

# Building Conducive School Climate

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**Abstract:** This paper is aimed at examining conceptually the efforts to build conducive school climate based on religious character culture. Conducive school climate is a condition and atmosphere of school climate with all supporting components both human resources and existing facilities to provide safety and convenient experience for all school residents with various activities both material and spiritual. Building conducive school climate is a maximum effort for school residents to create a harmonious education and learning climate actualized in the form of a safety feeling, convenient, family climate as a supporting factor for the process of learning activities, which is effective, efficient, and productive. Building a conducive school climate can be realized through the effort to create safety feeling, comfortable and beautifully. It is an environmental condition providing school atmosphere with high effectiveness. Meanwhile, the religious characters becoming the foundation of conducive school climate are: 1) faith, 2) devotion, 3) honesty, 4) modeling, 5) democratic atmosphere, 6) care, 7) openness, 8) togetherness, 9) safety, 10) orderly, 11) cleanness, 12) politeness, 13) beauty, and 14) health.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

All efforts undertaken by school management to improve education quality are already existed. It produces a lot of results. This is a form of awareness owned by the education managers in facing the recent issues. One way to improve schooling education quality is to maintain and manage school climate in order to be conducive. The conducive school climate can be achieved through the realization of safety feeling, comfortable and beautifully. It is an orderly environment condition providing school atmosphere with high effectiveness. Therefore, the important role of principal leadership is strongly needed. Conducive school is a school enabling to provide safety feeling, comfortable for school citizens. To create safety feeling and comfortable, the construction must be strong, according to applicable standards; beautiful shape, air circulation and light safety for health, furniture size and its placement are safe to health. School has fire extinguishers, school guards, fences, far from immorality and insecurity places. The orderly schools are schools implementing the rules indiscriminately, able to create discipline of school citizens well. Based on the above consideration, the

writer wants to deeply investigate on: how to build conducive school climate?

## 2 DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Definition of Conducive School Climate

Conceptually, the environment climate or atmosphere at school is defined as a set of attributes giving color or character, spirit, ethos, inner atmosphere of every school (Fisher & Fraser, 1990; Tye, 1974). Operationally, as well as the meaning of climate on weather, school climate can be seen from factors such as curriculum, facilities, principal leadership, and classroom learning climates. Several other explanations on school climate having similar meaning are put forth below. Hoy and Miskel (1987) formulated the meaning of school climate as teachers' perceptions on the school work climate in general. De Roche (1985) proposes climate as the inter-personal relationships, social and cultural factors influencing individual and group behavior within the school climate. According to Litwin and Stringer (in Gunbayi, 2007: 1) the school climate is defined as varied by experts as the

result of subjective perceptions on formal system, the principal's informal style, and other important environment factors influencing attitudes, beliefs, values and motivations of individual at school. However, the definition variation on school climate when deeply examined, conical to three meanings. First, the school climate is defined as school personality distinguishing it from other schools. Second, school climate is defined as an atmosphere in the workplace, encompassing various complex norms, values, expectations, policies, and procedures affecting individual and group behavior patterns. Third, the school climate is defined as individual perceptions of activities, practices, and procedures as well as perceptions of behaviors that are valued, supported and expected within an organization. According to Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (in Milner and Khoza, 2008: 158), school climate is understood as a manifestation of school personality that can be evaluated continuously from open to closed school climate. Open school climate is based on respect, trust and honesty, and provides opportunities for teachers, school management and learners, to engage constructively and cooperatively each others. Sorenson and Goldsmith (2008: 30) view school climate as the collective personality of school. Therefore the core of school climate is how we treat each other. Cohen et.al. (in Pinkus, 2009: 14) describes the school climate as the quality and character of school life, based on student behavior patterns, parents and school personnel experience of school life reflecting norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, learning and teaching practices, as well as organization structure.

The concept of school climate as an atmosphere in place refers to the following opinions. Moos (1979: 81) defines school climate as the setting of social atmosphere or learning climate. Moos divides social climate into three categories, namely 1) Relationships, including involvement, affiliation with others in the classroom, and teacher support; 2) Personal growth or goal orientation, including personal development and self-improvement of all climate members; and 3) System maintenance and system changes, including orderly from the climate, clarity of the rules, and the seriousness of teacher in enforcing the rules. Wenzkaff (in Cherubini, 2008: 40) suggests a school climate informs the atmosphere in classrooms, meeting rooms, offices, and every path in the school. Based on the opinion of experts on organizational climate as stated earlier, it can be concluded that school climate is a collective perception on the quality and character of school life. Meanwhile, the meaning of conducive is

safety feeling and convenient felt by someone in a place and at a time psychically or psychologically. Thus it can be concluded that conducive school climate is the condition and atmosphere school climate with all the supporting components either in the form of human resources or facilities and infrastructure provided safety feeling and convenient to all school citizens with all its activities both material and spiritual.

## 2.2 The Urgency of Conducive School Climate

A description of the urgency of conducive school climate is based on the impact emerged, referring to various research results. Cohen et.al. (2009) explain, over the past three decades there have been tremendous research growths proving the importance of school climate. Research has shown that positive school climate has a direct impact on school success such as low dropout students; reduce crime rate, and student achievement increases. Freiberg (in Marshall, 2002: 1) confirms the school climate can be a positive influence on health of learning climate or significant barriers to learning.

Referring to various research results, Marshall (2002: 2) gives some conclusions about the importance of school climate for various parties, as follows: a. School climate can affect many people in school. For example, a positive school climate has been linked to the emotions and behaviors of students with problems. b. School climate in urban area having high-risk shows that a positive, supportive, and cultural awareness of school climate can shape the success of urban students in achieving academic degrees. c. The researchers also found that a positive school climate provides protection for children with a supportive learning climate and prevents from antisocial behavior. d. Positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can improve performance and reduce maladaptive behavior.

In general, it can be described about the urgency of a conducive school climate, namely: 1) Positive school climate closely related with increasing job satisfaction for school personnel. School climate can play an important role in providing a healthy and positive school climate. 2) The interaction of various schools and classroom climate factors can provide supports allowing all members of school community to teach and learn optimally. 3) The school climate, including "trust, respect, mutual understanding of duties, and concern for other well-being, has a

strong influence on educators and learners, relationships among learners, as well as academic achievement and overall school progress. 4) A positive school climate is a rich environment, for personal growth and academic success.

These benefits are not only felt in the school environment but also anywhere. Since, it is shaped by personal norms and not by rigid rules with various penalties in case of violations committed. In addition to some benefits above, other urgencies in shaping the conducive school climate for individuals (individuals) and groups of schoolchildren are: 1) Increasing job satisfaction, 2) Making more intimate association, 3) Increasing Discipline, 4) Lightening functional supervision, 5) Having a desire to be always proactive, 6) Increasing spirit of learning and continuously achievement, and; 7) Always want to give the best for school, family, others and self.

### 2.3 Cultivating Religious Character in School Climate

Creating an atmosphere or conducive school climate, at the same time, also needs to be implanted cultural and religious character as a strong foundation of school climate. The religious characters needed to be instilled when building a conducive school climate are: **1) Faith.** Faith greatly affects one's behavior. The faith needs to be nurtured and grown according to their beliefs. With the faith, it is expected that every learner develop by himself becoming a man having noble character. **2) Devotion.** The devotion should be instilled early to students entering the school through various activities. Basically the quality of man is determined by his/ her devotion. Devotion is a reflection of the faith values in the form of manifest behavior in running the religious orders and religious prohibitions. **3) Honesty.** In many things, honest behavior and responsibility attitude must be realized and developed so that they become a part of everyday life. Whether it is related to God or self and others. Honesty and assertive behavior must be implemented. **4) Modeling.** Modeling or Exemplary is to give an example through real behavior or concrete action, because exemplification is more important than giving a verbal lesson. The school principal can give modeling/ exemplary to teachers and employees and then the teacher to students, as well as seniors to juniors. **5) Democratic atmosphere.** The atmosphere of school should be an atmosphere showing freedom of expression and appreciate the differences in accordance with democratic politeness. The existence of democratic atmosphere

in school environment will give effect on the behavior development and mutual respect each other. **6) Concern.** Concern is manifested with empathy and advising each other, telling and reminding each other, caring for and protecting each other so that any problems can be solved quickly and easily. **7) Openness.** An open management system will eliminate suspicion and slander. This should be practiced by school principals, administrators, teachers and students. **8) Togetherness.** Togetherness is directed to strengthen the relationship among school citizens so that an atmosphere of brotherhood in a harmonious school relationship can be realized. **9) Security.** Security is a fundamental capital to create a harmonious and funny school atmosphere. School residents should be proactive to anticipate and overcome all forms of interference from outside and inside the school environment. Security is the responsibility of all school residents. **10) Orderly.** In all matters in the school, orderly is a condition reflecting the harmony and regularity in the association among school residents. Orderly is not created by itself but it must be pursued by every school citizen. **11) Cleanliness.** A clean, tidy and refreshing atmosphere continuously will give the students an impression of feeling fun. Cleanliness includes physical and psychological, physical and mental. **12) Health.** Health concerns physical and psychological aspects. This should be sought and done by all the school citizens. **13) Beauty.** The school environment, office room, teachers' room, classrooms, library, school yard and orderly school garden looks beautiful with pleasant impression and art. The beauty of the school must be created and maintained continuously by the school citizens in order not to fade away so that the school climate always be fresh, remain active and fun. **14) Manners.** Manners are attitudes and behaviors in accordance with customs or norms prevailing in society in relation to self, family, school and community.

The school environment is a distinct form of society, in contrast to communities outside the school environment. The community of the school environment consists of principals, teachers, administrators and learners with social interactions having a very clear purpose, that is, learning. Therefore, the school community can be said as a learning society with certain levels, which are not found in ordinary society. The activities in the school take place in the same patterns, repetitive activities and arranged with a tight schedule. The atmosphere of school life needs to be established together by the school citizens according to their

function and position. Principals, administrators, teachers and learners can contribute to the coaching of virtuous life through their attitudes and behaviors at school.

## 2.4 Conducive School Climate Measurement Dimension

Many researchers have identified various dimensions to measure school climate. One of them, according to Gunbayi (2007: 2), is Halpin & Croft (1963), who propose eight dimensions of organizational climate. Four of them focus on teacher behavior, namely disengagement, hindrance, esprit and intimacy. Four other dimensions focus on school principal behavior, namely aloofness, production, trust, and consideration. In 1968, Harvard Business identified six dimensions of school climate: flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity and team commitment. Schneider in 1983 proposed six organizational climate dimensions: organizational support, member quality, openness, supervisory style, and member conflict and autonomy members. In 1996, Hoy, Hofman, Sabo and Bliss (in Gunbayi, 2007: 2) describe six dimensions of school climate, which classified into two aspects: behavioral aspects of school principal and teacher behavioral aspects. The three dimensions of measured school principal behavior are: supportive, directive, and restrictive, while the three dimensions of measured teacher behavior are: collegial, committed, and disengaged. The three school principal behaviors supporting the creation of conducive school climate are: First, supportive is the behavior of school principals directed to social needs and job performance. The principal should be helpful, really cares about teachers, and seek to motivate teachers by using constructive criticism and by modeling through hard work. Second, directive is a rigid principal's behavior. The school principal constantly monitors almost all aspects of teacher's behavior in school. Third, restrictive behavior is the school principal limiting teacher's work rather than facilitating it. The school principal burdens teachers with administrative work, and other requests that interfere teaching responsibilities.

In addition, the three teachers' behaviors that can support the creation of conducive school climate are: First, collegial is an open behavior teacher and supports the interaction among teachers in a professional manner, such as mutual respect and help each other both personally and professionally. Second, committed is the teachers' behavior that directed to assist students in developing intellectual

and social skills. Teachers work extra hard to ensure students' success at school. Third, disengaged is a teacher behavior that is less focused and meaningful for professional activities.

Cohen, et.al. (in Pinkus, 2009: 14), describes the measurement of school climate into 10 dimensions, which is classified into four categories: 1) safety, 2) teaching and learning, 3) interpersonal relationships, and 4) institutional climate. The first category, safety consists of: a) rules and norms, including the existence of clearly communicated and consistently executed rules; b) physical safety includes the feelings of students and parents who feel safe from physical harm at school; and c) social and emotional security includes the feelings of students who feel safe from scorn, satire, and exceptions. The second category, teaching and learning consist of: a) support for learning, showing support for teaching practices, such as positive and constructive responses, risk-taking, academic challenges, individual interest, and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in various ways; and b) social and civic learning, showing support for the development of knowledge, social skill and society including effective listening, problem solving, reflection, responsibility and ethical decision. The third category, interpersonal relationships consist of: a) respect for diversity, differences between individuals in all levels, That is, between students and students; parents and students; and parents with parents; b) social support adults, showing mutual trust and relationships between parents and parents to support students related with their high hopes for success, wishing to hear, and for personal caring; and c) social support students, indicating a network connection to support students' academic and personal activities. The fourth category, the institutional climate consists of: a) school connectedness / engagement, encompassing positive ties with schools, having ownership feeling, and general norms to participate in school life for students and families; and b) physical surroundings, including cleanliness, orderliness and appeal of facilities and adequate resources and materials.

The result of Magfirah Hafsari' study (2006) about the influence of culture and school organization climate on student achievement motivation of Sales Skill Program: a study at the third grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Malang revealed that: (1). School organizational culture can influence school organizational climate based on perception of the third grade students of Sales skill program at SMK Negeri 1 Malang; (2) School organizational culture can influence significantly to the student achievement motivation at the third



grade students of Sales skill program at SMK Negeri 1 Malang; (3) Climate of school organization can influence significantly to the student achievement motivation at the third grade students of Sales skill program at SMK Negeri 1 Malang, (4) Culture and climate of school organization can simultaneously influence significantly to the students' achievement motivation at the third grade students of Sales skill program at SMK Negeri 1 Malang.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

Conducive school climate is the condition and school environment atmosphere with all the supporting components both in the form of human resources and existing facilities and infrastructure providing safety feeling and convenient to all school citizens with all activities both physical and mental. Building conducive school climate is the maximum effort for all school residents to create environment education, and learning climate that actualized in the form of safety feeling and convenient, family atmosphere, which is a supporting factor for the implementation of effective, efficient, and productive teaching and learning activities. Schools have fire extinguishers, school guards, fences, avoid from immorality and insecurity places. Orderly Schools are schools that apply the rules indiscriminately, able to create discipline of school citizens as well. The religious characters that can be the foundation of conducive school climate are: 1) Faith, 2) devotion, 3) honesty, 4) modeling/exemplary, 5) democratic atmosphere, 6) caring, 7) openness, 8) togetherness, 9) security, 10) orderly, 11) cleanliness, 12) courtesy, 13) beauty, and 14) health. By establishing conducive school climate based on religious values, the school climate becomes a safe place, comfortable and friendly place for students to be calm and warm in learning. One of the efforts to create harmony is by familiarizing a strong greeting culture without differentiating the tribe, religion, and intergroup so that it builds a systematic manners and can build akhlaqulkarimah (good behavior) as modeled by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

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