Case Study of the Students' Perception of the School Climate of A Rural Primary School In China

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ABSTRACT: *A large number of studies around the world have shown that the school climate has an important impact on the growth of students. Although there are many studies on school climate, studies targeting the rural settings are limited in number. Therefore, this paper presents students' perceptions of school climate in rural schools in order to promote a positive school climate. This study was set in a selected rural primary school located in China. Data were collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews protocol. The study involved 127 students from a rural primary school in China. The findings revealed that the rural schools were unable to establish a complete school curriculum, lacked sufficient number of teachers, had shortfall of safe and adequate infrastructure, had school violence, inadequate extracurricular activities and programs, and that the teachers used punitive discipline. Inferential statistics further showed that the female students' perceptions of school policies were higher than the male students. The ≤59 academic performance students perceptions of spaces, processes, policies, and programs were lower than the 60-79 academic performance students and 80-100 academic performance students. It is hoped that this study could aid government officials in making better policy decisions to address the rural-urban educational divide.*

KEYWORDS: *Students, School Climate, Policies, Spaces, Administrators, Teachers, and Students, Programs, Processes*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Recently, there have been more research on the rural-urban gap, which has been identified as the most important factor driving inequality (Normile, 2017). In the policy aspect, the household residential permit system (Hukou System) formed a clear and strict gap between rural and urban inhabitants. In the financial support aspect, the shortage of funds in rural poor schools is a clear challenge to improve basic education in rural areas (Wang, 2003). The huge economic gap between urban and rural areas directly leads to inequalities in basic education opportunities (Liu, 2008). The shortage of teachers has resulted in many rural school teachers teaching subjects in which they have little or no training or expertise (Wu & Yang, 2005). Although there are many studies on school climate, studies targeting the rural settings are limited in number. Therefore, it is important to understand the perceptions of rural school students regarding the school climate in rural schools in order to promote a positive school climate. This study aims to investigate the students' perceptions of the rural school climate.

The Invitational Education (IE) theory (Purkey & Novak, 2008) underpins this research. The IE theory embodies contributions and influences from five domains—people, places, processes, policies and programs (Purkey & Novak, 2008). The theory and practice of IE is an ethical approach designed to create and maintain a pleasant learning environment for people in educational institutions to enhance professional growth and education outcomes (Shaw et al., 2013). Purkey et al. (2010) asserted that by addressing the whole climate of the school environment using the Invitational Education (IE) theory, schools can be built, kept safe and flourish. This theory presents a model for guiding and leading today's schools, supports the development of a school climate, and encourages people to tap into their unlimited potential (Burns & Martin, 2010; Purkey & Siegel, 2013). It incorporates the many factors that are required for achieving success in educational organizations (Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

Rosenberg et al. (2014) identified specific barriers to school improvement in rural areas, including remoteness, broad geographic boundaries, teacher recruitment and retention, obstacles, as well as limited parental involvement in school activities. Rural schools tend to have a narrower curriculum than other schools. They are also more likely to hire less experienced teachers, hire more teachers who are not certified in the subject areas that they teach, possess moderate facilities compared to other schools, and receive less material support (Toldson et al., 2006). Hickey and Harris (2005) made the point that rural schools need more efficient and effective utilization of inadequate human and financial resources. These schools were found to compensate for their lack of resources by having teachers teach at least one class or Grade level that they are not specialized

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in or in which they do not possess sufficient experience or training (Thomas, 2005). Hu (2003) pointed out that rural school students have lower educational aspirations, access and enrollment levels than suburban and urban school students. Schwartzbeck (2006) pointed out that rural schools nowadays often suffer from low or declining student enrollment rates, which directly affects the level of funding. As a result, the smaller a district, the more probable the schools there will have buildings that are not in an inadequate condition.

According to Caglayan's (2013) analysis, the school climate perceptions of the students in smaller schools were more positive and there was greater satisfaction in students from these schools. Students' perceptions of a positive school climate are significantly linked with a sense of connectedness, engagement, school motivation, learning attitudes, and pro-social beliefs and behaviors (Waters et al., 2009). Cavendish (2013) suggested that actively facilitating student involvement in educational planning could lead to an improved probability of successful graduation. Students who have a negative perception of the school's climate and interpersonal relationships often face academic challenges and difficulties in schools (Cohen & Geier, 2010). Aldridge and Ala'l (2013) have indicated that students who feel that their safety and security is taken care of may have a more positive perception of the school. Students who perceive positive school climates and feel safe at school obtain higher scores on measures of academic performance, including tests in the language, math, reading, and overall grade-point-average (Wilms & Somer, 2001). Studies have also found that students' engagement in schools is important for promoting successful school outcomes and improving the school climate (Wu et al., 2010).

II. METHODOLOGY

Although there are many studies on school climate, studies targeting the rural settings are limited in number. Therefore, this case study investigated the students' perceptions of the rural school climate in China. The study was guided by the following three questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the rural school climate?

2. Is there any significant differences in students' perceptions of the rural school climate based on gender?

3. Is there any significant differences in students' perceptions of the rural school climate based on academic performance?

The study was conducted at one selected rural primary school located in Hebei Province, in China. This school currently serves 127 students, so a total of 127 students participated in the study. The data of this study was collected from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The demographic profile revealed that 63 of the students were males while 64 of them were females. There were 19 students in grade one, 15 students in grade two, 25 students in grade three and grade five, 23 students in grade four, and 20 students in grade six. The questionnaire comprised 38 questions with 5 components, there were 11 items for administrators, teachers, and students, 8 items for spaces, 7 items for processes, 6 items for policies, and 6 items for programs. The respondents were required to respond to a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 indicated strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 somewhat agree, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree). The questionnaires used in this study were adapted from the Inviting School Survey-Revised (ISS-R). The instrument's items represent and measure major school climate factors that are assessed by experts in the field of Invitational Education. The validity and reliability of the ISS-R have been shown to be statistically significant (Smith, 2011). The pilot study also showed that the reliability of the questionnaire stood at 0.944. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed for analyzing the quantitative data.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 36 students and a purposeful sampling procedure was used. The selected student sample was based on their academic performance in the previous semester. There were two high achiever students, two mediocre achiever students, and two low achiever students from each grade to collect the qualitative data. This school currently had six grades. The semi-structured focus group interviews protocol data was analyze by NVivo.

III. DISCUSSION

The following section provides the findings of the study followed by a brief discussion of the students' perceptions of the rural school climate in Hebei Province, in China. Five aspects were explored in this study, which were policies, programs, processes, administrators, teachers, and students, and spaces.

3.1 Students' Perceptions of the School Climate

Table 1: Students' Perceptions of the School Climate (n=127)

Perceptions of Students	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Policies	1.2	1.6	9.7	28.5	59.1	4.43	0.82
Programs	1.3	2.5	18.4	31	46.8	4.20	0.91
Processes	1.8	2	17.7	31.8	46.7	4.20	0.92

Administrators, Teachers, and Students	2	3.5	16.5	31.1	46.9	4.17	0.96
Spaces	3.1	3.9	18.7	31.9	42.5	4.07	1.02
Overall	1.9	2.7	16.2	30.9	48.4	4.20	0.94

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The findings showed that 95.5% of the students were hold a positive perception of the school climate (M=4.20, SD=0.94). 97.3% of the students were of the view that this school policies were good (M=4.43, SD=0.82). 95.6% of the students felt the school programs were good (M=4.20, SD=0.91). 96.2% of the students hold a positive perception towards the processes (M=4.20, SD=0.92). 94.5% of them were of the view that the school administrators, teachers, and students had a good relationship (M=4.17, SD=0.96). It could be seen that 93.1% of the students felt the school spaces were good (M=4.07, SD=1.02). Overall, the results of the study indicate that the students had a good perception of the school climate.

3.2 Students' Perceptions of the Policies

Table 2: Students' Perceptions of the Policies (n=127)

Question Items	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Teachers are willing to help students who have special problems.	0.8	0.8	7.1	21.3	70.1	4.59	0.73
A high percentage of students pass in this school.	0.8	0.8	8.7	27.6	62.2	4.50	0.76
The grading practices in this school are fair.	0.8	0	12.6	23.6	63	4.48	0.78
School policy encourages freedom of expression by everyone.	0.8	3.1	9.4	29.1	57.5	4.39	0.85
The messages and notes sent home are positive.	1.6	0	15	29.9	53.5	4.34	0.85
Students have the opportunity to talk to one another during class activities.	2.4	4.7	5.5	39.4	48	4.26	0.94

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The results showed that majority of the students (70.1%) strongly agreed that the teachers were willing to help them (M=4.59, SD=0.73). Many students (62.2%) strongly agreed most of them could pass in this school (M=4.50, SD=0.76). Some (63%) also strongly agreed that the grading practices in this school were fair (M=4.48, SD=0.76). More than half of the students (57.5%) strongly agreed that the school encouraged them to have free expression (M=4.39, SD=0.85). 83.4% of the students agreed that the school notes sent home were positive (M=4.34, SD=0.85). 87.4% of the students considered that they had the opportunity to talk to others during class activities (M=4.26, SD=0.94). All the items mean in the policies aspect were more than 4. This indicates that majority of students were satisfied with the school policies. Interview sessions revealed that students were not satisfied with the school curriculums arrangement, rural school curriculum was dominated by the subjects required examinations. For instance, Student 2 stressed that "*I feel that physical education, art and music classes are not enough.*" For example, Student 14 highlighted that "*I feel we have less physical education classes, fewer music classes, and a lot of Chinese classes.* "

3.3 Students' Perceptions of the Spaces

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of the Spaces (n=127)

Question Items	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
The lighting in this school is more than adequate.	1.6	0	9.4	23.6	65.4	4.51	0.80
Bulletin boards are attractive and up-to-date.	3.1	2.4	15	21.3	58.3	4.29	1.02
There are comfortable chairs for visitors.	2.4	2.4	11	36.2	48	4.25	0.92
Fire alarm instructions are well posted and seem reasonable.	3.9	2.4	21.3	26.8	45.7	4.08	1.06
Space is available for students' independent study.	2.4	7.1	15	36.2	39.4	4.03	1.02
Classrooms offer a variety of furniture arrangements.	2.4	3.1	22	36.2	36.2	4.01	0.96
The restrooms in this school are clean and properly maintained.	4.7	7.1	16.5	47.2	24.4	3.80	1.04
The principal's office is attractive.	3.9	6.3	39.4	27.6	22.8	3.59	1.03

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The findings showed that 65.4% of the students strongly agreed that the lighting in this school was very adequate (M=4.51, SD=0.80). 48% of the students strongly agreed that the school has comfortable chairs for visitors (M=4.25, SD=0.92), and more than half of the students (58.3%) strongly agreed that the bulletin boards were attractive and up-to-date (M=4.29, SD=1.02). Almost half of the students (45.7%) claimed that the fire alarm instructions were well posted and seemed reasonable (M=4.08, SD=1.06). 75.6% of the students felt that the school had space for their independent study (M=4.03, SD=1.02). 72.4% students agreed that the classrooms provided a variety of furniture arrangements (M=4.01, SD=0.96). Those six items' mean in the spaces aspect is more than 4. It shows that many students felt that the school infrastructure was good, and the classrooms provide various furniture arrangements. 71.6% of the students felt that the toilets in the school were clean and properly maintained (M=3.80, SD=1.04). 89.8% of the students felt that the principal's office was attractive (M=3.59, SD=1.03). The two items mean in the spaces aspect was less than 4. This indicates that some students felt that the toilets were not clean and the principal's office was not attractive. Interview sessions revealed that

students felt that the school toilets were small or dirty. Students said that some of the school's infrastructure was damaged. They also felt the school entrance was dirty and noisy, the playground was not big enough. For example, Student 14 highlighted that "*The toilets are too dirty and smell bad. Some of the stairs are a little bit broken; uneven steps can cause us to trip and fall. Some floors, tables, and chairs in the classroom are broken and needs improvement.*"

3.4 Students' Perceptions of the Administrators, Teachers, and Students
Table 4: Students' Perceptions of the Administrators, Teachers, and Students (n=127)

Question Items	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Teachers in this school show respect for students.	0.8	3.1	5.5	20.5	70.1	4.56	0.80
Teachers spend time after school with those who need extra help.	0.8	0	5.5	36.2	57.5	4.50	0.68
Teachers are easy to talk with.	1.6	2.4	6.3	29.1	60.6	4.45	0.84
School pride is evident among students.	1.6	3.1	11	29.9	54.3	4.32	0.91
Students work cooperatively with each other.	1.6	2.4	7.1	42.5	46.5	4.30	0.83
Teachers are generally prepared for class.	3.9	3.9	11	22	59.1	4.28	1.07
People in this school are polite to one another.	1.6	1.6	11.8	38.6	46.5	4.27	0.85
Teachers share out-of-class experiences with students.	1.6	3.9	9.4	37	48	4.26	0.90
Teachers exhibit a sense of humor.	3.1	4.7	26	33.1	33.1	3.88	1.03
Teachers appear to enjoy life.	1.6	7.1	31.5	35.4	24.4	3.74	0.96
The principal involves everyone in the decision-making process.	3.9	6.3	56.7	17.3	15.7	3.35	0.95

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The results showed that 70.1% of the students strongly agreed that the teachers in this school showed respect for them (M=4.56, SD=0.80). 57.5% of the students strongly agreed that the teachers spend time after school with those who need extra help (M=4.50, SD=0.68). More than half of the students (60.6%) strongly agreed that the teachers were easy to talk with (M=4.45, SD=0.84). More than half of the students (54.3%) agreed that the school pride was evident among them (M=4.32, SD=0.91). 46.5% of the students strongly agreed that they worked cooperatively with each other (M=4.30, SD=0.83). 59.1% of the students strongly agreed that the teachers were generally prepared for class (M=4.28, SD=1.07). 46.5% of the students strongly agreed that the school people were polite to one another (M=4.27, SD=0.85). 48% of the students strongly agreed that their teachers shared out-of-class experiences with students (M=4.26, SD=0.90). The mean value of these eight items is more than 4. The data indicates that many students felt that the people in this school were polite and cooperative with each other. And teachers usually prepare for class. 66.2% of the students agreed that their teachers exhibited a sense of humour (M=3.88, SD=1.03) and many students (59.8%) believed that the teachers appeared to enjoy life (M=3.74, SD=0.96). 56.7% of the students somewhat agreed that the principal involved everyone in the decision-making process (M=3.35, SD=0.95). The three item means in the administrators, teachers, and students aspect is less than 4. This indicates that some students felt that their teachers were too strict and the principal did not involve them in the decision-making process. This concern was also articulated during the interview sessions. Students said that the relationship between the parents and the school was harmonious and pleasant. For instance, Student 2 highlighted that "*I think the principal is very good; the teachers and classmates are very good. I feel that the teacher-student relationship is very harmonious… the parent-teacher relationship is also very good.*" Meanwhile, students felt that the some school teachers was not prepared for class. Students mentioned that sometimes bullying happened in the school. For example, Student 14 highlighted that "*The science teacher always asks us to remember the answer.*" For instance, Student 36 stressed that "*Grade two students often fight with us, grade three and six students always bully us.*"

3.5 Students' Perceptions of the Programs
Table 5: Students' Perceptions of the Programs (n=127)

Question Items	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Good health practices are encouraged in this school.	1.6	0	11.8	29.1	57.5	4.41	0.82
There is a wellness (health) program at this school.	0.8	0	14.2	30.7	54.3	4.38	0.79
Interruptions to classroom academic activities are kept to a minimum.	0.8	1.6	16.5	25.2	55.9	4.34	0.87
Everyone is encouraged to participate in athletic (sports) programs.	0.8	3.1	8.7	39.4	48	4.31	0.82
School programs involve out of school experience.	2.4	3.1	21.3	38.6	34.6	4.00	0.95
The school sponsors extracurricular activities apart from sports.	1.6	7.1	37.8	22.8	30.7	3.74	1.03

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The results showed that more than half of the students (57.5%) strongly agreed that good health practices were encouraged in this school (M=4.41, SD=0.82). 54.3% of the students strongly agreed that there was a wellness program at this school (M=4.38, SD=0.79). 81.1% of the students agreed that interruptions to classroom academic activities were kept to a minimum (M=4.34, SD=0.87). Almost half of the students (48%) strongly agreed that everyone was encouraged to participate in athletic (sports) programs (M=4.31, SD=0.82).

73.2% of the students believed that the school programs involved out of school experience (M=4.00, SD=0.95). The mean of the five items in the programs aspect is more than 4. These data indicate that many students felt that they are encouraged to participate in athletic programs and health practices, interruptions to classroom academic activities are kept to a minimum, and school programs involve out of school experience. 53.5% of the students believed that the school sponsored extracurricular activities apart from sports (M=3.74, SD=1.03). This item mean in the programs aspect was less than 4. This indicates that some students were not satisfied with school's extracurricular activities. Interview sessions also revealed that students felt that they lacked extracurricular activities. For instance, Student 2 stressed that "*There are very few extra-curricular activities in our school, and I think we need to add more activities, preferably two or three times a semester.*"

3.6 Students' Perceptions of the Processes
Table 6: Students' Perceptions of the Processes (n=127)

Question Items	Distribution of responses (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Student discipline is approached from a positive standpoint.	1.6	1.6	8.7	29.1	59.1	4.43	0.84
Grades are assigned by means of fair and comprehensive assessment of work and effort.	0.8	0	15	26.8	57.5	4.40	0.80
Everyone arrives on time for school.	1.6	1.6	7.9	35.4	53.5	4.38	0.83
Classes get started quickly.	2.4	3.1	16.5	29.9	48	4.18	0.98
All telephone calls to this school are answered promptly and politely.	1.6	3.1	20.5	37	37.8	4.06	0.92
People often feel welcome when they enter the school.	1.6	4.7	23.6	31.5	38.6	4.01	0.98
Daily attendance by student and staff is high.	3.1	0	31.5	33.1	32.3	3.91	0.96

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The findings showed that more than half of the students (59.1%) strongly agreed that the student discipline is approached from a positive standpoint (M=4.43, SD=0.84). 84.3% of the students believed that the grades were assigned by means of fair and comprehensive assessment of work and effort (M=4.40, SD=0.80). Almost half of the students (53.5%) strongly agreed that everyone arrived on time for school (M=4.38, SD=0.83). 77.9% of the students agreed that the classes could get started quickly (M=4.18, SD=0.98). 74.8% of the students thought that all telephone calls to this school were answered promptly and politely (M=4.06, SD=0.92). 70.1% of the students agreed that people often felt welcome when they entered the school (M=4.01, SD=0.98). The six items mean in the processes aspect was more than 4. These data indicates that many students felt that their discipline was approached from a positive standpoint, classes get started quickly, their performance and efforts were comprehensively evaluate. 65.4% of the students agreed that the daily attendance of the students and staff was high (M=3.91, SD=0.96). This item mean in the processes aspect was less than 4. This indicated that some students felt the daily attendance of the students and staff was not very high. This concern was also articulated during the interview sessions. Students said that some teachers used corporal punishment to punish them, which made them feel sad and hurt their self-esteem. For instance, Student 16 stressed that "*If we forget to bring textbooks, the teachers make us stand in the corner.*"

3.7 Students' Perceptions of the School Climate by Gender
The one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in students' perceptions of school climate between boys and girls.

Table 7: Students' Perceptions of the School Climate by Gender (N=127)

	Male (n=63)		Female (n=64)		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Administrators, Teachers, and Students	4.14	0.99	4.21	0.94	.651	.421
Spaces	4.06	1.09	4.08	0.94	.028	.868
Processes	4.17	0.97	4.23	0.87	.308	.580
Policies	4.38	0.88	4.47	0.76	4.165	.043*
Programs	4.19	0.95	4.20	0.87	.009	.923

*p≤ 0.05 **p≤ 0.01 ***p≤ 0.001

Table 7 shows when the students' perception of the school climate was analyzed, based on gender, no significant differences were found on any subscale except for the policies (F=4.165, P=0.043). The female students perceptions of policies (M=4.47, SD=0.76) was slightly higher than that of the male students (M=4.38, SD=0.88).

3.8 Students' Perceptions of the School Climate by Academic Performance
For analyzing the academic performance, 127 respondents were required to write down the average score of the last semester. They are divided into three groups. Out of the total 127 students who completed the

questionnaires in the study, 80-100 group comprised 94 students. 60-79 group consisted of 26 students whilst the ≤59 group consisted of 7 students. To examine if there were any significant difference in students' perceptions of the school climate based on academic performance, a one-way ANOVA was applied to analyze the data.

Table 8: Students' Perceptions of the School Climate by Academic Performance (N=127)

	80-100 (n=94)		60-79 (n=26)		≤59 (n=7)		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Administrators, Teachers, and Students	4.18	0.94	4.19	0.99	4.05	1.15	.244	.784
Spaces	4.09	1.00	4.11	0.96	3.68	1.35	3.443	.035*
Processes	4.23	0.89	4.21	0.88	3.69	1.34	3.732	.027*
Policies	4.46	0.77	4.44	0.74	3.91	1.45	8.588	.000***
Programs	4.23	0.86	4.22	0.88	3.67	1.43	15.054	.000***

*p≤ 0.05 **p≤ 0.01 ***p≤ 0.001

It could be seen from Table 8 that there was significant difference in the subscales spaces (F=3.443, P=0.035), processes (F=3.732, P=0.027), policies (F=8.588, P<0.001), and programs (F=15.054, P<0.001). The ≤59 academic performance students perceptions of spaces (M=3.68, SD=1.35), processes (M=3.69, SD=1.34), policies (M=3.91, SD=1.45), and programs (M=3.67, SD=1.43) were lower than the 60-79 academic performance students and 80-100 academic performance students.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study explored 127 students' perceptions of the school climate in a selected rural primary school located in China. The findings from the current study had indicated that rural school curriculum was dominated by the subjects required examinations. Therefore, the government should take seriously into account the PE art, music, and so on subjects incorporating them into the examination. In order to ensure these subjects did not become part of the exam-oriented education system, the schools should not be allowed to increase the number of these classes shortly before the examination and ignore them for the rest of the semester.

The findings showed that some school teachers were not prepared for class, Khumalo and Mji (2014) concluded similar findings that the proportion of unqualified teachers in rural schools is high, unqualified teachers are not ideal in the teaching and learning context because they leave students with gaps in knowledge. Hence, the government should helped improve the qualifications of the underqualified teachers through upgrade programs. The governments could provide teachers with access to teaching resources through open content and help teachers integrate that content into their instruction.

The findings in this study revealed that the school infrastructure and playground were in poor condition and needed to be improved. Schools lacking facilities and insufficient resources are directly related to the academic failure of students (Lolwana, 2004). The findings in this study also revealed that the school toilets were small or dirty, the school entrance was dirty and noisy. Murtaza (2012) further supported that thousands of children have little or no opportunity to access clean and healthy sanitation facilities in rural schools. Hence, the government needed to continue to invest in rural schools in rehabilitating and renovating the existing building stock, increase, repair, and maintain school infrastructure and facilities, and encourage routine maintenance.

The findings in this study also revealed that bullying happened in the school. Victims of bullying are typically absent from school, not going near certain places in school, academic performance and health decline, and lack of self-esteem (Lai et al., 2008). Therefore, the government and the schools should develop, implement, and enforce antibullying policies. The schools should create an anonymous reporting systems, monitor school common areas, and provide ongoing professional development for school staff to deal with bullying behaviors.

The current study revealed that the extracurricular activities were not well organized. Extracurricular activities affect student behaviors in education. Students who participated in extracurricular activities have fewer behavioral problems (Massoni, 2011). Therefore, the governments and the schools needed to provide students with various extracurricular activities and other programs.

The findings also showed that teachers used corporal punishment to punish them. Students had developed senses of anxiety, fear, frustration, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and poor concentration in classes when punished (Elbla, 2012). Hence, the government and schools should provide teachers with effective classroom management skills and active school discipline skills training, and such training should include instructions on the deleterious consequences of corporal punishment.

The findings in this study also revealed that the female students perceptions of policies was slightly higher than that of the male students. The ≤59 academic performance students perceptions of spaces, processes, policies, and programs were lower than the 60-79 academic performance students and 80-100 academic performance students.

Finally, it cannot be denied that this study has some limitations. The small sample involved 127 students from a selected rural primary school located in China. Moreover, data was collected from the self-perception survey and semi-structured focus group interviews protocol. Both of these instruments have their own limitations, because respondents may provide socially desirable answers instead of the truth. Despite these limitations, this study has shed some light on improving the rural school climate in China.

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