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## **Influence of Social Responsibility Projects on the Holistic Development of Secondary School Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This Study tries to investigate the impact of demographic profile, moral science and social service, more specifically the social responsibility in developing secondary school students' perception about social responsibility and how they contribute towards their holistic development. This is exploratory research based on a modest sample of 120 respondents drawn from various secondary schools in Kolkata, India through judgement sampling method. Data have been analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS version 3.3.2. The results indicate that the moral science and social service knowledge as manifested through social responsibility projects are important in developing empathic perception of the students towards the community, environment, nation and the whole world. This study provides a fresh perspective on the influence of sense of social responsibility on holistic development of secondary school students in Indian scenario.

**Keywords:** Moral Science, Social Service, Social Responsibility, Holistic Growth

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Social responsibility has emerged as a vital factor for the very survival of human race. While it is well pronounced in the business context, the matter has received rather lukewarm response from the stakeholders in school education sector. Hence, it is imperative to understand the concept of social responsibility through the lens of Corporate Social Responsibility and then apply the nuances of the same in understanding how social responsibility might help in improving social conditions in general and the school students in particular.

According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2000), 'Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large'. The Commission of the European Communities (2001) has observed that 'being socially responsible means not only fulfilling legal expectations, but also going beyond compliance and investing "more" into human capital, the environment and the relations with stakeholders'. Further, supporting oneself and others, and being committed to the society, understanding pain, and trying to create a better world is termed as social responsibility (Lickona, 1991). Social responsibility is imbued with a sense of accountability, integrity, and ethical conduct. Indeed, social responsibility augments quality of life of the people and contributes towards overall economic development of a nation.

Integrating social responsibility in the school curricula creates an ecosystem for holistic development of students and eventually contributes significantly towards desirable citizenship behaviour. Also, the social responsibility projects tend to instill a sense of accountability towards protecting the environment which is central to the idea of sustainability. Educational institutions play a vital role in modelling the character of an individual (Jenney, 2011). Hence, use of social projects is likely to go a long way in how the students behave later in their lives when it comes to taking care of the interest other than their own. Unfortunately, today we see a decadence in the value system. This scenario can be tackled positively by way of social projects aimed at sensitizing the school students about the

needs of the communities and the nation. In the emerging scenario, the schools are supposed to heed the call of the world leaders to create a better tomorrow by promoting universal human values and sustainability among the students through social responsibility projects in a meaningful manner.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

It has been observed that the character-building programmes contribute to the overall development of the school students. Such programmes aim at augmenting the pro-social characteristics of the students, which enable them to grow up as responsible citizens in due course. Even the likes of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato have who emphasized the importance of character building as a prerequisite for social development. Further, moral development is intrinsically associated with character building. Moral development is also associated with classroom discussions and personality development initiatives that make students work and relate with the people who are quite vulnerable and living on the margins. It has been rightly observed that immoral behaviour is a natural corollary of social imbalance that a human is faced with, and which results in moral retardation among individuals (Haan 1985; Walker 1986).

Researches on secondary school education have brought forth the need to incorporate moral education through community service projects (Heller 1989; Rozenweig 1980; Honig 1990). This notion was further supported by the likes of Kohlberg (1971), Boss (1994), and Dewey (1939) among others. True, the study of moral principles helps in developing cognitive capabilities related to decision making and problem-solving in later years. Reasoning gets developed with moral growth while empathy and other humanistic attributes also see a surge of development through moral learning (Chickering and Reisser 1993; Li, Wright et al, 2008).

Burgos and Carnero (2020) in their paper assessed the requirement of the theory of the Corporate to be transcended to the realm of secondary educational system. They proposed a model titled Measuring Attractiveness in the Categorical-based Evaluation Technique (MACBETH), that helps fulfil the objective of incorporating social responsibility among school students.

Turkkahraman (2015) stressed upon the importance of school as a part of the social system, and observed that it is very crucial for the growth of the future of the society. School bears the effects of the innovations and changes the society undergoes. Accordingly, schools play a direct part in the upbringing of students as also their social growth. To get a clear picture of the societal structure, the dynamics of the social system of the schools must be understood very well. Dewey (2021) has observed that school is the only system that has the potential to revert the destruction which the society is witnessing. Education itself can help in ameliorating the degrading state of humanity, and it is the ultimate responsibility of the schools ensure that morality prevails in the society throughout the world by means of educational interventions such as social responsibility projects in order to awaken the failing humanity.

Shek (2010) has observed that the promotion of pro social, economic, intrapersonal, civic, citizenship characteristics and responsibility foster positive youth development and holistic growth among senior students. Wray-Lake and Syvertsen (2011) have emphasized the role of social responsibility in nurturing the pro social and emotional growth of a child. They have also emphasized the need to instill empathy, communicative spirit, and care among adolescents to promote social responsibility among students. Wentzel (1991) has indicated that there is a positive relationship between socially responsible behaviour, adhering to the norms of social responsibility and academic achievement which lead to the overall development of students.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To develop a cause-and-effect relationship between the subjects' moral science, social service and the secondary educational institutions' social responsibility.
- To analyze the association of holistic development in a child with social responsibility by attempting to develop a model.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Sample:** The sample primarily consisted of 120 students of grade 6 to grade 10, falling in the age group of 12 to 16 years of cognitive capacity. The respondents were drawn

after obtaining due permission from their respective schools located in Kolkata. The use of purposeful and convenience method was also adhered to, while selecting sample to deliver information that is rich and instructive of the phenomenon of the study (Patton, 2002).

**Materials/tools used:** Measurement tools used in the study are PRESOR Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale. Statistical Tools used in the study are SPSS version 21 and SmartPLS version 3.3.2.

**Procedure:** The student's perception and understanding of sustainability and social responsibility utilizes 10 items from the PRESOR (Perceptions of ethics and social responsibility) scale (Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli and Kraft, 1996) measuring the students' perceptions of social responsibility and understanding the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale: (Shek, Siu and Tak Yan Lee, 2007) consisting of 20 items primarily. The paper also utilizes the de Brabander (2000), and the Cook, Murphy and Hunt (2000), scales for social service and moral science questionnaire. Moreover, reflective and formative modeling was offered through PLS-SEM in Smart PLS, which offers flexibility in complex models because of which it stands widely accepted multivariate analytical method (Hair et al.,2017: Hair et al.,2019; Richter et al 2016; Rigdon,2016; Ringle et al,2015; Hair et al,2020). The application of the PLS-SEM approach, helps to identify the impact of moral science and social service subjects on building the perception about ethics and social responsibility in school students, which result in their holistic growth.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Reliability investigations were done through Cronbach's Alpha, Dijkstra and Henseler's rhoA, Composite Reliability (CR), which provided results that are much above 0.70 (threshold limit) (Ali et al2018, Hair et al 2017;2020). The social service and demographics had Cronbach Alpha below the accepted value. The convergent validity established with average variance extracted (AVE) score was sufficiently above the 0.50 (threshold value) and above for every construct in the proposed model (Fornell and Larcker,1981: Hair et al 2019). The results of the internal reliability and convergent validity are given in Table 1. The discriminant validity is also

investigated with Fornell and Lacker’s Criterion (1981) where the under root of AVEs of the constructs on the diagonal were greater than their inter item correlation values. Table 3 provides a clear picture of each construct bearing a clear distinction with others, making the study fit.

**Measurement Model Assessment**

The model specifications were investigated applying the internal validity and validity checks of the model. All internal reliability checks were analyzed through, Dijkstra and Henseler’s values of RhoA, Composite Reliability (CR) were above 0.70 (threshold limit) (Ali et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2017; 2020). The RhoA for Holistic Growth (RhoA = 0.944) is having the RhoA well above the threshold limit of 0.70 and is acceptable. Moral Science (RhoA = 0.84) and Perception (RhoA = 0.854) also has RhoA value above 0.70 and is acceptable. Though the Social Service (RhoA = 0.539) RhoA value is below the 0.70 however the value of composite reliability (CR) was sufficiently above 0.70 (threshold limit) to syndicate the reliability of the construct (Hair et al., 2019). Average variance extracted (AVE) score of Social Service was used to establish the convergent validity, which was above 0.50 (threshold value) and above for all the prime reflective constructs in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). The results of internal reliability and convergent validity are described in Table 1

**Table 1 Quality Criterion for Reflective Model Assessments**

|                 | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A  | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-----------------|------------------|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Demographic     | -0.011           | -0.013 | 0.648                 | 0.498                            |
| Holistic Growth | 0.944            | 0.947  | 0.95                  | 0.488                            |
| Moral Science   | 0.833            | 0.84   | 0.899                 | 0.749                            |
| Perception      | 0.765            | 0.854  | 0.826                 | 0.372                            |
| Social Service  | 0.753            | 0.539  | 0.809                 | 0.679                            |

Source: Authors’ Calculation

The Discriminant validity of data was further examined with Fornell and Larcker’s Criterion (1981), where the under the root of AVE extracted from each construct on the diagonal and it was found to be higher than their inter-item correlation values. Table 2 explains that each construct indicated having a clear distinction from others. Thus, the study is considered to be fit for conducting the final analysis.

**Table 2 Discriminant Validity of Constructs**

|                 | Demographic | Holistic Growth | Moral Science | Perception | Social Service |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Demographic     | 0.705       |                 |               |            |                |
| Holistic Growth | 0.061       | 0.698           |               |            |                |
| Moral Science   | 0.422       | 0.708           | 0.865         |            |                |
| Perception      | -0.115      | 0.703           | 0.676         | 0.61       |                |
| Social Service  | -0.123      | 0.299           | 0.291         | 0.243      | 0.824          |

Source: Authors’ Calculation

**Structural Model Assessment**

The relationship between the independent and dependent variables were tested in structural model (Hair et al., 2017). The process of bootstrapping with recommended 5000 bootstraps without change of sign was derived so that required p-values can be checked for formulating the hypotheses of the study (Hair et al., 2020). The VIF value is less than 5, which is the rule of thumb for calculating co-linearity because some other factors like sample size also influence regression coefficients (O’Brien 2007). The values of the VIFs (See Table 3) range from 1.001 to 1.113 were found in this study, which is below the threshold limits 5 and is acceptable (Ringle et al., 2015) and it suggests that there are no co linearity issues. (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 3: Inner VIF Values**

| Constructs     | Inner VIF Value |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Demographic    | 1.019           |
| Moral Science  | 1.096           |
| Perception     | 1.001           |
| Social Service | 1.113           |

Source: Authors' Calculation

**Structural model assessments**

The structural model proposed with SmartPLS 3.3.2 version is shown in the figure 1 below:

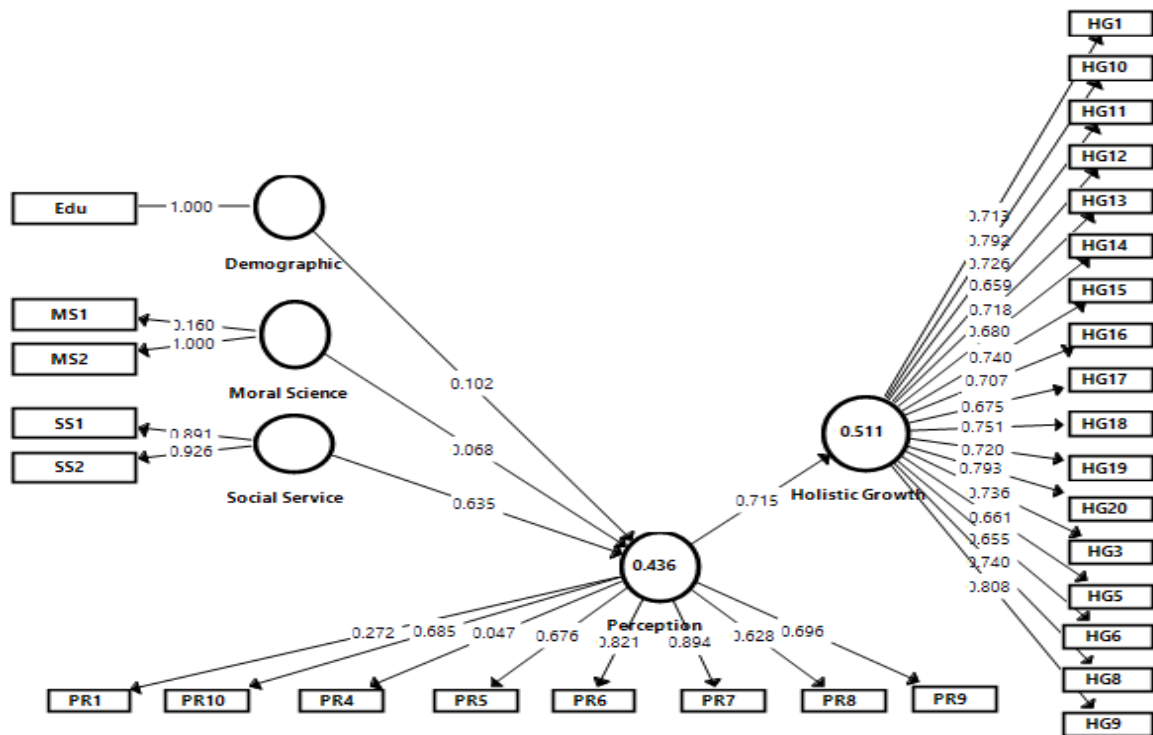


Figure 1 Structural Model

Some of the items were deleted from demographic, moral Science, and perception and holistic growth because of outer loading values less than 0.70. Figure 1 represents the final model. The next step after Investigating the co-linearity in the inner model, was to check the path coefficient's significance and relevance by following the process of bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples in PLS SEM. The hypotheses testing is well elucidated by Table 4 below.



**Table 4 Results of Hypothesis Testing**

|                               | Std Beta | t Values | 2.50% | 97.50% | Support   |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|--------|-----------|
| Demographic -> Perception     | 0.102    | 2.319*** | 0.186 | 0.016  | Supported |
| Moral Science -> Perception   | 0.068    | 0.958*   | 0.071 | 0.027  | Supported |
| Perception -> Holistic Growth | 0.715    | 3.616*** | 0.314 | 0.821  | Supported |
| Social Service -> Perception  | 0.635    | 7.993**  | 0.473 | 0.778  | Supported |

Source: Authors' Calculations; Path Co-efficient (\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ )

Table 4 results reveals that perception has greater positive influence on the holistic growth ( $\beta = 0.715$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) of the school students. The education ( $\beta = 0.102$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), moral science ( $\beta = 0.068$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) teachings in school and social services ( $\beta = 0.635$ ;  $p < 0.005$ ) conducted by the school with the students have positive influence on the students' perception on social responsibility. Among these constructs, the most prominent one is social service conducted by the students which positively influences the perception of the students towards social responsibility.

The  $R^2$  (coefficient of determination) for holistic growth was found to be 0.511 and for perception it was 0.436. Hence the coefficient of determination of holistic growth was found to be significantly moderate to high at 51.1%. Perception's coefficient of determination was found to be 0.46 which is well above 0.20 as per the data belonging to behavioural sciences and can be considered at 43.6% (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Further the goodness fit criteria were cross-examined by the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) global fit indices.

In the present research, a global model fit index like SRMR is important to evaluate its goodness (Hair et al., 2020). The SRMR value obtained from this study is 0.079 in this model is below the threshold value of 0.08. The model proposed has good explanatory power (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Henseler et al., 2016). Based on these results the model can be acceptable indicating social services have a greater role in creating the perception towards the social responsibility of schools, which in turn influence the holistic growth of the students.

## **Conclusion**

The prime objective of this research was to explore the influence of demography, moral science and social service on perception building and the overall holistic growth of school students. The study confirms that perception of social responsibility has a significant impact on holistic growth of a child. The role of the subjects like social service and moral science too find a very strong impact on developing the students' perception on social responsibility. It is argued by scholars that adolescence is the time moral values are formed and which gets crystallized during early adulthood. Thus, building strong perception on social responsibility in childhood is certainly an imperative. The study is in line with the literature that helps to associate the knowledge on social service and moral science with the learning of values and social responsibility (cf. Hitlin & Pihavin,2004). A sustainable tomorrow is possible only if we inculcate social responsibility among children and thereby contribute towards their holistic growth by developing their emotional and cognitive competencies.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

The present study faces certain unavoidable limitations as to the demographical characteristics, which due to time and resource constraints could not be much explored beyond the present sample size. The methodology of data collection too was restricted to the online questionnaire, which lacked much humane touch. The futuristic goal of the study would need to incorporate new parameters to be studied to explain the holistic growth of a student. It should also decrease much of the limitations in the scope and sample size which might present distinguishing results for more defined theoretical implications.

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