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# EMOTIONS, CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

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**ABSTRACT**
The classroom climate has been approached by different authors, where a diversity of elements that constitute it are raised, however, emotions is a factor that has not yet been given relevance in the conformation and assessment of the classroom climate. Therefore, this monographic document through the documentary review will approach the concept of classroom climate, to analyze this variable, know the components that make it up and recognize the importance that is given to the emotions of the students in the context from the classroom. This study is organized in three stages: first, the mentions of different authors about the term classroom climate is reviewed; second, different instruments used to assess the classroom climate are reviewed; in the third moment, positions of various authors on the participation of students' emotions in the classroom climate are reviewed and analyzed. Through the documentary review, it was found that the classroom climate in addition to having diversity of elements, mixtures of these elements are produced, which have their own characteristics. Likewise, the emotions of the students are a determinant that has not been important in the constitution and evaluation of the classroom climate.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper approaches the concept of classroom climate with the objectives of accessing and recognizing the multiplicity of elements that characterize it and of inquire about relevance of students' emotions as a component of classroom climate. The emotional factor is present in personal interrelationships in the classroom and "they seem to have the ability to modulate the activity of the rest

of the cognitive functions" (Candela and Pastor, 2018, p. 46) and although emotions have been related to social competencies and academic performance of students (Márquez et al., 2006), has not been accepted within the classroom climate as a prioritized determinant.

In addition, considering that the classroom climate is a useful construction to predict school performance and satisfaction (López et al., 2018; Raviv et al., 1990), and better explains the variations in student learning (Cercós, 2009), makes it an important variable that requires unraveling its nature, in order to understand it and thus identify the relevant factors for the design of strategies that provide an appropriate classroom climate, which tips the balance for a pleasant meeting of the student with learning. Next, we will review what has been sustained by different authors about classroom climate and its components and the instruments to assess it, to find out which are the elements that constitute it and what importance is given to the students' emotions in the shaping of the classroom climate.

*Classroom Climate*

According to Walberg and Moos (1982), the classroom climate is the perception that students and the teacher have regarding the aspects of the classroom that influence learning. So, if it is necessary to find the classroom climate in a certain educational institution, it can only be indicated by the participants of that space where the dynamics of the teaching and learning process occurs. In this sense, the classroom climate is a vitally important element in determining how social relationships are within the educational process, and it indicates what the learning environment is like (Sánchez et al. 2008). The class climate is decisive for the psychosocial functioning in students, which comprises a mixture of teaching practices and peer processes, being influenced by teacher-student relationships (Leff et al., 2011).

From the point of view of Paredes and Sanabria (2015) it is important to understand that the interaction of the person with the natural environment involves both internal and external factors of the individual, and that is where the matter becomes relevant, since it is prominent to identify how the two types of factors - internal and external - intervene in social interaction. Duarte (2003) makes a real exhibition about the personal interactions that occur inside a classroom:

The classroom where the most faithful and true interactions between the protagonists of intentional education, teachers and students are staged. Once the classroom doors are closed, interactions begin that only their actors can account for. It is here where the master is made and shown, here the desires already become a reality, it is no longer the world of what could be, but the space of what is. (p.105)

The interactions, as Duarte says, between the protagonists inside a classroom - teacher and students - are known to everyone there, and they are the ones who can really give information about what happened in the classroom. Thus, peer

relationships are some of the main determinants of the concept of classroom climate (Cengel and Türkoğlu, 2016).

However, in addition to interpersonal relationships, it can be noted of other characteristics that are associated with the classroom climate, according to Moos (1980), in the determinants of the classroom climate is the context of the school and the class, physical and architectural characteristics, organizational factor, student characteristics and teacher characteristics.

For Coop and White (1980) the classroom climate covers sociological variables -power and influence-, psychological variables -expectations, attitudes, self-concept, behavior- and didactic variables -motivation, individual curriculum, classroom practice-. According to Brophy (1983) in the classroom climate, in addition to the effective management of the classroom teacher, it can also be related to the teacher's ability to actively involve their students in learning, to organize themselves in their classroom and teaching practices, and to use proactive and positive encouragement.

In addition to this, Gairin (1986) alludes to different determinants associated with the classroom climate, such as the physical conditions of the classroom -lighting, acoustics, furniture-, internal circumstances of the person -heredity, psychological characteristics, predispositional situation-, human conditions -density, agglomeration, confidentiality-, pedagogical conditions -nature, evolution and properties of the learning group, educational programs-, and contextual determinants -typology of the educational center, nearby sociocultural environment, among others-.

In this sense, Paredes and Sanabria (2015) coincide with Gairin, declaring determinants associated with the classroom climate, external factors, and internal factors of the person, as is the case, of the predispositional situation, which concerns the individual's state of mind. Along the same lines, Ascorra and Cáceres (2000), resolve that a good climate is not related in a unique way with discipline and authority, but also includes organizational and cultural conditions of the classroom and the establishment, which according to Treviño et al. (2013) "the organization of the classroom includes the management of teacher behavior, the way that students respond to the rules and regulations of the class and productivity within the classroom" (p.6).

Addressing Gómez (2012), makes relevance to factors that intervene in the climate, such as, the physical space -acoustics, luminosity, ventilation, temperature, arrangement of tables or desks, the methodology, which is the direct responsibility of the teacher, also characteristics of the students - age, self-esteem, motivation, sociocultural origin, relationships between peers, diversity in students - knowledge, abilities, interests, expectations, attitude, maturation process, gender, sociocultural origin, family support, ways of learning, student interest, technology influence, the teacher as a formal class discipline leader and as a manager of the classroom climate and disruptive behaviors.

Likewise, for Maldonado (2016), the classroom climate is associated both with the relationships between teacher and student and among peers, but also with the methodological teaching strategies, significance of the contents,

participation of the students in the room. of classes, among others. Similarly, López et al. (2018) show different factors that are associated with the classroom environment, such as teacher and student interaction, classroom organization, providing clear behavioral expectations, also the physical environment - lighting, cleaning, and acoustics-, and extracurricular activities.

In this order of ideas, you can see contributions from different authors where they expose elements or you can say "ingredients" that produce the classroom climate, which as indicated by Ríos et al. (2010) is a complex concept as it is multidimensional, however, elements that appear more frequently in each of the authors' positions are evident (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Factors Of Classroom Climate

| Classroom climate according to concepts: determinants and elements |
| --- |
| Interpersonal relationships: teacher and students, between students. Organization: educational programs, classroom practice, classroom, classroom culture, order, class methodology, teacher -discipline leader-. Physical environment: classroom and institution. Sociocultural context of the institution. Didactics: motivation, proactive-positive stimulus, curriculum, classroom practice, student involvement, work orientation, values, methodology, student participation. Psychological characteristics of students: learning attitude, self-concept, behavior. |

**Source:** Self-Made.

### *Instruments Of Evaluation of The Classroom Climate*

Next, an analysis of validated questionnaires that evaluate the classroom climate will be carried out, which allows to find other factors associated with the classroom climate variable. A questionnaire used to assess the classroom climate is the so-called Social Climate of the Classroom, prepared by Pérez, Ramos and López (2010) for secondary school students. For the elaboration of said questionnaire they were based on a variety of instruments, such as, School Environment Scale (SES), Classroom Environment Scale (CES), Learning Environment Inventory (LEI), My Class Inventory (Simplified version of the LEI) (MCI) , School Environment Perception (PAE), School Climate Questionnaire, Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ), College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI), University Classroom Environment Inventory (IACU), Systemic Classroom Observation Scale (ESOC ) and the Battery of Instruments for the Evaluation of School Climate in Primary Schools. Denoting 41 items grouped into 9 dimensions: interest / respect / concern, satisfaction / expectations, relationship, competitiveness / favoritism, communication, cooperation / democracy, norms / discipline, group cohesion and physical organization of the classroom.

In a similar way, Gonzalez and Bisquerra (2013), after reviewing 22 scales that included a total of 93 factors, most of which were tests about the social climate

of the classroom or the educational center, construct the Brief Class Climate Scale ( EBCC) for secondary education students, composed of 11 items organized in two dimensions: group cohesion, which includes satisfaction and involvement factors and cohesion among equals, and group management, which involves the teacher-student relationship, the order and organization, and task orientation.

Rostan et al. (2015), carried out the construction of an instrument to evaluate the class climate of university students called "Scale of Social Climate in the Classroom for Universities" (ECSA-U), based on the adaptation of the questionnaire on social climate in the classroom designed by Pérez et al. (2010) for secondary schools, which includes 22 items grouped into three second-order factors, teacher performance and relationship with students, affective atmosphere –sense of belonging- and normative behavior, and relationship between students.

For the design of the aforementioned questionnaires, they were based on a great diversity of these, resulting in different dimensions, but emotions are not found as a determinant within the classroom climate. However, two instruments were found that involve the emotional component within the evaluation of teacher-student interaction in the classroom, one of these instruments is the one developed by Pianta et al. (2008), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an observation instrument that assesses the emotional and instructional environment based on teacher-student interactions, which comprises three domains: emotional support, classroom organization and educational support.

The other instrument is the class emotional climate questionnaire (CEC-Q) developed by Alonso-Tapia and Nieto (2019) that assesses "the perception of students about the sensitivity of teachers to detect and identify the emotional states of their students, and the reaction of teachers to these states in a positive and proactive way" (p.81). This questionnaire comprises 32 items, of which 16 refer to the teacher's ability to perceive the emotions of sadness, shame, concern and joy of their students and the remaining 16 items refer to the proactive response to such emotions of teachers.

For Alonso-Tapia and Nieto "the Emotional Class Climate component (CEC) includes not only the facets generally referred to emotions, but also aspects that would fall within the academic-motivational climate and the discipline management climate" (p .80). The authors resolve that the CEC is part of the classroom climate together with the Motivational Class Climate and the Disruptive Climate, and that it is related to some degree with the Sense of community and with the student's satisfaction with the way in which the teacher them. treats.

In accordance with the different concepts issued on the classroom climate, the elements that indicate that they make it up, the questionnaires prepared for their assessment and bearing in mind the aforementioned authors, the dimension of emotions has not been addressed in a relevant way within of the classroom climate, despite the fact that the presence of relationships between classroom

participants is indisputable, which implies, as indicated by Evans et al. (2009), emotional aspects.

### *Emotions: Factor Involved in The Climate Classroom*

The interpersonal relationships that occur inside the classroom, such as the interaction between the teacher and students, and the interaction between students, is where emotions are present. Corresponding emotion according to González (2017) to "a complex state of the organism that arises as a response, more or less primary, to some experience or thought" (p.26).

However, Zubieta et al. (2008), indicate that the classroom climate is perceived as if it existed independently of personal feelings. Ibáñez (2002) also states that, although emotions are important in the educational context, they are not considered for the design of methodological and evaluative strategies. Along the same lines, Osher and Berg (2017) argue that the conceptualization of the school climate has included the physical, social, academic, and disciplinary context, but the school climate and emotional and social learning have been treated on many occasions separately both by researchers and professionals, also emphasize that the school context is affected by the social and emotional competence of each participant in the educational community, both individually and collectively.

For all this, Cercós (2009), states that emotions are understood as mechanisms of action -learning- and interaction -pedagogy- that occur in a context or work environment. And according to research according to Cercós, the influence of emotions is strong in education, and they decisively affect the processes and the school environment. Likewise, Newland et al. (2019) point out that students' feelings of confusion, annoyance, apprehension, and disapproval can interfere with peer relationships and learning experiences.

Regarding emotions in the classroom environment, Pereira (2010) alludes that, The interaction in the classroom setting implies a structural encounter between professors, teachers and students and as a whole causes a structural change in the direction limited by the emotions that are at the base of the actions of those who participate in the interaction, and, in the same sense, they also generate a specific classroom climate. (p.11)

In accordance with the above, emotions are an inherent element of people, and therefore of interpersonal relationships, which contributes positively or negatively to the classroom climate, and taking into account the variety of elements that constitute it - classroom climate-, emotions can affect all those elements, naming a few: teaching practices, the context of the institution and the class, psychological variables, individual curriculum, organization in classroom and teaching practices, educational programs, predispositional situation, the methodology, teacher and student interaction, student and student interaction, physical aspects of the classroom -care of furniture-, among others. Therefore, and according to Alonso-Tapia and Nieto (2019), to have a comprehensive vision of what happens in the classroom, and to be able to guide educational interventions, it is necessary to evaluate the emotional climate of

the classroom, which according to Evans et al. (2009) examines the exchange of feelings between the teacher and the student.

In this same sense, Gordillo et al. (2016) state that in the exchange between teachers and students, it occurs in an emotional context that facilitates or hinders the attitude and emotional capacity of the student. Consequently, the teacher holds a relevant place in the expression of emotions of students in the classroom through their dynamics, empathy, and assertive communication. One of the ways for the teacher to facilitate an appropriate emotional environment, according to Hong et al. (2021), is that it strengthens the skills of social interrelation between students, through a positive psychological and social environment, which involves the support of the teacher, the promotion of respect among peers and the promotion of interaction.

In this order of ideas, the emotions of a person can affect the relationships that occur between peers within a classroom and at the same time interpersonal relationships can affect the emotions of a person in the classroom, that is, the association of these two elements -emotions and interpersonal relationships- forms an atmosphere or an emotional class climate; that according to Evans et al. (2009) are all the interactions that involve the emotional exchange between the teacher and the student. Like Hamre et al. (2013) sustain that teacher and student interactions in the classroom comprise different emotional domains.

But it should be noted that the emotional climate in the classroom results both from the relationships that exist between the teacher and students and, among the students themselves, that is, between the conglomerate of students, from which emotions can emerge and promote a specific classroom climate - emotional classroom climate. Consequently, the emotional climate of the classroom is the result of the emotional interactions - feelings - of the protagonists in a classroom.

But, in addition to these reagents -emotions and interpersonal relationships- there can be reactions with effects towards one or some of the constitutive elements of the classroom climate (figure 1).

**Figure 1**. Emotional Climate -Emotions and Interpersonal Relationships- In the Classroom Climate. Self-Made.
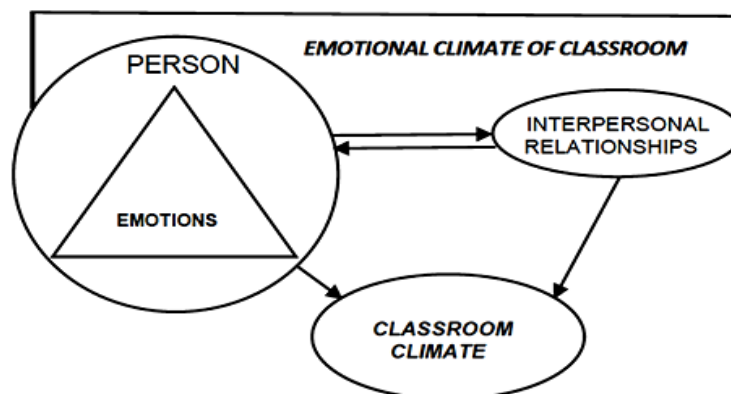
Consequently, as Evans et al. (2009) the classroom climate is a multifaceted concept. This plural nature of the classroom environment is given by being constituted by a set of variables (Adelman and Taylor, 2005; Herrera and Rico, 2015), and it is reasonable because it deals with interpersonal relationships or social coexistence in a specific context. That as indicated by Aron et al. (2012) in social coexistence "(…) they have different social representations and different emotions in the face of the same phenomenon" (p.805). And it is the diversity or multiplicity of the constituent elements and their reacting aspects in the context of the classroom climate, which make their objective measurement complex. As mentioned by Alonso-Tapia and Nieto (2019) there is "the problem of establishing the limits and relationships between the different components of the climate in the classroom, as well as the effects of each of them and their interactions" (p.80).

However, although it is complex to define all the elements of the classroom climate, the emotions that emerge in a pedagogical room, is a very pressing factor to consider, which is essential to measure, to establish the emotional condition of the assistants in the class, to be able to intervene in a correct way, providing strategies and guidelines that achieve positive emotions in the students. And as Brackett (s.f) points out, students perform more academically and achieve their goals, when they regulate their emotions.

It is relevant to carry out a recognition of the emotions in the students within the classroom, which not only facilitates the understanding of behavior among their peers, but also makes it possible to carry out a good emotional management of the teacher with the students. As Brackett (s.f) points out, "most teachers waste a lot of time managing discipline in the classroom. As emotion regulation strategies are put into practice, there will be more time available to continue [with the academic objectives]".

According to the above, the application of strategies on the regulation of emotions - emotional intelligence - in students is decisive for a positive classroom climate. Being emotional intelligence according to Goleman (1995) the ability to recognize one's own feelings and those of others and know how to handle them. Additionally, Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal, (2004) allude:
Emotionally intelligent students, as a general rule, have better levels of psychological adjustment and emotional well-being, have a higher quality and quantity of interpersonal and social support networks, are less likely to engage in disruptive, aggressive or violent behaviors; they can achieve better school performance by coping with stressful situations more easily and consuming fewer addictive substances (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, etc.). (p.12)

In this sense, recognizing and evaluating emotions in the classroom, gives greater clarity to the events that occur in the classroom and emotional intelligence being the ability to regulate these emotions, Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal indicate that "emotional intelligence is another new element to consider, one more piece of the puzzle that allows us to explain vital results of the individual so far not predicted by the existing variables" (p.13). Therefore, the dimension of emotions is one of the relevant conditions for the

positive or negative classroom climate. Hence, the importance of including emotions as a determinant within the classroom climate.

## CONCLUSIONS

It has been possible to review and analyze how the classroom climate comprises different elements; so that its nature is complex, since each of these elements they can be interrelateds with each other causing the mixture of two or more elements with their own characteristics and relevant to each participant in this environment. As is the case of interpersonal relationships, a totally unavoidable factor within the classroom climate that is associated with people's emotions, resulting in the emotional climate of the classroom, a determining and fundamental factor in the classroom climate.

This being the case, emotions in personal interactions, a key determinant; as indicated by Abarca et al. (2002), affect and emotions play a fundamental role in educational practice (interaction with students, organization of the class, space, methodologies, etc.). That is how, the teacher must apply curricular motivation strategies, according to the ages of the students. Indeed, a person with positive emotions, such as joy, satisfaction, motivation, pride, among others, favors a good classroom climate -with its constituent elements-, allowing the achievement of a better teaching and learning process.

According to the documents reviewed and analyzed, the emotional component has not been assigned the relevant place in the conceptualizations of the classroom climate, in the same way, in the evaluations designed to examine the classroom climate, it is not recognized as a dimension to be assessed. However, the emotional climate of the class is assessed in isolation.
So, according to what has been studied about the classroom climate, for a class to function and to present a harmonious environment, it is necessary for the teacher to keep in mind the emotional competencies of the students, both those at an intrapersonal level.

 (self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-control, self-motivation, self-realization...) and those of an interpersonal nature (empathy, assertiveness...) (González, 2017). In addition to establishing emotional management guidelines in accordance with the emotional needs of the group of students in the classroom, in a way that empowers students with emotional intelligence.

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