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INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AMONG THE B.Ed. STUDENTS

Dr. Sreelatha K.[1] and Dr. Amruth G Kumar[2]

[1]Assistant Professor in Education, Mahathma College of Education, Nileshwar , Kasaragod, Kerala.

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Education, Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod, Kerala.

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to study the influence of "Institutional Climate" on "Student Engagement" among the student teachers in the B.Ed. institutions. The findings show that the Student Engagement is significantly influenced by Institutional Climate. The Institutional Climate is able to differentiate students belonging to high, average and low student engagement even after equating the groups by controlling the factors such as Gender, Marital status, Age and Type of management of the Institution.

Keywords: *Student engagement, Institutional climate,, B.Ed. students, Equated group.*

INTRODUCTION

Student Engagement has been defined as "participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes" (Kuh *et al.*, 2007). If the students are able to involve physically, mentally and emotionally in the process of learning, then it can be said that they are 'engaged' in learning, because through this process, the learning will become meaningful. Hence, this kind of engagement is needed in all the aspect of education especially in teacher education, because of the importance of teachers in the teaching-learning process. According to Coates (2005), "The concept of student engagement is based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Learning is seen as a 'joint proposition', however, which also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved. However, individual learners are ultimately the agents in discussions of engagement". It is clear from this statement that 'there are other personal and environmental factors involved in the engagement by the student'.

One among these factors is Institutional Climate which influences the academic performance among the students. Findings of the Studies conducted by Desales (1978), Ekambaram (1980) and Chopra (1982) supports this argument. According to Litwin and Stringer (1968) "Climate in an institution comprises the structure, responsibility, warmth, support, reward, conflict, standards, identity, and risk existing in the institution.

This study is dealt with the influence of Institutional Climate on Student Engagement based on selected subsamples such as gender, marital status, age group and type of management of the institution.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the influence of Institutional Climate on the Student Engagement of the student teachers pursuing B.Ed. program.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Within an unselected group of student teachers there will be significant difference in mean scores of High, Average and Low Student Engagement based on Institutional climate

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2. Within an unselected group of student teachers , based on the institutional Climate
    - The mean score of High Student Engagement will be significantly greater than the mean score of Average Student Engagement ;
    - The mean score of High Student Engagement will be significantly greater than the mean score of Low student engagement;
    - The mean score of Average student engagement will be significantly greater than the mean score of Low Student Engagement.
3. Within three equated groups drawn from three levels of Student Engagement based on the Institutional Climate
    - The mean score of High Student Engagement will be significantly greater than mean score of Average Student Engagement;
    - The mean score of High Student Engagement will be significantly greater than mean score of Low Student Engagement;
    - The mean score of Average Student Engagement will be significantly greater than mean score of Low student engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from 1601 students pursuing B.Ed. course in various colleges in Kerala State. The sub-samples selected for the study were Gender (male & female), Marital Status (married & unmarried), Age (20-25 & above 25) and Type of Management of the Institution (government supported & private). The size of the sub samples were as follows. Male- 126 & Female-1475, Married-719 & Unmarried-882, Age between 20-25 is 1258 & above 25 years -343 and Government supported college students- 698 & Private college students-903. The data was gathered using two standardized tools. The tools used were 'Student Engagement Scale' by Sreelatha and Amuth G Kumar (2015) and' Institutional Climate scale' by Sreelatha and Amruth G Kumar (2015). Both the tools were standardized using item analysis and the reliability was established using split half method. For the Student Engagement Scale there were 58 items. It was found that the reliability value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.850 and that of Guttman Split – Half Coefficient was 0.875 and that of Guttman Split- half coefficient was 0.903. For the Institutional Climate scale, it was found that the reliability value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.956 and that of Guttman Split – Half Coefficient was 0.932. There were 64 items in Institutional Climate Scale.

The sample of the study was 1601 students pursuing B.Ed. course which gave due representation to factors such as Gender, Marital status, Age and Type of management of the institution. It is quite plausible that their representative nature will be affected by grouping into high, average and low groups. There are possibilities for the students to accumulate more in high group from the government colleges than from the private colleges. There are chances for the independent variables to be affected by the over or under representation of these factors. This over or under representation of factors may lead to the impairment of the results obtained from the test of significance of means for the unselected group of sample. So it was decided to equate the group by controlling Gender, Marital status, Age and Type of Management of the institution.

The method used to draw the equated group is given below.

All the subsamples had adequate number of representatives. For equating the group it was decided to draw subjects with similar

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characteristics in all the aspects for the study. In this study females those who are married, belonging to the age limit of 20-25, studying in the private institutions are selected from high group. Sample with same description was selected from average and low groups. The above groups were selected because they represented maximum numbers of subjects compared to their counterparts in respective groups.

This method yielded 47 cases in high group, 187 in average group and 57 in low group based on Institutional Climate. To make all the three groups equated the researcher eliminated 140 cases from the average group and 10 from the low group in a random manner to avoid subjectivity. This technique yielded 47 students for Institutional Climate. Mean and standard deviation was calculated for Institutional Climate at three levels. Correlation between the scores of the compared groups was required for the application of the test of significance for dependent groups. So the correlation between each scores were calculated for each pair and applied for the test. Test of significance between means of large dependent samples was applied to analyze the data obtained for the equated groups.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Levene's test was undertaken to see the equality of variance. Result of the Levene's test is given below.

Table 1. Result of Levene Test for Student Engagement of B.Ed. Students with Different Levels of Institutional Climate

Variable	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Institutional Climate	1.320	2	1598	0.267

The Levene's Statistic for Institutional Climate was 1.320 which has a significance value as 0.267. This value is not significant at 0.05 level and so the variance are equal and this result indicates that the assumption of homogeneity is satisfied.

As the data fulfills the above said criteria, ANOVA and Independent sample t-test were done for the sample. It was done with the corresponding scores of the dependent variable for the high, average and the low groups of Institutional Climate. The results are shown in below tables with interpretations.

Table 2. Results of ANOVA for Institutional Climate

Institutional Climate	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	93032.293	2	46516.147	107.827	0.001
Within groups	689370.223	1598	431.396		
Total	782402.516	1600			

From table 2, it can be seen that for Institutional Climate, the mean square value of between groups is 46516.147 and that of the within group is 431.396. The F value is 107.827, which is significant ($P<0.001$). It means that the high, average and low group of Institutional Climate has a significant influence on the Student Engagement. Or it can be said that the difference in the means of between groups and within groups based on the institutional climate on

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student engagement is significant. It means that the Institutional Climate can differentiate the total group into students with high engagement, average engagement and low engagement. Thus the manipulation of this variable can make a low engaged student into an average engaged student or an average engaged student to a high engaged student.

The results of ANOVA will express whether mean difference exists among the groups. But it will not express which group or groups cause the difference. By doing mean difference test the group or groups which produces this difference can be identified. So the test of significance of difference between means for different levels of student engagement such as high, average and low were applied separately for each pair. The one- tailed test of significance for difference between means of large independent sample is applied here. The results are given below for each pair.

Comparison of unselected group of students with high and average student engagement

The mean scores of high and average groups were compared. The results are given below in table 3.

Table 3. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with High and Average Student Engagement (Unselected Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						Critical Ratio	P Value
	High			Average				
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ		
Institutional Climate	258	233.60	20.026	1096	218.95	20.601	10.33*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

It can be seen from table 3 that the mean of high group is 233.60 with a standard deviation of 20.026 and the mean of average group is 218.95 with a standard deviation of 20.601. The t value of this group is 10.33 which is significant (P<0.001). It shows that this group of Institutional Climate has a significant influence on the student engagement.

Comparison of equated group of students with high and average student engagement

The result of the test of significance between means of large dependent samples for high and average group is given below.

Table 4. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with High and Average Student Engagement (Equated Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						'r'	Critical Ratio	P Value
	High			Average					
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ			
Institutional Climate	47	240.74	16.172	47	224.04	21.010	0.944	14.573*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

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Table 4 shows that, the mean of the High group is 240.74 and its standard deviation is 16.172. The mean of Average group is 224.04 with the standard deviation of 21.010. The correlation value is 0.944. The value of t- is 14.573 which is significant (P<0.001). It means that the influence of this group based on the Institutional Climate on the Student Engagement is significant.

Comparison of unselected group of students with high and low student engagement

The mean scores of high and low groups were compared to identify whether there are significant differences between the means for the high and low groups. The results are given below in table no.5

Table 5. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with High and Low Student Engagement (Unselected Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						Critical Ratio	P Value
	High			Low				
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ		
Institutional Climate	258	233.60	20.026	247	206.55	22.232	14.378*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

It can be seen from table 5, for Institutional Climate, the mean and standard deviation of high group is 233.60 and 20.026 respectively. For low group it is 206.55 and 22.232 respectively. The t value for this group is 14.378 which is significant (P<0.001). This shows that this group of Institutional Climate has a significant influence on the Student Engagement.

Comparison of equated group of students with high and low student engagement

The test of significance between means of large dependent samples for high and low equated group was done as it was done for high and average equated groups. The result is given below in table 6.

Table 6. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with High and Low Student Engagement (Equated Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						'r'	Critical Ratio	P Value
	High			Low					
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ			
Institutional Climate	47	240.74	16.172	47	204.68	22.220	0.955	29.732*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

From table 6, it can be observed, for Institutional Climate, the high group has a mean of 240.74 and a standard deviation of 16.172. The low group has a mean of 204.68 and standard deviation of 22.220. It has a correlation value of 0.955. Its t value is 29.732 and is significant

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(P<0.001). This shows that this group based on the Institutional Climate has a significant influence on the Student Engagement.

Comparison of unselected group of students with average and low student engagement

The mean scores of average and low groups were compared to identify whether there are significant differences between the means for the average and low groups. The results are given below in table 7.

Table 7. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with Average and Low Student Engagement (Unselected Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						Critical Ratio	P Value
	Average			Low				
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ		
Institutional Climate	1096	218.95	20.601	247	206.55	22.232	8.42*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

Table 7 says for Institutional Climate, the Average group has a mean of 218.95 and its standard deviation is 20.601. The low group has its mean as 206.55 with a standard deviation of 22.232. This group has its t value as 8.42 which is significant (P<0.001). This also shows that there is a significant influence on the Student Engagement by this group of Institutional climate.

Comparison of equated group of students with average and low student engagement

The test of significance between means of large dependent samples for average and low equated group was done as it was done for high and average equated groups. The result is given below in table 8.

Table 8. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Groups with Average and Low Student Engagement (Equated Group)

Independent Variables	Groups						'r'	Critical Ratio	P Value
	Average			Low					
	N	μ	σ	N	μ	σ			
Institutional Climate	47	224.04	21.010	47	204.68	22.220	0.977	27.460*	.001

*significant at 0.05 level

From table 8, it can be seen that, for Institutional Climate, the mean of Average group is 224.04 with a standard deviation of 21.010. The mean and standard deviation of low group is 204.68 and 22.220 respectively. The correlation value is 0.977. The t value for this is 27.460 which is significant (P<0.001).This reveals that the Student Engagement is significantly influenced by this group based on Institutional Climate.

FINDINGS

All the p-values from table 3 to 8 are significant at 0.05 level. It means that, the

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Institutional Climate is able to differentiate students belonging to high, average and low student engagement even after equating the groups by controlling the factors such as Gender, Marital status, Age and Type of management of the Institution. All the means in the high group are higher than the means in the average group for both in unselected groups as well as in equated groups. All the means in the high group are higher than the means in the low group for both in unselected groups as well as in equated groups. All the means in the average group are higher than the means in the low group for both in unselected groups as well as in equated groups. It means that students with high favorable Institutional Climate are engaged much in the B.Ed. course than the students those who are in an average and low circumstance regarding Institutional Climate. And also the students with average favorable Institutional Climate are engaged much in the B.Ed. course than the students those who are in a low circumstance regarding Institutional Climate. The findings of the studies conducted by Conchas (2001), Finn &Voelkl (1993), Lee & Smith (1993,1995),Newmann (1981) and Newmann, Wehlage & Lamborn (1992) supports the results of the present study. All these studies report that when there is good Institutional Climate then the Students Engagement will be high.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the institutional climate plays a significant role in all the academic and non –academic activities of any institutions. Especially while considering B.Ed. course, it is very difficult to involve and enjoy the course fully because of it's over loaded curriculum unless and otherwise there is a promoting institutional climate. Right from the timing of the college, rules and regulations, academic and non-academic activities, freedom, culture that followed in the institution such as principal - teacher relationship and teacher- teacher relationship etc will influence the engagement of the students in their course. Any of the factors such as rules and regulations, cultural practices of the institution etc are becoming a burden to the students then it will definitely affect their engagement in the course. It is not imaginable to make a student engaged themselves in the course in an institution where there is autocratic setup, rigid rules and regulations, less academic freedom, ego clashes between principal and teachers or between teachers and teachers. These are all well known facts and the present study also reveals these facts.

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