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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER MORALE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE.

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TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER MORALE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, 299 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SUBURBAN CHICAGO SCHOOLS WERE GIVEN (1) THE 50-ITEM CHANDLER-MATHIS ATTITUDE INVENTORY, WHICH MEASURES LEVEL OF MORALE WITH RESPECT TO SELF, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, ADMINISTRATION, AND POLICY, AND (2) THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE (OCDQ), WHICH MEASURES DEGREE OF OPENNESS OR CLOSEDNESS IN EIGHT FEATURES OF SCHOOL CLIMATE--DISENGAGEMENT, HINDRANCE, ESPRIT, INTIMACY, ALOOFNESS, PRODUCTION EMPHASIS, THRUST, AND CONSIDERATION. TEST SCORES WERE ANALYZED IN RELATION TO YEARS TEACHING, YEARS TEACHING IN PRESENT SCHOOL, AND SALARY. THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT AN "OPEN" CLIMATE IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH MORALE REGARDLESS OF TYPE OF SALARY SCHEDULE. IN "CLOSED" CLIMATE SCHOOLS, HOWEVER, HIGHER MORALE WAS FOUND IN SCHOOLS WITH MERIT, RATHER THAN NONMERIT, SALARY SCHEDULES. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 10, 1967). (LC)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER MORALE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

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The investigation of teacher morale is a subject of increasing interest to the educator. Several recent reports by Richardson and Blocker (1963), Redefer (1959), Chandler (1959), and Mathis (1959) have acted to call attention to the variable of staff morale in an educational setting. The concern of industry with the morale of workers and its relationship to productivity has provided some historical continuity to the study of teacher morale, although the dimensions of morale in both settings has not been demonstrated to be the same.

The investigation reported here represents an extension of earlier studies of teacher morale, especially those of Chandler (1959) and Mathis (1959). Specifically, the study sought to determine the nature of the relationship, if any, between staff morale in an educational setting and organizational climate. In addition, data were obtained on the salary policies of the schools involved to determine if the type of salary schedule had any consistent relationship to teacher morale.

Procedure

Morale was operationally defined for the purposes of this study in terms of the Morale Inventory originally used by Chandler and Mathis (1957). These authors defined teacher morale as a feeling of general well-being and psychological comfort relative to attitudes about the self and the environment. The Inventory consists of fifty items requiring a response on a scale which can be quantified in relation to anchor points of low or high morale. The fifty items are divided into five attitudinal areas as follows:

Self, School, Community, Administration, and Policy. These areas of the Inventory have been substantiated by a factor analysis of the data reported here. Data relevant to the validity and reliability of the Inventory are available in the literature (Mathis, 1959). The statements in the Inventory as well as the choices for each statement are randomly presented.

The organizational climate of a particular school was operationally described as the climate defined by the scores from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) developed by Halpin and Croft (1963). These investigators hypothesized that schools in general have a distinct "personality" or organizational climate. The OCDQ was developed to test this hypothesis. The OCDQ is a 69-item questionnaire identifying eight subtests related to organizational climate. These are: (1) disengagement, (2) hindrance, (3) esprit, (4) intimacy, (5) aloofness, (6) production emphasis, (7) thrust, and (8) consideration. Six distinct organizational climates can be identified from the subtest scores. Halpin and Croft refer to these as: open, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal and closed.

Data on salary schedules consisted of whether or not the school had a non-merit (single) or merit salary schedule, with the latter being defined as any salary schedule which authorizes merit pay above the regular schedule as a recognition of superior performance.

The subjects for the study consisted of 299 elementary school teachers representing seventeen suburban elementary schools in the suburbs of Chicago. The schools represented areas with homogeneous socio-economic backgrounds.

The Morale Inventory and the OCDQ were administered to the two hundred and ninety-nine subjects. The Morale Inventory was analyzed by the investigators while the OCDQ was scored by Dr. Croft at the University of New Mexico.

The reliability of the Morale Inventory for the present sample was .83 using Hoyt's (1941) method of estimation from analysis of variance. The index of reliability was .91.

The analysis of the data consisted of: (1) separating the schools according to their respective organizational climates; (2) testing for normality and homogeneity of variance using Bartlett's Chi-square procedure; (3) comparing schools with different and similar organizational climates using data on the five morale attitudinal areas; and, (4) comparing schools on the basis of their respective salary policies. Analyses of variance were used as the basic statistical tool.

Results

The distribution of the seventeen schools relative to data from the OCDQ identified five "autonomous", five "familiar", and seven "closed" climate schools. The "autonomous" climate is defined as being characterized by complete freedom for teachers to establish structures for social interaction. Teachers are more task-oriented and less occupied by administrative activity and clerical concerns. The "familiar" climate is characterized by high school need-satisfaction. Teachers are more disengaged from task-oriented situations and burdened with administrative and clerical activities. The "closed" climate is identified as

being characterized by general dissatisfaction relative to social and task accomplishment, with very little group achievement and much busy work accompanied by low morale.

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF PROBABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE F VALUES FOUND
IN THE ANALYSES OF VARIANCES

Organizational Climate	Type of Salary Schedule	Morale Inventory					
		Total	Self	School	Comm.	Admin.	Pol.
All Schools	Among Schools	.001	--	.001	.001	.01	.001
	Merit	--	--	--	.01	--	--
	Single	.001	.05	.001	.01	.01	.001
	Merit vs. single	.01	--	.01	--	--	.001
Autonomous	Among Schools	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Merit	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Single	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Merit vs. single	--	--	--	--	--	--
Familiar	Among Schools	--	--	.01	--	--	--
	Single	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Merit vs. single	--	--	.01	--	--	.05
Closed	Among Schools	.01	--	.001	.01	.01	.01
	Single	.001	--	.001	.05	.01	.01
	Merit vs. single	--	--	--	.01	--	.05

Table I summarizes the results of the various analyses of variance. The results of the study suggest that where the most favorable organizational climate, i.e., "autonomous" climate prevailed, no statistically significant differences were found among the participating schools on the basis of a comparison using total scores from the Morale Inventory or scores on each of the five areas of the Inventory. This lack of significance for "autonomous" climate schools was found in comparisons among the "autonomous" climate schools as well as comparisons utilizing "autonomous" climate schools grouped on the basis of type of salary schedule.

Schools with a "familiar" climate differed significantly among themselves only on the basis of scores on the area of the Inventory concerning attitudes about school. When compared on the basis of salary schedule, these "familiar" climate schools differed significantly in attitudes about school and policy. No significant differences in morale were found between "familiar" climate schools using a non-merit salary schedule.

Schools with a "closed" organizational climate and non-merit salary schedules differed significantly on all but one morale area (Self). "Closed" climate schools with a merit salary plan compared with non-merit schools differed significantly on attitudes about "community" and "policy".

An examination of the data suggests that the open nature of the organizational climate is associated with a generally high morale regardless of the particular salary schedule employed. On the other hand, "closed" climate schools showed significant variability on the areas of the Morale Inventory, with the non-merit salary schedule being associated with lower mean scores and thus lower morale as .

In summary, the following conclusions appear to be supported by the data obtained in this study:

1. Morale, as measured by the five subtests or areas, of the Morale Inventory, was more a function of the particular organizational climate than of the type salary schedule employed by the school.
2. The open nature of the school climate appears to be associated more with higher morale.
3. The closed nature of the school climate appears to be associated more with low morale.
4. Schools enjoying an "autonomous" climate characterized by freedom and high cooperation between principal and teachers seem to be unaffected with respect to morale by the particular salary policies of the schools. When teachers are assured of cooperation, assistance, guidance, and social need satisfaction, it appears to make no difference whether the salary plan is merit or non-merit.
5. The Morale Inventory appears to be a reliable and valid instrument capable of measuring differences between school populations relative to the rationale for morale which served as the basis for the identification of the five attitudinal areas in the Inventory.

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