

## PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: INFLUENCE OF HOME ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:** Hardiness is a personality style, which is characterized by a sense of commitment, control and perception of problems as challenges. (Santrock 2006). “Home environment is the quality and the quantity of cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home”. (Mishra, 2000). The present study was conducted to explore the psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students and to analyze its relationship with home environment of students. The study included 200 senior secondary school students (100 students from each type of school i.e. Government and Private schools, out of 100 students (50 male students and 50 female students). The study revealed that students studying in private schools had higher commitment, control, challenge and psychological hardiness (total) as compared to their government schools counterparts. Students studying in government and private schools differed significantly with respect to control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward, nurturance and rejection dimensions of home environment. Male students possess higher challenge accepting tendency as compared to their female counterparts. Male and female students differed significantly with respect to control, punishment, conformity, social isolation and nurturance dimensions of home environment. Significant positive relationship was found between psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with home environment.

**Keywords:** Psychological hardiness, home environment, senior secondary school students.

### INTRODUCTION

Stress is the part and parcel of human life. Everyone feels stressed from time to time in a different manner. Poltavski (2003) pinpointed that “every demand for adjustment to new conditions causes stress. Stress can be produced due to certain conditions in family or work, health reasons, academics as in case of students and various other factors. Stress is the result of interaction between the demand of situation, conditions and circumstances and personality traits of an individual. Whenever the demands of situation and its pressures are beyond the individual’s capacity, the person would experience stress”. Students are experiencing stress due to rat race, too much of competition, huge expectations of parents, members of family, peer group and society. The budding youth wants to create a niche for them in this fast growing economy. Stress may adversely influence the performance, level of motivation, cognitive functioning, physical and mental wellbeing of students.

### Psychological Hardiness

Research has described that there are certain personal characteristics in the individuals that increases their inner resistance against stress and thereby protect them from

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stress-related diseases. One of such personality traits is psychological hardiness, which enables the individual to deal with stressful situations. The concept of “hardiness” emerged from the medical literature, and was first introduced by Kobasa in 1979, “as a resistance factor”. Kobasa (1979) introduced the term hardiness, as “a combination of one’s beliefs about oneself and one’s way of looking at world”. “The construct of hardiness was proposed by Maddi and Kobasa with colleagues when they conducted a 12-year longitudinal study of managers at Illinois Bell Telephone from 1975 to 1986, and found that with high levels of stress, individuals demonstrating hardy attitudes were more likely to remain healthy and continue to thrive” (as cited by Jabeen, 2013). The hardiness construct, has its roots in existential theory e.g. Kierkegaard, 1849/1954; Frankl, 1959; Gendlin, 1966 (as cited in M. Sheard, 2013, p.58) emerged from individual differences research on stress reactions. According to Kobasa (1979) “hardiness as a complicated personal characteristic is formed by three constituents: challenge, control and commitment, which are supposed as a set of mediators that can modulate stress effects.” “Hardiness is an operationalization of existential courage, aids the individual in pursuing the future despite its uncertainty (Maddi, 2004)”. In the words of Santrock (2006) “hardiness is a personality style, which is characterized by a sense of commitment (rather than alienation), and of control (rather than powerlessness) and a perception of problems as challenges (rather than threats).”

Psychological hardiness as a construct has emerged as a buffer against stressors and enhances the performance, conduct, and morale of the individual (Maddi, 1999b). Individuals vary in their levels of hardiness along a continuum from low to high. A psychologically hardy student is strong, chalks out a plan of action to cope up, faces the stressful situations (like examinations, assignments, project work, etc.) instead of withdrawing and avoiding it, rather considers those stressful situations as learning opportunities. On the contrary, the individual with low hardiness may find difficulties in dealing with the various ups and downs of life. Such individuals may be less committed, have less ability to control the situation and take novel situations as a threat to their comfort and safety, and thereby leading to less learning and growth. “As conceptualized, the 3Cs of hardiness are a cognitive/emotional blend constituting a learned, growth-oriented, personality style. Hardiness theory submits that people who feel committed, in control, and positively challenged by life circumstances have the tendency to perceive events or circumstances as less stressful, seeing them as manageable rather than overpowering” (Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999) (as cited in M. Sheard, 2009). Various researches have reported that individuals with high hardiness are more likely to report happiness, life satisfaction and good mental and physical health (Delahajj, et. al., 2010; Cunningham and De La Rosa 2008; Schreurs, et. al., 2010). On the other hand, other studies have reported that individuals low in hardiness are more likely to report mental disorders like depression, anxiety, and stress (Eschleman, et. al., 2010). Setoudeh

(2007) pinpointed that psychological hardiness is one of the elements that plays an important role in qualitative aspect of man life and creates equilibrium in its various dimensions. People with low hardiness are more vulnerable to the harmful factors in long- term in comparison to people with high hardiness who possess a natural security against stressful factors.

### **Home Environment**

Home plays a significant role in the harmonious development of the child. Home is a social institution, in which human beings are born, and where they are socialized for their participation in the wider society. Conversely, home also leads to several interpersonal conflicts, problems, difficulties and agonies. On the contrary, if adequate support is provided to the child within the home, it will lead to the creation of a tough and well-adjusted personality, capable enough to successfully face the odds of life. Research findings show that adolescents whose parents are supportive and show acceptance to their need for psychological independence, shows greater success in life. (Deepshikha and Bhanot, 2011; Lee et. al., 2006; Madhu and Matla, 2004; Olsson et. al., 1999; Powell, 2006; and) (as cited by Dasgupta and Sain, 2015). Home environment refers to “the psychosocial climate of home as perceived by children. It provides a measure of the quality and the quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home”. (Mishra,2000). Home environment consciously or unconsciously moulds the behavior and influences the personality of an individual such as self-concept, adjustment, level of aspiration, aptitude, social maturity, emotional maturity and attitude, and so on while psychological hardiness is also a vital personality construct. The personality characteristics of an individual play a vital role in the performance, outcomes and achievements in various areas. Students are a vulnerable section of society as they are under varying stressful situations, be it related to studies, examination, peers, teachers or parent’s pressure or ever increasing competition. A strong parental support, encouragement, acceptance, affection, care and guidance to children may render a helping hand to cope up with the various stressful situations of student life as well life as a whole. A few researches reported that creative adolescents with more protectiveness and permissiveness component of home environment were found to be more hardy, likewise family environment is a significant predictor of psychological hardiness among adolescent boys only ( Kaur and Singh, 2011; and Dasgupta and Sain, 2015). Research findings focus that an adolescent, with a cohesive and wholesome home and school life, is able to depict similar consistency of attitude over other areas of life also. Likewise, it is important to know how home environment can influence the psychological hardiness. Thus, keeping this in view, the study was conducted so as to fulfill the following objectives:

## OBJECTIVES

Following objectives were framed in the study:

1. To explore the Psychological Hardiness and Home Environment of senior secondary school students.
2. To compare government and private senior secondary school students with respect to
  - Psychological hardiness
  - Home environment
3. To compare the male and female senior secondary school students with respect to
  - Psychological hardiness
  - Home environment
4. To find out the relation between Psychological Hardiness of senior secondary school students with their Home Environment.

## HYPOTHESES

1. There exists no significant difference in the Psychological Hardiness of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools
2. There exists no significant difference in the Home Environment of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools
3. There exists no significant difference in the Psychological Hardiness of male and female senior secondary school students
4. There exists no significant difference in the Home Environment of male and female senior secondary school students
5. There exists no significant relationship of Psychological Hardiness of senior secondary school students with their Home Environment.

## METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Descriptive survey method was used in the study. Data collection was done from male and female senior secondary school students studying in eight schools (four Government schools and four Private schools) of Jalandhar district of Punjab, by employing simple random sampling technique. The sample comprised of 200 senior secondary school students (100 students from each type of school i.e. Government and Private, out of 100 students, 50 male students and 50 female students) was selected by employing simple random sampling. Two psychological tests were used to collect the data, one was “psychological hardiness scale by A.K. Singh (2008) and the second tool, “home environment inventory” developed by Karuna Shankar

Mishra (2000). To explore the current status in terms of psychological hardiness and home environment of senior secondary school students, mean and standard deviation were calculated and for testing the significance of difference between means of psychological hardiness and home environment, t-test was applied. To analyse the relationship between psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with home environment correlation was calculated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of data, result and interpretation of findings have been done variable wise keeping in view the objectives of the study.

- **Results relating difference between senior secondary school students in psychological hardiness:** The below given table shows the differences in mean scores of psychological hardiness for senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools

**TABLE 1: MEAN SCORES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS STUDYING IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

<i>Psychological Hardiness</i>	<i>Type of School</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Commitment	Government	100	39.58	5.01	2.660	0.01
	Private	100	41.34	4.31		
Control	Government	100	37.07	3.85	3.314	0.01
	Private	100	38.81	3.56		
Challenge	Government	100	38.14	5.18	2.920	0.01
	Private	100	40.05	3.98		
Psychological Hardiness (Total)	Government	100	114.79	11.27	3.683	0.01
	Private	100	120.20	9.41		

A look at the above Table 1 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools. Further, the t-value calculated with regard to three components of psychological hardiness, namely commitment, control, challenge and psychological hardiness (total) of students studying in Government and Private schools was found to be significant at 0.01 level. It can further be explained that students studying in private schools had higher commitment, control, challenge and psychological hardiness (total) as compared to those studying in government schools. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.1 i.e. "there exists no significant difference in the psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools" is thus not accepted.

2. **Results relating difference between senior secondary school students in home environment:** The below given table shows the difference in mean scores of home environment of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools

**TABLE 2: MEAN SCORES OF HOME ENVIRONMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS STUDYING IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

<i>Home Environment</i>	<i>Type of School</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Control	Government	100	21.22	5.84	2.025	0.01
	Private	100	22.79	5.09		
Protectiveness	Government	100	27.29	4.77	4.207	0.01
	Private	100	30.57	6.16		
Punishment	Government	100	25.86	6.24	3.326	0.01
	Private	100	28.76	6.08		
Conformity	Government	100	29.26	4.02	5.742	0.01
	Private	100	32.69	4.41		
Social Isolation	Government	100	16.56	8.93	1.818	Not Significant
	Private	100	14.49	7.05		
Reward	Government	100	29.90	5.92	3.215	0.01
	Private	100	32.64	6.12		
Deprivation of privileges	Government	100	14.79	7.03	1.346	Not Significant
	Private	100	13.29	8.63		
Nurturance	Government	100	23.22	5.77	2.156	0.01
	Private	100	24.82	4.66		
Rejection	Government	100	17.64	7.32	8.971	0.01
	Private	100	8.79	6.60		
Permissiveness	Government	100	20.71	6.36	1.204	Not Significant
	Private	100	19.77	4.53		

The above Table 2 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of home environment for senior secondary school students studying in Government schools and Private schools. Further, t-values calculated for social isolation, deprivation of privileges and permissiveness dimensions of home environment of students studying in Government schools and Private schools was found to be insignificant, while t-values calculated for control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward, nurturance and rejection dimensions of home environment of students studying in government schools and private schools was found to be significant at 0.01 level. It can further be explained that students studying in private senior secondary schools had higher control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward and nurturance as compared to their government school counterparts. While

the government school students had higher rejection as compared to their private schools counterparts.

It infers that too much of restrictions are imposed on students to discipline them, infantile care is prolonged, punishment is given for undesirable behavior, they are expected to meet parent's desires and expectations, reward is given to them to strengthen their desirable behavior and parents show keen interest and bestow love on the students studying in private as compared to their Government school counterparts. Further, it infers that conditional love was given to students studying in Government schools as compared to their private schools counterparts as if they have no right become self-governing individuals. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no. 2 i.e. "there exists no significant difference in the home environment of senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools" is thus not accepted.

3. **Results relating difference between of male and female senior secondary school students in psychological hardiness:** The below given table shows the differences in mean scores of psychological hardiness of male and female senior secondary school students

**TABLE 3: MEAN SCORES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS OF MALE AND FEMALE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

<i>Psychological Hardiness</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Commitment	Male	100	40.98	4.57	1.554	Not Significant
	Female	100	39.94	4.88		
Control	Male	100	38.82	3.33	1.416	Not Significant
	Female	100	37.56	4.21		
Challenge	Male	100	39.80	4.35	2.135	0.01
	Female	100	38.39	4.96		
Psychological Hardiness (Total)	Male	100	119.10	9.38	2.138	0.01
	Female	100	115.89	11.71		

A look at the above table 3 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of psychological hardiness of male and female senior secondary school students. Further, the t-value calculated with regard to commitment, control components of psychological hardiness was found to be insignificant while, t-values calculated for challenge component of psychological hardiness and psychological hardiness (total) of male and female students was found to be significant at 0.01 level. It can further be explained that male students possess higher challenge accepting tendency and are significantly more hardy as compared to their female counterparts. However gender does not seem to affect the commitment and control component of psychological

hardiness. On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.3 i.e. “there exists no significant difference in the psychological hardiness of male and female senior secondary school students” is thus not accepted.

4. **Results relating difference between male and female senior secondary school students in home environment:** The below given table shows the difference in mean scores of home environment of male and female senior secondary school students

**TABLE 4: MEAN SCORES OF HOME ENVIRONMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

<i>Home Environment</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Level of Significance</i>
Control	Male	100	22.89	5.95	2.289	0.01
	Female	100	21.12	4.93		
Protectiveness	Male	100	28.95	5.67	0.049	Not Significant
	Female	100	28.91	5.82		
Punishment	Male	100	29.33	5.26	4.760	0.01
	Female	100	25.29	6.65		
Conformity	Male	100	31.98	4.39	3.195	0.01
	Female	100	29.97	4.50		
Social Isolation	Male	100	16.93	7.71	2.486	0.01
	Female	100	14.12	8.26		
Reward	Male	100	30.66	6.57	1.402	Not Significant
	Female	100	31.88	5.70		
Deprivation of privileges	Male	100	15.01	7.46	1.746	Not Significant
	Female	100	13.07	8.22		
Nurturance	Male	100	22.64	4.82	3.808	0.01
	Female	100	25.40	5.40		
Rejection	Male	100	14.11	7.60	1.539	Not Significant
	Female	100	12.32	8.80		
Permissiveness	Male	100	19.49	5.07	1.933	Not Significant
	Female	100	20.99	5.87		

The above Table 4 reflects mean scores and standard deviation of home environment of male and female senior secondary school students. Further, t-values calculated for protectiveness, reward, deprivation of privileges, rejection and permissiveness dimensions of home environment of male and female students was found to be insignificant while, t-values calculated for control, punishment, conformity, social isolation and nurturance dimensions of home environment were found to be significant at 0.01 level. It can further be explained that male students had higher control, punishment, conformity



and social isolation as compared to their female counterparts. While female students had higher nurturance as compared to their male counterparts.

On the basis of above mentioned findings, it can be stated that the hypothesis no.4 i.e. “there exists no significant difference in the home environment of male and female senior secondary school students” is thus not accepted.

- **Results relating to relationship of psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with their home environment:**

**TABLE 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Psychological Hardiness (N = 200)</i>			
	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Psychological Hardiness (Total)</i>
Control	0.162*	0.204**	0.255**	0.257**
Protectiveness	0.223**	0.247**	0.271**	0.306**
Punishment	0.131(N.S.)	0.261**	0.178*	0.229**
Conformity	0.133(N.S.)	0.333**	0.245**	0.285**
Social isolation	0.063(N.S.)	0.209**	0.095(N.S.)	0.144*
Reward	0.179*	0.174*	0.221**	0.239**
Deprivation of privileges	-0.016(N.S.)	0.177*	0.072(N.S.)	0.088(N.S.)
Nurturance	-0.001(N.S.)	0.016(N.S.)	0.055(N.S.)	0.018(N.S.)
Rejection	-0.137(N.S.)	-0.064(N.S.)	-0.080(N.S.)	-0.118(N.S.)
Permissiveness	0.036(N.S.)	-0.022(N.S.)	-0.032(N.S.)	-0.006(N.S.)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N.S. Not Significant

The above Table 5 shows the relationship of psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with their home environment. The result shows that the calculated value of correlation of commitment component of psychological hardiness of students with control, protectiveness and reward dimensions of home environment is positive. This indicates that if students have high level of control, protectiveness and reward then students are likely to show greater commitment. Similarly, it is observed that the calculated value of correlation of control component of psychological hardiness of students with control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward and deprivation of privileges dimensions of home environment is positive. This indicates that if students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward

and deprivation of privileges then students are likely to possess greater control. Further, the calculated value of correlation of challenge component of psychological hardiness of students with control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity and reward dimensions of home environment is positive. This indicates that if students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity and reward then students are likely to show greater challenge accepting tendency. In addition to this, the calculated value of correlation of psychological hardiness (total) of students with control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation and reward dimensions of home environment is positive. If students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation and reward then students are likely to possess greater psychological hardiness.

This can further be explained that control, protectiveness and reward dimension of home environment as perceived by students positively influences their commitment to involve themselves in whatever they encounter as an individual. Further, control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward and deprivation of privileges dimensions of home environment as perceived by students positively influence their control over their lives. While control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity and reward dimensions of home environment as perceived by students positively influence their ability to accept challenges. In addition to this, control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation and reward dimensions of home environment as perceived by students positively influence their psychological hardiness (total). Thus, there exists a positive relationship of psychological hardiness (its various components and total) of students with control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward and deprivation of privileges dimensions of home environment. On the basis of above mentioned result hypothesis 5, namely, “there exists no significant relationship of psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with their home environment.” is partially accepted.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study documents the following conclusions:

- Senior secondary school students studying in government and private schools differ significantly with respect to commitment, control, challenge components of psychological hardiness and psychological hardiness (total). Senior secondary school students studying in private schools had higher commitment, control, challenge and psychological hardiness (total) as compared to their government schools counterparts.
- Senior secondary school students studying in government and private senior secondary schools differ significantly with respect to control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward, and nurturance and rejection dimensions

of home environment. Senior secondary school students studying in private schools had higher control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward and nurturance as compared to their government school counterparts. While the government school students had higher rejection as compared to their private school counterparts.

- Male and female senior secondary school students differ significantly in with respect to challenge component of psychological hardiness and psychological hardiness (total). Male students possess higher challenge accepting tendency and are significantly more hardy as compared to their female counterparts. Gender does not seem to affect the commitment and control component of psychological hardiness.
- Male and female senior secondary school students differ significantly with respect to control, punishment, conformity, social isolation and nurturance dimensions of home environment. Male students had higher control, punishment, conformity and social isolation as compared to their female counterparts. While the female students had higher nurturance as compared to their male counterparts.
- Significant positive relationship was found between psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students with home environment. If senior secondary school students have high level of control, protectiveness and reward then students are likely to show greater commitment. Further, if senior secondary school students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward and deprivation of privileges then students are likely to possess greater control. In addition to this, if senior secondary school students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity and reward then students are likely to show greater challenge accepting tendency. Furthermore, if senior secondary school students have high level of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation and reward then students are likely to show higher level of psychological hardiness.

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