

**TEACHER BURNOUT, SATISFACTION WITH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE  
CLIMATE, TEACHER MORALE AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG  
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KULAIJAYA**

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**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of  
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**2013**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled "The Relationship Between Teacher Burnout And Satisfaction With School Discipline Climate And Teacher Morale And Job Satisfaction Among Primary School Teachers In Kulaijaya" is the result of my own research except as cited in references. This dissertation has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature : .....

Name of Candidate : SYAHIDAH BINTI RASHID

Date :

*Dedicated to*

*My Beloved Parents,*

*Rashid b. Kasim & Azizah binti Hamzan*

*and*

*dearest friends, colleagues and supervisor*

*For the unceasing support and encouragement*

*and*

*For bringing joy and aspiration in my life*

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## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara *teacher burnout* dengan kepuasan terhadap iklim disiplin sekolah serta. Kajian ini melibatkan 320 orang responden yang terdiri daripada guru-guru sekolah rendah di sekitar daerah Kulaijaya, Johor. Kaedah pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah dengan mengedarkan soal selidik. Jumlah kekerapan, purata, sisihan piawai dan pekali korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk menjawab persoalan kajian. Data yang diperolehi dianalisa dengan menggunakan *Statistical Package For Social Science* (SPSS) versi 16. Hasil kajian deskriptif menunjukkan tahap *teacher burnout* dan tahap moral dan kepuasan guru terhadap kerjaya adalah sederhana manakala tahap kepuasan guru terhadap iklim disiplin sekolah adalah tinggi. Hasil kajian inferensi pula menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan negatif yang tidak signifikan antara *teacher burnout* dengan kepuasan guru terhadap iklim disiplin sekolah ( $r = -0.012$ ) dan terdapat hubungan positif yang tidak signifikan antara *teacher burnout* dengan moral dan kepuasan guru terhadap kerjaya ( $r = 0.016$ ). Beberapa cadangan telah dikemukakan kepada pentadbir sekolah untuk membantu mewujudkan situasi kerja serta sesi pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang sihat bagi guru-guru di sekolah.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between teacher burnout and satisfaction with school discipline climate and teacher morale and job satisfaction among school teachers in Kulaijaya District. The study involved 320 respondents consisting of primary school teachers in Kulaijaya, Johor. The method of data collection was by distributing questionnaires. Total frequency, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation are used to answer the research questions of the study. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package For Social Science (SPSS) version 16. From the descriptive analysis, the study found that the levels of teacher burnout and teacher morale and job satisfaction are moderate, and the level of satisfaction with school discipline climate is high. The inferential analysis results showed a non-significant negative relationship between teacher burnout and satisfaction with school discipline climate ( $r = -0.012$ ), and a non-significant positive relationship between teacher burnout and teacher morale and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.016$ ). Several suggestions were proposed to school administrators to help in promoting healthy working as well as teaching and learning condition for the teachers at school.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

MBI	Maslach Burnout Inventory
PTO	Purdue teacher Opinionnaire
r	Pearson Correlation
SDCS	School Discipline Climate Survey
SD	Standard deviation
SPSS	Statistical Packages For Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

A healthy school environment consists of a healthy school discipline climate. Teachers experience high moral, positive look on their profession and have a greater sense of accomplishment in a healthy school environment. Such environment has proven to be beneficial for students' achievement especially in schools with low socio-economic background (Griffith, 1999). It is also proven that discipline climate is among the characteristics that made a difference in teaching and learning (Grossnickle, et al., 1993).

The administration influences the sense of discipline outside the classroom where the headmasters apply the regulations from school board policy to a variety of

situation. However, there are times when these policies did not meet the expectations of teachers regarding student discipline. In this case, communication and understanding between teachers and the administrators is crucial to ensure a healthy working relationship. Therefore, conducting a survey of teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction can improve relations among staff and administration and subsequently enhance students' learning and achievement (Mendel, 1987).

Teachers' perception of their working condition has the greatest impact on their job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001). This finding supported previous research that revealed a positively significant relationship between aspects of the teaching occupation and job satisfaction (Goodlad, 1984; Poulin & Walter, 1992). Low levels of job satisfaction and morale can lead to decreased teacher productivity and burnout. These are associated with a decrease in the quality of teaching, depression, greater use of sick leave, efforts to leave the profession and a cynical dehumanized perception of students. It is found that teachers' perception of students and students' learning also affected job satisfaction. Teachers valued student responsiveness and enthusiasm as a crucial factor to their own enthusiasm and found low motivation in students as a discouragement (Stenlund, 1995).

Transformation to the school board's discipline policies is required to endure changes to a school's discipline climate. Such alterations may necessitate a complete update to the discipline system so that a new and improved system can take place (Knoff, 2001). Collecting school discipline climate data can help identify areas where discipline policies are lacking. This assessment can reveal discrepancies between teacher-perceived importance of discipline policies and their satisfaction of the policies being addressed. Such actions can be accomplished by the school community working together as a team and implementing a school discipline climate survey (Grossnickle, et al., 1993).

Teacher morale had a positive effect on students' learning (Miller, 1981). Raising teacher morale made learning more pleasant for students as well as teachers. When teachers experience high morale, it raised their self-confidence and promoted positive attitudes and expectations about teaching and learning. Teachers who worked in an orderly atmosphere that was conducive to learning experience high morale (Petracco, 2000). In addition, under the leadership of a concerned principal, the school has a better opportunity of enhancing its climate and thus the self-esteem and morale of the teachers (Adams, 1992).

School climate can be broadly described as the quality of interaction between adults and students at school (Emmons, 1993). Research indicates that school climate has important implications for students learning, psychological adjustment and behavior (Brand, et al., 2003; Johnson, 2009; Lerner, et al., 2009). A healthy school climate cannot be produced through traditional approach of addressing behavior instead of its cause. The results of such approaches do not last long (Williams, 2000). It is suggested that each school has its own committee to monitor and review their school climate and policies as well as facilitating in the creation and monitoring programs and activities associated with the school's goals and mission. This committee also provides recommendations and assistance upon reviewed policies (Knoff, 2001).

There are several important measures in order to improve school discipline climate such as identifying a shared vision of discipline among staff members, comparing these standards to a n assessment of staff satisfaction, comparing staff expectations with their level of satisfaction to determine discrepancies, and developing specific plans to address areas of concern or disagreement (Grossnicle, et al., 1993).

Teacher burnout has been known to have serious consequences for the individual, the school and the students. It involves physical, psychological and/or

behavioural symptoms that include decreased motivation and self-esteem, and eventually removal from the teaching profession (Block, 1978). Teacher perceived self-efficacy was known to predict the level of burnout experienced (Friedman, 2003). Teachers with low sense of efficacy were also found to be the ones most likely to withdraw from the teaching profession (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). In fact, it is believed that teacher burnout is a crisis in self efficacy (Leiter, 1999). In a study done by measuring teacher burnout in three dimensional measures that comprised of exhaustion, unaccomplishment and depersonalization, it was found that the lower teacher perceived self-efficacy, the higher sense of perceived burnout (Friedman, 2003). These studies however did not suggest that teachers who experience burnout are not interested in their students' well-being. Instead, a study showed that teachers who reported more stress were those most concerned about their students and expressed a greater tendency of getting sick as a result of the stress they experienced.

Teaching profession has always been classified as a highly stressful occupation (Farber, 1991; Friedman, 2003). Many factors in the teaching profession can lead to teacher burnout such as unmediated stress, overload, inadequate support and absence of buffers. Burnout accumulates from the individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between expectations or dreams of impeccable professional performance, and actual results or rewards (Friedman, 2000). Stress can lead to ineffectiveness and inefficiency in teaching roles (Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Farber, 1984). The more stressed teachers were, the less tolerant they became towards their students (Kokkinos, 2005). It is also found that tension between school administrators and teachers was a significant source of stress (Farber, 1984).

## 1.1 Background of Study

Teachers' perspectives of their students are as the vital element of their enthusiasm and discouragement. Students' responsiveness being the enthusiasm and students' low motivation are considered as discouraging agents. Not being satisfied with the students often affects teachers' job satisfaction. Low levels of job satisfaction and morale can lead to decreased teacher productivity, depression, greater use of sick leave, efforts to leave the profession and cynical dehumanized perception of students. Interestingly though, a study suggested that student academic achievement does not appear to be an important element in teacher enthusiasm (Stenlund, 1995).

Another study found that teachers were most satisfied with the interaction with their students and least satisfied with general working conditions. They were also not satisfied with the salary and amount of autonomy. However, the overall result suggested that they were satisfied with their career (Klecker&Loadman, 1999). This showed that teachers are more concerned in regard of their students more than anything else in the school even though they are slightly unsatisfied with their income and authority.

It is also revealed in a study focusing on relationships between teacher morale and teacher behavior that teacher morale was negatively related to the time that the teacher talked out of the total amount of teacher and student talk. On the other hand, teacher talk was found to be negatively related to teaching satisfaction, teacher load, curriculum issues and community support of education (Greenwood & Soar, 1973).

Adams (1992) stated that principals were the keys to improving the morale and self-esteem of teachers. It was as a support to a claim by Washington and Watson (1986) stating that a principal's ability to create a positive school climate can also affect

teacher job satisfaction. Higher student achievement can be obtained when teachers perceive higher job satisfaction which created positive learning environments (Ellenberg, 1972). This showed that it is important for teachers to possess supportive and satisfactory perception of a school climate to enhance students learning.

Teachers with more positive perception of their relationship with school administration are more satisfied with their profession (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Administrative control, teaching competence and organizational culture were the three most significant measures of workplace condition that influence teacher job satisfaction. This clearly showed that teachers need more control in the administration and organization for them to feel part of the school system.

However, in the aspect of stress, teachers identified factors clustering upon the classroom as those most stressful to them. The core task of working with students proved to be more closely related to stress compared to issues related to school organization (Duquette, Golaszewski & Milstein, 1984).

The most significant effect on improving school climate be achieved when teachers and students had the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process for discipline policies and procedures (Petraco, 2000). Consistent rule in an orderly environment impacted school climate, teacher job satisfaction and students achievement. Learning would be hard to achieve without order and consistency (Kaufman, 2001).

The formation of a committee in each school specified in monitoring school climate and policies is one brilliant suggestion made by Knoff (2001). The development of such committee would facilitate the creation of programs and activities to accomplish

the goals and missions of the school besides gathering information about discipline problem. However, to ensure the authority of this committee, it is crucial that everybody in the school including parents acknowledged its existence and willing to give support as well as commitment.

Teacher efficacy predicted teachers' level of burnout (Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler, 1988). Lack of belief of one's capability to organize and execute strategies for classroom order is a crisis of self-efficacy which would lead to burnout. Physical, psychological and behavioural burnouts presented serious consequences for teachers. Teachers who considered themselves as less competent in classroom management and discipline had higher level of burnout (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Such teachers provided significantly less information, praise and acceptance towards students and less frequent interaction. There were six undesirable students behaviours associated with burned-out teachers which are antisocial, defiant, interpersonal sensitivity, restlessness, negative affectivity and inattention (Kokkinos, Panayioutou & Davazoglou, 2005).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Teachers have been acknowledged to hold numerous responsibilities in curriculum, professional development, parent relations, students' discipline, and classroom management. It is such an excruciatingly daunting task trying to maintain an acceptable level of job satisfaction while avoiding professional burnout with these many variables. Teachers are prone to get sick over stress involving classroom discipline (Lewis, 1999). One factor that can help with this problem is maintaining a healthy school discipline climate. The assessment of a school's discipline climate facilitates this process of maintenance. School climate also facilitates social interactions and fulfills



individual and group members' identity and interpersonal needs, called expressive or emotional support (Griffith, 1999). Discipline policies and procedures can become redundant and ineffective, adding to stress and low job satisfaction for teachers. Teachers who experience low job satisfaction can deter student learning and achievement.

Teachers may lose confidence in administration and feel abandoned if a school has an unhealthy discipline climate. However, it is not a reflection of the administrator's abilities but rather the discipline system itself such as in the discipline policy and due process (Oneschuk, 2007). Surveying teachers' perception of their school discipline climate can reveal components in the system that may require changes and improvement. These modifications may increase job satisfaction and lower burnout thereby increasing teacher productivity and enthusiasm.

School climate is important in order to achieve students' satisfaction in learning (Griffiths, 1999). The school discipline system can become ineffective if its discipline climate is not assessed and monitored regularly. This situation can be detrimental to teachers' morale and job satisfaction, as well as students' achievement. Thus, it is crucial to facilitate the promotion of a healthy and positive discipline climate, based on functional and effective policies and procedures. This research is intended to determine if teachers possess a discrepancy between perceptions of the importance and satisfaction with the school discipline climate, relative to the potential consequences for job satisfaction and burnout.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

- 1.2.1 To identify the level of teacher burnout among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.
- 1.2.2 To identify the level of satisfaction with school discipline climate among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.
- 1.2.3 To identify the level teacher morale and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.
- 1.2.4 To identify the relationship between teacher burnout with satisfaction with school discipline climate and teacher morale and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- 1.3.1 What is the level of teacher burnout among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya?
- 1.3.2 What is the level of satisfaction with school discipline climate among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya?
- 1.3.3 What is the level of teacher morale and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya?

- 1.3.4 Is there any significant relationship between teacher burnout with satisfaction with school discipline climate and teacher morale and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya?

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

Null hypotheses designed to achieve the objectives of the study are as follow :

- 1.4.1 There is no significant relationship between teacher burnout and satisfaction with school discipline climate among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.
- 1.4.2 There is no significant relationship between teacher burnout and teacher morale and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kulaijaya.

## **1.6 Rationale of the study**

This study offers an opportunity to examine the level of school discipline climate in the selected area by measuring the level of satisfaction with school discipline climate. Further actions can be taken by the school board or the ministry of education in order to obtain a functional and healthy school discipline climate.

Furthermore, collecting school discipline climate data can help identify areas where discipline policies require change and improvement. Specific areas in need of improvement can be determined to ensure that the policy being used is able to keep up with the demands and challenge of managing students discipline nowadays.

Humanitarian concerns are of interest because teachers have to be satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction has been related to various factors, like physical and mental health, as well as overall life satisfaction, so it is important for teachers to be satisfied at work (Balzeret *al.*, 1997). Unsatisfaction in teaching leads to unwanted burnout.

To sum up, this study is intended to identify teachers' level of satisfaction with school discipline climate and teacher morale and job satisfaction, as well as identifying whether the two are related to teacher burnout.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

Identifying level of teacher burnout will provide insight to the current emotional status of teachers. This is important for the administrators as it can serve as a guide for them to make sure that the level is maintained at a low or moderate level to maximize teachers' enthusiasm at work.

In addition, examining the level of satisfaction with school discipline climate will provide a clearer view of factors troubling teachers at schools. This study will help

the administrators to determine factors in the discipline policy that are required to be improvised in order to create a healthier discipline climate in the school.

Apart from that, identifying the level of teacher morale and job satisfaction will give information about aspects that need to be improved in order to achieve maximum satisfaction and thus promotes healthy teaching.

### **1.8 Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1.0 shows the conceptual framework of this study. The following paragraphs provide an explanation of the conceptual framework.

The aim of this research was to determine the relationship between teacher burnout and satisfaction with school discipline climate and teacher morale and job satisfaction. Other than that, this research was also aimed to identify the level of teacher burnout, satisfaction with school discipline climate, and teacher morale and job satisfaction.

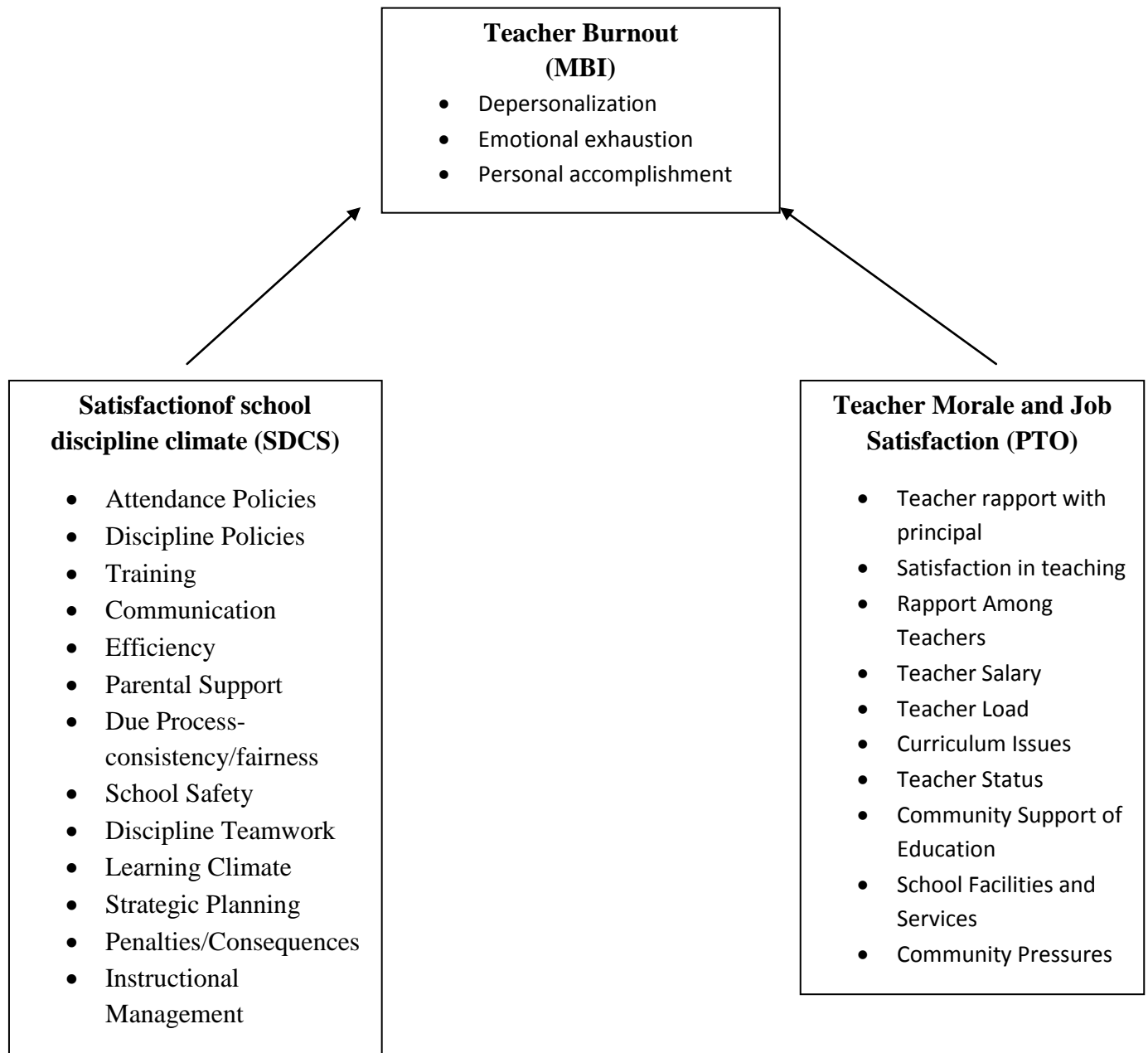


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework

## **1.9 Limitation of study**

There are several limitations in conducting this study. One aspect of the issues in this study is the demographic data of the respondents. This study only consists of samples from primary schools in the district of Kulaijaya, Johor. A larger scale study will have to be done in order to generalize the findings of the study. In addition, the phenomenon of teacher burnout may optimally be studied over a number of years and carried out on a longitudinal basis rather than just distributing questionnaires.

The findings of this study are highly dependent on the honesty of the selected respondents to provide answers to the questions contained in the questionnaires submitted. Providing true and accurate answers is important so that the analysis will not be based on false information. However, it is subjected to the respondents' attitude and sense of responsibility to cooperate honestly and the researcher does not have the right to force the respondents to provide answers as expected.

## **1.10 Definition of terms**

### **1.10.1 Conceptual definition**

#### **1.10.1.1 Teacher Burnout**

Burnout is perceived among organizational psychologists as a common response to chronic emotional strain caused by dealing with the need of others (Maslach&Schaufeli, 1993), and directly linked with stress and strain (Maslach&Leiter, 1997). It is also viewed as the feeling of failure and exhaustion resulting from excessive demands on a person's energy with insufficient reward for the effort (Freudenberger, 1974). Leiter (1991) defined burnout as a crisis in self-efficacy. It is found that teacher efficacy predisted teacher's level of burnout (Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey &Bassler, 1988). Teachers with a low sense of efficacy were also found to be the ones most likely to drop out of the teaching profession (Glickman &Tamashiro, 1982).

#### **1.10.1.2 School Discipline Climate**

Emmons (1993) described school climate as the quality of interaction between adults and students at school. It is also perceived as a factor in determining classroom environment and how effectively developmentally appropriate practices are implemented (Sweeney, 1998 :Bredekamp&Copple, 1997. School climate is also referred to as the atmosphere in a school which attempts to facilitate an orderly, safe and peaceful environment in which to learn and work. It is created by the practice of discipline policies and procedures and their effectiveness. The perceived notion of how disciplinary action and policy is executed.

The discipline policies and practices in schools ensure that the school has a discipline system that is safe and fair for all of its communities. According to Grossnickle,et al., (1993) collecting school discipline climate data enable the school board to identify areas where discipline policies require change and improvement.



### **1.10.1.3 Teacher Morale and Job Satisfaction**

Mendel (1987) defined teacher morale as a feeling, a state of mind, a mental or emotional attitude that teachers experience regarding their profession, including the work environment and conditions. It has been classified into three categories according to stress which are environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Swick, 1980). It has been reported that when teachers experience high morale, his or her level of confidence is increased and thus create a conducive teaching and learning session in the classroom (Petraco, 2000).

Weiss (2002) has argued that job satisfaction is an attitude. However, he cautioned that researchers should clearly distinguish the objects of cognitive evaluation which are effective (emotion), beliefs and behaviours. This definition suggests that we form attitudes towards our jobs by taking into account our feelings, our beliefs and our behaviours.

Locke (1976) defines it as an employee's overall evaluation of his or her job as favourable or unfavourable. In short, job satisfaction is a feeling of like and dislike. In order to come to a stand of like and dislike, there should be a point of comparison. That point of comparison is the expectation of the employees. Job satisfaction is also directed to many areas of the job such as the nature of the job, the quality of supervision, the relationship with colleagues, the kind of leadership of superiors and others. These are some of the facets or dimensions of job satisfaction. All of these are linked to the attitude of a person about his or her job.

Job satisfaction can almost easily be assessed by asking people how they feel about their job (Spector, 2000). It involves the person's feeling about their job whether

there are satisfied or dissatisfied. According to Spector, job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable that reflects how people feel about their jobs overall as well as various aspects of them. Simply, job satisfaction is the extent to which people like their job and job satisfaction is the extent to which they dislike them.

### **1.10.2 Operational definition**

#### **1.10.2.1 Teacher Burnout**

Burnout is the sense of helplessness perceived by teachers due to emotional strain and stress. In this study, teacher burnout was measured by means of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey.

#### **1.10.2.2 School Discipline Climate**

School climate is the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members. A positive school climate would indicate a positive relationship and quality of interaction between administration and staff, staff and staff, students and staff, students and students, and administration and students as measured by the School Discipline Climate Survey (SDCS) in this study.

The school discipline policy provides a framework for the development of learning communities which are safe, inclusive, conducive to learning and free from

harassment and bullying. In this study, the school discipline policies and practices were analyzed using The School Discipline Climate Survey (SDCS). It was a means of formally assessing teacher's perceptions of their schools' discipline climate.

#### **1.10.2.3 Teacher Morale and Job Satisfaction**

As previously defined, job satisfaction is the feeling of a person's towards his or her job. According to Locke (2002), job satisfaction can be viewed as an employee's observation of how well their work presents those things which are important to them. Simply put, "job satisfaction is an attitude people have about their job" (Chelladurai, 1999). Job satisfaction can be measured with job satisfaction scales such as Job Description Index (JDI), Job in General Scale (JIG) and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). In this study, another type of instrument will be used which is Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO). This instrument is selected because it consists of items associated with teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Teacher morale refers to the attitude possess by a teacher towards teaching profession (Mendel, 1987). In this study the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) is used to measure the level of teacher morale. As explained under job satisfaction, this instrument is selected because it consists of items associated with teacher morale and job satisfaction.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

The background to job satisfaction, discipline policies and practices, teacher morale, school climate and teacher burnout have been described. Teachers' perceived discrepancy between satisfaction and importance of school discipline climate, teacher morale and job satisfaction, teacher burnout, as well as consequences were put forward and the significance of how this study would benefit various areas were explained. This study on discrepancy between satisfaction and importance of school discipline climate would benefit teachers, students, school administrators and the Ministry of Education. The next chapter describes the theoretical framework explaining the discrepancy between satisfaction and importance of school discipline climate and its potential consequences.

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