

Submissions Abstract Book - All Papers (Included Submissions)

0221

Measuring Management Students' Experiences: Exploring Indian Management College Climate Scale

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Research Domain: Student experiences (SE)

Abstract: The multitude of problems, including poor academic output and low attendance, are major factors that concern institutions. Policymakers in college need to focus on the different socio-ecological factors that impact the life of the students in college. Thus, this study aims to explore and conceptualise the various socio-ecological factors that impact students life in colleges. The study employs semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions of the management college students and professors, respectively, which are analysed using grounded theory. Twelve different themes emerged from the qualitative analysis, i.e., Academic Success; Classroom; Institutional Leadership; Student Engagement; Prevalence of Teasing & Bullying; Sexual Abuse/Misconduct; Usage of Alcohol and Drugs; Depressive Symptoms; Culture of Equity; Homophobia. The findings from the study are useful at both policy and practitioner levels in India, where there is no theory and literature on campus climate assessment.

Keywords: College Climate, Student Experiences, Management Education, India.

Paper:

Introduction:

Management in Business Administration (MBA) is the third most popular postgraduate programme in India, with an enrolment of 1.63% totalling more than 6.48 lakh students (AISHE 2018), after the MA (4.1%) and MSc (1.9%) in 2018 (Ravi et al., 2019). MBA colleges aim to offer a conducive climate for education that is truly global and up to the demands of the current market. However, there are many problems in college like low academic output, discrimination based on gender and socio-economic backgrounds that make the climate of a college inhospitable and toxic for students. College climate is a useful mechanism to understand the network of ecological factors and their interlinkages. Campus climate is an "intricate web of relations, socially constructed by individuals in an environment" (Hurtado et al., 2008). Hurtado et al. (1998) framework include historical legacy, structural diversity, psychological and behavioural dimensions in measuring campus climate.

The places of learning have to be free from all kinds of fear, stigma, and discrimination, and students need to feel safe in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) so that they have a comfortable climate to study, learn and grow. "The individual student's experiences account for the vast majority of learning, but these experiences are encouraged or discouraged by peers, faculty members, and institutional policies that make up the overall campus climate for learning" (Reason, 2013). Hence,

we posit that it is important in management institutions to study the campus climate and recommend making the campus environment positive and conducive to learning.

The scales developed to measure campus climate were to improve diversity within the campus. Another objective of developing these scales was to understand how individuals in the same space endanger radically diverse opinions and perceptions (Vaccaro, 2014). However, the earlier measurement of campus climate does not tell us the perceived and felt social interactions within a campus. The studies on campus climate are limited to the colleges in the western country. The campus assessment surveys are specific to a country's cultural context, making it problematic to borrow and use the earlier studied constructs to assess India's management campus climate (IMCC). Hence, through this study, we aim to conceptualise the IMCC scale for students.

Method:

An exploratory sequential mixed-methods study was employed to elicit behaviour about the critical dimensions contributing towards the development of the IMCC. In such a design, qualitative data is first collected and analysed, and themes are used to drive the development of the quantitative instrument to explore the research further. As a part of this study, we restrict to the first, i.e., analysing the qualitative data to understand various themes.

The grounded theory approach was selected (Strauss & Corbin, 2014) to analyse and understand the experiences of the students in college and the complex range of socio-ecological factors that may explain the experiences of the students. Grounded theory can provide description and interpretation to generate the conceptual models that can be further translated into the future hypothesis ([Fassinger, 2005](#); [Charmaz, 2014](#)). Focused group discussions with 15 students and five in-depth qualitative interviews with the professors in the college were conducted as part of the study.

Results:

The grounded theory analysis to understand the experiences of college students resulted in 12 core themes, namely Academic Success; Classroom; Faculty-Student Relationship; Institutional Leadership; Teaching Practices; Student Engagement; Prevalence of Teasing & Bullying; Sexual Abuse/Misconduct; Usage of Alcohol and Drugs; Depressive Symptoms and Suicide; Culture of Equity; Homophobia. The results from the exploratory study add to understanding the different dimensions in conceptualising the IMCC.

Discussion:

The study believes that campus climate assessment can become one of those initiatives that can help provide an optimal learning environment for the HEIs by measuring and identifying the gaps and problems in students experience in the institution and then suggesting changes to overcome such deficiency. Management colleges always strive to be innovative, stay relevant, and deliver world-class outcomes; campus climate can help them achieve their strategic goals. Promoting college climate and campus assessment can create awareness at an organisational/institutional level and help reduce the fear, suicides, and unnoticed ragging and reduce toxic environment within the college. Institutions need to focus not only on academic outcomes but also on the socio-ecological factors that impact students' lives and experiences in college. Further, the quantitative method of scale development can validate in future the IMCC scale. The potential of the IMCC instrument is to

become a part of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) in HEIs of India, as IDP has been envisioned in National education policy, 2020 of India.

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