



**The Silent Force at the Heart of Education: A Systematic Review of the
Role of School Climate in Education**
**Eğitimin Kalbindeki Sessiz Güç: Okul İkliminin Eğitimdeki Rolüne Yönelik
Sistematiik Bir İnceleme**



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Abstract

This research analyzes postgraduate theses on school climate in Turkey from a thematic perspective. 81 theses¹ completed between 2020-2024 in the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center database were examined, and theses were systematically classified in terms of their profile characteristics, universities where they were published, data collection tools used, themes addressed, and recommendations. The findings show that school climate research is most often associated with school commitment, academic achievement, school effectiveness, self-efficacy, and organizational justice variables. The majority of the studies are at the master's level, and quantitative research methods are widely preferred. The most frequently used scales as data collection tools are the School Climate Scale, developed by Canlı and colleagues, and the Organizational Climate Scale, developed by Hoy and Tarter. While the aims of the theses are gathered under five main themes, the development of practices that will improve school climate by school administrators and the increase in in-service training stand out within the scope of the recommendations. This study reveals that increasing methodological diversity in school climate research in Türkiye and implementing recommendations for practice will make significant contributions to improving educational environments.

Keywords: *School climate, Yöktez, content analysis, systematic review*

Özet

Bu araştırma, Türkiye’de okul iklimi üzerine yapılan lisansüstü tezleri tematik bir perspektifle analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Tez Merkezi veri tabanında 2020-2024 yılları arasında tamamlanan 81 tez incelenmiş ve tezler; profil özellikleri, yayımlandıkları üniversiteler, kullanılan veri toplama araçları, ele alınan temalar ve öneriler doğrultusunda sistematik olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Bulgular, okul iklimi araştırmalarının en çok okula bağlılık, akademik başarı, okul etkililiği, öz-yeterlilik ve örgütsel adalet değişkenleri ile ilişkilendirildiğini göstermektedir. Çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğu yüksek lisans düzeyinde olup, nicel araştırma yöntemleri yaygın olarak tercih edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak en sık kullanılan ölçekler, Canlı ve arkadaşları tarafından geliştirilen Okul İklimi Ölçeği ile Hoy ve Tarter tarafından geliştirilen Örgütsel İklim Ölçeğidir. Tezlerin amaçları beş ana tema altında toplanırken, öneriler kapsamında okul yöneticilerinin okul iklimini iyileştirecek uygulamalar geliştirmesi ve hizmet içi eğitimlerin artırılması öne çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de okul iklimi araştırmalarında metodolojik çeşitliliğin artırılması ve uygulamaya yönelik önerilerin hayata geçirilmesinin, eğitim ortamlarının iyileştirilmesine önemli katkılar sunacağını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Okul iklimi, Yöktez, içerik analizi, sistematik derleme*

¹ Postgraduate theses examined within the scope of the research are given with the * symbol in the reference section.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions play a key role in improving social welfare and quality of life, as well as having an important role in economic development. Identifying the key factors of educational systems and educational development is important to understand the main drivers in education (Laila, 2015). Therefore, many studies have been conducted to identify the factors that affect students' academic and social success. These studies are generally categorised under three main headings: the student himself/herself, his/her family and school (Çobanoğlu & Badavan, 2016; Dağdelen, 2013; Engin et al., 2009; Özer & Anıl, 2011; Polat, 2009). When these factors are analysed, it is seen that the school is the most important phenomenon regardless of the individual and his/her characteristics. For this reason, studies focusing on schools are carried out in many countries to improve the education system and its quality.

In studies focusing on schools, especially the concept of school climate has come to the fore and various models have been developed. School climate includes the atmosphere and emotional environment in an educational institution, the working environment shaped directly or indirectly by employees, and the relationships and behaviours of school members (Yılmaz & Altinkurt, 2013). In this context, while school climate directly affects educational practices, it also indirectly affects the human capital of education systems and societies. For this reason, school climate has a psychological connotation. It can be expressed as the silent power at the heart of schools. In addition, school climate is a comprehensive term and includes teachers' perceptions of the general working environment of the school, formal and informal organisational structure, members' personalities and organisational leadership affecting these personalities (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). The climate of a school represents the qualities related to the school environment that distinguish that school from others and affect the behaviours of school members. Any person in the school can have a general understanding of the school climate by making simple observations. Even a newcomer can get a favourable or unfavourable impression of the school climate in a short time based on his/her intuition. Elements such as the materials seen on the walls, corridors, school boards, sounds and events experienced in the school, students' behaviour and the school's approach to problems can form an impression about the school climate (Noonan, 2004). Although parents and adults are exposed to various stimuli when they come to school, they can quickly make an assessment about the school climate.

Graduate theses on the concept of school climate in Turkey began to emerge in the early 1990s, as recorded in the YÖKTEZ database (Aksu, 1994), whereas academic interest in this subject in the international literature can be traced back to the 1970s (Breckenridge, 1976; Brookover et al., 1978). During this period, schools were emphasized not only as institutions aimed at improving students' academic achievement but also as environments supporting their emotional and social development. In addition, since the concept of school climate is influenced by many concepts and affects many concepts itself, it can be said that the concept maintains its actuality and importance in terms of educational systems and educational policies. In this context, considering that many studies have been conducted on the concept and that the studies conducted cover a wide time period, it is seen that the research studies and research methods are repetitive. Systemic reviews on school climate generally offer a limited perspective by examining certain parameters (year, method, design and participant etc.) (Sezgin & Sönmez, 2018; Korkmaz & Yumuşak, 2021; Üstüntaş et al., 2022). However, a more diverse and in-depth approach is needed for a comprehensive understanding of the concept of school climate. When the current situation in the literature is examined, it is seen that there are very few studies that reveal differences and similarities in research on school effectiveness and evaluate the data obtained in a systematic and comprehensive manner (Charlton et al. 2021; Voight & Nation, 2016). In addition, the current studies generally deal with the history and the lack of an up-to-date approach that integrates recent research and theses stands out. In this framework, in order to provide a new perspective on the research on school climate and to provide a broader evaluation, this study comparatively analysed the aims and recommendations of postgraduate theses on school climate. In addition, theses on the tools used to measure school climate were analyzed thematically, providing a comprehensive perspective to researchers.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyse all postgraduate theses in the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK) Thesis between 2000-2024 (June) that address the concept of school climate in Turkey. In line with this general purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered:

1. What is the profile of postgraduate theses on school climate?
2. What are the scales and dimensions used in postgraduate theses on school climate?
3. What are the topics addressed in postgraduate theses on school climate?

4. What are the aims of postgraduate theses on school climate?
5. What are the suggestions for practitioners, researchers and policy makers based on the results of postgraduate theses on school climate?

METHOD

This research was designed as a systematic review, which is a qualitative approach. Systematic reviews allow researchers to transparently visualise and analyse findings from various sources (Oakley, 2002). In addition, systematic review is an effective tool to identify gaps in the literature and analyse existing knowledge in depth (Hallinger, 2017). The following outlines the stages of systematic review as proposed by Higgins and Green (2011).

1) Defining the purpose of the research

Systematic examination of the research on school climate in postgraduate theses in Turkey

2) Deciding on inclusion and exclusion criteria

- Theses published in Yöktez and open to access
- Theses in the field of education
- Graduate theses made between 2020-2024 (June)

3) Identifying search terms

The term "school climate" was searched as thesis title category in Yöktez.

4) Determination of the studies to be included in the review

Total 81 graduate thesis studies

5) Conducting the analysis and presenting the results

Identification of Resources

In this study, graduate theses published between 2020 and 2024 that include the term "school climate" in the thesis title category were examined in the Higher Education Council (YÖK) Publication and Documentation Department Thesis Center database. The scope of the review was limited to theses conducted in the field of "education and teaching" as of June 2024. The inclusion criteria were based on the relevance of the theses to the field of education and their accessibility in the YÖKTEZ archive. During the evaluation process, no distinction was made between institutes, departments, or scientific fields. However, one thesis was not analyzable due to either its unavailability in the YÖKTEZ archive or access restrictions, which is noted as a limitation of the study. Consequently, a total of 81 graduate theses were analyzed in the research.

In the study, the concept of "school climate" was chosen to examine the unique social, cultural, and emotional dynamics of educational institutions. While the concept of "organizational climate" offers a broader framework, focusing on school climate allows



for a more detailed analysis specific to the educational context, thereby facilitating meaningful and targeted results. This approach is particularly relevant for understanding the internal dynamics of vocational schools and their collaborative processes with other institutions. Moreover, the selection of the 2020–2024 period as the study's timeframe is grounded in the significant transformations and developments observed in the field during this period. Starting in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered rapid changes in education, technology, and societal dynamics, which were reflected in the literature. During this time, key topics such as digitalization, remote education practices, and technology integration became prominent areas of study. Additionally, 2024 was chosen as the final year of the review to include the most recent literature available at the time of the research. This timeframe has provided a comprehensive and contemporary framework, ensuring that the study captures the evolving dynamics and emerging trends within the field.

Analysing the data

In this study, descriptive content analysis method was used. The data were categorised and presented as frequencies and percentages by content analysis method. The theses were meticulously examined and organised in accordance with the classifications specified in the thesis examination form and the data for each criterion were recorded in an Excel file. The tables presented under the title of findings proved once again the accuracy of the information entered, with the results being supportive of each other. Microsoft Excel and SPSS programmes were used for data analysis and the tables/figures obtained are given in the findings section.

FINDINGS

This study aims to compile the data of postgraduate theses on school climate in Turkey and evaluates the findings under six main headings: (1) profile characteristics of the studies, (2) examination of the scales and dimensions used, (3) analysis of the related topics addressed, (4) objectives of the studies and (5) presenting recommendations for practitioners, researchers and policy makers based on the results obtained. Table 1 presents the classification of the analysed studies according to publication date, type, and research method.

As seen in Table 1, most of the postgraduate theses on school climate were conducted between 2022 and 2023. It is seen that most of the researches were done at the master's

degree level and quantitatively. Table 2 shows the scales and their dimensions used in postgraduate theses related to school climate.

Table 1

Profiles of Graduate Theses

Publication Date	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
	15	20	22	20	4	81
Publication type	MA			PhD		
	72			9		81
Research method	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	70		8		3	81
Working group	School Principal	Teacher		Guardian	Student	
	4	60		3	14	81

Table 2

Scale and Dimensions of Graduate Theses

Scale and Dimensions	f	Citation
Schueler et al. (2014) was adapted by Ertem and Gökalp (2017). Dimensions: <i>Academic climate, security climate, and social climate</i>	2	Taştepe, 2020; Kesik, 2023
The "school climate scale" developed by Halpin and Croft was adapted into Turkish by Kavgacı (2010). Dimensions: <i>Supportiveness, restrictiveness, directiveness, and sincerity.</i>	4	Dağ, 2020; İnanır, 2020; Şafak, 2021; Uzun, 2023.
"Organizational Climate Scale," developed by Hoy and Tarter (1997), was adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2013). Dimensions: <i>Supportive principal behaviors, guidance, secondary principal behaviors, restrictive principal behaviors, professional teacher behaviors, sincere teacher behaviors, and free teacher behaviors.</i>	10	Aktan, 2021; Altay, 2024; Asa, 2022; Durmaz, 2020; Erdoğan, 2020; Gul, 2023; Kemer, 2021; Öztürk, 2022; Uslu, 2020; Yıldız, 2021.
"School Climate scale" was developed by Çağlayan (2014). Dimensions: <i>Leadership and participation, educational environment, and cooperation</i>	2	Akpolat, 2023, Hatkaoglu, 2020
"School Climate Scale" developed by Canli et al. (2018). Dimensions: <i>Democracy and school dedication dimension, leadership and interaction dimension, success factors dimension, sincerity dimension, and conflict dimension.</i>	28	Ak, 2021; Akman, 2021; Alaca, 2022; Altay, 2021; Ada, 2020; Avcı, 2022; Aydın, 2022; Çetinel, 2022; Çevik, 2022; Çınar, 2021; Çokay, 2022; Doğan, 2021; Gezerler, 2021; Gülcü, 2023; Kışmır, 2021; Keçeli, 2022; Maşeroğlu, 2021; Metin, 2020; Ofraz, 2023; Özdemir, 2023; Pınar, 2023; Salbaş, 2021; Şen, 2024; Telci, 2023; Tilkioglu, 2021; Vural, 2022.
"School climate scale" developed by Çalık and Kurt (2010). Dimensions: <i>Supportive teacher behaviors, success orientation and safe learning environment, and positive peers.</i>	6	Kayacık, 2021; Münisoğlu, 2022; Özer, 2022; Pehlivan, 2020; Zehir, 2020.
"Preschool school climate scale" was developed by İnceoğlu (2020). Dimensions: <i>Adult attitude and relations, administrative atmosphere, peer relations, teacher attitude, physical environment, and instructional planning and implementation.</i>	1	İnceoğlu, 2020
"School Climate Scale" developed by Terzi (2015). Dimensions: <i>commitment to school, communication, and learning environment</i>	1	Sevilen, 2021
"School Climate Scale" developed by Hoy et al. (2002) and adapted into Turkish by Özdere (2017). Dimensions: <i>Colleague leadership, institutional vulnerability, professional teacher behavior, and success pressure</i>	6	Çağırtekin, 2022; Faiz, 2023; Kezer, 2023; Nezir, 2022; Seday, 2021; Sesli, 2023.
The "School climate scale" developed by Hayney et al. (1994) was adapted into Turkish by Bugay et al. (2015). Dimensions: <i>Use of resources, order and discipline, school building, parent involvement, student-teacher relationships, and relationships between students</i>	5	Aksoy, 2021; Aslan, 2023; Balkaya, 2023; Tüten, 2023.
School Climate and Support Scale was developed by Papanastasiou & Angeli (2008). It was adapted into Turkish by Tezci (2009).	1	Kocaoğlu, 2022

The school climate scale was developed by Özdemir (2022). Dimensions: <i>School safety, peer support and closeness, and social interaction</i>	1	Özdemir, 2022
İrban (2023) developed a school climate scale. Dimensions: <i>Relationships and learning environment at school, physical environment, and security</i>	1	İrban, 2023
The school climate scale was developed by Bozan (2023). Dimensions: <i>Negative impact and positive impact.</i>	1	Bozan, 2023

The most preferred scale in postgraduate theses was the "School Climate Scale" (n=28) developed by Canlı et al. (2018). In addition, another scale frequently used in the studies was the "Organisational Climate Scale" (n=10) developed by Hoy and Tarter (1997) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2013). In three postgraduate theses, it was observed that the researchers themselves developed scales (Bozan, 2023; İnceoğlu, 2020; İrban, 2023). In Figure 1, the word cloud of the related topics examined in the postgraduate theses within the scope of the study is presented.



Figure 1. Word cloud of the topics covered in postgraduate theses

As can be seen in Figure 1, the most frequently addressed concept in the postgraduate studies on school climate was "commitment to school" (n=7). However, in some postgraduate theses, variables such as "academic success" (n=3), "school effectiveness" (n=3), "organizational silence" (n=3), "organisational justice" (n=3), and "psychological well-being" (n=3) were also examined intensively. Table 3 analyses the aims of the postgraduate theses in detail.

Table 3

Analysis of graduate theses in terms of their purposes

Themes and Subthemes	f	Citation
Theme 1: Organizational behavior and teacher perceptions		
• Sub-Theme: Teachers' perceptions of organizational commitment, organizational value, organizational silence and image	15	Ak, 2021; Akman, 2021; Akpolat, 2023; Aktan, 2021; Alta, 2024; Çağırtekin, 2022; Dağ, 2020; Durmaz, 2020; Gülcü, 2023; Kemer, 2021; Kişmir, 2021; Maşeroğlu, 2021; Oflaz, 2023; Sallabaş, 2021; Şafak, 2021.
• Sub-Theme: Teachers' classroom management, in-service training, professional attitude and communication satisfaction	5	Aydın, 2022; Çevik, 2022; Özdemir, 2023; Özdemir, 2023; Öztürk, 2022.

Theme 2: Leadership models, mentoring and school principal perceptions

- *Sub-Theme:* Leadership styles, practices and skills of school administrators 9 Asa, 2022; Doğan, 2021; Doğan, 2021; Doğan, 2021; Gezerler, 2021; Metin, 2020; Seday, 2021; Yıldız, 2021; Yurttav, 2020.
- *Sub-Theme:* Teachers' and students' perception of leadership and mentoring 8 Akpolat, 2023; İnanır, 2020; İrban, 2023; Münüsoğlu, 2022; Pınar, 2023; Seday, 2021; Sesli, 2023; Telci, 2023.

Theme 3: Teachers' psychological state and organizational happiness

- *Sub-Theme:* Teachers' emotional intelligence, motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction 5 Aksoy, 2021; Avcı, 2022; Çetinel, 2022; Nezir, 2022; Uzun, 2023.
- *Sub-Theme:* Teachers' perceptions of psychological well-being, alienation, and organizational citizenship 6 Altay, 2021; Kayacık, 2021; Keçeli, 2022; Şen, 2024; Tilkiöğlu, 2024; Uslu, 2020.

Theme 4: Student behaviors and student perceptions

- *Subtheme:* Perceptions of school climate and academic performance 3 Pehlivan, 2020; Sevilen, 2021; İnceoğlu, 2020
- *Sub-Theme:* Students' perceptions of the school climate 6 Aslan, 2023; Çetin, 2021; Dağ, 2020; Kubilay, 2020; Özer, 2022; Zehir, 2020.

Theme 5: External stakeholder perceptions

- *Sub-Theme:* Parents' perception of school climate 3 Kesik, 2023; Taştepe, 2020; Tüten, 2023.
- *Sub-Theme:* The relationship between the environment and unions, and school climate 2 Alaca, 2022; Hatkaoglu, 2020; Şafak, 2021; Soysal, 2021.

The aims of the postgraduate theses evaluated within the scope of the research were grouped under five thematic headings. According to the results of the analysis, the most common purpose was "comparing organisational variables with school climate" (n=15). Similarly, some of the related studies focused on "the effect of leadership styles, practices and skills of school administrators on school climate" (n=9). Other topics frequently addressed by the researchers are "teachers' perceptions of psychological well-being, alienation and organisational citizenship" and "students' perceptions of school climate". Table 4 presents a detailed analysis of the postgraduate theses conducted within the scope of the research in terms of recommendations for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

Table 4

Analysis of the recommendations section of graduate theses

Theme	Sub theme	f	Citation
Practitioners	1) Social events should be organized inside and outside the school.	16	Akpolat, 2023; Alaca, 2022; Aslan, 2023; Avcı, 2022; Çokay, 2022; Doğan, 2021; İnanır, 2020; Özdemir, 2023; Özer, 2022; Sesli, 2023; Tüten, 2023; Uzun, 2023; Vural, 2022.
	2) Educational environments that can clearly express the opinions of school stakeholders should be created and behaviors that would limit the school climate should be avoided.	14	Akpolat, 2023; Alaca, 2022; Altay, 2024; Çokay, 2022; Dağ, 2020; Doğan, 2021; Erdoğan, 2020; Kişmir, 2021; Maşeroğlu, 2021; Öztürk, 2022; Sesli, 2023; Toğa, 2021; Tüten, 2023; Vural, 2022.
	3) It is recommended that school administrators develop practices that will contribute to improving the school climate.	31	Akman, 2021; Akpolat, 2023; Aksoy, 2021; Alaca, 2022; Asa, 2022; Balkaya, 2023; Çiner, 2021; Dağ, 2020; Doğan, 2021; Durmaz, 2020; Erdoğan, 2020; Faiz, 2023; Gülcü, 2023; İnceoğlu, 2020; Kemer, 2021; Kişmir, 2021; Maşeroğlu, 2021; Pınar, 2023; Sallabaş, 2021

	4) In-service training should be provided	26	Asa, 2022; Aslan, 2023; Aydın, 2022; Avcı, 2022; Balkaya, 2023; Çetinel, 2022; Çevik, 2022; Çiner, 2021; Doğan, 2021; Faiz, 2023; Gülcü, 2023; İrban, 2023; Özdemir, 2022; Özdemir, 2023; Pınar, 2023; Sallabaş, 2021; Sesli, 2023; Şen, 2024; Telci, 2023; Tüten, 2023; Uzun, 2023; Vural, 2022.
	5) Experience sharing practices should be implemented where teachers with more professional experience can provide support to teachers with less professional experience.	7	Alaca, 2022; Altay, 2024; Aydın, 2022; Çağırtekin, 2022; Çevik, 2022; Oflaz, 2023; Sesli, 2023.
	6) The physical conditions of the school can be improved.	7	Akpolat, 2023; Balkaya, 2023; Çağırtekin, 2022; Faiz, 2023; Gülcü, 2023; İrban, 2023; Vural, 2022.
	7) Teachers' perceptions of the school climate can be improved by carrying out studies that will support postgraduate education.	5	Aydın, 2022; Bozan, 2023; Çağırtekin, 2023; İrban, 2023; Oflaz, 2023.
Researchers	1. Working with different sample groups	63	Ada, 2020; Aksoy, 2021; Alaca, 2022; Altay, 2021; Altai, 2024; Asa, 2022; Aslan, 2023; Çevik, 2022; Çiner, 2021; Çokay, 2022; Dağ, 2020; Doğan, 2021; Faiz, 2023; Gezerler, 2021; Gülcü, 2023; İnanır, 2020; İnceoğlu, 2020; İrban, 2023; Kemer, 2021; Kezer, 2023; Kocaoğlu, 2022; Kubilay, 2020; Metin, 2020; Münüsoğlu, 2022; Nezir, 2022; Özer, 2022; Özdemir, 2023; Öztürk, 2022; Pehlivan, 2020; Pınar, 2023; Sallabaş, 2021; Sesli, 2023; Şen, 2024; Taştepe, 2020; Telci, 2023; Tüten, 2023; Uzun, 2023; Vural, 2022; Yıldız, 2021; Zehir, 2020.
	2. Conducting research using different methods	54	Ada, 2020; Akpolat, 2023; Aksoy, 2021; Alaca, 2022; Avcı, 2022; Çağırtekin, 2023; Dağ, 2020; Doğan, 2021; Faiz, 2023; Gülcü, 2023; İnanır, 2020; İnceoğlu, 2020; İrban, 2023; Kemer, 2021; Kışmir, 2021; Kocaoğlu, 2022; Kubilay, 2020; Maşeroğlu, 2021; Münüsoğlu, 2022; Nezir, 2022; Oflaz, 2023; Özdemir, 2023; Pehlivan, 2020; Seday, 2021; Sesli, 2023; Şen, 2024; Telci, 2023; Tüten, 2023; Uzun, 2023; Öztürk, 2022.
	3. Conducting research with different variables	36	Ada, 2020; Alaca, 2022; Avcı, 2022; Çevik, 2022; Çağırtekin, 2023; Dağ, 2020; Doğan, 2021; Gezerler, 2021; Gülcü, 2023; İnanır, 2020; İrban, 2023; Kayacık, 2021; Kezer, 2023; Metin, 2020; Münüsoğlu, 2022; Nezir, 2022; Oflaz, 2023; Özer, 2022; Öztürk, 2022; Sesli, 2023.
Policy makers	1) Support should be provided to teachers in schools where there are many disadvantaged students.	1	Kubilay, 2020
	2) Necessary changes can be made in the relevant Ministry of Education legislation so that they can act more autonomously while doing their jobs in educational processes and environments.	1	Dağ, 2020
	3) It has been determined that school size affects the climate of schools. In this regard, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education make regulations in schools where the number of teachers is more than 75.	1	Ada, 2020
	4) Legal regulations should be made by the Ministry of National Education regarding the determination of time that can be allocated to activities based on staff interaction in the weekly work schedule of school staff.	2	İnceoğlu, 2020; Kışmir, 2021
	5) Teams should be established in schools to measure and improve school climate.	1	Zehir, 2020

According to the data in Table 4, in the majority of the postgraduate theses examined, important suggestions aimed at policy makers, practitioners, and researchers were presented. These recommendations focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of school climate. Among the recommendations for practitioners, one of the most emphasized is that school administrators make arrangements to develop practices that will improve the school climate. In recommendations for researchers, they are encouraged to conduct studies with different samples, methods, and variables. Among the recommendations for policymakers, it is emphasized that teams should be established in schools to evaluate and improve the school climate and that the Ministry of National Education should make legal regulations to allocate time for activities based on staff interaction in the weekly work schedule of school staff.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It was determined that 81 postgraduate theses on school climate conducted between 2020-2024 were concentrated in 45 universities, and the highest number of theses were completed in Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (8 theses) and Atatürk University (5 theses). This situation is generally associated in the literature with advisors directing their students to their areas of expertise and students focusing on frequently studied topics (Üstündaş et al., 2022). However, this trend is not limited to advisory processes. Although there are 209 universities in Turkey, it is striking that there are only 97 active education faculties according to the data of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) for the 2021-2022 period (YÖK Statistics, 2022). The concentration of education faculties and related academic departments in a limited number of universities, access to the necessary infrastructure for research, regional needs, and support from funded projects are among the main reasons for this concentration. In this context, the concentration of postgraduate studies in certain universities can be explained by both academic infrastructure and regional and institutional dynamics. When examining the distribution of theses by year, 2022 stands out with the highest number of theses, while significant research activity was also observed in 2021 and 2023. However, in 2024, there was a notable decrease in the number of theses, which is a point worth considering. This decrease can be interpreted as a reflection of the decreased interest in educational research in the post- pandemic period or the restrictions in research budgets and resources.

The research results show that theses on school climate are mostly concentrated at the master's level (88.9%), while a very limited number (11.1%) remain at the doctoral level. This situation indicates that master's students may be more interested in the subject or that research in this field at the doctoral level is insufficient. One of the



underlying reasons for this is that the data collection process in master's theses is faster and easier than in doctoral theses, making such studies more applicable to students (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). In addition, the clear context of the school climate topic and its potential to produce practical outputs may create a more attractive area for research at this level. However, increasing the number of studies in this field at the doctoral level may provide theoretical and methodological contributions by providing a more in-depth and comprehensive treatment of the topic. In terms of research methods, it was determined that the vast majority of theses (86.4%) were conducted using quantitative methods, while qualitative (9.9%) and mixed methods (3.7%) were used quite limitedly. The dominance of quantitative methods can be associated with the widespread preference for data collection tools suitable for large sample groups, such as surveys and tests. However, the limited use of qualitative and mixed methods restricts the examination of school climate from different perspectives and with richer contextual data. This tendency coincides with similar findings obtained by Aldridge and McChesney (2018) in their systematic review study on scientific articles on school climate; it draws attention to the lack of mixed and qualitative depth in the literature and the predominance of quantitative studies.

When examined in terms of research groups, it is evident that the majority of studies focus on teachers (55.6%), followed by school administrators and teacher candidates (18.5%), students (17.3%), school principals (4.9%), and parents (3.7%). The significant focus on teachers highlights their pivotal role as key determinants of school climate. However, the limited examination of other stakeholders, such as students and parents, restricts a comprehensive understanding of how school climate impacts all involved parties. For instance, the study by Altundaş et al. (2020) examined the influence of school administrators and parents on school climate and presented findings that support these interactions. Based on these findings, future research is expected to enrich the field by employing more diverse research methods and including a broader range of stakeholder groups. In particular, studies that incorporate the perspectives of various stakeholders have the potential to develop a more holistic understanding of school climate. Such an approach would not only enhance the academic discourse on school climate but also offer more concrete contributions to educational policies and practices. This inclusive and multifaceted perspective could bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications, fostering more effective implementations in educational settings.

A total of eleven different school climate scales were used in 81 postgraduate theses within the scope of the research. It shows that the most preferred scale in the theses is the "School Climate Scale" (n=28) developed by Canlı et al. (2018). It can be said that the widespread use of this scale is due to the strong validity and reliability studies of the scale. In addition, the scale's comprehensive structure and ease of application may be effective in researchers' preference for this scale. Another widely used scale in research is the "Organizational Climate Scale" (n=10), developed by Hoy and Tarter (1997) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz and Altinkurt (2013). While the concept of organization provides a broader analytical framework, this scale enables a comprehensive assessment of school climate by examining its various dimensions. Its adaptation into Turkish offers a significant advantage for researchers in understanding the unique dynamics of the Turkish education system, thereby enhancing its contextual validity. In three postgraduate theses, it was observed that the researchers themselves developed the scale (Bozan, 2023; İnceoğlu, 2020; İrban, 2023). In general, the widespread use of standardised scales in school climate research increases the comparability and consistency of the findings. However, new scale development initiatives also add richness to the field and allow different perspectives to be explored. The findings of this study shed light on future school climate research. Researchers can continue to expand the knowledge on school climate by developing new measurement tools in addition to the existing scales.

It has been observed that the most frequently addressed concept in the postgraduate studies on school climate in the research framework is "school engagement". School engagement refers to students' emotional commitment and involvement towards school. These results reflect a growing awareness of how school climate influences students' emotional experiences and attitudes. However, factors such as academic achievement, self-efficacy, organisational justice, and psychological well-being were also found to be important. These findings highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted effects of school climate on students' academic performance and overall well-being. It is important for future research to examine the interactions among these factors in more depth and to consider the diversity of school climate in different cultural contexts.

The diversity of postgraduate theses on school climate reflects the dynamic and comprehensive research efforts in the field of education. The research results show that especially the impact of organisational variables on school climate has been examined in depth. This finding is an important step towards understanding how changes in educational systems impact on the experiences of students and teachers. Likewise,



examining the leadership styles of school administrators has emerged as a critical factor in the formation of school climate. Investigating teachers' and students' perceptions of psychological well-being and organisational citizenship also provides an important window into the human experience in education. These results suggest to education stakeholders, school administrators and policy makers specific areas of focus to improve educational environments and increase student achievement. Future research is expected to further contribute to the transformation efforts in education by addressing these core themes as well as more innovative and in-depth topics.

Recommendations for future studies

- 1) Research findings reveal that school climate has a critical impact on student achievement and teacher satisfaction. In this context, training programmes to strengthen the leadership skills of school administrators should be developed and implemented. In addition, school-wide psychological support and counselling services should be provided to support the emotional well-being of students and teachers. These measures can contribute to strengthening the school climate positively and increasing student achievement.
- 2) Postgraduate research shows that school climate shapes students' affective commitment and that academic achievement, self-efficacy, organisational justice, and psychological well-being are also important in this context. Therefore, it is important to examine the interactions of these factors and the diversity of school climate in different cultural contexts in future studies.
- 3) The variety of different scales used in school climate research may lead to problems of comparability and consistency. Therefore, it is recommended that standardised scales should be preferred in future studies, and cross-cultural validity studies should be given more importance. These approaches can improve the quality of school climate research and strengthen the body of knowledge in the field.
- 4) Based on the findings, it is important to examine various stakeholder groups more comprehensively in future research on school climate. In particular, more inclusion of other stakeholders such as students and parents in the research will provide a broader understanding of the effects of school climate. In addition, more use of qualitative and mixed methods in addition to quantitative research methods will help to address the issue of school climate in depth and from various perspectives. In this way, research on school climate can become more comprehensive, in-depth and meaningful.

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