

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL CLIMATE DURING HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION AND ACADEMIC MOTIVATION: A CHINESE SAMPLE

YANGYANG LIU AND ZUHONG LU

Southeast University, Nanjing, People's Republic of China

In extant literature, students' perceptions of school social climate have been linked to their academic achievement, adjustment problems, and social and personal attitudes (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008). However, few researchers have examined the relationships between students' perceptions of school social climate and their academic motivation, especially in a Chinese high school sample. In the present study, we sought to reduce this research gap. We expected, and found, that the students' perceptions of school social climate would positively predict their academic motivation.

Participants were 497 grade 10 students (273 females). The mean age was 16.36 years ($SD = .61$) for males and 16.34 years ($SD = .53$) for females.

Perceived school social climate Perceived school climate was assessed with a 27-item scale adapted from Cemalcilar's (2009) scale. The scale has four subscales, which are teacher-student relationship, student-student relationship, physical features, and supporting resources. Responses were scored on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The negatively keyed items were reverse coded and average scale scores were computed for each subscale. The internal consistency of all subscales was high ($\alpha = .87$, for teacher-student relationship, $\alpha = .78$, for student-student relationship,

Yangyang Liu and Zuhong Lu, Research Center for Learning Science, Southeast University, Nanjing, People's Republic of China.

Appreciation is due to reviewers including: Çetin Semerci, Firat University, Elazığ, Turkey, Email: csemerci@firat.edu.tr; I-Shuo Chen, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan, ROC, Email: ch655244@yahoo.com.tw

Please address correspondence and reprint requests to: Yangyang Liu, Research Center for Learning Science, Southeast University, Si Pai Lou 2, Nanjing, People's Republic of China. Phone: +86-025-816-19502; Email: Liuyangyang661@sina.com

$\alpha = .71$, for physical features, and $\alpha = .87$, for supporting resources, respectively). Confirmatory factor analysis also indicated an excellent validity, $\chi^2 = 1169.57$, $df = 318$, $\chi^2/df = 3.67$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .91; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06.

Academic motivation Academic motivation was assessed with a 13-item measure adapted from the scales developed by Hong and Zhong (2003) and by Loundsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, and Smith (2009). Three subscales of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivational behavior were used to assess self-regulated learning strategies. The students were asked to respond on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Negatively keyed items were reverse coded and average scale scores were computed. This scale was found to have good validity, $\chi^2 = 198.24$, $df = 62$, $\chi^2/df = 3.19$, RMSEA = 0.06. The internal consistency of all subscales was also good ($\alpha = .74$, for intrinsic motivation, $\alpha = .70$, for extrinsic motivation, and $\alpha = .80$, for motivational behavior, respectively).

The relationship between students' perceptions of school climate and academic motivation was tested by a structure equation model. Factor loadings of all indicators were significant and the goodness of fit indices of the model were excellent, $\chi^2 = 58.40$, $df = 13$, $\chi^2/df = 4.49$, CFI = 0.96, Tucker-Lewis Index = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.08. The students' perceptions of school climate during high school transition significantly predicted their academic motivation ($\beta = .66$, $p < .01$), which supported our hypothesis.

Keywords: school social climate, academic motivation, Chinese, student perceptions, achievement.

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