A STUDY ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS IN ZAYARTHIRI TOWNSHIP

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers concerning parental involvement and school climate in Zayarthiri Township. A total of 300 teachers (7 males and 293 females) from selected Basic Education High Schools in Zayarthiri Township were chosen as the participants by using simple random sampling technique. As research instruments, School Climate Survey developed by Thapa et al., (2013) and Parental Involvement Questionnaire developed by Epstein (2007) were used to measure teachers' perceptions on parental involvement and school climate. Results from descriptive statistics independent the levels of teachers' perceptions on parental involvement and school climate were satisfactory in Zayarthiri Township. According to the results of independent samples *t* test, it was found that there were no significant differences in both parental involvement and school climate by qualification. However, the ANOVA results revealed that there were significant differences in both parental involvement and school climate by teaching experience. Teachers who have high teaching experience possessed better perceptions on both parental involvement and school climate than those who had lower teaching experiences. Moreover, Pearson's Product Moment correlations revealed that parental involvement was positively correlated with school climate ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$). In this study, it was found that the better perceptions on school climate the teachers possessed, the higher level of perception on parental involvement they had.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, School Climate

Introduction

Importance of the Study

Continuous improvement in schools and the education system has become an interesting challenge for educational scholars. The aim of continuous improvement is collaboration between teachers, principals and parents as a team to improve the process of student learning (Weller, 2000, as cited in Pourrajab et al., 2018). On the other hand, this kind of collaboration requires a positive climate in schools. Currently, a series of school reforms have been implemented in education systems around the world (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D' Alessandro, 2013) in order to improve student learning. A positive school climate can foster the development of students, parents, teachers, and administrators which make up the school community (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008, as cited in Jacobs, 2018).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) claimed that parental involvement is included contribution of family members, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncle to children's education and development. Sheldon (2002, as cited in Pourrajab et al., 2015) defined parental involvement as investment make by parents for their children. Parental involvement has many positive effects on students other than academics, including increased motivation, self-esteem, and self-reliance, which may lead to academic success regardless of economic background. Conversely, research affirms that inadequate or no parental involvement contributes to low student achievement and engagement (Bower & Griffin, 2011, as cited in Martinez, 2015).

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In this study, the relation of school climate and parental involvement of teachers in Zayarthiri Township was examined. Based on the results of this study, it is hoped to highlight the ways and means of improving communication to parents, development teams and assist school with their overall climate in Zayarthiri Township.

Aim of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers concerning parental involvement and school climate in Zayarthiri Township. The specific objectives of this study were described as follows.

(1) To investigate level of perceptions of teachers on school climate in Zayarthiri Towhship,

(2) To examine the differences in perceptions of teachers on school climate by qualification and teaching experience,

(3) To investigate level of perceptions of teachers on parental involvement in Zayarthiri Towhship,

(4) To explore the differences in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement by qualification and teaching experience,

(5) To find out the relationship between parental involvement and school climate as perceived by teachers in Zayarthiri Township.

Definitions of Key Terms

School Climate   :   School climate is the character and quality of school life, which is a reflection of organizational structures, teaching and learning practices, interpersonal relationships, values, goals, and norms (Cohen et al., 2009, as cited in Either, 2017).

Parental Involvement   :   Parental involvement refers to the individual practices or types of involvement that may be implemented with the school-family partnership (Graham, 2009).

Teachers' Perceptions   :   This term refers to insight or knowledge about school climate or parental involvement based on their experience (Dixon, 2008).

Review of Related Literature

School Climate

School Climate is vital for quality education. According to Freiberg (1999, as cited in Jacobs, 2018) school climate consists of atmosphere, feelings, tone, setting, or milieu of the school. Cohen et al., (2009) reported that school climate refers to the character and quality of school life. School climate may be based on a set of experiences in the school environment such as goal setting, values, norms, teaching and learning practices, and relationships. School climate is the personality of the school. A positive school climate can foster the development of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. It is necessary to work together to achieve the mission and vision of the school and to provide an environment that meets the needs of all its inhabitants.

In this study, school climate was measured by using School Climate Survey which was developed by Thapa et al., (2013). This scale includes five dimensions: Safety; Relationships; Teaching and Learning; School Environment; and School Improvement Process. The meanings of five dimensions were as follows:

Safety: Feeling safe - socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically - is a fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Thapa et al., 2013). Feeling safe in school powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development (Devine & Cohen, 2007, as cited in Thapa et al., 2013). Students feel less safe in large schools and that verbal bullying is more likely to occur at such schools (Lleras, 2008, as cited in the Center for Social and Emotional Education, 2010).

Relationships: The cooperation of principals, teachers, and parents to the implementation of a good school climate is necessary (Pourrajab et al., 2015). One of the most important aspects of relationships in school is how connected people feel to one another (Thapa et al., 2013).

Teaching and Learning: Teaching and learning represents one of the most important dimensions of school climate. School leaders and teachers should strive to clearly define the sets of norms, goals, and values that shape the learning and teaching environment (Thapa et al., 2013). One of the principal's and teachers' responsibility is to define the aims and values which made the teaching and learning environment.

School Environment: This dimension categorized into two parts: (a) school connectedness/engagement and (b) physical layout and surroundings of school as well as resources and supplies (Pourrajab et al., 2015).

School Improvement Process: School improvement process is one of the factors for implementation of school reform program successfully (Gregory, Henry, & Schoeny, 2007; Guffey, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Cohen, 2011, as cited in Pourrajab et al., 2015). Teachers are expected to positively persuade students, not only teaching them to read, write, and think in words and numbers, but also to help them develop their social and moral sensitivities, character, and citizenship (Cohen, 2012, as cited in Pourrajab et al., 2015).

Parental Involvement

The role of parental involvement in school has been emphasized in several theories and frameworks by various authors (Graham, 2009). Swap (1993, as cited in Graham, 2009) identifies four models that describe the relationship between schools, families, and the community. These models include: (a) the protective model, (b) school-to-home transmission model, (c) the curriculum enrichment model, and (d) the partnership model. Additionally, Connors and Epstein (1995, as cited in Graham, 2009) developed a fifth model: the overlapping spheres of influence model.

Epstein has identified a framework which containing six important factors with regards to parental involvement. This framework is based on findings from many studies of what factors are most effective with regards comes to childrens education (Epstein, 1995, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2009, as cited in Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Those six factors are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community.

Parenting: The first dimension of parental involvement is parenting and includes helping families with basic parenting skills, encouraging home conditions to support children in the

educational process, and assisting schools to understand families (Epstein et al., 2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011).

Communicating: Communicating refers to parent-initiated and school-initiated contact regarding school programs and student progress. Communication is defined by Epstein (2001, as cited in Herrell, 2011) as the ability to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and student progress.

Volunteering: The third type of parental involvement is volunteering and is defined as recruiting and organizing people to assist and support the school and the students (Epstein, 2001, as cited in Herrell, 2011). Volunteering is more than be present at the school and offering assistance during the day, but consists of supporting the goals of the school and the learning process in any way, in any place, and at any time (Epstein et al.,2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011).

Learning at Home: Learning at home is the fourth type of involvement described by Epstein and refers to providing ideas to families on ways to assist their children in learning activities at home including homework and other curriculum related activities, decision-making and planning (Epstein et al., 2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011). Learning at home activities that encourage children to share and discuss assignments and ideas with family members support two-way connections between the home and the school regarding the curriculum and other school related activities (Epstein, 2001, as cited in Herrell, 2011).

Decision-Making: Epstein has identified decision making as including families in school decision making and developing parent leaders and representatives within the school (Epstein et al., 2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011). By allowing parents to represent the school in leadership roles, parent leaders can assist families and the community in understanding and contributing ideas to support school programs (Epstein, 2001, as cited in Herrell, 2011).

Collaborating with the Community: Collaborating with the community refers to coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school to support learning (Epstein et al., 2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011). The community is comprised of everyone influencing the educational experiences of students not just those living in neighborhoods near or around the school (Epstein et al., 2009, as cited in Herrell, 2011).

Method

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were chosen from 6 Basic Education High Schools in Zayarthiri Township. The sample was chosen by using simple random sampling method. The total number of the sample participants were 300 (males=7 and females=293) teachers.

Research Design and Method

In this study, quantitative approach, descriptive research and questionnaire survey method were used.

Instrumentation

The first instrument was the School Climate Survey which was developed by Thapa et al., (2013). It measures the teachers' perception on school climate by five subscales, namely Safety,

Relationship, Teaching and Learning, School Environment and School Improvement Process. The total items used in the present study were 22 items which were examined by five-point Likert scale. All items were positively stated.

The second instrument, Parental Involvement Questionnaire was used to measure the perceptions of teachers on parental involvement in Zayarthiri Township. It was developed by Epstein (2007) and it has six subscales, namely Parenting, Communicating, learning at Home, Volunteering, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community. The total items used in this study were 30 items and all are five point Likert scale. All items were positively stated.

Data Analysis and Findings

In this section, findings of the present study will be discussed in accordance with the respective specific objectives.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Level of Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate in Zayarthiri Township

Variable	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	*SD*
School Climate	300	42	109	76.13	19.602

Table 1 showed the minimum score, maximum score, mean and standard deviation for teachers' perception on school climate in Zayarthiri Township. It was found that the minimum score and maximum score of teachers' perceptions on school climate were 42 and 109; with mean and standard deviation were 76.13 and 19.602.

According to the results, observed mean score for teachers' perceptions on school climate in Zayarthiri Township was 76.13 while the highest possible score from School Climate Survey was 110. And then, the lowest possible mean score was 22 and the average possible mean score was 66. Since the observed mean score (76.13) was greater than the average possible mean score (66) in teachers' perceptions on school climate, it can be concluded that teachers' perceptions on school climate in Zayarthiri Township was satisfactory level.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Qualification

Variable	Qualification	*N*	Mean	*SD*
School Climate	BEd/MEd	73	76.86	18.353
	BA/BSc/MA/MSc	227	75.89	20.020

In Table 2, for school climate of teachers, the mean and standard deviation of BEd/MEd degree holders were 76.86 and 18.353; those of BA/BSc/MA/MSc degree holders were 75.89 and 20.020. It was found that the mean score of BEd/MEd degree holders (76.86) for perceptions of teachers on school climate was greater than that of BA/BSc/MA/MSc degree holders (75.89) with the mean difference (0.97).

Table 3 Result of Independent Samples *t* test for Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Qualification

Variable	Qualification	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*MD*
School Climate	BEd/MEd	73	0.37	298	0.250	0.97
	BA/BSc/MA/MSc	227				

According to the result of *t* test, it was found that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions on school climate by qualification. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' qualification was not the factor which can make different in teachers' perceptions on school climate.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Teaching Experience

Variable	Teaching Experience	*N*	Mean	*SD*
School Climate	Below 10 years	64	70.88	17.206
	10-19 years	115	77.08	19.130
	20-29 years	55	71.35	18.718
	30 years and above	66	83.55	21.062

According to Table 4, for teachers' perceptions on school climate, the mean score of teachers who have 30 years and above teaching experience was the highest (83.55), followed by those who have teaching experiences between 10 and 19 years (77.08), and those who have teaching experiences between 20 and 29 years (71.35). The teachers who have teaching experience below 10 years was the least in mean score (70.88) for teachers' perceptions on school climate among different teaching experience groups.

Table 5 ANOVA Result for Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Teaching Experience

Variable	Region of Group	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
School Climate	Between Groups	6759.091	3	2253.030	6.17***	0.000
	Within Groups	108124.096	296	365.284		
	Total	114883.187	299			

*** $p < 0.001$

According to ANOVA result, it was revealed that there was significant difference in teachers' perceptions on school climate by teaching experience, $F (3, 296) = 6.17$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore, teaching experience may be considered as one of the factors that make different in perceptions of teachers on school climate.

Table 6 Result of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons for Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Teaching Experience

(I) Teaching Experience	(J) Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	*p*
30 years and above	below 10 years	**12.670****	**.001**
	10-19 years	6.467	.128
	20-29 years	**12.200****	**.003**
20-29 years	below 10 years	0.470	.999
	10-19 years	-5.773	.261
10-19 years	below 10 years	6.203	.162

** p < 0.01

According to Table 6, it can be seen that teachers who have 30 years and above teaching experiences had better perceptions on school climate than those who have below 10 years teaching experiences and those who have teaching experiences between 20 and 29 years. But, significant differences were not found among teachers' perceptions on school climate of other teaching experience groups. So, it can be seen that teachers who have high teaching experiences possessed better perceptions of school climate than those who had lower teaching experiences.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics for Level of Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement in Zayarthiri Township

Variable	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	*SD*
Parental Involvement	300	52	147	98.18	27.533

Table 7 showed the minimum score, maximum score, mean and standard deviation for parental involvement in Zayarthiri Township. It was found that the minimum score and maximum score of parental involvement were 52 and 147; with mean and standard deviation were 98.18 and 27.533.

According to the results, observed mean score for teachers' perceptions on parental involvement in Zayarthiri Township was 98.18 while the highest possible score from Parental Involvement Questionnaire was 150. And then, the lowest possible mean score was 30 and the average possible mean score was 90. Since the observed mean score (98.18) was greater than the average possible mean score (90) in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement, it can be concluded that teachers' perceptions on parental involvement in Zayarthiri Township was satisfactory level.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement by Qualification

Variable	Qualification	*N*	Mean	*SD*
Parental Involvement	BEd/MEd	73	105.77	26.618
	Rural	184	22.12	16.29

In Table 8, for parental involvement of teachers, the mean and standard deviation of BEd/MEd degree holders were 105.77 and 26.618; those of BA/BSc/MA/MSc degree holders were 95.74 and 27.433. It was found that the mean score of BEd/MEd degree holders (105.77) perceptions of teachers on parental involvement was greater than that of BA/BSc/MA/MSc degree holders (95.74) with the mean difference (10.03).

Table 9 Result of Independent Samples *t* test for Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement by Qualification

Variable	Qualification	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*MD*
Parental Involvement	BEd/MEd	73	2.74	298	0.255	10.03
	BA/BSc/MA/MSc	227				

According to the result of *t* test, it was found that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement by qualification. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' qualification was not the factor which can make different in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement.

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement by Teaching Experience

Variable	Teaching Experience	*N*	Mean	*SD*
Parental Involvement	Below 10 years	64	91.59	26.030
	10-19 years	115	99.14	27.020
	20-29 years	55	93.49	27.109
	30 years and above	66	106.79	28.304

According to Table 10, for teachers' perceptions on parental involvement, the mean score of teachers who have 30 years and above teaching experience was the highest (106.79), followed by those who have the teaching experiences between 10 and 19 years (99.14), and those who have the teaching experiences between 20 and 29 years (93.49). The teachers who have teaching experience below 10 years was the least in mean score (91.59) for teachers' perceptions on parental involvement among different in teaching experience groups.

Table 11 ANOVA Result for Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement by Teaching Experience

Variable	Region of Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Parental Involvement	Between Groups	8981.65	3	2993.88	4.07**	0.007
	Within Groups	217673.99	296	735.38		
	Total	226655.64	299			

** $p < 0.01$

According to ANOVA result, it was revealed that there was significant difference in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement by teaching experience, $F(3, 296) = 4.07$, $p = 0.007$. Therefore, teaching experience may be considered as one of the factors that make different in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement.

Table 12 Result of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons for Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement by Teaching Experience

(I) Teaching Experience	(J) Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
30 years and above	below 10 years	15.194**	.008
	10-19 years	7.649	.263
	20-29 years	13.297*	.038
20-29 years	below 10 years	1.879	.981
	10-19 years	-5.648	.582
10-19 years	below 10 years	7.545	.283

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

According to Table 12, it can be seen that teachers who have 30 years and above teaching experiences had better perceptions on parental involvement than those who have below 10 years teaching experiences and those who have teaching experiences between 20 and 29 years. But, significant differences were not found among teachers' perceptions on parental involvement of other teaching experience groups. So, it can be seen that teachers who have higher teaching experiences possessed better perceptions on parental involvement than those who had lower teaching experiences.

Relationship between Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement and School Climate

To investigate the relationship between general parental involvement and school climate, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. The results were shown in Table 13.

Table 13 Correlation Matrix Between Parental Involvement and School Climate

Variable	School Climate
Parental Involvement	**.634**[**]

[**]The correlation is significantly at the 0.01 level.

According to Table 13, there was a significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions on school climate and parental involvement ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$). It was found that the better perceptions on school climate the teachers possessed, the higher level of perception on parental involvement they had.

Discussion and Suggestions

In this section, summary of findings, discussion and suggestions were discussed via specific objectives.

Level of Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate in Zayarthiri Township: According to the results of descriptive analyses, the mean of teachers' perceptions on school climate was 76.13. The minimum and maximum scores were 42 and 109. It can be interpreted that teachers from Zayarthiri Township had satisfactory level of perceptions on school climate.

Differences in Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Qualification: To analyze difference in perceptions of teachers on school climate by qualification, descriptive statistics and independent samples *t* test were used. According to the result, there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions on school climate by qualification. This result was consistent with Dixon's (2008) research which found no significant difference in perceptions of teachers on school climate by getting educational degree. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' qualification was not the factor which can make different in teachers' perceptions on school climate.

Differences in Teachers' Perceptions on School Climate by Teaching Experience: To explore the significant difference in perceptions of teachers on school climate by teaching experience, one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results of ANOVA showed that there were significant differences in school climate by teaching experience at 0.001 level. Therefore, teaching experience may be considered as one of the factors that make different in perceptions of teachers on school climate. Then, to find out the mean comparison in teachers' perceptions on school climate by teaching experience specifically, Post-Hoc test was computed by Tukey HSD method. So, it can be seen that teachers who have high teaching experiences possessed better perceptions of school climate than those who had lower teaching experiences. This could be because older teachers have more experience of school life, view themselves as experts to create positive school climate and have better understanding of how school is actually operating.

Level of Teachers' Perceptions on Parental Involvement in Zayarthiri Township: According to the results of descriptive analyses, the mean of teachers' perceptions on parental involvement was 98.18. The minimum and maximum scores were 52 and 147. It can be interpreted that teachers' in Zayarthiri Township had satisfactory level of perceptions on parental involvement.

Differences in Perceptions of Teachers on Parental Involvement by Qualification: To analyze difference in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement by qualification,

descriptive statistics and independent samples *t* test were used. According to the result, there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement by qualification. This result was consistent with Dixon's (2008) research which found no significant difference in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement by getting educational degree. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' qualification was not the factor which can make different in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement.

Differences in Perceptions of Teachers on Parental Involvement by Teaching Experience: To explore whether there was significant difference in perceptions of parental involvement by teaching experience, the ANOVA was used. Then, the result revealed that there was significant difference in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement by teaching experience $p<0.01$ level. Therefore, teaching experience may be considered as one of the factors that make different in perceptions of teachers on parental involvement. Then, to find out the mean comparisons in teachers' perceptions on parental involvement by teaching experience specifically, Post-Hoc test was computed by Tukey HSD method. So, it can be seen that teachers who have higher teaching experiences possessed better perceptions on parental involvement than those who had lower teaching experiences. This may be because more teaching experience teachers realize the importance of parental involvement, provide more suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level. Less teaching experience teachers should persuade parents to attend school ceremony and events and help parents to involve in advisory committee.

Relationship between Perceptions of Teachers on Parental Involvement and School Climate: In order to find out relationship between perceptions of teachers on parental involvement and school climate, the Pearson's Product – Movement Correlation was conducted. The result revealed that teachers' perceptions on parental involvement was positively correlated with their perceptions on school climate ($r=0.634$, $p<0.01$). So, it was found that the better perceptions on school climate the teachers possessed, the higher level of perception on parental involvement they had.

By examining the perceptions of teachers regarding parental involvement and school climate, an effective approach for teachers to enhance parental involvement and positive school climate and assist families, educators, and community to encourage student academic success. Teachers and headmasters are responsible to create a socially, emotionally and physically safe school climate for students.

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