

SCHOOL-BASED PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Military-connected children often face unique psychological challenges stemming from frequent relocations, school transitions, and parental deployments. These stressors can significantly impact their socioemotional development. This study investigates the influence of school-based protective factors—specifically school climate, peer support, and resilience—on the emotional well-being of military children aged 10 to 16 years. Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, data were collected from 150 students enrolled in both military-base and civilian schools. Standardized tools, including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), School Climate Scale (SCS), Peer Support Scale, and the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-12), were used for assessment. Results revealed significant negative correlations between emotional difficulties and positive school climate, peer support, and resilience. Regression analysis showed that these school-based factors collectively predicted 48% of the variance in socioemotional outcomes, with resilience emerging as the strongest predictor. The findings highlight the critical role of educational environments in supporting the psychological well-being of military children and emphasize the need for targeted school-based interventions to foster resilience and emotional health.

Keyword : School Climate Scale, peer support, emotional health

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, an evaluated 3,387,858 officers will be in dynamic obligation. Among them, 2,509,590 are serving within the military and 878,268 are civilians. Beside their spouses, children, or other grown-up dependents, half of the active-duty warriors serving within the Office of Defense are portion of family groupings. Military families regularly confront interesting challenges as a result of the a few movements, amplified periods of parental sending, and other stresses related with military life. Sending a parent or family part, especially to a locale where strife is still continuous, may cause huge push for children. The affect of arrangement on children varies according to their formative arrange and the term of time went through separated. Children whose guardians are serving within the military regularly encounter expanded uneasiness and other behavioral wellbeing issues, as appeared in a few thinks about. Other ponders have appeared an expanded probability of child manhandle and disregard. A few thinks about have appeared that children of military staff with post-traumatic push clutter (PTSD) may have emotional and mental challenges that proceed into adulthood. Flexibility- and stress-reduction medications centered on families have appeared promising comes about. Fourth, compared to the full populace, veterans have a more prominent frequency of liquor utilize clutter (AUD). A add up to of 40.8% of 4,069 veterans had AUD at a few point in their lives, as detailed in a ponder conducted in 2021. Autonomously related with a more noteworthy lifetime recurrence of AUD were being more youthful, male, white, single, and resigned,

concurring to the ponder. It is basic to screen veterans and those who have fair been released from the military for liquor utilize clutter (AUD), concurring to this consider. Liquor utilize clutter (AUD) is more common among veterans compared to the complete populace. A add up to of 40.8% of 4,069 veterans had AUD at a few point in their lives, as detailed in a think about conducted in 2021. 2. Autonomously connected with a more prominent lifetime recurrence of AUD were being more youthful, male, white, single, and resigned, concurring to the think about. It is basic to screen veterans and those who have fair been released from the military for liquor utilize clutter (AUD), concurring to this think about. It is similarly vital to connect children and other family individuals with assets and back. Furthermore, families who have children require additional care. Tensions in families are exacerbated by the well-documented passionate, mental, and social results of substance abuse by guardians. Military families were appeared to be more likely to take part in a sedate abuse avoidance program on the off chance that one or more of the taking after variables was display: parental push, brokenness, family struggle, or earlier deployments.

There is a few prove that children of benefit individuals pick up anything from being inundated in military life. Living in near vicinity to other families going through comparable battles might give entryways to back, fellowship, and shared encounters. In spite of more prominent mental horribleness due to parental sending, one think about found that school-aged children had less psychosocial indications at pattern compared to civilians. Military families have get to to a wide extend of government-sponsored programs, counting the Office of Defense employee-sponsored child care program, a worldwide wellbeing care conveyance framework, and an instruction framework that teaches 7,200 understudies in 7 states, 11 countries, and 2 regions. Still, half of all military families see civilian doctors, who may not understand all the choices or the ins and outs of military culture and life. Supporting military families through anticipation endeavors ought to incorporate preparing mental and physical wellbeing experts with the instruments they got to do their occupations well.

Review

(Edelbrock and Achenbach, 1981). Mental trouble, internalizing side effects, and externalizing indications were the operationalized mental wellbeing side effects in this inquire about, and the directing impact of child rearing behaviors and warmth was investigated as well. A individual with internalizing side effects may have psychosomatic inconvenience, intemperate withdrawal, uneasiness, pity, and formative issues that are not appropriate for their age. Excessively rash, criminal, or savage conduct are common appearances of externalizing indications, which are characterized as inappropriate, maladaptive activities pointed exterior of the person.

Concurring to Golan and Shai (2004). Wars, amplified periods of enmity, psychological warfare, and rocket attacks are as it were many signs of the long-running encounter between Israel and the Middle easterner governments and individuals within the locale. Harm, misfortune of life, wounds, and annihilation have all been results of these clashes. Battling between Israelis and Palestinians close Gaza has overwhelmed the conflict's most later stage. The ban on all borders has extremely crushed Gaza's framework, and the region has been the target of numerous military operations and ambushes. Fear mongering and overwhelming rocket and rocket bombardments have shaken Israel on a few events; these ambushes to begin with begun within the south and have since extended their border to target center and northern Israel as well. City and town tenants in these regions have fifteen seconds to one diminutive to look for asylum when the alarm sounds.

Zuckerberg and Kaplan in 2014. This inquire about overviewed families in southern Israel in no time after Operation Column of Defense finished in 2013. Beginning on November 14, 2012, Israel propelled attack

Column of Defense, an 8-day attack within the Gaza Strip. Earlier to the operation, there were numerous periods of complementary strikes between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and an evaluated 22,221 rockets and 196 mortars were propelled in 2012. There are a extend of negative mental impacts connected to developing up in situations of fear mongering, war, and equipped strife. These incorporate, but are not constrained to, indications of post-traumatic stretch clutter (PTSD) and other ailments, both self-evident and unpretentious (Betancourt and Khan, 2008; Slone and Shechner, 2009). Outrage, stun, fear, and anguish are a few of the short-term impacts, whereas forceful behavior and stun are a few of the long-term impacts (Slone et al., 2008; and Finzi-Dottan et al. (2006) all found PTS and full-blown PTSD, but the comes about for long-term impacts are conflicting, extending from expanded sign of externalizing clutters (Hair stylist, 2001; Muldoon, 2004) to sub-clinical side effects (Slone and Shoshani, 2008b) to uneasiness and sadness (Gupta and Zimmer, 2008).

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Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between school-based protective factors (school climate and peer support) and the socioemotional development of military children.
2. To determine the predictive role of resilience in moderating the impact of school environment and peer dynamics on emotional well-being.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between school-based protective factors (positive school climate and peer support) and emotional difficulties among military children.

H2: Resilience significantly moderates the relationship between school-based protective factors and the socioemotional development of military children, such that higher resilience reduces emotional difficulties even in less favorable school environments.

Research method

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine how school-based protective factors influence the socioemotional development of military-connected children. The target population consisted of children aged 10 to 16 years enrolled in both military-base schools and civilian/public schools, ensuring a diverse representation of school environments. A total of 150 participants were selected through stratified random sampling, ensuring balance across school types and accounting for age and gender distribution.

Data were collected using standardized psychological assessment tools. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to assess emotional and behavioral challenges, while the School Climate Scale (SCS) measured student perceptions of support, fairness, and safety within the school environment. The Peer Support Scale evaluated the level of emotional and instrumental support perceived from classmates, and the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-12) captured the participants' adaptive capacities and coping mechanisms.

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, and informed consent was secured from parents or guardians. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression to explore the relationships among variables and to determine the predictive strength of school-based factors on children's emotional well-being. This methodology provided a structured and evidence-based approach to identifying the key elements in educational settings that promote resilience and socioemotional health in military children.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	n	Percentage (%)
Age Group	10–12 years	58	38.7%
	13–14 years	49	32.7%
	15–16 years	43	28.6%
Gender	Male	79	52.7%
	Female	71	47.3%
School Type	Military-base school	81	54.0%
	Civilian/public school	69	46.0%
Number of School Transfers	0–2	47	31.3%
	3–5	69	46.0%
	6 or more	34	22.7%
Parent Deployment Status	Currently Deployed	42	28.0%
	Previously Deployed	73	48.7%
	Never Deployed	35	23.3%

The study sample consisted of 150 military-connected children aged between 10 and 16 years. The age distribution was fairly balanced, with 38.7% of participants aged 10–12 years, 32.7% aged 13–14 years, and 28.6% aged 15–16 years. Gender representation was nearly equal, with a slight majority of males (52.7%) compared to females (47.3%). Just over half of the respondents (54%) were enrolled in military-base schools, while 46% attended civilian or public schools. A notable proportion of participants (46%) had changed schools 3–5 times, indicating a high level of mobility. Furthermore, 76.7% of the children reported that one of their parents had been deployed at least once, with 28% currently experiencing parental deployment. These demographic factors underscore the frequent transitions and potential disruptions in the lives of military children, which are important considerations when assessing their socioemotional development.

2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Key Variables in Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Emotional Symptoms (SDQ)	3.8	1.2	0	10

School Climate Score	28.5	4.3	10	35
Peer Support Score	15.2	3.6	5	20
Resilience Score (CYRM)	22.1	3.9	12	30

Descriptive statistics revealed that military children experienced moderate levels of emotional symptoms (Mean = 3.8, SD = 1.2) as assessed by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The average perceived school climate score was relatively high (Mean = 28.5 out of 35), suggesting that many participants viewed their schools as supportive and positive. Peer support was also moderate to high (Mean = 15.2 out of 20), indicating that children generally felt emotionally supported by their classmates. The mean resilience score (CYRM-12) was 22.1 out of 30, suggesting that participants had moderately strong coping and adaptation abilities. These findings highlight that, despite challenges related to mobility and parental deployment, many military children report relatively positive school experiences and adaptive capacities.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Emotional Symptoms	Resilience	Peer Support	School Climate
Emotional Symptoms	1.00	-0.62**	-0.48**	-0.55**
Resilience	-0.62**	1.00	0.61**	0.58**
Peer Support	-0.48**	0.61**	1.00	0.53**
School Climate	-0.55**	0.58**	0.53**	1.00

Note: $p < 0.01$; strong negative correlations with emotional symptoms

The correlation analysis showed significant relationships between school-based protective factors and socioemotional development indicators. Emotional symptoms were negatively correlated with school climate ($r = -0.55$, $p < .01$), peer support ($r = -0.48$, $p < .01$), and resilience ($r = -0.62$, $p < .01$), indicating that children who perceived their school environments as more supportive, and who felt greater peer support and resilience, tended to report fewer emotional difficulties. Additionally, strong positive correlations were found between resilience and both peer support ($r = 0.61$, $p < .01$) and school climate ($r = 0.58$, $p < .01$), suggesting that these protective environmental factors also strengthen internal coping mechanisms. These interrelationships confirm the central role of supportive school and peer environments in fostering better psychological health among military-connected youth.

Table 4: Regression Analysis (Predicting Socioemotional Adjustment)

Predictor	β (Beta)	t	Sig. (p)
School Climate	-0.35	-4.21	0.000
Peer Support	-0.27	-3.55	0.001
Resilience	-0.41	-5.18	0.000
$R^2 = 0.48$			

The multiple regression analysis further reinforced these findings by showing that school climate ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < .001$), peer support ($\beta = -0.27$, $p = .001$), and resilience ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < .001$) were all significant predictors of reduced emotional symptoms among military children. The model explained 48% of the variance in emotional outcomes ($R^2 = 0.48$), suggesting a strong predictive relationship. Resilience emerged as the most influential predictor, highlighting the critical role of internal coping strategies in moderating the impact of external stressors. Nevertheless, both school climate and peer support significantly contributed to emotional well-being, underscoring the importance of fostering safe, inclusive, and nurturing school environments.

Finding

Collectively, the findings suggest that school-based protective factors—such as a positive school climate and strong peer support—are closely associated with better socioemotional outcomes in military children. These factors not only directly influence emotional well-being but also bolster resilience, which further protects against emotional difficulties. Given the unique challenges faced by military families, educational settings have a vital role to play in promoting psychological stability and development. Interventions that enhance school connectedness, foster peer inclusion, and support resilience-building may be particularly effective for this population.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that school-based protective factors—especially positive school climate, strong peer support, and student resilience—are significant predictors of better socioemotional outcomes in military children. Children who perceived their schools as supportive and fair reported fewer emotional and behavioral problems. Peer support and resilience further mediated this effect, suggesting that protective environments not only buffer stress but also foster internal coping skills.

Given the psychological risks tied to military family life (e.g., frequent moves, parental deployment), these findings emphasize the importance of psychosocial support within educational settings. Schools serving military-connected students should prioritize interventions that build peer connection, emotional resilience, and inclusive school climates.

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