The Concept of Trust and its Relationship with School Climate: A Study of Govt. Secondary Schools of District Gujarat.

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Abstract

The study was conducted to establish the relationship between school climate and trust of government secondary schools in the district of Gujarat. The instrument used in the study was organizational climate descriptive questionnaire (OCDQ), adapted by the researcher. There are four tehsils of Gujarat and from each tehsil headquarter, one male and one female government secondary school was selected as sample for the study, using stratified random sampling technique. From each selected school eight senior subject teachers (SST) and the principal were the sample of the study. The total number of respondents aggregated to 69 teachers and principals from eight government secondary schools of Gujarat. The research design was descriptive, correlational survey type. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was applied to measure the degree of relationship between school climate and trust of government Secondary Schools in Gujarat district. The analysis revealed that there was significant strong relationship between trust and school climate of government Secondary Schools in Gujarat district.

Key words: school climate, trust, government secondary Schools.

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Introduction

In this fast moving technological world the urge and need for education has increased immensely, which has opened the doors of multiple reforms for academic press. Among these reform programs the concept of organizational school climate has also emerged. Seeing the utility and fruits of school climate, nowadays as according to Hoy (2004) organizational school climate has become a global construct and its study is used together with or as an alternate to school effectiveness, school improvement, school environment, learning environment, learning climate, academic climate, leadership and social climate.

In the late 1950's the climate research began in corporate sector (Halpin & Croft 1963). In 1960's the climate concept was applied to educational settings by Halpin & Croft. Tschannen-Moran (2013) illustrates that empirical research into school climate and trust started in the late 1950's. In late 1960's psychologists became interested about young people disillusionment with institutions and authorities of society. In early 1980's because of soaring divorce rates, radical changes in family structures and the impact of the women movement, research on trust turned into interpersonal relationships. In 1990's due to the shift in technology and society, trust again gained importance in sociology and organizational science.

According to Norton (2008) school climate is the atmosphere that is created and experienced by the social and professional interaction of the members of the school. The effectiveness of a school is dependent on the school climate. Hoy (2008) asserts that school climate has gained importance and been studied for decades. He defines school climate as the atmosphere, ethos, tone, ideology, community, personality or milieu of a school. Mine (2009) defined school climate as the perception of individuals work environment. Wikipedia defines organizational climate as the controlling factor of the behavior of the employees in an organization. It is also sometimes known as corporate climate.

As regards the trust factor, Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty (2005) talking about is say that schools with positive school climate will be places where self-worth, pride, respect and trust are practiced and fostered. (Ingersoll, 2001: Wynn, 2008) add that teachers retention in a school is longer where there is positive climate. This retention enhances students' achievement. Making a powerful case for trust as the underpinning of successful leadership influence, Tschannen-Moran (2013) explains, "trust is the key ingredient that makes it possible for us to do that well and to celebrate mistakes, not as failures, but as opportunities for real learning". Leaders who don't

focus on trust and self-efficacy will not accomplish much. "… Trust is the key missing ingredient when not only students but also teachers and even leaders fail to engage in the learning process".

Tschannen-Moran (2013) defines trust as one's willingness to be vulnerable to another on the grounds that other is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open. Zakrzewski (2013) states that there is no magic formula in building a positive school climate. It depends on the leaders' vision and values and how he brings everyone on board with it. It starts with trust, which according to researchers is an essential prerequisite for positive school climate. To build trust is to give teachers, staff and students some say in the process and good leaders facilitate trust-building relationships between the stakeholders. Cohen, Pickeral, & McCloskey (2009) assert that whether clearly expressed or disguised, school principal has great influence on school climate and can build a trusting atmosphere in the school.

Innumerable research point out that nurturing relationships, especially trust among colleagues is very important and is critical for successful learning environment (NWREL, 2003; Homana, Barber, & Torney-Purta, 2005; Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Norton, 2008). School leaders practicing strong trust for their faculty, get that trust back. In such situations teachers show greater cooperation with colleagues, stronger commitment and professionalism towards their students (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). On the contrary (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2008) states that negative school climate with an atmosphere of mistrust, refrain teachers, administration and support staff to model positive citizen behavior for the students. Schools with negative school climate have teacher turnover and absenteeism (Wynn, Carboni, and Patall, 2007). Tschannen-Moran (2009) reports that where schools are run authoritarianly in a rule-bound manner, teachers have less trust for their administration and do not go beyond contractual potential for students.

NWREL (2003) suggests that relationship building is of paramount importance and principals should act professionally to encourage in building relationships. According to Tschannen-Moran (2009) trust is an important factor as regards teacher-teacher, teacher-principal relationship. It not only impacts the school climate but also have long lasting impact on the trust of the students and their parents. Tschannen-Moran (2013) expresses that in this 21st century the importance of trust have even increased. We have to understand the power of trust and how we can foster it, how to maintain, intervene and restore when trust is damaged or lost. When trust is damaged teachers' energy is drawn off from their primary, collective work. They pull back and

their energy is invested in self-protection and in hyper-vigilances. Like this teachers spend their energy focusing on the source of their distrust. A number of insecure questions hover around them. "What is she up to?" "What is he going to do next?" "What recourse do I have if that happens?" …this takes up a lot of teachers' time, attention and energy which was to be utilized for important, collective work and student learning.

Going through review of related literature regarding trust and strengthening faculty relationships with respect to overall school climate it was found that there is not much research internationally, and especially in Pakistan that can help educationists and researchers to assess the quality of faculty relationships and the impact they have on overall school climate and students' achievements. Therefore the focus of this study is to explore this important trust factor and its effects on school climate.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the school climate of the government secondary schools of Gujarat district
2. To explore the relationship between school climate and the important dimension of trust, of government secondary schools of Gujarat district.

Method and procedure

There are four tehsils of Gujarat and from each tehsil headquarter, one male and one female government secondary school was selected as sample for the study, using stratified random sampling technique. From each selected school eight senior subject teachers (SST) and the principal were the sample of the study. The total number of respondents aggregated to 69 teachers and principals from eight government secondary schools. Table 1 below shows the overall distribution of the sample.

Table 1
Overall Summary of the Sample

District	Tehsils	Resp. from Govt. Schools		Total No. of Respondents
		M	FM	
Gujarat	4	33	36	69

The instrument used in the study was organizational climate descriptive questionnaire (OCDQ) adapted by the researcher. Keeping in view the norms of research pilot-testing of the instrument was conducted and was professionally vetted from the experts before its administration.

Data Analysis

Collected data was arranged and tabulated for the analysis. As the study focused to explore the school climate and its relationship with students' achievement, therefore the research design was descriptive, correlational survey type. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was applied to measure the degree of relationship between school climate and trust of government secondary schools of Gujarat district.

Results

Through data analysis and finding it is worth to mention that in government schools: principals interaction with the staff was found to be formal (statement [S]-1), principals were not good listeners(S- 4), the principal besides official duties did not mix with the staff (S-7), principals remained aloof from the adverse incidents/situations in the schools (S-9), There was lack of trust between principal, teachers and subordinates (S-17), teachers quarreled and criticized each other (S-32), teachers' backbiting was a habit (S-33), there was unjust distribution of workload among the teachers (S-34), teachers were divided into groups (S-35).Teachers did not plan their teaching to achieve desired objective (S-49). Teachers received sufficient training for their professional needs (S-50). Principals' without consultation framed and fixed the objectives/goals of the school (S- 6), Faculty meetings were mostly principal-report meetings (S-8),

Besides this, in these schools there was a disconnection about some of the important indicators of school climate as showed by the statements: Principal did not formulated and implemented clear, logical policies and procedures (S-5), Teachers were not mutually respectful and helpful (S-43), Principal did not involve teachers in decision making process related to their work (S-22), Principal did not help teachers to solve their personal problems/grievances (S-26), Teachers needs were not well taken care of (S-42).

Table 2
Correlation between School Climate and trust factor of Government Secondary Schools in Gujarat District

Variables	N	*r*	Sig.
School Climate	69	0.600	0.017
Trust			

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table 2 shows that correlation value of overall organizational school climate to students' achievement was $r = .60$ and p value .017. This leads to that there is significant strong relationship between school climate and students' achievement of government sector secondary schools in Gujarat district.

Discussion

1. It was evident from the data that government schools had ample, experienced and professionally trained teachers, qualified and trained principals, well paid off staff, not much work load as compared to private schools, which are supposed to be important indicators for high student achievement, but because of low trust their school climate was not healthy, they had low student achievement. This means that although number, experience, training, pay, work load etc. of staff counts but trust is the an important invisible underpinned factor that not only affects school climate and school improvement badly but also imprints' its affects on student achievement. This analysis supports the findings of (Cohen et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) that school climate is one of the most important factor that affects students' achievement.

2. The analysis revealed that there was significant positive relationship between trust and school climate of government secondary schools in the district of Gujarat. These findings were similar to that of (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Cohen et al., 2009; Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2003).

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations are made.

1. School climate and the dimension of trust should be made the key focus of school improvement efforts and programs at policy level.
2. It is recommended that education department should regulate guidelines, policies, rules to understand, integrate and sustain healthy school climate.
3. Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) should develop simple school climate survey instruments that can comprehensively measure school climate and the dimension of trust. These instruments should be distributed to all schools to assess their school climate on regular bases.
4. It is suggested that school and classroom climate should be research-based part of teacher education.

5. School climate assessment should be made a continuous process and integral part of accountability system of schools education.
6. This study was conducted in Gujarat district. This can be replicated in other districts, Punjab province and other provinces of Pakistan.

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