

A STUDY OF TEACHERS PERCEPTION ON LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAM (IBDP)

KASHEFA V. PEERZADA

Teaching Assistant (Faculty of Commerce) Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India

ABSTRACT

The study focuses on teachers' perception on the 'Learning Environment' in the school specifically focusing on International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP). Learning Environment was conceptualized for the present study which constituted five dimensions - Learning Climate, Instructor Enthusiasm, Psychological Environment, Physical Environment and Classroom Disciplinary Climate. The study adopted qualitative research methods and data was collected using Questionnaire to understand teachers' perception regarding the learning environment which comprised these entire five dimensions. Descriptive statistics frequency distribution and percentage was used to obtain qualitative analysis of the respondents'. The data revealed that nearly 83 percent of teachers i.e. 9 out of 11 perceived that students get opportunity to interact and participate, and learner centered approach is been practiced, even the school administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. The data reveals 81.1 percent teachers perceived teachers' facilitates students' own inquiry. The teachers' flexibility in understanding and accepting ideas was related to their academic qualifications and not necessarily teaching experience. It was found that nearly 60 percent of teachers perceived that the teacher student ratio was maintained according to norms of IB.

KEYWORDS: International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), Learning Environment, Teachers' Perception

INTRODUCTION

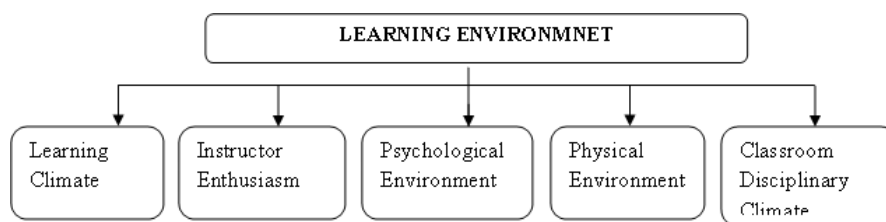
Background of the Study

Today in India there has been rapid increase in the number of International Baccalaureate (IB) Schools imparting Diploma program (DP) and the number of secondary students completing an International Baccalaureate Diploma. IB DP is playing an increasing role in preparing students for university study. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma was developed in 1968 and it's a two year curriculum aimed at students aged 16 to 19. It's a two year course of study comprising final examinations in six subject areas and it is widely recognised by the world's leading universities. Students need to study at least three subjects at a 'higher level' and three subjects at a 'standard level'.

The present school system which has been considered for the study is an IB World School in Vadodara (Baroda) since June 2006. It is situated in Bhaili in Baroda city and run by the trust offering. It is the only school in Vadodara offering IB curriculum. School provides a co-education. The School is affiliated to International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International Examination (IGCSE) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The Schools is Day school and also offers boarding facility. It offers the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and IB Diploma Programme (DP). With the completion of every five year there is inspection and evaluation of the school functioning by IBO. In the 2012 the present school in consideration had undergone its evaluation by IBO.

Learning Environment in a school does play a role in the quality of education a child receives. It's

Learning Environment in the school which enables creativity and innovation. For the present study Learning Environment was categorized in to 5 dimensions, Learning Climate, Instructor Enthusiasm, Psychological Environment, Physical Environment and Classroom Disciplinary Climate. These five dimensions constitute an affective learning environment.



Source: Researcher conceptual framework of ‘Learning Environment’

The Rationale of the Study

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (DP) curriculum is different from Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) & Gujarat Secondary Board of Education (GSEB). No school other than IB awards Diploma there are no prescribed textbooks in IB DP; here students can choose their own books. It is unlike CBSE/ICSE and other state boards which have a fixed syllabus and standard textbooks. Even the IB Diploma program (11th and 12th Grade) students are not divided in standard streams viz. science, commerce or arts. Like CBSE/ICSE and other school education boards, the Diploma Programme is open-ended & encourages problem-solving activities with the help of three requirements i.e. the Extended Essay, Theory of knowledge and Creativity, Action, Service. The present study seeks to reassert the centrality of understanding the Perceptions of teachers about learning environment of IBDP curriculum in an IB school of Baroda and there by suggesting measures to overcome the loopholes in the system. To date, no formal research has been conducted to ascertain the Perceptions of teachers and students about implementation and management of IBDP curriculum.

Objective of the Study

To understand Teachers Perceptions on Learning Environment in the school with regard to International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP).

Limitations of the Study

It is important to emphasize that this study is only limited to the perceptions of DP teacher about learning environment and implementation IBDP curriculum in one of the local IB World School in Baroda city. Diploma Program is considered for the present study excluding the other programs of IB viz. MYP and PYP. The data presented in this study are based on a relatively small sample of responses. In addition one of the shortcomings of the survey questionnaire is that the researcher has no way of knowing how the learning environment by teachers’ is interpreted and used by each individual teacher as he/she responds to survey questions.

Population, Sample and Tool Used for Data Collection

As there is only one IB school in Baroda city, it is situated near Bhaili, was considered for the present study. The population of the study comprises of all 15 IBDP teachers that are engaged with grade 11th & 12th. To collect the data research used survey questionnaire and observation to understand perception of teachers about the learning environment for DP program in the school.

Data Analysis and Findings

The nature of data demands both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The data was analyzed based on the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics Frequency distribution and percentage was used to obtain qualitative analysis of the respondents'. A percentage frequency distribution is a display of data that specifies the percentage of observations that exist for each data point or grouping data points.

Analysis of the Responses of Teachers' Perception Regarding Learning Environment Obtained Through Questionnaire

Questionnaire was designed to study teachers' perception regarding the learning environment of the school in the context of IB DP. The survey questionnaire had five parts. Part one and two was about the learning climate, instructor enthusiasm, Part three and four was about the psychological environment and physical environment and last part dealt with classroom disciplinary climate. In all there were 15 teachers for DP, a questionnaire were allotted to each of them, but the respondent rate was only 11 teachers.

In this tool there were 30 items which were categorized in to 5 dimension and the responses of the teachers were solicited. The scale was designed in the Likert type. However, to analyze the responses only the frequency count was taken in to consideration and the same is presented percentage wise in the Table 1 and Table 2, where, P=Poor, A=Average, S=Satisfied, G=Good, E=Excellent. The percentage data is also presented through graphs. Researcher also computed a mean score for each statement of all five dimensions.

On the whole **learning environment** is perceived to be good by DP teachers. The data reveals that nearly 83 percent of teachers i.e. 9 out of 11 perceived that students get opportunity to interact and participate, and learner centered approach is been practiced, even the school administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. The data reveals 81.1 percent teachers perceived teachers' facilitates students' own inquiry. The teachers' flexibility in understanding and accepting ideas was related to their academic qualifications and not necessarily teaching experience. About 6 out of 11 Teachers believed that they convey confidence in student's ability to become what they want to become. The IBO strongly recommends a limit of 25 students per class. It was found that nearly 60 percent of teachers perceived that the teacher student ratio was maintained according to norms of IB.

Only two out of eleven i.e. 18.1 percent Teacher perceived that spends adequate time is spent on lesson planning. Almost all teachers i.e. 10 (90.9%) out of 11 teachers believed questioning strategies practices in class are likely to enhance the development of student conceptual understanding and inculcating problem solving attitude which was positively related with **instructor's enthusiasm** levels in the class. More than seven out of 11 educators (64%) agree that Teaching methods are practiced as per learners' profile. And Students are rendered immediate feedback when they need directions to proceed. There was not much consensus regarding identification of those students who have Learning difficulties by the teachers. Nearly 63.6 percent of teachers perceived that their teaching methods and activities reflect no discrimination.

With regard to **psychological environment** Teacher had not much consensus regarding majority of students are pleasant and friendly towards them. 4 out of 11 teachers perceived student to be friendly and pleasant. Nearly fifty percent of teacher perceived Students enjoys autonomy to think and express their understanding and ideas and work in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task. Majority of teacher i.e. 63.6% believed students' are induced

to think differently and be innovative and teachers rendered immediate feedback when students need directions to proceed. Nearly 50% of teacher believed that students do not carry work stress or any workload at home. This displayed a positive perception of teacher towards psychological climate pertaining to students in the school.

With regard to **Physical environment**, 72.7% teachers were of the opinion that the school complex is well maintained. But there did not seem to be much consensus among teachers perception about having sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software. Even with regard to internet access and the reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school nearly 50% of teachers' perceived facilities are not much sufficient or excellent to support instructional practices.

According to 73% of teacher perceived **classroom disciplinary climate** that students treat peers with respect in class. More than 7 out of 11 educators (75%) believed that students follows rules of conduct, they understand expectations for their conduct and follow the rules by true will but did not considered to be good enough. This reveals a great scope for students to follow rules and a proper conduct. According to 81.1% teachers the school administrators support their efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. According to 8 out of 11 teachers perceived students' needs to understand expectations for their conduct.

Table 1: Mean Score of Teachers Perception Regarding Learning Environment

| Learning Climate | Mean* Score |
|--|--------------------|
| The teacher – student ratio is well maintained according to norms of IB. | 4.45 |
| Student Centered approach is been practiced. | 4 |
| Teachers' facilitates students' own inquiry. | 3.91 |
| Students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own. | 3.45 |
| Students are given opportunity to interact and participate. | 4.82 |
| Teacher conveys his or her confidence in student's ability to become what they want to become. | 4.27 |
| Instructor Enthusiasm | |
| Teacher spends adequate time on lesson planning. | 3.82 |
| Teaching methods are practiced as per learners' profile. | 3.64 |
| The teacher's questioning strategies are likely to enhance the development of student conceptual understanding/ problem solving. | 3.91 |
| Identification of students who have Learning difficulties is been made | 3.91 |
| Teachers motivate Students engagement in reading & written communication for EE-Research | 4.18 |
| Teaching methods and activities reflects no discrimination. | 4.64 |
| Psychological Environment | |
| Most students are pleasant and friendly to teachers. | 4 |
| Students enjoys autonomy to think and express theirs understanding and ideas. | 4 |
| Students' are induced to think differently and be innovative. | 4.18 |
| Students work in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task. | 4 |
| Students are rendered immediate feedback when they need directions to proceed | 3.82 |
| Teachers take a note that students do not carry work stress & workload. | 3.73 |
| Physical Environment | |
| School complex is well maintained. | 4.73 |
| Teachers & students have adequate space to work productively in classroom. | 4.45 |
| The school library includes an adequate selection of books and periodicals. | 4.45 |
| Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials. | 4.55 |
| Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access. | 4.27 |
| The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices. | 4.09 |
| Classroom Disciplinary Climate | |
| Students treat peers with respect in class. | 3.73 |

| | |
|--|------|
| Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct. | 3.27 |
| Students follow rules of conduct. | 3.36 |
| School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. | 4 |
| Students follow the rules by true will. | 3.36 |
| Disciplinary actions are taken in the school seriously. | 4 |

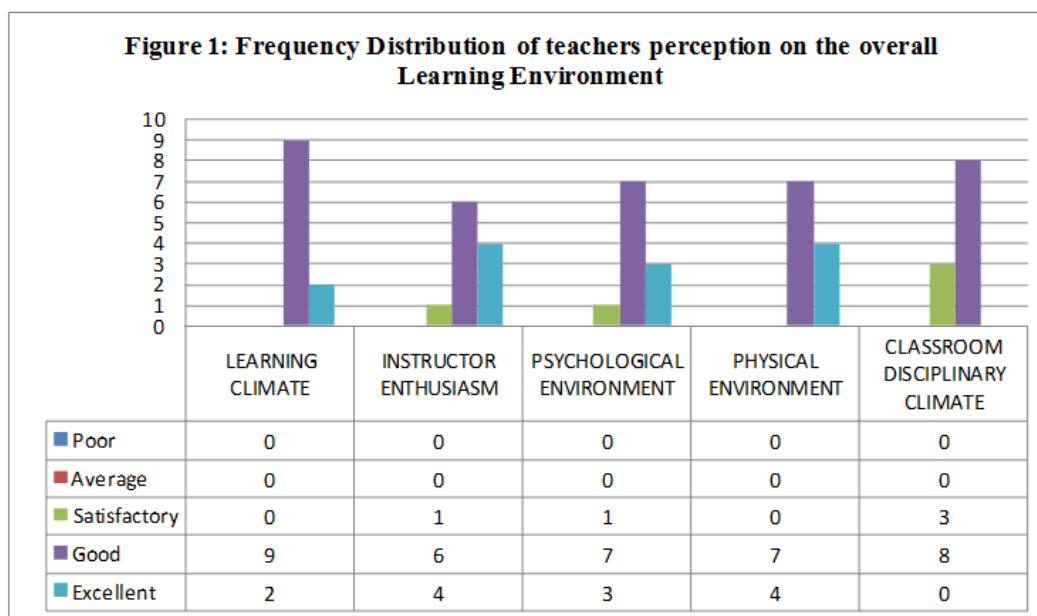
* Mean ratings are calculated using a five-point scale, where 1=poor and 5=excellent

Table 1 above shows the **mean score of teachers' perceptions** regarding school learning environment. Highest mean score of 4.82 depicts that students are given autonomy and opportunities to interact and participate. And the lowest mean score of 3.45 depicts that teacher perceive students' needs to build an attitude of independent learners. Majority of the teachers perceive overall learning environment to be good on the scale. Responses that teachers gave of learning environment in the school in the context of IB DP, suggest that the grand mean scores of learning climate and physical environment is 4.15 and 4.42 respectively (Table 1). This reveals teachers' perceived learning climate and physical environment in school to be good. The physical and virtual learning environments, facilities, resources and specialized equipment support the implementation of the program. Instructor Enthusiasm with the mean score of 4.0 exhibited to be good as well. The psychological Environment and classroom disciplinary climate needs an improvement. In other words, majority of teacher perceived students should improve in maintaining their discipline and some measure required to decrease students stress to motivate them to be more innovative and built a healthy student – teacher relationship.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Overall Learning Environment in the School in the Context of IBDP

| Items | Poor | Average | Satisfactory | Good | Excellent |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Learning Climate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 (81.8) | 2 (18.2) |
| Instructor Enthusiasm | 0 | 0 | 1 (9.1) | 6 (54.5) | 4 (36.4) |
| Psychological Environment | 0 | 0 | 1 (9.1) | 7 (63.6) | 3 (27.3) |
| Physical Environment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 (63.6) | 4 (36.4) |
| Classroom Disciplinary Climate | 0 | 0 | 3 (27.3) | 8 (72.7) | 0 |

To better understand teachers' perception, survey results also provide a closer view of the level of overall assessment of learning environment of DP in school (table 2). This analysis reveals that 9 out of 11 i.e. more than 81 percent of teachers' perceived learning climate in the school to be good, 7 teachers – 64 percent perceived psychological and physical environment to be good as well. Researcher did not found deviations in participants' responses in the first four elements of learning environment in overall assessment. Researcher observed a difference of teachers' perception only regarding classroom disciplinary climate, where majority of teacher perceived it to be only satisfactory, portraying the presence of need for better conduct of the students'. In contrast the table 2 exhibits that 73 percent of teacher believe classroom disciplinary climate to be good. Following figure 1 shows graphical presentation of teachers 'responses of frequency and percent in terms of overall learning environment in the school.



DISCUSSION OF STUDY'S IMPLICATION

Based on the questionnaire responses and researcher observations two categories of teachers emerged:

- Those that practiced learner-centered approaches were aware of IB standards and tried to justify the same through their taught curriculum.
- Those that practiced teacher-centered approaches were exhibited lack of awareness of IB standards and were not effectively trained to align their written and taught curriculum.

The data suggests that individual teachers are perceive learning environment as good, however, since the questionnaire was a self-assessment, it is quite possible that these numbers are being artificially inflated. When asked to DPC whether teachers' transaction successfully incorporate IB learner's profile, TOK and international mindedness as an important part of the curriculum, data reflected that both the participants DPC and curriculum coordinator overwhelmingly agreed that they did. However, when researcher observed responses became to be less strong and in some cases were neutral. The result is data that are systematically biased toward respondents' perceptions of what is "correct" or socially acceptable (Maccoby and Maccoby, 1954).

For any school Library is one of the important facilities which both teachers and students rely for instructional and educational resources. In the present school library is accessible at times that are convenient for students there is no regular period allotted for it. The library has the educational resources to meet students' needs. The school library is enriched with various national and international books and publishers, course companions of different subjects, journals, magazines, newspapers, quiz books, fiction and non-fiction books and past question papers. It also has facility of online library QUESTIA. It has open membership and except science it provides a large resource base for various disciplines'. Teachers have an access to it even from their residence through login ID and password. Yearly the library is being updated to enrich their resource base. The school management maintains an in-house budget for the same. Teacher can issue books for two weeks and students for a week. Five to six books can be issued at a time. The working hours of the school is from morning to afternoon three, but the library is open for more one hour for students' access.

Effective Learning Environment

Efforts for improving student-teacher relationship and disciplinary climate in the school are needed. According to the data teachers believes there is a scope of improvement in the students conduct especially in the classroom. Inconsistency in school policy enforcement may be a contributor to lower perceptions of appropriate student conduct. According to the group discussions with students' teacher should be more understanding and guiding towards students. Sound learning environment will result in an effective transaction of curriculum.

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Web links

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8. <http://www.ibo.org/country/IN/>
9. <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/research/publications/documents/notesapril03.pdf>
10. <http://www.navrachana.ac.in/IBDP.html>
11. <http://udini.proquest.com/view/the-power-of-teacher-student-pqid:2444980471/>
12. http://www.navrachana.ac.in/WebPages.aspx?PageID=scheme_inter,2

