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**Psychological *Suzhi* Mediates the Longitudinal Association Between
Perceived School Climate and Depressive Symptoms**

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Abstract (209 words)

The protective influences of students' perceptions of school climate against mental health problems has been supported in previous research, yet, relatively little is known about the mechanism underlying school climate's influences on Chinese youths' depressive symptoms. Guided by a Process-Person-Context-Time model, this study examined the mediating effect of psychological *suzhi* (a Chinese cultural construct comprised of a hierarchical, integrated set of positive psychological qualities) on the longitudinal associations between perceived school climate and depressive emotional experiences among Chinese adolescents. Students ($N = 1,151$; 52.2% boys; $M_{age} = 16.24$, $SD = 0.70$) from one Chinese high school participated in a three-wave (each wave was six months apart) longitudinal study. Multilevel mediation models analyzed between- and within-person effects on the longitudinal association between perceived school climate and depressive symptoms. Results indicated that students who perceived more positive school climate reported lower depressive symptoms than students who perceived negative school climate (between-person effect); however, for the students who positively perceived school climate did not always directly report lower depressive symptoms across time (within-person effect). Psychological *suzhi* mediated the association between perceived school climate and depressive symptoms both at the between- and within-person levels. Students perceived positive school climate increased their psychological *suzhi*, and further decreased their depressive symptoms. Implications for school-based mental health prevention services that target depression are discussed.

Keywords: perceived school climate, psychological *suzhi*, depressive symptoms, longitudinal relationship, process-person-context-time model.

Impact and Implications

Psychological *suzhi* is a positive psychological quality in Chinese culture, which may explain the relation between the students' perceived school climate and depressive symptoms. Changes in proximal process influenced outcomes indirectly through the change in students' characteristics with time. Identifying the influence of psychological *suzhi* on this relation can help to inform efforts to develop and implement prevention programs that increase the quality of the educational environment (school climate) for students while also reducing youths' depressive symptoms.