

A Validation Study of Perception of School Social Bonding (PSSB) instrument

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Abstracts:

School bonding refers to a meta-construct that encompasses several aspects of students' engagement and connection with school. Previous studies have constantly shown that school bonding is one of the significant protective factors that affect numerous educational and social outcomes for students. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted to develop a reliable and valid instrument to measure the concept of school bonding. This study aims to validate Perception of School Social Bonding (PSSB) with explanatory factor analysis and examine differences in school bonding across students' characteristics. Data for this study include a total of 2620 students in 8 public schools across Indiana. More than half of respondents was female (53.5%) and students of color (55.5%), while a majority of students (70.7%) was 11-15 ages. A factor analysis demonstrated that school bonding consisted of three subscale: attachment (4 items), involvement (3 items), and commitment/brief (4 items). All scales indicate acceptable reliability; Cronbach's alpha coefficients for overall school bonding was .85, ranging from .74 to .83 for subscales. On average, commitment/brief ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .83$) was rated relatively higher than involvement ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.04$) and attachment ($M = 3.43$, $SD = .97$). In addition, the findings indicated that the level of school bonding significantly differs by students' demographics. Female students ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .72$), white students ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .75$), and students aged 6-10 ($M = 3.695$, $SD = .80$) reported significantly higher scores on overall school bonding than did their counterparts. The findings suggest that school should pay more attention to male, ethnically marginalized, and older students in promoting their school bonding. Future research is also needed to identify significant challenges and barriers that prevent such students at risk from their active engagement and positive connection with their school.

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