
How School Climate Influences Student Adjustment: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the secondary school climate and its relationship with students' adjustment. The objectives of the study were to assess different aspects (i.e. teacher's behavior, school allied facilities, schools' discipline, and interpersonal relationships) of the school climate of public sector girls' secondary schools and to determine the relationship of school climate with students' adjustment. The population of the study included all the female students enrolled at the secondary level in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. But only three districts' i.e. Peshawar, Charsadda, and Mardan class 10th girl's students were selected as the accessible population of the study. A sample of 439 female students of 10th class from 18 schools of three districts was chosen using a two-stage simple random sampling technique. A 5-point Likert scale adapted questionnaire comprising 28 questions was used for easy understanding and clarity. The collected data was compiled and analyzed by descriptive statistical procedures like percentages, frequency, mean standard deviation, one sample T-Test, and Pearson's correlation analysis using IBM SPSS software version 24.0 and presented in tabular form. Inferences were drawn from the analysis of data and it was found that there is a strong relationship between School Climate and Student Adjustment. In the light of above, a few recommendations were made for the education planners, policymakers, curriculum designers, principals, school administrators, and teachers to take appropriate remedial measures to improve the school climate according to the national demand and student's interest/mental level. These improvements will help in students' emotional, social, and educational adjustment.

Keywords: School climate, Emotional adjustment, Social adjustment, Educational adjustment.

Introduction

Since the concept was first introduced in the early 20th century, there have been various definitions of school climate, but there is still no universally accepted definition. According to the Education Encyclopedia, school climate is the ideology, atmosphere, tone, or feel of a school. A positive school climate is thought to be necessary for a child's healthy growth. Since students spend the majority of their time in school, the school climate has a significant impact on their social, emotional, and physical development. Adjustment, according to Mangal (2002), is the process of identifying and embracing behavior that is suitable for the surroundings or the changes occurring in the surroundings. Students in secondary school experience a variety of behavioral shifts, and the school environment is crucial in helping to manage these shifts and foster positive behavior in the classroom. A balanced individual fits in well with society. A well-adjusted individual contributes to the organization, while a maladjusted individual causes discomfort to others and becomes a liability (Singh & Mathew, 2019). According to

several assessments of research, students' adjustment to school, academic performance, and general development are all significantly impacted by a safe, encouraging, non-threatening, engaging, pleasant, caring, and responsible school atmosphere (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). While there are few studies examining students' adjustment in school and its relationship to academic accomplishment, numerous studies have demonstrated a strong association between a positive school climate and a student's ability to adapt to that setting.

Objective and Hypothesis

The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between School Climate and Students' Adjustment in a sample of secondary school levels in District Peshawar, District Mardan, and District Charsadda of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. It was hypothesized that:

Ho: There was no significant relation between School Climate and students' Adjustment at the secondary school level.

Review of Literature

School Climate

School climate is an intricate and multifaceted notion that has attracted the attention of several researchers who have extensively debated its theoretical and conceptual definition (Rudasill et al., 2018). School climate is often characterized as the overall quality of social interactions and the character of the school life (Cohen et al., 2009). School climate encompasses the interpersonal dynamics among students, teachers, and staff, as well as the academic environment, shared values, practices, and rules and regulations within the educational community (Lee et al., 2017).

The concept of school climate is complex and encompasses several dimensions. The term "school climate" refers to the intangible aspects of a school, such as its unwritten rules, ideals, and expectations (Petrie, 2014). According to Lawrence and Vimala (2012), the school climate includes not only the academic environment but also many factors like physical facilities, psychosocial services, teacher-student relationships school discipline, etc. Some of these elements are given below.

School Allied Facilities/Resources

The school climate consists of three primary components: physical, intellectual, and classroom services. These components serve a crucial role in the process of teaching and learning. The learning supporting components had a substantial influence on the academic performance of scientific students (Hirata & Fisher, 2013). Moreover, the supportive atmosphere of the school enhances the performance of both English medium and Urdu medium schools. The presence of superior learning and empathetic components such as well-equipped physical facilities, academic resources, and a conducive school environment contribute to an improved teaching and learning experience (Mahmood & Gondal, 2017). New, attractive, well-designed, managed and maintained school buildings, cleaned and well-furnished and well-ventilated classrooms, science laboratories, libraries, and bathrooms lead to the improved achievement of students (Earthman, 2017).

Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationships and free communication among all stakeholders is very essential for a positive school climate and student achievement. In such a climate, students, teachers, and parents work collaboratively and feel respected and engaged. Productive and constructive engagement and involvement from community members and parents are major factors related to students' adjustment and achievement. (DiPaola, 2005). Generally, school performance, and specifically students' performance is greatly influenced by teachers' relationships with each other, with the school

administrator, the principal, students, and with their parents. Fan et al., (2011) considered a healthy interpersonal relationship as one of the basic factors for high achievement and productivity of students.

Teacher Behaviour

An individual's behavior is a reaction to their environment under different circumstances (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2015). Teacher's behavior encompasses the actions and instructional methods used by teachers to help and interact with pupils. It includes both verbal and nonverbal actions that teachers demonstrate and promote throughout the process of teaching and learning. Teachers use many strategies while imparting instruction to their pupils. Some teachers provide a conducive learning atmosphere for students, while others just teach. Thus, the behavior of teachers is a crucial factor in determining pupils' academic progress (Uddin et al. 2018).

School Discipline

Predetermined rules and regulations of the school are known as a discipline (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014). Ideally, discipline means more than just following the rules and regulations of a school; it demands the learners' ability to distinguish between right and wrong (Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari, 2013).

Students Adjustment

Adjustment and adaptation are lenses through which behavior among people may be observed and comprehended. Lazarus (1969) suggests that behavior is often seen as a result of personal adaptation to various demands or pressures. Mangal (2002) found that finding and adopting appropriate behaviors according to the changing environment is known as adjustment. School adjustment is a broad notion including several aspects relating to the school. This notion mostly refers to student behavior that is incompatible and undesirable, such as aggression, low attendance, hostility, inattention, and destructive behavior. It does not include good behaviors like collaboration, agreeableness, and self-care (Kurt, 2022). Crede and Neihorster (2012) explained various dimensions of Student adjustment i.e. educational, social, and emotional.

Educational Adjustment

The educational adjustment reflects students' interest in school, progress in study, and motivation towards achievement of their goals. Well-adjusted students mostly perform better in the examination, their attention span is more extended and their work completion and achievement levels are high at schools. (Bhagat, P., 2017).

Social Adjustment

Students' adaptation in their educational setting and participation in social activities is known as social adjustment and it has a strong effect on students' achievement (Rienties et al., 2011). According to Kerr et al., (2004), students have to face and adjust to different situations, challenges, and responsibilities confronted by the environment and it has also been observed that low achievers face more adjustment problems than high achievers (Bala, 2014).

Emotional Adjustment

Emotion is a constantly changing adjustment process in the organism that functions to promote the contentment, satisfaction, and well-being of the person. The emotional adjustment of the student is mainly the responsibility of parents and teachers. According to Awokiyesi, et al., (2014), the main cause

of emotional problems among students is ignorance of their emotions and feelings. Emotionally disturbed students start feeling inferior and demotivated, unable to think properly, feeling anxious and frustrated, and alienation from life (Kumaraswamy, N. 2013).

Research Methodology

Generally, the current study aimed to determine the relationship between School Climate and students' Adjustment at the secondary school level. The population of the study includes all the female students at the secondary school level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Three districts, namely District Peshawar, District Mardan, and District Charsadda, were selected as accessible population for the study. Two-stage simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. For data collection, a sample of 439 female students in the 10th class was selected. Data was collected by using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was used as a tool to collect primary data from class 10th students. It was designed according to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire has two parts, the first part consists of 28 questions related to the school climate's four variables i.e. School allied facilities/resources, Inter-personal-relationships (Teacher-student and student-student), School discipline and Teacher behavior, and the second part of the questionnaire also consists of 28 questions related to student's adjustment which includes educational, social and emotional adjustment. The questionnaire was developed by adapting 17 questions from Shah's (2017) 11 questions from Georgia Pashiardis's (2008) questionnaires regarding school climate four variables and 28 questions from Sinha and Singh's (2013) inventory regarding student's adjustment. Sinha and Singh's inventory has been changed to a 5-point Likert scale, closed-ended adapted questionnaire comprising 56 questions was used for easy understanding, clarity, and time-saving.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho: There was no significant relation between School Climate and students' Adjustment at the secondary school level.

Table: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) between School climate and Students' Adjustment

Correlations			
S C	Pearson Correlation	SC	SAD
		1	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	439	439
S AD	Pearson Correlation	.972**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	439	439

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data in the table indicated that Pearson's Correlation coefficient (r) between School Climate and Students' Adjustment was .972, demonstrating both the strength and direction of their linear relationship. This finding suggests a significant and strong positive correlation between School Climate

(SC) and Students' Adjustment (SAD). Based on the above analysis, the H_0 was rejected and it was accepted that there was a significant positive relationship between School Climate and Students' Adjustment.

Results and Recommendations

To investigate the relationship between School Climate and Students' Adjustment by using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The Pearson's Correlation coefficient (r) between School Climate and Students' Adjustment was .972, demonstrating both the strength and direction of their linear relationship. This finding suggests a significant and strong positive correlation between School Climate (SC) and Students' Adjustment (SAD). These results reveal how school climate has a key influence on students' adjustment in addition to their academic achievement, stressing the value of making strong teacher-student relations in their learning environments.

Discussion

The hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between School Climate and Students' Adjustment at the secondary school level. The study indicated that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between School Climate and Students' Adjustment. School climate is often characterized as the overall quality of social interactions and the interpersonal dynamics among students, teachers, and staff. The student-teacher relationship is considered as one of the influencing factors of school climate and the success of students depends upon systematic collaboration and established relationships. The findings of the study showed that the majority of students believed that their classroom's atmosphere was pleasant and friendly. They have good relations with their teachers and they feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and sharing problems with their teachers. Their teachers were also helpful in addressing their problems. Most students felt happy and respected among their schoolmates/classmates and they helped each other in solving problems. All this showed their strong interpersonal relationships with each other and their teachers which directly influenced their adjustment in their school which in turn had encouraging and noteworthy effects on their academic achievements. These results are in line with the outcomes of the study conducted by Wentzel (2009) who asserts that a strong teacher-student connection enhances students' well-being, positive self-perception, drive to adapt to social and academic situations, and associated abilities. The psychosocial atmosphere of the school and the inter-group interactions has a great impact on student's adjustment and academic performance. (Johnson & Stevens, 2006). School adjustment is a broad notion including several aspects relating to the school and the school climate that had a great impact on students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive adjustment. (Kurt, 2022). As per the findings of the study, approximately 65% of the students felt safe, secure, and satisfied in their school did not feel sad, distressed, or neglected, and didn't feel jealous of their classmates, even though they had no intention of harming students that they weren't on good terms with and most of the students did not feel threatened by their seniors. These findings showed that the emotional stability of students directly influenced their adjustment in their school and indirectly their overall performance. Similar to the findings of this study, Gul (2015) and Soni (2018) also discovered a strong and meaningful correlation between the socio-emotional adjustment and academic achievement of adolescent girls. Way et al., (2007) and Brand et al., (2008) also claimed that the school climate is a primary indicator of the emotional and behavioral outcomes of children and has an impact on students' ability to adapt psychosocially which also influences students' self-esteem.

Future Directions

Based on the findings of the study few suggestions are given for future scholars who will act as a foundation for their research work. That suggestion will be helpful to them in planning and exploring next as a researcher and provide them with future direction for their research work.

- The same study can be conducted in other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because of differences in geographical location, cultures, and tastes.
- School climate is a broad term; therefore, other variables of school climate like curriculum, safety, group resources, communication, etc. can be taken.
- As this study was limited to only Girls students of Government schools, so, further study may be held with male students and in private sector schools.
- As this study was delimited to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, therefore, the same study may be conducted in other provinces i.e. Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Gilgit–Baltistan, the Islamabad Capital Territory of Pakistan.
- To explore in-depth information about school climate, a qualitative study may be conducted.

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