
ACADEMIC CLIMATE IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS

Abdul Samad

Assistant Professor, Baihata Chariali B.Ed. College, Assam

Abstract:

Academic climate is the important prerequisite for academic success of an educational institutions. To see the present status of academic climate of secondary schools in relation to academic achievement, the present study is undertaken. Academic climate perceptions was studied in terms of location of schools and sex of the students. A sample of 100 students of IX standard of provincialized secondary schools, Darrang District of Assam have been selected by simple random sampling techniques. The data was collected by employing Academic Climate Description Questionnaire (ACDQ) by Shah, M.L. and Shaha, A. and Academic Achievement Data Sheet constructed by the investigator. The study revealed that (i) Secondary Schools shows an average academic climate. (ii) Academic climate perceptions of students of urban and rural schools differed. (iii) The academic climate perceptions do not differed significantly between boys and girls.

Key words: Academic Climate , Academic Achievement , provincialized.

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of school climate is based on the patterns of peoples experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, inter - personal relationships, teaching-learning practices, and organizational structures. School climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and provide the pre-conditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. It can be focused on the basis of the feelings and attitudes about a school expressed by students teachers, staff and parents the way students and staff 'feel' about being at school each day. In fact school climate comprises several aspects of the school environment that includes a physical environment to welcome and conduce learning, a social environment to promote communication and interaction, an effective environment to promote a sense of belonging and self esteem, and finally, an academic environment to promote learning and self fulfillment on the part of the students.

Academic climate can be conceptualized as a climate wherein teaching learning is spontaneous and natural, wherein hurdles in the process are removed by willing mutual effort of teacher and student, wherein student feel encouraged to engage himself in learning activity and makes effort of improving and fashioning their behaviour accordingly. Thus component of academic climate can be visualized as a concept incorporating the motivation on the part of the

students, encouragement and inspiration on the part of the teacher and inter -personal trust between authority and students. The entire atmosphere of the school throbs with ideas, activities and processes that contribute to the mental and behavioural enrichment. Perhaps those scholars who have tried to indentify climate measures only in intrapersonal relationships and their resultant perceptions will find it slightly difficult to subscribe this view that academic climate does not have a physical and material aspect. Almost all psychologists agree that the nature and quality of our physical environment affects our core of behaviour. So the physical material aspect that imbibes in student a sense of dedication to learning can also be said to be contributory aspect in academic climate. Besides these general ingredients, the leadership behaviour of the administrator can be also be incorporated to signify the academic climate of school.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

School climate has been studied with a multitude of variables, methodologies, theories and models resulting in not easily defined body of research. Over the past two decades, researchers and educators have increasingly recognized the importance of school climate. School climate has been researched for many years and continues to be examined and redefined as a result of its significant influences on educational outcome.

Davidson and Long's (1960) study reported that students who felt liked by their teachers had higher academic achievement and shows more productive classroom behaviour than those students who felt their teachers held them in lower regard. Sackney, Larry (1988) found that school climate is the cultural dimension of schools including norms, processes and structures and also reports that school climate directly impact on students learning by making the school activities important to students. Devine & Cohan (2007) reported that feeling safe in schools powerfully promotes students learning and healthy development.

In the context of India, Shah, M.L. (1988) studied characteristics of academic climate in educational institutions. The study reported that boys and girls belonging to urban and rural, govt. and private colleges differed in the perception of physical material, school provision and academic provision dimension of ACDQ. Fernandez, M.S. (1990) studied on the psychological aspects of human relations in school administration and reported that the pattern of distribution of grade of human relationship in terms of the relative degree of sharing of responses was not normal. Rey, Tilak (1995) studied academic alienation among students in relation to their home and school environment and reported that male and female tribal high school student did not seem to differ significantly with regard to their level of academic alienation. Goswami,M (2007) while conducting study reported that schools are having different organizational climate and the academic performance is highest in private schools followed by urban and rural schools.

METHODOLOGY :

Sample

A normative survey method was used for the present research. The investigator has made an attempt to study the existing situation of academic climate in provincialized secondary schools. A sample of 100 students of IX standard of Darrang District, Assam was selected by simple random sampling technique. It comprises 60 students from urban schools and 40 students from rural schools. In terms of sex it consists of 50 boys and 50 girls.

Objectives of the study

The investigator has formulated the following objectives for the study

1. To identify the academic climate of provincialized secondary schools of Darrang District.
2. To compare academic climate perceptions of students in respect to their location (urban & rural).
3. To compare academic climate perceptions of students in respect to their sex (boys & girls).
4. To study the relationship between academic climate and academic achievement of students.

Hypotheses of the study

The hypotheses for the above objectives are formulated as stated below;

- H₁ : There exist an average academic climate in the provincialized secondary schools.
- H₂ : There exist no significant difference in the perceptions of academic climate of students in respect to their location (urban of rural).
- H₃ : There exist no significant difference in the perceptions of academic climate of students in respect to their sex (Boys & Girls).
- H₄ : There exist no significant relationship between academic climate and academic achievement of students.

Research Tools

Following research tools have been employed to collect data for the present study.

- (i) Academic Climate Description Questionnaire (ACDQ) – by Shah, M.L. and Shah, A
- (ii) Academic Achievement Data sheet
- (iii)

The ACDQ seeks to study academic climate in respect to four dimensions namely physical material (PM), inter- personal trust (IPT), school provision (SP) and Academic provision (AP) respectively. The final scale contained 84 items in which 16 for PM, 14 for IPT, 32 for SP and 22 for AP were selected. The investigator collected the students academic achievement marks secured in the examinations, from the school records.

Data collection and scoring procedure

The adopted tool ACDQ and a personal information data sheet were administered on selected sample with the help of the headmasters and teachers. The students were asked to read instruction manual before answering the questions. The students were instructed to keep the answers confidential and not to disclose to anyone. The scoring procedure was done according to the test manual.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The perceptions of the students with regard to academic climate of their respective schools collected with ACDQ were scored adopting the procedure given in the test manual. The analysis of ACDQ was based on the four dimensions of academic climate of schools namely, physical material (PM), inter-personal Trust (IPT), School provision (SP) and academic provision (AP).

The raw data obtained for each dimension have been tabulated and feed into appropriate frequency table in the light of four dimensions of ACDQ. Percentile Rank were calculated with regard to each dimension separately to measure the level of academic climate of the schools. The percentiles calculated in the four dimensions of ACDQ is given in Table -1

Table -1
Percentiles Calculated in respect to dimensions of ACDQ

Percentiles	Dimensions of ACDQ				Total	Interpretation
	Physical Material	Inter-personal trust	School provision	Academic provision		
P ₉₀	27.14	25.48	47.7	32.63	132.95	Very high Academic climate
P ₈₀	25.47	24.3	46.1	30.4	126.27	High Academic climate
P ₇₅ (Q ₃)	24.96	23.97	45.41	29.32	123.66	
P ₇₀	24.46	23.64	44.72	28.7	121.52	
P ₆₀	23.44	22.98	42.38	27.28	116.08	Average Academic Climate
P ₅₀ (Mdn)	22.26	22.33	40.27	26.11	110.97	
P ₄₀	20.98	21.7	38.58	24.84	106.1	Low Academic Climate
P ₃₀	19.46	21.1	37.1	23.43	101.09	
P ₂₅ (Q ₁)	18.77	20.75	36.16	22.16	97.84	
P ₂₀	18.1	20.3	34.9	20.78	94.08	Very Low Academic Climate
P ₁₀	15.34	18.3	31.56	17.74	82.94	

In view of the percentiles calculated in respect to the different dimensions of ACDQ (Table -1) the following table -2 represents the Mean and SD of all the dimensions to interpret the academic climate of provincialized secondary schools.

Table -2
Academic climate of Provincialized secondary schools (N = 100)

Dimensions of ACDQ	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Physical Material	21.85	4.38	Average Academic Climate
Inter-personal Trust	22.26	2.7	
School provision	40.44	6.2	
Academic provision	25.76	5.4	
Total	110.3	18.7	

The table -2 shows the mean and SD of all the dimensions of academic climate of school. It also shows the calculated mean value of physical material, interpersonal trust, school provision and academic provision dimension were 21.85, 22.26, 40.44 and 25.76 respectively. In all the four dimensions of the academic climate of schools indicates an average academic climate. Moreover, the total mean score was 110.3 which falls at P₅₀ (Mdn) therefore it can be interpreted that provincialized secondary schools of Darrang District shows an average academic climate.

The sample schools are further classified as 'urban' and 'rural' on the basis of location in order to compare academic climate perceptions in respect to location of schools. Comparison of academic climate perceptions of students in respect to location is shown in Table -3

Table -3
Comparison of academic climate perceptions of urban and rural students

Location	N	Mean	SD	't' - value	Remark
Urban	60	118.5	16.2	5.29	**
Rural	40	101.3	15.8		

** - Significant at 0.01 level

The table -3 reveals that t-value 5.29 to significant at 0.01 level. Therefore the null hypothesis formulated is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic climate perceptions of students of urban and rural schools. The academic climate of urban schools are found better than the rural schools. This findings shows conformity with the findings of Shah, M.L. (1988)

The academic climate scores are also classified as 'boys and 'girls' in order to compare academic climate perceptions in respect to sex of the students. The table 4 shows the comparison of academic climate perceptions in respect to the sex of the students.

Table - 4
Comparison of academic climate perceptions of boys and girls

Sex	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Remark
Boys	50	112.52	15.4	1.26	NS
Girls	50	108.4	17.2		

N.S. – Not Significant

The table -4 shows that the t - value 1.26 is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the academic climate perception between boys and girls. This findings contradicts the findings of Shah, M.L. (1988).

The academic climate perception scores and academic achievement scores of the sample students were collected and attempt was made to examine their relationship by employing Product moment correlation method. Relationship between academic climate and academic achievement of students is shown in Table – 5.

Table – 5
Relationship between academic climate and academic achievement

Variables	N	df	r
Academic climate (X)	100	98	.32**
Academic Achievement (Y)	100		

Table value of r (df = 98)=.19 at .05 level and .25 at 0.01 level.

** -significant at 0.01 level.

To see the relationship between academic climate and academic achievement product moment correlation is applied and statistical analysis is undertaken. The co - efficient of correlation between the academic climate and academic achievement is found to be .32 which is significant at 0.01 level (Table -5). It can be concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between academic climate and academic achievement of students. It indicates that high sores in academic climate tend to accompany high scores in academic achievement. This findings goes in tune of a number of correlational studies between school climate and academic achievement. (Brand, Felner, Shim 2003)

Major findings of the study

On the basis of analysis data, following findings have been drawn.

- The study reveals that the provincialized secondary schools shows an average academic climate. The total mean score of academic climate is 110.3, which fall at P₅₀ (Mdn) can easily be interpreted as average academic climate of the school.
- The academic climate perceptions of students of urban and rural schools were found significantly differed. Academic climate of urban schools are found better than the rural schools.
- The academic climate perceptions do not differ significantly between boys and girls.
- Academic climate is positively and significantly related to academic achievement (r=.32,df =98).

Conclusions and Educational Implications

From the above analysis of data and findings of the study, the investigator came up with the result that a student’s progress at school is over welmingly dependent on academic climate of schools. The study focused academic climate as a crucial pre-requisite for academic success of students. This study identified academic climate on the basis of four dimensions, namely,

physical material, interpersonal trust, school provision and academic provision. The academic climate is found average in the provincialized secondary schools. It is also observed that rural school are not having proper academic climate. Hence special attention to be given in the improvement of academic climate of rural schools. Finally, the investigator concludes that academic climate of secondary schools of Darrang District in particular and Assam in general should be improved so to increase achievement level of students.

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