School Climate and Academic Achievement of Government and Private Upper Primary School Going Children: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The present paper is aimed to investigate the influence of school climate on academic achievement of upper-primary children. 120 upper primary children were selected randomly from four primary schools in Kashmir valley. School Climate Scale developed by Bhat & Mir (2019) was used to measure the school climate. The academic score obtained in the pre-midterm examination constituted the academic achievement of upper primary school-going children. Statistical treatments such as mean, t-test, and correlation coefficient were employed. The findings revealed that perceived school climate has significantly influenced the academic achievement of upper primary children. Moreover, physical infrastructure and trustworthy relationship dimensions of school climate were found to be the most significant factors in determining the academic achievement of upper primary children. Government and privately managed upper primary schools were found as significant predictors of school climate and academic achievement.

Key Words: School Climate; Academic Achievement; Upper Primary Children

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Introduction

Education is debatably the most instrumental to individualistic, national and international developments. It is the first and foremost vehicle through which societies are structured and reproduce themselves. International human rights provide free and compulsory primary education to all children irrespective of any social restrictions and constraints. Primary education undoubtedly is the foundation upon which further education cements. The primary level of education is further extended to upper primary education covering 6th, 7th and 8th standards, and finally proceeds towards secondary and higher education. This upper primary schooling reflects a magnetic image of society as it connects primary education to secondary education.

The prime role of school education is to promote the harmonious development of children. This balanced, integral, holistic and inclusive development of the child is promising in a given school climate where a conducive and congenial ethos occurs. School climate is considered as the total health and personality of a given school (Mir, 2018). It is the atmosphere of a setting on which composite norms and protocols, belief systems, high expectation levels, belongingness feelings, and satisfaction levels of stakeholders are characterized (Hoy & Miskel, 2011; Moos, 1979). Such feelings may reflect either favourable and productive school climate or unfavourable and unproductive one. Favourable school climate provides a satisfying environment characterized by optimal output and high satisfaction level of stakeholders.

Unfavourable school climate restrains the basic needs of school members and hence, their satisfaction level is too low. In educational institutions, the success of students is usually measured by their achievement in academics. Academic achievement is the index of how well students deal with their studies, how they cope with their learning difficulties, how they accomplish their prescribed learning tasks, or how well a particular institution has minimized the gap between expected and terminal behaviour (Ankomah, 2002). It is the capacity of a student to achieve what he/she has been taught by the teacher. The yardstick of academic achievement is measured by examination marks, percentages and grades earned by students. Academic achievement determines not only the status of a student in a classroom but is detrimental to future successes and career opportunities (Mir & Paray, 2018; Paray & Mir, 2018; Bhat & Mir, 2018).

Review of Related Literature

Bhat, M.S. & Mir, S.A. (2018) conducted a study on perceived school climate and academic achievement of secondary school students and revealed that gender and type of school do influence the academic achievement of students. The study further established that school climate matters the most in exploring the academic achievement of students.

Mir, S.A. (2018) investigated the academic achievement of secondary school students and concluded that the type of school location (rural v/s urban) determines the academic achievement of students.

Mir, S.A. (2019) while exploring school climate, learning style and academic achievement of secondary school students concluded that gender and type of educational institutions are the factors influencing the academic achievement and school climate of students.

Mir, S.A. & Paray, A.A. (2018) investigated the academic performance of secondary school students and found that academic performance is influenced by gender and the extent of internet usage.

Paray, A.A. & Mir, S.A. (2018) explored the academic achievement of secondary school students and found that technology use such as smartphone usage impacts the academic achievement of students.

Rationale of the Study

After going through trend reports and intensively reviewed literature, no study related to the present study on upper primary children has been found. Most of the studies highlighting school climate and academic achievement were conducted on secondary school students (Mir, 2019; Bhat & Mir, 2018). This prompts the researcher to beat the unbeaten area on school climate and academic achievement of government and private upper primary children. The researcher is hoped that the present investigation will open new frontiers in educational practices.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school-going children.

2. To compare the school climate of government and private upper primary school-going children.

3. To compare the academic achievement of government and private upper primary school-going children.

4. To study the correlation between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school-going children.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between government and private upper primary school-going children on school climate.

2. There is no significant difference between government and private upper primary school-going children in academic achievement.

3. There is a significant relationship between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school-going children.

Procedure

Sample

120 upper primary school-going children from two government (60 students) and two private upper primary schools (60 students) of District Pulwama Kashmir have been selected by using the randomization technique. The sample break -up is shown in table number 1:

Table 1: Showing the sampling frame of the study

Name of the School	Group	Number of Students taken
Government Upper Primary Model School, Dadasara	Government boy students= 17 Government girl students= 13	30
Sky Touch Educational Institute, Dadasara	Private boy students= 13 Private girl students= 17	30
Government Upper Primary School, Gufkral Hardumir	Government boy students= 13 Government girl students= 17	30
Hajahad Public School, Awantipora	Private boy students= 17 Private girl students= 13	30
Total		**120**

Tool Used

The School Climate Scale (SCS) developed by Bhat & Sajad (2019) has been administered to sample subjects to collect the required data. SCS is a standardized Likert-type scale with 30 items and 04 dimensions. The concurrent validity of SCS is 0.862. A correlation coefficient of 0.83 was found after applying Spearman's Brown Prophecy formula. The maximum score on the scale is 150 and the minimum score is 30.

Data analysis and interpretation

To achieve the objectives of the present study, collected data has been statistically treated through mean, standard deviation, percentage, t-test and correlation coefficient. The statistical treatment breakup is shown in table number 2.

Table 2: Showing objective-wise statistical treatments

S. NO.	Objective Number	Statistical Treatment
1	1	Percentage Statistics
2	2,3	t-test
3	4	Correlation coefficient

Objective-wise data analysis

Realization of objective number 1 (part 1): Objective 1 (part 1) of the present study reads as "To study the school climate of upper primary school-going children". To achieve this sub-objective, percentage statistics were done and the results obtained thereupon are presented below in table number 3.

Table 3: Showing percentage distribution of upper primary children on school climate (composite score)

Variable	Total Mean	Levels of School Climate			Total N*(Percentage)
		Unfavourable	Moderate	Favourable	
School Climate	106.21	29(24.2%)	57(47.5%	34(28.3%)	120 (100%)

N*=total number of students

Observation: The perusal of table 3 indicates that 24.2%, 47.5% and 28.3% of upper primary school-going children perceived unfavourable, moderate and favourable levels of the school climate respectively. The total mean score is 106.21.

Interpretation: On following the manual of school climate scale developed by Bhat & Sajad (2019), the total mean score (106.21) obtained by upper primary school-going children falls on the moderate level of school climate. It shows that there is a need to develop a conducive climate so that optimal learning of students is possible.

Realisation of objective number 1 (part 2): Objective 1 (part 2) of the present study reads as "To study the academic achievement of upper primary school going children" and in order to achieve this sub-objective, percentage statistics were done and the results obtained thereupon are presented below in the table number 4.

Table 4: Showing percentage distribution of upper primary children on academic achievement (composite score)

Variable	Total Mean	Levels of Academic Achievement			Total N*(Percentage)
		Below Average	Average	Above Average	
Academic Achievement	69.60	31(25.9%)	52(43.3%	37(30.8%)	120 (100%)

N*=total number of students

Observation: The presentation of table number 4 reveals that 25.9%, 43.3% and 30.8% of upper primary school-going children have achieved below-average, average and above-average levels of academic achievement respectively. The total mean score is 69.60.

Interpretation: It is to be interpreted from table number 4 that the majority of upper primary school-going children achieved an average level of academic achievement. Moreover, the total mean score of 69.60 also falls in the average category of academic achievement.

Realisation of objective number 2: Objective 2 of the present study reads as "To compare school climate as perceived by government and private upper primary school going children". In order to realise this objective, a t-test was applied and the results obtained thereupon are presented below in table number 5.

Table 5: Showing comparison between Government and Private school going upper primary children on school climate (N=60 in each group)

Variable/Dimension	Mean		SD		t-value	Level of Significance	Remarks
	Govt.	Private	Govt.	Private			
Physical Infrastructure	27.79	30.49	6.01	4.85	2.72	Significant at 0.01 level	
Trustworthy Relationships	24.40	27.98	4.29	4.19	4.68	Significant at 0.01 level	
Effective Teaching Learning Strategies	28.72	30.92	6.90	4.81	2.04	Significant at 0.05 level	*Hypothesis 1 not accepted*
Satisfaction	20.15	22.04	4.02	3.61	2.45	Significant at 0.05 level	
School Climate (composite)	101.28	111.14	15.76	13.89	3.65	Significant at 0.01 level	

*tabulated t-value at 0.01=2.62 & at 0.05=1.98

Observation: Table number 5 represents that the mean scores of government upper primary school-going children are 27.79, 24.40, 28.72 and 20.15 respectively on physical infrastructure, trustworthy relationships, effective teaching learning strategies and satisfaction dimensions of school climate. Similarly, private upper primary school children possess mean scores of 30.49, 27.98, 30.92 and 22.04 respectively on physical infrastructure, trustworthy relationships, effective teaching learning strategies and satisfaction

dimensions of school climate. The overall mean score of school climate is 101.28 for government upper primary school-going children and 111.14 for private upper primary school-going children.

Interpretation: From table number 5 it is to be interpreted that there is a significant difference between government and private upper primary school-going children on school climate (total) as the calculated t-value (3.65) exceeds the tabulated t-value (2.62) at 0.01 level of significance. Private schools have high infrastructure facilities, mutual trustworthy relationships among school members, effective teaching learning strategies, and are highly satisfied

in comparison to government upper primary schools. In this way, hypothesis number 1 reads as "There is no significant difference between government and private upper primary school going children on school climate" stands not accepted.

Realisation of objective number 3: Objective 3 of the present study reads as "To compare the academic achievement of government and private upper primary school going children". In order to achieve this objective, a t-test was applied and the results obtained thereupon are presented below in table number 6.

Table 6: Showing comparison between Government and Private school going upper primary children on academic achievement (N=60 in each group)

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance	Remarks
Government	64.10	18.04	3.24	Significant at 0.01 level	*Hypothesis 2 not accepted*
Private	75.09	19.12			

*tabulated t-value at 0.01=2.62 & at 0.05=1.98

Observation: The presentation of table number 6 reveals that the mean scores of government and private upper primary school-going children on academic achievement are 64.10 and 75.09 respectively. The t-value is found to be 3.24.

Interpretation: It is to be interpreted from table number 6 that private school-going upper primary children have outperformed the government school-going upper primary children in terms of academic achievement. Since the calculated t-value (3.24) exceeds the tabulated t-value (2.62) at a 0.01 level of

significance, therefore, there is a significant difference between government and private school-going upper primary children on academic achievement levels. In this way, hypothesis number 2 reads as "There is no significant difference between government and private upper primary school going children on academic achievement" stands not accepted.

Realisation of objective number 4: Objective 4 of the present study reads as "To study the correlation between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school going children". In order to achieve this objective, Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied and the results obtained thereupon are presented below in table number 7.

Table 7: Showing the correlation between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school going children

Variables	N*	df	r**	Remarks
School Climate	120	118	0.73	*Hypothesis 3 accepted*
Academic Achievement				

N*=total number of students

r**= coefficient of correlation

Observation: The perusal of table number 7 reveals that the calculated correlation coefficient between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school-going children is 0.73.

Interpretation: The above-mentioned r=0.73 is found to be highly significant at 0.01 level which implies that there is a significant relationship between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school-going children. In this way, hypothesis number 3 reads as "There is a significant relationship between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary school going children" stands accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between government and private upper primary children in school climate. The finding is in line with the findings of Bhat & Mir (2018), Joseph (2013) but it is in against the finding of Saini (2010). Private schools were found to have favourable school climate than government schools. Private schools were found to possess adequate infrastructure facilities, effective teaching & leadership styles, democratic discipline and mutual understanding. Students enrolled in private upper primary schools were highly satisfied because they feel physically and emotionally safe and above all ethos-like culture was prevailing in the school.

Another major finding of the study confirmed that there exists a significant difference between government and private upper primary children in academic achievement. Mean difference has preferred private school going children. In private schools, various teaching-learning aids, playground facilities, equipped computer labs, adequate pupil-teacher ratio, congenial school environment, etc. were found to strengthen the academic achievement of students. Such facilities were found inadequate in government upper primary schools.

Last but not least findings of the present study supported that there is a significant relationship between school climate and academic achievement of upper primary children. A positive, productive, caring and favourable school climate promotes academic achievement and a negative, unproductive and unfavourable school climate inhibits the optimal learning of students (Mir, 2019; Nkuba, 2015; Jankens, 2011).

Recommendation

Based on the present findings, it is recommended that government should ensure that upper primary schools are provided with equal and effective teaching-learning facilities so as to enhance the academic climate of students.

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