

## THE PRINCIPAL AS CREATOR OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

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### Abstract

The paper focuses on the role of the principal role in creating a positive school climate. Undoubtedly, a positive climate is a prerequisite for successful teamwork at school, successful implementation of a lesson, as well as greater motivation and commitment to the cooperation of teachers, students, parents, and the community. A positive school climate exists when all teachers and students feel comfortable, valued, accepted, and safe in an environment where they can interact. It is the belief system or culture that underlies the day-to-day functioning of a school and on which the creation of the school culture depends and has an impact on the achievement of higher results for all students, motivation and productivity, great, as well as effective management. The research was carried out online through Google Forms with a total of 42 principals and 158 teachers responding and completing the questionnaire via links provided and accepted by the schools. Through the use of survey questionnaires for principals and teachers, we have achieved results that show that when teachers feel supported by their principals, they perform better and students have higher learning outcomes. The data collected were processed and analyzed using the SPSS package, allowing us to assess the correlation between the principal's behavior and the school climate.

*Keywords:* principal, school climate, motivation, effective management.

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### Introduction

School climate may be defined as an aggregate measure of a school's characteristics, such as relationships between parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as the physical facilities on the ground. It could be seen as the overall interaction resulting from human relationships with each other and with the physical plants in the school environment. Climate refers to the atmosphere in an organization. (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011). An organization consists of people and because this is so, organizational culture is important. Although the people in an organization come from varying cultures and each individual holds different beliefs, the organization they make up holds beliefs and values that are common within it (Eren, 2010).

School culture, defined as "the basic assumptions, norms and values, and cultural artefacts that are shared by school members, which influence their functioning at school" (Maslowski, 2001, pp. 8-9), plays a significant role in enhancing school effectiveness (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996; Sammons et al., 1995). The physical and psychological working environment had influences on teacher performance. Kuncoro & Dardiri (2017), in their research results, proved that there was a correlation between the working environment and performance, which meant that a good working environment included physical, psychological, and non-physical conditions that positively affected the psychological and professional performance of teachers. (Baharuddin, 2021)

This is because environmental factors influence the activities found in the school in one way or the other. The school environment often determines the extent of success of the school. It also determines the relationship and interactions of the school with another school and with the entire public. Today, the school environment

is greatly being considered before many students take up enrolment in the schools, the teachers and the parents considered. (Gülşen & Gülenay, 2014). School climate is a broad concept that includes the perception of the teachers regarding the working environment of the school, its formal and informal organization, and the leadership of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2010).

In several papers, researchers have shown that the policies of principals and teachers constitute a healthy school climate and influence the effectiveness of the school. The principal is the key figure whose actions have a direct effect on the school climate (Price, 2012). Several studies demonstrate the crucial influence of school principals on school culture, and through school culture on teachers' functioning and well-being (Aelterman et al., 2002; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1996). Principals hold an important position and it is therefore essential that they function well.

In an implicit sense, school culture manifests itself in rituals, customs, stories, ways of treating each other, and cultural artefacts such as language (Stoll, 1999). Fullan argues that principals, facing multiple competing demands and a limited amount of time that they can spend within classrooms, should focus on transforming the culture of the school to ensure that teaching and learning function effectively. (Fullan, 2001)

By creating several motivating conditions that encourage teachers to learn and optimize their practice, principals adopt a mediation role. A leadership theory that has been associated with this kind of motivating environment is transformational leadership. A transformational leader can influence teachers' behaviour and attitudes by inspiring them, by individualized consideration, and by providing intellectual stimulation (Koh et al., 1995; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1999; Griffith, 2003). Recently the notion of distributed leadership (Harris, 2003) also gained importance. (Morris, J. E. et al., 2020). School leadership plays a significant role in staff members' professional growth. The promotion of staff learning (or lack thereof) is one factor that affects a school's culture (Grossman et al., 2015; Kwakman, 2003). While teachers and other staff members may be individually motivated to participate in professional learning, leadership practices can create a culture that shapes how collaborative professionals are within the school context (Grossman et al., 2015; Kwakman, 2003; Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, 2008). It can also affect how diverse professional learning is in the school, where some schools may focus on a whole-school approach to learning and others may encourage more diversity between departments and individual staff members (Grossman et al., 2015).

Leaders must be consummate relationship builders within groups, especially with people different from themselves. Principals should lead by example and show the same to teachers. The most successful teachers may have a beautiful relationship developed with their principals, motivated for the very best (Edgeron & William, 2006). They also opined that when positive family cultures exist on school campuses, productivity increases, and students excel. Programs and systems are successful when committed and dedicated individuals are within the system. Then we can say that systematic collaboration as a result of established relationships is the true measure of success. (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011)

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding increasing the efficacy of schools and many factors have been put forward as affecting the success of schools. School climate, including a healthy school climate, is one of the factors that indirectly affect the success of the school. For a school to be effective, an appropriate atmosphere for education is essential (Bush, Bell, Bolam, Glatter, & Ribbins, 1999). The leadership of the principal is the key factor in the formation of the school climate. (Gülşen & Gülenay, 2014)

## **Methodology**

The research was carried out online through Google Forms and in the link accepted by the schools, a total of 42 principals and 158 teachers answered and completed the questionnaire. Through the use of survey questionnaires for principals and teachers, we have achieved results that show that when teachers feel supported by their principals, they perform better and students have higher learning outcomes. The processed data which were analysed in the SPSS package also give us information on the existence of the correlation

between the principal's behaviour and the school climate. This research was chosen because the principals in primary and secondary school in the Republic of North Macedonia has changed whenever the municipality comes to Majors of different political subject.

Profiles of principals in elementary schools with positive and problematic school climates and cultures will be compared in a way to contributes to the identification of variables that allow them to do their best to make changes in student learning and impact teachers. theirs. school climate and culture. The research questions are addressed as follows:

- Are there differences in teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of the school environment on school climate and culture?
- Are there differences between teachers' interpersonal relationships and student success?
- Are there patterns in the profile of principals within positive school cultures and their opposites?

The items were arranged in a Likert-type scale and were graded under 5 alternative responses, as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Percentages (%), arithmetic averages ( $\bar{X}$ ), and frequencies (f) were calculated. When evaluating the data, the intervals on the scale were set equally.

A Likert scale was chosen as the main instrument in this study's questionnaire, as the simplest and most practical way to measure strength of opinion; and a review of the literature shows that is most commonly and successfully employed in IS research (Alonazi, M. at al., 2019). Weighted averages were calculated for the Likert scales, from Strongly Agree=1 to Strongly Disagree=5, (see Table 1) so that the tendency of the composite scores could be ascertained. The numbers entered into SPSS represent 'weight' and the weighted averages for the scale need to be calculated to understand means. The results can be interpreted to show how influential (or not) each factor is.

**Table 1.** *Weighted averages for 5-point likert scales*

<b>Weighted average</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Result Interpretation</b>
1 - 1.79	Strongly agree	Very uninfluential
1.80 - 2.59	Agree	Uninfluential
2.60 - 3.39	Neutral	Neutral or do not know
3.40 - 4.19	Disagree	Influential
4.20 - 5	Strongly disagree	Very influential

## Results and discussion

*Table 2. Teachers' attitudes about the school environment*

Question		f	$\bar{X}$	Result Interpretation
1	The school functions by its environment	158	3.01	Neutral or do not know
2	The school is supported by its environment	158	2.54	Uninfluential
3	The school is accepted by its environment	158	3.11	Neutral or do not know
4	The school can stand out against the inappropriate demands of parents and society	158	3.25	Neutral or do not know
	Weighted Mean		2.98	Neutral or do not know

The arithmetic average of teachers' answers about the school environment in Table 2 shows that they agreed with these items reasonably ( $= 2.98$ )

*Table 3. Teachers' attitudes about the school leadership*

Question		f	$\bar{X}$	Result Interpretation
1	The principal has the main influence on decision-making	158	3.64	Influential
2	The principal is friendly	158	3.12	Neutral or do not know
3	The principal expresses his expectations honestly	158	2.78	Neutral or do not know
4	The principal honestly expresses his performance standards	158	2.98	Neutral or do not know
5	The principal ensures the needs of the teachers for the school	158	3.32	Neutral or do not know
	Weighted Mean		3.17	Neutral or do not know

The average score of the teachers' answers about the institutional dimension of the school in Table 3 shows that they agreed with these items reasonably ( $\bar{X}=3.17$ ). This average is higher than the average in the school environment.

**Table 4.** Teachers' attitudes about interpersonal relationships and student success

Question		f	X <sup>-</sup>	Result Interpretation
1	Teachers love and respect each other	158	2.74	Neutral or do not know
2	The morale of the teachers is high	158	2.45	Uninfluential
3	Teachers think that all students will be successful	158	2.10	Neutral or do not know
4	The school has high goals for student success	158	3.02	Neutral or do not know
5	In school, success is rewarded	158	2.79	Neutral or do not know
	Weighted Mean		2.62	Neutral or do not know

The average score of the teachers' answers on the technical function as presented in Table 4 reveals that they agreed with these items reasonably ( $\bar{x} = 2.62$ ). The average scores of the teachers' answers in the three dimensions revealed that they agreed with the items reasonably. The average score for the institutional dimension was relatively higher than the scores for the other dimensions.

**Table 5.** Teachers' attitudes about the school climate in general according to the arithmetic mean

Question		f	X <sup>-</sup>	Result Interpretation
1	The principal has the main influence on decision-making	158	3.64	Influential
2	The school can stand out against the inappropriate demands of parents and society	158	3.25	Neutral or do not know
3	The school has high goals for student success	158	3.02	Neutral or do not know
4	The principal expresses his expectations honestly	158	2.78	Neutral or do not know
5	The school is supported by its environment	158	2.54	Neutral or do not know
6	Teachers think that all students will be successful	158	2.10	Uninfluential
	Weighted Mean		2.89	Neutral or do not know

The data in Table 5 show that the teachers agreed mostly with the items “The principal has the main influence on decision-making” and “The school can stand out against the inappropriate demands of parents and society”, and they agreed reasonably with the other states. The statement “Teachers think that all students will be successful” had the lowest average score.

## Conclusion

Nowadays, schools are expected to provide effective teaching. The principal plays a critical role in shaping the school climate, which, in turn, positively influences its overall efficiency. The teachers think that the school is not satisfactorily supported by its environment. Because teachers' expectations of student success were low, success in school was not rewarded. The results we obtained showed that the teaching process did not meet the required standards, and the school staff lacked sufficient enthusiasm for student success. The teachers generally agree that the school should be more integrated with its environment. The statement “The school is supported by its environment” had the third lowest score of all items on the scale, and this indicates that the school has deficiencies in terms of support and acceptance by its environment.

## Suggestions

- A stable management should be required for the formation of a healthy school climate.
- Teachers during training should understand that school efficiency will be increased by high expectations regarding student success.
- Teachers and principals should be subject to performance evaluation and should, through multiple forms of professional development, strengthen their capacities and increase performance.
- Reward systems should be implemented, as should student and teacher success be promoted.
- About the improvement of the institutional dimension in the school, campaigns, and activities should be organized to strengthen the school's relationship with its environment.

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