

## High School Students' Perception of School Climate in Aizawl City with reference to Selected Variables

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### Abstract

School plays an important role in the lives of students. The school acts as a platform for students to develop a positive self-concept and self-identity and to have that platform the climate of the school holds a vital role in the life of the students. School climate is the overall environment of the school. The school climate can have an impact on students' behaviour, both positively and negatively. The present study is conducted on 126 Government Mizo High School students in Aizawl city, the capital of Mizoram state, out of which 48 are males and 78 are females. The study revealed that while no significant difference was found in students' perception of school climate with reference to gender and father's working status, significant difference was found in students' perception of school climate when they were compared with respect to their fathers' educational qualification.

**Key words:** *Perception, School climate, High School, Fathers' occupation,*

### Introduction

Education is critical in assisting individuals and societies in improving their social, economic, and cultural aspects, as well as in promoting the development of human capital, which is necessary for economic growth. Schools, in particular, aim to impart knowledge, skills, and behaviour in order for students to function in society. Schools, in essence, are institutions where students learn to value what society expects them to contribute to their advancement and development. The school should be viewed as a healthy place of learning, where students' and parents' dreams and ambitions are central, teachers are motivated to give their best, and all are respected and feel connected to school. School climate is the prevailing atmosphere in the school that is primarily dictated by the leaders and influences how students and teachers perceive their school as well as their values and attitudes toward school and work. School climate, according to Freiberg and Stein (1999), is the soul and heart of the school, as well as the principle that draws teachers and students to love the school and want to be a part of it.

The term "school climate" refers to the overall quality, character, and environment of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents', and school personnel's experiences of school life, and it reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practises, and organisational structures. A positive, long-term school

climate promotes the development and learning required for a productive, contributing, and fulfilling life in a democratic society. To further explain this discussion, school climate can be referred to as weather climate. When the weather is moderately warm, we usually feel comfortable; when it is extremely hot or extremely cold, we do not feel comfortable and put in an effort to feel better. We can conclude from this that the weather is closely related to the climate, which influences our feelings as well as our willingness to engage. Similarly, school climate influences teachers' and students' feelings, as well as their willingness to participate, commitment to contribute, and attitudes toward themselves and others. The school climate influences teachers' commitment to defining the school's vision, which reflects on the characteristics of respect, dignity of the individual, honesty, fairness, and safety. It also has an impact on various learning as well as the development of learners. As a result, we can safely assume that the school climate has a significant impact on the atmosphere or feeling that prevails in a particular school. It emerges from the interactions of leaders and teachers, teachers and students, and leaders and students. The school, as a social interaction system, requires leaders, teachers, and students to interact on an administrative level in the fields of planning, decision-making, and problem solving.

### **Rationale of the study:**

We can all recall childhood moments when we felt especially safe (or unsafe) at school, when we felt especially connected to a caring adult (or frighteningly alone), and when we felt especially engaged in meaningful learning (or not). These are the school memories that we all remember vividly, for better or worse. It is not surprising that such experiences influence learning and development. However, the school climate is much bigger than any single person's experience. When people collaborate, a group process emerges that is greater than any single person's actions. A comprehensive school climate assessment considers major aspects of school life such as safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the environment, as well as larger organisational patterns. Learning and student development are influenced by how we feel about school and larger group trends. A positive school climate is linked to academic achievement, effective risk-aversion efforts, and positive youth development.

Many educational studies concluded that students' perceptions of the school influenced their self-perception, self-esteem, and behaviour in school. Students may have positive or negative attitudes toward school. This becomes a more obvious issue when students have a negative perception of school and school climate. Students who have a negative perception of the school climate are more likely to dislike the school and to have low attendance, which leads to low academic achievement. School climate influences students' behaviour and helps shape their personalities. Various aspects of school climate, such as rewarding and punishing students for their behaviour, considering students' needs when developing school norms, good classroom management for group activities, positive leadership style, and so on, resulted in positive outcomes such as good and consistent attendance and high academic achievement among students.

Thus, this study is taken up to generate new findings and shed light on how these differ based on different factors attributed to the students. It is also an attempt to contribute towards the enhancement and expansion of limited existing knowledge in this particular area

as well as provide evidences that could be put to application for the development of the learners as well as the teachers and the overall education system.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Musheer, Govil & Gupta (2016) studied “Attitude of Secondary Level Students towards Their School Climate.” The study was conducted on the sample of 358 students studying at various secondary level schools of India. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students with reference to their gender and medium of instruction. However, no difference has been found in the attitude of secondary school students towards school climate in relation to their parental education.

Muhammed Turhan &, Tülin Akgül (2017) studied the relationship between students’ perception of school climate and their adherence to humanitarian values. The findings of the study indicated that female students have a higher level of adherence to humanitarian values

Vats (2019) conducted “A Study of 9th Grade Students’ Perception Regarding School Climate.” He conducted his study on 120 students among 9th grade students of North – West zone in Delhi. The findings of the study indicates that majority of students have fairly good and satisfactory level of perception regarding the climate of school. In addition it was found that teacher’s and faculty support, discipline, opportunities provide a positive impact on students. In addition, it was observed that private school students have significantly better perception towards school climate in comparison to their government school counterparts.

### **Statement of the problem**

The problem of the study is entitled as “High School Students’ Perception of School Climate in Aizawl City with reference to selected variables.”

### **Objectives**

1. To find out the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl city
2. To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl city with reference to their gender.
3. To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl city with reference to their fathers’ working status.
4. To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl city with reference to their fathers’ educational qualification.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between male and female students in Aizawl city.
2. There is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between students in Aizawl city whose fathers were working and students whose fathers were not working.

3. There is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers' educational qualification were post-graduate and those whose fathers' educational qualification were graduate.
4. There is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers' educational qualification were post-graduate and those whose fathers educational qualification were under-matric
5. There is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers' educational qualification were graduate and those whose fathers educational qualification were under-matric

### Methodology

Descriptive status survey method was used to carry out the present study as the study aims to investigate how the students perceive their own school climate and compare them with reference to certain independent variables.

### Population and Sample

The population consists of all high school students in Aizawl. For the present study, the investigators used stratified random sampling technique. The sample comprises of 126 Class X students of Government Mizo high school with a composition of 48 male and 78 female students.

### Tools Used

The investigator employed the School Climate perception scale (2022) developed and standardized by the investigators.

### Analysis and findings of the Study

The collected data was scored in accordance with the procedure stated by the scale developers and they were tabulated and analysed according to the objectives as follows:

**Objective 1:** To find out the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl City.

The scores obtained from the school climate perception scale were converted into z-score. Based on this, students were classified into five categories as depicted in Table – 1

**Table – 1**  
**Classification of students' perception on school climate**

Level of school climate	No. and % of students
Excellent school climate	3 (2.38%)
Satisfactory school climate	37 (29.37%)
Normal standard school climate	45 (35.71%)
Unsatisfactory school climate	38(30.16%)
Poor school climate	3 (2.38%)

From the above Table – 1, we can see that majority (35.71%) of the students perceived their school as having normal standard school climate, 29.37% students perceived

their school as having satisfactory climate, while 30.16% students perceived their school as having unsatisfactory climate. Only 2.38% of students perceived their school as having excellent climate and the same percentage (2.38%) of students perceived their school as having poor school climate.

**Objective 2:** To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students in Aizawl City with reference to their gender.

In order to compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by the male and female students, the mean and standard deviation of the two groups were calculated. Then the mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table no 2.

**Table – 2**

Comparison of male and female students in the perception on prevailing standard of school climate

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE <sub>MD</sub>	t- Value	Sig level
Male	48	295.19	23.583	2.261	4.183	.541	NS
Female	78	297.45	21.470				

Table – 2 shows that the calculated ‘t’ value of .541 is lower than the criterion ‘t’ value at both .01 and .05 level. Therefore, this reveals that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female students on the prevailing standard of school climate. Consequently the hypothesis no. 1 “There is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between male and female students in Aizawl city” is accepted.

**Objective 3:** To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students of Aizawl City with reference to their fathers’ working status.

In order to compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by students whose fathers were working and those whose fathers were not working, the mean and standard deviation of the two groups were calculated. Then the mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table no 3.

**Table – 3**

Comparison of students’ perception on prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were working and students whose fathers were not working

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE <sub>MD</sub>	t- Value	Sig level
Working	52	292.48	24.337	6.992	4.118	1.698	NS
Non-Working	74	299.47	20.300				

Table – 3 illustrates that the calculated ‘t’ value of 1.698 is lower than the criterion ‘t’ value at both .01 and .05 level. Therefore, this indicates that there is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers were working and those students whose fathers were not working.

Consequently the hypothesis no. 2 “There is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between students in Aizawl city whose fathers were working and those students whose fathers were not working” is accepted.

**Objective 4:** To compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by high school students of Aizawl City with reference to their fathers’ educational qualification.

Fathers’ educational qualifications were categorized into three groups i.e. Post-graduate, Graduate and under matric. Therefore comparing was done between (a) Post graduate & Graduate fathers, (b) Post graduate & Under matric fathers and (c) Graduate & Under matric fathers

(a) Consequently, in order to compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by those students whose fathers were post graduate and those students whose fathers were graduate, the mean and standard deviation of these two groups were calculated. Then the mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table no 4.

**Table – 4**

Comparison of students’ perception on prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were post graduate and students whose fathers were graduate

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE <sub>MD</sub>	t- Value	Sig level
Post graduate	12	282.67	19.490	14.986	6.034	2.483	.05
Graduate	72	297.65	18.506				

As indicated in the above table 4 the calculated ‘t’ value of 2.483 is greater than the criterion ‘t’ value at .05 level of confidence, therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were post graduate and students whose fathers were graduate. Therefore, the null hypothesis no.3 that states “There is no significant difference in students’ perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers’ educational qualification were post-graduate and those whose fathers’ educational qualification were graduate” is rejected since the two groups differed significantly at .05 level of confidence. A comparison of their mean scores shows that this difference is in favour of those students whose fathers’ educational qualification were Graduate. The result indicates that students whose fathers’ educational qualification were Graduate had a more favourable perception on the prevailing standard of school climate than those whose fathers educational qualification were post-graduate.

(b) In order to compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by those students whose fathers were post graduate and those students whose fathers were under matric, the mean and standard deviation of these two groups were calculated. Then the mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table no 5.

**Table – 5**

Comparison of students' perception on prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were post graduate and students whose fathers were graduate

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE <sub>MD</sub>	t- Value	Sig level
Post graduate	12	282.67	19.490	16.071	7.034	2.285	.05
Under Matric	42	298.74	27.358				

As depicted in the above table 5 the calculated 't' value of 2.285 is greater than the criterion 't' value at .05 level of confidence, therefore, it can be said that there was a significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were post graduate and students whose fathers were under-matric. Therefore, the null hypothesis no.3 that states "There is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers' educational qualification were post-graduate and those whose fathers educational qualification were under-matric" is rejected since the two groups differed significantly at .05 level of confidence. A comparison of their mean scores shows that this difference is in support of those students whose fathers' educational qualification were Under-matric. The result indicates that students whose fathers' educational qualification were Under-matric had a more favourable perception on the prevailing standard of school climate than those whose fathers educational qualification were post-graduate.

(c) In order to compare the prevailing standard of school climate as perceived by those students whose fathers were Graduate and those students whose fathers were under matric, the mean and standard deviation of these two groups were calculated. Then the mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying 't' test and the details are presented in the following table no 6.

**Table – 6**

Comparison of students' perception on prevailing standard of school climate between students whose fathers were post graduate and students whose fathers were under-matric

Groups	N	Mean	SD	MD	SE <sub>MD</sub>	t- Value	Sig level
Graduate	72	297.65	18.506	1.085	4.752	.228	NS
Under matric	42	298.74	27.358				

Table – 6 explains that the calculated 't' value of .228 is lower than the criterion 't' value at .05 level. Therefore, this indicates that there is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers were post-graduate and those students whose fathers were under-matric. Thus, the hypothesis no. 5 that assumes "There is no significant difference in students' perception on the prevailing standard of school climate between those students whose fathers' educational qualification were graduate and those whose fathers' educational qualification were under-matric is accepted.

## Conclusion

The present study found that majority of students perceives their school as having normal standard school climate. Students' feelings, involvement, enthusiasm, and sense of

self and others are all influenced by the school climate. Therefore, it is important that students should have a favourable school climate. The present study also found that students whose fathers' educational qualification is either 'Under-matric' or 'Graduate' had a more favourable perception of school climate than those students whose fathers' educational qualification is Post-graduate. So, it seems that students' perceptions of the school climate are more favourable the less educated their fathers are. This is rather surprising, but on the other hand, it could be that students with lower educated fathers may be socio-economically inferior and this may lead the students to appreciate the ordinary set-up of the school surroundings.

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