

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CLIMATE AND STUDENTS' SCHOOL LIFE SATISFACTION IN WU HAN CHINA-BRITAIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to study the relationship between School Climate and Students' School Life Satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School. The research objectives were 1. To identify the level of school climate in Wu Han China-Britain International School. 2. To identify the level of students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School. 3. To determine the relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School. There were two set of questionnaire: school climate survey and students' school life satisfaction survey. 88% of the questionnaires were returned valid and mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r), and regression analysis analyzed questionnaires. The research finding for objective 1: The level of each dimension of school climate were "moderate", the overall school climate level were "moderate". The research finding for objective 2: the level of students' school life satisfaction was "high". The research finding for objective 3: there was a significant relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction, and the school climate can prediction students' school life satisfaction. Discussion and Recommendation were provided by the researcher.

Keywords: School Climate, Students' School Life Satisfaction, China

Introduction

The topic of social climate has been studied for years. It was first introduced in the business world to assess the work environment; however, researchers used the term organizational climate instead of "work environment" (Conley & Muncey, 1999, p.103). The original studies of organizational climate were specific in addressing the needs identified in the work environment of business firms (Conley & Muncey, 1999). Researchers viewed "organizational climate as a characteristic of the entire organization" (Hoy & Feldman, 1999, p.84). These authors identified key features of organizational climate. Climate was viewed as the following: "based on collective perceptions of members, arising from routine organizational practices that are important to the organization and its members, and influencing its members' behaviors and attitudes" (p.84). At that time, schools were not being viewed as work

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organizations, and studies related to schools were limited.

Educators eventually took the business definition of organizational climate and determined that it could be used to address the work environment of the school. Schools are now being viewed as work organizations, and researchers are interested in learning how to “enhance the performance and goal achievement of schools as work organizations”.

School climate has been a topic of discussion internationally for the past decades and has been linked to school effectiveness as well as students achievement. School climate can be regarded as the heart and soul of a school, a school of essence, lead to a learner, educators and other staff enjoy and looking forward to is in the school every day. From this school climate can be seen as part of the school quality, "help each individual think personal value, dignity and importance, and at the same time, to help create a sense of belonging to transcend yourself" (Freiberg & Stein, 1999:11).

Objectives

There are three objectives:

1. The purpose of this study was to identify the level of school climate in Wu Han China-Britain International School.
2. The purpose of this study was to identify the level of students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School.
3. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher constructs one theoretical framework. The theoretical framework used in this study to examine the relationship between school climate and students' satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School was based on the concepts and theories of school climate and students' school life satisfaction. School satisfaction is a major aspect of children's quality of life. It is important in and of itself and children have a right to feel good about themselves and the institutions in which they function. Schools should be caring and supporting settings that children value and enjoy. Furthermore, the level of school satisfaction is important because it affects psychological well-being, as well as school engagement, absentee rate, dropout and behavioral problems (Ainley, 1991; Reyes and Jason, 1993). Hence, it is important to understand how children rate their school and to know which factors are related to the level of school satisfaction. Epstein & McPartland (1976) using ecological systems theory and previous work citing school satisfaction to identified both distal environmental variables, such as school climate, classroom practices, school organization, and peer contexts, and more proximal variables, such as academic ability, gender, race, socioeconomic status, mental health, and family contexts, likely to affect school satisfaction.

One theory that involves the study of human needs is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory has been widely used in the study of motivation in organizations such as schools. Maslow (1987) identified five basic groups of human needs, which emerge in a specific sequence or pattern and are arranged into a hierarchy. The needs

are arranged from the lowest level, that is, from lower order needs to higher order needs. These five levels of need, which represent the order of importance to the individual, are physiological, safety and security, social, esteem, and self-actualization.

These needs, arranged from lowest level to highest level, are as follows:

1. Physiological needs include the basics of food, water, sleep, oxygen, and the like.
2. Safety and security needs include the need for physical safety, avoidance of anxiety, order, structure, and job and financial security,
3. Social needs include the need for belonging to groups, friendship, and acceptance by others.
4. Esteem needs include the need for self-respect, appreciation, and recognition from others.
5. Self-actualization needs include the desire for maximizing one's own potential, autonomy, and creativity.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs notes that the basic needs must be met first. Once individuals believe that the physiological needs are met and will continue to be satisfied, individuals will then be motivated to achieve the safety needs, which Maslow identified as stability and protection. After the safety needs are met, Maslow theorized that individuals become concerned with meeting social needs, according to Maslow, are those needs that relate to love and belonging. Relationships become more important in Maslow's social needs. Once the physical and social needs are achieved, the focus then becomes meeting the needs of an individual's ego or esteem needs. This area is where recognition from others, as well as ourselves, becomes the motivation for an individual's actions. Finally, Maslow theorized that self-actualization is the highest level of attainment.

Classroom dynamics are complex and similar to school climate in that they involve the relationships and interactions between teachers and students, among students, and the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of students and teachers within the classroom (Montague & Rinaldi, 2001). It is likely that the climate of specific classrooms varies within a single school and that classroom management, class composition, and teacher characteristics may influence students' experiences. Research has suggested that teacher management style is related to the social structure of the class (Roland & Galloway, 2002). Teachers with practices that include emphasis on prosocial values and cooperation and teachers who were supportive have experienced improvements in positive student behavior and an increase in students' perception of connectedness (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1996). Classroom variables that are more descriptive such as gender and ethnic composition and class size have also been investigated. Two studies of Dutch students incorporated these descriptive variables into their analyses but found no significant effects in relation to school satisfaction (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002) and school adjustment (van der Oord & Van Rossem, 2002). Similarly, teacher characteristics such as full- versus part-time status and work experience have also been investigated (van der Oord & Van Rossem, 2002) and linked with students' perceptions of climate. Classroom climate encompasses the emotional qualities of relationships and interactions within the classroom, including student-teacher and peer relationships.

Conceptual Framework

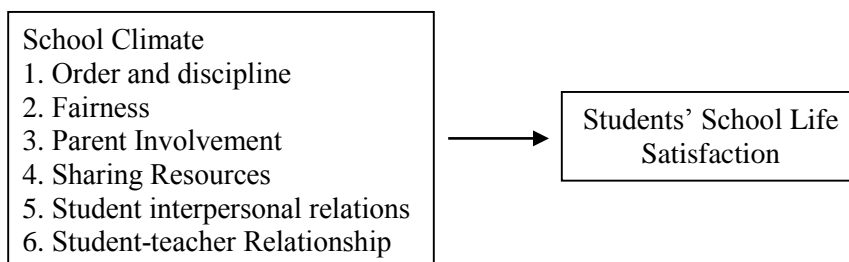


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Method and procedures

The research was a quantitative statistics that include descriptive and Pearson correlation studies. Descriptive study was used to identify the degree of the levels of school climate and students' school life satisfaction, while Pearson correlation study and regression analysis were used to determine the relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction.

All one hundred and twenty five (125) A-Level students of Wu Han China-britain International School in the second semester of school year 2013 were used as the subjects of this study, in other words, the population and sample were the same.

The researcher used questionnaire for this research. The questionnaire had two parts. The questionnaires described as below:

Part 1: School Climate Survey

The school climate Survey was developed by the School Development Program (SDP) (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997). The SCS measures student's perception of the various dimensions of the school climate. The SCS consists of 37 questions; each scored on a 3 point scale and grouped in 6 major dimensions. The responses are coded in the following manner: Agree = 3, Not sure= 2, and Disagree = 1. Items 1, 6, 9, 12, 14, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 33 are reversed scored after the frequency analyses on individual items have been performed, but before means of the variables are computed or any inferential analysis completed. These items are reverse scored because agreement with them reflects negative opinions of school climate. A positive view of the climate should elicit disagreement with these items. For these items, a program is written that changes the scores such that agree = 1 and disagree = 3.

To identify the degree of the level of school climate, the scores were interpreted as shown below:

Mean	Interpretation
2.51 - 3.00	High level
1.51 - 2.50	Moderate
1.00 - 1.50	Low level

Part 2: The Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)

The MSLSS School Satisfaction subscale consists of eight items assessing a respondent's satisfaction with his or her school experience (Table 3). Respondents are asked to indicate on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) the degree to which they endorse general statements about their school (e.g., "I feel bad at school," "I look forward to being in school"). Negatively keyed items were reverse-scored (see Table 4 for the list of negatively keyed items) so that strongly agree = 1 and so forth. With higher scores indicating higher levels of students' satisfaction with school.

To identify the degree of the level of student's school life satisfaction, the scores were interpreted as shown below:

Mean	Interpretation
4.51 - 5.00	Very High
3.51 - 4.50	High
2.51 - 3.50	Moderate
1.51 - 2.50	Low
1.00 - 1.50	Very Low

Finding and Results

From the analysis of the data, the findings were as follows:

1. The descriptive analysis that shows the mean score for the school climate under study is presented in table 1 below. This mean score is the degree of the level of the school climate.

Table 1: Students' Perception towards School Climate

School climate	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Order and discipline	2.23	.36531	Moderate
Fairness	2.45	.44785	Moderate
Parent involvement	1.93	.48423	Moderate
Sharing resources	1.95	.55560	Moderate
Student interpersonal relations	2.33	.40671	Moderate
Student-teacher relationship	2.42	.35428	Moderate
Overall	2.25	.22	Moderate

From Table 1 the result showed students' perception on order and discipline (2.2260), fairness (2.4523), parent involvement (1.9323), sharing resources (1.9545), student interpersonal relations (2.3271), and student-teacher relationship (2.4258) as moderate perception, and the overall school climate (2.25) as moderate level.

2. The descriptive analysis that shows the mean score for the students' school life satisfaction under study is presented in Table 2 below. This mean score is the degree of the level of the students' satisfaction.

Table 2: Students' School Life Satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Students' school life Satisfaction	3.87	.55	High

Degree of the level of students' school life satisfaction as perceived by the students is 3.87 with standard deviation of .55. Students' satisfaction is measured in terms of degree of level on the continuum from 0 to 5 as High perception.

3. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction.

Table 3: Relationship between School Climate and Students' School Life Satisfaction

	Order and Discipline	Fairness	Parent Involvement	Sharing Resources	Student Interpersonal Relations	Student Teacher Relationship	Satisfaction
Order and Discipline	1	.117	-.253**	.111	.268**	.197*	.188*
Fairness		1	.395**	-.208*	.547**	.542**	.636**
Parent Involvement			1	-.623**	.178	.150	.265**
Sharing Resources				1	-.256**	-.033	-.147
Student Interpersonal Relations					1	.423**	.423**
Student-teacher relations						1	.491**
Satisfaction							1

The research finding of the hypothesis testing 1 in Table 3 has shown that the significant correlation at .05 between students' school life satisfaction and each dimension of school climate was order and discipline (.188). The significant correlations at .01 between students' school life satisfaction and each dimension of school climate were Fairness (.636), Parent Involvement (.265), Student Interpersonal Relations (.423), Student Teacher Relationship (.491). Fairness had strong relationship, Student-teacher relationship and Student interpersonal relations had moderate relationship, and Parent involvement and Order and discipline had weak relationship.

4. The analysis was to form a Prediction of students' school life satisfaction based on school climate. The multiple linear regressions as Table 5 shown were used to do this analysis.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regressions of Students' School Life Satisfaction Based on School Climate

	b	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	P
(Constant)	1.109		2.154	.034
Order and Discipline	.153	.101	1.254	.213
Fairness	.577	.470	4.536	.000
Parent Involvement	.079	.070	.661	.510
Sharing Resources	.001	.001	.101	.992
Student interpersonal Relations	.065	.048	.507	.613
Student-teacher Relationship	.289	.186	2.071	.41

The result showed that Fairness had the highest standardized coefficient Beta (.470) and t-value was less than .01, which could imply that it had the best predictive value and hence, was the best predictor to students' satisfaction. And the student-teacher relationships had the standardized coefficient Beta (.186) and t-value was less than .05, which could also imply that it had the predictor to students' satisfaction. However, both order and discipline, parent involvement, sharing resources and student interpersonal relations had relatively low scores on standardized coefficient Beta and their t-value were more than .01, which indicated that there were weak to predict the value of students' satisfaction. The adjust R Square for this analysis was .416, which meant all 6 variables-order and discipline, fairness, parent involvement, sharing resources, student interpersonal relations and student-teacher relationship can explain the variation of students' satisfaction by 41.6%.

Discussion

The discussion with the research objectives were stated below:

Objective 1: To identify the level of school climate in Wu Han China-Britain International School.

The current study finding had shown the level of school climate were moderate. The school climate influences a student's sense of safety and well-being as well as student behavior (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben- Avie, 1997). Additionally, the Safe School Study (Pink, 1982) showed that a school's climate significantly influenced a student's behavior. A positive school climate can yield positive educational and psychological outcomes for students and school personnel; similarly, a negative climate can prevent optimal learning and development (Freiberg, 1998; Johnson, 1997).

The results showed the school climate were moderate level; however, the level of student's perception of school climate could further be enhanced. To promote order and discipline at the school, rules should be consistent and fair across settings, students must know the rules as well as the consequences for following or not following those rules, and students should be included in the development of school policies (Barbarasch & Elias, 2009; Bear, 2008). To promote parent involvement, Esler (2008) recommend schools: recognize that parent involvement involves more than being physically present in the school setting, make it a priority to include parents in decision- making processes, and show appreciation when parents are involved.

Objective 2: To identify the level of students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School.

The current study finding had shown the level of students' school life satisfaction were high. Students' satisfaction is an important indicator of positive well-being within the school environment. Cock and Halvari (1999) found a positive relationship between students' satisfaction and academic performance in high school students. This means that students who were more satisfied with school performed better in school. The important predictors of the students' satisfaction with school are that the students feel that they are treated fairly, that they feel safe, and that they experience that teachers are supportive. This emphasizes the common need for health promoters,

school teachers and educators to develop strategies to improve the quality of the students' school experiences, alongside attention given to content of curriculum and effectiveness of teaching method.

Students with caring supporting interpersonal school relationships have a more positive academic attitude, higher satisfaction with school, and more academically engaged (Klem & Connell, 2004). When students feel respected and valued, both by peers and by teachers, they are more motivated to engage in learning (Stipek, 2006).

Objective 3: To determine the relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School.

There is a significant relationship between school climate and students' school life satisfaction in Wu Han China-Britain International School. According to the finding, Results indicated that student perceptions of school climate significantly associated with their satisfaction with school of the six dimensions of school climate considered (e.g., order and discipline, fairness...), fairness demonstrated the most consistent associations with students' school life satisfaction. The students' perception of fairness is based on whether the students feel that they can influence rules and regulations in school, and whether they experience that the teachers treat them fairly. It is important for each student to experience that nobody else is treated in a different way, especially if this is a better way.

Student-teacher relationship seems to make a significant contribution to the students' satisfaction with school as indicated by the findings concerning perceived support from the teachers. Teacher support is measured both in terms of practical and emotional support, and both seem important influences on the students' satisfaction with school. The teachers as persons and their way of caring for the individual students (as well as the total class) all appear to be important in determining a high satisfaction with school.

The students' perception of fairness is based on whether the students feel that they can influence rules and regulations in school, and whether they experience that the teachers treat them fairly. It is important for each student to experience that nobody else is treated in a different way, especially if this is a better way. The students' contribution to the development of rules and regulations is also an important means of accepting and perceiving ownership of the regulations that are needed in a school society.

The conjoint evaluation of school climate and students' satisfaction information enabled the determination of which (and to what extent) school climate variables related significantly to the students' satisfaction. This study thus confirmed previous research suggesting school climate differences (e.g., teacher – student relationships, student interpersonal relations) between students who like and dislike their schooling experience (DeSantis, 2006; Huebner & Gilman, 2006; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). As a result, study findings lend insights into potential targeted environmental strategies to increase school satisfaction and improve students' schooling experience.

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