

Organizational Climate and Students' Performance in Rural and Urban Schools

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ABSTRACT

School climate has long been recognized as having an important effect on student learning & achievement (Agnew, 1981; Anderson, 1982; Strong & Jones, 1991; Fraser, 1994; Bulach, Malone & Castleman, 1995). The schools are the major social environment in which students share beliefs, fears, values & norms (Hofman & Guldemon, 2001) & where in turn students "Cognitive & affective functioning is shaped by the characteristics of their schools & schooling" (Hofman et.al.2001, P.172). The climate of a school is one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1985) and "without a climate that creates a harmonious and well functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain" (Hoyle et.al.1985, P.15) Learning in schools takes place in social context, both inside & outside the classroom (Hofman et.al., 2001). A large body of evidence found student perceptions of classroom psychosocial characteristics to be strongly related to cognitive & affective outcomes (Haertel, 1981; Fraser, 1998). Also the exemplary school project done by "Canadian Association, 1985" found that the essential characteristics of high achieving schools were their psychosocial climate. Learning is facilitated when the school environment is secure, supportive & focused on learning. This applies to all children including the children who have special educational needs i.e. exceptional children. Besides, this is applicable to young children as well. Indeed, the social climate of school is likely to be far more important as the child begins school. The socio emotional adjustment is the outcome of interpersonal interactions of the individuals in social systems, which is an important aspect of psychosocial climate of an organization such as an educational institution (Disterly and Schneider, 1974). Findings of many research workers (Doctor, 1984; Martin, 1983) have established the effect of educational environment and psychosocial climate of the school on development and progress of the students. The present investigation was a forward step on the way, where various researchers have laid foundations of their researches. In the present study the investigator has made an attempt to compare the perceived organizational climate and its relation with scholastic performance of sec. school students in rural and urban locality. This would be of tremendous importance for the personnel engaged with the students in rural and urban areas.

KEY WORDS: - Organizational Climate, Students' Performance, Rural Schools, Urban Schools

INTRODUCTION

The climate of a school is one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1985) and " without a climate that creates a harmonious and well functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain" (Hoyle et.al.1985,P.15)

The purpose of the present investigation was to identify the correlation of socio-emotional school climate and performance among rural and urban school students. The study was also aimed to compare the perceived socio-emotional school climate and performance of rural and urban school students.

The socio-emotional climate of the school is an important aspect of education and it contributes to the satisfaction of pupils' needs, development of their attitudes and to the nature of learning that takes place. The perception of the students of their school is supposed to affect their motivation and behaviour, hence, all the dimensions of their development.

Conceptual Clarity

Organizational Climate

The organization with different forms and functions may share bureaucratic activities and norms but develop different and distinctive normative climate (Kant & Khan, 1978). Organizational climate is defined as a set of perceived attributes of an organization and its sub-systems as reflected in the ways the organization deals its members, groups and issues. Renaton (1968) defined organizational climate as a relatively enduring of the internal environment i.e. experienced by the members, influences their behaviour and can be described in terms of values of a particular set of characteristics of the organization.

Forehand & Gilmer (1964) defined organizational climate as a set of characteristics that describes organization

- a) Distinguishes one organization from the other organization
- b) Is relatively enduring over time, and
- c) Influence behaviour of people in the organization.

STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

In ordinary sense, performance refers to the performance of students in various subjects of prescribed curriculum in the educational institutions. It is the academic status of an individual as a whole. In literal sense, achievement is something that is accomplished successfully with efforts and skills. The performance is regarded educational outcomes of an individual or group of individuals through a process of regular instructions.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

In the present study, organizational climate has been taken as the socio-emotional climate prevailing in the school which is assessed in terms of scores obtained by the students in SESCOI (Socio-Emotional School Climate Inventory) developed by Sinha and Bhargava.

STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

In the present study, average of total scores in the final exams of previous three years has been considered as the students' performance.

RURAL SCHOOLS

The schools which are located in the villages are considered as the rural schools.

URBAN SCHOOLS

The schools which are located in the cities or towns are considered as the urban schools

. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Kumar (1972) conducted a study entitled, "Social climate in a school and character of its pupils" and found that different types of school social climates have differential effect on certain aspects of students' behaviour. School with open climate tends to show better personal adjustment of pupils than the other types of climate.

Pillai (1974) studied organizational climate, teacher morale and school quality and planned to determine the extent, to which the organizational climate of school and faculty morale in the school were related to quality of schools. The major finding of the study was that performance of pupils was significantly better in the schools with open and autonomous.

Verma (1977) studied the school-learning environment as a function of Socio-emotional climate of the school. His findings were that the Socio-emotional climate of classroom not only predicted and influenced the pupil's academic achievement, but also affected his classroom behaviour development. The classroom climate was positively correlated with studiousness factor of the socio-metric test.

Gayathri (1983) conducted a study entitled "Educational orientations and related factors affecting the academic achievement of university students" and found a significant relationship between educational environment and academic achievement.

Puri (1984) conducted a study entitled, "A study of relation of locus of control, environment facilities, drive and academic achievement of secondary school students. The study was conducted on 284 students and a significant positive relation was found between environment facilities and academic achievement.

Forman (1988) conducted a study on educational environment and students' morale. Significant correlation was found for all the Government single shift schools of urban area and Government single shift schools of rural area. The students' moral educational environment was found to be significantly correlated.

Cook and Mari Naells (1989) investigated the effect of school climate and teacher morals on student's achievement and any possible relationship among these variables. The study indicated that there was not any significant relationship between mean level of gain in students' achievement and degree and openness of organizational climate.

Debra Ann and Pavignano (1990) conducted a research entitled, "Influence of organizational structure and climate on academic achievement in elementary school." The study was concerned with an investigation of structure and climate of elementary school and the relationship between these characteristics and student's achievement. Support was found for the positive influence of division of labour, a measure of structure on student's achievement.

Meenan (1991) conducted a study entitled, "The effect of classroom environment on achievement in Work Place Literacy Program". The study was concerned with the investigation of relationship of social environment of work place literacy classroom to student's achievements.

Coton (1996) in his study entitled, "School size, school climate and student's performance" investigated effect of school unit size, its academic and social standard on student's performance. It was found that students in a small high school experience an increasingly more positive attitude towards school. This allows greater students' participation and performance in extra-curricular activities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organizational Climate and Students' Performance in Rural and Urban Schools in District Sirsa- A Comparative Study

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is carried out by the investigator with the following objectives:-

1. To study organizational climate as perceived by the Sec. School students in rural schools.
2. To study organizational climate as perceived by the Sec. School students in urban schools.
3. To study performances of students in rural schools.
4. To study performance of students in urban schools.
5. To compare perceived organizational climate of students in urban and rural schools.
6. To compare performances of students in urban and rural school.
7. To study effect of organizational climate on students' performance.

HYPOTHESES

The study has been undertaken on the basis of following hypotheses:-

1. The students of urban schools perceive their organizational climate as more favorable than rural school students.
2. The performance of urban school students is better than rural school students.
3. The perceived organizational climate affects significantly the performance of the students.

METHODOLOGY

In research there are various methods and procedures to be applied.

- (1) Historical method
- (2) Experiment method
- (3) Descriptive method

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study is comprised to Normative Survey Design. Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. The responses were in multiple choices.

POPULATION

The main purpose of research is to discover principles that have universal application, but to study a whole population to arrive at generalization would be impracticable, if not impossible. At times, some populations are so large that before the measurement of characteristics could be completed, the population would have been changed. Thus, research is invariably conducted by means of a sample drawn from the target population on the basis of which generalizations are to be drawn and applicable to the population as a whole.

In the present study, the target population constitutes all the sec. School students of the rural and urban locality in the Sirsa district.

SAMPLE

For the present study, the investigator followed convenience or chunk and simple random sampling. The convenience or chunk sampling is a non-random sampling method, which is neither based on probability nor on judgment, but the sample is selected by convenience. On the other hand, in random sampling method each item in the population has equal probability for being included in the sample. The target population in the present study covered all the secondary school students. Owing to obvious constraints of field situation, it was not possible to encompass the entire population. Thus, two secondary schools from rural and two from urban locality were selected by convenience sampling method. Then, 50 students from each selected school were picked up by the simple random sampling method.

Thus, a sample of 200 students of classes IX, X, XI and XII including 100 students from rural schools and 100 students from urban schools were selected for the present investigation.

DESIGN

In the present investigation Pre-test and post-test design was used.

METHOD USED

There are mainly three types of methods in educational research.

- Historical Method

Experimental Method

Descriptive method or Normative Survey Method

The survey approach to educational problem is one of the most commonly used approaches. It is used in studying local as well as state, national and international aspects of education. It involves interpretation, comparison, measurement, classification, evaluation and generalization, all directed towards proper understanding and solution of significant educational problems. In present study the experimental method of research was used.

TOOLS USED

the present study, the investigator used “Socio-emotional School Climate Inventory” by Sinha and Bhargava (1994).

COLLECTION OF DATA

After selecting the schools, the investigator visited the schools with the tool (SESCI) meant for the secondary school students. With prior permission of heads of the institutions (i.e. principals), the investigator met selected student of classes IX,X,XI and XII personally. The purpose of the questionnaires was explained to them. The students were assured that the present questionnaires were meant for the research purpose only and would not them in any way and the information furnished by them would be kept confidential. They were requested to feel free while responding to each item in the questionnaire.

For the collection of data, investigator distributed the questionnaire to each and every student and asked to respond for each and every item mentioned in the questionnaire.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

For analysis of data in the present study following statistical techniques were used:

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- T-test

MAIN FINDINGS

In the light of the analysis of the data and interpretation of results of the present investigation as already discussed in the previous chapter, the following main findings are stated:-

1. Most of the rural school students perceive their organizational climate as more favorable. This may probably due to the attitude of the school teachers towards their students. A significant percentage of the students in rural school perceive their organizational climate as moderately favorable. This may probably due to other dimensions of the school climate such as structure and autonomy. A very little percentage of the rural school students perceive their organizational climate as unfavorable. This is due to the structural and functional aspects of the school climate.
2. Most of the urban school students also perceive their school climate as favorable. This is due to structural and functional aspects of the school. A good percentage of urban school students perceive their school climate as moderately favorable. This is due to the administrative aspects of the school climate. A very little percentage of the urban school students perceive their school climate as unfavorable. This is due to the poor interest of the students towards study and may be due to impartial attitude of the school staff.
3. A large majority of the rural school students are high performers. Further, a good fraction of rural school students are average performers. A very little percentage of the rural school students are low performers.
4. A large majority of the urban school students are high performers. A little percentage of the urban school students is average performers. A very negligible fraction of urban school students are low performers.

5. The perception of urban school student's w.r.t. their organizational climate was found to be more favorable than the rural school students.
6. The performance of the urban school students was found to be far better than then performance of rural school students.
7. The perception of student's w.r.t. their organizational climate was found to affect the overall performance of the students.

CONCLUSION

As is evident from the above findings, the investigator concludes that the organizational climate prevailing in the school affects significantly to the academic performance of the students. The performance of the students who perceive their school climate as favorable was found to be better than, those who perceive their school climate as moderately favourable and rather unfavorable.

Further, it has been found that the performance of urban school students was found better than the rural school students.

The better performance of the urban school students was due to better educational facilities, competent teaching staff and better functional aspects of school climate.

The performance of rural school students was comparatively poor than the urban school students. This was due to poor educational facilities available in rural schools, comparatively less competent school staff lacking innovative ideas to motivate students. That is why the performance level of rural school students was found to be relatively poor than the urban school students.

It was also found in the present investigation that the urban school students perceive their school climate as more favorable than the rural school students do. This was due to better infra-structural facilities, competent teaching, non-teaching and administrative staff & other educational facilities available to them in the school.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In the scientific age of today, the explicit progress and prosperity of man both in terms of material and intellect has put forward a challenge to the educational institutions. Schools as the most vital agency educating the human beings have always been the symbol of progress and the center of values in the past and even today. So apart from quantity, the quality of education provided by schools has been and continues to be a major concern in our society. The effectiveness of any school system is gauged through the extent the pupils involved in the school system achieve, whether it may be in cognitive, connective or psychomotor domain. A number of research studies have identified the favorable school climate as contributing to and correlating with increased students' achievement.

The present study was too undertaken to find out the effect of perceived organizational climate on academic performance of rural and urban school students. Thus, the finding of present study have its implications for the teachers, administrators and other personnel working with the secondary school students studying in rural and urban localities.

The studies have evidently indicated that the academic performance of students is positively correlated with the perceived organizational climate prevailing in the school. The favorable perception of socio emotional school climate has nurtured higher to students' performance as compared to moderate/less favorable or unfavorable perception. Thus, it implies that in order to bring better academic performance of the students, the administrators, teachers and other personnel should maintain cordial relationship among themselves as well as with students. They should take utmost care of a democratic environment inside the school. They should also take all care of students' problems. Apart from the instructional methodology, they should provide new programs leading to better interpersonal interactions and favorable perception of students with respect to their socio emotional school climate.

The study also indicated that the urban school students perceive their socio emotional school climate as more favorable in comparison with the rural school students. This favorable perception is attributed to the individual attention paid by administrators, teachers and other personnel towards the students in urban schools. Such kind of interaction is found to be lacking in the rural school settings. Thus, due care is to be made in this regard. The school authorities should make best efforts to meet the unique individual needs of the students in the rural school systems. Also, a significant attention is to be paid towards the structural and functional aspects in the school.

The results of the present study, therefore, have important implications for the teachers, administrators and other school personnel who are responsible for maintaining effective organizational climate in their schools.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

Each and every study has some scope for further improvement. The present research is not an exception to this fact. The present study was undertaken to find out the relationship between organizational climate prevailing in the school and the academic performance of the secondary school students. The following suggestions may be considered for further research:-

1. The study was confined to secondary/ senior secondary schools. Similar studies may be undertaken at primary/ middle or college/ university level in other states too.
2. Similar study may be extended to large sample to get more valid results.
3. The study was confined to co-educational general schools. Similar studies may be undertaken in boys and girls schools separately.
4. Replication of study may be done by using other tools and techniques.

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