

# **SCHOOL CLIMATE AS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Expectations, values, faith, relationships with staff, the school leader, teachers and students behavior create school climate. The leader can promote or hinder a positive climate through his leadership model.

The purpose of this study is to explore what are the climate types that appear in the school as well as to contribute to the expectations of different stakeholders on the school climate. The starting point for improving the performance of students and teachers is to improve school climate. Thus, this study will help leaders who for one reason or another have not been effective in keeping their responsibilities, and, as a result, did not work efficiently in improving school climate. It is assumed that a positive school climate enhances effective teaching, and as a result a better performance of student learning.

This study will serve to further studies related to the expansion of the leaders' roles on school climate. In conclusion, the research will assist policy makers in Albania to assess the content of the modules needed for training future managers and teachers to ensure they are equipped with the skills required to create a positive, open and collaborative climate in school. The school leader should be released from some managerial tasks, for paying more time to teachers and students

**Key word:** School climate, open climate, closed climate, climate dimension, climate improvement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education and training play a vital role in supporting the individual and society to improve their social, economic and cultural aspects, as well as in promoting the development of human capital that is essential for economic growth. Modern education, schools in particular, aims to communicate knowledge, skills and behavior required by young people in order to become functional in society. Basically, schools are institutions where students learn to appreciate what society wants them to contribute to their advancement and development.

The law<sup>1</sup> says that the pre- university education system aims at the formation of each individual, in order to meet the challenges of the future, be responsible to the family, society and the nation in particular: *a) to recognize, respect, protect and develop the national identity heritage and our cultural diversity; b) to be developed in the ethical, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects, to be able to think independently, critically and creatively, to adapt to change, to have self-confidence and the spirit of cooperation, to be ready to offer his/her assistance to the nation's welfare, prosperity, freedom and democracy; c) to be deeply convinced that justice, peace, harmony, cooperation and respect for others are the highest human values; etc...*

To realize such a system, the school should be seen as a healthy place of learning, where dreams and ambitions of students and parents are the central focus, teachers are motivated to give their best, where all are respected and feel connected with school. This is the school climate.

School climate is defined as a mixture of beliefs, values and behaviors of students, teaching staff, leaders and parents, level of independence, leadership styles and job satisfaction. From the above definition school climate can be perceived as the prevailing atmosphere in the school, which is mainly dictated by the leaders and affects the way how students and teachers perceive their school and affects their values and attitudes toward school and work.

Researchers on school climate, Hoy and Sabo (1998)<sup>2</sup>; Freiberg and Stein (1999)<sup>3</sup>; Hoy and Miskel (2001)<sup>4</sup> note that a positive school climate affects the overall effectiveness of the school. In other words, it implies that there is a link between positive climate in the school and its effectiveness. In this regard, the study of Litwin (1968)<sup>5</sup> concludes that it is possible to improve the climate in the school within a short period of time, intervening in leadership style. Andrew Halpin and Don Croft pioneers of research on the school climate are of the opinion that students' and community's perceptions about the school are important to create a good climate, where teachers can have a quality teaching, students reach results according to the ambitions, and parents are involved in their children's education.

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<sup>1</sup> The law nr. 69/2012, dated 21.06.2012, "On the Pre-University Education system in the Republic of Albania",

<sup>2</sup> Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. 2001: *Theory, Research and Practice*

<sup>3</sup> Freiberg, J. H & Stein, T. A. 1999: *Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments*

<sup>4</sup> Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. 2001: *Theory, Research and Practice*

<sup>5</sup> Litwin, G. H. & Stringer, R. A. 1968: *Motivation and Organisational Climate*

The study "Teachers' job satisfaction", in Albania, of 2011<sup>6</sup>, being held for the second time, gives us a clear picture of the impact that pre-university education system reforms have had in the recent four years. During this analysis various factors that affect the performance and results of teachers as well as teachers' attitudes in relation to these factors have been identified. Although it is accepted that, compared to 2007, all indicators are improved, there have been several issues that present a possibility of intervention in order to increase teacher satisfaction from work and consequently a higher performance. Based on the above findings, it is recommended that the intervention of the education leaders to increase overall teachers' satisfaction level be focused primarily in: Setting of clear criteria for assessment, appointment and promotion of teachers based on the good work performance of everyone; Equipping schools with full teaching tools needed to guarantee the learning process.

The researchers maintain that to have a more effective learning, the environment/climate should be friendly not only between students but also between teachers. He believes that learning would be more enjoyable and effective if the environment was more friendly and hospitable than hostile.

Through the examination of the relevant theories and literature, this study seeks to answer these questions:

1. What are the available kinds/types of climate in school?
2. How to create a positive climate in the school?
3. How can we improve school climate?

## **THE CONCEPT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**

"The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, organizational structures within a school, teaching practices, diversity, leader-teacher relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, parent-teacher relationships, and student-teacher relationships, is the concept of school climate."

School climate concept has its origins in the late 1950s as researchers in social sciences studied variations in work environments. Andrew Halpin and Don Croft published in 1963 the results of their research on school climate. Thus, the concept was formulated, and their work became the basis of research for other researchers. Various researchers and educational reformers identified school climate in different ways, but it seems that there is a consensus on what constitutes the school climate. Freiberg and Stan (1999)<sup>7</sup> claim that the climate of the school is the "heart and soul" of a school, the factor that motivates students, teachers and makes them to want it and willing to be there every day. Heart and soul were used as metaphorical terms to highlight the importance of climate change, because it motivates members of a school making them feel attracted by it. In this regard, school climate is what gives life to it and highlights the values that school represents.

Hoy and Miskel (1996)<sup>8</sup> determined that the school climate is the grouping of features that distinguishes one organization from the behavior and attitudes of the people it consists of. In other words, as the

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<sup>6</sup> Tamo, A dhe Karaj, DH 2007 and 2011: *The study of job satisfaction of teachers in the framework of the Excellence and Equity in Education, supported by World Bank, Investment Bank and European Bank*

<sup>7</sup> Freiberg, J. H & Stein, T. A. 1999: *Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments*

<sup>8</sup> Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. (1996). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.*

behavior of specific persons is used to distinguish individuals from one another, the school has its own characteristics according to human interaction. Halpin's (1966)<sup>9</sup> general perception is that climate is the personality of an organization and that the organization climate is similar to the individual personality. X school climate is different from Y school climate associated with the personality of each of them. Litwin and Stringer (1968)<sup>10</sup> have argued that school climate is a facility with "measurable work environment parameters" based on collective perceptions of the people who live and work in that environment. In other words, school climate is more or less the understanding that teachers have on the amount of kindness and hospitality they receive, while interacting with the school manager.

Alexandra Loukas (2007)<sup>11</sup> states that although it has been difficult to determine a comprehensive definition of school climate, researchers agree that climate is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social and academic dimensions as follows:

*Physical dimension includes:*

- Presentation of the school building and classrooms;
- The size of the school and the students/teachers ratio in the classroom;
- The organization of classes in the school;
- The effectiveness of the tools and teaching resources;
- Security and safety.

*Social dimension includes:*

- The quality of interpersonal relationships of all members of staff (teacher-leader; teacher-teacher; teacher-student; student-student; teacher-parents);
- A fair and equal treatment of students by teachers and other staff members;
- The degree of competition and social comparison among students;
- The extent of the contribution of students, teachers and school staff in decision-making process.

*Academic dimension includes:*

- The quality of teaching;
- Teachers' expectations for students' achievement;
- Monitoring of the students progress and immediate reporting of results to students and parents.

In fact, the climate of the school is the subject of staff and students perceptions and is measurable. From the above definitions, we can conclude that the climate of the school has to do with the atmosphere or feeling that prevails in a particular school. It appears from the relationship between leaders and teachers, teachers and students and between leaders and students. The school as a social interaction system forces the leaders, teachers and students to interact in the planning, decision-making and problem solving fields in an administrative level. They also interact on personal issues that are part of the normal school routine.

### ***Differences between School Climate and Culture***

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<sup>9</sup> Halpin, A. W. 1966. *Theory and Research in Administration*

<sup>10</sup> Litwin, G. H. & Stringer, R. A. 1968: *Motivation and Organisational Climate*

<sup>11</sup> Lucas, A. Vol. 5, No. 1, Fall 2007. *What Is School Climate?*

School climate and school culture are sometimes used interchangeably. Although these two concepts are similar in some respects, they still have their differences. Both concepts identify specific aspects of the organization. In fact, the researchers themselves say that the definitions of climate and culture are often unclear. Usually the difference is that culture consists of "assumptions" and ideology, and the climate is defined as the perception of behaviors. They note that the conceptual "jump" from culture to climate is not very large, but the difference is significant and meaningful.

	<b>CLIMATE</b>	<b>CULTURE</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	Psychology and Social Psychology	Anthropology and Sociology
<b>Method</b>	Research Method Multivariety Statistics	Ethnographic Techniques Language Analysis
<b>Content</b>	Perception of behavior Multivariety Statistics	Assumptions and Ideologies Language Analysis
<b>Level of abstraction</b>	Concrete	Abstract

### **IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**

As a starting point to this discussion it is common to refer to the climate in terms of the weather. When it is moderately warm outside we usually feel cozy and comfortable, when it is stiflingly hot or exceedingly cold we do not feel comfortable and make a strenuous efforts to make ourselves feel better. And when it is overcast, some individuals feel relieved hoping the sun will just come out and shine through the clouds while others do feel challenged in their anticipation of the storm. In other words, the weather closely associated with the climate affects the feelings as well as our willingness to get engaged. Likewise school climate affects the teachers and students' feelings, their very willingness to get involved, their commitment to contribute and their feelings towards themselves and others. The school climate does affect the teachers' commitment to setting out the school vision as to where the school is heading to, reflects upon the characteristics of respect, personal dignity, honesty, fairness and safety. If the school climate fails to mirror this set of characteristics, then integration, maintenance of sustainability, establishment of sense of equality among students with limited intellectual capabilities or not is questioned.

According to Brooks (1999)<sup>12</sup>, students are more likely to flourish in a school environment in which they feel comfortable, when they feel they are treated fairly by the teachers and when they feel they have a sense of belonging to the school environment. With regard to the sense of belonging it is vitally important to establish a degree of hospitality for each and every student, in order to avoid any feeling of isolation and detachment. Factors that have a role to play in the school climate can be summarized as follows:

- Quality of interaction
- Personality of school
- Enviromental factors
- Academic performace

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<sup>12</sup> Rodney Brooks (1999), *Cambrian Intelligence: The Early History of the New*

- Safety and school size
- Trust and respekt

As often as not, the school should become a safe and positive place which assumes the role of a facilitator in the learning process, promotes positive relationships and helps students be better prepared to face up to the challenges ahead. The school climate could have a positive impact on the student or it could easily turn itself into an obstacle to learning. It could otherwise hinder or facilitate the academic potential in each and every student.

Even in Albania a fair share of importance has been attached to the school climate by making it feature considerably into the internal and external evaluation manual<sup>13</sup>. In this manual the school climate is portrayed as a domain which covers the physical and psycho-social dimensions along with the learning process. The climate as such refers to the organization at the school and classroom level, it refers to the "feeling" in a school and that one school is different from another. The manual lays the stress thick on one factor that the school climate reflects the common and shared ideas, values, vision and trust, which in turn bestow upon the school the identity and standards of the expected behavior. The climate is reflected upon the school atmosphere as well as on the moral code. A pleasant physical environment promotes the social interaction and vice-versa the social interaction creates a warm and affectionate environment. A warm and welcoming physical environment targeting learning is regarded as one of the most significant elements for the development of a quality education and equity.

## THE PROSPECTS OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

There are several perspectives on school climate, but within the scope of the study the perspective on ‘**Climate as a personality**’ will be further considered.

Freiberg and Stein (1999)<sup>14</sup> argue that although the school is not a biological organism in the natural sense of the word, nonetheless it has the characteristics of a living organism in its organizational sense. They go on arguing that beyond the physical structure of the school there are other elements that do reflect the human interaction. Halpin and Croft conclude that "the climate is real: it can be felt" in the teacher-teacher, teacher-student, student-student and teacher-principal interactions. Halpin and Croft built up the school climate as a organizational "personality" in the process of conceptualizing the school climate from being an open one to a closed one.

The behavior of the individuals within a school does affect climate. The behavior patterns of various actors from that of the principal, the teachers and that of students and parents constitutes the school climate. Moreover, the climate prevalent in the school, points to the interaction between principals and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and students as well as between parents and school. Halpin (1966)<sup>15</sup> distinguishes different types of climates that exist in schools including an *open climate*, *controlled climate*, *autonomous climate*, *paternal climate*, *family climate*, and *closed climate*.

**a) Open climate :** Open climate of the school is chiefly associated with its expressive characteristics. An open climate can be easily utilized to account for both the space and authenticity between

<sup>13</sup> National Inspectorate of pre-university education in Albania, 2011

<sup>14</sup> Freiberg, J. H & Stein, T. A. 1999: *Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments*

<sup>15</sup> Halpin, A. W. 1966. *Theory and Research in Administration*

relationships of principals, teachers, students and parents. Hoy (1998)<sup>16</sup> argues that the open climate reflects upon the supportive, welcoming and positive role of the principal (manager) towards teachers' ideas as well as his attachment and devotion to work. According to the researcher the leader shows genuine concern over the teachers. He supports staff members; the staff are given their free way in undertaking tasks in the best way possible they can manage; he is particularly careful so as not to allow the daily tasks to interfere with the responsibilities of teachers; in an open school climate teachers are portrayed as being tolerant, helpful and to be revered in the profession; teachers are attentive to and ready to provide for the needs of students by working hard in order for the children to succeed in their pursuits; teachers turn out to be reaching out, help each other at the professional level, including the personal one too.

According to Halpin (1966), teachers work in teams to guarantee the students' success. Teachers and leader alike make themselves available to maintain close relationships with students and parents. The findings indicate that the behavior enjoying the full support of the school top management, the not so conspicuous top-down behavior, and the low-level stressful behavior of teachers are attributed deriving from a healthy and open organizational climate at school. The more open the school climate, the more dedicated, loyal and pleased will the teachers be. The more open the school climate, the more productive students will be in their school performance.

There is a broad consensus across the body of literature on school climate which emphasizes that the open school climate pretty much favors the promotion of positive outcomes in students' academic performance by contributing in turn to a good mental and spiritual health as well as to job satisfaction of teachers and principals.

According to Hoy (1998), an open school climate can not happen overnight, that should be the outcome of a well-thought out development engineering and implemented between the teachers and school principals. That is also the outcome of robust hiring policies which should be characterized by good instruments of personality.

- b) Controlled climate:** The main characteristics of the controlled climate is more and more in the way of work. Although in this case the principal is far from being the model of dedication, importance is bestowed upon the accomplishment of tasks and little time is devoted to social life. Yet, teachers appear to be entirely devoted to their work and spend considerable chunks of time on fulfilling them. Hence, in most cases there is little time available to allow for interaction between each other. Students are also heavily engaged with the tasks and are given little time to give over to the extracurricular activities. According to Halpin (1966)<sup>17</sup> and Silver (1983)<sup>18</sup> the principals usually keeps his distance from the teachers, students and parents in order to avoid any degree of familiarity. Parents are not encouraged to visit the school and see teachers about their children's problems, using instead such a time on something much more valuable (based on their opinion).

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<sup>16</sup> Hoy, W. K. & Sabo, D. J. 1998: *Open and Healthy*

<sup>17</sup> Halpin, A. W. 1966. *Theory and Research in Administration*

<sup>18</sup> Silver, P. 1983: *Theoretical Perspectives on Practice and Research*

**c) Autonomous climate:** According to Halpin (1966) the autonomous climate is a type of climate that portrays an atmosphere where teachers have at their disposal a considerable degree of freedom to act in school. The leader epitomizes the model of enthusiasm and zeal. There are no external threats or influence. Teachers have a strong desire to teach and students are motivated to learn. There is a close relationship between the managers, teachers, students and parents.

**d) Paternal climate:** According to Costley and Todd (1987),<sup>19</sup> paternal climate is described by a type of atmosphere in which the school principal is a hard-working person, but he falls short of having any effects on the staff; to them the label ‘hard-working’ is not such a familiar word. There is a degree of approachability between the leaders and teachers, but teachers ‘expectations of teachers tends to be quite impractical. The school principal is full of life and lively, but his management style tends to lean on the autocratic side. As a result, the majority of the teachers, students and parents prefer to keep their cautious distance from the leader. More often than not, students can have a hard time expressing their concerns and difficulties, while the parents come to school only they feel it absolutely necessary, for example, like when teachers require that they come.

**e) A familiar school climate:** According to Silver (1983)<sup>20</sup> the familiar school climate is described as a sort of "*laissez-faire*" atmosphere (*let them do it*). The principal is pretty much interested in maintaining a social atmosphere that favors the fulfillment of any particular task. Thus, a significant number of teachers is not committed to their main task. Some of them do not take a liking to the way how a principal leads, but others do not necessarily share the same opinion with their colleagues or with the principal. As a result, those that are not really dedicated, make up a particular group since they exhibit the same type of behavior. Most of the students do not take their learning process seriously and some others do cook up all sorts of vain and hollow excuses to be out of school or to be absent from it (unexcused absences). Most parents are not involved in their children's education, and they are clueless as to what their children are up to at school. They think that it is not necessary for them to attend meetings that are meant for parents. According to Halpin (1966)<sup>21</sup> in this type of familiar climate between the principal and the teachers a scant attention is paid to the overall performance of the school.

**a) Closed climate:** Hoy and Sabo (1998)<sup>22</sup> argue that the closed climate represents the opposite to the open climate. The key characteristics of a closed climate has been identified by Halpin (1966) and that one is primarily concerned with the lack of commitment and productivity. There is hardly any commitment particularly on the part of both the principal and teachers. There is hardly any emphasis on fulfillment of duties; while the director is engaged in routine activities or trivial matters or in an unnecessary paperwork that teachers respond to with a minimum degree. The school principal tends to be stern and wielding control. He inattentive, not supportive, and not on hand. As a result, most of the teachers tend to be frustrated and ineffective. According to Sabo (1998), there is a lack of respect on the part of the principals. In addition to this, teachers do show a lack of respect towards the school authority (management), towards each other or even to the students. Teachers are intolerant and divided, hence a

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<sup>19</sup> Costley, Dan L. & Todd, Ralph , 1987, *Human relations in organizations*

<sup>20</sup> Silver, P. 1983: *Theoretical Perspectives on Practice and Research*

<sup>21</sup> Halpin, A. W. 1966. *Theory and Research in Administration*

<sup>22</sup> Hoy, W. K. & Sabo, D. J. 1998: *Open and Healthy*



social pressure takes hold at school. Hoy (1998) sets down the same features as those of a closed unhealthy climate / like the ones already listed by Halpin. Under such an atmosphere, it would be contrary to reason to expect students to have any good academic achievement or to show any positive attitudes towards school and to one-another simply because there is no example set to be followed.

## CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

A positive school climate is often characterized by: a strong relationship between students and staff; the formal discipline administered is not punitive by any measure, but agreeable to the consequences; engagement, assessment and managership opportunities for students in a wide range of activities. In a number of surveys conducted by Johnsons' (1993)<sup>23</sup>, Freiberg (1999)<sup>24</sup>; Kuperminc & Leadbeater & Blatt (2001)<sup>25</sup> a total of eight factors have been determined in relation to a positive climate in the school which is associated with positive educational and psychological outcomes for the students and school staff as shown in the chart 1:

Chart <sup>26</sup>1 Eight factors of a positive climate in the school



Freiberg and Stein (1999)<sup>27</sup> argue that the school climate can be seen in every other aspect: from the way how teachers behave, the data over students' participation in the class, in the course of the implementation of the programs, during the holidays, in the teachers' common room, from the movements of students down the hall and from their communication patterns etc. Interestingly enough, school climate does not exist in a random way. School climate is established as such can be maintained. It is threatened to fall apart only if there is a shift in the school life. The above researchers arrive at the conclusion that it is quite true that the behavior of headmasters, teachers, students and parents affects

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, David W. & Johnson Roger T. 1993, *Social Interdependence Theory and Cooperative Learning*

<sup>24</sup> Freiberg, H. J. 1999. Introduction, in *School Climate: Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments*

<sup>25</sup> Kuperminc, G.P., Leadbeater, B.J., & Blatt, S.J. (2001). *School social climate and individual differences in vulnerability to psychopathology among middle school students.*

<sup>26</sup> Positive school climate <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/beh/pdf/3.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Freiberg, J. H & Stein, T. A. 1999: *Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments,*

school climate and to a certain extent it is the manager himself who sets up the climate, that is, he is the one capable of determining whether the climate will be a positive or negative one.

In order to set up a positive climate, the school focuses upon some areas. It gets involved in series of initiatives as outlined in the diagram of "Development of healthy and respectful relationships among members of the school community" which are depicted in the chart 2:

Chart 2<sup>28</sup> Development of healthy and respectful relationships among members of the school community



Several guiding principles concerning the implementation of these initiatives:

- Everyone has a role to play in building up a welcoming, positive and inclusive climate at the school. The success depends heavily on the active involvement of principals, staff members, students, parents and other community members who engage together behind a vision, which is well-planned and supportive to the community;
- The building of a positive school climate requires that the focus is narrowed down on the development of a robust relationship and respectful of the whole school community - among students, adults and between adults and students.
- Building a positive school climate means entrenching the principles of equality and inclusion in all aspects of the learning environment in order to support the well-being and academic achievement of all students.
- No single solution can be prescribed to guarantee the establishment and maintenance of a positive school climate. Success requires an ongoing effort to be made which should be comprehensive and cooperative from all of the stakeholders with interests in the school.

According to these researchers, it is argued that the school climate can be easily manipulated and thus directly influence the behavior of people associated with the school. They point out that the key criteria to the establishment of a positive climate in the school are : a) *job satisfaction*, b) *recognition of the human dignity as well as teamwork*.

## **IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

According to the researchers Pasi (2001) as well as Harris and Lowery (2002)<sup>29</sup>, the principal, teachers, students and parents have many opportunities available to improve the school climate. Below some indicators of intervention are mentioned:

<sup>28</sup> Promoting a positive school climate <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/introdoceng.pdf>

- Implementation of the main character and mission of education as well as the promotion of basic moral values in the students;
- Involvement and commitment of the school community (teachers, students and parents) in its work;
- Prevention of violence and conflicts in school;
- Peer collaboration;
- Prohibition of verbal and psychological violence;
- Principal and teachers treat students fairly, equally and with respect;
- A safe environment for staff and students is secured;
- Strengthening of students' personality through activities;

Freiberg and Stein (1999)<sup>30</sup> compare the maintenance of school climate with the ongoing efforts to preserve the '*beauty of a garden*'. The ongoing efforts embrace: a) motivation, b) evaluation, c) development of teachers, d) teamwork which are further detailed as follows:

**a) Motivation**

These researchers maintain that the school principal is provided with a great many opportunities to use emotion (which already exists in the school) in a constructive fashion to get teachers, students and parents deeply involved by encouraging motivation, personal commitment to their school activities in attaining the goals. Therefore, in his role as a motivator, the principal must persistently acknowledge and evaluate the work of teachers, students and parents.

**b) Evaluation**

Steffy (1989)<sup>31</sup> points out that the intent and purpose of evaluation of teachers should be employed to give them feedback on their performance. In order to be able to maintain a positive climate, the school manager (principal) should know and then evaluate the teachers performance to boost the effectiveness of the teaching process. Evaluation is as important as the response garnered. Steffy goes on to say that when feedback is lacking, there is no recognition, and when there is no recognition there is no reward, this in turn might lead to discouragement and disappointment. The regular evaluation of the teachers' performance serves as a vehicle towards improving the teaching process and promoting a positive school climate.

**c) Teacher development**

Schools should be transformed into learning organizations, the place where students and teachers' capacities are created and encouraged. Schools are organizations committed to the teaching and learning process, because such is the purpose of the school. Therefore, just as students increase their knowledge continuously, in the same way teachers need to develop their knowledge as well as their professional potential: to develop effectively and efficiently in order to meet the goals of the school. Harris (2002)<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Harris, S. & Lowery, S., Eds. (2002). *A school for every child: School choice in America today*.

<sup>30</sup> Freiberg, J. H & Stein, T. A. 1999: *Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments*,

<sup>31</sup> Steffy, B. E. 1989. *Career Stages of Classroom Teachers*

<sup>32</sup> Harris, S. & Lowery, S., Eds. (2002). *A school for every child: School choice in America today*.

claims that the teacher development is critical both critical to the students' progress and school improvement.

**d) Teamwork**

George (2003)<sup>33</sup> describes a team as a group of people possessing certain skills who work closely together to achieve a common goal for which they are collectively responsible. In other words, teamwork happens when teachers work together towards the same purpose and use their skills to attain common targets. This concept underlines a saying that goes "two heads are better than one." According to Geroge, when teachers work in groups, they serve better their students.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions have been arrived at through this study:

- a) The types of climate range in size from being an open to being a closed one. By taking a close look at the traits of every organizational atmosphere of school as described by Halpin (1996)<sup>34</sup>, the open and the closed climate are the two extremes, that is two opposites. Each dimension in any given open climate is a positive one which contributed to an environment conducive to improving the achievements, while in the case of a closed climate every dimension is negative, bringing about an atmosphere of confusion and nonproductivity. A similar contrast is to be seen between the autonomous and paternal climates; the overall impression on an autonomous climate is that there is already a person oriented towards a relationship which totally different from the one which is task-oriented which characterizes the paternal climate. Both the controlled and paternal climates are similar to the paternal climate. The controlled climate is more and more task-oriented and tends to be more open than closed. The paternal climate is less task-oriented, but it is more closed than open
- b) Each school is characterized by its own unique climate. This is the case because schools do operate in different ways. The type of climate prevailing in a school is a mixture of the behavior of school principal and that of teachers, students and parents in the school. The climate varies from one school to the other and is looked at as factor which always changes. The findings of studies indicate that some schools are welcoming, nice places to be working in as well as comfortable places to study. Everyone is treated as a human being, both teachers and students are encouraged to express their views and opinions. In other schools, the tension is quite evident: in the principal's office, in the classrooms, in hallways, in the front yard as well as during the breaks.
- c) Even though the behavior of teachers, students and parents contributes to the type of school climate, the behavior of principals is defined as the main dimension of the climate established in the school. His behavior can either prevent or promote a positive climate. This is the case because teachers rely on school principals for motivation, managership and development. On the other hand, students also depend on the principal for quality education (a variety of school activities and a good physical environment). Moreover, parents see in the manager the man who maintains the high academic

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<sup>33</sup> George, J. M. 2003: *Understanding the Structure and Role of Emotions in Organisational Behaviour*,

<sup>34</sup> Halpin, A. W. 1966. *Theory and Research in Administration*.

standards as well as the character of the school so that their children receive the best education available.

- d) The establishment and maintenance of an open climate in the school is quite necessary in developing a student complete with all the right stuff. The school is the ideal place where the character of the students is tempered, where the attitude towards teaching and learning is established, where their perceptions on life are created and where the purpose for the future is developed. A positive school climate reflects often times the product of the relationship established between headmaster and teachers, among teachers, between teachers and students, among parents, but more importantly it is the direction of the principal.

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