

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION
OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ACHIEVEMENT
MOTIVATION AMONG KOREAN STUDENTS IN
GRADES 6 TO 12 AT A SELECTED
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN BANGKOK,
THAILAND**

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Abstract: This study was conducted mainly to determine whether there was a significant relationship between Korean students' perception of school climate and their achievement motivation level. The perception of school climate was investigated by a researcher-created questionnaire and achievement motivation was examined by a questionnaire developed by Turner (1996). The school climate questionnaire measured four dimensions: safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationship and institutional environment. The achievement motivation questionnaire measured need for achievement based on McClelland's (1987) theory of motivation. Eighty-three Korean students studying in grades 6 to 12 at an international school in Bangkok in the academic year 2013 participated in the study. The findings indicated that the students perceived average school climate at a relatively high level. Also, the students had a relatively high level of achievement motivation. A significant relationship was found between the Korean students' perception of school climate and their achievement motivation level.

Keywords: Achievement Motivation, Korean Student, School Climate, Studying Overseas, Thailand

Introduction

The world is becoming closer and more competitive as a consequence of globalization. The process of globalization has created an international education market which has become highly competitive. Over the past several years, world-wide student involvement in study overseas has increased steadily (Hatakenaka, 2004). According to Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), almost 3.7 million tertiary students were enrolled in educational institutions outside their country in 2009. Chinese, Indian and Korean students comprise the largest number of international students (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2011). Korean parents send their children to study overseas because they want to give them a better quality of education which will afford them a higher

probability of success in life. Kim (2007) reported that 35.5% of Korean parents were 'unsatisfied with the Korean education system which they perceived as being too competitive, rigid, and expensive. This led Korean parents to seek different systems for their children which would cause them less stress and encourage them to develop their own talents. Even though many Korean students study overseas, some 44% of Korean students who went to top universities in America ended up dropping out (Park, 2008). Korean parents continually try to find good overseas schools for their children in order to more effectively prepare them to be successful in tertiary education abroad. Therefore, the question as to which school is more effective in terms of the success of its students becomes a critical question for the parents.

Recent studies and models of school effectiveness have incorporated school environment or climate as one factor contributing to school effectiveness (McGaw, Piper, Banks & Evans, 1993). Positive climate makes for a school to which parents will entrust their children (Howard, Howell & Brainard, 1987). Overseas students face communication and cultural problems which they must overcome (Seo, 2011).

McClelland (1985) defined achievement motivation as a constant drive to improve one's level of performance, to accomplish success in the face of difficulties. He mentioned that personal goals controlling actions result directly from the strength of this achievement motivation (McClelland, 1985). Also Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999) noted that it is advantageous for learners to find their personal interests in their study through achievement motivation.

Together, school climate and achievement motivation have been considered as critical factors which influence the success or failure of students' school life and determine whether they will study overseas or not. The researcher, therefore, was interested in these two variables: students' perceptions of school climate and their level of achievement motivation as they affect overseas Korean students.

Objectives

The study sought to address four research objectives and one research hypothesis as follows.

1. To identify the demographics of grades 6 to 12 Korean students at an international school in Bangkok.
2. To determine the grades 6 to 12 Korean students' perceptions of school climate at an international school in Bangkok.

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