

The Impact of Demographic Factors on School Learning Environment of Co-educational Secondary School Students of Varanasi District.

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Introduction

The importance of school environment and to some extent culture for an effective school has been the subject of extensive research. Bulach, Malone, & Castleman (1994), in their research on 20 schools found a significant difference in student achievement between schools with a good school climate and those with a poor school climate. While there is a plethora of research showing the importance of school climate for achievement, there is also some research that supports its importance for other factors.

Other research links school climate to job satisfaction, levels of work-efficacy, and teacher autonomy. Bahamonde-Gunnell (2000) found that teachers who were satisfied with their jobs had more positive views about school climate than those who were not satisfied. Hirase's (2000) research found that teachers have a greater sense of work-efficacy in schools where there is a good climate. Erpelding (1999) found a strong relationship between teacher autonomy and school climate.

Johnson (1998) stated that there is a need for better measures of school effectiveness and indicated that there was a particular need to look at teacher characteristics. Gallimore (2001) wrote that if we want to improve schooling and achievement we will have to investigate the dynamics of culture that affect individual students and schools. The research of Franklin (1989), looked at the effect of school climate and some demographic factors on teacher efficacy and found that gender, teaching level, and setting did affect teacher efficacy, but that school climate did not. The relationship of these factors to school climate was not mentioned. It is possible that if these demographic factors have an effect on teacher efficacy, they might also have one on school climate. Hodgkinson (1998) described the changing student demographics that are occurring in the United

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States and the challenge of blending many cultures and faiths. If student demographics can affect the way schools are or should be run, it logically follows that faculty demographics could also be a factor. The world is changing rapidly and demographics could be an important factor in coping with that change.

Background of the study

School environment research suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behavior (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). Kalyani and Radhakrishna (2002) conducted a study to find out the impact of classroom learning environment on the intelligence of Ashram school (Tribal) children. The results indicated that components of classroom environment were significantly correlated with the intelligence. Nolen (2003) studied the relationship between high school students' perceptions of their science learning environments and their motivation, learning strategies, and achievement.

For instance, Grift et al. (1997) argued that "student behaviour and student attitudes (e.g., enjoyment in learning) can be seen as outcome measures that can be influenced by the environment. Kallestad et al. (1998) stressed that school environment may be explored with regard to school members in general, but also with reference to particular groups such as students or the teachers. Rees (1999) argued that a good school modified the behaviour of its students. He identified school environment as a determinant of the behavior of students.

Monoharan and Sundaram (2003) studied certain school variables as related to classroom climate and teacher's teaching as perceived by higher secondary students. Goel (2004) investigated the effect of home environment on educational aspiration. The results revealed that Girls had much higher educational aspiration than Boys. Generally, the accepted view is that a good school environment enhances student outcomes. This is because school environment influences student cognitive outcomes a view that was supported by researchers such as Barker (2000), Brookover et al. (2001). Other researchers, such as Vyskoeil & Goens (2004) added that school environment influences student values. Furthermore, student personal growth and satisfaction was also seen as a factor that is influenced by school environment (Bailey, 2005).

The purpose of this research paper is to investigate the impact of selected demographic factors on the school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district.

Statement of problem

The present study is stated as “The Impact of Demographic Factors on School Learning Environment of Co-educational Secondary School Students of Varanasi District.”

Objectives of the Study

The investigators framed the following specific objectives related to the present study:

1. To study the School Learning Environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to gender .
2. To study the school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to type of school management (Aided and Unaided).
3. To study the school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to medium of instruction (Hindi and English).

Hypotheses of the Study

The investigators formulated the following null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance pertaining to the present study:

H₀1- There is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to gender.

H₀2- There is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to type of school management.

H₀3- There is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to medium of instruction.

Method of the study

In the present study, the investigators have adopted descriptive survey method.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study includes all the students of classes 6th, 7th and 8th studying in co-educational secondary schools of Varanasi district. In the

present study, the sample consisted of 480 students studying in 6th, 7th and 8th classes of aided and unaided co-educational secondary schools of Varanasi city.

Tools Used

The investigators of the present study used the following tool for data collection.

- School Learning Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ)

Statistical Techniques Used

For the analysis of the data, Pearson product moment Correlation coefficient was used.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Study was delimited to the Varanasi district only.
2. Study was delimited to the students of aided and unaided coeducational secondary schools only.
3. In the present study, sample comprised of 480 students only.

Results and Discussion

The entries in the table1 indicates coefficient of correlation between school learning environment and gender ($r=0.38$) which is significant at 0.05 level of significance, hence the hypothesis H_0 that there is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to gender is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. It may be concluded from the result that school learning environment is positively related with demographic variable (gender) where boys (139.83) scored higher than girls (138.76). So it can be said that boys perceive better school learning environment than girls.

Table 1: Showing the Correlation Coefficient of School Learning Environment of Co-educational Secondary School Students with respect to Gender.

Variable	N	Boys		Girls		r
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
School Learning Environment	480	139.83	14.84	138.76	15.11	0.38*

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The entries in the table 2 indicates coefficient of correlation between school learning environment and Type of school management ($r=0.12$) which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis H_{02} that there is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to type of school management is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. It may be concluded from the result that demographic variable (type of school management) has significant influence on the school learning environment. The same table also reveals that unaided type of school management scored higher (139.36) than aided type of school management (125.16) which shows that unaided schools provide better school climate and facilities which enhance the learning environment of the students.

Table 2: Showing the Correlation Coefficient of School Learning Environment of Co-educational Secondary School Students with respect to Type of School Management.

Variable	N	Aided		Unaided		r
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
School Learning Environment	480	125.16	11.36	139.36	10.24	0.12*

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The entries in the table 3 indicates coefficient of correlation between school learning environment and medium of instruction ($r=0.07$) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis H_{03} that there is no significant relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students of Varanasi district with respect to medium of instruction is accepted at 0.05 level of significance. It may be concluded from the result that demographic variable (medium of instruction) is not associated with school learning environment and it does not influence the climate of school.

Table 3: Showing the Correlation Coefficient of School Learning Environment of Co-educational Secondary School Students with respect to Medium of Instruction.

Variable	N	Hindi		English		R
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
School Learning Environment	480	139.23	11.64	138.29	15.62	0.07

Conclusion

It may be concluded that there exists a positive relationship in school learning environment of co-educational secondary school students with respect to gender and type of school management. Scholars like Verma and Kumar (1999), Bala Indu (2004), Ramana (1997) in their studies have recognized the positive relationship between learning environment and demographic variables such as gender, locale and type of school management. Research also shows that boys perceive better school environment than girls and unaided schools scored better than aided type of school management. Rangappa, K. T. (1995) in their studies have also supported this view that unaided type of school management is better than that of aided type of school management. Results also reveal a non significant relationship in school environment of co-educational secondary school students with respect to medium of instruction. It may be concluded that medium of instruction do not influence the school learning environment.

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