

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS  
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND THEIR RETENTION IN  
GUIYANG QINGZHEN BOYA INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL  
SCHOOL, GUIZHOU PROVINCE, CHINA**

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**Received:** 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Revised:** 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Accepted:** 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Abstract:** The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of teachers' perception towards organizational climate and their retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School, Guizhou Province, China. The research surveyed a total of 80 full-time teachers in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. The researcher used Mean and Standard Deviation to analysis the teachers' perceptions toward the level of organizational climate and their retention. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to test the relationship between the two variables. The result of this study showed that teachers in the school perceived a high level of organizational climate and their perception towards their retention. Pearson correlation tested that there was a relationship between teachers' perception towards organizational climate and their retention.

**Keywords:** Teachers' Perception; Organizational Climate; Teachers' Perception

### **Introduction**

Education is the foundation of development. In China, people pay more and more attention to education, teachers are the core of the education industry, teachers should be respected. In today's China, teachers are the first occupation of many people, but the loss rate of teachers is really high, especially in urban areas. In the current situation, teacher retention has become the main concern of schools. Individuals who have been trained tend to switch to other organizations for better prospects. For example, profitable salaries, comfortable time, a better atmosphere and growth prospects are some of the factors that motivate teachers to seek change.

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According to Alliance for Excellent Education in 2008, teacher retention has become a problem; there are approximate 400000 teachers leave their school in United States every year. A disproportionate number of academically superior teachers left the classroom within a few years of entering, while their less qualified peers remain behind (Schlechty, 1981). Teacher retention is hampered by a reputation as an occupation in which the work is boring and high in stress (Gehrke, 1979). Halpin and Croft (1963) organizational climate is a flow of behavior and feeling in a group, they state “personality is to the individual what organizational climate is to the organizations”.

Over the years, researchers started studying the organizational characteristics, which could help understand the way an organization deals with its members. These studies were originally used to assess the working environment in the business world, however, more studies focused on the organizational atmosphere rather than work environment as Conley & Muncey (1999) pointed.

In today's China, teachers are the first occupation of many people, but the loss rate of teachers is high, especially in urban areas. A 2004 study showed that about 96.6% of teachers under the age of 45 left their positions (Xu, 2004). Education does not exist alone; it always tries to promote human development and is influenced by the surrounding environment (Chawla & Cushing, 2007).

Education does not exist alone; it always tries to promote human development and is always influenced by the surrounding environment (Chawla & Cushing, 2007). This kind of surrounding environment, in another word, it referred to a kind of organizational climate, which determined the working environment that may let teachers feel satisfied or dissatisfied. As satisfaction determines or affects the efficiency of teachers, the school's organizational climate might directly relate to the efficiency and performance of teachers.

The researcher did an interview on Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. Seven teachers were invited to do this preliminary study and interview. The researcher invited teachers who have worked or are working at the school to know about their intention to resign. The results showed that some teachers had the intention to resign, and even some teachers have left the school. The school provided advanced teaching equipment and working environment for teachers, but the teachers might not be satisfied with the organizational climate of the school as this researcher knew from the preliminary interview with some of the teachers.

### **Research Objectives:**

There were three objectives in this research:

1. To identify the level of organizational climate in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School.
2. To identify the level of teachers' retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School.
3. To determine the relationship between teachers' perception towards organizational climate and their retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Organizational Climate*

Since the 1930s, the term "organizational climate" has a long history in social science and education. The term "Organizational Climate" was initially coined around 1960s, and the concept is that "on the one hand, the way a person performing an allotted job is dependent on what type of person he is, and on the other hand, he does what is planned" (Tagiuti & Litwin, 1968, p.11). Especially throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of organizational culture and its emphasis on organizational life performance and symbolism received widespread attention, eventually becoming a cornerstone topic in the literature on organizational behavior and management (Alvesson, 2011). Stringer's (2002) Organizational Climate Theory was selected to measure the teachers' perception regarding their work environment in the present study. The organizational climate concept was primarily developed by Litwin and Stringer in 1968. The researchers had found that employees' job satisfaction and work-motivations were influenced by organizational climate which can be measured by a set of dimensions. Researchers had identified the organizational climate dimensions as follows: structure, standard, responsibility, recognition, support and commitment. Stringer (2002) divided social support into six dimensions:

*Structure:* Structure is the set up or design of an organization that allows expressed allocation of responsibilities for different functions and processes to the different entities and represents how information flows between the levels of management within the organization (French, 1994). The organizational structure dimension of climate considers employees' sense of well arrange and having a clear clarification of their roles and their responsibilities (Stringer,2002). According to Litwin and Stringer (1968), organizational structure is the feeling that employees have about the constraints in the group, rules, regulations, and procedures in the organization. A clearly structured organization is important because it prevents the role ambiguity and misunderstand among the employee of the organization.

Structure reflects the pattern of relationship among the positions in the organization and members of the organization (Mullins, 2002).

*Standards:* Standards are the feeling of pressure to improve performance and degree of pride employees have in doing a good job (Stringer, 2002). Structure means employees' sense of organizational structure constraints. A well-set standard provides a guideline for the employee and increase the self-responsibility to maintain the quality of services. Conversely, it also creates a responsibility for the organization to develop the services by qualified personnel (Calvert, 2008). Therefore, development of the human resource became a routine part of the organization like continuous training, higher education that facilitated employees' personal development and increases the satisfaction.

*Responsibility:* Responsibility involves accepting the obligation by the subordinate to perform certain duties or make certain decisions and to accept possible reprimand for unsatisfactory performance (Mullins, 2002). Responsibility means the feeling of being "your own boss," rather than being forced to scrutinize all decisions with higher authority. Feel that when there's work to do, you know it's your work and you're not told how to do it. When responsibility is recognized, the employee becomes a part of the whole organization rather than just a part in the unit (Doll, 2007). Latif (2010) mentioned that members of the organization felt trust and satisfaction when they assumed responsibility for performing the work.

*Recognition:* Recognition is the desirable outcome of the employee from the organization for their good performance (Mullins, 2002). The philosophy of reward and recognition was based on the quality of beliefs and guiding principles that were consistent with the values of organization and willingness to enact them.

*Support:* Support reflects the feeling of trust and mutual support or good fellowship that prevails in the work group atmosphere (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). Similarly, Stringer (2002) identified that the support climate dimension refers to entrusting and helping each other. Mullins (2002) mentioned that organizational climate can make progress through perceived organizational support. When employees feel positive organizational support in the organization, it increases the emotions between employees and the organization, and enhances work motivation, high productivity, and job satisfaction.

*Commitment:* Commitment is the process by which employees generate favorable or unfavorable views on the exchange of benefits and costs, and employees' commitment to the organization changes accordingly. Baker (1960) described commitments as a tendency to engage in consistent activities, such as intentions to stay in an organization. In the definition of organizational commitment, the link between the individual and the organization is recognized. Organizational commitment has two perspectives, namely a behavioral perspective and an attitude perspective.

### *Teachers' Retention*

Teachers' retention refers to the various policies and practices that allow teachers to adhere to the organization for a longer period of time. Every organization invests time and money in training new teachers, making them ready materials for the school and making them comparable to existing teachers. When teachers leave after training, the organization is in a state of total loss. Teachers' retention takes into account various measures taken so that individuals can stay in the organization for the longest time.

The problem of teacher retention has existed before. Retention of teachers has become a problem area in the 1980s and 1990s. There was evidence that teaching majors fail to keep pace with other professions in the process of competing for talents. Not only was teaching attracting a smaller number of the most capable college graduates, teaching was but also makes it difficult to retain academic talents who are true teachers (Seyfarth, 1980). The issue of teacher retention has become the most important part in the minds of many urban school educators (Waddell, 2010).

Maslow (1954) indicated that the hierarchy of needs can serve as a human based on some needs are more important than others and must be met before the other needs. Maslow's hierarchical structure is usually shown as a pyramid. The bottom layer of the pyramid consists of the most basic requirements, while the most complex requirements are at the top of the pyramid. Maslow (1954) believed that the five basic needs of human beings have an impact on human motivation, defined at the level of physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, self-actualization or self-fulfillment needs.

*Physiological needs:* Physiological needs are the main physical requirement for human survival. This means that physiological needs are universal needs of humans including food, water, air, sleep, clothes and so on. Organizational factors that might meet these needs include the minimum wage necessary to promote endurance and working conditions for survival.

*Safety needs:* Safety needs would be reflected when physiological needs are met. At this level, the needs for safety and stability become primary. Like the physiological needs, safety needs are also low-level needs. Before the safety needs are not met, people are concerned about this kind of needs. People who lack physical needs don't want to do anything, just want to live.

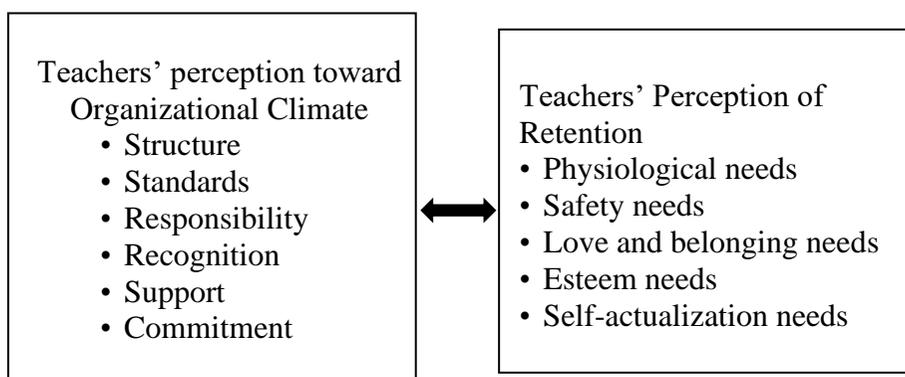
*Love and belonging needs:* Love and belonging needs refer to when physiological, people want to belong to a group, people belong to society, and need to communicate with society. After meeting physiological and safety needs, the need for love, affection and a sense of belonging will arise. At this level, it's important for people to feel loved and accepted.

*Esteem needs:* Esteem needs refer to the recognition and respect of what people need to do when social interaction needs are met. This kind of need belongs to a higher level of need, including not only personal feelings of achievement or self-worth, but also others' recognition and respect for themselves. Self-esteem is crucial in this regard. Only when these needs are met will they need the respect, recognition and respect of others.

*Self-realization needs:* Self-realization needs is the highest level of needs, it refers to the realization of personal ideals, ambitions, the ability to personally maximize the ability to complete everything that is commensurate with their own abilities. The goal of self needs is self-realization.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study aimed to study the relationship of teachers' perception toward organizational climate and their retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya international experimental school, Guizhou province, China. One of the major variables was the teachers' perception toward organizational climate; the other major variable was teachers' retention. The teachers' perception towards organizational climate was based on Stringer's Organizational Climate Theory. Teachers' retention was based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The following figure was the illustration of the conceptual framework of the study.



**Figure1. Conceptual Framework of this Study**

### **Research Method**

This study is mainly quantitative, initially researchers also use qualitative methods to study problems. The researchers conducted an interview to investigate the teachers' influence on the organizational atmosphere of the school and used the results of the interview to support and continue the quantitative research. There are six questions in the preliminary interview.

The questionnaire has divided into three parts: Part one was the demographic data of the participant, in this part, the researcher utilized seven questions: gender, age, marital status, residence registration, degree, major and income about the participants. Part two: Organizational Climate. It was adopted from the previous study of Stringer (2002). For this part, there are totally 24 questions. In this questionnaire, the administrative support has six components: structure, standard, responsibility, recognition, support and commitment. Part three: Teacher's Retention, it was to survey the level of teachers' retention. For this part, there were totally 25 questions. In part 3 the researcher adopted from the previous study by Murat (2011), which has five dimensions: physiological needs, safety need, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

### **Findings**

#### *Research Objective One*

Table 1 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of each dimension of organizational climate perceived by teachers. The total scores of the teachers' perception of organizational climate was 3.82, in the scale of 3.51-4.50, it meant teachers' perception of organizational climate in in the Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School were regarded as high. The

score of commitment was the lowest (3.54), and the score of structure was the highest (4.13). Both of commitment and structure were in the level of high.

Table 1: *Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of organizational climate in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. (n=80)*

Organizational climate	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Structure	4.13	0.61	High
Standard	3.80	0.84	High
Responsibility	4.01	0.65	High
Recognition	3.78	0.77	High
Support	3.69	0.81	High
Commitment	3.54	0.51	High
Total	3.82	0.57	High

### *Research Objective Two*

Table 2 indicated that the mean scores and the standard deviations of the level of teachers' retention in the number of 80 teachers who are full-time teachers in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. As Table 31 showed the total score was 3.90 in the range scale of 3.51-4.50, which had the level of high. The highest scores (4.19) were from the item "self-actualization needs", which had the high level. The lowest scores (3.67) were from the item "Love and belonging needs", which had the high level.

Table 2: *Means and Standard Deviations of the Level of Teachers' Retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. (n=80)*

Retention	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Physiological needs	3.94	0.77	High
Safety needs	3.78	0.78	High
Love and belonging needs	3.67	0.73	High
Esteem needs	3.93	0.73	High
Self-actualization needs	4.19	0.58	High
Total	3.90	0.59	High

### *Research Objective Three*

Table 3 analyzed the relationship between teacher retention and teachers' perception towards organizational climate in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. The result showed  $r = .691$ , Sig. (2-tailed) was .001, which was less than .05; at the level of .05 (even .01), there was a strong positive correlation between teacher retention and teachers' perception towards organizational climate perceived by teachers in the school. Therefore, the research hypothesis was accepted, there was a significant relationship

between teacher retention and teachers' perception towards organizational climate in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School.

Table 3: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Teachers' Perception towards Organizational Climate and Their Retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. (n=80)*

Correlation Test		Teachers' perceptions toward teachers' retention	Conclusion
Teachers' perceptions toward organizational climate	Person Correlation	.691** .001	There is a significant relationship
Sig. (2 tailed)			

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

## Discussion

The results shown that the level of perception towards organizational climate in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School was high (3.82), and the level of teachers' retention in the school was high (3.90). For the dimension of the level of perception towards organizational climate, the item "structure" got the highest score (4.13). For the dimension of teacher's retention, the item "self-actualization needs" got the highest score (4.19). Based on the analysis of the study, the result has shown that there was a strong positive correlation relationship between teachers' perception towards organizational climate and their retention in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School, Guizhou province, China.

According to preliminary study, the researcher found that most of teachers thought work pressure and workload made them no free time to relax. It meant that teachers care about the school policy and working environment. From the results of the preliminary study and interview, none of the seven people interviewed had worked at this school for more than five years. They had a negative attitude towards the school's sense of belonging, and very much accept that the school's policies will affect their willingness to take up the job, and 85.7% of the interviewed teachers recognized that the school's policies would affect their willingness to leave school.

According to the results of the questionnaires, the total mean scores of the level of organizational climate was 3.82 in the scale of 3.51-4.50, which in the level of high. The lowest scores (3.54) of organizational climate was from "commitment". And the highest score (4.13) was from "structure". Both the lowest score and the highest score of organizational climate was in the level of high. For teachers' perception toward their retention in the school, the item

of love and belonging needs was got the lowest score (3.67), as the data shown that structure got the highest score (4.13). And self-actualization needs were 4.19, which was the highest score of the teachers' perception toward their retention based on the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Shuanglong (2016) pointed that teachers in a good organizational climate could help to meet their self-actualization. Shuanglong (2016) identified that teachers' professional development is affected by personal factors and organizational climate. School organizational climate is an extremely important element for teachers' professional development. Under the conditions of a good school organization climate, teachers can more clearly get care and support from school, prompting them to be more willing to participate in professional development activities and improve teacher retention. Similarly, Chadha (1989) also showed that the organizational climate had a direct impact on teachers' job satisfaction. A democratic and supported organizational climate could increase teachers' professional self-identity, reduce job burnout, and reduce the number of teachers' leaving the school.

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) did a research in Public Schools in Massachusetts, which pointed out that 22% of teachers who switched to teach in other schools admitted that they did not receive adequate school support, and another 22% expressed roughly the same feelings. Overall, the recognition of school management support has become the most important predictor of teacher turnover. And the score of teachers' perceptions toward organizational climate based on support was 3.66. The researcher compared support with other elements, the score of working in a good working team and getting assistance from administrators and co-workers was not too high. For that, school administrators should try to provide a good working environment for teachers and find a good way to communicate with teachers so that get job feedback on time. For teamwork, it was recommended that managers organize activities to enhance the relationship between teachers so that they can understand each other at work and work better in a team.

According to this study found that there was a significant relationship of teachers' perception toward organizational climate and their retention. The organizational climate was unhealthy in secondary school in district of Klang, Selangor, Malaysia from previous studies of Selamat, Samsu and Kamalu (2013) confirmed the impact of organizational climate. The result of the previous study described that organizational climate affected teachers' job performance. The study by Qian Qinzhen, Jiang Yong and Ruan Ting in 2007 also supported this result and confirmed that schools' organizational climate had both direct and in direct effects on teachers' development. Six components of organizational climate are structure, standard, responsibility, recognition,

support and commitment. There five components for teachers' perception toward retention, including physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Teachers who worked in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School got the highest scores in structure and self-actualization needs. According to the score, it shown teachers in the school had a positive attitude for their responsibilities.

And teachers kept a satisfied attitude to esteem needs in Guiyang Qingzhen Boya International Experimental School. Most of teachers in the school were satisfied with esteem from other teachers and students. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) claimed that in order to improve teachers' retention, schools should establish an orderly environment to keep a good organizational climate, which meant that teachers could get respect from teachers, administrators and students.

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