

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT: *Of late, surfaced reports of ethical breach by teachers has led to a worrying decline in teacher's competency. Added to this was another report by Berita Harian Online that revealed around 4.4 percent of teachers are experiencing a medium to a high level of stress. The main contributor to this situation is an unhealthy school climate that threatens to disrupt teachers' performance in school. Further, there are insufficient studies on school climate and how it affects teacher performance in Malaysia. It is logical that an investigation on this matter should be carried out. Thus, quantitative research was conducted to explore the link between school climate and teachers' performance. Respondents for this study were made up of primary school teachers in Selangor. Research data was gathered using a set of a questionnaire answered by 381 subjects. The data was then analyzed using inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 software. Findings from the data analysis yielded only one dimension that had a significant relationship with teachers' performance, which was the decision making dimension. The results from this study suggest robust initiatives are needed to increase decision-making skills among primary school teachers, as this aspect plays a significant role in improving teachers' performance.*

Keywords: School climate, teachers' performance, PBPPP, primary school

1. INTRODUCTION

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) has detailed with clarity the objectives that need to be achieved in terms of quality, equity and access in a period of 13 years. This means strategic and careful planning is imperative, especially in matters of human resource management, finance, and the setting of key initiatives to ensure student success [1]. Before the completion of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), educators everywhere in this county looked to the National Education Philosophy for guidance as it was the pillar for the education system. The National Education Philosophy highlighted holistic competency that needed to be nurtured consistently to guarantee that Malaysian students grow to be wholesome individuals [2].

To manage the rapid development in the education system and the expansion of globalization, informed and knowledgeable teachers are very essential. The Malaysian Teacher Standard (SGM) developed by the Ministry of Education Malaysia has outlined the professional competency which should be achieved by teachers. Three standards were emphasized by SGM. There were values of professionalism in teaching, knowledge, and skills in teaching and learning [3].

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life, as well as its readiness to support teaching and learning [4]. It encompasses the interaction and relationship styles of the school inhabitants, which include the relationship between teachers and school administrators, teachers and teachers, teachers with students, among school administrators, and students with other students. In addition, the school climate also covers objectives, values, interpersonal relationships, the structure of an organization, and organization practices [5]. Overall, it concentrates on the physical and social aspects of a learning and teaching environment. All of these elements play important roles in creating a healthy school climate.

A conducive school environment can create a comfortable and safe space not only for students during learning but also

for teachers when teaching. School administration's support and cooperation from everyone in school help build a good school climate. In other words, the school climate is one of the crucial elements in determining teachers' competency and effectiveness in task execution [6], where this will promote the growth of quality teachers [7].

Literature review on this subject has purported school climate as the critical element in influencing teachers' performance. [6-15]. In regard to this, the effectiveness of a school climate depends on the extent to which it stresses on aspects such as collaboration [7], the relationship among school inhabitants, school resource management, decision making, as well as the knowledge and skills to execute current education system [10].

On the other hand, ethical breach committed by teachers in schools has seemed to reach a worrying level in recent years. This has an adverse effect on teachers' competency. Moreover, ethical breach by teachers has become one of the causes in the fragile state of this nation's education system. Needless to say, this phenomenon is tarnishing the teaching profession, and many are worried about the implications. One of the known factors that contribute to the ethical breach is the school climate. To give an illustration of the worrying state of teachers at this moment, 4.4 percent of 48,258 teachers were reported to suffer from medium to high-stress level that was caused by workload, administration, the absence of recognition, and the lack of skills in task execution [16]. This matter deserves serious attention, as it affects teacher performance. Thus, this research was done to investigate the relationship between factors in school climate and teacher performance.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey method using a set of questionnaire to collect data on the school climate experienced by primary school teachers. Respondents for this survey were made up of 381 teachers from a number of schools in Selangor. An instrument from the *School Level Environment Questionnaire* (SLEQ), which was developed

by Bruce Johnson [19], was adapted involving five dimensions; collaboration, student relationships, school supplies, decision-making, and teaching innovation. These dimensions discuss climate-related tasks and the roles of teachers. The dimension of collaboration is related to cooperation between teachers and teachers. The dimension of student relationships discusses the perception of teachers towards pupils in their schools. The dimension of school supplies involves the provision of teaching equipment in schools. The dimension of decision making is related to the openness of leaders in giving teachers the opportunity to lead the school together, while the dimension of teaching innovation involves the extent to which the teaching method employed by teachers are in line with current educational development. Teachers' performance in this study was measured by using an Integrated Assessment of Education Service Officers (PBPPP). The data was then analyzed using inferential statistics to determine the relationship between factors in a school climate and teacher performance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regression analysis yielded that only decision making had a positive and significant relationship with teachers' performance ($\beta=0.34$, $p=0.03$, $p<0.05$), while other factors like collaboration ($\beta=0.13$, $p=0.56$, $p>0.05$), teachers' relationship with students ($\beta=-0.03$, $p=0.88$, $p>0.05$), availability of school supplies ($\beta=-0.01$, $p=0.93$, $p>0.05$), and teaching innovations ($\beta=-0.28$, $p=0.22$, $p>0.05$) were found to not have a significant relationship with primary school teachers' performance. Findings from the regression analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table (1) Relationship between school climate dimensions and teacher performance			
Dimension	β	SE	p
Collaboration	0.13	0.22	0.56
Teachers' relationship with the student	-0.03	0.20	0.88
Availability of school supplies	-0.01	0.16	0.93
Decision making	0.34	0.15	0.03
Teaching innovations	-0.28	0.23	0.22

Results revealed that only decision-making factor has a significant and positive relationship with primary school teachers' performance. The findings carry the implication that primary school teachers' performance will increase if they are given the opportunity to make decisions at school. This outcome can be justified by taking into account the positive impact teachers can have when they are directly involved in making decisions on school matters. Because they would have to be aware of the weight of their decisions, teachers are able to put into practice leadership skills and knowledge when determining important matters at school. For instance, if a teacher is allowed to decide on the learning management methods she would like to apply in her classroom, she would be more consistent in executing the chosen method, compared to teachers who had the decision being made for them on the matter. The literature review also supports this

notion as teachers' involvement not only has a positive effect on teachers' performance but also contributes to the school's achievement [17]. Based on these findings, appropriate initiatives should be taken to assist in the development of decision-making skills and the continuous application of these skills in the school context, to ensure a perpetual increase in primary school teachers' performance.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, it can be deduced that the decision making dimension is a reliable predictor for the improvement of Selangor's primary school teachers' performance. Therefore, it is only rational that the Ministry of Education improves teachers' professionalism through autonomy and accountability, as was highlighted by the third scope in Education Aspiration 2018-2023 [18]. Teachers should be given the opportunity and power to work together when solving problems at school, as this will encourage autonomy. When decision-making power is given to teachers, a more specialized intervention can happen in school daily operations. School administrators should relinquish decision making power to teachers to motivate effective task execution, where this will also encourage a positive improvement in teachers' performance.

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