

School Learning Environment and the Home Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT

Learning is complex; it begins at birth and continues throughout life. Parents are the first teachers and role models for their children, and therefore have a strong influence on their learning. Yet, studies continue to show that many parents are not aware of the importance they play in their child's education and have a limited understanding of their role in their children's learning (DCSF, 2007).

Literature suggests that academic achievement is affected by the nature of activities in schools, particularly group norms and values and the relations among group members (Stockard and Mayberry 1992). Similarly, research on successful home schools has revealed that parents have constructed learning environments that promote the type of norms, values, and relationships research has demonstrated to positively affect academic achievement (Mayberry and Knowles 1989).

Feinstein and Symons (1999) found that parental interest in their child's education was the single greatest predictor of achievement at age 16. In a study (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weiss, 2006) for the Harvard Family Research Project, it was found that if families who were initially uninvolved in the school became more involved, their children's literacy improved.

There seems to be some kind of relation between the school and home learning environments that needs to be studied with respect to various factors involving them.

The term 'Learning environment' suggests place and space - a school, library, classroom. Learning environments are the structures, tools and communities that inspire and motivate students and educators. Learning must take place in contexts that promote interaction and a sense of community. In effective learning environments, high morale appears to boost the self-confidence of both teachers and learners and promote positive attitudes and expectations about teaching and learning. A conducive learning environment creates healthy learning spaces which will enable people to construct their identities as inter-dependent and inter-connected social beings.

The current paper seeks to explore the relationship between the school learning environment and home learning environment. Tools used will be (i) School learning environment schedule (SLES) and (ii) Home learning environment schedule (HLES). The reliability of the above tools are 0.65 and 0.63 respectively. The SLES consists of 130 items with 10 components, viz., goal orientation, study habits of students, social environment of the students, involvement of students in school activities, physical facilities in the school, teaching materials used by schools, teacher-students interaction,

method of teaching by schools and qualification of teacher. The HLES has 37 items categorised into three components viz., parental encouragement and care, facilities provided at home, parental involvement and support, parenting and co-curricular activities. The tools will be administered to the primary and the higher secondary students of the same school. Karl Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient analysis will be used to measure the relationship between school learning environment and home learning environment. The implications with recommendations for further research will be discussed towards the end.

Learning is complex; it begins at birth and continues throughout life. Parents are the first teachers and role models for their children, and therefore have a strong influence on their learning. Yet, studies continue to show that many parents are not aware of the importance they play in their child's education and have a limited understanding of their role in their children's learning (DCSF, 2007). Research suggests that parental involvement in their learning has a greater impact on children's learning and achievement.

Second to home, school is the most important experience in the process of development of children. The school system classroom is a vital part of the school atmosphere that constitutes the learning environment. School atmosphere includes favourable attitude towards school teacher, co-students, methods of teaching, facilities in the classroom, teacher-student interaction, teaching learning situation; congenial and favourable institutional learning climate is likely to create a positive attitude and facilitate learning.

Learning Environment

The term 'Learning environment' suggests place and space - a school, library, classroom, home, etc. Learning must take place in contexts that promote interaction and a sense of community. Creating healthy learning spaces will enable people to construct their identities as inter-dependent and inter-connected social beings.

Educators in any context need to be aware of the "ideal" with regard to the type of environment that enhances good learning and the achievement of good learning outcomes with minimum stress and maximum effectiveness.

School learning environment (SLE)

Dave (1963) defined educational environment as "the conditions, process and psychological climate which affect the educational achievement of the child". The classroom environment consists of teacher support, teaching material, task orientation, clique, study habits, involvement, empathy, and disengagement etc.

Home learning environment (HLE)

Home environment has been conceptualized as the quality of human interactions, trust and confidence, sharing of ideas, parents support, parenting, parental encouragement, care, affection and support of siblings.

Both teachers and parents have greater responsibility to foster mental health status of the students. Both the environments share influential place in child's life. It is therefore necessary to study the academic learning environment of children in these two different contexts of home and school.

Review of previous studies

Johnson and Mayberry (1992) suggest that academic achievement is affected by the nature of activities in schools, particularly group norms and values and the relations among group members.

Van Voorhis (2003), reported that students achieved at higher levels at school when parents offered assistance with their school homework.

Dearing, Kreider, et. al.(2006) found that if families who were initially uninvolved in the school became more involved, their children's literacy improved.

Policymakers and practitioners agree that teaching and learning, and therefore the organisation of schooling, needs to be redesigned in order to address the needs of learners and societies for the 21st century (Darling-Hammond 2008).

Jagpreet Kaur, J. S. Rana and RupinderKaur (2009) studied home environment and academic achievement as correlates of self-concept among adolescents and stressed on the duty of the teachers to assist children by applying various intervention strategies to foster positive self-concepts for successful learning.

RS Ekanem, et. al. (2011) in a study investigating the influence of learning environment on academic performance of primary school children recommended that parents should put in their best to provide a conducive home environment for their children to study. Also, that government should provide schools with good and adequate infrastructural facilities as well as learning materials to make teaching and learning easy. In addition, teachers should provide conducive classroom environment to promote free interaction between teachers and the pupils.

Need and significance of the study

The previous studies exhibit outcomes of SLE or HLE at individual levels. The researcher was keen to know if there existed a signification relation between SLE and HLE and whether establishing closer ties between the school community and the home community may help in improving student outcomes on a larger scale. It may also provide educators and policy makers new ways to engage in fruitful partnerships with teachers, administrators and parents. Hence the researcher sought to explore the relationship between the school learning environment and home learning environment and study the students' perception of the individual components of both the environments.

Sample and Tools

The sample constituted of 86 students from 7th and 9th class studying in the same school.

The tools for the study are -

- (a) School learning environment schedule
- (b) Home learning environment schedule

Objectives of the study

- To study the differences in the perceptions of various components of SLE and HLE among school students
- To measure the relationship between SLE and HLE.

Statistical analysis

1. To know the differences in the perceptions of various components of SLE and HLE among school students, percent mean scores were calculated
2. Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was used to measure the relationship between SLE and HLE.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1a. Comparison of percent mean scores of components of SLE of boys and girls

Sr. No.	Components	Girls			Boys		
		Mean	SD	Percent Mean	Mean	SD	Percent Mean
1	Goal orientation	17.308	1.615	73.08	17.176	1.761	71.76
2	Study habits	26.712	2.338	57.13	26.412	2.271	55.36
3	Co-operation of the students	31.846	1.775	87.33	31.382	2.27	84.6
4	Involvement of students	24.808	2.627	77.2	24.471	1.926	74.79
5	Physical facilities in the school	28.288	1.993	66.4	27.324	2.17	60.73
6	Teacher-student interaction	44.923	3.423	79.69	43.529	4.944	74.12
7	Equality	20.365	2.293	85.14	20.029	3.08	82.08
8	Method of teaching	11.212	1.126	60.17	11.118	0.977	58.83
9	Qualification of the teacher	7.385	0.745	84.63	7.088	0.933	77.2
10	Teaching material	19.327	2.046	75.7	19.529	1.779	77.54

Discussion

From the above table it is observed that except the component of teaching material, girls' perception of all other components was higher than that of boys. Teacher-student interaction was found to be higher among girls. Girls perceived their teachers to be highly qualified and showed more liking for their teachers than boys.

Implications

The differences in the various components between gender highlights the fact that the varied expectations of boys and girls from the same might have led to different perceptions. Also the kind of home environment may result in the difference in perception among boys and girls. There cannot be a single way or strategy to cater to all students' needs or expectations of a supportive learning environment. Hence teachers need to modify their ways and strategies in classrooms in order to cater to the individual needs of students so as to provide a conducive learning environment.

Fig 1 a. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of SLE of boys and girls

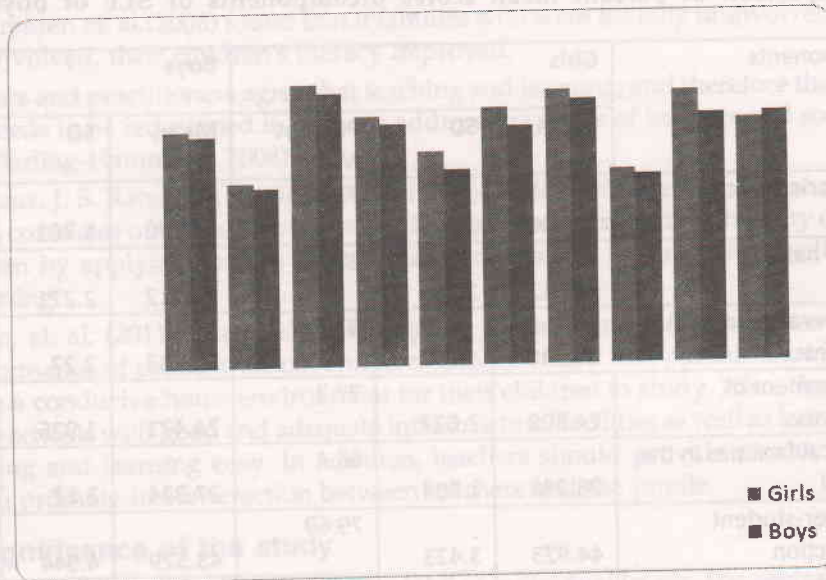


Table 1b. Comparison of percent mean scores of components of HLE of boys and girls

Sr. No.	Components	Girls			Boys		
		Mean	SD	Percent Mean	Mean	SD	Percent Mean
1	Parental encouragement and care	13.327	1.2	66.59	13.147	1.282	64.34
2	Facilities in home	10.615	0.993	76.92	10.529	1.022	75.48
3	Parental guidance	12.365	1.495	76.64	12.088	1.564	72.69
4	Parenting	21.019	2.253	50.14	21.029	1.817	50.21
5	Co-curricular activities	7.481	0.779	87.03	7.441	1.746	86.02

Discussion

From the above table it is observed that girls' perception of parental guidance was quite higher than that of boys.

Implications

It is obvious that HLE varies across different homes. Yet on an overall basis it is found that girls' perception of all the components of home environment is higher than boys'. Possibly boys' expectations of a better environment is something more than what is provided. Especially

Component of parental guidance was perceived lower by boys. Maybe the lower scores of the perception of school learning environment would have affected the scores of home learning environment. A lower score on study habits and teacher-student interaction may have led to lesser interaction with parents about school. This might have resulted in lower parental guidance among boys. Both parents and teachers have to come together and work co-operatively to understand the needs and expectations of students and tailor their ways of providing a healthy learning space for them.

Fig 1 b. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of HLE of boys and girls

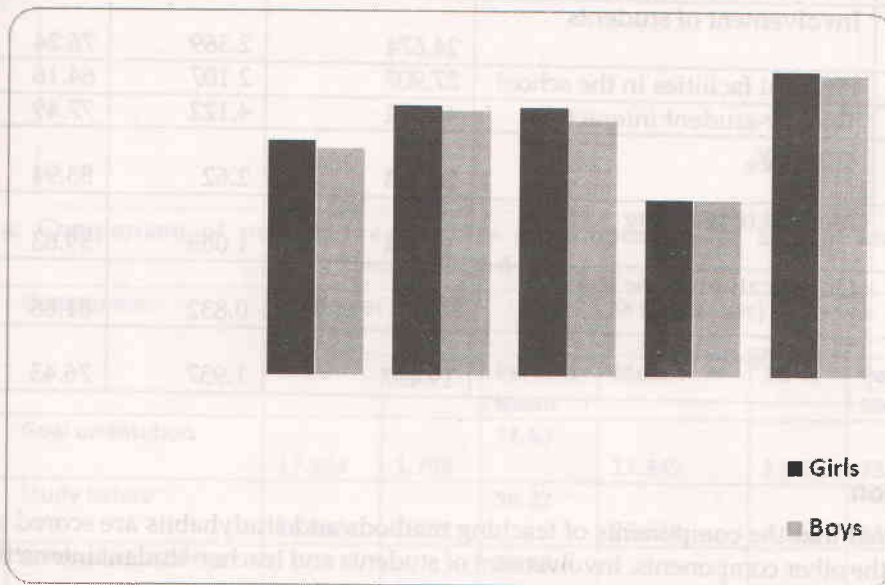


Table 1c. Percent mean scores of components of total SLE

Component	Girls (%)	Boys (%)
Parental Guidance	75.00	65.00
Study Habits	70.00	65.00
Teacher-Student Interaction	70.00	65.00
Parental Involvement	65.00	65.00
Home Learning Environment	85.00	80.00
Total SLE	71.00	68.00

Conclusion
 The study revealed that the majority of the students were not co-operating with their teachers and did not follow study habits. This might have been due to the shared school/home/parents. Higher secondary schools had higher goal orientation, much more interaction with teachers, more co-operation of better

Sr. No.	Components	MEAN	SD	PERCENT MEAN
1	Goal orientation	17.256	1.668	72.56
2	Study habits	26.593	2.303	56.43
3	Co-operation of the students	31.663	1.986	86.25
4	Involvement of students	24.674	2.369	76.24
5	Physical facilities in the school	27.907	2.107	64.16
6	Teacher-student interaction	44.372	4.122	77.49
7	Equality	20.233	2.62	83.94
8	Method of teaching	11.174	1.065	59.63
9	Qualification of the teacher	7.267	0.832	81.68
10	Teaching material	19.407	1.937	76.43

Discussion

It is observed that the components of teaching methods and study habits are scored at a moderate level than the other components. Involvement of students and teacher-student interaction are scored at a substantial level.

Implications

The school needs to give better opportunities for teachers to interact more with the students and enable students to participate and get more involved with the learning environment. This can be made possible by using better interactive teaching methods like constructivist approach, project method, cooperative learning techniques, role-play, the use of different models of teaching, etc. This in turn will be able to foster healthy study habits in students, teach them proper time management and motivate them to be independent learners in the long run. Thus students will be able to set high realistic goals for themselves.

Fig. 1c. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of total SLE

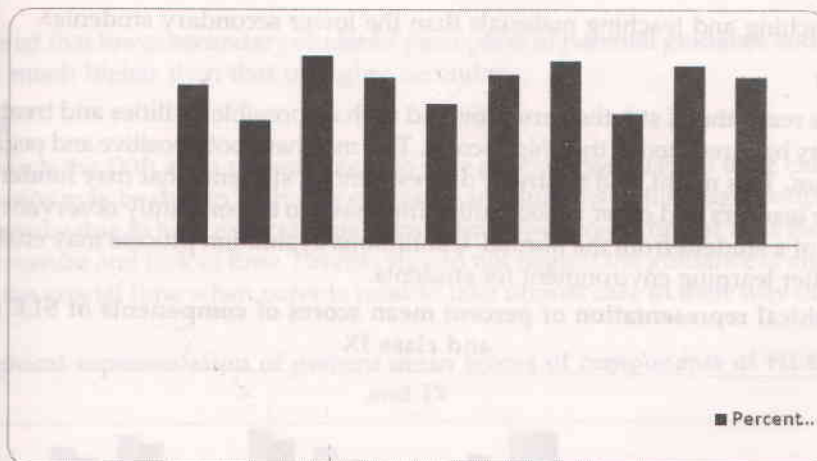


Table 2 a. Comparison of percent mean scores of components of SLE of students of class VII and IX

Sr. No.	Components	VII (lower sec)			IX (higher sec)		
		Mean	SD	Percent Mean	Mean	SD	Percent Mean
1	Goal orientation	17.163	1.799	71.63	17.349	1.541	73.49
2	Study habits	26.558	2.462	56.22	26.628	2.161	56.64
3	Co-operation of the students	31.651	2.203	86.18	31.674	1.769	86.32
4	Involvement of students	24.814	2.228	77.24	24.535	2.52	75.25
5	Physical facilities in the school	27.419	2.25	61.29	28.395	1.841	67.03
6	Teacher-student interaction	43.814	5.086	75.26	44.93	2.806	79.72
7	Equality	20	2.059	81.82	20.465	3.089	86.05
8	Method of teaching	10.884	1.117	55.49	11.465	0.935	63.79
9	Qualification of the teacher	7.209	0.804	80.23	7.326	0.865	83.15
10	Teaching material	19.209	2.166	74.63	19.605	1.678	78.23

Discussion

It is observed that majority of the students seemed to be co-operative with their classmates and shared similar study habits. This may have been due to the shared school climate/culture. Higher secondary students had higher goal orientation, much more interaction with teachers, were exposed to better

methods of teaching and teaching materials than the lower secondary students.

Implications

When students reach the IX std. they are provided with all possible facilities and treated as special ones, which may have resulted in their high scores. This may have both positive and negative impacts on the outcomes. This might lead to stress/distress among students that may hinder the positive outcomes. The teachers and other school authorities have to be constantly observant to check out any deviation of a student from the normal. Continuous evaluation process may enable schools to strive for a better learning environment for students.

Fig 2 a. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of SLE of class VII and class IX

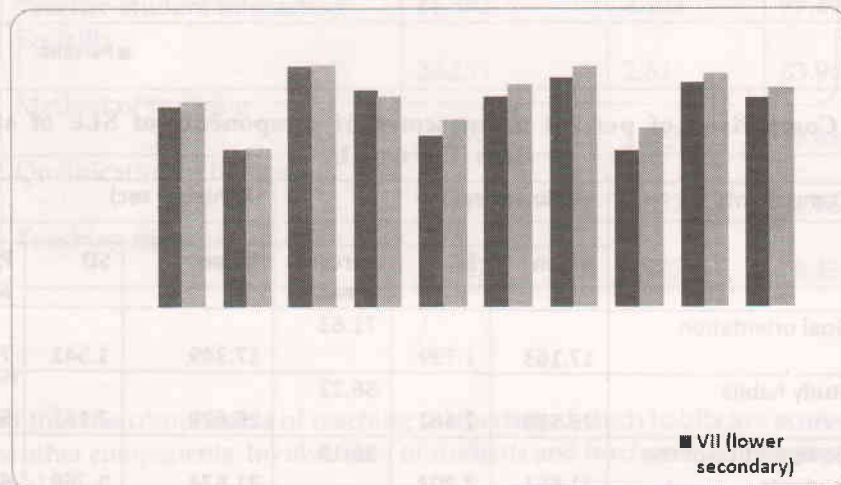


Table 2 b. Comparison of percent mean scores of components of HLE of students of class VII and IX

Sr. No.	Components	Lower secondary VII			Higher secondary IX		
		Mean	SD	Percent Mean	Mean	SD	Percent Mean
1	Parental encouragement and care	13.233	1.269	65.41	13.27	1.202	65.99
2	Facilities in home	10.349	0.948	72.48	10.81	1.006	80.23
3	Parental guidance	12.674	1.169	81.06	11.83	1.717	69.1
4	Parenting	21.093	2.457	50.66	20.95	1.647	49.66
5	Co-curricular activities	7.581	0.731	89.53	7.349	0.783	83.73

Discussion

It is observed that lower secondary students' perception of parental guidance and co-curricular activities was much higher than that of higher secondary.

Implications

As students reach the IXth class parents seem to give special treatment to their children. Lower parental guidance may be due to high rate of classes and tuitions at his stage, better facilities for children may be due to high expectations from them, lower co-curricular activities may be due to increased pressure and lack of time. Parents should not neglect the guidance of children as they grow. This is the crucial time when parents need to take utmost care in their way of dealing with their kids.

Fig 2.3. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of HLE of class VII and IX

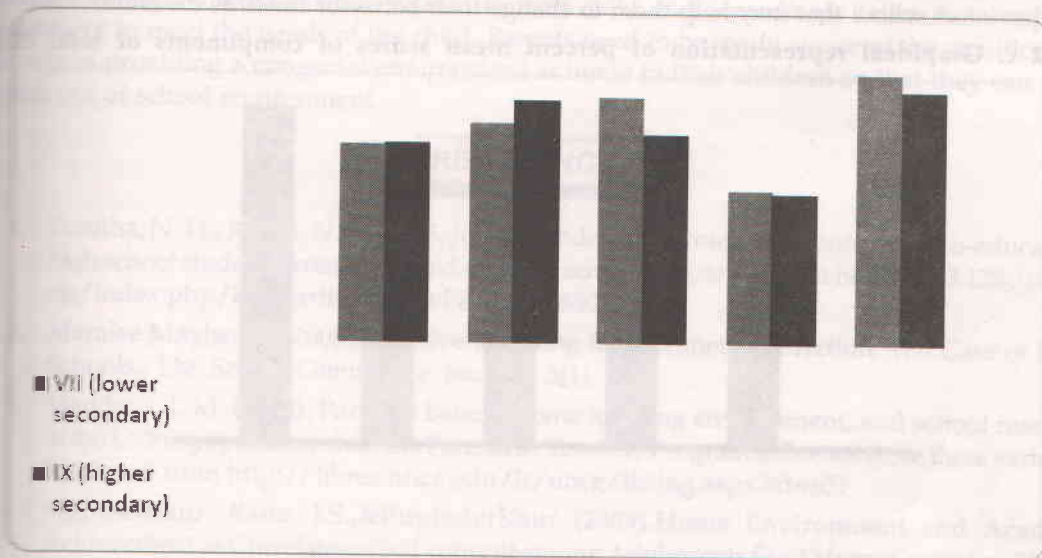


Table 2c. Percent mean scores of components of total HLE

Sr. No.	Components	MEAN	SD	PERCENT MEAN
1	Parental encouragement and care	13.256	1.229	65.7
2	Facilities in home	10.581	0.999	76.35
3	Parental guidance	12.256	1.52	75.09
4	Parenting	21.023	2.081	50.16
5	Co-curricular activities	7.465	0.762	86.63

Discussion

The above table indicates that the score on the component of parenting is moderate at only 50.16%. All other scores except co-curricular activities which is scored high with 86.63% are at a substantial level.

Implications

In addition to providing good facilities, encouraging co-curricular activities, guiding children in their academic work, parents need to be made aware that parenting style has a lasting impact on the child's development. There cannot be a one single way of dealing with all children in every situation. Parents need to amend their ways of dealing with kids as per situation demands. They need to have regular interaction with their children to know the happenings in their child's life. They also would be able to gauge the child's feelings, desires so that they don't lay over expectations from the child. They also need to have frequent meetings with their child's teachers to know his/her behavior at school that may help them to change their behavior towards the child.

Fig. 2 c. Graphical representation of percent mean scores of components of total HLE

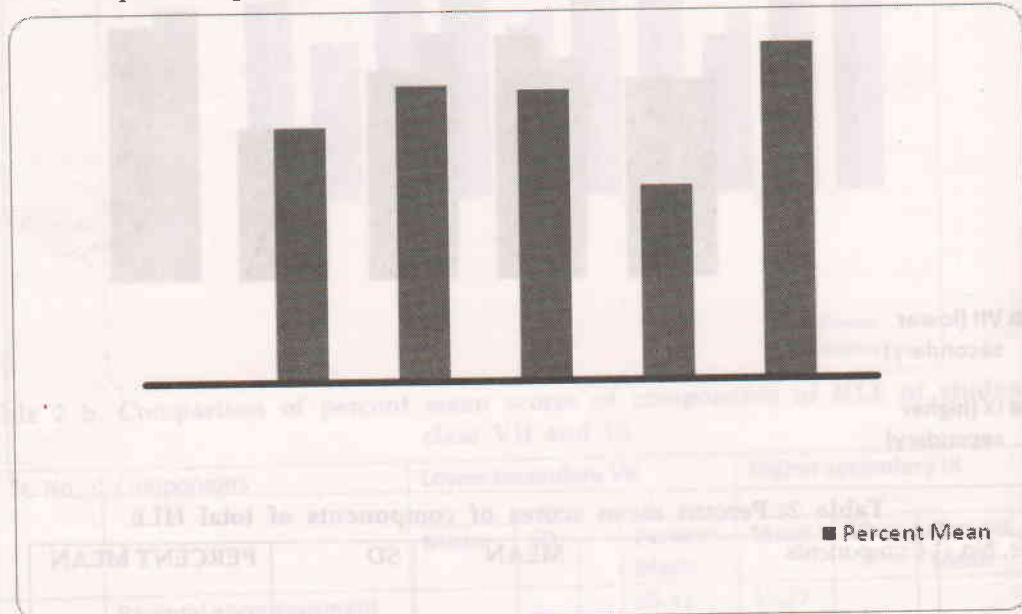


Table 3. Correlation co-efficient between SLE and HLE

		'r' between SLE and HLE
Total	N= 86	0.386
Gender	Boys N= 34	0.28
	Girls N= 52	0.537
Class	Higher sec (std IX) N= 43	0.35
	Lower sec (std VII) N= 43	0.461

Discussion

It was observed that there was statistically significant relationship between SLE and HLE. The correlation coefficients between SLE and HLE was statistically significant in case of girls whereas it was not for boys. **The correlation coefficients between SLE and HLE were found to be statistically significant in both classes, wherein it was high for the lower class.**

Implications

Looking at the significant correlation between SLE and HLE, one needs to focus on the fact that a good supportive SLE and HLE may probably be able to multiply the effects that would be achieved at individual levels. Efforts can be taken collaboratively by teachers, administrators, parents to provide a conducive and productive learning environment to children.

In this direction, steps can be taken by parents and school authorities to come together, hold meetings, discuss matters related to their child and accordingly tailor their respective environment to meet the needs of the child. Parents need to be made aware of the significance of their role in providing a congenial environment at home to their children so that they can derive the best out of school environment.

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