requirements of school, and a preference for challenge (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko & Fernandez, 1989) and also viewed as in terms of being strategic or self-regulating (Corno & Mandinach, 1983). Cognitive engagement includes being thoughtful, willing to exert the necessary effort for comprehension of complex ideas and mastery of difficult skills (Corno & Mandinach, 1983).

Emotional engagement includes students' positive and negative affective reactions in the classroom (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) and students' emotional reactions to the school and the teacher (Lee & Smith, 1995; Stipek, 2002). Other scholars conceptualize emotional engagement as identification with the school, which includes belonging, or a feeling of being important to the school, and valuing, or an appreciation of success in school-related outcomes (Voelkl, 1997).

School engagement can be considered as students' relationships with teachers, peers, rules, and their involvement in extra-curricular activities and curriculum and instruction (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). Influence of School engagement can be found in participation in school activities, reactions to people and the environment, and the desire to complete tasks and acquire skills (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

Finn (1989) indicated that understanding patterns of school engagement will allow for understanding the gaps in academic achievement. In a study conducted by Janosz, Le-Blanc, Boulerice and Tremblay (2000), students who expressed reductions in family, peer, and individual relationships were less engaged. Students who were less engaged were also found to be more likely to drop out of school compared to students who were more engaged (Janosz, Archambault, Morizot, & Pagani, 2008). When students are less engaged in their school, they are also less likely to demonstrate marked academic improvement (Finn, 1989; Finn & Rock, 1997).

A number of studies show positive relationships between the three types of engagement and dropping out. Children's behavioral engagement and academic adjustment in the first grade were related to the decision to dropout of high school (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997). Other studies illustrate the long-term consequences of negative school-related experiences and early school failure. Dropouts are more likely than other students to have poor attendance, disruptive behaviors, and to exhibit early school failure (Barrington & Hendricks, 1989; Cairns, Cairns & Neckerman, 1989; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Many studies suggest that alienation, a feeling of estrangement or social isolation, contributes to the dropout problem (Elliot & Voss, 1974; Newmann, 1981).

### **Objectives**

1. To find out the extent of school engagement among Secondary school students in Kerala.
2. To find out the main and interaction effects of Sex and Type of Management on School engagement.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Sex of students significantly influences school engagement.
2. Type of School Management significantly influences school engagement
3. Interaction effect of Sex of the student and Type of School Management on school engagement is significant.



## Method

### Participants

Participants of the study consist of 523 secondary school students belonging to different schools in Kerala. Among them 262 (50.10%) are boys and 261 (49.90%) are girls. There are 127 (48.47%) rural boys and 135 (51.53%) urban boys. Among girls 130 (49.81%) belong to rural area and 131 (50.19%) from urban area. Among the total participants 178 (34.03%) belong to Government schools, 125 (23.90%) to aided schools, 81 students are (15.49%) from unaided schools, 69 (13.19%) from tribal schools and 70 (13.38%) from schools following CBSE syllabus.

### Instruments

1. School Engagement Scale: This scale was developed by Sini and Vijayakumari (2012) on the basis of theoretical frame work described by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) to measure School engagement of students. It is a five point Likert type scale which measures the three components namely behavioral engagement, Emotional engagement and Cognitive engagement. It consists of 45 items (15 items for each component). Reliability of the scale was calculated separately for each dimension and found to be acceptable. The reliability coefficient Alpha for Behavioral engagement is .78, Emotional engagement is .72, and for Cognitive engagement is .76 respectively. Since the scale was developed on the basis of sound theoretical frame work and incorporating suggestions from experts in the field, content validity for the scale is established.
2. Personal Information Schedule: Personal data like sex, and type of management were collected using a personal information schedule.

### Results and Discussion

Since this is a new concept in Indian context and according to theoreticians the variables are related to each other, the investigator first calculated the inter correlation of the variables behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement and the results indicate that these three variables are significantly related to each other. The calculated correlation between behavioral and emotional engagement is .75 ( $p < .01$ ), behavioral and cognitive engagement is .57 ( $p < .01$ ) and between emotional and cognitive engagement is .54 ( $p < .01$ ) respectively. This finding further authenticates the soundness of the theory of school engagement and its components.

Mean score of each component of school engagement was calculated together with standard deviation. One sample 't'-test was employed in the school engagement variables and the results are presented in table 1. Here the test value was taken as 45 since it is the middle value of school engagement scale.

Table 1

*Mean, SD, and 't' values of Behavioral, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
Behavioral engagement	523	59.80	8.62	39.25**
Emotional engagement	523	59.71	9.03	37.23**
Cognitive engagement	523	60.91	7.37	49.35**

\*\* $p < .01$

The results of one sample 't' test revealed that the three components of school engagement significantly differ within the group from the scale value and mean scores of all dimensions are higher than the scale value among the subjects. From the table it can be seen that among the three dimensions, cognitive engagement has a higher mean score than the other two dimensions. This indicates that students are more involved in their studies, actively participating in school related activities - academic and non academic. They possess positive



conduct, absence of disruptive behaviors, good relationship with teachers, peers and academics.

Two-way (2 x 5) ANOVA was computed on each of the variables of school engagement and the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2

*F values of Behavioral, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement by Sex and Management (2 x 5)*

Variables	'F' Values (Main and Interaction Effect)		
	Sex	Management	Interaction
Behavioral engagement	36.66**	4.67**	3.58**
Emotional engagement	18.62**	8.30**	2.55**
Cognitive engagement	13.37**	2.39*	2.98*

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Two-way Analysis of variance revealed that there is significant sex difference in behavioral engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. Regarding the type of management, the results showed that there exists significant difference in the three components of school engagement. These results indicate that what type of institution in which they study influences the school engagement of secondary school students. From the table it can also be seen that the variables sex and type of management significantly interact together influencing the behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement of students. To get a clear picture, one-way ANOVA followed by multiple comparison of means were carried out as follow up analysis and the results are presented in tables 4, and 5 together with mean and standard deviation of the variables for boys and girls in table 3.

Table 3

*Mean, and SD of behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement by Sex*

Variables	Sex	N	Mean	SD
Behavioral engagement	Boys	262	57.63	8.66
	Girls	261	61.97	8.04
Emotional engagement	Boys	262	58.00	9.42
	Girls	261	61.42	8.30
Cognitive engagement	Boys	262	59.67	6.89
	Girls	261	62.15	7.65

The mean scores of the variables for girls are greater than that for boys indicating that girls have better school engagement than boys. Standard deviation in the case of is comparatively less than that of boys except for cognitive engagement. That is the scores on behavioral and emotional engagement are more deviated from the mean score for boys than that of girls. But in the case of cognitive engagement, though the mean score is higher for girls, the individual scores are more deviating from the mean compared to boys.

Table 4

Summary of one-way ANOVA of School Engagement by Type of School

Variables	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Behavioral engagement	Between Groups	1099.466	4	274.866	3.77**
	Within Groups	37714.454	518	72.808	
	Total	38813.920	522		
Emotional engagement	Between Groups	2050.563	4	512.641	6.55**
	Within Groups	40557.678	518	78.297	
	Total	42608.241	522		
Cognitive engagement	Between Groups	554.334	4	138.583	2.58*
	Within Groups	27818.435	517	53.807	
	Total	28372.768	521		

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

One-way ANOVA of components of school engagement by type of school (Government, Aided, Unaided, Tribal, and CBSE) revealed that there exists a significant difference ( $F_{(4, 518)}=3.77$ ,  $p < .01$ ) among the five types of school management on the variable behavioral engagement. This means that students under different schools behave in different ways. Similarly the variable emotional and cognitive engagements of students are also found to be differ significantly among schools of different management.

Table 5

Comparison of means scores (Scheffe's F) of School Engagement by Type of School Management

Type of School Management	Behavioral engagement	Emotional engagement	Cognitive engagement
Type 1 & Type 2	0.12	0.19	3.54
Type 1 & Type 3	8.13	9.22	0.02
Type 1 & Type 4	2.31	7.69	2.11
Type 1 & Type 5	4.96	1.50	1.80
Type 2 & Type 3	8.74	10.35	2.79
Type 2 & Type 4	1.37	5.18	8.04
Type 2 & Type 5	5.62	2.18	0.04
Type 3 & Type 4	13.31*	23.86**	1.29
Type 3 & Type 5	0.17	2.14	1.63
Type 4 & Type 5	9.75	19.96	5.43

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

(Note: Type 1=Government, Type 2=Aided, Type 3=Unaided, Type 4=Tribal, Type 5= CBSE)

The mean scores of the five types of schools on behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement were compared using Scheffe's procedure and found that the mean scores of students of unaided and tribal school on behavioral engagement differ significantly ( $F=13.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Likewise emotional engagement was also found to be differ significantly ( $F=23.86$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between these groups.





## Conclusion

The study shows that girls are having better school engagement than boys and tribal school students are less engaged in school compared to unaided schools. These results can be read together with the results of Board Examinations in which girl students perform better than boys. Results of previous studies in the area established the relationship between school engagement and academic performance and hence more efforts must be made by the school authorities to engage boys in school related activities. The secondary school curriculum must be modified so that boys find it challenging and meaningful. This is also the case with tribal students. In order to bring the tribal students to the main stream, their curriculum should be made more acceptable and challenging to them.

## References

- Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Horsey, C. S. (1997). From first grade forward: Early foundations of high school dropout. *Sociology of Education*, 70, 87-107.
- Barrington, B. L., & Hendricks, B. (1989). Differentiating characteristics of high school graduates, dropouts, and nongraduates. *Journal of Educational Research*, 82, 309-319.
- Birch, S., & Ladd, G. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology*, 35, 61-79.
- Cairns, R. B., Cairns, B. D., & Neckerman, H. J. (1989). Early school dropout: Configurations and determinants. *Child Development*, 60, 1437-1452.
- Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (1991). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system processes. In M. Gunnar & L. A. Sroufe (Eds.), *Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology (Vol. 23)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Elliot, D. S., & Voss, H. L. (1974). *Delinquency and dropout*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. *Review of Educational Research*, 59(2), 117-142.
- Finn, J. D., & Rock, D. A. (1997). Academic success among students at risk for school failure. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(2), 221-234.
- Finn, J. D., Pannozzo, G. M., & Voelkl, K. E. (1995). Disruptive and inattentive-withdrawn behavior and achievement among fourth graders. *Elementary School Journal*, 95, 421-454.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59-109.
- Janosz, M., Archambault, I., Morizot, J., & Pagani, L. S. (2008). School engagement trajectories and their differential predictive relations to dropout. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(1), 21-40.
- Janosz, M., Le-Blanc, M., Boulerice, B., & Tremblay, R. E. (2000). Predicting types of school dropouts: A typological approach with two longitudinal samples. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 26, 733-759.
- Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B. (1995). Effects of high school restructuring and size on early gains in achievement and engagement. *Sociology of Education*, 68, 241-270.
- National Survey of Student Engagement. (2002, November). *From promise to progress: How colleges and universities are using student engagement results to improve collegiate quality*. NSSE. Indiana University: Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning.
- Newmann, F. (1981). Reducing student alienation in high schools: Implications of theory. *Harvard Educational Review*, 51, 546-564.
- Roderick, M., & Camburn, E. (1999). Risk and recovery from course failure in the early years of high school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36, 303-343.
- Skinner, E., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effect of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 571-581.



- Stipek, D. (2002). Good instruction is motivating. In A. Wigfield & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation*. Academic Press: San Diego.
- Voelkl, K. E. (1997). Identification with school. *American Journal of Education*, 105, 204-319.
- Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N. L., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support*. Philadelphia: Farmer Press
- Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2007). *Students are bored, many skip school, lack adult support: High school students from 110 schools in 26 states participate in IU study*. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, University of Indiana.