



International Journal of Educational Research and Studies

www.journalofeducation.net

Online ISSN: 2664-6811, Print ISSN: 2664-6803

Received: 21-05-2021, Accepted: 03-06-2021, Published: 21-06-2021

Volume 3, Issue 2, 2021, Page No. 14-17

School culture: Methods for improving a negative school culture

Vaibhav Verma

Student B.A. B.Ed, Department of Education, Prarambh State Institute of Advanced Studies in Teacher Education, Jhajjar, Haryana, India

Abstract

Cultural trends influence children's educational involvement. For the most part, the term "school culture" refers to the beliefs, thoughts, relations, mind-sets, and written and unwritten norms that influence and shape every aspect of how a school operates. There are two sorts of school cultures. Positive and negative school cultures. Several measures to improve academic performance and alter how schools operate have emphasised the role of school culture. Disagreements often arise as a result of pertinent reform proposals instead of the broader purpose of improving school culture. This study comprises signs of negative school culture and ways of building positive school culture.

Keywords: school culture, school education, signs of negative school culture, building positive school culture

Introduction

India has achieved significant progress in enrolling children in school during the last decade. According to the World Bank's collection of development indicators derived from officially recognised sources, primary school enrolment (percent gross) in India was reported at 96.83 percent in 2019. While Asia dominated the global fall in out-of-school children after 2000, India accounted for the majority of the fall.

Language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and the arts are all examples of cultural qualities and knowledge. The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition has defined culture as "common patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive structures, and knowledge that are gained through socialisation". As a result, it can be viewed as the development of a group identity encouraged by social processes specific to the group. "Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things," quoted Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London.

The term "culture" comes from a French term, which originates from the Latin "colere," which meaning to tend to the earth and grow, or to cultivate and nurture. "It has the same etymology as several other words connected to endorsing growth," De Rossi stated.

Children's educational participation is influenced by their cultural tendencies. Teachers must know their students and their academic strengths personally to effectively engage them in the learning process, rather than relying on racial or ethnic stereotypes or prior experience with other students of similar backgrounds. Individualist and collectivist cultures can both be used to define proper school behaviour. Teachers who are unfamiliar with a culture may misunderstand a child's behaviour and incorrectly label students as misbehaving or disrespectful.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to identify concerns of negative school cultures emerging in schools and to overcome such toxicity by building positive school culture.

Methodology

This study follows the narrative review approach. Articles related to school culture were searched and examined to reach the objectives of this study.

Material

Teachers cannot avoid the fact that their communication "styles" are influenced by their cultural background. Much of what they say, how they say it, and how they interact with children, parents, and colleagues are heavily influenced by how they were socialised. Race and ethnicity frequently play important roles in children's identities, influencing their behaviour and attitudes. Recognising this can help pupils flourish in a school culture that is unfamiliar with standards and communication.

The term school culture for the most part alludes to the beliefs, insights, relationships, mentalities, and composed & unwritten rules that shape and impact each part of how a school functions, however, the term likewise includes more substantial issues like the physical and mental wellbeing of children, the efficiency of study halls and public spaces, or how much a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or social diversity.

A school culture, like the social culture, is formed by both conscious and unconscious attitudes, values, relationships, and practices, and it is highly influenced by a school's specific institutional history. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members all contribute to the culture of their school, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how the school operates, or the ideals upon which the school was formed. According to Thomas J. Sergiovanni, Culture is the most

powerful source of leverage for bringing about change in a school or any organization, for that matter.

School cultures can be broadly classified into two types:

1. Positive School Cultures.
2. Negative School Cultures.

Numerous researchers, educators, and authors have sought to define the major characteristics of positive and negative school cultures, and there is a plethora of studies, articles, and books on the subject. Furthermore, several educational groups, such as the National School Climate Center, have provided thorough definitions of positive school cultures and techniques for enhancing them. Positive school cultures, broadly defined, are beneficial to both professional satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness, as well as student learning, fulfilment, and well-being.

Positive school culture or climate is one in which students feel appreciated, cared for, and respected. Such an environment promotes high-quality education as well as genuine engagement both in and out of the school.

According to a study, school culture is very important. "Positive learning can occur only in a positive culture. A positive school culture will have a greater impact on student and teacher success than any other reform or school improvement endeavour now in place" – Gary Phillips.

The following is a representative list of some of the qualities that are usually connected with positive school cultures:

1. Individual accomplishments of teachers and students are acknowledged and appreciated.
2. Transparency, honesty, respect, and gratitude define interrelationships.
3. Faculty connections are convivial, cooperative, and creative, and all personnel is expected to high-quality standards.
4. Students and staff members believe mentally and psychologically protected, and the school's rules and resources encourage student safety.
5. Constructive, healthy practices are exhibited for students by school administrators, instructors, and members of staff.
6. Errors are not perceived as failures, but rather as opportunities to learn and improve for both students and faculty.
7. Students are consistently driven to academic excellence, and the vast majority of them achieve or surpass those standards.
8. Essential leadership issues are addressed collectively, with involvement from faculty, students, and parents.
9. All students, including minorities and those with impairments, receive equitable access to educational facilities and learning opportunities
10. All students have access to assistance and facilities that they may desire to achieve.

Positive school culture is distinguished not just by the elimination of discrimination, ferocity, or discipline issues, but also by the presence of a system of standards and values that focus everyone's attention on what matters most and drive them to work hard toward a common goal.

Occasionally, the culture develops dysfunctional ideals and beliefs, negative customs, and caustic ways of engaging. These are referred to as toxic school cultures or negative school cultures. These cultures are discouraging in nature. Toxic environments in

schools induce a swing in emphasis away from student development.

Signs of toxic school culture:

1. Ineffective leadership.
2. Differential treatment.
3. A lack of diversity.
4. Unpredictability and ambiguity in communication.
5. Threatening and Punishing.
6. Inappropriate behaviour.
7. Inequality.
8. There is no assistance with student behaviour issues.
9. Embarrassing behaviours
10. The principal is unappreciative of his employees.
11. Hostile relations among faculty.
12. Permitting educators to be abused.
13. Intimidating analyses.
14. Feeling obligated to contribute additional time and resources.
15. The Teachers do not have the administration's support.
16. Ineffective communication.
17. Relocating instructors without their consent.
18. There is no recognition for your achievements.

In negative school culture, faculty consider pupils to be a burden instead of a valued client. They're occasionally a part of toxic subgenres which are antagonistic and critical of the change. They do not explore new ideas, methods, and strategies as they assume to be doing their utmost. They tend to share unpleasant, disheartening, and demoralising stories and historical perspectives on the school. Concepts, resources, or remedies to classroom concerns are rarely shared. Complain, criticise, and be sceptical of any new ideas, strategies, or opportunities for the future put forward by planning committees. There are very few ceremonies or school customs that celebrate what is optimistic and upbeat about their institution.

These schools are not enjoyable places to work, and they rarely try to improve things. Toxic cultures stymie and hinder reform attempts in a variety of ways. Faculty here feels fear of being criticised or ridiculed for offering fresh ideas and suggestions. Due to the pessimism and sense of hopelessness produced by antagonistic faculty who refuse to recognise that progress is feasible, planning sessions led by the school development council or committee are frequently half-hearted. New employees who introduce a vision of opportunity and enthusiasm are promptly suppressed and re-socialized into negative mind-sets. Projects collapse due to the absence of desire. Proposed initiatives fail to be implemented because inspiration and dedication to change are inadequate or non-existent.

Nobody wishes to operate in such institutions. However, reforming these crumbling institutions requires direction, patience, and dedication. Many schools, thankfully, are not this awful, but many have these kinds of cultural patterns that make improvement problematic.

Many initiatives to transform how schools operate and enhance educational outcomes have centred on the concept of school culture. While a school's institutional past has a strong influence on its culture, it also generates social patterns, habits, and dynamics that impact future actions, which can impede change and progress.

A school leader is necessary to uphold their institution's culture, their roles in building a positive school culture can be defined in three steps. Firstly by analysing and comprehending their school's present culture. This entails watching educators' behaviours in the classroom and faculty meetings, as well as learning students' general opinions regarding the school and the staff. Secondly identifying the elements of their school that enhance the ambiance and those that produce negative emotions in educators and learners. Lastly identifying the positive elements of their school culture and entail other ideals, behaviours, or qualities that they would like to see in their school. Then, take measures to enhance those positive attributes and foster a positive school culture.

Developing action plans can also aid in coping with negative cultural concerns. An Action Plan is a strategy for organising a district or school improvement process. It could take the shape of a school management document or a publicly available site. Action plans may be evaluated and amended on an annual basis depending on progress made during the previous year or to reflect shifting school goals and values, however, multiyear action plans are also popular. An action plan often contains information such as a school's improvement goals, specific strategies or techniques, roles and responsibilities, and so on.

To overcome such toxicity in school culture there are several ways to build positive school culture.

1. Cultivate solid relationships.
2. Teach positive life skills.
3. Inspire students by serving as role models.
4. Promote problem-solving skills for all students.
5. Acknowledge students for making wise decisions.
6. Lay down criticism and hostility, face-to-face and strive to deflect negativity.
7. Safeguard novel sources of positive concentration and effort.
8. Deliberately seek out more creative and innovative personnel.
9. Embrace the excellent and improving aspects of the school with zeal.
10. Invest time, energy, and resources in the effectiveness of enhancement practices and initiatives.
11. Reconnect teachers towards the goal to encourage all children in learning and flourishing.
12. Facilitate positive parental participation as a priority.
13. Honour personal accomplishments and ethical behaviour.
14. Adopt values-based school norms.
15. Follow a systematic measure of discipline.
16. Exhibit the behaviours you want to see in your institution.
17. Engaging learners in activities that will benefit them.
18. Cultivate engaging customs and beliefs for students and faculty.
19. Foster students' creativity in the classroom.
20. Professional development for faculty.
21. Keep your school's physical surroundings in good condition.
22. Keep a keen eye on your school's culture and adjust accordingly.

It is the responsibility of school leaders, principals, teachers, and sometimes parents to assist in eliminating the crippling effects of negative cultures and creating and reinforcing positive student-focused cultures. Reforms will stagnate in the absence of

constructive, collaborative environments, faculty's enthusiasm and dedication will dwindle, and student learning will deteriorate. Putting together a management team comprised of a diverse group of school officials, educators, students, parents, and the local community to assess and steer a school improvement program. Assessing students, parents, and educators regarding their school perspectives as well as organising discussion boards in which stakeholders are invited to deliver their perspectives on and ideas for the school and its initiatives. Forming an advisory service that connects groups of students with professional advisers to develop adult-student interactions and ensuring that students are well acquainted and encouraged by at least one professional in the school. Offering conferences, workshops, and unique lessons to educate students and staff concerning harassment and prevent such incidents.

Fostering learning communities that empower teachers to interact, exchange knowledge, and operate more cooperatively and effectively. Conducting training and learning environments that dignify and embrace the student body's ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity, such as sponsoring cultural festivals and events, displaying culturally appropriate components throughout the school, encouraging traditional indigenous leaders to interact with students, or creating a vital connection among students' diverse cultural backgrounds and what has been taught.

As a result, disagreements tend to rise in response to specific reform concepts rather than the overarching goal of enhancing school culture. However, given that institutional dysfunction is, by specification, an ensconced pattern of often unconscious behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs that obstruct organisational change and enhancement because humans can become strongly attached to emotions and behaviours that make them less happy, fulfilled, productive, or successful attempts to reform school cultures may be more prone to failure.

In recent years, school culture issues have been mentioned as causes for school closures or the dismissal of a major percentage of the teaching personnel. In many circumstances, "school culture" may become a catalyst in larger arguments about specific school-reform policies and techniques.

Conclusion

Negative School Culture can take many years to improve as it is highly influenced by a school's specific institutional history. Planned measures and attitudes towards dealing with toxic culture are very crucial for building a positive culture, it is not an overnight process. However, this will come with its worth. Since all school cultures are special, it is essential to research and foster comprehension of the fundamental reasons for any discussions, including the prior social conditions that might be adding to the discussions.

References

1. Deal T, Peterson K. Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998. http://archive.wceruw.org/ccvi/pub/ReformTalk/Year_1998/Nov_98_Reform_Talk_11.html
2. Fareed A. School culture, 2013. <https://www.slideshare.net/apsswl/school-culture-16230069>
3. Futterman L. Beyond the Classroom: The impact of culture on the classroom, 2015. <https://www.miamiherald.com/>

news/local/community/miami-dade/community-voices/article36727782.html

4. Huisman J, Rani U, Smits J. School characteristics, socio-economic status and culture as determinants of primary school enrolment in India, 2010.
5. India - School Enrollment, Primary (% Gross). (n.d.). <https://tradingeconomics.com/india/school-enrollment-primary-percent-gross-wb-data.html>
6. Moshman R. (n.d.). 20 Signs of a Toxic School Culture to Be Aware of. <https://www.boredteachers.com/teaching-and-career-tips/20-signs-of-a-toxic-school-culture>
7. O'Callarain, L. School culture, 2016. <https://www.slideshare.net/LorcanOCallarain/school-culture-57827743>
8. Raudys J. 11 Real Ways to Build a Positive School Culture, 2018. <https://www.prodigygame.com/in-en/blog/school-culture/>
9. School Culture, 2013. <https://www.edglossary.org/school-culture/>
10. Verma V. Action Research in Academics: A Brief Introduction, 2021. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.36543.43684.
11. Zimmermann K, 2017. What is Culture?. <https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html>