

Urban School Climate (USC): The Study of Teacher Perceptions of Safe and Comfortable School Atmosphere in Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Building child-friendly schools is teachers' main task so students can learn safely and comfortably. However, there are still teachers who still need to be fully aware of this. This research aims to explore elementary school teachers' perceptions of a safe and comfortable environment as an illustration of the Urban School Climate (USC). This research method is a case study with a qualitative approach. Interviews with elementary school teachers in Bogor carried out data collection. Conversations are carried out directly (face-to-face) and are recorded to ensure that the interview results match the respondent's information. Our research involved 45 teachers with permanent teacher (PT) status in 17 elementary schools in Bogor, Indonesia. The recruitment of teachers who would share their valuable insights was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, display, and verification. The data analysis was assisted with Nvivo 12 software. The research results showed a safe and comfortable environment as an illustration of USC, including 1) a pleasant school atmosphere for students and teachers, adequate facilities and a mutually supportive atmosphere, 2) a safe environment, 3) a comfortable environment, and 4) school policies which lead to restrictions for parents when picking up their children at school, regulations regarding discipline and various binding regulations. The impact of the results of this research is that schools can build a school climate by referring to the characteristics of USC, which are described as a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment.

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1. Introduction

Urban school climate (USC) is the atmosphere or attributes inherent in urban schools, which are environmental, interaction patterns, and individual characteristics different from rural communities. Conceptually, school climate is defined as the attributes that are the distinctive character of a school in the form of an atmosphere that differentiates one school from another (Daryanto, 2015). School climate influences the behavior of school members to do things to other people in the form of actions or words (Fauziah et al., 2023; Tubbs & Garner, 2008). School climate is also described in terms of the school environment, especially in terms of learning (Daryanto, 2015). Perceptually, school climate is multidimensional, and differences are inherent in the perceptions of each school member (Ryberg et al., 2020). Therefore, school climate can be described into two main dimensions, namely 1) the condition of the school environment, which is formed from the interaction of each school member, school facilities, and policies, and 2) patterns of interaction, which together are interconnected to form a distinctive pattern.

The perception of each school member produces a different picture of the atmosphere and environment of the school as well as patterns of interaction between individuals in the school. This is based on the experience of interacting between teachers and teachers, students with students, and teachers with students (Fauziah et al., 2023). Many studies on school climate (Back et al., 2016; Berkowitz et al., 2021; Blitz et al., 2020) state the importance of school climate in building a school atmosphere so that students can learn comfortably and safely (Cui & To, 2021; Rutherford et al., 2023; Varela et al., 2021). School climate is also essential to improve academic performance or student achievement (Erdem & Kaya, 2023; Huang et al., 2016a). The study results illustrate that the school climate is closely related to the atmosphere, interaction patterns, the environment, and academic performance or student achievement.

This study seeks to explore elementary school teachers' perceptions regarding what urban school climate (USC) is like, as described by the school atmosphere and the policies that schools can implement to create a safe and comfortable school environment. The research was conducted using the case study method in Bogor elementary schools. The novelty of this research is 1) the characteristics of a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and 2) the form of school policy to support the realization of a safe and comfortable school. The results of this research can be used to build a safe and comfortable urban school climate that will lead to a child-friendly school model.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method (Sugiono, 2016). The case study method can produce research that can produce data about events that have occurred in depth. This research seeks to explore elementary school teachers' perceptions of safe and comfortable schools, which are described in the form of atmosphere, safe and comfortable environment, and school policies that support the formation of an urban school climate (Gunadi & Suherman, 2021).

2.2. Participants

Our research involved 45 teachers with permanent teacher (PT) status in 17 elementary schools in Bogor, Indonesia. These teachers were recruited based on their extensive teaching experience of more than five years in elementary schools, ensuring their ability to comprehensively understand how teachers perceive USC, including the atmosphere, safe and comfortable environment, and school policies. The recruitment of teachers who would share

their valuable insights was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. The teacher perceptions were collected through direct interviews using open questions, ensuring an unbiased and transparent approach where PT could provide his views openly.

2.3. Data Collection

Interviews with elementary school teachers in Bogor carried out data collection. Conversations are carried out directly (face-to-face) and are recorded to ensure that the interview results match the respondent's information. These questions were prepared based on the research objective: to explore teachers' perceptions about the atmosphere, safe and comfortable school environment, and supportive school policies. Experts reviewed the interview guide to increase its reliability and validity. Data was collected from October to November 2023 and involved all participants mentioned (see Table 1).

Table 1 Profile of participants

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	18	40.0
Female	27	60.0
Age		
41-60 year	10	22.2
31-40 year	10	22.2
20-30 year	25	55.6
Educational Level		
S1	45	100
S2	0	0
S3	0	0

2.4. Instruments

The instrument used in the research was an interview guide, which contained open questions. The questions on the instrument ask respondents to state their income and experience as well as their understanding of the atmosphere, safe and comfortable school environment, and school policies. The following are the forms of questions used in research:

- (1) What is a safe and comfortable school atmosphere like for students?
- (2) Do you feel safe and comfortable at school?
- (3) Is there a school policy that can create a safe and comfortable atmosphere?

2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which consists of reduction, data display, and data verification. Data analysis was also carried out using Nvivo 12 software. Data analysis using NVIVO 12 software includes the following stages: (1) importing data/data sources, (2) coding data, (3) visualizing data, (4) presenting results, and (5) drawing conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The research results describe four themes, namely 1) school atmosphere, 2) safe school environment, 3) comfortable school environment, and 4) school policies that can support creating a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment. These four things

illustrate the urban school climate (USC), namely the atmosphere and environment of urban schools. A clear picture of the findings of this research can be seen in Figure 1.

3.1.1. The School Atmosphere at USC

The school atmosphere that describes USC includes a clean and good school, an atmosphere that can foster a sense of family so that students and teachers feel at home, and an atmosphere that shows that the school environment is safe and comfortable for anyone who carries out activities at school. This kind of situation is highly desired by everyone attending school.

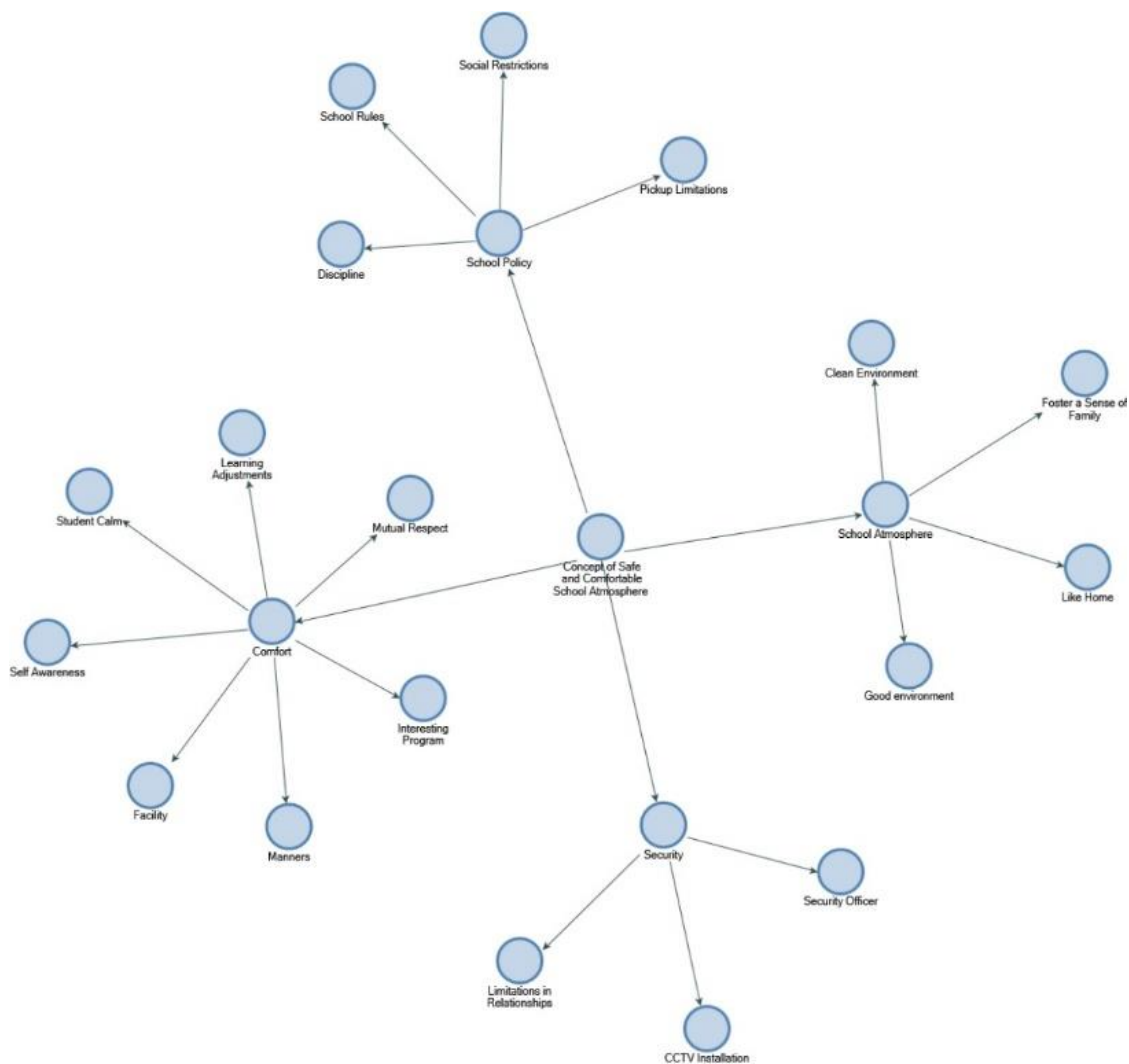


Figure 1 The Main Themes of Thematic Analysis (use Nvivo 12)

Some teachers stated:

For student comfort, namely creating a clean environment, creating a family relationship between students and students, students and teachers, teachers and the principal. (GT-1)

The atmosphere and class are clean, and the children are orderly. (GT-2)

A clean, safe, peaceful school and discipline are important. (GT-5)

... Teachers are familiar with their students and do not feel awkward, so they dare to express their opinions and complain about their feelings, so they are not stiff, but that

does not mean they are too free, so they do not have respect for their teachers... (GT-12)

Students who study daily, teachers who carry out teaching activities every day, and even staff and the community will feel the same way. A good school environment is described by adequate and supportive school facilities for learning, which can help students or teachers be more optimal in teaching and learning activities. The school community desires the school atmosphere. Characteristics of a safe and comfortable school atmosphere (see Figure 2).

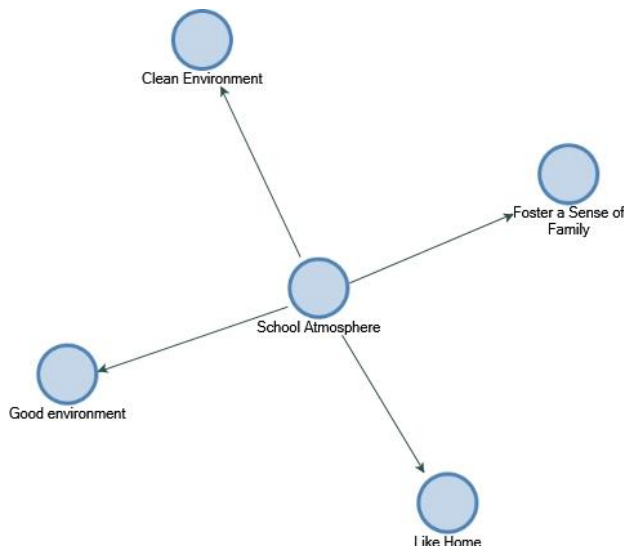


Figure 2. School Atmosphere at USC

Some teachers believe that a safe and comfortable school atmosphere is as follows:

...a comfortable atmosphere, in my opinion, is that the class meets the standards of the facilities are adequate... (GT-20)

A comfortable school means that you have to pay attention to the facilities; it will look comfortable or feel comfortable when the child can calmly study and. then apart from studying, they are also provided with facilities for playing because here they are still elementary school age... (GT-27)

Firstly, we must acknowledge the facilities, especially those that must be adequate... (GT-28)

3.1.2. Safe Environment at USC

A safe environment is described as a school environment maintained from the outside, meaning no random people can come in and out of the school in large numbers. School security is equipped with a security office, and every corner of the school has surveillance cameras. This ensures that students or teachers do not get bullying or violence from any party. Surveillance cameras allow every student's actions and behavior to be well monitored. Some teachers stated:

A safe school is one where the school community is free from fear, every learning process or activity runs well, and the relationship between the community is positive and does not cause harm... (GT-40)

Limit people entering and report to security officers if there are guests from outside (GT-42)

...there is a good security system (CCTV) to monitor students and teachers. (GT-15)

... a safe school environment can protect children with fears such as bullying. Schools must have a platform to protect children from things that harm or disturb their lives. (GT-14)

A safe environment is an anticipation to prevent bullying or even violence at school. An overview of the safe environment in Urban School Climate (USC) can be seen in Figure 3 below:

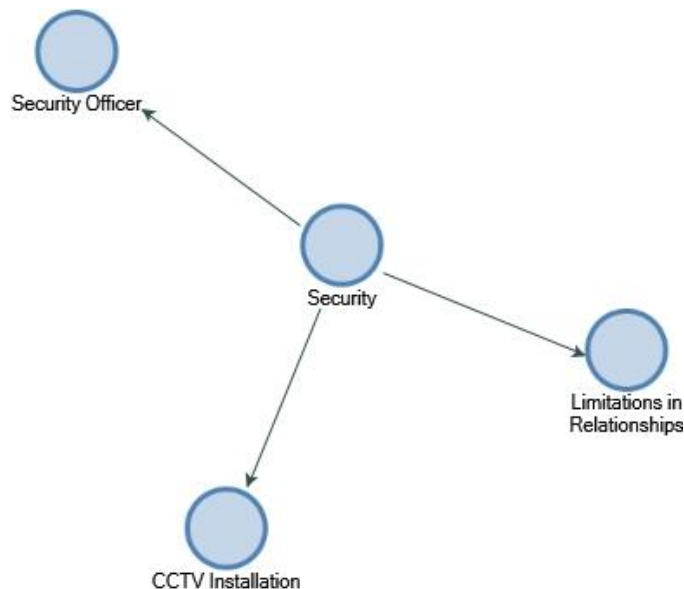


Figure 3. Security Environment at USC

3.1.3. The Environment is Comfortable at USC

A comfortable environment is described by a situation of (1) a calm school atmosphere and adequate facilities, (2) an exciting learning program for students so that students are motivated to participate in learning, and (3) a pattern of mutually respectful interaction, full of good manners and manners between students. Students, teachers, and staff. Some teachers stated:

A school environment that is comfortable for students to study is clean. Therefore, there needs to be awareness of cleanliness among all school residents. (GT-10)

The school environment is comfortable for student learning, namely a clean environment and adequate infrastructure (facilities). (GT-11)

The condition or atmosphere of an adequate school (facilities) is one of the characteristics of a school that is comfortable for students... (GT-8)

A comfortable environment is also indicated by a learning process that is appropriate to the student's circumstances so that students can participate happily in learning. The programs implemented by schools are voluntary and by students' aspirations and talents so that students and teachers participate in school programs voluntarily without coercion. So, it can be described that a comfortable school environment at USC lies not only in the environment outside the classroom but also inside the classroom (see Figure 4).

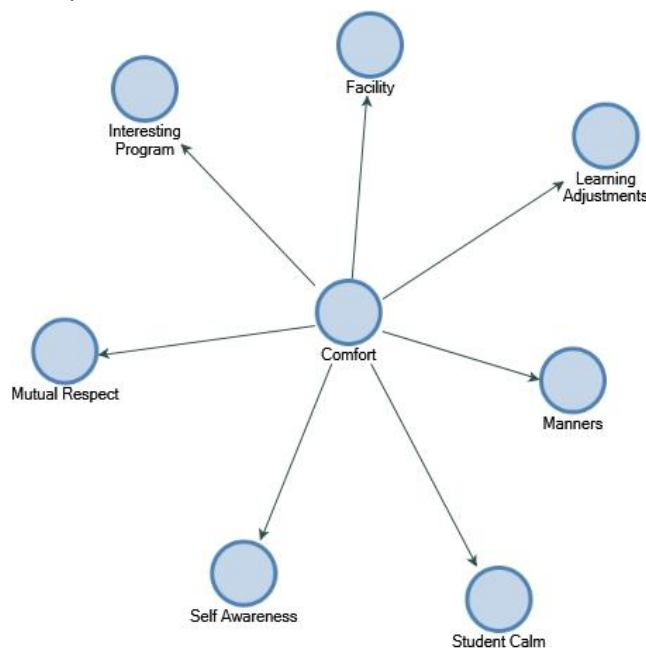


Figure 4. Comfortable Environment at USC

3.1.4. School Policy for USC

Building an Urban School Climate (USC), which is described as a safe and comfortable environment, needs to be supported by school policies. The policy is formal and enforces the entire school community. However, its impact will be suitable for forming the school climate. Operationally, school climate can influence individuals to do things and behave according to the school climate patterns that have been formed. However, school climate is conceptually formed due to interactions and reciprocal relationships between individuals, which ultimately form a permanent pattern. Based on the research results, one of the elements in USC is school policy regarding various school regulations, discipline, social restrictions, and parents' limits when picking up their children at school (see Figure 5).

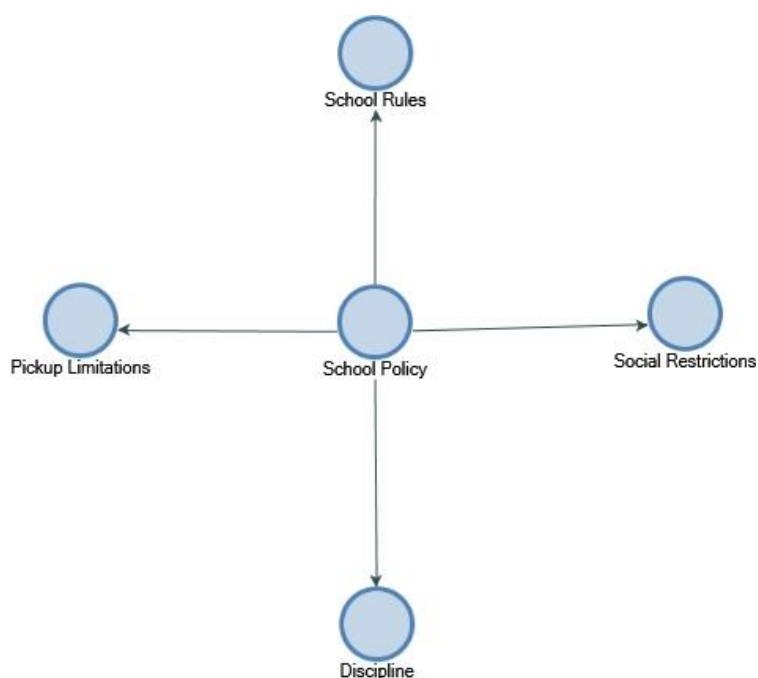


Figure 5. School Policy for USC

Several teachers argued about school policies that could build a safe and comfortable environment for students, teachers, and staff at USC

...separate toilets between male and female students and classes between men and women from puberty from grades 3-6. (GT-3)

...School policy regarding limits on picking up students when they come home from school is so that parents or guardians who pick them up do not interfere with various activities at school. (GT-6)

...School policy is the establishment of regulations in schools to foster discipline... (GT-20).

3.2. Discussion

Urban School Climate (USC) is a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment. School climate is seen as an attribute that influences individuals' behavior and interaction patterns at school. It also impacts teacher commitment and performance (Manla, 2021; Steele et al., 2021). Student achievement and learning outcomes are also influenced by the characteristics of the school climate that is formed (Cuellar et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2016; Saputra et al., 2020). Therefore, USC's impact in supporting the achievement of quality education is huge. In connection with this, USC has a critical position from two points of view, namely (1) atmosphere and (2) safe and comfortable environment, because, in the end, this will create quality education with high student achievement and learning outcomes.

The image of USC, which consists of Susana and a safe and comfortable school environment, as well as school policies that support efforts to realize these conditions, are typical school attributes. One of the school concepts that has become an educational policy in Indonesia, along with the characteristics of a safe school atmosphere and environment, is child-friendly schools (CFS). There have been many studies on CFS policies (Aminpour, 2023; Barliana et al., 2023; Suharti et al., 2023; Supeni & Harini, 2021). The CFS policy is the government's effort to build safe and comfortable schools for students, teachers, and staff while at school.

The characteristics of a safe and comfortable environment reflect an ideal school for students to participate in the learning process without fearing discrimination and even violence (bullying) at school. This condition is the dream of all school members because that way, the teaching and learning process will run well. Then, it will have an impact on achievement and good learning outcomes. USC's completeness attributes must be complete and perfect if you want to build a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment, including school regulations, policies, facilities, and even the concern of all school members towards creating a safe and comfortable school environment. This means that all elements will have their role in supporting the creation of USC, described as a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that a safe and comfortable environment, as a description of USC, includes 1) a pleasant school atmosphere for students and teachers, adequate facilities and a mutually supportive atmosphere, 2) a safe environment, 3) comfortable environment and 4) policies schools which lead to restrictions for parents when picking up their children at school, regulations regarding discipline and various binding regulations. The impact of the results of this research is that schools can build a school climate

by referring to the characteristics of USC, which are described as a safe and comfortable school atmosphere and environment.

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