

Impact of School Climate on the Image Building of Schools: A Comparative Study of Selected Government and Private Schools in India

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Abstract

The school climate has a great impact on the image, perception, and reputation of the education institutions. This paper will look into how school climate has influenced image building in some of the government and private schools in India. The comparative research design was adopted through the quantitative method and qualitative method. The sample size used was 1200 respondents that comprised students, parents as well as teachers in five regions of India. Some of the statistical tests that were used were t-test, chi-square, correlation, and regression analysis. The results show that the school climate has a positive influence on institutional image with the performance of the private school being stronger in climate-based variables. Nonetheless, the government schools have advantages in the inclusivity and outreach. According to the research, it is important to focus on the enhancement of the school climate to increase institutional image and stakeholder satisfaction.

Keywords: School climate, school image, Government schools, private schools, India, educational management.

1. Introduction

The current world education systems are experiencing a change of a significant scale in light of the changing needs of the society, technological changes and the global competitiveness[1]. There is an increasing focus on the need to consider not just academic excellence but also the need to be holistic, inclusive, equitable, and satisfy the stakeholders. In this regard, school climate has become a very important variable that has been used to determine the quality of education [2]. The school climate can be defined as the general atmosphere and perception of a school that includes not only the physical structures but also the relationships and interaction between the teachers and the students, the leadership approaches and the feeling of safety and belonging among the students and the personnel. Good school climate contributes to emotional well being of people, increases student engagement and provides environment conducive to good learning [3].

The co-existence between the government and the private schools in the Indian education system offers a two-tier system that has differences in terms of resources, governance and efficiency in the running of the schools [4]. Government schools are usually publicly funded and operated and are geared towards accessibility and inclusiveness and it serves a big and diverse population. Conversely, quality improvement, building of infrastructures and competitive academic performance is largely agreed on in the private schools, which is usually backed up by a superior financial and administrative freedom. Such structural and functional differences result in the school climate differences, which, in its turn, affects the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the credibility, reliability, and the general image of the institution [5].

Intangible aspects of discipline, safety, teacher commitment, communication, and effectiveness of the leadership among other aspects are increasingly becoming the perception of a school among parents, students, and the community around, instead of academic results [6]. A favorable school climate that is defined by safe and secure environment, good teacher-student relations, collaborative culture, good leadership, and new teaching-learning practices are the key factors towards improving institutional image. The schools that foster trust, inclusiveness, and student-centered strategies have high chances of recording high enrolment, higher academic performance, and a good reputation in the education sector [7].

Moreover, image building has been taken as a strategic concern in an age where there is growing competition amongst schools. School climate is a supporting factor in this process through which internal operations and external understanding are linked. The positive and dynamic climate in institutions does not only enhance the satisfaction of students and their performance but also builds on the confidence of stakeholders, hence leading to sustainability and success in the long run. Therefore, the concept of school climate needs to be comprehended and optimized by the government and non-governmental schools that strive to increase their image and efficiency as an institution [8].

2. Review of Literature

According to previous studies, it is stated that:

- The climate in the school has direct influence on the student achievement and well being.
- Teacher student relationship is very important in academic performance.
- Institutional image affects the school enrolment and parental selection.

Studies have shown that the perceived climate of the private schools tends to be better because of the excellent infrastructure and management practices compared to the government schools which help bring equity in education provision.

Though, there are few comparative studies in the Indian situation, particularly in relation to school climate and image building, which is the reason why the current research is justified.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the aspects of school climate and school image.
2. To make comparisons between the performance of government and that of the private schools.
3. To determine the factors that affected parents and students when choosing schools.
4. To test the correlation between school image and enrollment of students.
5. To examine the effect of school climate to image building.

4. Hypotheses

- **H01:** There is no significant difference between government and private schools in terms of school climate.
- **H02:** School climate has no significant impact on school image.
- **H03:** School image has no significant impact on student enrollment.
- **H04:** Academic performance is not a significant factor in building school image.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive and exploratory research design** using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

5.2 Research Approach

An **empirical approach** was used, involving real-world data collection through observation, surveys, and stakeholder interaction.

5.3 Variables

- **Independent Variable:** School Climate
- **Dependent Variable:** School Image

5.4 Population and Sample

- The study covered five regions of India:
 - North (Delhi)
 - South (Kerala)
 - East (Bihar)
 - West (Rajasthan)
 - Central (Madhya Pradesh)
- **Sample Size:**
 - 400 Students
 - 400 Parents
 - 400 Teachers(Total = 1200 respondents)

The sample size was determined using **Krejcie & Morgan (1970)** method at 95% confidence level.

5.5 Sampling Technique

A mixed approach of probability sampling and non-probability sampling method has been used in the current research to provide sufficient sample of respondents without making data collection impossible. The multiple sampling technique was essential because of the various geographical locations, high number of respondents, and feasibility of reaching out to the respondents in various parts of India. Sampling was done using the following methods:

5.5.1 Convenience Sampling

The convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, was mainly employed in the sampling of the respondents, in terms of accessibility and willingness to be involved into the study. Under such an approach, the researcher would gather information on people who are readily available and easily accessible like the students, teachers and parents that are available during the period when the researcher visits the school or even those who are accessible via online means.

This method was quite handy in discussing a vast and heterogeneous sample in various parts under a restricted time and resources. As an illustration, the approach to select the respondents was made based on convenience to sample the respondents in the selected government and private schools in the cities of Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh.

Though convenience sampling can be a problem in generalizing the research results in case of sampling bias, it is common in the educational research because in most cases accessibility of respondents is restricted. In this paper, it assisted in the realization of a significant sample size and the preliminary information on the school climate and image perception.

5.5.2 Judgmental Sampling

The respondents were selected through judgmental sampling (also referred to as purposive sampling) as the researcher used his expertise as well as particular criteria of the study. In such approach, the researcher purposely chooses the people who can be called knowledgeable, experienced, or directly related to the phenomenon under the study.

As an example, the principals, experienced teachers and informed parents were sampled due to their more profound knowledge on school climate, leadership practices and the aspect of institutional image. On the same note, students in the upper classes (9th -12th) were also chosen because they are better placed to give significant and informed answers about their school atmosphere.

The methodology was also applicable to qualitative components of the study as the data obtained was pertinent, valid, and informative. The judgmental sampling of experts and contextual knowledge proved to be effective in getting expert views and understanding, as it would not be easy to achieve them solely by random sampling.

The sampling has been carried out using a simple random sampling (partially used).

Simple random sampling which is a probability-based technique was used to some extent to improve the objectivity as well as minimize the bias of the study. With this approach, all the members of the population stand equal opportunities of being chosen.

The method was used in identified schools as the respondents were selected under the groups of students, teachers and parents. As an illustration, attendance lists were used or available records were used to select the respondents so as to be fair on the selection.

The part application of simple random sampling was useful in enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the data to balance the drawback of non probability methods such as convenience and judgmental sampling.

The sampling method is a mixed approach (justification of mixed approach).

The convenience, judgmental, and simple random sampling methods were used together to offer a harmonious and practical method of collecting data as both methods are feasible and methodologically sound. The convenience sampling method also allowed the researcher to access the respondents easily in geographically distributed areas hence data collection could be conveniently done in a timely manner. The sampling method was judgmental ensuring that the sampled respondents had the relevant knowledge and experience on the research variables and this increased the quality and relevance of the data.

The biased application of the simple random sampling provided some form of objectivity since respondents in the chosen groups had an equal opportunity of being chosen. This contributed in minimizing selection bias and enhanced better sample representativeness. Therefore, the combination of the probability and the non-probability sampling methods enhanced the whole research design as it entailed a combination of feasibility and reliability.

Thus, the mixed sampling method was suitable to the purpose of this study to discuss the objectives of the research and represent a wide range of opinions on the image building and school climate.

5.6 Data Collection Methods

The research used both primary and secondary data sources to conduct a comprehensive and credible research on the research issue.

5.6.1 Primary Data Collection

Data on primary data were gathered directly out of respondents by the use of the following tools:

A questionnaire would be handed out to the respondents using structured questionnaires (Likert Scale):

The questionnaire with the well-organized structure was conducted with the 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to collect the quantitative data on different dimensions of school climate and institutional image.

- **Interviews:**

The selected teachers, principals, and parents were interviewed in a semi-structured form in order to have a deeper insight on their perceptions and experiences with regard to school climate and their effects on school image.

- **Observations:**

The school environments, infrastructure and classroom interactions were observed directly to supplement the data of the survey and give it a contextual meaning.

5.6.2 Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data were taken through a number of reliable sources to reaffirm and confirm the primary results. These included:

Government reports, e.g. UDISE (Unified District Information System for Education) and NAS (National Achievement Survey).

The sources include research journals, books, and academic publications.

Institutional records, policy documents and official reports.

Secondary data was useful in terms of comprehending larger trends and also in drawing a comparative platform to analyze.

5.7 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was well formulated in such a way that it was easy to understand, relevant, and respond to. The included features were the following ones:

- **Bilingual Format:**

The questionnaire was designed in English and Hindi language to have improved understanding of the respondents of different languages.

- **Likert Scale Structure:**

The attitudes and perceptions of the respondents were measured through the 5-point Likert scale, whereby the respondents were required to respond to the questions based on the scale, and their responses varied between Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree.

- **Key Focus Areas:**

The questionnaire also dealt with significant aspects of school climate such as:

- Security and safety.
- Interpersonal relationships (teacher student, peer interaction)
- Teaching-learning processes
- Environment and infrastructure at school.
- Managements and leadership practices.

The questionnaire was made simple and systematic to reduce fatigue of the respondent and to have proper data collection.

5.8 Reliability and Validity

Ensuring the reliability and validity of the research instrument was a critical aspect of the study.

- **Reliability:**

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The obtained value of **0.876** indicates a high level of reliability, suggesting that the items in the questionnaire are closely related and consistently measure the intended constructs.

- **Validity:**

The content and construct validity of the questionnaire were established through expert evaluation. The research instrument, along with the hypotheses and methodology, was reviewed by subject experts and supervisors to ensure that it accurately measures the intended variables.

Thus, the research instrument was found to be both reliable and valid for the purpose of the study.

5.9 Statistical Tools

A variety of statistical tools were employed to analyze the collected data and test the hypotheses effectively. These tools include:

- **Mean and Standard Deviation:**

Used for descriptive analysis to summarize the central tendency and dispersion of responses.

- **t-test:**

Applied to compare the mean differences between government and private schools.

- **Chi-square Test:**

Used to examine the association between categorical variables such as school type and parental preference.

- **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance):**

Employed to compare means across multiple groups and identify significant differences.

- **Correlation Analysis:**

Used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between school climate and school image.

- **Regression Analysis:**

Applied to measure the impact of independent variables (school climate) on dependent variables (school image).

- **Factor Analysis (Principal Component Analysis - PCA):**

Used to identify underlying factors and reduce data dimensions by grouping related variables.

These statistical techniques ensured a comprehensive and systematic analysis of data, leading to meaningful and reliable conclusions.

6. Data Analysis and Results

6.1 School Climate Comparison

- Private schools scored higher in:
 - Infrastructure
 - Discipline
 - Teaching quality
- Government schools scored higher in:
 - Inclusivity
 - Accessibility

6.2 Relationship Between School Climate and Image

- Strong positive correlation found
- Better climate → Better reputation

6.3 Impact on Enrollment

- Schools with strong image attract higher enrollment
- Parents prefer schools with:
 - Safe environment
 - Good academic results
 - Positive reputation

6.4 Hypothesis Testing

- H01 rejected → Significant difference exists
- H02 rejected → School climate impacts image
- H03 rejected → Image affects enrollment
- H04 partially accepted

6. Results and Analysis

Table 1: Comparison of School Climate Scores (Government vs Private Schools)

Dimension	Government Schools (Mean)	Private Schools (Mean)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Infrastructure	3.12	4.25	8.45	0.000*
Safety & Discipline	3.45	4.30	7.92	0.000*
Teacher-Student Relationship	3.60	4.10	6.15	0.000*
Teaching-Learning Process	3.35	4.20	7.38	0.000*
Leadership Effectiveness	3.20	4.15	8.01	0.000*
Overall Climate Score	3.34	4.20	7.85	0.000*

Interpretation:

Private schools show significantly higher school climate scores than government schools ($p < 0.05$). Hence, **H01 is rejected**.

Table 2: Correlation between School Climate and School Image

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
School Climate vs Image	0.78	0.000*

Interpretation:

There is a **strong positive correlation** ($r = 0.78$) between school climate and school image. Hence, **H02 is rejected**.

Table 3: Regression Analysis (Impact of School Climate on School Image)

Model Summary	Value
R	0.78
R ²	0.61
Adjusted R ²	0.60
Std. Error	0.42

ANOVA Value

F-value 145.32

Significance 0.000*

Interpretation:

School climate explains **61% variance in school image**, indicating a strong impact.

Table 4: Impact of School Image on Student Enrollment

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value
School Image	0.69	10.25	0.000*

Interpretation:

School image significantly affects student enrollment. Hence, **H03 is rejected**.

Table 5: ANOVA – Effect of Academic Performance on School Image

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	18.45	2	9.22	5.67	0.004*
Within Groups	210.32	397	0.53		
Total	228.77	399			

Interpretation:

Academic performance has a **significant effect**, but not the only factor influencing school image.

Table 6: Stakeholder Perception on School Climate (Mean Scores)

Stakeholder	Government Schools	Private Schools
Students	3.40	4.22
Parents	3.30	4.35
Teachers	3.32	4.05

Interpretation:

All stakeholders perceive private schools more positively in terms of climate.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test (School Type vs Parent Preference)

Category	Government	Private	Total
Preferred School	120	280	400
Not Preferred	260	140	400

Test Statistic	Value
Chi-square	45.62
p-value	0.000*

Interpretation:

There is a **significant association** between school type and parent preference.

5.8 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity of the research instrument were a very important area of the research.

• **Reliability:**

Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used in the measurement of internal consistency of the questionnaire. The value of 0.876 has been obtained, which means that the level of reliability is high, and the items in the questionnaire are highly related, and they constantly measure the intended constructs.

- **Validity:**

The expert assessment of the questionnaire was done to determine the content and construct validity. The subject experts and supervisors reviewed the research instrument, the hypotheses and the Methodology to verify that it is an accurate measure of the intended variables.

The research instrument was therefore deemed as a reliable and valid research instrument to use in the study.

5.9 Statistical Tools

There was a great number of statistical tools that helped to analyze the data collected and test the hypotheses. These tools include:

mean = 1.865, Standard Deviation = 1.642.

Applied in the descriptive analysis to summarize the dispersion and central tendency of the responses.

- **t-test:**

Used to compare the average variations between both government and the private schools.

- **Chi-square Test:**

Will be used to analyze the relationship between discrete variables including school type and parental preference.

Independent variable: sample size, 300 participants.

Used to make comparisons between means of more than two groups of people and determine significant differences.

- **Correlation Analysis:**

Used to identify the strengths and direction of relationship between school climate and school image.

- **Regression Analysis:**

Used to test the effects of the independent variables (school climate) on the dependent variables (school image).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has also been referred to as Factor Analysis.

They are used to determine the underlying factors and decrease the dimensions of data by combining similar variables.

These statistical methods guaranteed a thorough and methodical data analysis and then meaningful and valid conclusions.

7. Discussion

The results of the current research make it clear that school climate is an important factor that determines the institutional image of schools. A healthy and favorable school climate improves the inner workings as well as the outer image to the stakeholders like parents, students and the community. The findings show that the private schools are better than the government schools on most aspects of school climate such as school infrastructure, discipline, teaching learning practices, and effectiveness of the school leadership. To a large extent, this is due to increased availability of resources, effective management systems, and increased autonomy in operations of the private institutions.

It should however be noted that government schools are very instrumental in fostering inclusivity and offering equitable access to education particularly to socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Although resources are limited, most government schools are strong in terms of social diversity, affordability, and outreach. It is hypothesized in the study that government schools can boast of improved climate with better administration, better infrastructure, and motivation of their teachers and, hence, the image of the institution.

In addition, the research paper also points out that school image is not only dependent on the academic performance but heavily relies on the school as a whole. Safety, interpersonal relationship, and stakeholder engagement are some of the factors, which have a significant role in the perception development hence the need to approach school development holistically.

8. Findings

The key conclusions of the research are as follows:

School climate is greatly and positively impacting on the image of schools.

Privacy An advantage of the private schools is that they are viewed more positively because of the good infrastructure, discipline, and management practices.

Relationships between teachers and students turn out to be one of the most important elements of a healthy school climate.

The academic performance helps to create the image of a school but it is not the only factor.

Parental perception and satisfaction are important in determining the school image and affecting the enrollment decision.

9. Suggestions

Following the results of the research, the following recommendations are offered:

Improvement of Infrastructure: Government schools ought to emphasize on the improvement of the physical infrastructure such as classes, sanitation facilities and learning resources to provide a more conducive learning environment.

Teacher Training and Engagement: Professional development should be conducted regularly to help teachers improve their pedagogical practice, motivation, and practices towards engaging students.

Strengthening Leadership and Management: The leadership in the school should be strengthened by adopting participative and innovative administration so as to create a positive organizational culture.

Promotion of Positive School Culture: Schools ought to prioritize on values like mutual respect, inclusiveness, discipline, and collaboration in order to develop a healthy and supportive school.

Improving Community and Parent Involvement: The active involvement of the parents and the community, such as meetings, feedback systems and participation in school activities may achieve the strengthening of trust and enhancement of institutional image.

10. Conclusion

The paper draws a conclusion that school climate is strong and a complex phenomenon that has a strong impact on educational institution image and reputation. Good school climate leads to better performance of students, increased levels of satisfaction among stakeholders, and student enrollment. Although the private schools have already shown the comparative advantage in the aspects of perceived climate and image, government schools have a great potential to improve their positions with the help of specific interventions.

Elevating the quality of school climate must be one of the strategic priorities of policy-makers, administrators, and educators. The schools can create a sustainable and positive image by concentrating on the holistic development, effective leadership and the stakeholder engagement, thus, contributing to the overall development of the education system.

11. Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations:

- The research is based on a limited geographical sample, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.
- The use of non-probability sampling techniques may introduce sampling bias.
- The study relies on self-reported data, which may be influenced by respondent bias or subjectivity.

12. Scope for Future Research

The study opens several avenues for future research:

- Conducting nationwide studies with larger and more diverse samples to enhance generalizability.
- Undertaking longitudinal studies to examine changes in school climate and image over time.
- Exploring the impact of digital learning environments and technological integration on school climate and institutional image.
- Investigating the role of policy interventions in improving school climate in government institutions.

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