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## School Climate, Teacher Satisfaction, and Receptivity to Change

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# SCHOOL CLIMATE, TEACHER SATISFACTION, AND RECEPTIVITY TO CHANGE

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A dissertation

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The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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Key Words: School Climate, Teacher Satisfaction, Receptivity

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore what school climate factors influence teacher job satisfaction and receptivity to change. A survey based upon current literature was developed to assess teacher perceptions of the factors which may influence job satisfaction and receptivity to change. A regression analysis was conducted to determine impact of the nine school climate factors on teacher job satisfaction. A second regression was conducted using the nine school climate domains and satisfaction to evaluate which factors had an impact on teacher receptivity to change. Study findings indicated that (a) study participants report there to be two factors which influence job satisfaction in an educational environment: administration and instructional management, (b) participants' also reported there to be three factors which influence receptivity to change: administration, student academic orientation and student activities.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

An organization's climate can be defined as the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that comprise life in the organizational environment. Participants in an organizational climate may view the interpersonal relationships positively or as inadequate. Effective climates tend to have positive relationships. Moos (1978) defined school climate as an individual and experiential learning environment in which students have unique opportunities provided for them within parameters established by the school teachers and administrators. Moos divided these social environments into three factors: relationships, personal development, and system maintenance. Relationships include interaction and social reciprocity in the classroom as well as teacher reinforcement and goal orientation. Personal development is based on interpersonal relationships, self-enhancement, and goal attainment. System maintenance includes relationships to the social environment and system change. Moos believed that educational environments depend largely on the people in those environments as well as the outcome which is desired by participants of that environment and posited that an educational environment focused on relationships, personal growth, and system maintenance will be successful in implementing systemic change.

Although teachers, administrators, and researchers use different terminology to describe school climate, they seem to agree that the term refers to the general quality of the school

experience (Center for Social and Emotional Education, 2008). Furthermore, school climate is based on patterns of school perception by students, parents, and school personnel of several areas of school life including school standards, objectives, attitudes, relationships, pedagogy and learner effort, and the school organizational structure (Center for Social and Emotional Education, 2008).

School climate essentially characterizes the educational environment in a building or classroom. Characteristics of schools, such as the building architecture and interpersonal relationships between students, faculty, and administrators, are among the diverse factors that impact and define school climate (Marshall, 2007). Researchers agree that school climate is multidimensional and influences the individual relationships in the school environment as well as academic success. Freiberg (1998) supported the idea that climate is significant in establishing a healthy school environment which will yield positive educational results. The characteristics of climate often describe the atmosphere of the school and can vary significantly from school to school within a school district (Gonder & Hymes, 1994).

To determine the key components of climate, some researchers focus on the quantifiable time spent in the interaction between children and adults, while others focus on quality of interactions between adults and children (Kuperminc, Leadbeater & Blatt, 2001). Still others focus on perceptions of the environment by administrators, teachers, and students (Johnson, Johnson, & Zimmerman, 1996) or on the relationships between students and teachers (Manning & Saddlemire, 1996). While researchers often disagree on which aspect of climate is the most important, all are in agreement that climate is important to the overall success of a school.

Given the importance of school climate in the overall functioning of a school, it is in the best interest of all participants for educational leaders to periodically assess the school climate.

There are many measures for use in evaluating a school's climate. The School Climate Survey assesses seven dimensions of school climate, specifically focusing on student perceptions of achievement motivation, equity, order and discipline, parental involvement, student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and sharing (Haynes, Emmons, & Comer, 1993).

The Charles F. Kettering School Climate Profile (CFK) evaluates school climate from the perspective of teachers and administrators, with additional sections for student input. The CFK evaluates general climate factors such as respect, trust, morale, opportunity for expression, growth and support, cohesion, school renewal, and caring (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). The National Association of Secondary School Principals School Climate Survey (NASSP; 1986) measures ten domains that affect school climate: teacher-student affiliation, security and maintenance, administrative leadership, student academic focus, guidance advisement, student behavior, student-peer relationships, parent and community-school associations, instructional management, and extracurricular activities.

Garrido, Cobb, and Jackson (2008) suggested that many aspects need to be evaluated when analyzing school climate and its effect on students. According to these authors, the areas of greatest impact on students are extracurricular activities, friendships, parental and community involvement, teacher-to-teacher collegial relationships, and physical aspects of the educational facility. Freiberg (1998) suggested that another dimension of school climate could be measured by evaluating disciplinary policies and attendance records of the students, teachers, and staff. If there are excessive absences of the participants in the environment, there may be a problem within the climate that is contributing to the absences.

School climate influences all participants in the environment: children, parents, teachers, and administrators. School climate can positively influence the environment or be a substantial

impediment to learning (Freiberg, 1998). According to Freiberg (1998), some of the methods of assessing school climate may appear similar to community change initiatives. Teams are encouraged to plan, initiate, and evaluate solutions to problems that are empirically identified from a needs assessment. Several solutions can be implemented for the whole school, with selective interventions for high-risk members of the environment and supportive interventions which may be used by all participants in the environment at different times.

School climate can be a source of educational opportunity or an impediment to opportunity (Waugh, 2000). It can therefore be assumed that when there is an alteration to the climate, optimal performance may not be achieved during the time of the change. Teachers appear to be greatly affected when a change occurs. Chauvin and Ellett (1993) suggested that teachers will tolerate some types of change but will strongly resist changes that are perceived to alter or threaten established normative patterns and beliefs. The complexity of teacher receptivity may have important implications for change processes. Waugh (2000), found that teacher receptivity is made up of four aspects: features of the change when compared to the preceding system and classroom usability, managing the change at school, value for the teacher, and whether the teacher perceives the change to be valuable for students.

Research also has found that teachers tend to resist change that is implemented all at once. Freilich-Hjelle (2001) suggested that the process by which school districts implement change may have negative implications for the success of the change. Silin and Schwartz (2003) posited that when teachers' demonstrate reluctance to change in can be construed as communicating their dislike of the change, in effect clarifying which situations need to be evaluated and which situations may need to be resolved.

Another factor to be considered in receptivity to new interventions in a school is teacher job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the reaction of an individual to his or her work environment, co-workers, and status within the work or company structure. It has been correlated to specific outcomes such as productivity and receptivity (Rice, Gentile, & McFarlin, 1991). Ostroff (1992) suggested that teacher satisfaction with their chosen vocation may influence the quality of educational experience delivered to students, and that teachers who do not feel supported in the educational environment may not do their best work in the classroom.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Change is often viewed as disruptive by many teachers and perceived as a threat to the framework of educational principles (Mellencamp, 1992). Giaquinta (1973) as well as Berman and McLaughlin (1976) indicated that receptivity to new school initiatives comes in three stages. The first stage is implementation, in which ideas are introduced with procedures to be followed. The second stage is routinization, or incorporating the new methods into current practice. The third stage involves permanent incorporation, when the newly initiated change becomes permanently integrated into the school practice. Since the introduction of No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001 and its subsequent reauthorizations, teachers and administrators are evaluated and held accountable for school success and failure. School leaders are also held responsible for implementation of structures and processes that facilitate student success (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). However, there has been little research conducted to demonstrate teacher receptivity to the processes introduced by the school administration.

Another facet of productivity and receptivity is teacher job satisfaction. In a study conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997), teachers identified several factors that lead to job-related satisfaction, including administrator support for new initiatives,

decision-making roles, and routine duties. In this study, 34% of licensed teachers working in schools reported lack of support by administration, community, and family members of students. The same teachers stated that it was a waste of time to perform their best as a teacher, and that if given the choice to become a teacher again they would choose a different profession.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the relationship between school climate, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher receptivity to change. The primary method of analysis is regression, with survey data being used to determine if relationships exist between nine domains of school climate that are supported by literature, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher receptivity to change.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, literature and research are presented to examine the role of school climate and teacher job satisfaction and how they relate to teacher receptivity to change in a school environment. The focus of the review is upon organizational climate studies which highlight the environmental factors impacting the performance of teachers. This review discusses a historical perspective of climate and its importance to teachers and learners in a school as well as previously developed theory and assessments to determine the effectiveness of climate and job performance.

### **School Climate**

#### **What Is School Climate?**

Essentially, school climate is defined as how the participants of education relate within a school. Haynes et al. (1993) defined school climate as the quality and frequency of interaction that takes place between the educators and the learners within a school. They explained that relationships within the school environment have an impact on the quality of the school climate; the relationships between the administration, teachers, staff, and larger community are all considered components of school climate. Quinones (1987) also referred to school climate as the quality of life and human interaction within a school setting.

The expectations of the participants in the environment play a role in the development of a climate. The participants identify problems and decide upon effective solutions. These elements have an effect on how the participants within the school see themselves and others. According to Brookover et al. (1978) , within the social psychological realm the social climate within a school encompasses a composite of variables which are defined and perceived by the participants. Therefore, climate within a school can be seen as reflecting the “feel” of the people who work within the school (Sweeny, 1992).

School climate can be defined in many ways. Halpin and Croft (1963) suggested that school climate is the feel of a school. This is often interpreted as the energy demonstrated by the participants of the environment. Norton (1984) suggested that school climate is a collective personality or what makes a school unique. Administrators, teachers, support staff, and students are all participants within the school environment and are referred to as the human component of the climate, or the human environment. It is possible for there to be differences in climate across educational environments within the same district. Climate surrounds and impacts everything that happens in an institution (Freiberg, 1998).

In their study of the organizational climate of schools, Halpin and Croft (1963) suggested six types of climate: open, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal, and closed. An open school climate is one in which administration and faculty behaviors are supportive, genuine, and engaged. An autonomous climate is an environment in which teachers and administrators use skills such as collaboration, interdependence, and problem-solving and welcome innovation as a sign of improvement and progress. In the controlled school climate, independence is exhibited among the faculty and leadership is primarily provided by the educational administration. A familiar school climate tends to be less formal and more flexible in response to the needs of

students, families, teachers, and administrators. Paternal climates involve little cooperation of administrators with teachers. This type of school climate has a more rigid atmosphere, with the school administrator in the role of leader and the environmental participants as subordinates. A closed climate is characterized by lack of genuineness, game playing, and relational disengagement. These climate types were based on teacher input on four characteristics with regard to teacher relationships (impediment, familiarity, withdrawal, and unity) and on four factors based upon principal and teacher relationships (productivity, relationship avoidance, consideration, and trust). In essence, the degree of openness of a school climate is the result of the quality of relations within that school.

Freiberg (1998) suggested that the climate of a school is a function of multiple factors. These include principal administrative style, collegial relations, parent-teacher relations, student-teacher relationships, student-teacher instruction-based interaction, physical environment of the school, and peer relationships of the students. Howard, Howell, and Brainard (1987) identified other factors that may influence a healthy school climate, including the level of esteem, confidence, opportunity for contribution, cohesiveness, compassion, determination, and school revitalization.

School climate can be seen as the heartbeat of a school, or the feeling of a school that leads learners, educators, and staff members to enjoy and look forward to being at school each day. Apart from this, school climate can be seen as the attributes of the school that help individuals feel valued and esteemed, while at the same time fostering a sense of belonging to a greater purpose beyond themselves (Frieberg & Stein, 1999).

Creemers and Reezigt (1999) stated that schools should be viewed as having personalities of their own. Climate surveys measure the perceptions of the learners, staff, and parents of

certain characteristics of the school such as size of the classes and schools, educator stability, educator morale, the characteristics of the learner body, administrator-educator rapport, shared decision-making between administration and educators, levels of communication, student and teacher relationships, teacher interaction with one another, and learner participation. Other factors include teaching peer relationships, school and community relationships, the number of persons involved in the education process, peer norms, level of expectations that educators and administrators have of each other and for the learners, emphasis on academics, rewards systems, punishment systems, and consensus about clearly defined goals (Gonder & Hymes, 1994).

School climate is not a new issue. In 1908, Arthur Perry, the principal of a school in New York City, wrote *The Management of a City School*, in which he emphasized the importance of the school surroundings to support the learner. According to Frieberg (1998), the 1950s saw a revival of the issue of school environment and the relationship between climate and student success. In the 1960s, Halpin and Croft (1963) developed the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire, which evaluates school climate based on six types of leadership role of administrators and their relationships with teachers. In 1978, Brookover et al. began to investigate the influence of social climate in schools and its impact on student achievement. During this same era, Walberg (as cited in Fraser, 1994), expanded on the heightened interest in schools and proposed assessments of school climate to assist school administrators to get a better understanding of their climate's strengths and needs. This included early versions of the Learning Environment Inventory (Fraser, 1994).

School climate can be linked to the effectiveness of a school. Fisher and Fraser (1990) stated that together with curriculum, resources, and leadership, school climate makes a major contribution to the effectiveness of a school. Educational literature contains substantial support

for the importance of school climate as a predictor of school effectiveness. McCombs, Daniels, and Perry (2008) suggested that school climate not only plays a major role in the effectiveness of a school but also has an influence on the learners' achievement. Brookover et al. (1978) investigated the relationship between a school's social system and teaching outcomes by taking into account the social structure and climate in the schools they studied. They found that school structure accounted for 4 % of the variance in achievement and that the climate of the school accounted for more than 4 %. More recently, Worrell (2000) indicated that perceived school climate is a major variable in school completion. According to Haynes et al. (1993), a positive climate in school contributes to the reduction of absenteeism and related problems. School policies and staff also have an impact on academic performance and students' decision whether or not to stay in school. Positive school climate affects other aspects of school functioning such as the acceptance of academic and behavior standards by learners and staff, inter-group relations, interpersonal relationships among learners and staff, and overall school satisfaction among learners, staff, and parents (Haynes et al., 1993).

Freiberg and Stein (1999) suggested that a school creates a nurturing environment for learners and parents, stimulates educators, and elevates the staff, learners, and community. However, this can only occur in a school where the climate is positive. Teaching and learning occur more frequently in a school climate that demonstrates positivity, order, courteousness and facilitates safety. According to Sugai, Simonsen, and Horner (2008), disruptive behavior decreases the effectiveness and efficiency of a school. Unfortunately, schools are faced with many challenges and are experiencing difficulty in providing a full range of effective and positive teaching and learning environments. These challenges include lack of discipline, increased violence, reduced time spent on instruction, and regular use of punitive measures and

exclusionary programming. Furthermore, many schools demonstrate failed attempts to provide individually appropriate educational opportunities for learners with cognitive exceptionalities and learners who come from cultural minority backgrounds, suggesting a lack of fluency with specialized behavioral practices (Sugai et al., 2008).

While the majority of researchers have emphasized the importance of school climate, there are those who have recommended caution when considering the impact of school climate on the educational environment. According to Webb, Wilson, Corbett and Mordecai (1993), there has been little regard for the applicability of school climate across various contexts such as elementary and secondary school. Factors which impact the climate of a school are measurable, but there have been few proposals about how to change those aspects of climate that are lacking. Another limitation to the research is that many suggestions for climate improvement are based on research in schools which have demonstrated exemplary traits. These suggestions do not always apply to schools that are having difficulty with change implementation because they do not account for the fundamental factor of human diversity in a climate.

Apart from these limitations, climate factors are usually interpreted for use by the individuals who function in the environment. However, perceptions regarding their nature lack objectivity (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999). For example, the perception of school climate may be different for the principal, educators, and learners even though they work in and attend the same school. Nevertheless, Fraser (1994) suggested that there are advantages to using perceptual measures. First, pencil and paper perceptual measures are economical. Second, perceptual measures are based on experiences. Third, perceptual measures involve the amalgamated judgments of all participants in the environment.

## **Assessing School Climate**

Researchers recognize that learners and staff are influenced by the climate of the school in which they learn and work and have developed measures to evaluate the various aspects of school climate. Freiberg and Stein (1999) suggested direct and indirect methods of measuring school climate. Direct methods refer to data collection using climate surveys, classroom observation, interviews, video-taping, journal entries, narratives, and focus groups. These methods of assessment can give an accurate view of climate and allow observation of its impact. Indirect methods refer to existing data sources such as the records kept by educators, schools, or the local education authority, which can give a historical perspective of past successes and failures. Direct methods of evaluation yield the most valuable information for administrators because they provide a clear view of the strengths and needs of a school so that administrators can amend policies for areas of need and support areas which are successful (Freiberg & Stein, 1999).

Perry (1908) emphasized the importance of school surroundings in supporting the learner. According to Freiberg (1998), with economic upswing, population growth, and a drive for success, the 1950s saw a revival of the issue of school climate and how it related to learners' success. In response to increased interest, researchers developed surveys to assess school climate. In 1963, Halpin and Croft developed the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ), which is a Likert scale measure designed to categorize schools according to the type of organizational climate as perceived by the faculty of each school. Kottkamp, Mulhern, and Hoy (1987) modified the instrument for use with older students in secondary schools, while Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, and Bliss (1996) revised it for use in elementary schools.

The OCDQ is one of the most referenced measures of elementary school climate. The elementary version (OCDQ-RE), consists of 42 items and describes four types of school climate: open, engaged, disengaged, or closed. The secondary version (OCDQ-RS), has 34 items and measures two dimensions of principal behavior (supportive and directive) and three dimensions of educator behavior (engaged, frustrated, and intimate). The results from this instrument are useful for providing a framework for examining aspects of and developing plans for changing leadership behavior and motivation strategies within the school setting (McCombs et al., 2008).

The OCDQ for middle schools (OCDQ-RM) was developed because there was no instrument designed for use with children in that age range (Hoy et al., 1996). The OCDQ-RM consists of 50 items with six different dimensions; three dimensions measure principal behavior (supportive, directive, and restrictive) and three dimensions measure educator behavior (collegial, committed, and disengaged). As defined in the OCDQ-RM, a supportive principal will be goal-oriented and directed toward fulfilling the social needs as well as task achievement needs of the faculty. The principal is genuinely concerned with teachers' welfare, is helpful, and motivates staff using constructive criticism, setting an example, and modeling positive work ethics. On the other end of the principal behavior is the directive principal, who is more rigid in behavior and provides consistent monitoring over all aspects of the school's functioning. Restrictive principal behavior hinders rather than creates opportunity for teacher productivity. This behavior includes additional paperwork, requiring committee membership, and making other demands that may interfere with teaching responsibilities. The OCDQ-RM includes categories of teacher behavior. The collegial teacher is supportive of open and professional interactions between teachers and demonstrates friendliness toward colleagues. The committed teacher focuses on students and their development both socially and intellectually; these teachers



often stay late after school to help students or prepare additional learning activities for their students. Finally, the OCDQ-RM identifies the disengaged teacher, who demonstrates behavior which signifies low investment and focus on professional activities. These teachers are surviving, not thriving in their work environment, and often have strained, critical, and unaccepting relationships with their colleagues (Hoy et al., 1996).

Fisher and Fraser (1990) developed the School Level Environment Questionnaire on the assumption that school climate is affected by three dimensions: relationships in the school environment, personal development, and system maintenance. The first section identifies the nature and intensity of interpersonal relationships and evaluates the extent of personal involvement, including how the teachers in the school support and assist one another. Questions in the section on personal development relate to personal growth and self-enhancement. The final section relates to system maintenance and evaluates the orderliness of the environment, the clarity of expectations, the extent to which control is maintained, and responsiveness to change. This instrument includes methods to evaluate student support, belongingness, specialization of interest, staff freedom, active participation in decision-making processes, innovation, adequate resources for change implementation, and performance-based job pressure. The School Climate Survey contains seven dimensions of school climate, specifically focusing on student perceptions of achievement motivation, equity, order and discipline, parental involvement, student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and sharing (Haynes et al., 1993).

The Charles F. Kettering School Climate Profile (CFK) is another measure of school climate. This instrument focuses on teachers and administrators, with additional sections for student input. The CFK evaluates general climate factors such as respect, trust, morale, opportunity for expression, growth and support, cohesion, school renewal, and caring (Johnson

& Johnson, 1997). The National Association of Secondary School Principals School Climate Survey (NASSP, 1986) assesses ten domains that affect school climate: teacher-student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, guidance, student behavioral values, student-peer relationships, parent and community-school relationships, instructional management, and student activities.

A variety of classroom climate instruments have also been developed. Fraser (1994) discussed four instruments developed for measuring the classroom climate. The Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) contains 105 items which describe the typical school class. The respondent expresses the degree of agreement or disagreement on a four-point Likert scale. The LEI consists of 15 scales: cohesiveness, diversity, formality speed, material environment, friction, goal direction, favoritism, difficulty, apathy, democracy, cliques, satisfaction, disorganization, and competitiveness.

Fraser (1994) also discussed the Classroom Environment Scale (CES). This scale contains nine domains with ten items per scale in a true-false format. The scales are: involvement, affiliation, educator support, task orientation, competition, organizational order, role clarity, educator control, and innovation. These scales fall within the three dimensions of relationship, personal development, and the maintenance and change of a system.

The Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ) consists of five scales: personalization, participation, independence, investigation, and differentiation. This instrument was developed to measure the dimensions which differentiate conventional classrooms from individualized classrooms. The ICEQ consists of 50 items (ten items per scale), and each item includes a range of responses including almost never, seldom, sometimes, often, and very often. The My Class Inventory (MCI) is a simplification of the LEI which consists of five scales with

six to nine items per scale and is suitable for children between the ages of 8 and 12. The scales are cohesiveness, friction, difficulty, satisfaction, and competitiveness. Even though the MCI is a simplification of the LEI, there are important differences, namely that the MCI contains only five scales with simplified item wording to improve readability, consists of a yes/no response format, and allows learners to answer on the instrument itself instead of on a separate answer sheet (Fraser, 1994).

### **Dimensions of School Climate**

A review of the current literature and previous measures of school and organizational climate support a multidimensional approach to understanding school climate. The literature reveals eleven dimensions of school climate. The first dimension is teacher and student relationships based upon teachers' perceptions of the quality of relationships they have established with their students. The security and maintenance dimension focuses upon the quality and degree of personal security while in the school setting. This dimension includes not only the traditional view of safety as it is associated with security, but also the perception of job security. Administration is the third dimension. This evaluates the perceptions of the degree to which school administrators are effective in their ability to communicate with different groups within the educational environment. The fourth dimension is student academic and behavioral orientation based on teacher perceptions regarding student attention to task and achievement as well as the perception of students' ability to self-regulate and self-discipline. Guidance, the fifth dimension, is the perception of the availability of services to students to facilitate academic and career success. Next, the dimension of student-peer relationships evaluates perception of the students' care and respect for each other. Instructional management highlights teacher perceptions of the classroom organization. The parent, community, and school relationships

dimension evaluates perceptions of the involvement of parents and community members in the school environment. The buildings and educational environment dimension highlights teacher perception of the physical and emotional environment of the building in which they teach. Finally, the student activities dimension evaluates perceptions of opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Teacher and student relationships.** The teacher and student relationships domain is based on perceptions about the quality of the interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and students. Deci and Ryan (2002) suggested that when relatedness and autonomy support are present, intrinsic motivation and self-regulation will follow and lead to student academic success. Self-regulation, a branch of autonomy, is a developmental process in which the self-regulating individual will identify a situation, create a plan of action, act upon the plans, and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. According to Deci and Ryan, the more independently functioning an individual is, the more capable the individual is at self-regulation and the less reliant he or she is on external motivators. Student achievement shows improvement when students are intrinsically motivated and when teachers support their ability to be independent learners (Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004). Accordingly, when students feel supported by their teachers and assign personal value to the educational task, they demonstrate strength in self-regulated learning strategies that increase the quality of their learning experience as well as success in grades, test scores, and future achievement.

**Security and maintenance.** The security and maintenance domain focuses on perceptions about the quality and degree of personal security while in the school setting. Making changes to the physical environment can be done in a timely manner, but altering school climate requires more long-term solutions. Methods for insuring school safety include pedagogy,

effective discipline strategies, codes of conduct, and school-wide attitudes regarding violence, all of which impact student motivation and create school cohesion. Appropriate teaching practices can impact school-connectedness in several ways. Teachers are in an opportune position to facilitate student participation and to glean meaning from educational tasks. In addition, if students do not feel connected to the school environment, school safety will be compromised (Baker, 1998).

**Administration.** The administration domain involves perceptions of the extent to which school administrators are effective in communicating with different groups and setting high performance standards for teachers and students. Rosenholtz (1986) suggested that the modern leader is an opportunity creator, not an order giver. The primary job of the principal is leadership. While the modern administrator is an active member of the school work team, it is important for teachers to remember that the principal is not just one more member of the group. The effective leader helps to frame the issues and keep the school focused on priorities, while establishing positive collegial relationships with all participants in the school environment.

**Student academic orientation.** The student academic orientation domain focuses on the teacher perceptions about student attention to task and concern for achievement in the academic setting. Jones, Jamieson, Moulin, and Towner (1981) suggested that school personnel attitudes are an important key to student success in the mainstream educational setting. Interactions between students and teachers are an integral part of the teacher-learner process and shape teacher perceptions and expectations of student behavior in the classroom.

**Student behavioral values.** The focus in the student behavioral values domain is teachers' perceptions about students' ability to self-regulate and self-discipline as well as students' tolerance for others. Deci and Ryan (2002) suggested that teachers' attitudes toward

self-regulation actually belong in the area of autonomous development. They further posited that teachers prefer to work with students who are intrinsically motivated and need little external reward to complete tasks.

**Guidance.** The dimension of guidance involves perceptions of the quality of academic and career guidance and personal counseling services available to students. According to Farmer (1987), effective guidance in schools should occur early in the student's academic career and be given with consideration to that individual's background, personal qualities, motivation, and environment. Students are more likely to perceive guidance as valuable if it is culturally sensitive.

**Student-peer relationships.** The student-peer relationships domain involves teacher perceptions regarding students' care and respect for one another and their ability to mutually cooperate toward goal completion. Li (1985) suggested that a significant link exists between children's academic success and peer relationships. Elementary school children who are not well accepted by their peers perform less optimally in the classroom environment. Li further suggested that these children tend to have higher rates of dropping out of high school. Wentzel (1991) also established a link between adolescent peer relationships and academic accomplishment.

**Parent and community-school relationships.** The parent and community-school relationships domain involves perceptions of the amount and quality of involvement of parents and members of the community in the school. Teachers believe that the lack of parental involvement is one of the greatest problems that children face in education (Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997). Walberg (1984) identified three factors which affect parent perception regarding their involvement and how parental involvement impacts children's academic success. The first

is parents' beliefs about what is important or necessary for them to do on behalf of their children. The second factor is the extent to which parents believe they have a positive influence on their children's education. The last factor is the parental perception that their involvement is welcomed by both the children and the school environment.

**Instructional management.** Instructional management involves perceptions of the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher classroom organization and use of classroom time. Cook (1954) found that teacher attitude toward children was related to teacher and student relations and thereby related to teacher efficacy. Ryans and Wandt (1952) identified several effective teaching characteristics, highlighting the teacher's ability to be sociable, businesslike, reactive to change, and tolerant as well as the teacher's desire to please peers, students, administration, and families in the school. All of these characteristics were related to student response in the educational environment.

**Student activities.** The student activities domain examines opportunities for and actual participation of students in extracurricular activities. School-sponsored extracurricular activities give students an opportunity to develop group cooperation skills, responsibility, strength, endurance, and competitive skills, and a sense of belonging to their community as well as to experience cultural diversity. These activities provide a link to lessons learned in the classroom, giving students an opportunity to practically use academic skills in a real-world context, and should be considered a component of a well-rounded education. Researchers further suggest that participation in these activities increases students' sense of belongingness to their school, consequently decreasing the likelihood of academic failure and dropping out (Finn, 1993).

**Buildings and educational environment.** In order to create an environment of support that is also stimulating, attention should be paid to the physical surroundings of the school

(Sweeney, 1992). According to Freiberg and Stein (1999), a school is not an organic being in a biological sense, but has qualities of a living organism in an organizational as well as a cultural sense. The physical structure can have direct influences on staff and learners; decent and adequate facilities affects the learning environment. The School Level Environment Questionnaire includes resource adequacy as a scale of investigation within the area of school climate in which facilities of the school play an important part. Gonder and Hymes (1994) stated that the physical environment is an important element of school climate and can be described best by how learners perceive the school environment. Apart from what is defined as the physical environment, the state of the school buildings and classrooms is also associated with higher student performance (Anderson, 1982).

### **Characteristics of School Climate**

Climate characteristics are the various elements that make up school climate. These characteristics are the basis for the dimensions of school climate assessed in the survey. These characteristics are complex because they can range from the quality of interactions in the staff room to the noise levels in the hallways and from the physical infrastructure, which includes the building and comfort levels, to whether or not one feels safe. Even the opportunity for interaction between the educator and the learner can add to or take away from the school climate. No single factor determines school climate. Various factors interact to enable all of the participants in school to educate and learn (Freiberg, 1998).

**Cohesiveness.** According to Gonder and Hymes (1994), cohesiveness can be seen in a school when the people form a positive unity and are committed to education. Levine and Lezotte (as cited in Maslowski, 2001) identified nine characteristics of an effective school. The first of these is a productive school climate and orderly environment. Other important factors in



enhancing effectiveness are cohesiveness, collaboration, and collegiality. Anderson (1982) studied numerous school climates and found that cohesiveness is important for good communication as well as rapport. Cohesion also refers to the sum of group members' feelings about the group as a whole. In cohesive classrooms and schools the learners and staff value one another and are proud to be part of the group (Hoffman, 1993). Ultimately, cohesiveness can enhance the systems by creating a "we" feeling, which in turn promotes conformity to school norms.

**Trust.** Sweeney (1992) suggested that trust is the glue that holds the school together because it is a prerequisite for positive action. Trust can be defined in many ways, but Tschannen-Moran (2001) stated that all the definitions of trust recognize the willingness to risk in the face of vulnerability; where there is no vulnerability there is no need to trust another. Trust in any relationship is important, but in schools, trust has been specifically acknowledged to facilitate the processes required for smooth functioning. The reason for this is that a school climate of openness and trust allows people to work together in an atmosphere that is collegial (Bulach & Malone, 1994) and allows people to focus on the immediately presented task (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Peterson (1997) stated that there is a significant correlation between school climate, group openness, and trust and that these factors are of utmost importance in successful implementation of reform.

Trust seems to be a vital element of a well-functioning organization because it is necessary for cooperation. Trust and communication together form the basis for productive relationships. According to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), trust facilitates interactions and reduces the complexities found within any organization. The benefits of trustworthy behavior are great, especially because a person will work with the same group of people within the school

system over a long period. Studies in schools have provided the necessary evidence that trust is significant in the interpersonal dynamics of schools (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Without trust, learners are occupied with protecting themselves and not with the learning that is supposed to take place and communication cannot occur. In fact, communication becomes constrained, which makes problems more difficult to solve (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

**Respect.** Respect in a school is another noted factor in school climate. According to Gondor and Hymes (1994), respect entails that people within a school feel that other individuals in that school will behave in a manner that is honest and fair. Real respect involves building connections between people as well as building empathy and trust. Peterson (1997) found that high morale as well as social and academic growth were continuous in schools where the staff and the learners were able to care for, respect, and trust one another. Anderson (1982) stated that respect is necessary in fostering a positive school climate, while Sizer (1994) posited that respecting learners can reduce violence. Learners realize that someone cares for them when educators signal respect by taking the time to get to know them.

**Shared meaning.** Sweeney (1992) suggested that school climate represents the shared meaning of the people who work and learn in the school. The shared meanings or school culture are in turn reflected in the key beliefs and values that influence the behavior of the people who hold them. For example, Sweeney explained that respect for the individual is a key belief or value that can influence the people who are learning in a school. Therefore, an educator who believes that respect for an individual is important will treat learners and colleagues with respect. As a result, respect could become a shared value over time that could influence how educators treat learners, parents, and colleagues.

**Order.** Butler and Alberg (1991) as well as Gerner de Garcia (1994) suggested that order is another key component of school climate. They described order as the extent to which the environment is ordered and the appropriate student behaviors are present. A safe and orderly environment is important as it correlates with effectiveness of schools. However, this does not mean that the school climate is oppressive but rather conducive to teaching and learning. The orderliness of the school can be seen as the extent to which the learner perceives the rules and consequences of certain behavior to be clear. Gondor and Hymes (1994) suggested that orderliness is the extent to which educators and learners have sufficient influence and knowledge of events and activities occurring in the school. Both of these elements are important when considering control in school. Gonder and Hymes reported consistent findings that order and discipline in the school climate are variable and most in need of improvement in the United States.

**Crisis management.** As fear increases, confidence in the ability of school administration decreases and therefore the informal social control against violence decreases (Welsh, Stokes, & Greene, 2000). Peterson and Skiba (2001) described a variety of surveys that have been used to identify the severity of disagreements, violence, and other disruptions that contribute to a negative school climate. Eliasov and Frank (2000) found that in urban schools, crime and violence are endemic at the primary as well as secondary level. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007) found that theft of property and the possession of weapons were major problems within all of the schools sampled, while physical violence and vandalism were reported in 95% of urban schools. Drug abuse was a serious concern in 90% of the schools, while bullying and intimidation were reported in more than 75% of the schools. Assault was reported as a concern for 60% of the schools. Gang-related behavior was reported as a concern for 50% of the schools participating in

the study. Crime and violence in schools are a threat to young people and contaminate the school environment, which in turn jeopardizes the educational process. Sizer (1994) stated that research on the impact of violence indicates that learners in schools with high crime and violence are at high risk for poor educational progress among other consequences.

School climate has a far-reaching effect on all participants in the educational environment. Previous research delineates direct from indirect participants in the educational environment. Administrators, teachers, students, and staff are direct participants in the educational environment. While parents and community members are closely affiliated with schools, they are considered to be indirect participants in that environment because they do not attend school and participate in decision-making or implementation. If a change occurs in the school district, all members are affected. Holt and Smith (2002) suggest that public school leaders face many challenges such as lack of resources, and community relations. Although these challenges will directly impact the participants in the environment, the focus needs to remain on education. Brookover et al. (1978) suggested that school climate is a better predictor of student achievement than socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Similarly, Hoy and Hannum (1997) found that school climate was more closely related to student achievement than socioeconomic status. West (1985) also found that school climate was a significant predictor of student achievement overall.

## **Teachers**

### **Teacher Receptivity to Change**

When addressing components that affect school climate, it goes without saying that teachers play a key role. According to Hoerr (2001), teacher support and receptivity are essential resources in developing positive school climate. In addition, the success of any change effort is

the result of a relationship between two components: perceived quality of the change and teacher receptivity. Berman, Bowman, West, and Van Wart (2006) suggested that facilities which demonstrate high receptivity to change welcome new ideas and opportunities for improving the status quo. These facilities set high goals, identify progress that has been made, and modify the process of change when necessary to continue the growth process and focus on the training of individuals to continue to meet the goals of the facility. Palumbo and Styskal (1974) found that members of an educational facility who engage in professional development training as well as membership in professional organizations were more likely to be receptive to change.

Pettigrew, Woodman, and Cameron (2001) suggested that employees' receptivity to environmental change is an important issue for those involved in creating a climate with a focus on successful implementation of change. Frequency of change and resistance to change are important considerations given that dynamic organizations change frequently to maintain status quo in a constantly changing climate. There has been little recent research on this topic, though many models of receptivity to change and change implementation exist in the literature.

For instance, the Linkage Model as proposed by Havelock and Lingwood (1973) is user-focused. In this model, problem solving and the identification of users of the innovation are central foci. These initial users of the innovation are also pegged as the disseminators of the process and supervisors of the implementation. The expanded users of the innovation are regularly evaluated to determine needs for effective implementation. Once those needs are identified, the users must transform their needs into problem statements for group research and development consideration. The purpose of Havelock and Lingwood's research was to facilitate resolutions for the direct participants in the educational environment while establishing cooperation between those who research education and those who use their research. A strength

of the Linkage Model is that it provides for connectedness of the researchers with the users amid the constantly evolving nature of the innovation to meet the needs of the environment prior to permanent adoption.

Mann (1976) suggested three models of change implementation and its impact on receptivity. The Problem Solving Model heavily involves the potential users of the impending change implementation. Participants in the environment assess and diagnose the problems which need to be addressed, then search for solutions which seem viable for the areas to be addressed in the environment while simultaneously reducing the interventions list to only those that have the greatest potential for addressing the problem. They then incorporate those interventions as a permanent feature within the system. The Social Interaction Model focuses on communication and preparedness for the diffusion of knowledge. Mann suggested that persuasive communication leads to attitudes and beliefs regarding the innovative change, which further leads to the decision to adopt or reject the potential change. The innovation is then evaluated through informal discussions with peers. If the change is well received by peers, then the likelihood of permanence in the environment increases. The Research, Development, and Diffusion Model of Change Implementation posits that basic research should be conducted to determine areas of need. This research is conducted specifically for the purpose of remediating a problem in the environment. The findings of the research are applied in the form of new material or techniques which may lead to improved practices. The goal of this implementation model is dissemination of information so that other facilities may benefit.

Nash and Culbertson (1977) suggested that there are three potential strategies of change implementation and acceptance. The first strategy is the Empirical-Rational method. This strategy is based on the assumption that the individual or facility making the decisions is capable

of rational thought and will adopt a change if the change can be justified and implemented rationally. This strategy also assumes that acceptance of the change will be easier if the change is in one's best interest. The Normative-Re-educative strategy presumes that individuals who participate in the environment are heavily influenced by socio-cultural norms or environmental culture. These individuals hold attitudes and commitments and will accept change only when their concepts of norms and attitudes are changed. The Power-Coercive strategy assumes that participants will comply with the changes if the directive is given to implement change by one who is in power. The powerful individual may have legitimate power over the participants in the environment (e.g., an administrator) or perceived power (e.g., a senior teacher).

Waugh and Punch (1987) suggest that three factors influence the process of change. The explicitness and complexity of the innovation are at the forefront of the change. This factor is often identified by questions surrounding materials, time commitments, and details of the change. Strategies for implementation include in-service training, resources made available to the implementers, and feedback mechanisms to ensure correctness of the procedure. The adoption factor focuses on the adopting agency, which includes organizational climate, demographic factors of the employees, and environmental support that is provided before and after the change is made. Characteristics of the leadership within a particular climate forms the last of the factors. The design of the change and how it will be evaluated combined with a meaningful incentive program will influence receptivity to change. Waugh and Punch concluded that changes of high complexity and low explicitness have a low chance of success. High resource support, feedback mechanisms, interaction, problem identification, and participant involvement in decision making contribute to successful implementation of change.

## **Teacher Job Satisfaction**

The teaching workforce is made up of individuals from different backgrounds and educational opportunities. The supply and retention of quality teachers continues to present challenges for school districts. One of these challenges is that in the effort to raise educational standards, teachers are being given additional responsibilities, some of which may not have been expected. These unexpected responsibilities may cause a strain on the ability to produce and retain teachers. Ashton and Webb (1996) suggested that job satisfaction has a significant influence on the quality and stability of instruction, which may impact student success. Further, teachers who do not have support may not be as productive in the classroom. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997), as many as 5% of public school teachers leave the educational field per year on average. Of those who departed, 28% left the profession to pursue other career opportunities. The majority of those who reported dissatisfaction cited concern with student motivation to learn and the need for better salaries and benefits. Ingersoll and Alsalam (1996) cited teacher influence over policy and procedure for their schools as being an important facet of job satisfaction. Further, teacher perception of relationships with students, staff, and colleagues and the school disciplinary climate impact job satisfaction.

School climate is not a new subject. Many measures have been developed over the years to evaluate both school and classroom climate and included direct and indirect methods to focus on certain aspects of school climate. The areas most frequently referred to in the literature are cohesiveness, trust, respect, control, violence, and physical infrastructure. Creemers and Reezigt (1999) suggested four factors that influence school climate: a school plan for effectiveness, physical environments, educator behavior, and finally, the school system. They further suggest that a healthy school environment evaluates many potential outcomes pertaining to education and



methodology; nurtures a positive learning environment; and provides clear expectations regarding student and teacher behavior.

The researchers cited in this review found that school climate can be linked to school effectiveness and learner achievement. It is on this theoretical grounding that this study is built. The different instruments that have been designed to study school climate and classroom climate were briefly discussed and were factors chosen for inclusion in this study. School effectiveness requires an understanding of the processes that are taking place within the school in order that the necessary interventions can be put in place so the school can prosper.

Climate affects every aspect of the educational environment, from the larger climate of the central administration that directs district-wide change to individual building administrators, and from the building administrator who directs change to the teacher who must implement that change. Although many individuals are involved, no one person in the district feels the implementation of change like a teacher. In the community, teachers are perceived to be the ones who have full control over the educational environment and are held directly responsible for success and failure. As such, teachers are viewed to be responsible for failure when change is poorly initiated or is implemented incorrectly. Attention is rarely given to the quality of the change, the training to implement the change, or the support to maintain the change. In addition to increased culpability for failure, there is also limited reward if the change is successful. Functioning in a highly punitive, low reward school often leads to dissatisfaction in the workplace. This dissatisfaction can manifest in resistance to change and teacher attrition. Environments that nurture teachers, involve them in district changes, and provide training for the implementation as well as follow-up support after the implementation of the change are much more successful and have lower rates of attrition (Waugh & Punch, 1987).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate relationships between school climate, teacher satisfaction, and teacher receptivity to school change. The data collected in this study will add to the limited current literature regarding the impact of teacher receptivity to change in schools. A further understanding of these relationships will be facilitated by the development of a questionnaire for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire specifically addresses school climate, job satisfaction, and teacher receptivity. The data analysis addresses these relationships as well as teacher job satisfaction and how those concepts correlate.

### **Significance of the Study**

In this study, teacher receptivity to school-based interventions was investigated. There is a limited body of current literature on the impact of climate on receptivity. According to Hoerr (2001), teacher support and receptivity are essential resources in the school climate. Furthermore, the success of any change effort is the result of a relationship between two components: perceived quality of the change and teacher receptivity.

### **Research Questions**

The questions posed for this study are specifically designed to address whether a relationship exists between school climate domains and teacher job satisfaction and whether these concepts provide a predictive pattern of teacher receptivity. The questions for this research study are as follows:

1. What are the levels of receptivity to change for teachers?
2. What are the levels of job satisfaction for teachers?
3. What are the levels of climate domains reported by teachers?
4. Is there a relationship between receptivity to change and job satisfaction?

5. Are climate domain levels predictive of teacher satisfaction?
6. Are climate domain levels and job satisfaction predictive of teacher receptivity to change?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

In this chapter, methods and procedures used for this study are presented. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the sample, a review of the theoretical constructs presented in the review of the literature, data collection methods, and data processing and analysis.

#### **Participants**

The school districts in this study were selected from a recruitment pool of 50 districts. The 50 districts were obtained through extensive searches for superintendents' e-mail addresses. A recruitment e-mail was sent to the superintendents and their affirmative response yielded six districts willing to participate. Elementary schools within these districts were selected because most interventions are initiated in the elementary schools rather than middle schools and high schools. The types of interventions are usually different as well. In the elementary school years, interventions are initiated with school success and academic change in mind, while in the middle and high school years, interventions focus on enrollment retention and graduation requirements. There are 40 elementary schools that serve children from Kindergarten through sixth grade within these school districts. These schools have a total of 964 teachers serving the population. For the purposes of this survey, all teachers within the 40 schools were asked to participate in the data collection (see Appendix C). The teachers were licensed under the state educational standards of the sample population and vary in years of experience in the classroom. Data were

collected from 54 participants. Participation was completely voluntary and anonymous, thus no demographic data are available. Of the 54 participants who responded to the survey participation request, 36 submitted a completed survey and 19 submitted a partially completed survey by omitting one item. An analysis of the survey items that were omitted by the participants suggested a random pattern of omission and indicated that no items were skipped more than once.

### **Instruments**

Fisher and Fraser (1990) developed the School Level Environment Questionnaire on the assumption that school climate is affected by three dimensions: relationships in schools, personal development of the faculty, and system maintenance. The School Climate Survey is a measure that contains seven dimensions of school climate specifically focusing on student perceptions of achievement motivation, equity, order and discipline, parental involvement, student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and sharing (Haynes et al., 1993). The Charles F. Kettering School Climate Profile (CFK) is another measure of school climate. This instrument focuses on teachers and administrators, with additional sections for student input. The CFK evaluates general climate factors such as respect, trust, morale, opportunity for expression, growth and support, cohesion, school renewal, and caring (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). The National Association of Secondary School Principals School Climate Survey (1986) posited ten domains that affect school climate: teacher-student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, guidance, student behavioral values, student-peer relationships, parent and community-school relationships, instructional management, and student activities.

For the purposes of this study an instrument was created to evaluate relationships between school climate and teacher receptivity to change in the schools. The instrument developed for this dissertation was constructed after an extensive review of the research relevant to school climate assessment in schools. The dimensions of this survey are detailed below and parallel dimensions in similar previously developed instruments; the dimensions selected from the literature for use in this survey are believed to best represent the core areas focused upon in grade school years Kindergarten through fifth grade. The dimensions are relationships among teachers and students, relationships of teachers with principals, student relationships with each other, effective instructional time, school environmental concerns, building fitness, and individual safety concerns. Once the dimensions were selected, an evaluation of each of the aspects in the dimensions was conducted.

The survey questions developed directly relate to each of the dimensions as well as evaluate the three main areas of this study: teacher satisfaction, teacher receptivity to change, and school climate. The survey items appear to have face validity based upon their direct relationship to the domains and concepts being evaluated. Once the survey items were developed, a content expert evaluated the face validity of the items and made suggestions to clarify the wording of the questions and removed some items. Four items were removed from the survey due to redundancy, resulting in the 63-item survey developed for this study. Once data were collected, a Cronbach's alpha was conducted with satisfaction as a dependent variable; a second Cronbach's alpha was conducted with receptivity as a dependent variable. Both of the Cronbach's alpha analyses were conducted to measure the internal consistency of the instrument.

The developed instrument assesses nine dimensions of school climate as well as teacher satisfaction and receptivity. The dimensions are: teacher-student relationships, security and

maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, student behavioral values, student-peer relationships, parent, community and school relationships, instructional management, student activities, receptivity, and satisfaction. The student-teacher relationship dimension assesses the perceptions about the quality of the interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and students. Relationship development and maintenance are central themes to this dimension. Seven questions were developed to assess teacher perceptions of the quality of the relationships they establish in school. Six questions were developed to evaluate the themes represented in the security and maintenance dimension; feelings of safety and the condition of the school surroundings are central themes to this dimension. Nine questions were developed to evaluate the themes represented in the administration dimension to assess teachers' perceptions of their administrators; relationship development and support of teachers are themes in this dimension. Six questions were developed to assess the dimension of academic orientation of students, which focuses on teacher perceptions about student attention to task and concern for achievement in the academic setting. Four questions were developed to assess the student behavior dimension; they focus on teachers' perceptions about their students' ability to self-regulate, self-discipline, and tolerate others. Four questions were developed to evaluate the student-peer relationships dimension, which assesses teacher perceptions regarding students' care and respect for one another and their ability to mutually cooperate toward goal completion. Five questions were developed to evaluate the parent/community relationship dimension, which focuses on teacher perceptions of the amount and quality of involvement of parents and members of the community in school. Five questions were developed to assess the instructional management dimension, focusing on how a teacher organizes the classroom and how well the teacher uses the instructional time during the day. Seven questions were developed to assess the

student activities domain, which focuses on the opportunities for and actual participation of students in school-sponsored events. Previous research indicates that guidance is a dimension that is included in school climate. The guidance dimension was not included in this instrument because the focus of this study is on children in grade school, where guidance is not formally represented in school climate.

This instrument adds to these school issues additional dimensions assessing teacher job satisfaction and receptivity. The four questions related to teacher job satisfaction were developed as a general evaluation of satisfaction with relationships and school environment. Receptivity to change in the educational environment is under-represented in educational literature. The six questions evaluating this dimension were developed to evaluate the impact of receptivity to change and how that construct impacts the climate of a school. All items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents selected from a range of scores starting with one (strongly disagree) through five (strongly agree). The questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. A detailed list displaying the survey items within the dimensions is presented in Appendix B.

Composite scores were computed for the eleven domains used in this survey; teacher and student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, student behavioral values, student peer relationships, instructional management, student activities, receptivity and satisfaction. Sixty-three items were developed to evaluate the eleven scales. Seven items contributed to understanding teacher and student relationships. Six items evaluated security and maintenance. Nine items assessed teacher perception of administration. Six items evaluated student academic orientation. Four items were used to assess student behavioral values. Four items were developed to evaluate student peer relationships. Five items



relate to instructional management. Seven items evaluate the availability of student activities. And finally, six items were developed to assess teacher receptivity and four items to evaluate teacher job satisfaction. The responses were on a Likert-type scale and were assigned as follows: 5 = “Strongly Agree”, 4 = “Agree”, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = “Disagree”, 1 = “Strongly Disagree.”

## **Procedures**

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The responses for data collection analysis were collected from elementary schools within six school districts in the Midwest. For the purposes of this study, an elementary school is defined as a school comprised of grades Kindergarten through 6. The focus of this study is on elementary schools because most interventions in schools are implemented in that academic range to foster success for the students. The interventions in middle and high schools often have a remedial focus and are crisis-based. The current study solicited more than 900 participants. Ideally, with a 10% response rate there should have been more than 100 participants in the study. The respondents yielded for this study ended up at less than half of the projected amount. All schools in this study are public schools in the state of Indiana. Schools were identified through the district websites of the participating Midwestern school districts sampled in this study. The instrument was an electronic survey that was completed online by the respondent. An introductory email was sent to teachers to introduce the survey and a description of the purpose of the survey. Data was collected for the duration of one month during the academic year of 2009-2010.

Prior to the investigation, a participation invitation was sent to superintendents in the Midwestern school districts selected for this study (see Appendix D). Once approval was

received from the administration, the survey URL was distributed to all teachers in participating schools through their school e-mail accounts. This e-mail contained a letter of introduction including information about the study, goals to be achieved in studying this subject matter, and the survey URL (see Appendix C). Participants were asked a variety of questions regarding many areas of climate in the school in which they are teaching and were asked to respond by selecting the appropriate option on a Likert scale.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to predict receptivity using satisfaction and the climate dimensions of teacher and student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic and behavioral orientation, guidance, student peer relationships, instructional management, parent, community and school relationships, buildings and educational environment, and availability of student activities as predictors. A second stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to predict satisfaction using the climate dimensions of teacher and student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic and behavioral orientation, guidance, student peer relationships, instructional management, parent, community and school relationships, buildings and educational environment and availability of student activities as predictors. A descriptive analysis was conducted on the levels of receptivity and job satisfaction in the teachers surveyed as well as levels of climate domains in the school environment by evaluating means of the participants, frequencies of the reported levels, and standard deviations from the average. Finally, a correlation analysis was conducted to establish strength of the relationship between teacher receptivity to change and job satisfaction.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In the current study, nine domains with the addition of teacher satisfaction were used as predictors of teacher receptivity to change. Each domain was hypothesized to be a useful predictor of teacher receptivity to change in an electronic survey developed for licensed teachers. Higher levels of satisfaction in each of the areas assessed were hypothesized to be associated with greater levels of receptivity to change.

#### **Descriptive Analysis**

Composite scores were created for each of the climate domains. An analysis of the descriptive statistics based on these composite scores was conducted. Descriptive statistics for the eleven domains are presented in Table 1. The mean teacher and student relationships score suggested that teachers strongly disagree with these items ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = .52$ ). This mean score indicates that the teachers completing the survey do not believe the items presented to them are reflective of their sentiment toward their relationships with their students. In other words, teachers report a low level of connection with students. Item means for this domain ranged from 1.39 (I enjoy getting to know my students over the academic year) to 2.15 (a diverse population of students makes the classroom a better learning environment).

The mean security and maintenance score suggested that teachers reported disagreement to strong disagreement with these items ( $M = 1.81$ ,  $SD = .73$ ). This suggests that teachers do not

feel that matters related to their personal safety or safety of students are addressed in the academic environment. Item means for this domain ranged from 1.53 (when I am on this school campus, I feel safe) to 2.43 (security measures are discussed and reviewed regularly).

Teachers reported between neutral and disagreement with the items in the administration domain ( $M = 2.49$ ,  $SD = .59$ ). This suggests that teachers do not feel that the presence of the administrator is significant in their schools. Item means for this domain ranged from 1.72 (this school is focused on academic progress for my students) to 4.00 (I only see administrators during times of stress).

Teachers also reported disagreement with the items in student academic orientation ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = .40$ ). Teachers do not feel that their students are academically or achievement oriented. Item means for this domain ranged from 1.72 (my students enjoy my classroom) to 3.19 (I seem to spend a lot of time disciplining students). The mean student behavioral values score show that teachers reported between neutral and disagreement with the items ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = .67$ ). Teachers report relatively low student behavioral values toward classroom work and other students. Item means for this domain ranged from 2.15 (the students in my classroom are respectful of the property of others) to 2.94 (I am able to assign independent student work with little direct supervision). Teachers reported between neutral and disagreement with items of the student peer relationships domain ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = .48$ ). This shows relatively low levels of relationship and acceptance between peers. Item means of this domain ranged from 1.98 (my students accept all classmates regardless of their ethnicity) to 3.65 (the students in my classroom seem to be clique oriented).

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for each of the Climate Domains (n = 54)*

Climate Domains	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher-Student Relations	1.00	3.43	1.69	.52
Security/Maintenance	1.00	4.50	1.81	.73
Administration	1.22	3.67	2.49	.59
Student Academic Orientation	1.17	2.83	2.06	.40
Student Behavior Values	1.00	4.25	2.37	.67
Student-Peer Relationships	1.67	3.50	2.47	.48
Parent/School/Comm. Relationships	1.20	5.00	2.81	.79
Instructional Mgt.	1.00	4.00	2.58	.63
Student Activities	1.00	4.29	2.42	.65
Receptivity	1.00	4.83	3.05	.87
Satisfaction	1.00	4.00	1.95	.71

The mean parent, school, and community relationships score shows that teachers reported very near to neutral for the items in this domain ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = .79$ ). Teachers report ambiguity toward items relating to the connection between parents, school, and the community. Item means in this domain ranged from 2.50 (during classroom events the parents/guardians of my students are willing to assist) to 3.17 (the parents/guardians of my students are involved in parent/teacher planning committees).

Teachers reported between neutral and disagreement with items in the instructional management domain ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = .63$ ). This indicates relatively low levels of instructional support and conductivity of the environment to learning. Item means in this domain ranged from 2.07 (my classroom environment is sufficient for learning activities) to 3.94 (I have enough time for educational planning in my work day).

The student activities mean score shows that teachers report between disagreement and neutrality with items on availability and knowledge of student activities in the school ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = .65$ ). This indicates relatively low levels of awareness and attendance of extracurricular activities. Item means in this domain ranged from 2.13 (school activities are affordable to students) to 2.59 (the extracurricular activities at this school complement the diverse population of students).

The mean score for receptivity suggests only moderate receptivity of teachers towards change ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = .87$ ). Item means in this domain ranged from 2.67 (should questions arise, the leaders who present change are available to me after the initiation of change) to 3.69 (my school does not implement changes often).

The mean score for satisfaction suggests that teachers are generally dissatisfied with their work and relationships at work ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = .71$ ). Item means in this domain ranged from

1.59 (I am satisfied with the relationships I have with my colleagues) to 2.38 (I am satisfied with my relationships with the administration in my building).

The receptivity mean is the highest of all the domains in the survey. Teachers who completed the survey reported neutrally to the items assessing receptivity ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = .87$ ). The lowest mean of all the domains is on teacher and student relationships ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = .52$ ). Teachers in this small sample do not view the relationships with their students as a positive aspect of their school climate. The relative elevation in the receptivity mean may suggest that receptivity is not viewed to be problematic in comparison to many other climate domains. The skewness and kurtosis for each composite variable were examined. Two composite variables had values greater than an absolute value of one, suggesting relatively normal distributions for most variables.

### **Reliability**

Reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha for each scale. Because of omitted items by the respondents the N's for the scales varied from 50 to 54. The fluctuations are likely to have little impact on calculated results. The Cronbach alpha's ranged from .10 to .89. Only two of the scales, student academic orientation and student peer relationships, generated alphas below .50. Further analysis indicated that the Cronbach alpha could be improved for both scales with minor editing. Specifically, the removal of item #28 would improve the internal consistency of student academic orientation from .21 to .54. Likewise, removal of item #34 would increase the internal consistency for student peer relationships from .10 to .81. Overall, the analysis of internal consistency indicates that most of the scales are sufficiently consistent with only two scales requiring revision. Subsequent use of the scale should remove these items or comment on the two lowest in reliability.

Table 2

*Cronbach's Alphas of Climate Domains*

Climate Domains	<i>n</i>	Cronbach alpha
Teacher-Student Relations	53	.79
Security/Maintenance	53	.89
Administration	51	.80
Student Academic Orientation	50	.21
Student Behavior Values	54	.79
Student-Peer Relationships	53	.10
Parent/School/Comm. Relationships	52	.78
Instructional Mgt.	53	.50
Student Activities	51	.87
Receptivity	52	.83
Satisfaction	52	.65

**Correlation Analyses**

A series of correlations were conducted to determine if relationships could be found among the assessed dimensions of climate. Several factors are highly associated with one another while other relationships indicate independent factors of climate. These items are reported in order from high association to low association. All of the tests of significance performed for this analysis are two-tailed.



The security and maintenance relationship composite correlated significantly with the teacher and students relations composite ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ). This domain also correlated significantly with administration ( $r = .43, p = .001$ ), student academic orientation ( $r = .31, p = .021$ ), student peer relationships ( $r = .40, p = .002$ ), parent, school, and community relationships ( $r = .40, p = .002$ ), instructional management ( $r = .34, p = .010$ ), student activities ( $r = .31, p = .020$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .32, p = .017$ ).

The satisfaction mean correlated significantly with security and maintenance ( $r = .32, p = .017$ ), administration ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ), student behavior values ( $r = .27, p = .044$ ), parent, community, and school relationships ( $r = .33, p = .014$ ), instructional management ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ), student activities ( $r = .33, p = .014$ ), and receptivity ( $r = .45, p = .001$ ).

The teacher and student relationships mean correlated significantly with security and maintenance ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ), student academic orientation ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ), student behavior values ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ), student peer relationships ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ), parent school community relationships ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ) and instructional management ( $r = .39, p = .003$ ).

The student peer relationships mean correlated significantly with teacher and student relationships ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ), security and maintenance ( $r = .40, p = .002$ ), student academic orientation ( $r = .34, p = .010$ ), student behavior values ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ) and parent school community relationships ( $r = .28, p = .039$ ).

The parent, school, and community relationships mean correlated significantly with teacher and student relations ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ), security and maintenance ( $r = .40, p = .002$ ), student peer relationships ( $p = .28, p = .039$ ), instructional management ( $r = .32, p = .016$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .33, p = .014$ ).

The instructional management mean correlated significantly with teacher and student relationships ( $r = .39, p = .003$ ), security and maintenance ( $r = .34, p = .010$ ), administration ( $r = .27, p = .047$ ), student activities ( $r = .43, p = .001$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ). The administration domain correlated significantly with security and maintenance ( $r = .43, p = .001$ ), instructional management ( $r = .27, p = .047$ ), receptivity ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ). The student activities mean correlated significantly with security and maintenance ( $r = .31, p = .020$ ), instructional management ( $r = .43, p = .001$ ), receptivity ( $r = .38, p = .004$ ) and satisfaction mean ( $r = .45, p = .001$ ).

The receptivity mean correlated significantly with administration ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ), student academic orientation ( $r = .32, p = .016$ ), student activities ( $r = .38, p = .004$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .45, p = .001$ ). Student academic orientation correlated significantly with teacher and student relationships ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ), security and maintenance ( $r = .31, p = .021$ ) and student peer relationships ( $r = .34, p = .010$ ). The student behavior values mean correlated with teacher and student relationships ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ), student peer relationships ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = .27, p = .044$ ).

### **Multiple Regression Analyses**

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to determine if the nine school climate domains are predictive of teacher satisfaction. A second stepwise multiple regression was employed to determine if the nine domains with the addition of satisfaction were predictive of receptivity to change. The assumptions of multiple regression were verified using the scatterplot of residual values, a histogram of residual values, and tolerance values. For the regression predicting satisfaction, the scatterplot of residual values was random in shape, indicating independence of residuals and homogeneity of variance of residuals. The overall

magnitude of residual values indicated that the predictors and the criterion are linearly related. The histogram of residual values indicated normality. The tolerance value for the two included predictors was .93. For the regression predicting receptivity, the scatterplot of residual values was random in shape, indicating independence of residuals and homogeneity of variance of residuals. The overall magnitude of residual values indicated that the predictors and the criterion are linearly related. The histogram of residual values showed a slight positive skew, but can be considered relatively normal in shape. The tolerance values for the three included predictors were all above .90.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to help determine which of the nine climate domains could be used to predict job satisfaction. Administration was shown to have the strongest association with satisfaction and was entered into the stepwise regression first  $t(51) = 4.68, p < .001, b^* = .47$ . Using administration as the sole predictor, approximately 34% of the variance in satisfaction is explained,  $F(1, 52) = 27.61, p < .001$ . Instructional management was also shown to significantly predict satisfaction  $t(51) = 4.39, p < .001, b^* = .44$ . When the administration and instructional management domains were combined in the regression, approximately 52% of the variance in satisfaction is explained,  $F(2, 51) = 28.28, p < .001$ . There was a small difference noted between the coefficient of multiple determination and the adjusted coefficient of multiple determination, which suggests that the models are relatively stable. Information from the model summary for this stepwise regression is presented in Table 4.

Table 3

*Multiple Regression Analysis Using Satisfaction as Dependent Variable*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.58 <sup>a</sup>	.34	.33	.58
2	.72 <sup>b</sup>	.52	.50	.50

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), administration

b. Predictors: (Constant), administration, instructional management mean

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the significance of the coefficient of multiple determination for each model. Using administration as the sole predictor, a significant amount of the variance in satisfaction is predicted,  $F(1, 52) = 27.61, p < .001$  ( $R^2 = .34$ ). Adding instructional management as a second predictor increases this significant proportion of predicted variance in satisfaction,  $F(2, 51) = 28.28, p < .001$  ( $R^2 = .52$ ).

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to assess whether the nine climate domains and teacher satisfaction are predictive of teacher receptivity to change. Three climate domains indicated predictability to teacher receptivity to change. As with the regression on satisfaction, administration is shown to have the strongest association with receptivity and was entered into the stepwise regression first,  $t(50) = 5.29, p < .001, b^* = .54$ . Using administration as the sole predictor, approximately 36% of the variance in receptivity was explained. Student activities was also shown to significantly predict receptivity,  $t(50) = 2.72, p < .01, b^* = -.27$ . The combination of administration, student academic orientation and student activities led to the best predictive model of receptivity,  $t(50) = 2.23, p < .05, b^* = .23$ . There was a small difference noted between the coefficient of multiple determination and the adjusted coefficient of multiple determination. This suggests that the models are relatively stable.

Table 4

*Multiple Regression Analysis Using Receptivity as Dependent Variable*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.59 <sup>a</sup>	.35	.34	.70
2	.67 <sup>b</sup>	.45	.42	.66
3	.70 <sup>c</sup>	.50	.47	.63

*Note.* a. Predictors: (Constant), administration

b. Predictors: (Constant), administration, student academic orientation

c. Predictors: (Constant), administration, student academic orientation, student activities

An ANOVA was conducted to test the significance of the coefficient of multiple determination for each model. Using administration as the sole predictor, a significant amount of the variance in receptivity is predicted,  $F(1, 52) = 28.70, p < .001 (R^2 = .35)$ . Adding student academic orientation as a second predictor increases its significant proportion of the predicted variance of receptivity,  $F(2, 51) = 20.90, p < .001 (R^2 = .45)$ . Adding student activities further increases the significant proportion of explained variance of receptivity  $F(3, 50) = 16.68, p < .001 (R^2 = .50)$ .

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The purposes of this study included assessing the relationship between the dimensions of climate and teacher satisfaction; and further evaluating the impact of those dimensions with teacher satisfaction on receptivity to change. The other purpose was to create a survey instrument to assess the impact of school climate and teacher receptivity to change. The data collected in this study add to the limited literature on the impact of climate in the school and how it influences the ways in which teachers receive change. The creation of a valid and reliable instrument is the first step toward assessing the impact of climate on teachers and ultimately the persons whom they serve, the students. The instrument was based on a review of literature on school climate as well as previously developed instruments that evaluate various aspects of climate within schools. From the overall review of literature, more than 80 articles were chosen that strongly represent the existing literature on climate and environmental impact within a school. These articles supported the domains created for this survey: teacher and student relationships, security and maintenance, student academic orientation, student behavioral values, student/peer relationships, parent, school and community relationships, instructional management, student activities and administration. Items were then developed for use on the survey. The survey items were based on research into school climate and factors that influence school environment. I consulted with an expert in survey development to clarify the wording of

initially developed items as well as delete items that appeared to be redundant or unrelated to the literature. The result was a final survey comprised of 63 items that have content validity. The survey was formatted for online delivery. Approval for data collection within the districts was first solicited by the district superintendents. Once that approval was obtained, the potential participants were individually e-mailed with information describing the survey, its purpose and a live link that would give them access to the survey.

### **Analysis**

Administration and instructional management were found to be predictors of a proportion of job satisfaction in teachers. In other words, these two domains were found to have an impact on how teachers perceive their satisfaction in the work place. The domains of administration, student academic orientation and student activities were also found to have significant interaction and to be predictors of receptivity in a school. These three domains were found to have an impact on how teachers perceive their own receptivity to change in the school environment. These findings support the findings in the literature and from previously developed assessments that these domains may serve as predictors of teacher receptivity to change. This means that these domains have an effect on how receptive teachers are to change in the school environment. The analysis does not support the hypothesis that satisfaction has a direct impact on how receptive teachers are to change. Three domains demonstrated a direct relationship in predicting receptivity, while two domains indicated a direct relationship in predicting satisfaction.

It is important to consider the limitations of this study and the factors that may have influenced the outcome. It is also important to reflect on what could be altered if the study were to be replicated in the future. This study was conducted as an evaluation of teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of eleven domains on job satisfaction and receptivity to change. The data

were collected from different districts that were independently administrated by different superintendents. If significant changes were happening in one district and not another, teachers' perceptions of the importance of each domain may have been altered. District responses were not compared, so these differences were not taken into account. This study was also conducted electronically via e-mail contact with teachers logging onto a survey web page. If this study determine if changes were occurring in the districts which may impact the overall results of the survey.

Although more than 900 potential respondents were solicited, the actual number of participants was very low, making the application of the results limited. The respondent pool would be higher (and the results more conclusive) if the participants were solicited from the whole state or from multiple states.

Data collection was challenging because there are several education programs in the state of Indiana and the pool of potential respondents receive regular requests to participate in survey data collection. Furthermore, incentives to participate were not offered. I was contacted by several of the respondents who stated that they would participate if incentives were offered as their time was valuable. Finally, some of the survey items may have been perceived as sensitive. Even with assurances of anonymity teachers may have been hesitant to report perceptions of the administration in their building or district.

This study investigated the theoretical underpinnings associated with the concept of climate. Specifically, the potential contributors of school climate were investigated and a tool to measure school climate was developed. Despite the historical roots, the conceptualization of school climate remains debatable. School climate has been researched as it relates to achievement concerns but never before to evaluate receptivity to the changes implemented in the



environment. School climate as it pertains to receptivity to change is the center of this project and may help in the provision of a framework for introducing change and monitoring its success.

First, the review of literature established a clear definition of climate. This definition was supported by the work of Creemers and Reezigt (1999), who wrote about schools having individual personalities, and Sweeney (1992), who described climate as the “feel” of the school. The idea of school climate having clearly defined factors which influence the environment was established by Brookover et al. (1978), who found that school climate is comprised of multiple factors. More recently, Freiberg (1998) provided further support for the idea that school climate is the function of multiple factors.

This study focused on the definition of school climate as a composition of multiple factors as suggested by Freiberg (1998) and Brookover et al. (1978). Factors that influence climate within a school are thought to have a significant impact on student success in the educational environment, and previous researchers have studied climate as it pertains to students’ academic success. In this study, climate was investigated as it relates to teacher receptivity to change and satisfaction in the workplace. Two factors which influence job satisfaction of teachers and three factors which influence receptivity to change in the academic environment were found.

Satisfaction, which is believed to be a contributor of school climate, was shown to be influenced by the administration of the building and how those administrators support the teaching staff. The items in the survey that contribute to administration focus on teacher perception of the relationship between teacher and administration as well as the role of administration of the buildings within the district and not the district administration as a whole. If teachers perceive a closer relationship with the administration, one in which the administrator

serves as a support rather than a micromanager, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Teacher satisfaction is also influenced by teacher perception of instructional management. If teachers perceive that they have time to prepare and execute lesson plans during the school day they are more likely to be satisfied, thereby impacting the overall environment of the school.

Receptivity is influenced by teacher perceptions of administration and the role the administration plays in the school. Better perceptions of the teacher and administrator relationship lead to greater receptivity to change. Receptivity is also influenced by student academic orientation. Teachers who perceive students to be hardworking are more likely to be receptive to change in the school. Finally, receptivity is influenced by the degree of student activities and their availability to the students in the school. If teachers perceive that students are involved in after-school activities, they may believe that the students see the school environment as one of learning and development, thereby making the teachers more receptive to changes which would be beneficial to students.

This study was conducted to better understand school climate domains and their connection to teacher receptivity to change and teacher employment satisfaction. The findings highlight how human relationships as well as perceptions of involvement relate to school climate. The domain of administration was shown to be significant to the teachers who participated in this survey in both areas of receptivity to change and satisfaction in the workplace. When discussing relationships with teachers and their administrators, Rosenholtz (1986) suggested that school administration can be an opportunity creator, not an order giver. The primary job of the principal is leadership. While the modern administrator is an active member of the school work team, it is important for teachers to remember that the principal is not just one more member of the group. The effective leader helps to frame the issues and keep

the school focused on priorities while establishing positive collegial relationships with all participants in the school environment.

The importance of organization and time management in job satisfaction as discussed in Cook (1954), suggested that a teachers attitude toward children in the classroom was related to teacher efficacy. Ryans and Wandt (1952) identified several effective teaching characteristics, highlighting the teacher's ability to be sociable, businesslike, reactive to change, and tolerant as well as the teacher's desire to please peers, students, administration, and families in the school. All of these characteristics were related to student response in the educational environment.

Jones et al. (1981) discussed the impact of student academic orientation on climate in the schools suggesting that school personnel attitudes are an important key to student success in the mainstream educational setting. Interactions between students and teachers are an integral part of the teacher-learner process and shape teacher perceptions and expectations of the student behavior in the classroom.

School-sponsored extracurricular activities were reported as significant to teachers in their receptivity to change. Research conducted by Finn (1993), suggests that extracurricular activities give students an opportunity to develop group cooperation skills, responsibility, strength, endurance, develop competitive skills, experience cultural diversity, and develop a sense of belonging to their community. These activities provide a link to lessons learned in the classroom, giving students an opportunity to practically use academic skills in a real-world context, and should be considered a component of a well-rounded education. Researchers further suggest that participation in these activities increases students' sense of belongingness to their school, consequently decreasing the likelihood of academic failure and dropping out (Fisher, Grady & Fraser, 1995).

The results of this study are useful because change is regularly implemented in schools by teachers, who are often not included in the decisions about what kinds of change are introduced. This study speaks to the variables that could be addressed prior to introduction of change.

### **Use of the Survey**

School climate impacts all of the participants in the academic environment. There is also an established link to the climate of the school and achievements of the participants (Freiberg, 1998). There are many elements which may affect the climate of a school. The survey created for this study was meant to investigate nine of those elements and may be useful to help administrators and school psychologists assess the climate of a school and the receptivity of teachers prior to initiation of change. Understanding teachers' perceptions prior to the initiation of change may help administrators increase the chance of intervention integrity and success. The research conducted for this study would suggest that if teachers feel supported and nurtured through changes they may be more likely to support the changes and implement them successfully. One potential implication of this study could be that the school psychologist be more involved with the process. School psychologists are typically viewed as the primary mental health provider of a school. That concept could be generalized to the care of the staff and faculty in the form of administrator support.

### **Limitations**

There is limited literature on the impact of school climate in academic settings, and little has been conducted using more modern methodologies. Much of the research used to support the development of this survey, while strong, has not been conducted recently. As a result, this research is limited by changes in society and technology that may be available to current

participants in an educational environment. Further, some of the research used to support this study was conducted abroad and may not be generalizable to the American education system.

This study was limited by the small population of respondents from a geographically limited area. Any survey that relies upon the perceptions of individuals is limited because of environmental factors which may influence their perceptions. Factors which may influence perception include the time an individual spends in the environment, the perceived power of the person in that environment, and job roles and responsibilities. Geographically limited responses are always subject to scrutiny because of many environmental factors that are not able to be generalized to larger diverse areas. For example, smaller school districts have methods of instruction and curricula which may not be used in many other areas.

This research was completed with the assumption that the participants responded honestly to the survey presented to them. Operating under that assumption, this is further limited by the low response from the participants solicited. More than 900 participants were asked to participate in this survey and fewer than 60 completed the survey. Several potential participants contacted me via e-mail stating that they did not have time to complete tasks outside of their job requirements; some asked if there was an incentive for their participation. When I responded to the e-mails advising the participants that no incentive plan was in place for this survey, they responded with refusal to participate. Some expressed hostility at being bothered with this solicitation in their place of employment and refused to participate.

### **Future Research**

There are many potential influences on the climate of a school. Culture and ethnicity of both the teachers and students of a school will influence the ways in which they relate to each other, thereby impacting the school climate. Greater exploration of culture and ethnicity in

academic relationships would assist in developing a better understanding of how those factors relate to climate. More work may also be done to collect qualitative data from teachers who complete the survey. Qualitative data collected from interviews with individuals and focus groups would lend depth to the perceptions reported in the survey. Qualitative exploration would best be conducted using the domains rather than individual items and creating prompts for the domains to give the respondents a chance to reflectively explore each stimulus. A thematic analysis could be conducted with that data to support content validity of the domains.

### **Summary**

This study was conducted to investigate domains of school climate and their impact on teachers. A survey was designed to be administered to individual teachers or groups of teachers within school districts. Many districts were asked to participate in the survey, but response was very limited. Teachers reported their perceptions through the eleven domains. Multiple regression analyses were performed to evaluate school climate domains and how the climate related to teacher receptivity and satisfaction. The analyses indicated that two domains had an impact on teacher job satisfaction: administration and instructional management. The analyses also indicated that three domains impacted teacher receptivity to change: administration, student academic orientation and student activities. The limitations of this study are limited participant response and limited geographic area of study. The findings of this study provide a better understanding of factors which may influence teacher receptivity to change in schools.

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## APPENDIX A: SCHOOL CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

*You are being asked to participate in a research project to investigate the relationship among school climate, teacher job satisfaction and receptivity to change. This research is through the use of a survey questionnaire. The process should take no longer than 20 minutes of your time. Due to the nature of the survey there will be nothing to link you to the answers on your survey. The information gained from your participation will only be viewed by myself and my dissertation supervisor. There are no known risks to your participation in this survey. The information gained in the survey will assist in developing a better understanding of the relationship among school climate, teacher job satisfaction and teacher receptivity to change in the educational environment.*

*The following items have been developed to create a snapshot of the school climate in this building. Please respond to each as honestly as possible. All responses are confidential. Thank you.*

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>			<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. The relationship with most of my students is positive.....5	4	3	2	1
2. My students respond well to my instructional methods.....5	4	3	2	1
3. My students seem to respect me. ....5	4	3	2	1
4. I respect all of my students. ....5	4	3	2	1
5. I enjoy getting to know my students over the academic year. ....5	4	3	2	1
6. Special needs students make my job more challenging.....5	4	3	2	1
7. A diverse population of students makes classroom a better learning environment. ....5	4	3	2	1
8. When I am on this school campus, I feel safe.....5	4	3	2	1
9. I believe adequate precautions are taken for my safety at this school.....5	4	3	2	1
10. I believe adequate precautions are taken for my students' safety at this school. ....5	4	3	2	1
11. Security measures are discussed and reviewed regularly. ....5	4	3	2	1
12. My school is in a safe neighborhood. ....5	4	3	2	1



13. I feel safe when I come in during evenings or vacations.....5	4	3	2	1
14. I regularly see an administrator during the school day. ....5	4	3	2	1
15. Interactions with the administration are satisfying. ....5	4	3	2	1
16. I only see administrators during times of stress.....5	4	3	2	1
17. Our administrators have my best interest in mind. ....5	4	3	2	1
18. I am received positively when I voice a concern to the administration.....5	4	3	2	1
19. The administration acts upon my suggestions. ....5	4	3	2	1
20. The administrators are available. ....5	4	3	2	1
21. I value the relationship with my administration. ....5	4	3	2	1
22. This school is focused on academic progress for my students. ..5	4	3	2	1
23. This school is focused on state-based testing. ....5	4	3	2	1
24. My students enjoy my classroom. ....5	4	3	2	1
25. My students are engaged in classroom activities. ....5	4	3	2	1
26. My students regularly submit homework assignments. ....5	4	3	2	1
27. My students ask questions during class. ....5	4	3	2	1
28. I seem to spend a lot of time disciplining students. ....5	4	3	2	1
29. I am able to assign independent student work with little direct supervision.....5	4	3	2	1
30. The students in my classroom abide by the classroom rules. ....5	4	3	2	1
31. The students in my classroom are respectful of the property of others.....5	4	3	2	1
32. The students in my classroom are respectful of others' personal space. ....5	4	3	2	1
33. The students of my classroom seem to have positive relationships with each other. ....5	4	3	2	1
34. The students of my classroom seem to be clique oriented.....5	4	3	2	1
35. My students accept all classmates regardless of their ethnicity...5	4	3	2	1

36. My students accept all classmates regardless of their academic ability. ....5	4	3	2	1
37. During whole-school events the parents/guardians of my students are willing to assist. ....5	4	3	2	1
38. During classroom events the parents/guardians of my students are willing to assist. ....5	4	3	2	1
39. The parents/guardians of my students are involved in Parent/Teacher Planning committees. ....5	4	3	2	1
40. The parents/guardians of my students help in purchasing classroom supplies. ....5	4	3	2	1
41. Our classroom receives donated school supplies from community organizations. ....5	4	3	2	1
42. I have enough time for educational planning in my work day. ..5	4	3	2	1
43. I have sufficient supplies to provide meaningful instruction. ....5	4	3	2	1
44. My students have enough time to make educational progress during the day. ....5	4	3	2	1
45. My classroom environment is sufficient for the number of students in my classroom.....5	4	3	2	1
46. My classroom environment is sufficient for learning activities. ....5	4	3	2	1
47. Our school offers a variety of extracurricular activities. ....5	4	3	2	1
48. The student body is aware of extracurricular opportunities.....5	4	3	2	1
49. The parents/guardians of our students are aware of extracurricular opportunities. ....5	4	3	2	1
50. The extracurricular activities at this school complement the diverse population of students. ....5	4	3	2	1
51. School activities are affordable to students. ....5	4	3	2	1
52. There is sufficient attendance at extracurricular activities to maintain their availability. ....5	4	3	2	1
53. The activities at our school have diverse attendance. ....5	4	3	2	1
54. I am presented new ideas in a timely fashion before implementation is expected. ....5	4	3	2	1

55. I receive training before new ideas are to be implemented. ....5	4	3	2	1
56. Should questions arise, the leaders who present change are available to me after the initiation of change. ....5	4	3	2	1
57. I am made aware of the reasons for change. ....5	4	3	2	1
58. I am made aware of the effect the changes have on the school environment. ....5	4	3	2	1
59. My school does not implement changes often. ....5	4	3	2	1
60. I am satisfied with my relationship with the administration in my building. ....5	4	3	2	1
61. I am satisfied with the relationship I have with my colleagues. ...5	4	3	2	1
62. I am satisfied working in my current school. ....5	4	3	2	1
63. I am satisfied with my current school district. ....5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAINS AND ASSESSMENT ITEMS ON THE  
SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

<u>Domain Name</u>	<u>Domain Items</u>
Teacher and Student Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The relationship with most of my students is positive.</li> <li>2. My students respond well to my instructional methods.</li> <li>3. My students seem to respect me.</li> <li>4. I respect all of my students.</li> <li>5. I enjoy getting to know my students over the academic year.</li> <li>6. Special needs students make my job more challenging.</li> <li>7. A diverse population of students makes a classroom a better learning environment.</li> </ol>
Security and Maintenance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. When I am on this school campus, I feel safe.</li> <li>9. I believe adequate precautions are taken for my safety at this school.</li> <li>10. I believe adequate precautions are taken for my students' safety at this school.</li> <li>11. Security measures are discussed and reviewed regularly.</li> <li>12. My school is in a safe neighborhood.</li> <li>13. I feel safe when I come in during evenings or vacations.</li> </ol>
Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. I regularly see an administrator during the school day.</li> <li>15. Interactions with the administration are satisfying</li> <li>16. I only see administrators during times of stress.</li> <li>17. Our administrators have my best interest in mind.</li> <li>18. I am received positively when I voice a concern to the administration.</li> <li>19. The administration acts upon my suggestions.</li> <li>20. The administrators are available.</li> <li>21. I value the relationship with my administration.</li> <li>22. This school is focused on academic progress for my students.</li> </ol>
Student Academic Orientation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23. This school is focused on state-based testing.</li> <li>24. My students enjoy my classroom.</li> <li>25. My students are engaged in classroom activities.</li> <li>26. My students regularly submit homework assignments.</li> <li>27. My students ask questions during class.</li> </ol>

	28. I seem to spend a lot of time disciplining students.
Student Behavioral Values	<p>29. I am able to assign independent student work with little direct supervision.</p> <p>30. The students in my classroom abide by the classroom rules.</p> <p>31. The students in my classroom are respectful of the property of others.</p> <p>32. The students in my classroom are respectful of others' personal space.</p>
Student Peer Relationships	<p>33. The students of my classroom seem to have positive relationships with each other.</p> <p>34. The students of my classroom seem to be clique oriented.</p> <p>35. My students accept all classmates regardless of their ethnicity.</p> <p>36. My students accept all classmates regardless of their academic ability.</p>
Parent, Community and School Relationships	<p>37. During whole-school events the parents/guardians of my students are willing to assist.</p> <p>38. During classroom events the parents/guardians of my students are willing to assist</p> <p>39. The parents/guardians of my students are involved in Parent/Teacher Planning committees.</p> <p>40. The parents/guardians of my students help in purchasing classroom supplies.</p> <p>41. Our classroom receives donated school supplies from community organizations.</p>
Instructional Management	<p>42. I have enough time for educational planning in my work day.</p> <p>43. I have sufficient supplies to provide meaningful instruction.</p> <p>44. My students have enough time to make educational progress during the day.</p> <p>45. My classroom environment is sufficient for the number of students in my classroom.</p> <p>46. My classroom environment is sufficient for learning activities.</p>
Student Activities	<p>47. Our school offers a variety of extracurricular activities.</p> <p>48. The student body is aware of extracurricular opportunities</p> <p>49. The parents/guardians of our students are aware of extracurricular opportunities.</p> <p>50. The extracurricular activities at this school complement the diverse population of students.</p> <p>51. School activities are affordable to students</p> <p>52. There is sufficient attendance at extracurricular activities to maintain their availability.</p> <p>53. The activities at our school have diverse attendance.</p>

Receptivity	<p>54. I am presented new ideas in a timely fashion before implementation is expected.</p> <p>55. I receive training before new ideas are to be implemented.</p> <p>56. Should questions arise, the leaders who present change are available to me after the initiation of change</p> <p>57. I am made aware of the reasons for change</p> <p>58. I am made aware of the effect the changes have on the school environment.</p> <p>59. My school does not implement changes often.</p>
Satisfaction	<p>60. I am satisfied with my relationship with the administration in my building.</p> <p>61. I am satisfied with the relationship I have with my colleagues.</p> <p>62. I am satisfied working in my current school.</p> <p>63. I am satisfied with my current school district.</p>

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT SOLICITATION LETTER

September, 1, 2009

Dear Fellow Educator,

You are invited to participate in a research study about school climate, teacher receptivity, and job satisfaction. This research project is being conducted by Sherri Eaton-Bin Daar through Indiana State University. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the relationship between school climate, teacher job satisfaction and teacher receptivity to change. School Climate is defined as the atmosphere, or feel of a school as interpreted by the participants in that environment (Halpin and Croft, 1963).

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study, nor are there any costs for participating in this study. The information you provide will help me understand if the survey questions are clear and address the purpose of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate please complete the survey by visiting:

[http://survey.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV\\_e9gWMembHzzMYFC&SVID=Prod](http://survey.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_e9gWMembHzzMYFC&SVID=Prod).

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey or about your participation in the study you may contact me at 812-201-6754 or [seatonbinda@isugw.indstate.edu](mailto:seatonbinda@isugw.indstate.edu). You may also wish to contact Dr. Eric Hampton, Chairperson of my research committee at 812-237-2890 or [ehampton@isugw.indstate.edu](mailto:ehampton@isugw.indstate.edu).

Please complete the survey at your earliest convenience. The survey will remain active for 30 days.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Sherri Eaton-Bin Daar, MS; LSP

Indiana State University

## APPENDIX D: DISTRICT PARTICIPATION INVITATION E-MAIL

Dear Fellow Educator,

My name is Sherri Eaton-Bin Daar. I am a doctoral candidate in Guidance and Psychological Services/School Psychology at Indiana State University. I am requesting you to permit educators in your district to participate in my dissertation study. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the relationship between school climate, teacher job satisfaction and teacher receptivity to change. Hopefully, this study will provide valuable information to administrators in the area of school climate and how it impacts change.

Teachers would be asked to fill out an online survey. All responses will be confidential and information will be aggregated for the total statewide participant pool. Information will not be reported on individual schools or districts. The survey is expected to take no more than 20 minutes of their time. The survey is specific to elementary school teachers. The survey will be electronically distributed in the Fall of 2009.

This research has been deemed exempt from oversight by the Institutional Review Board of Indiana State University. If you are willing to allow this research to be conducted in your district, please reply to this email address [seatonbinda@isugw.indstate.edu](mailto:seatonbinda@isugw.indstate.edu). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 812-201-6754. You may also contact the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Eric Hampton, 812-237-2890, [ehampton@isugw.indstate.edu](mailto:ehampton@isugw.indstate.edu).

Respectfully,  
Sherri L. Eaton-Bin Daar, MS, LSP