Attitude of Secondary Level Students towards Their School Climate

Zainab Musheer
Student, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, India

Dr. Punita Govil
Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, India

Swati Gupta
Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, India

Abstract
The present study attempts to know the attitude of secondary school students towards their school climate. It explores their attitude with reference to certain demographic variables like gender, medium of instruction in the school and educational level of parents. The study has been conducted on the sample of 358 students studying at various secondary level schools of India. The tool of Hatboro-Horsham (2008) was adapted to meet the requirement of the present study. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students with reference to their gender and medium of instruction. However, no difference has been found in the attitude of secondary school students towards school climate in relation to their parental education.
Keywords: Attitude, School climate, Secondary school students, Gender, Medium of instruction, Parental education

Introduction

Over the past few years, researchers and educators have immensely worked upon school climate and its effects on students. According to Cohen et al. (2009) school climate refers to "the quality and character of school life, which generally includes the school's prevailing norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching practices and organizational structures." Howard, Howell & Brainard (1987) defined school climate as an atmosphere for learning, which includes the feeling of people about the school. Freiberg and Stein (1999) have defined school climate as "the heart and soul of the school". In the present study, the term 'school climate' refers to the life within the school environment, which includes everything that takes place within the boundaries of the school.

As school climate plays a substantial role in determining the performance of students, teachers and other school personal, it has been a topic of interest for researchers. A number of studies have been conducted so far to find out the relationship between school climate and academic achievement. For example: Hoy and Sabo (1998) and Freiberg and Stein (1999) in their study found positive link between school climate and scholastic achievement. Dwivedi (2005) found that the students having positive attitude towards school environment have significantly better academic achievements than the students having poor attitude towards school environment. Later Hoy and Miskel (2001) also supported the findings.

On the other hand, a number of researchers explored relationship between school climate and various demographic variables. For example: Lele and Sachdev (2001) found in their study that students studying in English medium schools have better attitude towards their school climate than those studying in Marathi medium schools. Results also revealed that girls have better attitude towards their school climate than boys. The findings are in coherence with the study of Biag and Sanchez (2013) who also found that female students have better perception towards school climate in comparison to male students. Contradictory results were found in the study of Devi and Mayuri (2003) who revealed in their study that male students have better attitude towards their school climate than female students. Moreover, Schneider & Duran (2010) and Fan, Williams, & Corkin (2011) also tried to find out the role of single-parent family, lower level of parental education and students' ethnic background, on the perception of students towards school climate. The results of the studies revealed that all the factors play significant roles in student's perceptions of school climate. A perusal of the studies revealed that a number of researches have been conducted on school climate with relation to gender, medium of instruction and educational qualification of fathers and mothers. All these studies have explored one or other demographical variable but the present investigators could not find any comprehensive study on secondary school students in corporating many demographic variables (gender, medium of instruction, parental educational qualification). The present study is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the Study
Briefly, the objectives of the study are to know the attitude of secondary level students towards their school

climate in relation to gender, medium of the school and educational level of parents.

Research Methodology

The present investigation is based on the sample of secondary level students of various Indian schools. Descriptive survey method has been used by the researchers. In the present study, cluster sampling technique has been employed to draw out the representative sample of the population. The study has been conducted on the sample of 358 students out of which 166 were male students and 192 female students. Among them 226 students were from English medium schools and 132 students were from Hindi medium schools.

In order to carry out the study, the researchers adapted the Hatboro-Horsham's tool (2008). The CSCI (Comprehensive School Climate Inventory) is a scientific survey based on research and theory explaining attitude towards school climate. The CSCI (2008) measures the perceptions of the school community and reveals how the population feel about the school environment. It shows the attitude of students, teachers and other personale of the school towards their school climate.

This tool has further been modified by the present researchers to suit the objectives of the present study. The number of items was reduced to 73 and the tool was converted to Hindi language also. After these modifications the tool was standardized again. The scale consisted of eight dimensions and the reliability and validity of each dimension was calculated again with the help of SPSS. The tool was validated on a sample of 200 students for content and construct validity. The reliability coefficient of the tool was also ensured by Alpha Cronbach method and the coefficient was 0.78. The below given table (No. 1) depicts the reliability coefficient of all dimensions of the scale and total scale:

Table 1: Reliability of the Inventory

Dimensions	Reliability
Physical safety	0.64
Socio-emotional safety	0.64
Quality of Instruction	0.66
Social Emotional Ethical Learning	0.72
Respect for Diversity	0.70
Community & Collaboration	0.71
Morale	0.73
Environment	0.72
Total	0.71

Table 2: Correlation between each dimension and total score

Domain and total score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
r value	.40**	.59**	.66**	.66**	.49**	47**	.70**	.61**
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

** Significant at 0.01 level

Data Analysis

The table and subsequent interpretation given below presents a detailed analysis of the data according to the objectives of the study.

Table 3: Attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate

Number	Mean	Median	Mode	s.d.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. E. of Mean	Z Value	Z Standard
358	174.23	175	175	14.22	-0.33	0.43	0.75	-0.44	±1.96

The table (3) presents various descriptive measures of attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate. The value of skewness (0.33) and kurtosis (0.43) and also the values of mean, median and mode show that data is approximately normally distributed. since z value (-0.44, where Z = Skewness / SE. of Mean) is also not significant according z standard (±1.96) (Doane & Seward, 2011) it shows that the data is normally distributed and the parametric statistics can be applied. Normalcy of the data has been described through figure no. 1. A perusal of the table also shows that an average student in the sample is able to score 174 (79.45%) i.e. an average student has favourable attitude towards his/her school climate. Thus, it can be concluded that that an average student in the sample has favourable attitude towards his/her school.
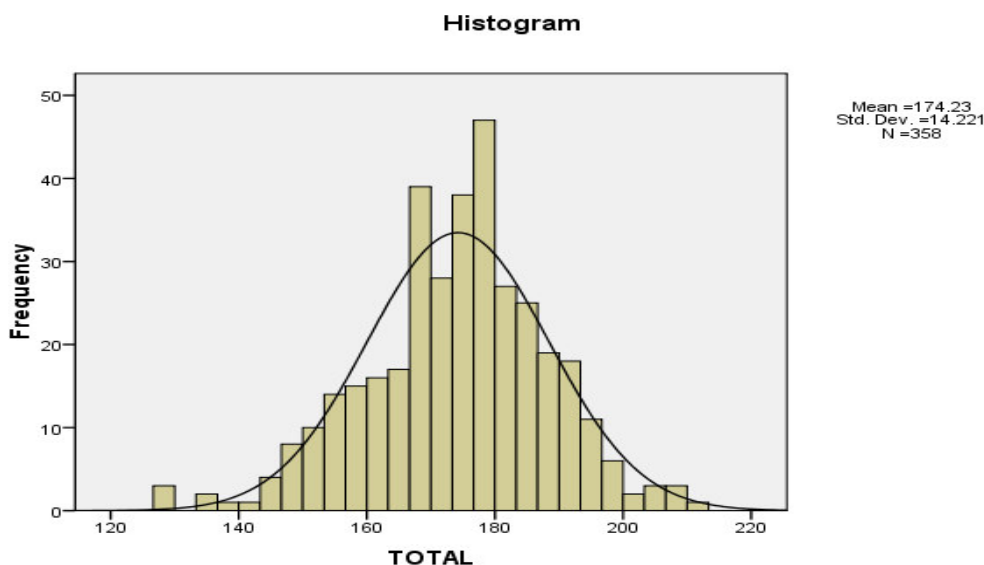
Figure1: Graphic representation of attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate

Table 4: Attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate on the basis of their gender

Groups	N	Mean	s.d.	t-value	Significance
Male students	166	176.50	12.75		
Female students	192	173.12	14.78	4.49	.035*

*Significant at 0.05 level

The table (4) reveals that the obtained t-value (4.49) is significant at 0.05 level, which confirms that there exists a significant difference between sub-groups. On the basis of mean values, (Male: 176.50 and Female: 173.12) it can be said that the male students have significantly better attitude towards school climate in comparison to their female counterparts. The results also confirm the findings of Lele and Sachdev (2001) and Biag and Sanchez (2013). The results have also been presented graphically (Fig. 2).
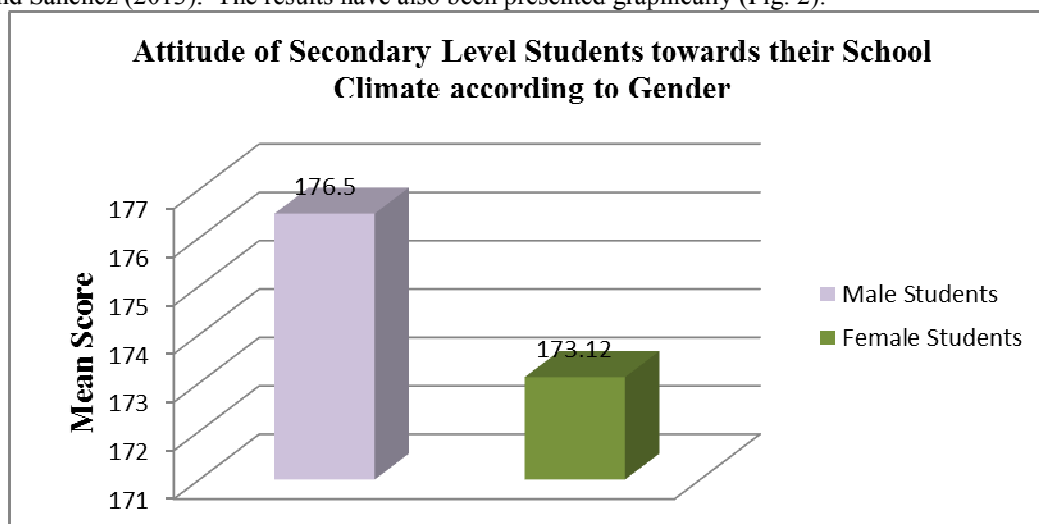

Figure 2: Attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate on the basis of their gender

Table 5: Attitude of secondary level student towards their school climate according to their medium of instruction

Medium of Instruction	N	Mean	s. d.	t-value	Sig.
English Medium	226	175.87	13.88		
Hindi Medium	132	171.42	14.41	8.30	.004*

* Significant at 0.05 level

The table (5) describes various values of students studying in Hindi and English medium schools. The obtained 't' value (8.30) is significant at 0.05 level, which confirms that there exists a significant difference between these groups. On the basis of mean values (English Medium students: 175.87 and Hindi Medium: 171.42), it can be said that the English medium students have a better attitude towards their school climate in

comparison to those student studying in Hindi medium schools. The results have also been presented graphically in Figure 3.
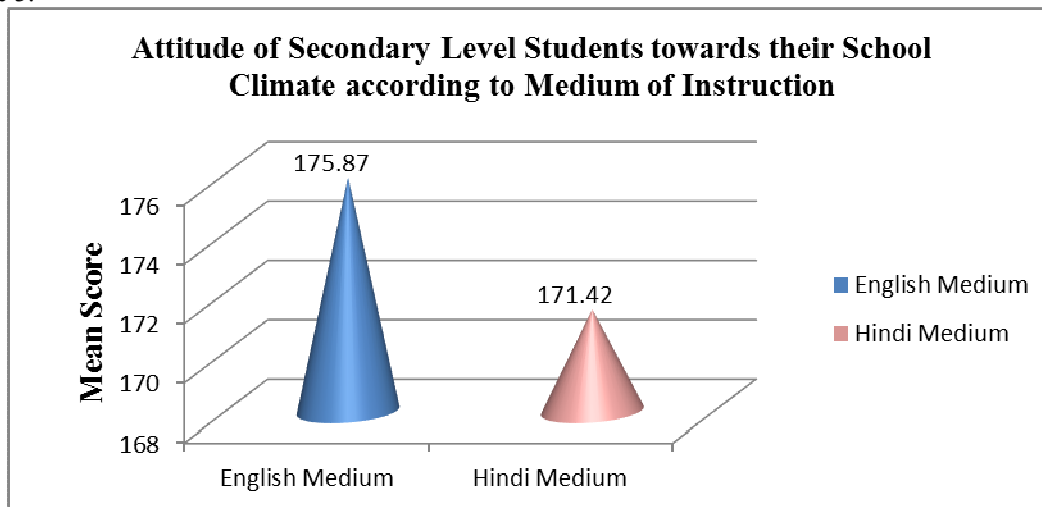

Figure 3: Attitude of secondary level student towards their school climate according to their medium of instruction

Table 6: Attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate according to their parental education

		N	Mean	s. d.	t-value	Sig.
Father's Educational Qualification	Up to Intermediate	186	174.11	13.38	0.16	0.87
	Up to post graduation	172	174.35	15.11		
Mother's Educational Qualification	Up to Intermediate	219	174.23	14.39	0.006	0.99
	Up to post graduation	139	174.22	14.00		

A perusal of the table (6) reveals that parental education does not affect the attitude of students towards their school climate. The obtained t –values (for father's educational level=0.160 and for mother's educational level=0.006) are not significant at the specified level of significance, which indicates that there exists no significant difference between the two groups. However, the findings of the study sharply contradict with the findings of Kalhotra (2011) who found significant relationship between school climate and educational qualification of parents. The results have also been presented graphically in Figure 4.
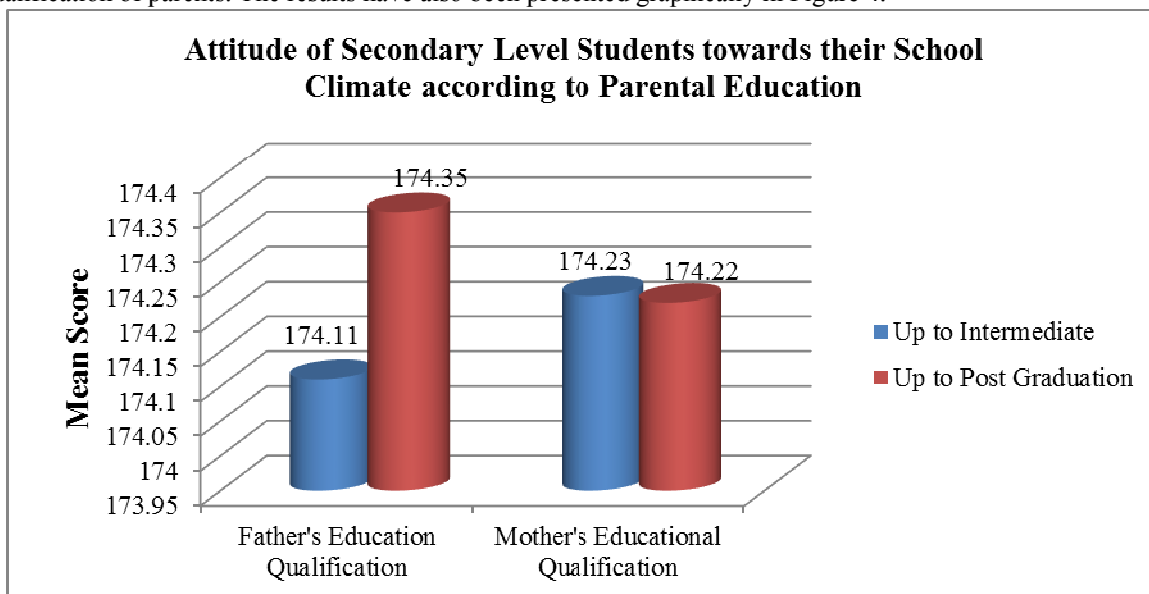

Figure 4: Attitude of secondary level student towards their school climate according to their parental education

Conclusion
The study leads to the following conclusions:

- Attitude of secondary school students towards their school climate is favorable.
- There is a significant difference between attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate in relation to their gender (male/female). Male Students have better attitude towards their school climate as compared to female students.
- There is a significant difference between the attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate regarding their medium of instruction (English/ Hindi). Students studying in English medium schools have better attitude towards their school climate as compared to the students studying in Hindi Medium schools.
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate in relation to their parental educational level.

Discussion

A positive school climate helps in the overall improvement of the school (Cohen et al., 2009). Students feel comfortable in learning when there is a positive school climate.

The study reveals that the attitude of secondary school students towards their school climate is satisfactory. It may be so because the study has been conducted on the urban population and the results may vary in case of rural population. The study has taken in consideration certain demographic variables like gender, medium of instruction and educational qualification of parents. It has been found that there is a significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students towards their school climate with reference to their gender and medium of instruction. The study reveals that male students have better attitude towards their school climate than female students. There could be many possible reasons for such difference. Male students at this age generally have good emotional adjustment and positive motivation if compared with female students. Besides, male students have broader outlook and perspective as compared with their female counterparts. It is due to their wide exposure of the society. On the other hand, females in our society are less explored to outside environment, which may result in narrow perspective and conservative outlook. The study also concluded that English medium students have better attitude towards their school climate in comparison to Hindi medium students. It may be so because students studying in English Medium schools may have better facilities of learning than the students studying in Hindi Medium Schools. Most of the Hindi medium schools are government administered and on the contrary the condition of government schools is very pathetic in comparison to privately managed schools. The study also reveals no impact of educational level of parents on the attitude of students towards school climate. It may be so because the external factors like society and peer group have more impact on learners than the factors like parental educational status.

The study confirms a positive attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate. School environments vary greatly. Whereas some students find school environment as friendly, inviting, and supportive, while others feel exclusionary, unwelcoming, and even unsafe. The feelings and attitudes that are elicited by a school's environment help in framing the personality of a student. A positive school climate helps in building the positive personality of the student. Attitude of school climate also influences student's behaviour and emotional status.

Developing positive attitude towards school climate is valuable for overall development of personality. The present education system is student centred. The quality of instruction being plays a great role in the development of a positive school climate. The curriculum framed must be useful from the practical point of view. The behaviour and the attitude of the teacher towards students play a significant role in framing attitude towards school climate. The way in which a teacher encourages the students for the active participation in classroom activities and in making decisions for life also affects attitude towards school climate. The role of the teacher is not limited to as an instructor rather he/she is a guide, friend or a philosopher. He represents the natural complexity of the real world. Teacher must have a caring attitude towards the class. He must possess a quality that not only makes him a good instructor but also a mentor and an asset for the society.

Attitude of secondary level students towards their school climate helps in the development of the personality of any student. The environment or the surrounding of any school plays an important role in the development of the atmosphere. Respect for diversity, culture and the morale are learnt in a school, and help in the development of positive personality of any individual. The age in which the students attend the secondary level is a crucial age as it is a period of transition. The perception and attitude of student in this phase of life thus becomes very much important. Physical safety in the school building and social, emotional safety also play an important role in the overall development of the personality of the learners.

The present study aimed at measuring the attitude of Secondary level schools students towards their school climate. The study included the variables like: gender and medium of instruction and parental educational background as the determinants of attitude towards school climate. A number of dimensions and variables like living place, type of school etc. are yet to be included in the study. Besides, other variables like achievement level of learners, level of intelligence, achievement motivation etc. may also be taken into consideration for more

comprehensive results.

References

- Anderson, C. S. (1982). The search for school climate: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, (52),* 368–420.
- Biag, M. & Sanchez, M. (2013). Examining students' perceptions of the school environment: sequoia high school's school climate survey. Stanford, CA: John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities.
- Cohen, J. & Geier, V.K. (2010). School climate research summary: January 2010. *School Climate Brief*, 1.
- Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy,practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record, (111),* 180–213.
- Cohen, J., Pickeral, T. & McCloskey, M. (2009). The challenge of assessing school climate. *Educational Leadership*, 66.
- Devi S., and Mayuri K., (2003). "Family factors associated with scholastic backwardness of Secondary School Children", Journal of Community Guidance and Research, 20(2): 139-148.
- Doane, D.P. and Seward, L.E(2011). *Applied statistics in business and economics, third edition,* Mc Graw Hill/ Irwin, *154-156.*
- Dwivedi (2005) Influence of School Environment and Approved Academic Achievement of Students. Journal of Educational Research and Extension, 36(3), 207-210.
- Dwivedi. R.D. (2005) Influence of School Environment and Approval Motive on Academic Achievement of Students. Ram-Eesh Journal of Education, Vol.2 (2), p. 101-107.
- *Fan, W., Williams, C. M., & Corkin, D. M. (2011). A multilevel analysis of student perceptions of school climate: The effect of social and academic risk factors. Psychology in the Schools, 48, 632–647. doi:10.1002/pits.20579*
- Freiberg, H. J. & Stein, T. A. (1999). *Introduction t*o *School climate:Measuring, improving, and sustaining healthy learning environments*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.
- Freiberg, H.J. (Ed). (1999). *School climate: Measuring, improving, and sustaining healthy learning environments*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Hall, D. T., Bowen, D. D.,Lewicki, R. J., & Hall, F. S.(1982). *Experiences in management and organizational behavior.* USA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Halpin, A. W. (1967). *Theory and research in administration*. New York: Macmillan.
- Halpin, A. W., & Croft, D. B. (1963). *Organizational climate of schools.* Chicago: University of Chicago,Midwest Administration Center.
- Hatboro-Horsham High School CSCI Report (2008). Retrieved from http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents on 1 February 2016.
- Howard, E., Howell, B. & Brainard, E. (1987). Handbook for Conducting School Climate Improvement Projects. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. 2001: Theory, Research and Practice. Retrieved from http://www.academicus.edu.al/nr8/Academicus-MMXIII-8-110-125.pdf on 15/2/15.
- Hoy, W. K. & Sabo, D. J. (1998). Open and Healthy. Retrieved from http://www.academicus.edu.al/nr8/Academicus-MMXIII-8-110-125.pdf on 15/2/15.
- Hoy, W. K., Hofman, J., Sabo D., & Bliss J. (1996). The organizational climate of middle schools: the development and test of the OCDQ-RM. *Journal of Educational Administration.* Vol.34, No.1, 41-59.
- Lele, R.P., & Sachdev, P. (2001). A study of academic performance and attitudes to learning of secondary school students in relation to their perception of the academic climate in their school. Journal of Educational Research and Extension, 38(4), 1-13.
- perspective. Journal of Research in Character Education, 8(2), 25–37.
- Schneider, B., Wheeler, J.K., & Cox, J.F. (1992). A passion for service: using content analysis to explicate service climate themes. *Journal of Applied Psychology (*77), 705–716.
- Schneider, S. H., & Duran, L. (2010). School climate in middle schools: A cultural
- Sergiovanni J. S., & Carver F. D. (1973). *The new school executive: a theory of administration*. New York: Dood, Mead and Company Inc.
- Sergiovanni T. S., & Robert J. Starratt. (1988). *Supervision: human perspectives.* New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Spencer L. M., Pelote V., & Seymour P. (1998). A causal model and research paradigm for physicians as leaders of change. *New Medicine*, 2:57-64 Current Science Inc. ISSN 1089-2524.

- Weber, J. (1995). Influences upon organizational ethical subclimates: a multi-departmental analysis of a single firm. *Organizational Science (*6), 509–523.

Web links-

➢ Cohen, J. & Geier, V.K. (January 2010). School Climate Research Summary:January2010.Retrievedfrom www.schoolclimate.org/climate/research.php on 7 February 2016.

➢ Cohen.J, Pickeral.T & Closkey.M (December 2008). The challenge of assessing school climate. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/The-Challenge-of-Assessing-School-Climate.aspx on 4 March 2016.

➢ Gandhi &Kirti, A. (2015). A study of school climate as a function of personality of school personnel and pupil control ideology. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/58022 on 12 March 2016.

➢ Positive school climate- education and training. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/beh/pdf/3.pdf 13 February 2016.

➢ Safe and accepting schools: promoting a positive school climate. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/climate on 7 March 2016.

➢ School Climate- Measuring school climate, school climate and outcomes, issues trends and controversies. Retrieved from http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2392/School-Climate.html on 26 February 2016.

➢ School Climate- Safe Supportive learning. Retrieved from http://safesupportivelearning.edu.gov/school-climate on 12 March 2016.

➢ The School Climate Challenge: Narrowing the gap between school climate research and school climate policy, practice guidelines and teacher education policy. (2007). Retrieved from http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/policy/school-climate-challenge-web.pdf   on 11 April 2016.