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## ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT

### Article Particulars

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### Abstract

*The purpose of the study is to assess the school climate at higher secondary level with respect to Gender, Locality, Type of family, Medium of Instruction and Type of management. Survey method was adopted to collect the relevant data for the present study. School Climate Inventory developed and Standardized by Murray (1999) was adopted for the study. The Investigator randomly selected three hundred higher secondary students studying in Government and Private schools in and around Tiruvallur District of Tamilnadu. For analyzing the data mean, standard deviation, 't'-test and ANOVA are used. The results of the study reveal that most of the students have Moderate level of School climate at higher secondary level. It was found that there is no significance difference between the Male and Female higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores. The urban school students have favorable school climate than rural school students. The findings of the study reveals that there is no significance difference between the Joint family and Nuclear family higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores. The English medium school students have favorable school climate than Tamil medium school students. The result reveals that the private school students have favorable school climate than their counterparts.*

**Keywords:** *School Climate, Higher Secondary Students, Organizational Climate, School Atmosphere, Positive School Climate.*

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### Introduction

School climate is an integral and indispensable component of the teaching and learning process. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. It is based on patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision.

Howell and Brainard (1987) who defined a school's climate as its "atmosphere for learning. In this study school climate is defined as a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of a particular school that: (a) is experienced by the members (students, teachers, administrators, consultants and custodians), (b) influences their behaviour, and (c) can be described in terms of the values, norms and beliefs of a particular set of attributes of the school. Teachers plays important role for developing positive school climate at higher secondary level. Therefore, Positive school climates powerfully promote student achievement and positive youth development.

### **Need and Significance of the Study**

Students learn best and achieve their full potential when they are physically, socially, emotionally, and academically safe in safe and orderly classrooms. We must support comprehensive, evidence-based efforts to increase student achievement by establishing a positive school climate as reflected in the character and quality of school life. School climate reflects multiple aspects of people's experience of school life, including: norms, goals, values, and interpersonal relationships. A key to student success is to ensure that all students have opportunities to feel capable, connected, and that they are contributing members of the school. Students need to be encouraged to become actively involved in their school and classroom. Sometimes it becomes necessary for the staff to take steps to ensure the school and classroom are inviting and welcoming for students who are not good at school.

The school climate could influence on school life of a student. It is an important factor in determining his/her progress in performance or achievement in subject concerned. The students and teachers at school level should have a positive attitude towards the school and on the various activities that go on in the school. Schools perceived as being positive, safe, and nurturing environments focused on student learning, perform better in examinations regardless of available technology or teacher training. This is not to say that a school with no textbooks will outperform one with textbooks based solely on environment, but that the learning environment, culture, and climate produced by the school as a whole may help or hinder learning.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The school climate is positively connected to student achievement as proved in research literature (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998; Ma, Wilkins, 2002; Brown and others, 2004; Lehr, 2010) and in previous TIMSS studies (Martin, Mullis, Gonzalez, & Chrostowski, 2004; Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez, & Chrostowski, 2004; Martin, Mullis, & Foy 2008; Mullis, Martin, & Foy 2008; Mullis, Martin, Ruddock, O'Sullivan, & Preuschoff, 2009). A more positive The Proceedings of IRC 2008 5 school climate is connected to higher achievements.

Lowie (1995) noted that while forces outside of the school influence the climate, it can be described as largely the result of behaviours and attitude exhibited within the

organization. Hoy et al. (1991) indicates that the climate is directly associated with the interrelationship of the buildings, headmaster/mistress and the teachers in that school, as it is based on their perception of behaviour common to the organization. Browne (2002) viewed the school climate as it reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. This has a significant element in discussions about improving academic performance and school reform. Additionally, creation of an orderly environment is an essential component of an effective school (Edmonds, 1979). Schools show a lot of differences in terms of the feel, atmosphere or ideology, student behavior, academic performance, social and civic values, moral character, and interpersonal skills. The cumulative effect of these differences creates the 'ethos' or climate of the school. Many studies have been conducted linking a positive school climate to student performance (Bliss, Firestone, & Richards, 1991; Carter, 2000; Cruickshank, 1990; DuFour, 2000; Goddard, Tschannen – Moran, & Hoy 2001; Hoy & Feldman, 1987; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Klinger, 2000; Lezotte, 1991, 1992, 2002). The overall conclusion of these studies has been that a positive school climate exists as an essential element in successful schools.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the level of school climate among higher secondary school students.
2. To find out significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Gender.
3. To find out significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Locality.
4. To find out significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Type of family.
5. To find out significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Medium of Instruction.
6. To find out significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Type of Management.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Gender.
2. There is no significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Locality.
3. There is no significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Type of family.
4. There is no significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Medium of Instruction.

5. There is no significant difference in school climate among higher secondary school students with respect to Type of Management.

### Methodology

**Method of the Study:** The researcher adopted the Survey method to collect the relevant data from desired areas.

**Population:** The population of the study constituted as Higher Secondary school students in Tiruvallur District.

**Tools used:** The following research tools were used for collecting the relevant data.

- Personal Information sheet developed by investigators.
- The School Climate Inventory developed and Standardized by Murray (1999) was adopted for the study.

**Sample:** The sample for the present study includes the higher secondary school students from Government and Private schools of Tiruvallur districts in Tamilnadu.

**Sample size:** In the present study includes 300 higher secondary school students.

**Sampling Technique:** The researcher used Simple random sampling technique for selecting the sample.

### Statistical Techniques Used

For analyzing the data mean, standard deviation and 't'-test are used.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1 The level of School Climate among the Higher Secondary School Students**

Levels of School Climate	Frequency	Percentage
Low	43	25.21%
Moderate	193	60.23%
High	44	14.56%

From the above table it is clear that the 25.21% of students reveals low level of School climate, 14.56% of students reveal High level and 60.23% of students reveal that Moderate level of School climate at higher secondary level.

**Table 2 Difference between Male and Female Higher Secondary Students with Respect to School Climate**

School climate	Male	150	62.95	16.787	0.897	NS
	Female	150	64.86	16.178		

From the above table, it is inferred that t- value (0.897) is lesser than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 levels. Hence there is no significance difference between the Male and Female higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores. Therefore the above null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 3 Difference between Rural and Urban Higher Secondary Students with Respect to School Climate**

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	t - value	Level of Significance
school climate	Rural	171	59.86	14.716	6.479	0.01
	urban	129	73.93	16.430		

From the above table, it is inferred that the t- value (6.479) is greater than the table value (2.58) at 0.01 level. Hence there is a significance difference between the Rural and Urban area higher secondary school students on their School climate mean scores. Therefore the above null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 4 Difference between Joint and Nuclear Family Higher Secondary Students with Respect to School Climate**

Variable	Type of Family	N	Mean	SD	t - Value	Level of Significance
School climate	Joint	198	63.16	17.789	0.965	NS
	Nuclear	102	65.33	13.592		

From the above table, it is inferred that the t- value (0.965) is lesser than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence there is no significance difference between the Joint family and Nuclear family higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores. Therefore the above null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 5 Difference between Tamil and English Medium Higher Secondary Students with Respect to School Climate**

Variable	Medium of Instruction	N	Mean	SD	t - value	Level of significance
School climate	Tamil	200	56.52	11.460	12.686	0.01
	English	100	78.68	15.026		

From the above table, it is inferred that the t- value (12.686) is greater than the table value (2.58) at 0.01 levels. Hence there is a significance difference between the Tamil medium and English medium higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores. Therefore the above null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 6 One way ANOVA for Type of Management**

Variable		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F Value	L.S
Schoo climate	Between groups	39742.108	2	19871.054	187.189	0.01
	With in groups	25158.688	297	106.155		
	Total	64900.796	299			

From the above table, it is observed that the F-ratio (187.189) is greater than the table value (4.60) at 0.01 levels. Hence, that there is a significant difference among the type of management of schools with respect to school climate. Therefore, it is considered for further analysis.

**Table 7 Analysis of School Climate among Higher Secondary Students with Respect to Type of Management**

Variable	Type of Management	N	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	L.S
school climate	Govt.	100	47.31	5.162	17.107	0.01
	Aided	100	65.72	8.126		
	Govt.	100	47.31	5.162	17.655	0.01
	Private	100	78.68	15.026		
	Aided	100	65.72	8.126	6.780	0.01
	Private	100	78.68	15.026		

From the above table, the t- value is found that there is a significant difference in the School climate of higher secondary school students with respect to Government, Aided and Private higher secondary schools at 0.01 levels. Hence the Null hypothesis is rejected. The result reveals that the private school students have favorable school climate than their counterparts.

### Major Findings of the Study

- The results reveals that the 14.33% of students reveals low level of School climate, 14.66% of students reveal High level and 64.33% of students reveal that Moderate level of School climate at higher secondary level.
- It was found that there is no significance difference between the Male and Female higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores.
- The urban school students have favorable school climate than rural school students.
- The findings of the study reveals that there is no significance difference between the Joint family and Nuclear family higher secondary school students on School climate mean scores.
- The English medium school students have favorable school climate than Tamil medium school students.
- The result reveals that the private school students have favorable school climate than their counterparts.

### Educational Implications

The climate of a school is established by the headmaster/mistress and school staff and is, therefore, capable of change. If the staff can establish and change the climate in the school, then the level of achievement can also be changed. Furthermore, research has shown that climate can impact on student achievement. Positive learning environments and positive learning outcomes appear to go together (Haertel et al., 1981) as cited in Sackney (1988). In that regard a model of school climate improvement attributes is highly needed. As such, the attributes can be used as the basis for climate improvement activities. When analyzing the effects of the school climate on student achievement, the researchers mainly focus on teachers, principals and neglected students who are directly influenced by school climate (Gentilucci, & Muto, 2007). Present study gives attention also to the students' point of view and encourages future research to include students' evaluation of school climate together with principals' and teachers.

## Conclusion

The school influences student achievement through student attachment, commitment, involvement and, most importantly, through the schools' resources and climate (Freiberg, 1999). School climate is a relatively stable aspect of the school environment (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004) defined as a set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influences the behaviour of school members. School climate is very important to promote positive learning and stimulate students who want to learn. The school and classroom climate needs to address all types of learning styles. The room needs to be clean and the desks need to be arranged in an orderly fashion to encourage student participation. Without a good school climate no one can teach effectively. One teacher may work best in a very structured classroom while another may prefer a more laid back approach. In either instance the teacher must be willing and able to insure that there is no interference with the learning process. The results of study pave the way for developing positive and healthy school climate at higher secondary level.

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