



The State Of School Climate At Secondary Level: Problems, Perspectives, And Their Remedies

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Abstract

This research article explores the intricate aspects of school climate in secondary education, specifically for secondary level. It examines the various challenges that influence the educational setting and acknowledges the critical role of school climate in shaping students' academic and personal growth. The study seeks to pinpoint and assess the main issues affecting this environment and offers potential solutions to address them. Secondary school years are a critical period in students' lives, influencing their well-being, academic success, and overall school experience. This research highlights several pressing concerns that contribute to an unfavorable school climate. Among these are the high rates of bullying and peer conflicts, which create an unsafe and unwelcoming atmosphere. The study also addresses the social and emotional difficulties faced by adolescents, such as mental health challenges, the need for supportive relationships, and the importance of fostering a sense of belonging. Additionally, the research explores how school leadership and teacher-student relationships influence the school climate. It underscores the importance of effective communication and collaboration among all members of the school community to improve the overall educational experience. By examining these issues and proposing solutions, the study aims to help schools create a more positive and supportive environment for their students.

Key Words: School Climate, Secondary level, Teachers, Students, Perspectives, Remedies.

Introduction

Education is the act of integrating children into society by instructing them in cultural values and norms, equipping them with the necessary abilities to contribute effectively to society, and enabling them to acquire the technical and analytical skills required to pursue their chosen occupation, create goods, and offer services to others. Education is crucial in democratic societies since it enhances civic engagement and fosters equitable access to opportunities for everyone. It serves as a potent catalyst for progress and is one of the most effective tools for alleviating poverty and enhancing health, gender parity, peace, and

personal well-being. Education plays a crucial role in promoting economic development, alleviating poverty, and enhancing overall well-being.

Hoy and Miskel (1996): School Climate is the atmosphere in which the school conducts itself, which is technically known as its organisational climate. It refers to teachers' perceptions of their general work environment. More specifically, school climate "is a relatively enduring quality of the entire school that is experienced by members, describes their collective perceptions of routine behaviour, and affects their attitudes and behaviour.

Concept of School Climate

School climate is a complex concept that has been extensively examined by psychologists and sociologists. The concept of organisational climate in educational institutions was initially defined by Halpin and Croft in 1963. It was noted that the interplay between the behaviours of school leaders and teachers shapes the organisational climates of schools. Halpin and Croft categorised organisational climates in schools into six distinct types: open climate, controlled climate, autonomous climate, paternal climate, intimate climate, and closed climate. These variables of school organisational climate have been utilised in diverse research to comprehend the influence of school climate on student learning and accomplishment. But the concept of school climate was initially introduced in the literature more than a century ago, in 1908, by Perry. Subsequently, other facets of school climate have been scrutinised. Researchers have been establishing a correlation between school climate and student results for more than four decades.

Sweeny (1988) provided an overview of School Organisational climate as the current circumstances that impact the functioning and operations of successful schools. An inclusive and conducive school environment that positively impacts the well-being and engagement of both students and staff is essential. Due to the impact of school climate on the emotional aspect, it is challenging to separate climate from the competencies, information, and beliefs that children acquire via their academic pursuits. School climate refers to the whole quality and nature of the school environment, encompassing both social and physical elements. It plays a crucial role in fostering healthy behaviour, academic success, and the social and emotional growth of children. The school climate plays a vital role in influencing the entire educational experience. The term "school culture" refers to the collective social attributes of a school, such as the dynamics between students and staff, the focus on learning and teaching, the values and standards upheld, and the common methods and practices followed. The school climate throughout the secondary level time significantly impacts student well-being, academic success, and overall school effectiveness. School climate encompasses the social aspects of a school, including the interactions between students and staff/teachers, the focus on learning and teaching, the values and standards upheld, and the common techniques and practices followed. Studies have demonstrated that the school environment significantly influences children's emotional and behavioural results. It impacts the adaptive psychosocial adjustment of students. Psychological well-being and self-perception. An inclusive and nurturing educational

environment enhances the social, emotional, and cognitive growth of both children and instructors. An optimistic school atmosphere and conducive learning environment enhance academic performance, attendance, grade advancement, and graduation rates. Furthermore, there is a correlation between school climate and other favourable results, such as heightened student involvement, decreased absenteeism, and diminished occurrences of disciplinary issues. An optimistic school atmosphere can also mitigate the adverse consequences of stress on pupils, therefore enhancing their academic achievements and general welfare.

Types of School Climate

The literature categorises school organisational climates into six distinct types: open climate, autonomous climate, regulated climate, paternal climate, familiar climate, and closed climate.

The following types of school climate have been identified in the literature:

Open Climate: This type of climate is characterised by a culture of openness, trust, and collaboration. It fosters an environment where students, teachers, and administrators feel comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns.

Autonomous Climate: In an autonomous climate, there is a high degree of independence and self-governance. This type of climate encourages individual initiative and decision-making, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility among students and staff.

Controlled Climate: A controlled climate is marked by strict regulations, rules, and oversight. It may be associated with a more authoritarian or rigid approach to management and discipline within the school.

Paternal Climate: This type of climate is characterised by a nurturing and supportive atmosphere, where the school leadership and staff take on a parental role, providing guidance, support, and care for students.

Familiar Climate: A familiar climate emphasises a sense of community and belonging, where students and staff feel like they are part of an extended family. This type of climate promotes close relationships and a supportive network within the school.

Closed Climate: In a closed climate, there may be limited transparency, communication, and collaboration. This type of climate may be associated with exclusivity, secrecy, or a lack of openness within the school community.

Issues and Concerns of School Climate

This article examines the primary difficulties encountered at the secondary level, investigating their impact on students, instructors, and the learning atmosphere.

- 1. Bullying and Social Dynamics:** Bullying is still a serious problem in secondary schools, and it may take many different forms, including physical, verbal, and online abuse. A bad social climate may worsen when power disparities are amplified by the hierarchical structure of secondary education. The

psychological well-being, self-esteem, and academic achievement of bullied individuals are frequently negatively impacted in the long run. The development of a welcoming and accepting school climate, as well as intervention and prevention programmes, are essential in the fight against bullying.

2. **Academic Pressure and Stress:** There is a lot of pressure to do well in school and higher academic standards at the secondary level. Students may experience stress, worry, and burnout as a result of the excessive emphasis on standardised testing and the college admissions process. Concerns about mental health aside, the school climate is also affected by academic stress. There must be a middle ground between strict academic requirements and an atmosphere encouraging pupils to thrive. Essential measures include the introduction of stress-reduction programmes, the provision of counselling services, and the advocacy for a more comprehensive approach to education.
3. **Teacher Burnout and Retention:** Secondary level educators have distinct obstacles, such as effectively handling the different requirements of students, adjusting to changing curricula, and dealing with behavioural concerns. The resultant stress and workload contribute to teacher burnout and, in certain instances, elevated employee turnover rates.

The repercussions of teacher burnout transcend the scope of individual educators, exerting an influence on the overall atmosphere of the school. Schools can provide resources to enhance teacher support by providing professional development opportunities and mentorship programmes and fostering a pleasant work atmosphere that recognises and values teachers' accomplishments.

4. **Technology and Cyberbullying:** There are benefits and drawbacks to incorporating technology into the classroom. Although technology makes studying easier, it also puts pupils at risk of cyberbullying and other forms of online harassment. As a result of the increased complexity of social interactions brought about by the digital world, schools must teach students how to be good digital citizens and promote responsible technology use. For a school to have a healthy climate, it is vital to set clear norms, promote online safety, and provide a supportive environment for reporting cyberbullying.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Secondary schools serve as microcosms of society, including a wide range of students from different cultural, financial, and intellectual backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion issues, including discrimination, microaggressions, and unequal access to opportunities, can lead to a fragmented educational environment. Promoting inclusivity and diversity in schools may be achieved through implementing inclusive curriculum, anti-bias education, and creating places for open discourse. These efforts contribute to developing a more harmonious and supportive school environment.
6. **Lack of Parental Involvement:** A healthy school climate is achieved via effective communication between schools and parents. However, parents' engagement tends to decrease at the secondary level. A less supportive atmosphere might develop when people are not actively involved, leading to misunderstandings and problems that are harder to resolve. Schools should make an effort to include parents in their children's education by maintaining open lines of communication, holding frequent parent-teacher conferences, and launching programmes to get parents involved.

1. Bullying and Social Dynamis

Educational Emphasis: Bullying prevention and conflict resolution classes should be required in school curricula. As part of this effort, we must educate our youth about the seriousness of bullying and the value of developing compassion and tolerance.

Wellness Initiatives: Introduce well-being programmes that specifically target the psychological consequences of bullying on pupils. These programmes may encompass counselling services and support groups.

Approaches to Prevention: Anti-bullying efforts in schools should centre on creating a welcoming environment for all students. As part of this effort, we must encourage healthy peer interactions and fight against unequal power dynamics.

2. Academic Pressure and Stress

Adopting a Holistic Approach to Education: entails valuing not just academic accomplishments but also human growth. This entails integrating life skills, creativity, and critical thinking into the curriculum.

Stress Reduction Education: Incorporate stress-reduction education into the academic curriculum. Educate students on coping strategies, effective time allocation, and the development of resilience to enhance their ability to manage academic pressures.

Schools Should Provide Counselling Services: so that children have someone to turn to when they are struggling with emotional or mental issues related to school work.

3 Teacher Burnout and Retention

Professional Development: Continual professional development for educators must be a school priority. Classroom management, creative pedagogy, and accommodating students with special needs are all topics covered in this course.

Mentorship Programs: Implement mentoring initiatives to match experienced teachers with novice colleagues, establishing a cohesive and supportive atmosphere among the teaching personnel.

Recognition and Appreciation: To show teachers how much you value their work, institute recognition programmes. Both their happiness at work and their health can benefit from this.

4 Technology and Cyberbullying

Digital Citizenship Education: Incorporate digital citizenship education into the technology curriculum, teaching students about appropriate conduct online, strategies to minimise cyberbullying, and measures to ensure online safety.

Clear Guidelines: Formulate and provide explicit directives about the use of technology inside the educational institution. Ensure that students comprehend the repercussions of cyberbullying or engaging in

improper online conduct.

Reporting Mechanisms: Make sure your pupils know how to report occurrences of cyberbullying. A good school climate cannot be sustained without a reporting environment that is both supportive and encouraging.

5 Diversity and Inclusion:

Inclusive Curriculum: Create a curriculum that welcomes and values all students' backgrounds and viewpoints. Students from diverse backgrounds can develop mutual understanding and appreciation via this.

Anti-Bias Education: Give teachers training on identifying biases and combat them in the classroom. An inclusive and diverse learning environment may be fostered with the aid of this training.

Open Dialogue Platforms: Establish venues and programmes that foster open discourse, such as diversity forums or student-led initiatives, to effectively tackle diversity and inclusion concerns. These exchanges can cultivate a feeling of inclusivity and comprehension among students.

6 Lack of Parental Involvement:

Communication Strategies: Schools must utilise efficient communication tactics, such as periodic newsletters, electronic mail, and internet platforms, to ensure parents are well-informed and engaged.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Establish consistent parent-teacher conferences to facilitate discussions on students' academic development, resolve issues, and promote cooperation between parents and teachers.

Parental Involvement Programs: Introduce initiatives that help parents get more involved in their students' schools through various committees, extracurriculars, and decision-making roles. A feeling of belonging and collective accountability for the school's climate can emerge from this.

Conclusion

Comprehensive solutions and pedagogical tactics improve school climates. Educational institutions may foster holistic development by tackling bullying, academic pressure, teacher fatigue, technological concerns, diversity, inclusiveness, and parental participation. Prioritising anti-bullying education alongside wellness programmes shows a commitment to teaching pupils empathy and respect. Healthy peer relationships and power dynamics prevention measures demonstrate the commitment to a welcoming and inclusive environment. Advocating for holistic education recognises student diversity. The curriculum should emphasise life skills and stress reduction to boost academic performance and mental health. Professional development and recognition programmes to reduce teacher burnout recognise educators' crucial responsibilities in the school climate. Digital citizenship education and clear standards strive to create a pleasant online environment. Diversity and inclusion, shown via an inclusive curriculum and open conversation platforms, foster a peaceful and supportive school community. Encourage parental engagement for openness and communal accountability. These techniques see schools as transformational,

encouraging resilience, empathy, and community and academic accomplishment. We want to create healthy school climates that prepare students for success outside the classroom.

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