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ABSTRACT

This study examined differences between public and Catholic schools concerning teachers' pupil control ideology, teachers' pupil control behavior, and students' perceptions of their classroom environments. The concepts of humanistic and custodial pupil control ideologies were used to contrast types of individual orientations and the types of school organizations that they seek to rationalize and justify. Custodial orientation depicts a classroom atmosphere with a rigid and highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order. Humanistic orientation conceives of the school and classroom as an educational community in which students learn through cooperative interaction and experience. The subjects of the study were secondary teachers and students in two public school districts and in the Catholic schools in a large city in the Midwest. Teachers in the Catholic schools were found to be more humanistic in pupil control ideology than teachers in public schools; however, no statistically significant differences were found in either pupil control behavior or students' perceptions of their teachers' control patterns. The finding that teacher humanism in pupil control ideology and behavior is associated with students' perceptions of classroom life as more interesting, challenging, and action-packed, supports earlier research; it shows that teachers do make a difference in what school is like for students. (JD)

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TEACHER PUPIL-CONTROL IDEOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR AS PREDICTORS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COMPARED

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TEACHER PUPIL-CONTROL IDEOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR AS PREDICTORS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COMPARED

A persistent and pervasive theme of the literature and research on the school has been a preoccupation with pupil control (Waller, 1932; Silberman, 1970). Previous work has shown that pupil control influences normative and other social structures as well as relationships among members and clients of the school (Willower & Jones, 1967; Willower, 1971).

The investigation reported here examined differences between public and Catholic schools concerning teachers' pupil control ideology, pupil control behavior, and students' perceptions of their classroom environments as robust or dramatic. A concomitant objective was to examine the relationship between these variables for the overall sample of schools and separately for public and Catholic schools.

Two previous studies examined relationships between these variables using samples of teachers and students from public schools (Multhauf et al.; Estep et al.). A third study examined the relationship between principals' pupil control behavior and school robustness using samples of principals and students from public schools (Smedley & Willower, 1981). However, no research to date has explored differences between public and Catholic schools concerning these variables. The research reported here seeks, on a modest scale, to begin to remedy that situation.

Pupil Control Ideology

Following the lead of earlier research on pupil control (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973), the concepts of humanistic and custodial pupil control ideologies were used to contrast types of individual orientations and the types of school organizations that they seek to rationalize and justify. A brief description of each prototype is presented below (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).

The model of custodial orientation depicts a classroom atmosphere with a rigid and highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order. Students are stereotyped in terms of their appearance, behavior and parents' social status. Teachers who hold a custodial orientation conceive of the school as an autocratic organization with a rigid pupil-teacher status hierarchy; the flow of power and communication is unilateral downward. Students must accept the decisions of teachers without question. Student misbehavior is viewed as a personal affront; students are perceived as irresponsible and undisciplined persons who must be controlled through punitive sanctions. Impersonality, pessimism and watchful mistrust imbue the atmosphere of the custodial school.

On the other hand, the model of the humanistic orientation conceives of the school as an educational community in which students learn through cooperative interaction and experience. Learning and behavior are viewed in psychological and sociological terms rather than moralistic ones. Self-discipline is substituted for strict teacher control. The humanistic orientation leads

teachers to desire a democratic atmosphere with its attendant flexibility in status and rules, sensitivity to others, open communication and increased student self-determination. Both teachers and pupils are willing to act on their own volition and to accept responsibility for their actions.

Pupil Control Behavior

The concepts of custodialism and humanism provide a way of thinking about educator orientations toward pupil control. These concepts can be employed in terms of ideology or in terms of behavior. That is, we can speak of an educator whose ideology concerning pupil control is relatively custodial or humanistic and we can speak of an educator whose controlling behavior is relatively custodial or humanistic. The study of educators' pupil control ideology rather than their pupil control behavior has provided only a partial view of pupil control in school organizations. Ideology may or may not be reflected in behavior (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973).

To allow a more complete view of pupil control in the school, the construct of pupil control behavior was conceptualized (Helsel & Willower, 1974). This construct is also based on a humanistic-custodial continuum. The concept of pupil control behavior builds upon and is companion to the extensive earlier work on pupil control ideology in educational organizations. Specifically, it represents an attempt to define and measure pupil

control behavior using the same theoretical framework that guided the earlier investigations. Prototypes of humanistic and custodial pupil control behaviors will be presented briefly (Helsel & Willower, 1974).

Custodial educators strive to maintain a high degree of order among pupils. These educators are impersonal and aloof in their relationships with students and are stringent and unyielding in dealing with them. Threats and punitive sanctions are used as means of control. Custodial educators manifest suspicion and distrust of pupils, often addressing them in an unpleasant or angry manner. These educators react personally and judgmentally toward students who misbehave.

Humanistic educators strive to establish a basis of mutual respect and friendship in their relationships with pupils. They are patient, congenial and easily approached by students. These educators are responsive to student suggestions and ideas and encourage pupil self-discipline and independence. They are flexible and tolerant in dealing with students and try to understand misbehavior.

Classroom Environmental Robustness

Recently, Donald Willower and Joseph Licata have hypothesized environmental robustness as a construct for differentiating school environments (Willower & Licata, 1975). They have conceptually defined environmental robustness as the perceived dramatic content

of school structure (Licata & Willower, 1978). Up the Down Staircase (Kaufman, 1971), To Sir With Love (Braithwaite, 1959), and Good-bye Mr. Chips (Hilton, 1962) are a few examples of the literature that depict schools, particularly in urban cities, as potentially dramatic places for both students and professional staff alike.

In developing an operational definition for environmental robustness, Licata and Willower employed ten adjective pairs: interesting/boring, challenging/dull, active/passive, unusual/usual, powerful/weak, thrilling/quieting, important/unimportant, fresh/stale, meaningful/meaningless, and action-packed/uneventful.

Adjectives that connote robustness are interesting, challenging, active, important, fresh, meaningful, action-packed, powerful, thrilling, and unusual. On the other hand, adjectives such as boring, dull, passive, quieting, stale, meaningless, usual, unimportant, weak, and uneventful connote a relative lack of robustness. These adjective pairs are operationalized with seven point semantic differential scales developed by Charles Osgood and his associates (1957).

Since no studies have examined differences between public and Catholic schools concerning the aforementioned variables, predictive hypotheses were not stated However, based on past research findings with public school samples, it was expected that the analyses undertaken would yield significant relationships between teachers' pupil control ideology and behavior and students' perceptions of their classroom environments as robust or dramatic.

METHOD

Subjects

In order to examine differences between public and Catholic schools concerning pupil control ideology, pupil control behavior, and classroom robustness, it was necessary to locate two specific groups of subjects--a group of public school teachers and students and a group of Catholic school teachers and students. Two school districts in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest were selected for the study. The public school subjects were drawn from the public school system in the city, and the Catholic school subjects were selected from the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese located in the city.

The subjects represented a diverse group of teachers with respect to age, race, gender, experience, and educational level. The student sample also exhibited variation with respect to racial composition, gender, and socio-economic status. The sample was limited to secondary schools, grades nine through twelve. Only teachers who taught major subjects that met five periods per week were involved in the study. The classroom was the unit of analysis. Individual teacher and student scores on the instruments employed in this study were aggregated on the classroom level.

Instrumentation

The subjects were administered the instrument battery described below. Usable data were obtained from 104 teachers and nearly 3,000 students--approximately equally divided between public and Catholic schools.

Pupil Control Ideology

The Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) was the instrument used to measure the extent to which the pupil control ideology of educators was custodial or humanistic; it consists of 20 Likert-type items. Examples of items are: "Beginning teacners are not likely to maintain strict enough control over their pupils," "Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision," and "It is often necessary to remind pupils that their status in schools differs from that of teachers." Responses are made on a 5-point scale in a strongly agree to strongly disagree format. The scoring range is 20 to 100; the higher the score the more custodial the ideology. Corrected split-half reliabilities of .91 and .95 were reported for this instrument and it discriminated between teachers and schools judged to be custodial or humanistic (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973).

Pupil Control Behavior

The Pupil Control Behavior Form (PCB) is a 20-item Likert-type device which measures an educator's pupil control behavior along a custodial-humanistic continuum. Examples of items, prefaced by the words "My teacher," are "is cheerful and pleasant with students" and "gets angry with students." Responses to each item range over five choices from always to never. The instrument is completed by students, and the score of a given teacher is the mean of the scores of the responding students in that teacher's class. The possible score range is from 20 to 100. Higher scores indicate more

custodial pupil control behavior, while lower scores indicate more humanistic behavior. The reported reliability of the PCB Form was .92 as estimated by Cronbach's alpha. Item-scale correlations for the instrument averaged .81, and a one-way analysis of variance indicated that the measure differentiated among subjects while clustering within subjects (Helsel & Willower, 1974).

Robustness Semontic Differential Scale

The semantic differential techniques of Charles Osgood and his associates (1957) were used in developing the Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD) Scale. The RSD Scale consists of ten pairs of polar adjectives placed at opposite ends of a seven-point scale. The ten pairs of adjectives are: boring/interesting, fresh/stale, meaningless/meaningful, important/unimportant, usual/unusual, weak/powerful, passive/active, quieting/thrilling, uneventful/action-packed, dull/challenging. Interesting, fresh, meaningful, important, unusual, powerful, active, thrilling, action-packed, and challenging are the adjectives for the robustness pole of the RSD scale (Licata & Willower, 1978).

The choices on the seven-point scale, illustrated for the hypothetical polar adjectives X and Y, are: extremely X, quite X, slightly X, neither X nor Y or equally X or Y, slightly Y, quite Y, and extremely Y (Osgood et al., 1957). Respondents indicate their choices by placing a check mark on a seven-space continuum between each polar adjective of the pair. In scoring the responses, one is

assigned to the low robustness end of the scale. Positive/negative bias is avoided by alternating the high robustness terms from left to right. The form is completed by students, and the school or classroom score is the mean of the responding students in that school or classroom. The possible score range is from ten to 70 with the higher score indicating greater robustness.

The final version of the RSD produced Pearson test-retest correlation coefficients ranging from .40 to .67 and Spearman test-retest correlation coefficients ranging from .42 to .65 (N = 84). Test-retest coefficients for the total instrument were .77 Pearson and .78 Spearman (Licata & Willower, 1978). In addition, analysis of data generated by Linda Estep, Donald Willower and Joseph Licata (1980) with 1,979 secondary students produced an alpha coefficient of .89.

Concurrent validity was demonstrated for each of the ten items based on their ability to discriminate significantly between the concepts "dramatic" and "not dramatic" (Licata & Willower, 1978). Further, the RSD exhibits a degree of face validity. For example, the investigators initially suggested that the possible excitement generated by school athletic events, graduation ceremonies, final examinations, dances and other school social activities or the possible tedium of study halls, rigid rules and regulations, and disciplining of students in public suggest that considerable variation in the drama or robustness of school life can be experienced by students and teachers alike (Licata, Willower, & Ellett, 1978). They provoke a certain amount of empathy for the

players and are probably described with adjectives like those which compose the robustness dimension of the RSD: fresh, powerful, meaningful, and thrilling or boring, dull, meaningless, and uneventful.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis of variance was used to examine differences between public and Catholic schools concerning pupil control ideology, pupil control behavior, and classroom robustness. Relationships between pupil control ideology and classroom robustness and between pupil control behavior and classroom robustness were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. In addition, a series of step-wise multiple regression analyses were performed to determine the most significant predictors of classroom robustness from the two pupil control scores and classroom demographic variables.

RESULTS

With respect to differences between public and Catholic schools concerning pupil control ideology, pupil control behavior, and classroom robustness, only pupil control ideology was significantly different in public and Catholic schools ($F = 10.74$, $p < .01$). That is, teachers in Catholic schools were more humanistic in pupil control ideology than teachers in public schools. No statistically significant differences were found in either pupil control behavior

($F = 1.02$, $p > .05$) or classroom robustness ($F = 0.56 > .05$) in public and Catholic schools. The data are summarized in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

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Tables 1, 2, 3 Here

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Teacher humanism in pupil control ideology was directly related to students' perceptions of their classroom life as robust or dramatic for all classrooms ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$), for public school classrooms analyzed separately ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$), and for Catholic school classrooms analyzed separately ($r = -.38$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the relationship between teacher humanism in pupil control behavior as perceived by students and classroom robustness as reported by students was also significant for the overall sample ($r = -.56$, $p < .001$), for public school classrooms ($r = -.59$, $p < .001$), and for Catholic school classrooms ($r = -.52$, $p < .001$) analyzed separately.

In addition, three series of multiple step-wise regression analyses were performed in order to predict classroom environmental robustness from pupil control orientation, pupil control behavior as well as from demographic characteristics such as teachers' sex, age, educational level, subject taught, and school. These multiple regressions were performed using the overall sample and for subsamples of public and Catholic school classrooms separately.

Standard use of step-wise regression was employed. That is, the first predictor variable added was the one that correlated highest with the criterion; the next variable added was the one that, in concert with the first, best predicted the criterion, and so on. The final regression equation contained the variables that, in combination, represented the best predictive value while holding the other variables constant.

Table 4 through 6 present summaries of multiple correlations (R), squared multiple correlations (R2), F values (F), and significance levels (p) for each step of the regressions of the seven predictor variables against RSD.

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Table 4 Here

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Results in Table 4 indicate that teachers pupil control behavior significantly correlated with classroom robustness, at step one in the analysis (R = .583), and accounted for approximately 34% of RSD variance. At step two, the next variable to enter the regression equation was school, which, when combined with the pupil control behavior variable, increased the multiple correlation to .584, and the amount of variance in RSD only slightly. The inclusion of all seven predictor variables in the regression analysis increased the

multiple correlation to only .628, and the amount of explained RSD/predictor variable variance to 39%.

Table 5 summarizes the results of the regression of classroom environmental robustness and the seven predictor variables for public school classrooms. The predictor variable entering the regression equation at the first step was teachers' pupil control behavior. The RSD/pupil control behavior correlation was .608 ($p < .001$), indicating about 37% of common RSD/predictor variable variance. The addition of teachers' education level to the equation at step two, school at step three, and subject taught at step four raised the multiple correlation to .727, and the amount of RSD/predictor factor variance to approximately 53%.

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Table 5 Here

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Table 6 presents a summary of findings from the regression of classroom environmental robustness and the seven predictor variables in Catholic schools. Again, the first predictor variable to enter the regression equation was pupil control behavior. The RSD/pupil control behavior correlation was moderate ($R = .548$, $p < .001$). The next predictor variabl to enter at step two was school. When combined with the pupil control behavior variable at step one, the multiple correlation increased to .679, indicating about 46% shared

RSD/predictor factor variance. Moderate amounts of RSD variance were accounted for through step seven by the addition of educational level, pupil control orientation, sex, subject and age, increasing the multiple correlation to .720, and the amount of common RSD/predictor factor variance to about 52%.

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Table 6 Here

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The results in Tables 4 through 6 indicate that teachers' pupil control behavior is the single best predictor of classroom environmental robustness in the overall sample of classrooms and in the samples of public and Catholic school classrooms analyzed separately.

DISCUSSION

The finding that teacher humanism in pupil control ideology and behavior were associated with students' perceptions of classroom life as robust or dramatic provides support for earlier research using samples of public school teachers and students. Put another way, when teachers' pupil control beliefs and behavior were more humanistic toward students, the students tended to report their classroom life as more interesting, challenging, meaningful, action-packed, and so forth; when teachers pupil control orientation

and behavior were more custodial, students tended to report their classrooms as more boring, dull, meaningless, uneventful, and the like.

Teacher control behavior emerged as the stronger of the two pupil control measures used, however. This finding supported two previous investigations using public school subjects. One study used elementary public school teachers and students (Multhauf, Willower, & Licata, 1978); the second used secondary public school subjects (Estep, Willower, & Licata, 1980). The results of the present investigation (which used public and Catholic school subjects), combined with the two previous studies, justifies confidence in the relationship. All three studies found pronounced correlations, indicating that teacher pupil control behavior is a solid predictor of classroom robustness.

The fact that teachers' pupil control behavior accounted for about 45 percent of the variance in classroom robustness indicates that, at least in the present study, teachers did make a difference in what school was like for students. There were other factors that also had an impact. However, variables like personal characteristics of teachers and organizational components, which are not easily influenced by building level administrators, were found to be less important influences on students' perceptions of classroom environment. The pupil control behavior of the teacher made a distinct contribution to classroom life for students.

Licata and Wildes (1980) have already suggested in an earlier investigation that the classrooms of more humanistic teachers are

less routinized, repetitive, freer, and more interesting places for students than are classrooms of their more custodial colleagues. Their finding together with the works of Multhauf et al. (1978) and Estep et al. (1980), and the outcomes of the present investigation have far-reaching implications for education and the improvement of schools. They suggest that teachers do affect the tone of their classrooms. For example, the recent national reform package, Turning Point (1990), a project of the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the White House requires, among other things, that school administrators spend a majority of their time in instructional improvement; this requires concern with the kind of instruction taking place and the environment in the classroom. Any change or improvement in high school education will be hampered unless administrators look at teachers' pupil control styles. The present investigation and previous studies reveal the need for classrooms which are less custodial and more humanistic. School leaders need to design strategies to make the school a more attractive place for students to be.

The finding that Catholic school teachers are significantly more humanistic in pupil control ideology than public school teachers infers that the public school teachers in this sample perceive themselves as spending a great deal of time controlling, directing, and disciplining students. Briefly, a custodial pupil control ideology stresses the maintenance of order, impersonality, unilateral/downward communication, distrust of students, and a punitive, moralistic stance toward deviance. The situation in

public schools may be such that teachers may feel that they must maintain the views mentioned above, and that any letup in custodial control may be disastrous.

The Catholic school teachers in this sample perceive themselves stressing cooperative interaction and experiences in learning, high supportive behavior, less close supervision, close personal relationships between teachers and pupils, and positive attitudes toward pupils. Briefly, a humanistic pupil control ideology emphasizes the psychological and sociological bases of learning and behavior and an accepting, trustful view of students, and confidence in their ability to be self-disciplining and responsible.

An unexpected finding of this study was the apparent homogeneity of the students' perceptions of their teachers' pupil control behavior in public and Catholic schools. This occurred in spite of differences in pupil control ideology between public and Catholic school teachers. Coleman (1982, 1987) reported that every type of problematic student behavior which he examined in his comprehensive study of public, Catholic and private schools was less prevalent in Catholic and private schools. Since private schools experienced fewer discipline problems than public schools, it seems reasonable to assume that Catholic school students would perceive their teachers' pupil control behavior as less custodial, that is, more humanistic. This was not the case for the present sample.

One explanation for the lack of difference between public and Catholic schools concerning pupil control behavior is that teacher

beliefs toward pupil control may or may not be reflected in actual behavior in the classroom. Willower and his colleagues (1973) write:

> While it seems reasonable to expect a correspondence between beliefs and behavior in a free situation, such a correspondence in the setting of a formal organization cannot be assumed. The nature of hierarchical relationships, rules, sanctions and demands from various groups both within and outside of the organization clearly function as intervening variables (p. 37).

Another explanation for the apparent homogeneity of pupil control behavior in public and Catholic schools can be gleaned again from Coleman's (1987) study. According to Coleman, Catholic school students reported that, while they felt they were treated more fairly and had greater autonomy within the school setting than their counterparts in public schools, they acknowledged that discipline was stricter in Catholic schools. It can be reasoned, therefore, that Catholic school students expected discipline to be stricter and these expectations were manifested in their reports of the pupil control behavior of teachers.

Erickson's (1981, 1983) comparative work in public and independent schools may shed some further light on the homogeneity of pupil control behavior scores in public and Catholic schools. Erickson reported that Catholic school parents expected down-to-business, orderly conditions, lots of homework, and rigidly

strict discipline. This outlook emanating from the home may have disposed Catholic school students to perceive their teachers similarly to their public school counterparts, even though Coleman reported that there were fewer and less severe behavior problems in Catholic schools than in public schools.

Failure to find differences between public and Catholic schools concerning classroom robustness raises an interesting point. Students' perceptions of the degree of positiveness of the classroom environment is probably more a function of the individual teacher than the type of school--public or Catholic. It can be assumed that teachers do influence students' perceptions of classroom environment as being interesting, or boring, meaningful or meaningless, important or unimportant, action-packed or uneventful, challenging or dull, and so on.

Teaching involves the ability to establish rapport with students and, through the impact of personality, awaken enthusiasm for the learning process. The teacher daily must resolve the conflict between the personalistic demands of the pupil-teacher relationship and the exercise of organizational demands for control in the classroom. The relative homogeneity of teacher classroom robustness scores in public and Catholic schools can lead to the assumption that both the affective and organizational demands of the pupil-teacher relationships are evenly distributed within public and Catholic schools at least for the present sample. Obviously, these are speculations that call for careful empirical examination.

It should be noted that, given the exploratory nature of this study, the findings should be considered tentative. Limitations involving the nature and size of the teacher and student samples should be recognized. However, specific results of the study did provide greater insight into possible relationships between teachers' pupil control styles and classroom environments and differences between public and Catholic schools concerning these variables.

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Table 1

Summary Data and Analysis of Variance Data for Comparisons between Pupil Control Ideology of Public and Catholic School Teachers

	Public School Teachers	Catholic School Teachers
Number	56	48
Mean	59.55	53.79
Standard Deviation	9.27	8.53

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	1	858.08	858.08	10.74*
Within Groups	102	8147.76	79.88	

* $p < .01$

Table 2

Summary Data and Analysis of Variance Data for Comparisons between Pupil Control Behavior of Public and Catholic School Teachers

	Public School Teachers	Catholic School Teachers
Number	56	48
Mean	48.82	46.42
Standard Deviation	11.89	12.15

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	1	149.47	149.47	1.02 (N.S.)
Within Groups	102	14951.88	146.59	

Table 3

Summary Data and Analysis of Variance Data for Comparisons between Classroom Environmental Robustness of Public and Catholic School Classrooms

	Public School Classrooms	Catholic School Classrooms
Number	56	48
Mean	43.91	45.00
Standard Deviation	7.44	7.35

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	1	30.67	30.67	0.56 (N.S.)
Within Groups	102	5584.55	54.75	

TABLE 4

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTAL ROBUSTNESS FOR ALL CLASSROOMS

Variable	R	R2	F	P
Pupil Control Behavior	.5828	.3396	49.37	.001
School	.5838	.3408	3.81	.05
Education Level	.5855	.3428	1.52	.
Sex	.5916	.3499	1.43	.
Subject Taught	.6068	.3682	.81	.
Age	.6126	.3753	.29	.
Pupil-Control Orientation	.6277	.3940	.18	.

TABLE 5

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTAL ROBUSTNESS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Variable	R	R2	F	P
Pupil Control Behavior	.6076	.3692	30.44	.001
Education Level	.6589	.4342	5.86	.05
School	.7260	.5271	5.02	.05
Subject Taught	.7269	.5283	4.85	.05
Sex	.7277	.5296	1.34	.
Pupil Control Orientation	.7278	.5297	0.26	.
Age	.7311	.5344	0.01	.

TABLE 6

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTAL ROBUSTNESS FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Variable	R	R2	F	P
Pupil Control Behavior	.5480	.3001	18.03	.001
School	.6796	.4618	12.30	.001
Education Level	.6812	.4640	1.28	.
Pupil Control Orientation	.7111	.5056	0.80	.
Sex	.7156	.5121	0.31	.
Subject	.7193	.5175	0.31	.
Age	.7199	.5183	0.19	.