

## **The Satisfaction Level of Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak's Staff towards University Environment**

### **LE NIVEAU DE SATISFACTION DU PERSONNEL DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DES TECHNOLOGIES MARA SARAWAK VERS L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

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**Abstract:** This paper presents findings of an empirical study that was designed to investigate the perception of staff towards the university environment (university climate). Furthermore, the study was designed to determine the nature of current university climate and explore differences between academic and non-academic staff. A questionnaire adapted from Personal Assessment of the University Climate Survey (PAUCS) was administered to 550 university staff. The findings reveal a favorable university climate and no significant differences were found between components of

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campus climate and gender and category of staff except for collaboration. The authors propose measures for improvement of university climate.

**Key words:** University climate; Campus life; Students; Academic staff

**Résumé:** Ce document présente les résultats d'une étude empirique qui a été conçue pour étudier la perception du personnel vers l'environnement universitaire (le climat de l'université). En outre, l'étude a été conçue pour déterminer la nature du climat actuel de l'université et d'explorer les différences entre les professeurs et le personnel qui ne fait pas partie des enseignants. Un questionnaire adapté du Sondage de l'évaluation des personnels de l'Université sur le climat (PAUCS) a été distribué à 550 personnes de l'université. Les résultats révèlent un climat universitaire favorable et aucune différence significative n'a été trouvée entre les composantes du climat du campus et les sexes et la catégorie de personnel, sauf pour la collaboration. Les auteurs proposent des mesures pour améliorer le climat de l'université.

**Mots-Clés:** climat universitaire; la vie dans le campus; étudiants; personnel universitaire

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, considerable attention has been devoted to the idea of improving the overall quality of university and one aspect that can contribute to the overall quality of a university is the campus environment. Put simply, campus climate refers to the overall atmosphere of the university. Campus climate refers to the behaviours within a workplace or learning environment which can influence whether an individual feels safe, listened to, and treated fairly and with respect. It also refers to the organization's structures, policies and practices; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions and communications. Climate surveys serve as an essential means for determining the nature of universities' 'campus climate' in order to gauge how campus communities are responding to demographic changes, to the need to foster inter-group cooperation and to the need to evaluate universities' 'comfort level'. Climate surveys enable universities to identify potential areas that may need to be addressed in order to create a 'welcoming' environment for faculty, staff and students from diverse backgrounds. Such a 'welcoming' environment has been increasingly recognized as being instrumental in contributing to student successes and in retaining students and talented faculty. Organizational climate has been defined as the collective personality of a university, college or enterprise. It has also been described as the atmosphere which is created by the social and professional interactions of the individuals of the college. As stated by Sargeant (1967) "Climate may be pictured as a personality sketch of a school. As personality describes an individual so climate defines the essence of an institution..." (p. 3). Moreover, the organizational climate of a university affects the overall atmosphere of a particular institution to such an extent that one can sense the climate present in the university or college almost immediately upon entering the building (Roucche and Baker, 1986).

Several implications serve to underline the paramount importance of organization climate in the university setting. These implications include the following: the kind of climate that exists sets the tone for the university approach in meeting stated goals and resolving problems, effective communication necessitates a climate of trust, mutual respect and clarity of function; climate serves as an important determinant of attitudes towards continuous personal growth and development; climate conditions, the setting for creativity and the generation of new ideas and program improvement. University climate serves a crucial role in determining "what the institution is and what it might become" (Norton, 1984). In general, "climate" is to an organization what "personality" is to an individual (Roucche and Baker 1986).

The above definitions and statements underline the great importance of organizational climate to an institution. Therefore, there are numerous reasons for studying organizational climate. Firstly, there is evidence of a relationship between climate and other organization variables, such as job satisfaction, job performance, group communication, leadership, structure and organization commitment as well as organizational performance (Ansari, 1980; Joyce and Stocum, 1982). Secondly, knowing the organization's climate is considered useful for organizational development efforts. Thirdly, organizational climate has been found to influence the motivation and behaviors of individuals (Likert, 1967; Roucche and Baker, 1986; Schneider and Snyder, 1975). A positive university climate goes beyond safety and orderliness. A healthy university climate creates the context where teaching and learning are emphasized and rewarded. Faculty believe it is their responsibility to teach all students and consequently to be rewarded for academic research efforts, professional growth and teaching accomplishments. Students should be rewarded for academic efforts and accomplishments. Most certainly, in an institutional climate conducive to learning and research there is a spirit of collegiality and collaboration among the staff and between the staff and the administration in reaching the goals of the institutions (Sergiovanni, 1990). Specifically, all personnel work cooperatively in planning and coordinating the university's program as well as in implementing new learning techniques and initiating research projects. When a problem arises, faculty, administrative staff and the leadership use participative techniques of shared decision making in deciding about new solutions and ideas that will be utilized (Hoy and Miskel, 1991). An organization climate refers to those characteristic that distinguish one organization from other organizations and that influence the behavior of the people involved in the organizations. Subsequently, the organizational climate in universities is a relatively enduring quality of university climate that is experienced by participants (administrators, faculty, students), affects their behavior, and is based on the collective perception of behaviors of all the people involved in the university.

## **2. METHODS**

A questionnaire survey method was used to collect the data. The instrument used to measure the university climate was adapted from Personal Assessment of the University Climate Survey (PAUCS). This instrument measured campus climate based on six main components namely: Formal influence, Communication, Collaboration, Organizational structure, Job satisfaction and Student focus. The sampling frame comprises of all staff (both academic and non-academic) in UiTM Sarawak. The sample for the study was selected from the list of staff in the UiTM Sarawak provided by HEA which comprised of 300 academic staff and 250 non academic staff. A total of 550 questionnaires were sent to the respective faculties, departments and units. The questionnaires were delivered to the head of department and they were told to pass on the questionnaires to the subordinates in their respective departments and faculties. The response rate for the study was about 30%. Table 1 summarized the Cronbach Alpha for the main components of the instrument which is above 0.80 and is considered acceptable for the purpose of organizational research (Nunnally, 1978).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The profile of respondents is presented in Table 2 (academic staff) and Table 3 (Non-academic staff). The majority of the respondents were non-academic staff (57.3 %), male (86%) and married. About 60% of the respondents were in the age group of between 26 to 45. In terms of length of service, about 33% had served less than 3 years followed by 39% who had served between 3 to 12 years. The majority

of the academic staff members were from the DM45/46 academic grade group whilst the non-academic staff members were from the category C and D grade groups. Most of the respondents were permanent staff. About 25% of the non-academic staff respondents were from the security department followed by Finance and Library (16% each).

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviations of the six components of campus climate for staff arranged from highest to the lowest mean. The highest mean is for Job Satisfaction composite variable (5.32), followed by the Organization Structure (5.12) and Formal Influence (5.09). The Collaboration composite variable has the lowest mean (4.36). The overall mean for the campus climate is 5.02 which indicates a satisfactory level on a Likert scale of between 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

An independent sample t-test was used to examine the influence of gender on the main components of campus climate for staff. The t-test was not significant indicating that there was no difference in main components of campus climate based on gender. This shows that gender does not influence components of campus climate. An independent sample t-test was also used to examine the influence of category of staff on the main components of campus climate for staff. The t-test was significant only for collaboration indicating that there is a difference in the degree of collaboration between academic and non academic staff. This shows that the category of staff does influence collaboration between academic and non-academic staff.

One way ANOVA was used in order to explore the influence of length of service on six components of a campus climate. The results of the ANOVA test show no significant differences in length of service for the main components of campus climate. This indicates that length of service does not influence components of campus climate, meaning that perception of campus climate is not tenure related. One sample t test with a median of 4 was used to explore the degree of consensus on items of each component (as shown in Tables 5 to 10). The results of the item analysis include those detailed below.

Staff gave a high consensus on the formal influence component of campus climate. Among items on the formal influence, "I have opportunities to be creative in my work" "There is high emphasis on task accomplishment at the university" and "my superiors express confidence in my work" obtained the three highest consensuses. This is in contrast with the responses to "there is quality interaction between superior and subordinates", "I receive quality guidance in relation to my work" and "my superiors are concerned about my personal and professional development". As a result, the campus climate is more towards creativity and task-orientedness and least favorable to professional development.

The communication aspect of the campus climate also obtained high consensus. The item "I am aware of the vision and mission of the university" obtained the highest consensus, followed by "the information I receive is useful for my work". Conversely, the three items that showed the least consensus were "positive expectations are communicated often", "I receive sufficient information with regard to my work" and "written guidelines for my work are clearly communicated". As a result, in terms of campus climate, communication of vision, mission and information is of utmost importance. Collaboration component of campus climate showed low consensus on items: "My faculty/department/unit employs Group problem solving", "The University utilized group problem solving" and "I often feel rewarded for my efforts". Among the positive consensus items include "There is opportunity for developing relationship with colleagues in this university", "There is spirit of cooperation within faculty/department/unit" and "There is opportunity to collaborate with others". As a result, in terms of collaboration as a component of campus climate, developing relationship and cooperation spirit help in enhancing collaboration.

The Organizational Structure component of campus climate obtained a medium to high consensus. Notably, "I perform a number of different tasks beyond my job description" obtained the

highest consensus, while “My work requires accuracy” and “I can set my own work schedule according to my job responsibility” were ranked as second and third among all the items. Conversely, the lowest consensus came from the following items: “I receive feedback from my work”, “the university policies and procedures always guide my work” and “my colleagues appreciate my work”. As a result, in terms of organizational structure as a component of campus climate, performing different tasks and work accuracy should be underscored as important organizational activities.

The Job Satisfaction component of campus climate which obtained the highest rating was “My job is important to the vision and mission of the university” and the lowest item is “I find my overall job motivating”. As a result, in terms of job satisfaction, the campus climate contributes to the perception of importance of work to the overall success of the university. The Student focus component of campus climate which elicited the highest rating was “student’s needs are central to what we do” and the lowest rating was for the item “administrative services is of quality”. It can be surmised that in terms of student focus, the campus climate is focused on the student’s needs to give the students a quality university experience. The services offered to the students’ needs to be improved in order for students to be satisfied with their campus experience.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings show that university staffs rate the university climate as supportive in terms of job satisfaction, organizational structure and formal influence. Most of the staff is happy with their job and they are aware of the university’s vision and mission and what is expected of them to achieve the university’s goal. The findings indicate that job satisfaction showed the highest rating whilst collaboration revealed the lowest rating. In addition, findings of the importance of communication, job satisfaction, organizational structure and formal influence are the main components of campus climate. The students’ needs are also given priority by the university staff and quality of education is also being emphasized. Grey areas where there is room for improvement are collaboration and spirit of cooperation between faculties. The management need to have more academic activities to enhance the spirit of collaboration and cooperation amongst the staff. Students’ personal and career development is another area where improvements can be made to enhance the students’ educational experience at UiTM Sarawak.

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**Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha for Campus Climate and its Main Components**

Major Components of Campus Climate	Cronbach's Alpha
Formal influence	0.91
Communication	0.92
Collaboration	0.92
Organizational Structure	0.85
Job Satisfaction	0.91
Student Focus	0.93
Overall Campus climate	0.98

**Table 2. Profile of respondents ( Academic Staff)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Staff category		
Academic	70	42.7
Non Academic	94	57.3
	164	
Gender		
Male	86	52.4
Female	78	47.6
	164	
Marital status		
Married	119	72.6
Single	45	27.4
	164	
Age		
18 – 25	14	8.6
26 – 30	33	20.4
31 – 36	29	17.9
37 – 45	40	24.3
46 – 50	28	17.3
51 – 55	16	9.9
Over 55	4	2.5
	164	
Length of Service in UiTM		
Less than 1 year	27	16.5
1 – 3 years	27	16.5

To be continue

Continued

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
3 – 6 years	21	12.8
6 – 9 years	26	15.9
9 – 12 years	17	10.4
12 – 15 years	8	4.9
15 – 20 years	11	6.7
Over 20 years	27	16.5
	164	
Academic Grade		
VK7	1	1.4
DM54/53	7	10
DM52/51	7	10
DM45/46	48	68.5
DM41	7	10
	70	
Academic Status		
Permanent	62	88.5
Contract lecturer	6	8.5
Part-time/full time lecturer	2	2.8
	70	

**Table 3. Profile of respondents ( Non-Academic Staff)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Category		
A	8	8.5
B	14	14.9
C	35	37.2
D	37	39.4
	94	
Job status		
Permanent	88	93.6
Temporary	1	1
Daily paid	3	3.1
Contract	2	2
	94	
Department/Unit		
Administrative	11	11.2
HEP	8	8.2
HEA	11	11.2
Finance	16	16.3
Library	16	16.3
Facilities	7	7.1
Sports	1	1
Security	24	25.5
Transport	1	1
	94	

**Table 4. Mean and Standard of Deviations of Main Components of Campus Climate (N=164)**

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction	5.32	.977
Organization Structure	5.12	.937
Formal Influence	5.09	.979
Student Focus	4.92	.985
Communication	4.39	.845
Collaboration	4.36	.871
Overall Campus Climate	5.02	.842

**Table 5. Item analysis of formal influence concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Formal influence	My superior express confidence in my work	5.26	13.00**	2
	I receive quality guidance in relation to my work	4.95	10.17**	7
	I have opportunities to be creative in my work	5.27	12.71**	1
	My Superiors are concerned about my personal and professional development	4.96	9.62**	6
	My Superiors communicate the University' s vision	5.00	9.95**	4
	There is quality interaction between superior and subordinates	4.91	9.18**	8
	I am motivated to work in the university	5.24	12.10**	4
	There is high emphasis on task accomplishment at the university	5.26	13.38**	2

**Table 6. Item analysis of communication concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Communication	I am aware of the vision and mission of the university	5.34	15.05**	1
	I receive sufficient information with regards to my work	4.91	9.82**	7
	The information I receive is useful for my work	5.10	11.86**	2
	Positive expectations are communicated often	4.90	9.47**	8
	Achievement goals are clearly communicated	5.01	10.53**	3
	Written guidelines for my work is clearly communicated	4.94	8.99**	5
	There is clear verbal communication between superior and subordinates	4.94	9.60**	5
	There is clear written communication superior and subordinates	4.96	9.74**	4

**Table 7. Item analysis of collaboration concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Collaboration	There is ample sharing of information	4.86	8.79**	4
	My idea are often utilized by the management	4.60	6.07**	8
	There is adequate on-line access to knowledge databases/online resources	4.79	7.73**	6
	There is opportunity to collaborate with others	5.01	10.50**	3
	There is spirit of cooperation within faculty/department/unit	5.05	10.18**	2
	There is spirit of cooperation across different faculties/departments/units of the university	4.85	8.86**	5
	My faculty/department/unit employs Group problem solving	4.43	4.95**	11
	The University utilized group problem solving	4.52	4.16**	10
	Various university personnel often interact with the community (public)	4.61	6.65**	7
	I often feel rewarded for my efforts	4.58	5.58**	9
There is opportunity for developing relationship with colleagues in this university	5.16	12.32**	1	

**Table 8. Item analysis of organization structure concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Organization structure	The university policies and procedures always guide my work.	4.93	9.34**	6
	I receive feedback from my work	4.86	8.70**	7
	I perform a number of different tasks beyond my job description	5.45	15.49**	1
	I can set my own work schedule according to my job responsibility	5.22	11.78**	3
	My colleagues appreciate my work	5.06	12.22**	4
	My work requires accuracy	5.33	13.96**	2
	Decisions are also made at the appropriate level of the organization	5.05	10.76**	5

**Table 9. Item analysis of job satisfaction culture concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Job satisfaction	My job requires special skills	5.30	13.06**	3
	My job is important to the vision and mission of the university	5.56	16.47**	1
	I am also responsible for important work	5.46	14.64**	2
	I have quality relationship with colleagues in this university	5.21	14.16**	4
	I find my overall job motivating	5.18	13.14**	6
	I can balance in my job and personal life	5.21	12.31**	4

**Table 10. Item analysis of student focus concerning campus climate**

Component	Item	Mean	t-value	Rank
Student focus	The students' needs are central to what we do	5.30	13.58**	1
	Students' received quality education	5.26	13.16**	2
	The staff practice effectiveness and efficiency	5.03	10.72**	3
	Administrative services is of quality	4.68	6.70**	8
	Student services have quality	4.75	7.74**	7
	Student career development is of quality	4.82	7.78**	5
	Student personal development is of quality	4.77	7.81**	9
	Students generally feel comfortable	4.80	8.90**	6
My perception is that students are generally satisfied with their total educational experience	5.02	12.10**	4	

*Editor: Tuula Asunta*