

Assessment of Organisational Climate through Innovative Behaviour of the teachers

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ABSTRACT

As Quality of education manifests itself in the quality of human resources, it is a central and strategic issue in the context of nation-building. The part of the work environment which is not capital intensive but intrinsic to the educational institute and more or less dependent on the management style of the education institution can be taken on priority to improve the quality of education. This paper attempts to present a conceptual frame work for assessment of quality of work climate in any educational institution from the perspective of Innovative behaviour of its teachers. Irrespective of level of the education, the innovativeness of the teaching methods would invariably foster better learning among students. But, the innovation in teaching methods becomes all the more important, particularly in higher education because, unlike the school education which is primarily associated with memorization of facts, higher education is linked to higher order of learning and skill development involving higher mental operations such as problem solving and creative thinking. The ability of innovativeness and creativity among teachers can be cultivated in a productive and supportive work environment of any educational institute. There are several studies which support the direct relationship of Organisational Climate (herein after referred as OC) to the Innovative Behaviour (herein after referred as OB) of its teachers and ultimately to the performance of its students. Given that the 'innovativeness of the teachers' as OB is a plain and straightforward construct to measure than the complex construct of OC, this paper takes a cue from such studies and aims at devising a perspective by way of reverse engineering to predict the later from the former.

Key words: *Organisational Climate, Innovative Behaviour of teachers, Higher educational institutions, Teachers performance, Students performance*

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INTRODUCTION

India is all set to emerge as the youngest country of the world by year 2020 by then it would have an average age of 29 years, comprising around 28% of the then world's workforce. While in the same period, the average age of the population in China and U.S.A is expected to be 37 years whereas in Western Europe, it would be 45 years. India is expected to enjoy this advantage till 2040 (Esha Sharma, 2015). This would be the period of reaping the demographic dividend for India. Our country would be in a position to productively employ this youth asset in accelerating our economic growth further. A proper policy towards imparting appropriate skills and attitudes among the youth therefore becomes indispensable. The government has brought in a policy document called "The National Skill Policy document 2015" which carries an objective of making the Indian workforce globally competitive by empowering them with the required skills, knowledge and qualifications. In addition to laying down the objectives and expected outcomes, it aims at identifying various institutional frameworks which can act as the vehicle to reach the expected outcomes. The new skills policy also provides details on how skill development efforts across the country can be aligned within the existing institutional arrangements.

As per the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) at the end of the year 2018, it will be mandatory for all training/educational programmes/courses to be NSQF compliant, and all training and educational institutions shall define eligibility criteria for admission to various courses in terms of NSQF levels.

State of higher education institutions in India

It is always tempting to include the infrastructure and ambience of any institute in disguise of facilities and provisions as one of the factor among the plethora of others for arriving at the ranking of educational institutes worldwide. Nevertheless there are many useful and scientific approaches and cleverly devised, weighted scales adopted to rank institutes. Some of the prominent factors which frequently describe the institutes are Academic reputation, Employer reputation, Faculty-student ratio, Citations per faculty, International student ratio, and International staff ratio.

As is evident from the report of FICCI Higher Education Summit 2014 titled as "Higher education in India: Moving towards global relevance and competitiveness", India receives second largest enrollments in higher institutions, second only to China. We have largest number of higher education institutes in the world (33,723). US has 4140 and China has 2484 institutes only. However, among the list of the number of institutes by country in QS World University Rankings (top 500) 2014/15, India has only 6 institutes compared to 97 of US and 18 of China. Furthermore, only a handful of Indian B-schools have global accreditations such as AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS.

A significant number of Indian students go abroad, seeking quality education majority of which go to the developed western countries like US, UK, Canada. The incoming foreign students are limited in number. Foreign students from developed countries do not come to India primarily because India has few high ranked institutes, Poor

perception of education offered by Indian higher education institutes apart from the Lifestyle compromise and Limited high quality placements.

Organisational Climate and the Innovative behavior of the teachers

The two broadest dimensions of the Organizational climate could be the physical environment of the school and the work environment. The physical environment of the school includes the infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and the ambience of the school premises whereas the work environment consists of the orderly school environment with predefined mission and vision statements, objectives, goals, protocols, rules, etc. as well as live social interactions, the organizational behavior, management style, the expectations about teacher behavior and student outcomes (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999). The later aspect of the OC is described as a cognitive framework which consists of the attitudes, values, behavioral norms and expectations shared by organizational members (Sacher, 2010). Since climate breeds different characteristics, understanding of school climate is essential as it helps to segregate schools and diagnose the involvement and productivity of teachers (Kallestad, 2010). (Balkar, 2015) and (Hoy & Hoy 2006) suggested an influential climate would further the cause of institution as the school climate is directly related to school outcomes.(Anurupa Kundu, 2016) also suggested that the innovative behavior of teachers in school environment is incident upon their perception of the school climate.

One would like to study the organizational climate in order to devise strategies for change as it is believed that the climate has its effect on the performance of the teachers. The knowledge of multivariate analysis and social psychology comes handy to conceptualize climate through Organizational outcomes (Hoy & Hoy, 2006). Researchers treat Organizational climate as a latent variable comprising of several observable and measurable dimensions. (Douglas, 2010) has chosen Openness and Health as the two separate frameworks for the analysis and measurement of school climate. (Haplin 1962) pioneered the idea of studying the open and closed school climates. Both of them have attempted to describe school based on the “feel” and “personality” aspects by devising a questionnaire which they called “Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ)”. Teacher’s perception about the organization was the basis to determine the openness of the school as it was observed that the actual actions and behaviors of these relationships were far less important than how teachers perceive these relationships to be (Halpin & Croft 1962). The OCDQ tool requires the respondents to rate the school on the continuum of open to close and carefully recorded the respondent’s perceptions based on both the between teachers interactions and teachers and managements interactions. This instrument resulted in the description of the school as a degree of how open or close the school was. (Hoy & Sabo 1998) describe the open climate as decentralized system for it allows delegation of authorities. Open climate is supportive, as it fosters innovations and creativity, and is the one which is most likely to bring about organizational change. Those teachers

who are working in an open climate feel extra sense of responsibility and exert themselves to work for organizational success. In contrast the teachers who work in a closed environment feel restriction, risks and demotivated to put an extra effort. They consider the closed climate as hostile limiting which is most likely to fail to bring in organizational improvement.

Yet another perspective to describe the OC was 'Health of the school'. (Miles 1969) suggested a healthy school as the one that develops the abilities to cope well to its environment and continues to survive in a long haul. Parsons and colleagues adapted the idea of organizational health and suggested that it is contingent on the fulfillment of four basic requirements. These are adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency (Parsons, Bales & Shils, 1953). (Hoy & Feldman 1987) came up with the idea of inventory of items which they termed Organizational Health Inventory (OHI) for measure the health of schools. (Hoy & Tarter 1992) suggested that the administration in healthy schools is dynamic, resourceful, supportive, and sets high attainable objectives. They termed a healthy school as one which is not governed by the external influences and pressures (parents and community).

The teachers in a healthy school feel involved and committed. They work together as a team towards common goals, and set optimal goals for students. The students feel encouragement in a healthy school. They are motivated to participate in learning process in their own way while respecting the achievement of their co-learners. Unlike healthy school the un-healthy school is vulnerable to external factors. The principal in the un-healthy school

offers little shield to the teachers as a result teachers exhibit low morale and low commitment to the cause of the school. They grew suspicious of the administration and do not feel motivation to put extra efforts. Both these concepts of openness and health of the school seems similar as both of them exhibit strong predictive nature to organizational effectiveness (Hoy & Tarter 1997).

The openness and health aspects of the school environment have been undertaken as a similar and overlapping attributes by many. This has led to the development of an index number, an amalgamation of the OHI and OCDQ, indicating both the openness and health of the school. This index number has been referred to as the Organizational Climate Index (OCI) (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002). The original dimension of the physical parameters of the school took back seat in the new concept of the OCI as it has four dimensions namely: institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press.

The scope of IB on the other hand is concerned with a construct that comprises of personal attribute or degree of involvement, a higher order solution finding skills in the teaching profession. IB is “a multiple-stage process in which an individual recognizes a problem for which she or he generates new (novel or adopted) ideas and solutions, works to promote and build support for them, and produces an applicable prototype or model for the use and benefit of the organization or parts within it” (Carmeli, Meitar & Weisberg, 2006).

Impact of Organizational Climate on the performance of teachers and students

(Douglas, 2010) in his dissertation report indicated a relationship between OC and IB in schools. So far, it has been well established by numerous studies that the commitment or the innovative behavior of the teacher has a significant and direct relationship with the school climate.

(Lichtman 2007) observed that those environmental variables are most influential which tend to instill or augment the feelings of opportunities for personal growth and development among teachers. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters collaborative work environments and thus gives autonomy in part of teachers. When teachers perceive their school climate as positive, they will be more involved in their teaching job and try to address the different needs and requirements of students. (Chou, Shen, Hsiao & Chen 2010) suggested that teacher's trust and identification with schools influence their innovative behavior which in turn benefits the schools and infuse creativity and wisdom among students. Structural impediments to teacher autonomy and creativity often weaken the sense of collegiality and trust among teachers and also increase disillusionment among them (Ingersoll, 1996; Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Teachers' innovative behavior will therefore enhance if they perceive that their school is encouraging and rewarding them for their novel ways of teaching. Instruction innovation dimension of the school climate thus emerged as the most important factor for innovative work behavior. The IB in turn affects the performance of the students. There could be several factors which can influence the performance of students.

(Tempelaar *et al.*, 2007; Ramirez *et al.*, 2012; Hood *et al.*, 2010) has suggested that the expectancies, motivations, student characteristics, previous achievements, related experiences and interests are some of the factors which could influence the performance of the students. However one of the most important influencing factor on the attitudes and on the overall experience of the course is the lecturer itself (Ruggeri *et al.*, 2008).

Suggested framework for analyzing the Organizational Climate from Innovative behavior of the teachers

Given the fact that most of the higher education institutions in India are in public sector which receive financial aid from government, the management has less to do with the state of facilities and equipment in the institution. But, with their management style, they can certainly provide the much needed direction and supportive environment for innovations among the teachers to flourish.

From the continued discussion in the previous segments, it becomes clear that the assessment of OC requires a multi-dimensional approach. Some of these variables may be indicators of infrastructure or the likes of it. Part of which may not be relevant for the manager or the principal of the institution from the perspective of bringing innovativeness among teachers. Therefore the easier way out is to look into the composition and behavior attributes of the teachers linked to their innovativeness to peep into the OC of the institute.

Innovativeness could be measured as a latent variable in a single scale with several established series of observable straight forward subset of questions in a likert scale.

Principal Component factor analysis could then be done to establish the content validity and reliability of the scale. To measure the innovativeness of the teachers, only those observable variables should be retained in the scale which shows a Cronbach alpha statistics of above 7, rest of the others could be dropped from the scale.

Once the scale is ready, different institutions can be compared on their OC around their management aspect by measuring the degree of innovativeness of their teachers. The stats related to teachers, so obtained could be utilized to create an index of OC by percentage of teachers at different levels of Innovativeness on the base of overall budget of the institution. This exercise will create a list of institutions showing the best managed institutions irrespective of the size of their infrastructure.

Alternatively a cluster analysis could be done on the observable variables to create few groups (where Eigen values are more than 1) of teachers with different aspects of the innovativeness. Preferably, three to four or may be five groups can be created using the observable variables and named according to their dominant attributes. Then the institutions may then be segregated based on the composition of the Teachers in it belonging to different groups.

CONCLUSION

When we talk about the OC influencing the IB of Teachers we probably miss out the management aspect of the institute which do have a role in molding the OC of an institute. The methodology of segregating the institutes above would do the needful to address this issue and clear

the clouds around the hidden inefficiencies of the management of the institute. It will provide pin pointed and immediate do-ables to bring about the desired changes in the institutions towards its betterment.

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