

School Climate as Correlates of Stress Coping Ability, Learning Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy and Social Unrest among Students in University of Benin, Benin City

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Abstract

This study investigated the correlation indices of school climate with stress coping ability, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest among undergraduates in the University of Benin, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were formulated. A descriptive correlation research design was used for the study and a population of 420 full time undergraduate students was selected for the study with emphasis on those in their penultimate and final year, using multi-stage sampling technique of stratified, simple, proportionate and purposive sampling techniques, in which 205 and 215 penultimate and final year students were selected respectively. Two sets of self-reported questionnaires were used for data collection. Psychometric properties of the instrument were ascertained for accuracy and reliability. Collected data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that stress coping ability, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest were positively correlated to school climate. From the values of percentage of variability, school climate account significantly for stress coping ability, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest among students in university of Benin. In conclusion, school climate is the framework for effective stress management, motivation to learn and work as well as enhanced interest. Therefore, the need for school management and governing council to promote school climate becomes paramount particularly in enhancing students' overall well-being, fostering a positive learning environment, and cultivating a culture of academic excellence and social harmony.

Keywords: Stress coping ability, Learning satisfaction, Self-efficacy, Social unrest

Introduction

The school climate is the organization of the school environment that enhances learning, raises interest of learners and promotes their quality of life, therefore paying detailed attention to the school climate is imperative. A sustained positive school climate promotes student cognitive, social, mental and emotional development, and behavioural and learning outcomes, while guaranteeing both physical and social safety (Loukas & Robinson, 2019). Research has shown that school climate is associated with improved academic achievement and performance, adaptive psychosocial adjustment, satisfaction with school, sense of belonging, academic value and self-concept, motivation to learn, decreased behavioural problems and overall positive health and wellbeing (Clifford et al., 2022; Hoge et al., 2020). Parents commonly prioritize several key factors when selecting a tertiary institution for their children, with safety, a favorable reputation, and a welcoming atmosphere topping the list. While numerous components contribute to an exemplary educational

institution, parents consistently emphasize these elements as crucial criteria in their decision-making process (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015).

In a review of school climate literature, Cohen et al. (2019) established that there are four dimensions of school climate: physical and social-emotional safety, quality of teaching and learning, relationships and collaboration, and the structural environment. These dimensions shape school climate. In turn, school climate influences the experiences of individuals within that system (Cohen, 2019). A safe, supportive and healthy school climate can make a great difference in students' lives. A positive school climate, for instance, can promote students' academic achievement, well-being and self-esteem (Hoge et al., 2020), and some of these effects persist for years. Schools with safe, respectful and caring learning environments also protect students from engaging in maladaptive behaviours, such as truancy, smoking, drinking, using drugs, and other deviant and risky behaviours (Gase, 2017). In other words, students are more likely to reach their social, emotional and academic potential in a safe, supportive and collaborative school environment. Everyone can play a part to improve school climate (OECD, 2019). School climate has been described as the "quality and character of school life, the heart and soul of the school and the quality of relationships among students, teachers and school staff (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2022). School climate can be safe or unsafe, cohesive or divisive, collaborative or competitive. Above all, it is typically perceived as either positive or negative. Research has found that success in an academic setting is influenced greatly by self-efficacy which the school climate determines for the learners (Bryk et al., 2020). Students who master a challenging task with limited assistance will increase their levels of self-efficacy. Ruus et al. (2017) examined the relationship between university climate and academic self-efficacy among 475 students from different ethnic groups. The findings indicate that school climate correlates with students' academic self-efficacy and students from different ethnic minority groups are more dissatisfied with campus climate. Furthermore, conducting a study on 160 Asian American university students, Russ et al (2017) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and students' perceived university environment. Specifically, the results showed that higher positive perceptions of the university environment were significantly related to higher self-efficacy. A comparison between 22 undergraduate students receiving regular supervision and 11 students who received little or no supervision showed the students receiving regular supervision had higher self-efficacy (Durlak et al., 2019). Stress is part of learning process and the school environment within instructional and organizational framework can pose stress to learners. The reason for including students' coping styles as personal factors is the substantial amount of research evidence demonstrating that pressures and expectations within the school environment constitute considerable sources of stress in young people (Fraser & Fisher, 2012). It is therefore of interest to examine students' coping ability for dealing with stress situations at school. Similarly, previous research has found stability and consistency in coping styles over time and across different stressful situations (Reddy et al., 2018). In the university of Benin, prevalence of suicide, drug abuse to reduce stress have been reported, hence the correlation of school climate and stress coping skills of students will be of utmost importance to providing healthy and effective interventions.

Learning can and should be satisfying. The students who do not like school are underachievers and adopt forms of risky behaviours also the students who perceive school and classroom climate positively are more motivated and achieve better results. Finding out the correlation of school climate and learning satisfaction among learners create the insight on the extent of relationship between school climate and learning satisfaction in order to enhance learner interest and promote academic performance. Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, (2022) have established that better results in learning are achieved by students

whose classrooms are dominated by cohesiveness, satisfaction, high demands, goal-orientation and organization. On the other hand, negative classroom climate is characterized by tension students feel in class, apathy and disorganization, and it is associated with poor academic achievement of students. Clifford et al. (2022) have established that better results in learning are achieved by students whose classrooms are dominated by cohesiveness, satisfaction, high demands, goal-orientation and organization. Conversely, a negative classroom atmosphere encompasses feelings of tension among students, coupled with indifference and disorderliness, and is linked to decreased academic success. Social-cognitive theory noted the significance of self-regulated learning, where students take charge of their learning journey by establishing ambitious objectives, employing suitable strategies, and incorporating self-regulatory elements that inspire and guide their progress. Students who are self-regulated in such a way show a strong belief in their own abilities, which influences their knowledge, skills and dedication in the work done to realize their goals (Bryk et al., 2020). Students who are self-regulated in such a way show a strong belief in their own abilities, which influences their knowledge, skills and dedication in the work done to realize their goals (Bryk et al., 2020).

A student's perception of self in relation to school climate influences his/her self-efficacy. Oluwadare and Julius (2011) noted that a conducive teachers'/students' environment obviously will enhance social security and environmental safety, which is important in the assessment of school climate. Research has shown that school climate is associated with improved academic achievement and performance, adaptive psychosocial adjustment, satisfaction with school, sense of belonging, academic value and self-concept, motivation to learn, decreased behavioural problems and overall positive health and wellbeing (Bradshaw et al., 2019).

During the pivotal phase of adolescence marked by swift physical, social, and emotional growth, alterations in school and social frameworks can lead to heightened emotions of seclusion, victimization, and undesirable behaviors. School connectedness, encapsulating the caliber of social bonds within an educational institution, refers to the level of a student's sense of affiliation with the school environment and the degree of care perceived from the school (Beets et al., 2018) and it correlates with enhanced academic performance, improved attendance, positive social connections, and heightened mental and emotional wellness among students. Finally, School climate is very important to the learning and wellbeing of learners, this is because the schools provide multiple responsibilities ranging from facilitating learning, enhancing social life and goals, interest and quality of life, in recent development, the University of Benin is lacking in regard to conducive learning, interest and quality of life of students especially with the sudden increment of school and short deadline set that resulted in students protest and destructions in 2019. It is against this background; the researchers investigated the extent of school climate as it correlates to stress coping skill, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest among students in University of Benin.

The establishment of universities inherently embodies the aspiration for an environment conducive to learning, skill acquisition, academic diligence, and the successful execution of school-related activities. However, recent occurrences within educational institutions, particularly the University of Benin, suggest a divergence from these anticipated outcomes. Instances of social unrest, coupled with indications that students' stress coping abilities, learning satisfaction, and self-efficacy might be compromised, highlight the pressing need to understand the underlying factors affecting the school climate.

Also, this study is fundamentally driven by the realization that the anticipated benefits of a conducive school climate for fostering learning, skill development, and academic engagement seem elusive within the University of Benin. The alarming signs of social unrest

and potential challenges faced by students in coping with stress, finding satisfaction in their learning experiences, and developing self-efficacy raise profound concerns. By scrutinizing the correlations between school climate and these critical aspects of student well-being and academic success, this research aims to uncover the factors contributing to these issues. Identifying these correlations will enable the formulation of targeted interventions and policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the school climate within the University of Benin. Ultimately, this study sought to pave the way for a more supportive and enriching educational environment conducive to students' holistic development and academic achievements.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

1. There is no significant correlation between school climate and stress coping ability among students of University of Benin
2. There is no significant correlation between school climate and learning satisfaction among students of University of Benin.
3. There is no significant correlation between school climate and self-efficacy among students of University of Benin.
4. There is no significant correlation between school climate and social unrest among students of University of Benin

Methods and Materials

The study was based on descriptive correlational design. This design allows the researchers to establish relationships existing between variables and study phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The population of the study comprised of all full time undergraduate students of University of Benin who are in the penultimate and final year of their study under the 2020/2021 academic session. There are 14 faculties with 112 departments with a population of 11,580 (6396 and 5184 penultimate and final year respectively) of students in the penultimate and final year of their study in the University of Benin (University Academic planning, 2022). The multi stage sampling technique was used of stratified, simple, proportionate and purposive sampling techniques to select 420 University of Benin students (respondents) and this was carried out by using the criteria of representation based on gender balance, in school and off-campus students and religion differential. Two questionnaires including school climate survey (SCS) and general health psychological components of stress coping ability, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest which are the independents variables were developed by the researchers. The participants completed self-report questionnaires on school climate survey and other variables of stress coping ability, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest. It should be noted that participants completed the questionnaires of their own volition, remained anonymous and were not asked by the researchers to reveal confidential details in the questionnaires. The validity of the instrument was done by psychometric test analysis carried out by health psychologist, clinical psychologists and health educators in the University of Benin. The reliability testing of 30 students from faculties of Art, Education and Life sciences and after two weeks of the first administration, same questionnaire were re-administered to same set of students. The two set of scores obtained were subjected to analysis of correlation to get 0.71 reliability coefficient, hence ascertained reliable for the study. The instruments were administered by the researchers and two research assistants trained for the purpose of the study. The training was

done in one day that entailed target respondents, language to motivate respondents and to check for correctness of questionnaires distributed. Completed instrument were collected, sorted, coded. To analyze the data, correlation between variables were examined, using Pearson product-moment correlations. In this regard, correlation coefficient(r) $\pm 0-0.49$ indicate a weak relationship, $\pm 0.5-0.69$ is a strong relationship and $\pm 0.7-1$ is a very strong relationship with regard to the arithmetic sign(\pm) to indicate the direction of strength of relationship.

Results

Table 1: Summary of PPMC analysis of correlation between school climate and stress coping ability among students of University of Benin

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r ²	p-value.	Decision
School climate	420	16.15	7.91	.899	0.808	.031	Ho Rejected
Stress coping ability							

N=sample size, SD=standard deviation, r-cal=pearson coefficient, r² =coefficient of determination

From the result on table 1, school climate and stress coping ability were significantly related: Pearson r , 0.899, p -value=0.031. This indicates a significant relationship between school climate and stress coping ability because the p -value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between school climate and stress coping ability among students of University of Benin City was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school climate and stress coping ability among students of University of Benin City. Again, the r^2 of 0.808 explains that the variability in school climate account for 80 percent of the variability in stress coping ability. This shows that school climate explains and determines the stress coping ability of students in University of Benin.

Table 2: Summary of PPMC analysis of correlation between school climate and learning satisfaction among students of University of Benin

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r ²	p-value.	Decision
School climate	420	17.06	7.12	.811	0.66	.033	Ho Rejected
Learning satisfaction							

From the result on table 2, school climate and learning satisfaction were significantly related: Pearson r , 0.811, p -value=0.033. This indicates a significant relationship between school climate and learning satisfaction because the p -value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between school climate and learning satisfaction among students of University of Benin City was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school climate and learning satisfaction among students of University of Benin City. Again, the r^2 of 0.66 explains that the variability in school climate account for 66 percent of the variability in learning satisfaction. This shows that school climate explains and determines the learning satisfaction of students in University of Benin.

Table 3: Summary of PPMC analysis of correlation between school climate and self-efficacy among students of University of Benin

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r^2	p-value.	Decision
School climate	420	16.88	7.02	.875	0.76	.037	Ho Rejected
Self-efficacy							

From the result on table 3, school climate and self-efficacy were significantly related: Pearson r , 0.875, p -value=0.037. This indicates a significant relationship between school climate and self-efficacy because the p -value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between school climate and self-efficacy among students of University of Benin City was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school climate and self-efficacy among students of University of Benin City. Again, the r^2 of 0.76 explains that the variability in school climate account for 76 percent of the variability in self-efficacy. This shows that school climate explains and determines the self-efficacy of students in University of Benin.

Table 4: Summary of Ppmc Analysis of Correlation Between School Climate and Social Unrest among Students of University of Benin

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r ²	p-value.	Decision
School climate	420	16.18	7.72	.889	0.79	.034	Ho Rejected
Social unrest							

From the result on table 4, school climate and social unrest were significantly related: Pearson r , 0.889, p -value=0.034. This indicates a significant relationship between school climate and social unrest because the p -value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between school climate and social unrest among students of University of Benin City was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school climate and social unrest among students of University of Benin City. Again, the r^2 of 0.79 explains that the variability in school climate account for 79 percent of the variability in social unrest. This shows that school climate explains and determines the social unrest of students in University of Benin.

Discussion

The conduciveness of the teaching and learning environment is anchored on the nature of the school climate which is consciously created by school managers, administrators and teachers. This is because, the school climate determine and promote the physical, social and psychological outcome of the learners in the school. The study analyzed the school climate on stress coping skills, learning satisfaction, self-efficacy and social unrest among students in University of Benin. The correlation between school climate and stress coping skill of the students was positively high ($r=0.899$) and further demonstrated that 80% of the stress coping skill among students in school is explained by the nature of school climate. The stress coping skills adopted by the undergraduates such as drug abuse, self-denial, travelling from school, being inward and suicide intentions and sometime sporting activities are greatly determined by the nature of school climate set up and maintained over the years. This finding corroborate with that of Fraser and Fisher (2012); and Reddy et al. (2018) which stated that school climate represent an important factor in the stress coping skills and the choice of adopting a healthy stress management approach among students in a stressful learning environment.

Again, finding from Cohen et al. (2019) corroborated with the finding of the study that stress coping styles is a function of quality positive school climate organized for the general learning development of the learners.

Regarding the correlation analysis between school climate and learning satisfaction among students, there exist a positive relationship between these variables ($r=0.66$). It therefore explains that the school climate through conducive environment that is free from hostility, hardship, difficulties, unfriendliness, unmotivated teachers and perceived poor prospects promote poor learning satisfaction among learners. Creating and maintaining a friendly learning environment, social support, motivated teachers, excellent interpersonal relationship among teachers can promote excellent learning satisfaction and outcomes. This

finding is in congruent with finding of Brown et al. (2022) who established that better results in learning are achieved by students whose classrooms are dominated by cohesiveness, satisfaction, high demands, goal-orientation and organization. Another study by Clifford et al. (2022) found that learning satisfaction among students is a function of the positive school climate created and presented for learning.

Again, the correlation between school climate and self-efficacy of the students was positively high ($r=0.875$) and further demonstrated that 76% of the self-efficacy among students in school is explained by the nature of school climate. The self-efficacy demonstrated by students is a reflection of motivation created in the learning environment, the opportunities available, the positive interpersonal relationship created in the learning situations, social supports available and crisis response approach are greatly determined by the nature of school climate set up and maintained over the years. This finding corroborate with the finding of Bryk et al. (2020) who opined that success in an academic setting is influenced greatly by self-efficacy which the school climate determines for the learners. Again, finding from Hoge et al. (2020) corroborated with the finding of the study that self-efficacy is a function of quality and positive school climate organized for the general learning development of the learners.

Finally, the correlation analysis between school climate and social unrest among students demonstrates a positive relationship between these variables ($r=0.889$). It therefore explains that the school climate which is the character of the general learning environment has its influence on checking depression, anger and agitation among students as it influences social unrest. Creating and maintaining a friendly learning environment, social support, green environment, admitting well cultured students, organized security outfit and surveillance through close-circuit television, excellent interpersonal relationship among students can discourage social unrest in school, hence reduce cultism, prostitution and promote excellent academic outcomes. This finding is in congruent with finding from Gase (2017) which asserted that social unrest and violence can be reduced with positive school climate organized and improved on. Another study by Oluwadare and Julius (2011) found that school displeasure, violence and social unrest among students are function of the nature of school climate created and presented for learning.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that school climate play a significant role in the physical, social and psychological behaviours of the university students. School climate is a also a central determining factor that explains students stress coping ability, how they feel, learning satisfaction and the way they react to daily school activities and the intentions gathered after school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings and conclusion of the study;

1. University management and governing councils of the university should pay great attention to creating a positive school climate during planning, implementation of school programmes by investing in a friendly and secured learning environment.
2. Stress is part of human activities, and as such the green environment is a necessity to provide that natural relief for students, safe recreational centres should be provided like games hub and talent arena.
3. To improve learning satisfaction, university management and lecturers should ensure learning is fun by providing positive and health interactions, use of digital learning technology, provide sound learning reward system and positive interaction between

lecturers and students. Furthermore, there should be safe and conducive learning environment with captivating facilities.

4. The university management and lecturers should ensure learning is learners centered with healthy interpersonal relationship provided to aid self-efficacy among students through the use of discussion approach in teaching and follow up.
5. The university management should provide a reliable crisis resolving network, improve security intelligence and implement threat response information as quickly as possible to prevent students protest.

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