Student's Perception of Inclusion Climate in the School

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Abstract: A comfortable campus environment means the acceptance of students who have different perspectives, experiences, attitudes, and styles to the campus, which has a positive impact on education. Making students feel welcome is an important aspect of the inclusivity process. Student learning can be enhanced by creating a friendly, caring, and supportive tone in the classroom that allows students to explore the relationships between course materials, personal, and social experiences. In general, the purpose of this study is to assess student perception of the inclusivity climate of their school. Specifically, it aims to assess the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, type of membership to an organization, classification of schools, and year level. This study assesses students' perception of the inclusion climate in their school and if is there a significant difference in their perception of the inclusion climate when grouped according to their profile. Finally, the study will give recommendations on how an inclusion climate may be done in schools. The study used the descriptive method, and data were processed using the mean, One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test. Data was gathered using the questionnaire by Schwab, 2018. The study randomly surveyed the perception of 300 college students from different Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. Most of the respondents' age ranged from 21 and 25 years old, and 78.3% were female. Mean scores ere calculated to determine the respondents' perceptions of the inclusion climate contexts. The total score and both subscales values were between 1.95 and 3.51. Among the inclusion climate contexts, the context "I try to do my best in all subjects" got a mean of 1.95 while the inclusion climate context "My instructors are not very keen on teaching students who are shy" got the highest mean of 3.51. The overall mean is 3.30, which shows that an inclusive climate is moderately evident at the Higher Educational Institutions where the respondents are studying. This finding is positive as it shows that schools are creating positive experiences for students. The study also found that there were significant differences in their perception of the inclusion climate between the age groups. The respondents' gender did not make a significant difference in their perception of their schools' inclusion climate. There is no seen significant difference in whether the respondents were student leaders or members of student organizations. Further, the school type did not affect their inclusion climate perception, whether the Higher Education Institution is private, a State University and College, or a Local University and College. Based on the findings of this study, enhancing inclusive climates for students enables better learning without barriers. Higher education institutions are encouraged to ensure that their instructors are well-trained, flexible, and responsive to the varying needs of their students. The results of this study indicate that faculty members play an important role in creating an inclusive school climate. This critical and complex climate is maintained when instructors and students work together to encourage consideration and respect.

Keywords: Inclusivity, School climate, Inclusion climate

1. INTRODUCTION (*Heading 1*)

School climate has long been associated with student behavior and attitudes. Students' perceptions and experiences in school influence the development of self-esteem, self-awareness and health behaviors. Students who dislike school are most likely to fail academically and are most at risk of exhibiting unhealthy behavior, exhibiting psychosomatic disorders, and experiencing a reduced quality of life. Students who dislike school are more likely to feel alienated from the classroom and find places where they can rebel against school authority. It is clear that the school plays an important role in a student's life.

Inclusion climate is a broad term and can be conceptualized in many different ways. One focus of this research is the academic environment at the level of the student-teacher relationship. Studies have shown that one of the many characteristics associated with positive perceptions of school is good relationships with teachers. While many students start school with the skills they need to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, some students are unprepared to meet the expectations of their teachers. Many students are unaware of teacher expectations because they are unclear or differ from expectations at home. Teachers may also be unaware of their own expectations of student behavior, knowing that different groups of teachers have different expectations With the current knowledge about the importance of student-teacher relationships, it is important for educators to assess what techniques can be implemented in the classroom and throughout the school to facilitate these relationships.

The issue of the inclusion climate is multifaceted. Inclusion climate refers to the quality and consistency of relationships within a school.

Inclusion climate is the heart and soul of a school. This is about the nature of a school where children, teachers, administrators and staff love the school and look forward to coming to school every day. Inclusion climate is about the qualities of a school that help create a sense of belonging to something beyond oneself while allowing

each person to feel their own worth, dignity and importance. The atmosphere of a school can promote resilience in the lives of those who work and learn in school. The inclusion climate determines the quality of the school that creates a healthy learning space. It promotes the dreams and aspirations of children and parents, stimulates the creativity and enthusiasm of teachers, and benefits all members (Freiberg, 1999). Studies show that school climate can affect many communities and people within a school. A positive school climate is associated with fewer behavioral and emotional problems in students (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons & Blatt, 1997).

A supportive learning environment can contribute to healthy development and prevent antisocial behavior. Research on inclusion climate suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographics can enhance academic performance and reduce maladaptive behaviors (McEvoy & Welker, 2000).

The student's perspective is important when transitioning from one school level to another. Going to a new school can be scary for students. This fear can negatively affect students' perceptions of school atmosphere and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important that schools create a positive and supportive school environment for students.). A positive school climate can provide a rich environment for both personal growth and academic success.

In general, this study aims to assess student perception of the inclusivity climate of their school. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondent in terms of:
   1.1. Age;
   1.2. Sex;
   1.3. Type of Membership to an Organization;
   1.4. Type of School;
   1.5. Year Level

2. How may the student perception of inclusion climate be described in terms of?
3. Is there a significant difference in the students' perception of inclusion climate when grouped according to profile variables?
4. What output may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive-survey research design with the online survey as the primary data-gathering tool. Descriptive research is the one that tries to assess or analyze a particular sample of a population and describe it using different means, for instance, a simple survey method. On the other hand, a survey is a simple measuring tool to gather data for a particular research endeavor.

Since the study intends to analyze student's perception of the inclusion classmate in their schools, the said research design complements. The result of this study is the basis of the student welfare and services office to propose programs and activities for an inclusive school climate.

Respondents of the Study
The study utilized purposive sampling technique. The researcher employed the questionnaire after an inclusivity webinar that was conducted. The study had 300 respondents, they are students who participated in the webinar and have opted to answer the questionnaire.

According to Saunders (2012), purposive sampling, also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when "elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money".

Instrument of the Study
This study made use of a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from a study entitled "Are we included? Secondary students' perception of inclusion climate in their schools." The instrument was developed by Schwab, Sharma, and Loreman in 2018. The purpose of his study was to examine the secondary school students' perception of the climate in their classrooms with reference to inclusive education. The instrument was modified to fit the study. All factors were identical to the original instrument with slight revisions to suit to the needs of the study.

Data Analysis
The researchers used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the gathered data to achieve its objectives. With the help of IBM SPSS v. 23, Frequency and percentage for the descriptive analysis and One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test for the inferential statistics were utilized

3. Results and Discussion

This study intends to analyze the demographic profile, the students' perception of the inclusion climate in their school, and the difference in the students' perception on the inclusion climate with regards to their profile. Based on the gathered data, the study presented the results from the computation of descriptive and inferential statistics in the succeeding tables below.

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to profile. It shows that out of 300 respondents 87.3 percent are within the range of 21-25 years old. Majority of the respondents are female and are member of student organizations. Sixty-six (66.7) percent of the respondents are from State Universities and Colleges. Majority of the respondents or 75.3 percent are in their senior year.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Below 21	21	7
21-25	262	87.3
26-30	11	3.7
Above 30	6	2
Gender		
Female	235	78.3
Male	65	21.7
Membership in an Organization	65	21.7
Student Leader	235	78.3
Member		
Type of School		
Private HEIs	25	8.3
LUCs	74	25
SUCs	200	66.7
Year Level		
1st Year	4	1.3
2nd Year	7	2.3
3rd Year	63	21
4th Year	226	75.3

Table 2 exhibits the mean of the of the student-respondents in terms their perception of the inclusion climate in their college of university. As seen from the table the the total score and both subscale values were between 1.95 and 3.51. Among the inclusion climate context, the three context with the lowest mean are "My classmates invite me to social events" got a mean of 2.39, "I have been bullied by other students in the college at least once" got a mean of 2.07 and "I try to do my best in all subjects" got a mean of 1.95, all with a descriptive rating of disagree. While the three inclusion climate context with the highest mean are "My instructors make sure that all students a re actively participating in the

majority of school and classroom activities" got a mean of 3.46, "Instructors encourage cooperation among students" got a mean of 3.47 and "My instructors are not very keen on teaching students who are shy" got the highest mean of 3.51.

The overall mean is 3.30, which shows that an inclusive climate is moderately evident at the Higher Educational Institutions where the respondents are studying. This finding is positive as it shows that schools are creating positive experiences for students.

Table 2: Student Perception of Inclusion Climate

	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. I enjoy attending my class everyday.	3.45	Strongly Agree
2. I like the majority of lessons in my school.	3.40	Strongly Agree
3. I look forward to participating in classroom activities that the instructors has planned.	2.45	Disagree
4. I receive assistance from my instructors if I struggle to do class work.	3.33	Agree
5. My instructors make learning fun.	3.35	Agree
6. Instructors and other college staff are friendly.	3.41	Strongly Agree
7. My instructors give me supportive feedback when I do well at class.	3.37	Agree
8. Most of my classmates like me.	3.29	Agree
9. I have at least one friend in school who cares about me.	3.38	Agree
10. The majority of my instructors are not interested in teaching students who struggle with their learning.	2.97	Agree
11. My instructors make sure that students, who face difficulty in learning a subject receive enough support and guidance.	3.35	Agree
12. I am happy to be at this school.	3.45	Strongly Agree
13. My instructors are impartial and apply school rules in a fair way when	2.41	Disagree

somebody misbehaves in the class.		
14. I try to do my best in all subjects.	1.95	Disagree
15. My instructors make sure that all students are actively participating in the majority of school and classroom activities.	3.46	Strongly Agree
16. My instructors are very caring about all students.	2.44	Disagree
17. My classmates invite me to social events.	2.39	Disagree
18. My instructors want me to work as good as possible and to do well.	3.44	Strongly Agree
19. I have at least one instructor in my school who I can contact if I am facing any difficulties.	3.24	Agree
20. My instructors are not very keen on teaching students who are shy.	3.51	Strongly Agree
21. I am satisfied with my school achievement in most of my subjects.	3.39	Agree
22. Instructors treat all students with respect in school.	3.38	Agree
23. I have been bullied by other students in the college at least once.	2.07	Disagree
24. Instructors are not interested in teaching students who frequently misbehave in class.	2.85	Agree
25. Instructors encourage cooperation among students.	3.47	Strongly Agree
26. Instructors cooperate effectively with each other.	3.43	Strongly Agree
27. I have to work harder than others to be valued.	3.23	Agree
28. I feel valued as a person at my school.	3.37	Agree
29. I feel I belong at my school.	3.40	Strongly Agree
30. I have considered leaving my college because I felt isolated or unwelcomed.	2.75	Agree
31. I am treated with respect at our college.	3.45	Strongly Agree
32. I perform up to my potential at my college.	3.41	Strongly Agree
33. Our college provides sufficient programs to foster the success of a diverse student body.	3.38	Agree

34. I have opportunities for academic success that are similar to those of my peers.	3.38	Agree
35. My experience at school has had a positive influence on my academic growth.	3.44	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	**3.30**	**Agree**

Based on the table below, with a p-value of 0.5, statistically there is a significant difference in the student-respondent's perception of the inclusion climate in terms of the respondents age groups. This shows that respondents perception on inclusion varies with age. The respondents' gender did not make a significant difference in their perception of their schools' inclusion climate. There is no seen significant difference in whether the respondents were student leaders or members of student organizations. Further, the school type did not affect their inclusion climate perception, whether the Higher Education Institution is private, a State University and College, or a Local University and College.

Table 3: Difference in the Students' Perception of Inclusion Climate

Profile Variable	F-value / t-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
Age	2.58	.05	Significant	Reject Ho
Sex	1.13	.26	Insignificant	Accept Ho
Type of Membership	-.65	.53	Insignificant	Accept Ho
Type of School	1.76	.17	Insignificant	Accept Ho
Year Level	1.12	.34	Insignificant	Accept Ho

4. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this research is to determine the students' perception of the inclusion climate of their institution. Based on the result of this study, the institution can create ways to make an inclusive climate for their students.

Based on the collated results from the data gathering, a large proportion of the respondents' age ranged from 21 and 25 years old, and 78.3% were female while 21.7% were male. Most of the respondents are members of organizations of different State Universities and Colleges, and are mostly in their Senior year in college.

Mean scores were calculated to determine the respondents' perception of the inclusion climate contexts. Among the thirty-five inclusion climate contexts, the

total score and both subscales values were between 1.95 and 3.51.

Among the inclusion climate contexts, the 3 context with the lowest mean are "My classmate invite me to social events" got a mean of 2.39, it shows that peer connectedness was not that evident among the students. The context "I have been bullied by other students in college at least once" has a mean of 2.07, meaning students disagree to this context and were not bullied by other students in their college.

The social inclusion context "I try to do my best in all subjects," got the lowest mean of 1.95. Respondents do not find themselves exerting their effort in their studies. This can be attributed to the lack of the peer connectedness and respondents' involvement in social activities, which would give the respondents the opportunity to have life balance.

While the social inclusion context with the highest mean focused on teacher support and care. It can be seen that though instructors have been trying to encourage cooperation and participation among students, they were focused on those students who are active in the classroom. The instructors were not able to catch the attention and participation of the students who are shy or quiet.

According to Hoffman et al., (2021) it can be assumed that to have a positive classroom climate, the role of the teacher is important, it can be regarded as a necessary condition for the successful implementation of inclusion.

Overall, the mean is 3.30 of all the social inclusivity contexts. This shows that the respondents agree that social inclusivity is evident at the Higher Educational Institutions where the respondents are studying.
This finding is positive as it shows that schools are creating positive experiences for students. Though focus on social participation and inclusion of students who are shy must be given more attention.

The study also found that there were significant differences in their perception of the inclusion climate between the age groups. According to the results of Kaufman et al., (2019) students' age can influence how they perceive inclusion and how they behave inside the classroom. Kaufman (2019) stated that younger students show less negative behavior compared from older aged students.

The respondents' gender did not make a significant difference in their perception of their schools' inclusion climate. There is no seen significant difference in whether the respondents were student leaders or members of student organizations. Further, the school type did not

affect their inclusion climate perception, whether the Higher Education Institution is private, a State University and College, or a Local University and College.

Based on the findings of this study, enhancing inclusive climates for students enables better learning without barriers. Higher education institutions are encouraged to ensure that their instructors are well-trained, flexible, and responsive to the varying needs of their students.

The results of this study indicate that faculty members play an important role in creating an inclusive school climate. This critical and complex climate is maintained when instructors and students work together to encourage consideration and respect.

To create an inclusive school climate, it is recommended that (1) Create structured discussions within the classroom and encourage respectful and fair participation, (2) use small groups to facilitate non-competitive learning and intercultural communication, (3) Anticipate sensitive issues and respond to classroom disagreements when necessary (4) Personal Approach to Students, (5) Provide Alternatives to Participation, (6) Communicate respectfully with students, (7) Offensive, discriminatory or insensitive comments should be addressed. In general, it is imperative that schools develop a school-wide approach to inclusive education. The school has: (1) an inclusive school policy; (2) personable and knowledgeable school leadership and supervision; (3) support services and staff; (4) in-service training and best practices; involvement must be established.

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