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Kindergarten Climate in Padang

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***Abstract*—This research aimed to find out whether there were differences in the climates of kindergartens in Padang. Specifically, this research would see whether there were differences in perceptions among the kindergartens' climate experienced (the actual climate) and the climate of the kindergartens that were desired by teachers (preferred climate). The research samples were 50 kindergartens' teachers representing 305 kindergartens in Padang. To obtain the data, this research used the school climate measurement tool adapted from the School Level Environment Scale (SLEQ) which was originally developed by Fisher. The results generally indicated that no significant differences between the actual climate (3.07) and preferred climate (3.25) by the teachers. However, on the scale of participation in decision making (2.80 : 3.49), and physical comfort (2.86:3.53), the differences were higher compared to other scales. It was hoped that the principal of kindergartens in the city of Padang would minimize the differences by more involving kindergarten teachers in the decision-making processes and increasing the convenience and more adequate of managing infrastructure of kindergarten.**

Keywords—school climate; kindergarten; early childhood education;

I. INTRODUCTION

Studies of school climate, at educational institutions or classes, especially for early childhood education in Indonesia are such necessities that should have existed since long time ago. Yet, the study of climate in Indonesia has still not been much conductedby researchers or by education practitioners. This topic is actually important for the department of education administration and the department of early childhood education at the Faculty of Education where they have concern in developing better institutional climate and management.

The study of classroom and school climates has evolved in America since 1979 by Moos[1] and developed in Australia as example by Fisher and Fraser[2]. The studies then expanded to other countries such as Spain, Netherlands, Canada[3], and Taiwan[4].

The study of institutional climate has not been much implemented and developed to improve the quality of education in schools in Indonesia. Some of the researches were still very simple, limited to explorative studies, carried out by undergraduate and master degree students by using non-standard measuring instruments developed by themselves. For example Susanti[5] who did research at a kindergarten, and Safitri[6] who did research at a primary school. Their studies were not supported by comprehensive data, sources and research results.

The development and validation of primary school climate-measurement tools to compare school climate in some elementary schools in Padang has been initiated by Hadiyanto and Syahril[7], and by Sutjipto and Hadiyanto[8] in Jakarta. The results of this study indicated that the existing instruments can be used to capture the school climate. Nevertheless, the results of the research carried out at this elementary school level have never been implemented.

In addition to the research on the climate of educational institutions is still rarely implemented, research results are generally not used to make improvements. This research will be conducted at pre-school, or kindergarten level. Therefore, this study aimed to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the actual kindergarten climates with the expected kindergarten climates by the teachers in the city of Padang.

II. KINDERGARTEN'S CLIMATE

A. Understanding Educational Institutions' Climate

There are several terms often used interchangeably to the word 'climate', such as feel, atmosphere, tone and environment. Therefore the term of 'school climate' or educational institution is generally-acceptable used to represent learning environment, educational environment, climate group, school environment and organizational environment.

The definition of climate that we found in the literature was first stated by Bloom[9], as *"a condition, influence and external stimuli that include physical, social and intellectual influences that affect students and teachers"*. The National School Climate Council in Thapa, et al[10] says that school's climate is based on patterns of people's experiences in school lives and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, learning practices and organizational structures. Another notion is mentioned by Hoy and Miskel[11] saying that climate is *"the quality of the environment that constantly experienced by teachers affecting their behavior and based on the collective perception of their behavior"*. In addition, Halpin in Chand[12] mentions that the term 'climate' is similarto 'personality'. If the analogy is applied to

'Kindergarten', then climate means 'Kindergarten's personality'. Each Kindergarten has different characteristics, characters or personalities, although they share similar physical forms or architecture.

In the view of Bradshaw, et al[13], the school climate refers to the shared believes, values and attitudes establishing the interaction among students, teachers and administrators, and regulates acceptable behavioral parameters and norms that exist in schools. School climate is a product of social interaction between teachers and students, which is influenced by the values of education and social values. Therefore, it can be concluded that school climate is a situation or atmosphere arised by the relationship among school leaders, teachers, students, and other parties involved which influence the teaching-learning process.

B. School Climate Dimension

There are three general dimensions which can be used to measure the psychological and social atmosphere. These three dimensions consist of Relationship dimension, Personal Growth & System Maintenance dimension, and Change dimension[1]. These dimensions are enriched by adding Arter's[14] Physical Environment dimension.

Some experts who design school-climate instrument mentioned different scales from the other experts. For example, School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ) conducts a measurement using 8 scales, but only 2 scales are used in Work Environment Scale (WES). There are approximately 35 scales used by school-climate researchers in their studies to elaborate the above four dimensions by using the School Environment Level Questionnaire (SLEQ), 'Work Environment Scale' (WES), 'Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire' (OCDQ), 'Organizational Climate Index' (OCI), 'High School Characteristics Index (HSCI)[15].

Correlation of School Climate with Other Variables

Studies conducted in various countries show that educational institutions are linked to other variables. The study of the linkages between institutional climate and one's behavior has been done by Lewin[16] and is also supported by Murray[17], showing behavior as the result of the association between the individual employee/teacher and the environment. This finding

Learning achievement is influenced by several factors such as child's learning style, teachers, facility and school-climate as a still the most prominent factor. Hyman says that a supporting and condusive climate will result in: 1) a useful interaction among students; 2) clarifying the experience between teachers and students; 3) fostering the spirit which enables the activities in classroom or school going well; and 4) supporting mutual understanding between teachers and students[18]. Such opinions are also supported by Moos in Walberg[19], Howard[20], Kim and Kim[21].

Many internal and external factors affect the motivation of teaching work performed by teachers. School climate, a situation or atmosphere arised by the relationship among school leaders, teachers, students, and other parties involved, is an external factor that affects the motivation of teaching work. Rahmawati's research result shows that organizational climate has significant effect to employee's motivation[22]. A research conducted by Sucianti also shows that organization climate affect teacher's work motivation in elementary school. Every 1% increase in school organization climate results in the increase of teachers' work motivation by 58%[23].

III. METHODS

We conducted a comparative study which compared the actual kindergarten climate to the kindergarten climate expected by the teachers. The respondents taken from kindergarten teachers in city of Padang were 50 persons. Data collected by questionnaire developed for this study, consists of ten scales, namely Student Support, Professional Interest, Staff Freedom, Participatory in Decision Making, Innovation, Affiliation, Resource Adequacy, Work Pressure, Task Orientation, Physical Comfort. Collected data were processed and analyzed used comparative analysis by using data processing software.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

The results of this study indicate that, in general, the statistical calculation shows there is no significant difference between the kindergarten climates experienced with the kindergarten climate expected by the teachers as stated in Figure 01 below.

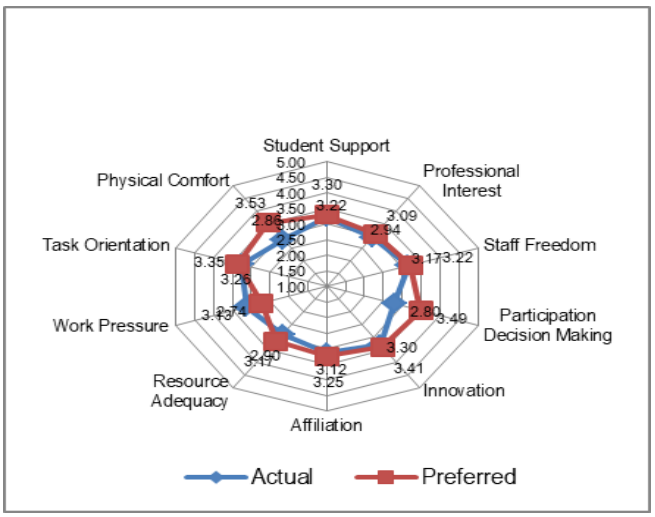

Figure 01. Comparison between Actual and Preferred Kindergarten Climate

The figure 01 shows that according to the teachers in general there is now different between the actual and the preferred climate. However, when examined in more detail, there were two visually visible scales that were more prominent than the other scales of physical comfort and the scale of participation in decision making. On these two scales, the kindergarten climate experienced by teachers was quite

lower than the teacher's expectation. In addition, the only desired scale lower than that experienced was the work pressure scale.

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that, in general, there is no significant difference between the kindergarten climates experienced by teachers today with the expected climate. However, at the physical comfort scale, actual physical conditions (2.86) appear to be lower than desired (3.53). In addition, the participation of teachers in the institutional decision-making process (2.80) is lower than that of teachers desired (3.49). From both of the above, it can be understood that the physical conditions of the school and the participation of teachers in the decision-making process is still lower than what is desired by the teachers. Thus, it can be said that the principal or managers of kindergarten educational institutions still have to improve the physical condition of schools, since according to Ontario Public Servisce their availability, quantity, and arrangement – affect the children's play[24], and ofcourse affect the teacher to perform their task and responsibility. In addition, the principal has to give more opportunity for teachers to participate in the decision-making process for the development of educational institutions, eventhough according to Lin, on the level of teacher in decision making[25]. There had been several benefits of teachers empowered to be involved in the school decision making, such as would encourage them to understand how these were planned and designed[26].

At the work pressure scale, there are opposite conditions compared to other scales that the teachers do not want to get a higher work pressure compared to what has been there so far. This is because their willingness to work pressure is lower than what has been gained from institutional leaders.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicate that in generally there is no difference between the kindergarten climates experienced and expected by the kindergarten teachers. Nevertheless, there is a prominent desire for better school physical conditions and increased participation of teachers in the decision-making process. In addition, there is a desire of the teachers to not to get work pressure as they have experienced.

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