Investigating Factors Influencing Classroom Emotional Climate and Their Effects on Psychological Well-Being in Nursing Students: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract: Psychological well-being encompasses positive functioning on both individual and interpersonal levels, including feelings of mastery and personal growth. This study explores the impact of classroom emotional climate on psychological well-being, with a focus on nursing students. A survey was conducted among 504 young adults aged 20-25 from five nursing colleges in Vadodara. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that the majority of participants reported average (67.7%) or good (30%) classroom emotional climates. Chi-square/Fisher's exact tests demonstrated associations between demographic variables and classroom emotional climate, particularly with the medium of education, and substance use and abuse. Furthermore, associations were found between classroom emotional climate and factors such as a focused life plan, low self-worth, effective daily routine, social skills, emotional maturity, and influential personality traits. The study highlights the significance of these factors in shaping classroom emotional climates and their subsequent impact on psychological well-being. These insights provide valuable implications for educators and policymakers aiming to promote positive classroom environments conducive to students' psychological well-being.

Keywords: Classroom Environment, Emotional Atmosphere, Psychological Health, Student Wellbeing, Nursing Education, Resilience Factors, Mental Health Outcomes.

1. Introduction

Classroom climate is a complex and dynamic environment encompassing intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects where students engage in various interactions. According to Ambrose and colleagues (2010), it influences students' learning experiences significantly. Specifically, classroom emotional climate (CEC) has been linked to students' skills, satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Students' experiences in the classroom are influenced by how teachers perceive and respond to their emotional needs. Psychological well-being refers to positive functioning on both interpersonal and individual levels, including a sense of mastery and personal growth. It affects classroom interactions and academic achievements, with improved academic skills and reduced rates of exclusion and failure. Interpersonal relationships within the classroom, such as those between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, are where emotions manifest. Understanding classroom climate involves recognizing the multitude of elements shaping it and investigating the significance of students' emotions within this context. Emotional factors influence personal relationships in the classroom and have the ability to affect cognitive functions, yet emotions have not been widely acknowledged as a primary determinant of classroom climate. Classroom climate significantly impacts learning environments, classroom behavior, and academic performance. Research indicates a strong correlation between classroom climate and students' academic success. Cohesive classrooms with clear goals and minimal conflicts provide better learning opportunities, fostering students' achievement. Mutual respect and understanding are essential for

creating a stimulating learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and exploring new content. A positive classroom climate is crucial for students' motivation, commitment, and academic achievement, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Individual and collective emotional experiences influence learners' personal and academic development, underscoring the importance of exploring emotions within educational contexts. Emotionally supportive classroom climates enhance performance and positively impact learners' emotional intelligence. Conversely, classrooms with negative emotional climates lack emotional connections between teachers and students, leading to disrespect, humiliation, or even physical aggression. In such environments, teachers may not adjust lessons based on students' needs, resulting in disengagement and discomfort. Neutral classroom climates exhibit inconsistent regard among teachers and students, with varying degrees of warmth and control. These insights emphasize the critical role of emotional dynamics in shaping classroom environments and the need for fostering supportive and inclusive climates to enhance students' learning experiences.

2. Materials and Methodology

The quantitative research approach utilized in this study aimed to explore the factors influencing the emotional climate within classrooms and its consequent effects on the psychological well-being of nursing students in Vadodara. Employing a Cross-sectional Survey Research Design, the study sought to examine various characteristics, attitudes, behaviours, and intentions of a specific group, namely 2nd to 4th-year B.Sc. nursing students. Conducting the research involved selecting 504 B.Sc. Nursing students from Vadodara using a conveniencesampling technique.

The study incorporated three main sections of the questionnaire:

- Section A: Demographic tool (Assessed through 11 questions).
- Section B: Psychological Well-being scale by Carol D. Ryff (Assessed through 18questions)
- Section C Self structured questionnaire (Assessed through 20 questions)

Prior to data collection, permissions were obtained from relevant authorities, and a schedule outlining the research activities was submitted to the research guide to ensure proper oversight. The tools used were subjected to content validity through expert evaluations, and reliability was established with a satisfactory test p-value of less than 0.05. Analysis of the collected data involved utilizing statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, chi-square test, and paired t-test to glean insights into the relationships between variables.

3. Results

Section 1: Description of Demographic Variables

Out of a total of 504 participants the majority of participants were females, comprising 388 (77%) of the total 504 participants, while males accounted for only 116 (23%). Among the age groups, the highest representation was from the 21-23 years category, with 279 (55.4%) participants, followed by 212 (42.1%) from the 18-20 years group, 9 (1.8%) from 24-26 years, and only 4 (0.8%) from 27 years and above. The majority of participants identified as Hindu, with 470 (93.3%), followed by 17 (3.4%) Muslims, 16 (3.2%) Christians, and only 1 (0.2%) with other religious affiliations. In terms of education level, 203 (40.3%) participants were in the 2nd year of B.Sc. Nursing, 160 (31.7%) in the 4th year, and 141 (28%) in the 3rd year. Regarding schooling, 282 (56%) participants attended Gujarati medium schools, while 220 (43.7%) attended English medium schools, and only 2 (0.4%) had other schooling mediums. In terms of living arrangements, 328 (65.1%) participants were day scholars, while 176 (34.9%) resided in hostels. Regarding paternal occupation, 220 (43.7%) fathers worked in other sectors, 188 (37.3%) were in government or private service, and 96 (19%) were businessmen. Similarly, 389 (77.2%) mothers worked in other sectors, 92 (18.3%) were in government or private service, and 23 (4.6%) were businesswomen. Family income distribution showed that 157 (31.2%) participants had incomes between 15001 and 25000, 119 (23.6%) between 25001 and 50000, 117 (23.2%) had incomes less than 15000, and 111 (22%) had incomes exceeding 50001. Regarding marital status, the vast majority, 490 (97.2%) participants, were unmarried, while 13 (2.6%) were married, and only 1 (.02%) was a widow/widower. Substance use was reported by 35 (6.9%) participants, while the majority, 469 (93.1%), were not using any substances.

CLASSROOM EMOTIONAL CLIMATE	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE %
AVERAGE	341	67.7
GOOD	151	30.0
POOR	12	2.4
Total	504	100.0

Section 2: Classroom Wellbeing in terms of Classroom Emotional Climate.

Section 3: Association between Demographic variables and classroom emotional climate.

The association between demographic variables and classroom emotional climate was investigated using chi-square or Fisher's exact test. The analysis revealed significant associations between classroom emotional climate and several demographic factors, particularly the medium of education and substance use and abuse. Regarding the medium of education, there was a notable correlation between the emotional climate in the classroom and the medium of education. This suggests that the language or method of instruction used in the educational environment may impact the emotional atmosphere experienced by nursing students. For instance, students from different language backgrounds or educational systems might perceive and respond to classroom dynamics differently, potentially affecting their emotional experiences. The study found a significant association between classroom emotional climate and substance use and abuse among nursing students. This implies that students who reported using or abusing substances tended to experience a different emotional climate within the classroom compared to their peers who did not engage in such behaviors. Substance use and abuse can influence psychological states and behaviors, potentially altering one's perception and interaction within the classroom setting. This association underscores the importance of addressing substance-related issues not only for individual wellbeing but also for fostering a conducive emotional climate in the academic environment.

Section 4: Association between Psychological wellbeing and classroom emotional climate.

Chi-square or Fisher's exact test was employed to examine the relationship between demographic variables and classroom emotional climate. The analysis revealed a significant association between classroom emotional climate and various demographic factors, including a focused life plan, low self-worth, effective daily routine, social skills, emotional maturity, and influential personality traits. The findings suggest that certain demographic characteristics are correlated with the emotional atmosphere experienced within the classroom among nursing students. Specifically, individuals with a focused life plan, characterized by clear goals and aspirations, may contribute to a more positive emotional climate in the classroom. Conversely, those with low self-worth, who may struggle with confidence or feelings of inadequacy, might experience a less favourable emotional atmosphere. The study found that having an effective daily routine, which promotes organization and productivity, was associated with a more positive classroom emotional climate. Similarly, students who are socially equipped, possessing strong interpersonal skills and the ability to navigate social interactions effectively, may contribute to a supportive and harmonious emotional environment within the classroom. Emotional maturity emerged as a significant factor influencing classroom emotional climate. Individuals who demonstrate emotional maturity, such as the ability to regulate emotions and empathize with others, are likely to foster a conducive emotional atmosphere in the academic setting. Influential personality traits were found to be associated with classroom emotional climate. Students with influential personalities, who possess leadership qualities and the ability to positively influence their peers, may contribute to a more positive and enriching emotional climate within the classroom.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from the study conducted by Sasha Erasmus et al. (2019) on classroom factors contributing to emotional intelligence among primary school learners indicate a significant relationship between classroom

climate and emotional intelligence levels. Positive aspects of classroom climate, such as satisfaction and cohesiveness, were positively correlated with emotional intelligence, whereas negative factors like friction, competitiveness, and difficulty were negatively correlated with emotional intelligence levels. These results underscore the importance of fostering a positive and supportive classroom environment to enhance students' emotional intelligence.Similarly, the research conducted by Jadav Manmohanbhai Bharatbhai (2023) on psychological wellbeing among youth in rural and urban areas highlights the role of gender differences in psychological wellbeing. While the area of residence did not significantly affect psychological wellbeing, significant differences were observed between male and female youths, with females exhibiting higher levels of wellbeing. These findings emphasize the need for interventions and support systems that consider gender-specific factors to promote psychological wellbeing among youth effectively. Moreover, the study by Maria R. Reyes et al. (2012) on classroom emotional climate, student engagement, and academic achievement provides valuable insights into the relationship between classroom climate and academic outcomes. Higher levels of observed classroom emotional climate were associated with higher ratings of student engagement, which, in turn, mediated the relationship between classroom emotional climate and year-end grades. This suggests that creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom can enhance student engagement, leading to improved academic achievement. In line with these findings, the present study on factors contributing to classroom emotional climate among nursing students reveals associations between demographic variables and classroom emotional climate. Specifically, the medium of education and substance use and abuse were found to be associated with classroom emotional climate. Furthermore, demographic factors such as a focused life plan, low self-worth, effective daily routine, social skills, emotional maturity, and influential personality traits were also associated with classroom emotional climate.

In total, these findings underscore the significance of classroom climate in influencing students' emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and academic achievement. Creating a positive and supportive classroom environment, characterized by satisfaction, cohesiveness, and effective engagement strategies, is crucial for promoting students' emotional and academic success. Future interventions and support systems should consider gender-specific factors and address demographic variables to enhance classroom emotional climate effectively.

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