

EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE PERCEPTION ON INFORMATION SKILLS OF POST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN AGRA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to find the major institutional factors influencing the Information skills of post graduate students. Institutional climate perception of post graduate students is treated as the independent variable of the study. Information skill of post graduate students is treated as the dependent variable. Information skill in this study is a composite of seven variables Viz., Skill of Locating, Reading, Assessing, Critical Thinking, using technology, Interpretation and Researching. The major objective of this paper is to study the effect of Institutional climate perception on information skills of the post graduate students. The sample selected for the study was based on stratified cluster sampling. 400 post graduate students from Agra district. The results of the study found that Institutional climate perception is having significant effect of information skills and its components. The study also found significant relationship between intuitional climate perception and information skills and its components.

INTRODUCTION

The opportunities and challenges of the late 20th Century are most available to those who can function successfully within the complex requirements of a society increasingly dependent on information. Students need to be information competent to succeed as students, employees, or entrepreneurs, and as well-informed adults who can adapt to rapid change. If students can become information competent during their college years, they will be better equipped for ongoing success even though the specific subject knowledge they gain in college may be forgotten or become obsolete in just a few years.

Computers and computer-based systems for information retrieval are playing an increasingly

important role in both teaching and access to global information. Computers are now nearly as common as telephones and televisions, and are expected through continued advances in bandwidth and convergence with telecommunications to replace all current technologies for the storage of information and the dissemination of knowledge (Sutton, 1994). Recent reports indicate that as of 1994 the computer industry was three times the size of the TV industry and growing ten times as fast (Gilder, 1994). In an article on teaching and learning in the computer age, Batson and Bass (1996) suggest that information technologies such as the World Wide Web make more visible and dynamic the often invisible process of knowledge creation. This allows teachers to bring their students into direct contact with the exciting process of knowledge creation and dissemination.

Information literacy is a survival skill for the information age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information that floods their lives, information-literate people know how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve a particular problem or make a decision, whether the information they select comes from a computer, a book, a government agency, a film, or any number of other possible sources.

With the increased rate of acceptance and use of information technologies in higher education and the workplace, the importance of educating students in information skills has become more apparent to university administrators who have the power to allocate funds and influence change in the curricula.

THE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTION

Universities and other institutions of higher learning in 21st century are expected to develop students, one who is able to find, evaluate and apply needed information. Information literacy skills, being the most demand skills of the present global society makes the institutions of higher learning to be centers of information skill training. Administrators must set the tone for the entire campus, by incorporating information literacy into the post graduate curriculum and developing programs that immerse students into information literacy throughout their postgraduate years. Institutions should go beyond the goal of producing graduates who are simply equipped to enter the workforce, and broaden their scope to produce enlightened graduates who are able to freely pursue happy lives and shape the information society of which they are a part. For setting up the goal for 21st century, educational institutions must be sensitive to the flux of global society. The most important responsibility of the modern higher education institutions is to maintain a climate which facilitates student progress.

Institutional climate represents a global impression of one's organization and personal impact of the environment, which influences the individual's behaviors and attitudes (Pritchard & Karasick, 1973). Institutional climate includes student's perceptions of and affective response to the institution and work tasks. More positive organizational climates are characterized by low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion is the extent to which an employee feels fatigued or burned out due to the demands of their environment.

A positive institutional climate for students exists when all feel comfortable, in their academic, physical, social and administrative environment of the institution. Institutional climate affects not only to students but to everyone associated with the institution-students, staff, parents, and the community. It is the belief system or culture that underlies the day-to-day operation of a institution. Improved institutional climate is a goal to pursue. Educators need to constantly work toward improving their institutional climate, culture, and conditions so that student learning is improved.

There has been a lot written about how to improve the performance of the students. It involves making them feel valued for their contributions, being there to listen to them, and making sure that they get the support they need to do their work. This study is an attempt to find the major institutional factors influencing the Information skills of post graduate students.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Institutional climate perception of post graduate students is treated as the independent variable of the study. Information skill of post graduate students is treated as the dependent variable. Information skill in this study is a composite of seven variables Viz., Skill of Locating, Reading, Assessing, Critical Thinking, using Technology, Interpretation and Researching

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this paper is to study the effect of Institutional climate perception on information skills of the post graduate students. Information skills, being the composite of many sub skills Viz., Skill of Locating information, Reading, Assessing, Critical Thinking, using Technology, Interpretation and Researching the investigator also intends to explore the effect of Institutional climate perception on each of these component skills. If the Institutional climate perception is having any effect on Information skills and its components, it would be an indirect indication to the relationship between these two variables. This prompted the investigator to maintain an optional objective i.e. to estimate the relationship between Institutional climate

perception and Information skills (total and component wise) of post graduate students.

For guiding the analysis of the study the investigator developed following research questions:

1. Did there exist any significant effect of institutional climate perception on Informational skills of post graduate students?
2. Did there exist any significant effect of institutional climate perception on Informational skill components of Viz., Skill of Locating information, Reading, Assessing, Critical Thinking, using Technology, Interpretation and Researching on post graduate students?

Table 1: Summary of F-values of ANOVA of Information skills (Component wise and total score) for post graduate students.

Information Skills		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Locating Information	Between	415.162	2		
	Groups Within	1451.776	397	207.581	
	Group Total	1866.938	399	3.657	56.765
Reading	Between	885.301	2	442.651	
	Groups Within	1798.689	397	4.531	
	Group Total	2683.990	399		97.700
Assessing Information	Between	359.367	2	179.683	
	Groups Within	1103.343	397	2.779	
	Group Total	1462.710	399		64.653
Critical Thinking	Between	253.910	2	126.955	
	Groups Within	1084.090	397	2.731	
	Group Total	1338.000	399		46.492
Using Technology	Between	1176.206	2	588.217	
	Groups Within	2647.206	397	6.668	
	Group Total	3823.640	399		88.215
Interpretation	Between	547.478	2	273.739	
	Groups Within	1470.620	397	3.704	
	Group Total	2018.097	399		73.897
Research	Between	1387.409	2	693.704	
	Groups Within	2522.769	397	6.355	
	Group Total	3910.177	399		109.166
Information Skills Total	Between	56245.763	2	28122.882	
	Groups Within	53311.914	397	134.287	209.424

	Group Total	109557.7	399		
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From the table it can be seen that all the F-values are significant. The F-values indicate that there is significant difference in Information skill (component wise and total) among the three groups based on Institutional climate perception. This reveals that Institutional climate have a significant effect on Skill of Locating, Reading, Assessing, Critical Thinking, using Technology, Interpretation, Researching and Information skill total of Post graduate students. The significant F-values shed light in to the indirect relationship between Institutional climate and Information skills. This led the investigator to use the Correlation analysis to estimate the relationship between these two variables.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation analysis was used to estimate the relationship between Institutional climate perception and Information skills (total and component wise) of post graduate students. In this study Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to estimate the relationship. The details of the relationship between these two variables are given in table 2.

Table 2: Details of Relationship between Institutional climate perception and Information skills (total and component wise) of post graduate students.

Dependent Variables	Independent variable	N	Correlation
Locating Information	Institutional climate perception	400	0.536
Reading	Institutional climate perception	400	0.587
Assessing Information	Institutional climate perception	400	0.529
Critical Thinking	Institutional climate perception	400	0.462
Using Technology	Institutional climate perception	400	0.542
Interpretation	Institutional climate perception	400	0.575
Research	Institutional climate perception	400	0.642
Information Skills Total	Institutional climate perception	400	0.758

From the table it can be seen that all the Correlation values are positive and significant. All the values of correlation between Institutional climate perception and Components of Information skill can be verbally interpreted as substantial or marked. The relationship between Institutional climate perception Information skills Total can be verbally interpreted as high to very high relationship. Hence it can be concluded that there exist significant relationship between Institutional climate perception and Information skills (total and component wise) of post graduate students.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study found that Institutional climate perception is having significant effect on Information skills and its components. The study also found significant relationship between Institutional climate perception and Information skills and its components. This indicates that Information skills of post graduate students are highly dependent on their Institutional climate perception. Many studies conducted earlier also proved that Student performance is highly related to institutional culture and climate in which they belong to In view with the findings of this study, there should be attempts from

the authorities to feel the students comfortable in their institutions. Healthy academic, social, administrative and physical climates are inevitable part of this. Researches may be promoted to develop indicators of good institutional climate in post graduate institutions.

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