

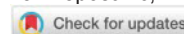
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND CLASS CLIMATE

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Abstract: Although there is no generally accepted definition of school climate and a single position on its dimensions, most authors agree that school climate is a multidimensional and complex construct, which refers to the quality and character of school life. Educational reforms that want to improve the quality of learning, but also improve the educational effect of the school, should not ignore that the school climate is one of the most researched school phenomena that affects the behavior and life of all participants in school life. In addition to the definition of school climate and other terms that conceptually overlap with school climate or other aspects of school life, it is necessary to define school climate and classroom climate. In contrast to school climate, classroom climate refers to social interactions in the classroom, student expectations for behavior, and school performance, but also to the physical characteristics of the classroom or the “intellectual, social, emotional, and physical environment in which students learn”. Classroom climate refers to the perception of the classroom environment, and school climate refers to the perception of the entire school. Classroom climate affects the perception of school climate as a more comprehensive phenomenon. The school climate’s perception depends on individual factors and the classroom climate. Teachers are the ones who represent one of the main factors in shaping students school experiences. A study conducted by Hallinan (2008) indicated that the teacher-student relationship predicts student commitment to school. Two special dimensions of that relationship are social and emotional support for students and teachers expectations of students. Students and teachers perceive the school climate more favorably when they feel safe and when aggression and victimization are not frequent. Students who feel safe at school are better adjusted, exhibit less delinquent and aggressive behavior, and report higher self-esteem. By improving the school climate, and especially the relationship between teachers and students, by establishing fair rules in the school and respecting diversity, the students behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement in school is affected, which further affects various areas of the student’s life, such as student well-being or and their academic achievement.

Keywords: School climate, student, teacher, classroom climate, positive performance

Field: Humanities

1. INTRODUCTION

Schools as organizations have great importance in shaping social reality and changes, but social changes continuously affect changing and redefining the view of the school. Therefore, since it is no longer characterized by one-way communication through frontal work and pronounced competition, but competencies such as cooperation, tolerance, and openness are developed among students, the modern school is considered a humane, creative, and pro-social community of students, teachers, and parents (Tadic, 2022).

In this paper, we will focus on the study of the influence of school and classroom climate on student achievement. Changes in the domain of climate and culture that characterize the school institution are very complex, and this will be highlighted in the central part of the paper, and should refer to all components of the content and structure of the school institution. The analysis that makes up the content of the text that follows, in addition to providing conceptual and terminological definitions of concepts that are increasingly used in current discussions about upbringing and education in the school context, aims to point out the importance of building a school as a safe and stimulating environment, as well as the complexity of that process because it can be successfully implemented only in the conditions of reviewing and changing the school climate and culture. (Hebib, Žunić-Pavlović, 2018: 115).

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS WITH A POSITIVE CLIMATE

School is an important factor in the social development of children. That it has a strong influence on child development is also confirmed by research that, based on the study of class size, teacher-student

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interaction, educational philosophy and the broader cultural context of the school, defines the school as a complex social system. Along with the family, it occupies a central place in a child's life. Namely, apart from having a significant role in his socialization, school is particularly important in the development of a young man's personality. "The school, through its educational denominator, educates and participates in the formation of the child's personality through the process of adopting social and cultural norms." It is not only an institution for the development of the individual, but it is also considered one of the oldest institutions for the civilizational, cultural and religious development of social communities". (Tadic, 2022). Therefore, the way the school and its factors function, directly affect the individual and his life.

What is characterized in the literature as a positive school climate usually includes a number of different properties: an attractive school appearance, a cooperative relationship between teachers, extracurricular staff, students and their families, high expectations in relation to all actors, an atmosphere of respect and positive interactions, open opportunities for inclusion in the academic and social sphere. (Popović-Čitić, Đurić, 2018: 34). School climate plays an important role in creating a healthy and positive school atmosphere, important for the achievements of students and the entire school staff. Researchers clearly link a positive school climate to a reduction in behavioral and emotional problems in students. Students in schools with a positive school climate are more involved in all curricular and extracurricular processes, the experience of victimization by violence and crime is reduced, discipline is better, absences from school are less frequent. Positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning conditions in all demographic environments can increase levels of school achievement and reduce behavioral problems. Schools with positive climates build environments that are optimistic, safe, intellectually challenging and fun. "McNeil and McLean state the following characteristics of successful schools: 1) continuous exchange of ideas (teachers exchange opinions daily about teaching, plans and programs, testing methods, school organization); 2) cooperation (teachers join teams that work together on issues of teaching, program improvement, research); 3) equality (participation of teachers in decision-making is not strictly formal, at meetings everyone has the right to vote and express their opinion - the attitude is fostered that the quality of an idea is more important than whose idea it is); 4) practical applicability (teachers think about whether what they do has practical applicability and whether it helps students, colleagues and the school)". (Popović-Čitić, Đurić, 2018: 34).

In order to raise the level of the quality of education in the knowledge society, which is defined by the quality of the outcome of the students' cognitive and affective achievements, it is necessary to fulfill three prerequisites. The first prerequisite is the reduction of existing differences between schools and regions. The second is related to reaching a high level of educational achievement of children. While the third prerequisite tries to emphasize that for better quality education, it is important to ensure that the influence of the socioeconomic status of the family on the educational achievements of children is as small as possible. Placing emphasis on quality education and a quality training system is at the same time an economic and social response to the challenges of globalization that modern society faces in all aspects (Tadić, 2022).

In addition to defining the concept of school climate and its dimensions, its assessment is also an important segment, which plays an important role in the development and reform of the school. Assessment is an important factor in discovering and solving problems that hinder the positive and healthy development of the school as an educational institution. Assessment of school climate is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data with the aim of identifying the problems and needs of the school, which provides the school management with an adequate basis for planning and implementing measures to improve the school climate. (Đurišić, 2020: 29). The assessment provides a picture of the weak and strong sides of the school, determines the current state of the school and indicates whether the existing state should only be monitored and maintained or it is necessary to improve it.

3. ANTISOCIAL AND PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

School is very important for the formation and development of personality. Just as there are dysfunctional families, there are also dysfunctional schools. These are schools with a negative school climate characterized by: "disciplinary problems, inadequate and unclear rules of conduct, a large number of student absences, frequency of behavior problems, vandalism, low morale, prosocial behavior, traditional teaching, poor school performance, etc." (Đurišić, 2015: 207).

The presence of antisocial behavior among students in the sense of provocation, mocking, ignoring, insulting, hitting, can explain the presence of violent behavior (physical, verbal and relational), victimization that takes place in a two-way direction, school violations. norms and norms of behavior, and therefore the school environment, which is not safe in the presence of all the above-mentioned patterns

of behavior. (Tadic, 2023: 81-82). On the contrary, with regard to the negative sign of prosocial behavior, the absence of positive forms of behavior among students, such as respecting others, providing help and support in times of need, mainly emotional, but also related to helping with schoolwork, also explains the presence of violent, inappropriate and undisciplined behavior. In relation to students with a noticeable absence of prosocial behavior and the presence of violent behavior, a thesis can be made about the development of social behavior (eg social competence and behavioral problems). It can be assumed that those students who are not adapted and accepted, and who do not have a positive orientation in interaction with their peers and the school, show a greater tendency towards negative patterns of behavior. This thesis is supported by the pedagogical model of social competence. In this model, social competences are classified in the area of social relations and pedagogical interaction, which refer to the child's ability to initiate and maintain a relationship with peers, while the basic determinants of peer relations and friendship are social knowledge and understanding, skills, dispositions and regulation of emotions. In this context, some authors point out that social competences are the most important indicator and outcome of prosocial behavior. (Tadic, 2023: 81-82).

The school environment plays a significant role in the etiology and prevention of peer violence, considering that students, staying at school every day, develop their personality, form attitudes, shape their world view, etc. We are of the opinion that the creation of a positive school climate is most directly related to the prevention of peer violence, that is, prevention is based on a positive school climate.

As school climate depends on the perceptions of all those who participate in school life, it also affects individual perceptions, interests, desires, behavior. Only viewed in this way can it provide a more complete picture of school life and can contribute to the improvement of educational work and its effects. (Đorđić, Damjanović, 2016: 302).

4. ADAPTATION OF EDUCATION INDIVIDUAL STUDENT DIFFERENCES

When talking about the quality of a school's work, the question arises as to how successfully schools respect and adapt to the individual differences in learning styles, interests and talents of their students. Only if education develops personal potentials and achieves the well-being of each individual student, education achieves its meaning. In this way, education as a process results in the fulfillment and satisfaction of everyone involved in it. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to take into account the fact that students differ according to their own cognitive abilities, motivation and the social environments they come from. "Each student has his own learning style and different prior knowledge and capacities for understanding the teaching material. In order to develop the potential of each individual despite such a diversity of students, different teaching strategies and education models have been designed" (Tadic, 2022).

Respect for diversity is a factor that contributes to students' emotional engagement in school. Institutional culture of attitudes towards diversity is crucial for the development of student engagement. Research indicates that students who are characterized as "non-traditional" often feel alienated and do not belong in schools. Research shows that the stronger the students' ethnic identity (and the content of this factor refers to the acceptance of diversity in the domain of nationality and ethnicity), the more students are engaged in school. These studies confirmed that individuals do not have to assimilate and renounce their ethnic origin in order to be more engaged in school. (Đorđić, 2020: 248).

5. COMMUNICATION IN TEACHING AS A FACTOR OF POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE IN SCHOOL

Teaching is based on cooperation between teachers and students, that is, on those who teach and those who learn. That cooperation is realized as their mutual interaction and communication. Therefore, teaching is basically a communication process. Teacher-student communication is an important aspect of the quality of educational work, but also a significant indicator of the quality of the classroom climate. The quality of the classroom climate is significantly influenced by the pedagogical, i.e. educational, leadership style of the teacher. "Three forms were distinguished in pedagogical practice: authoritative (autocratic), democratic and indifferent (laissez faire). Authoritarian communication is characterized by the superior position of the teacher who determines which contents and in what way the students will adopt them (without respecting the students' opinions), in a democratic relationship the teacher shows the students the way, but does not insist exclusively on his own proposal, exchanges opinions with the students, encourages them to present their views and attitudes, encourages them to make independent decisions, participates in teaching activities without imposing or needing to dominate. When the teacher

shows disinterest and indifference in the teaching work, the students have complete freedom of decision individually and as a group". (Radovanović, Kovačević, 2020: 172-175). The teacher is only a passive observer and does not participate in providing support and help during classes, so productivity in work decreases and bad interpersonal relationships are created. Hence, the teacher faces the complex task of finding the best ways to establish communication based on mutual interaction without coercion and punishment. To this end, a significant place belongs to the continuous professional development of teachers and expanding the circle of competences from the didactic methodical aspect to aspects important for creating a stimulating environment for learning and a positive atmosphere in the class. (Radovanović, Kovačević, 2020: 172-175).

In short, teachers have a crucial role for the more active participation of students in the school system, because they determine the position of students in school through their own communication with students and their behavior towards them. A condition for adequate student participation in the school system is prior good information and consultation in making decisions about school activities. There is no doubt that creating a quality school, the school of the future, is a condition for happy students, their parents and teachers, and it is also a significant resource for social progress. (Zukorlić, Popović, 2017: 105).

6. CONCLUSION

Unlike the school climate, which is often said to determine the process and results of school work, but in the way they are perceived and experienced by students and teachers, as well as other members of the collective, school culture refers to the nature and character of school work, i.e. the nature and the character of the functioning of the school as an institution. While the school climate represents the opinion, attitudes and feelings dominant in the institution, the school culture dictates the collective identity, the identity of the institution; she represents the personality of the institution. "School climate is: "...something that is all around us when we are at school, we can feel it as soon as we enter the school building...", and school culture is "...a part of us...", deeply is woven into the structure of the school and determines the way in which the entire activity of the school takes place". (Hebib, Žunić-Pavlović, 2018: 123).

Indicators of a positive school climate are: a sense of belonging to the school and the group, support for the teaching staff in terms of continuous professional development and cooperation among teachers, while the indicators of the school climate include: student motivation, group decision-making, equality and fairness, safety, order and discipline, parental involvement, cooperation between the school and the local community, commitment and expectations of teachers, the principal's role in school management, the appearance of the school building, school resources, care and sensitivity, positive social interactions. (Vujačić, Stanišić, 2007: 425-426). Bearing in mind the above indicators, it is clear that creating a positive climate in the school is a very complex task, which requires constant efforts of all participants in the educational process, and the end result is the improvement of the school's work.

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