



## School social climate and antisocial-criminal behaviour in adolescents

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**Abstract.** The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behavior in third year secondary school students in Tumbes department. The type of research used was descriptive - correlational, non-experimental design. The sample consisted of 346 students of both sexes, their ages ranging from 13 to 17 years old. The instruments used were adapted from the 23-item School Social Climate Scale by R. Moos and E. Trickett and the Antisocial-Delinquent Behavior Questionnaire by Nicolás Seisdedos Cubero with an abbreviation of 20 items that have adequate reliability and validity indices. The results showed that there is a highly significant correlation ( $.000$ ) being the negative correlation index between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behaviors in third year secondary school students from Tumbes. With respect to school social climate levels, it was found at the medium level with 41.9%, high level with 33.8% and low level with 24.3%. In addition, the levels of antisocial-criminal behaviour were: 35% low level, 30.1% medium high level and 18.5% high level and medium low level with 16.5%. It is concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between school social climate and antisocial delinquent behaviors, which indicates that the higher the school social climate the lower the presence of antisocial delinquent behaviors

**Keywords:** School social climate, Antisocial-criminal behaviour, Adolescents..

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### INTRODUCTION

Research has shown the importance of school climate, academic performance and student welfare within educational settings (Berkowitz, Moore, Avi & Benbenishty, 2016; Alinsunurin, 2020; Bravo-Sanzana, Salvo-Garrido, Miranda-Vargas & Bangdiwala, 2020). In addition, the family, peer group, school and community influence the lives of adolescents in a positive or negative way. This stage is a period of continuous transformation that requires adjustments to biological, emotional and social changes. When the above factors combine, they can influence young people to develop behavioural problems (Erickson, 1992). In this way, the education of the adolescent is influenced by the presence of antisocial-criminal behaviour, reflected in their academic performance, in the way they schematise, use their styles and cognitive resources that allow them to give solutions to problems (Chinchay, 2014)

Currently, there are different conceptions regarding the variables studied: the school social climate is the conceptualization that individual's form of the various aspects related to the environment in which they usually carry out their daily activities (Arón & Milicic, 2009). An adequate school social climate can generate a positive impact on students with respect to the educational context (Leria-Dulčić & Salgado-Roa, 2019).

Anti-social-criminal behaviour refers to the action of breaking social rules and expectations or going against others, regardless of its seriousness (López, 2008). In the school environment it starts with petty theft, damage to urban furniture, dropping out of school and drug use (Peña & Graña, 2006). The presence of these behaviours leads to negative consequences, such as low academic performance, complications in interpersonal relationships, aggression and crimes committed (Loeber and Farrington, 2000). If there is no change in these behaviours, they may continue into adulthood (Alarcón et al., 2018).

However, not all adolescents persist with this type of behaviour into adulthood, depending on the life trajectory with which the antisocial behaviour arises (Herrera & Morales, 2005). In many Latin American countries, young people commit violent crimes and die from them at an early age (ECLAC, 2008). There are also personal and economic consequences for the victims of such acts (Jiménez, Estévez, & Murgui, 2014). In Peru, Chong (2018) states that, according to the Youth Centres Management of the Peruvian Judicial Branch, the percentages of adolescents who receive some kind of corrective measure are between the ages of 14 and 21, who are in conflict with the law. In this line, the highest percentages of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 who are served in open media are 59.5% and in closed media 54.2%. This situation shows the importance of timely intervention that facilitates the understanding of the environment in which adolescents operate. It is worth noting that in the case of the department of Tumbes there is only one open centre for adolescents in conflict with the law, where their capacity to attend to them has already been covered and there is a 4% surplus of adolescents.

Some authors consider that adolescents may receive treatment or prevention programmes due to the high negative impact of the persistent life of the offender, and that it is important to prevent young people from developing a criminal career through the timely delivery of effective treatment or prevention (Assink et al. 2015). As the school environment is the second place where adolescents spend most time, it is important to understand the school social climate in which they operate.

It is important to note that there is no bidirectionality between antisocial behaviour and crime, i.e. every crime involves antisocial behaviour, but not every antisocial behaviour leads to crime, as long as the country's law has not been broken (Cabrera, González & Frando 2012; Morales, 2008). In that sense, there is research that tries to predict criminal behaviour within stages such as adolescence and early adulthood that has focused on antecedents of these behaviours during middle childhood and adolescence (Hill, Lui & Hawkins, 2001; Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2003). The consequences that an adolescent with antisocial-criminal behaviours can present are school desertion, conflicts with the law, family and community problems; being necessary to avoid that these behaviours lead to the development of a criminal career, by strengthening school, family and social relationships.

Therefore, it is important to know the relationship between the school social climate and antisocial-criminal behaviour, since, at present, this information is not available in the studied population; the study can contribute to carry out programmes for the prevention of antisocial-criminal behaviour and to strengthen the school social climate of adolescents.

## METHOD

This research was of a quantitative - descriptive, non-experimental cross-sectional design (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014). The study population consisted of 3421 students of both sexes, ranging in age from 13 to 17 years, who were studying the third grade of secondary school in the department of Tumbes, Peru. The study sample was a total of 346 students from the three provinces that make up the department: Rear Admiral Villar, Tumbes and Zarumilla, by means of a simple random stratified sampling, obtaining a significant sample from each province.

The instruments used were the abbreviated adaptation made by the authors of this study of the School Social Climate Scale by R. Moos and E. Trickett (23 items) and the Questionnaire of Antisocial-Delinquent Behavior by Nicolás Seisdedos Cubero (20 items). Within the psychometric properties, reliability values of .758 for school social climate and .852 for antisocial-criminal behaviour were found. Likewise, the inter-test validity for school social climate gave values between .456 and .552, in the case of antisocial criminal behaviour the validity indices were between .299 and .534.

In relation to the information processing, a statistical program was used for the inferential analysis such as: test analysis of normality of a sample that showed heterogeneity of the sample, so the correlation statistic Spearman's Rho was applied, also the statistical analysis was made to get frequencies and percentages.

Finally, as the population was adolescent, ethical aspects were considered by requesting authorisation from the Regional Education Directorate of Tumbes, for access to educational institutions. When the information collection instruments were applied, the subjects of the study signed an informed consent form, giving their agreement and willingness to participate.

## RESULTS

**Table 1.** Relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behavior in students

		School social climate	Anti-social and delinquent behavior
<b>Rho de Spearman</b>	School social climate	Correlation Coefficient Next (bilateral)	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000
		N	346
	Anti-social and delinquent behavior	Correlation Coefficient Next (bilateral)	-,322**
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000
		N	346
**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).			

In Table 1, the correlation between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behaviors can be observed by using Spearman's Rho test, which refers that in order for there to be a significant relationship between the research variables, the level of Sig. In our study, the value is negative and the significance level is ,000. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher the school social climate, the lower the tendency to manifest antisocial-criminal behaviour in third year secondary school students in Tumbes, 2016.

**Table 2.** Frequency of school social climate levels in students according to gender

School social climate	Sex		
	Man %	Woman %	Total %
Low	14.5	17.69	32,1
Medium	19.4	14.7	34.1
High	17.3	16.5	33.8
Total			100.0

In table 2 it can be seen that there is a higher percentage of school social climate perceived by women at a low level with 17.69% as opposed to men with 14.5%. Likewise, men have a more positive view of the level of school social climate, with 17.3% perceiving high levels of school climate and 19.4% medium levels.

**Table 3.** Frequency of antisocial and criminal behavior levels in students according to gender.

Anti-Social Behavior	Sex		
	Man %	Woman %	Total %
Low	16.5	19.9	36.4
Low Medium	8.4	9.8	18.2
Medium high	8.7	7.8	16.5
High	51.2	11.3	28.6
<b>Delinquent Conduct</b>			
Low	35.5	42.2	77.7
Low Medium	0	0	0
Medium High	11.8	4.3	16.2

High	3.8	2.3	6.1
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In table 3, it can be seen that the highest incidence of antisocial behavior is found in male students, with 51.2% showing a high level of these behaviors, as opposed to women, who only show high levels (11.3%). With regard to criminal behavior, it can be seen that 77.7% of students have low levels of criminal behavior, while the female sex presents a lower incidence, with high levels at 2.3% compared to men, who in the upper-middle class presented 11.8% of criminal behavior.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics on levels of school social climate and levels of antisocial-criminal behavior in students

				Province					
				Contralmirante Villar		Tumbes		Zarumilla	
School social climate	LOW	Anti-social and delinquent behavior	LOW	0	0	13	8,97	4	5.48
			LOW MEDIUM	2	7,14	10	6,89	4	5.48
			HIGH MEDIUM	0	0	15	10,34	13	17.81
			HIGH	0	0	21	14,48	2	2.74
	MEDIUM	Anti-social and delinquent behavior	LOW	4	14,29	38	26,21	3	4.11
			MEDIUM LOW	1	3,57	18	12,41	3	4.11
			HIGH MEDIUM HIGH	5	17,86	32	22,07	15	20.55
			HIGH	4	14,29	16	11,03	6	8.22
	HIGH	Anti-social and delinquent behavior	LOW	5	17,86	45	31,03	9	12.33
			LOW HIGH LOW	2	7,14	13	8,97	4	5.48
			HIGH MEDIUM	4	14,29	12	8,28	8	10.96
			HIGH	1	3,57	12	8,28	2	2.74
	TOTAL			28	100	245	100	73	100

Table 4 shows the percentage obtained in the relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behavior in students in third grade of secondary school in the provinces of Tumbes, demonstrating that in the case of the province of Rear Admiral Villar there is a greater relationship between high school social climate and low antisocial-criminal behavior (17.86%). Furthermore, in the province of Tumbes there is a greater relationship between a high school social climate and low antisocial criminal behavior (31.03%). Finally, in the case of the province of Zarumilla there is a relationship of medium school social climate with medium-high criminal antisocial behavior with a percentage of 20.55%.

## DISCUSSION

The main objective was to determine the relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behavior in high school students in the department of Tumbes, Peru. The results and applied statistical analysis show that there is a highly significant negative relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behaviors, so it can be concluded that the higher the school social climate, the lower the tendency to manifest antisocial-criminal behaviors. Different results are found in the research carried out by Carrión (2015) who sought to relate antisocial behavior and school social climate in high school students, finding that there is

a very weak, non-significant positive correlation between antisocial behavior and school social climate variables.

It was also found that with respect to the levels of school social climate prevailing among students according to gender, males perceived a better school social climate than females. In a similar study conducted by Guerra, Vargas, Castro, Plaza y Barrera (2012) found that they also perceive the school social climate to be at a moderate level; however, women perceive the school social climate more favorably than men. According to the results, we found a difference between the perception of the school social climate in the students in our study and those found in other research, which could be due to the fact that each institution influences students in a positive or negative way. According to Arón & Milicic (2009), they mention that the school social climate is the perception that people have of the various aspects of the environment in which they carry out their daily activities.

In relation to the levels of antisocial behavior, it was found that there is a greater incidence of men to carry out this type of behavior, since the percentages in the high level are higher than those of women. Likewise, women are the ones who present low levels of antisocial behaviors. Results similar to those found in Colombian adolescents who presented high levels of criminal behavior, a situation that reflects a predisposition in men for antisocial behavior in comparison to women (Uribe, F., Sanabria, A., Orcasita, L and Castellanos, J. 2016; Sánchez, Xóchitl and Robles, 2017; Sanabria, Uribe, 2009).

In relation to the levels of criminal behavior according to sex, it can be seen that it is men who present a greater incidence of criminal behavior at high and medium-high levels in relation to women who present a greater incidence at low levels. With regard to criminal behavior, a higher prevalence was found in the low level in men and women, which means that the adolescents in the study do not present a predisposition to infringe socially accepted norms. Studies similar to those found in Bogotá, Colombia, where low percentages of criminal behavior were identified in adolescents (Uribe, Sanabria, Orcasita & Castellanos, 2016).

Likewise, an attempt was made to establish the relationship between the social climate at school and antisocial-criminal behavior in third grade students in the provinces of Tumbes. In the province of Zarumilla there is a higher percentage of antisocial-criminal behavior than in the upper-middle class. These results could be due to the fact that Zarumilla is considered one of the most dangerous provinces in Peru. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Information (2018), the province of Zarumilla is among the top 10 provinces with the highest rate of reported crimes.

Considering the differences found in the relationship between school social climate and antisocial-criminal behavior, it is necessary that future research take into account the individual variables that have been shown to function as mediators between school factors and antisocial behavior such as personality, impulsivity or sensation-seeking (Sobral, Romero, Luengo & Marzona, 2000), self-esteem, attitudes towards aggression (Garaigordobil, 2005), or variables related to the influence of the family to generate or not antisocial behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1987; Rodríguez, 2011).

It is necessary to continue research on the genesis of antisocial behaviors and their relationship with various social-emotional problems, in addition to generating preventive or rehabilitation programs that reduce antisocial behaviors in adolescents.

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