



Original Article

Students' Perception of the Learning Climate

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Abstract

The study was conducted to acquire the base line information about perception of learning climate of education environment. To assay the climate of the medical education in Dhaka medical college, the Medical Education Environment Measure (MEEM) questionnaire was administered, completed and returned to the researcher by the 50 students of third year MBBS. The analysis of this inventory showed that the students felt that the teaching was teacher centered, not concerned to develop their competence and problem solving skills. Teachers were authoritarian and not good at providing feedback but they did not ridicule the students. Most students' felt that they have made in right career choice but have not learned a lot about empathy in the profession. Students felt that politics, atmosphere in the classroom and in the hostels, and teacher student relationship as well as relations among the students themselves influenced the learning environment.

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Introduction

Pierce (1994) states that the classroom is a critical locus for students interpersonal and educational development. The notion that classrooms have distance atmospheres or climate that mediates the students' interpersonal and educational development has been in the working vocabulary of educators and researchers for years. Also, pierce (1994) states that students outcomes, such as subject matter achievement and attitude towards a school subject, might be improved by crating classroom environment that are more conducive to learning. The Medical Education Environment such as the relationships among students and between students and teachers and the organizational structure to be characterized. Such climate assessment can be used, largely as a diagnostic tool for educational purpose, to

discover the nature of the education provides for the students and seek to improve that education.

The MEEM instrument is being developed by Roff. McAleer and Harden (1996) to provide an inventory that enable administrators and educators to measure the state of their school's learning and teaching climate.

If the information about the climate of the medical education environment is available it may used as basis of judgement about how 'good' the environment is (Geen and Harden, 1986). Climate is a powerful determinant of achievement and satisfaction, whether it is the climate of the whole school, or of classrooms that is involved (Heartel et al., 1981; Fraser, 1981b; O'Reilly, 1975). Geen and Harden (1986) also state that climate assessment is a way of assessing the nature of educational practice of the medical school and its

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sub-environments. In addition together with curriculum, resources, and leadership, the school climate of educational environment makes major contribution to the effectiveness of a school (Fisher and Fraser, 1990).

Objective of the study

To assay the climate of the medical education environment in the Dhaka Medical College, by using the Medical Education Environment Measure inventory (MEEN).

Methodology

To assay the climate of medical education environment the researcher administered the Medical Education Environment Measure (MEEM) inventory to the students of the third year in the lecture class of community medicine: 50 students returned the completed questionnaire. The MEEN is a 58-item questionnaire to be answered on a scale from strongly agrees (4) to strongly disagree (0). Also an open-ended question also asked students to list other factors which they felt had in influence on the learning environment. Responses to this open-ended question were analyzed and interpreted. As the students of Bangladesh, and specially students of medical colleges, are too heavily involved in local as well as national politics the responses to this open question gave the researcher some enlightenment on the political as well as other socio-cultural environment of the college.

The collected information was analyzed in the computer on the program of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). For analysis each variable was divided into three categories by collapsing the sectors obtained by the students. Therefore, score 1 and below were stated as negative, 3 and above as positive and 2 as unsure response in regard the particular variable of the MEEM. Also the MEEM inventories were clustered into 5 areas (domains) to facilitate the analysis of an institution's climate.

Results

For easy analysis each variable was given one of three scores. responses 0 and 1 were called

negative, 3 and 4 were labeled positive. The unsure response remained same. It was found in the table of student's views of teaching that most of the students (58%) stated that the teaching was not students centered.

Good friends, knowledgeable teachers, companionship, effective teaching time and certainly over career choice are all positive characteristic of this medical college, according to this sample of the third year students.

On the other hand, poor support for victims of stress, inadequate time for a social life, insufficient emphasis of developing confidence, and poor teaching atmosphere on the ward and in lectures were all the negative feature of the institution. Most of the students (58%) stated that the teaching was not student centered. Seventy percent of students stated that the teaching was not sufficiently concerned to develop their competence. Sixty eight percent (Table 4) of the students felt that their teachers were authoritarian. Half of the students thought their teachers were not well prepared for the class and 44% pointed that the teachers did not give clear examples. Only 40% were felt to have good communication skills with patients.

Seventy six percent (76%) of the students affirmed that they were happy in their choice of career but some 10% were decidedly unhappy.

Nearly half of the (45%) of the students said they had not learned a lot about empathy in their profession in addition a further 61% students felt that their problem solving skills were not being well developed.

Thirty-nine ((78%) students stated that student politics in the college had an influence on the learning environment of the college. Eight (16%) students expressed that the teachers' relationship with the students had an influence on the learning environment of the college. Ten students reported that methods of teaching had in influence on the learning environment of the college. Nine (18%) students affirmed that the atmosphere and the accommodation problem of the hostel had an influence on the learning environment of the college.

Table 1: The 5 most positive items relating to climate

Sl no.	Items or variables with the statements	+ve (%)	-ve (%)
48	I have good friends in this school	76	
36	The teachers are knowledgeable	74	
27	I seldom feel lonely	68	
13	The teaching time is put good use	61	
10	I wouldn't want to be following a career other than medicine.		

Table 2: The 5 most negative items relating to climate

Sl no.	Items or variables with the statements	+ve (%)	-ve (%)
56	there is a good support system for the students who get stressed		86
12	I have adequate time for		84
9	The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my confidence		78
57	The Atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable during ward teaching.		78
45	The Atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable during lecture		78

Table 3: Some impressive of teaching by the students based on the 58 items of MEEM

Sl	Items or variables	Students' views of Teaching		
		+ve (%)	unsure	-ve (%)
1	The teaching is student centered	26	22	22
7	The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my confidence	18	12	70
9	The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my confidence	12	10	78
24	The students are encouraged to develop problem solving skills	26	22	52
	The teaching encourages me to be an active	33	16	51

Table 4: The finding of the open ended question about the factors which have influence on the learning environment of the medical college.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students Politics in the College	39	78
Teachers relation with the students	8	16
Teaching methods	10	20
Resourceful Library	7	14
Relationship among the peers	2	4
Atompshere of the hostel including accommodation problem in the hostel	9	18

Discussion

The results of students' perception of views of teaching showed that they felt the teaching was teacher centered and not sufficiently concerned to develop their competence. Also they were not encouraged to be active learners. The students of DMC felt that the teaching was not encouraging them to develop problem-solving skills. On the other hand, results showed that the students reported that the teaching time was often stimulating and teaching time was put to good use.

Secondly, the teacher were seen to be knowledgeable and the teachers did not ridicule students. The student's perceptions of teachers showed that they were authoritarian. This result is consistent with the findings of the studies of Fraser and Fraser (1983).

Thirdly, the results of the study showed that students were confident about their future career direction and felt that they had made the right career choice. On the other hand, they had not learned a lot about empathy in their profession and problem-solving skills were not being well developed., Moreover, the enjoyment didn't outweigh the stress of studying medicine and the atmosphere was not relaxed and comfortable during ward teaching and lecture classes.

Therefore, these stressful situations might lead them to approach surface learning. The effect of these situations in the educational environment was consistent with Fransson's (1977) statements that the approach to learning depends on perceived relevance and anxiety.

Finally the results showed that most students (84%) felt they did not have adequate time for social life and there was no good support system for the students who got stressed.

Results of the open-ended question, which was attached to the questionnaires of Medical Education Environment Measure (MEEM), based on the students' pooled judgement. It was found in the results that the politics of both the students and teachers and certainly national politics had an effect on learning environment. In addition, teacher's skills and experience, teaching methods and media and teacher's relation with the students also had an influence on the learning environment. Results showed that the atmosphere on the college and in the hostel had influence on the learning environment. Finally, the students stated that relationship between peers and among the other students of the college influenced the learning environment of the college. Therefore the student's own perception or descriptions of their experiences of the learning context or climate of the education environment has crucial implications for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the Medical college or in higher education.

Conclusion

Results of the Medical Education Environment Measurement questionnaire showed that students perceive the teaching as teacher centered, not encouraging problem solving not sufficiently concerned to develop competence and not developing active learners. Teaching also was

perceived to over emphasize factual learning and thus influenced that students to be rote learner. Also the results of this study should that the students felt that friendly ness, enthusiasm, pace and presentation of the instruction influence the study approaches and learning environment. The sample of this study felt strongly that the student's in the college, teacher-student relationships as well as relationships among the students themselves affect the climate of the educational environment.

References

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