

Needs of Classroom Climate Improvement in Indonesian and Thai Universities

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Abstract

Improving classroom climate is an effort to improve the quality of education on a micro level that needs to be encouraged for lecturers in tertiary education. Several tertiary classroom climate instruments have been developed in English, for example the Colleges and Universities Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI), What is Happening in this Class (WIHIC), and the University Classroom Climate Inventory (UCCI), and been translated into several languages. To obtain information about a conducive classroom climate on an international scale, and on the pandemic situation, it is necessary to compare classroom climates between universities in other countries, and during normal and pandemic situation, so that the ideal classroom climate in a university can be reached. The article compares the classroom climate in universities in Indonesia with that in Thailand and between normal and pandemic covid-19 situation. On certain scales whose conditions are lower, efforts need to be made to improve based on the preferred and more conducive classrooms climate, wherever they are in Indonesia or Thailand.

Keywords: *classroom climate; learning management; Improvement, higher education; Indonesia; Thailand;*

Introduction

The excitement of research on classroom climate at the primary and secondary education level in Indonesia has been marked by the implementation of research, such as (Silalahi, 2008), (Saptiawati & Hadiyanto, 2009), (Amelia, 2016), (Hadiyanto & Pransiska, 2017). These studies are conducted by undergraduate, master and doctoral students, as well as by research lecturers at public and private universities. The number and variety of these studies are still very minimal when compared to research abroad such as those carried out by (Gascoigne, 2012), (Ryder et al., 2015), and as reported by (Hadiyanto, 2016). Classroom climate research in Indonesia is generally just an exploration of data, or linking between variables and has not been carried out to improve the classroom climate itself. There are some aspects have to be studied deeper around classroom and learning management environment such as students support, student development which important than only teaching content and could be done in future research (Phetmalaikul, 2017).

Comprehensive research for classroom climate improvement starting from the development and validation of classroom climate measurement tools has actually begun at the primary education level (Hadiyanto & Kumaidi, 1998), and in universities (Hadiyanto et al., 2018). The research that has been carried out has resulted in a validated classroom climate instrument. Research carried out to improve the climate in higher education classes has also been carried out (Hadiyanto & Afriansyah, 2019), but

this type of research is still very minimal and has not been of interest to researchers in tertiary institutions to improve the classroom climate independently.

On the basis of this fact, and demanded by the development and need for studies in the context of improving the classroom climate both in Indonesia and in other countries, a comparative have to be done to clarify the similarity or different dimension between context (Phetmalaikul, T. and Suthasinobon, K., 2019: 81-91). Data collection from various countries is needed to ensure whether or not an improvement in classroom climate is needed in higher education, this research was carried out in several universities in Indonesia and Thailand.

Classroom Climate as Dependent and Independent Variables

Several studies have been carried out and prove that the classroom climate is a unique variable related to other variables, namely as an independent variable and also as a dependent variable. As the dependent variable, classroom climate is influenced by other variables such as student attitudes (Pelu, 2019), supportive behavior (Mainhard et al., 2011), and simulation strategy (Kocoska, 2010). Meanwhile, as an independent variable, classroom climate affects or correlates with other variables. The studies that have been done indicate that the classroom climate can influence other variables. The results of the study prove that the adversity quotient and classroom climate have a significant effect on learning habits (Amelia, 2016). Other research also proves that classroom climate affects learning outcomes (Husna et al., 2013), learning achievement (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011), learning motivation (Aryani & Alsa, 2016), (Sari, 2013).

Some of the studies that have been carried out show that the classroom climate is a variable that is influenced or affects other variables so that it can be described in the following figure.

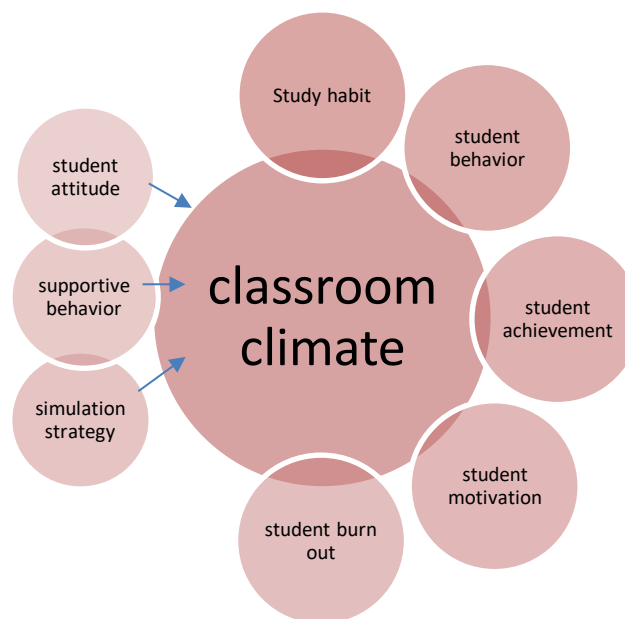


Figure 01 Dependent and Independent Variables of Classroom Climate

The picture above shows how important the position of the classroom climate is in the implementation of education in an educational institution, both at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. For this reason, the study of classroom climate is very important for teachers and education providers who always want to make the implementation of education in their institutions better and more optimal.

Method

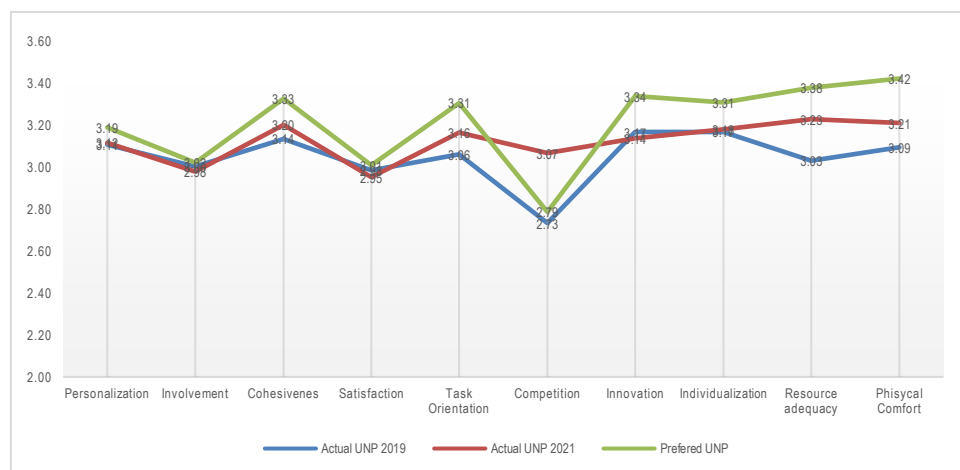
This is a descriptive comparative study to compare classroom climate portraits in several universities. Data was collected using google form against a sample of 535 students, namely 272 students from Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP), 21 Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) students, 97 Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) students in Indonesia, 145 students from Universities in Thailand. Indonesian respondents (UNY and UNESA) responded actual and preferred form of instruments; UNP students responded actual and preferred form of instruments, on normal and pandemic covid-19 situation; Thai students responded actual form of instrument only. Data were processed using SPSS to be graphed and compared descriptively.

Results and Discussion

This study compares the actual and preferred classroom climate individually in each sample university and compares between universities both in Indonesia and outside Indonesia. The comparison of the climate for higher education classes is shown in the following graph.

Sample of Classroom Climate in Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP)

The following is a sample comparison of the classroom climate experienced by current students with those desired at Universitas Negeri Padang, during normal and pandemic Covid-19 situation.

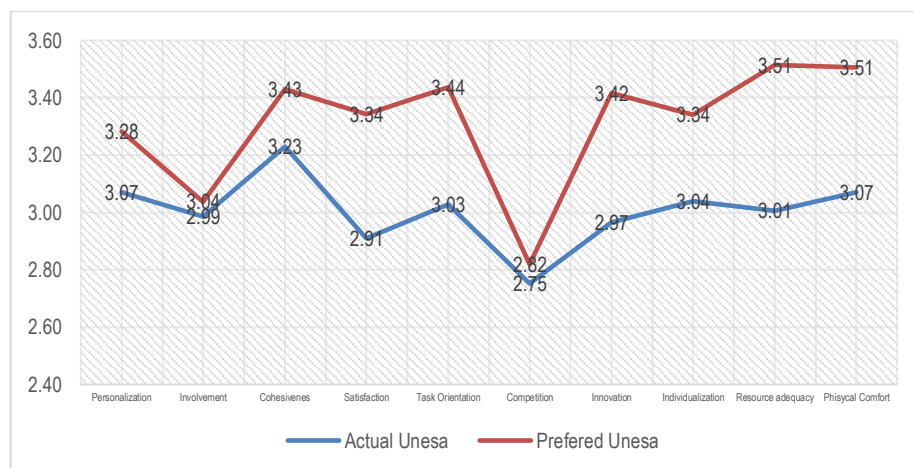


Graph 01 Classroom Climate Sample at Universitas Negeri Padang

From the graph, in general, it can be understood that the classroom climate expected by students is generally higher than the classroom climate that has been experienced by students at the State University of Padang. The differences between experienced and desirable classroom climates were less pronounced on the scales of engagement, satisfaction and competition. In some scales, such as task orientation, competition, resource adequacy and physical comfort of the classroom climate during pandemic covid-19 surprisingly higher than that on normal situation.

Sample of Classroom Climate in Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA)

The following is a sample comparison of classroom climate experienced with the classroom climate desired by students at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

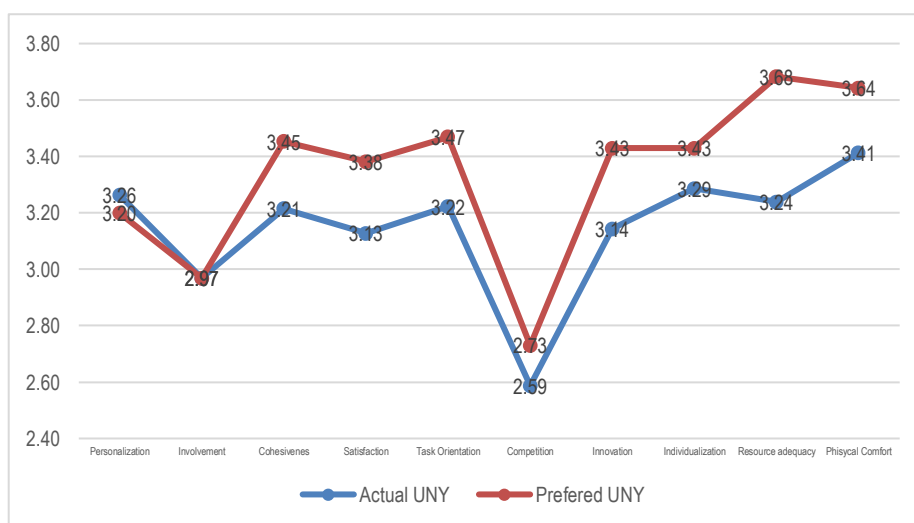


Graph 02 Classroom climate Sample at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya

The graph above generally illustrates that the classroom climate expected by students at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya is generally higher than the classroom climate that has been experienced by students so far. The differences between experienced and desirable classroom climates were less pronounced on the scales of engagement, satisfaction and competition.

Sample of Classroom Climate in Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY)

The following graph is a sample comparison of the classroom climate experienced by students at this time with the classroom climate desired by Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta students.

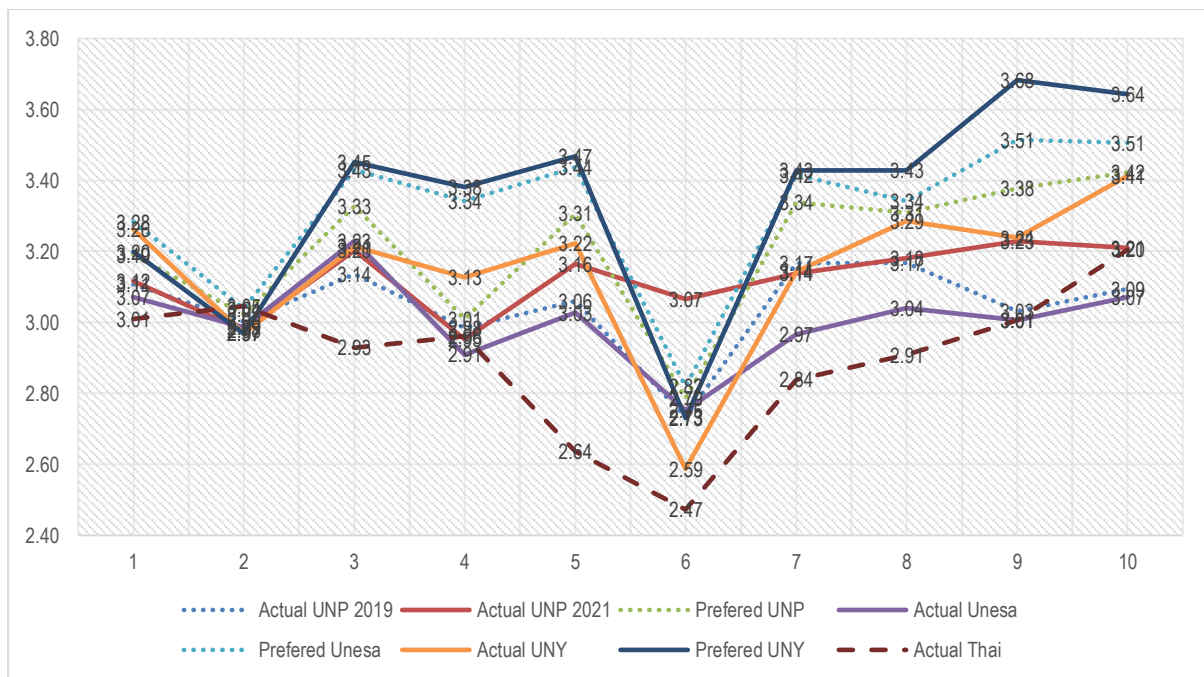


Graph 03 Classroom Climate Sample at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

From Graph 03 above, it can be seen that the classroom climate expected by Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta students is generally higher than the classroom climate that has been experienced by students so far. The differences between experienced and desirable classroom climates were less pronounced on the scales of engagement, satisfaction and competition. The scale of competition is one of the lowest scales compared to other scales.

Discussion

The following is a graph of the comparison between the actual climate and the preferred climate by students from Padang State University (UNP), Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) in Indonesia, and classroom climate in Universities in Thailand.



Graph04

Actual and Preferred Classroom Climate on Some Universities in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar

The graph above illustrates that in general there is a difference between the actual classroom climate compared to the student's preferred climate on several university classroom climate scales. However, the scores on the involvement scale and the competition scale tend not to differ either between the actual and the preferred form, or between one university and another.

The actual classroom climate and the preferred classroom climate at the University of Yogyakarta are generally higher than the two classroom climate forms in other universities in Indonesia. For the actual, it was followed by UNP and then UNY. As for the preferred classroom climate, UNESA was then followed by UNP.

There are two scales that tend to converge or there is no difference between the actual and desired classroom climate, namely on the scale of involvement and competition, and even the atmosphere of the competition at UNY is lower than in other universities. In such conditions, it requires efforts from the leadership of higher education to ask, encourage or even motivate the lecturers to involve students more in the learning process. In addition, there are also two scales that are responded to and desired to be higher than other scales, both in real and desired climates, namely the scale of resource adequacy and physical comfort. This is the case in almost all universities that were research samples in Indonesia.

Classroom climate data compiled from several universities in Thailand shows that the scales of classroom climate experienced by students are generally lower than those in Indonesia (This data collection from Thailand were done after the third wave of COVID-19 in Thailand and all students learned two semester continually without real class). The scale of involvement and competition are two scales that have almost the same conditions in several universities both in Indonesia and in Thailand.

Person-Environment Fit

Person environment fit is defined as the suitability that occurs between individual characteristics and the environment in which these individuals are active and compatible with one another (L. & Brown, 2001). The concept of person environment fit is a comprehensive assumption that includes the

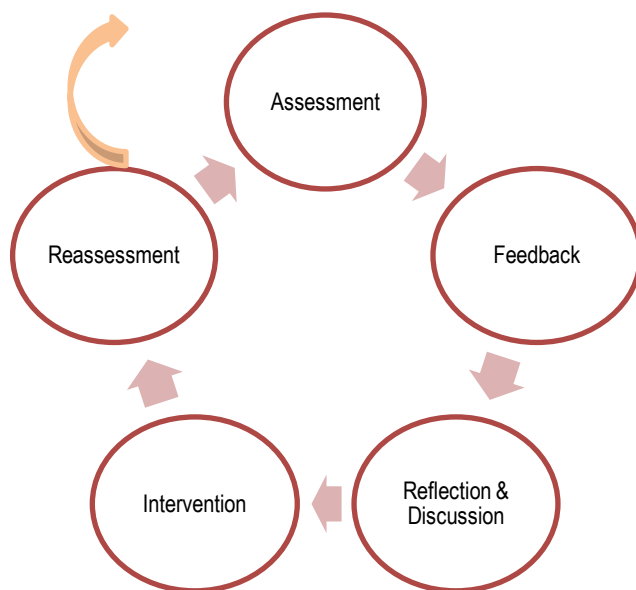
compatibility of one with various sub-systems in the work environment. The assumption underlying the perspective of person environment fit is that the level of fit between individuals and the environment produces maximum benefits or results for the individual concerned (Wahida, 2018).

The study of the relationship between the individual and the environment has actually been started by Lewin since 1935 (Hadiyanto, 2016). This opinion shows that behavior is the result of the relationship between the person and the environment. This opinion is formulated in a mathematical formula, namely: $B = f(P, E)$. In a more general context, the meaning of the formula is, $TL = f(K, L)$ meaning that behavior (TL) is a function of personality (K) and environment (L). He argued that in order to know and predict the psychological behavior of learners (B/TL), one must understand various psychological events such as a person's actions, emotions and expressions (P/K) and his/her psychological environment (E/L). Thus, it can be said that Lewin's approach emphasizes the importance of the two things above, namely the environment and personality as factors that shape the behavior of personnel or even students who are in that environment.

Based on this opinion, and by bringing the context into the classroom climate in universities, and analyzing the results of the comparison the actual classroom climate in general is still lower than preferred, it is time for competent lecturers and university administrators to make efforts to improve or increase the classroom climate scales to the conditions desired by the students.

Classroom Climate Improvement Stages

Classroom climate is a condition that changes due to other factors, and is a central condition that can be treated to make the classroom climate itself better and have an influence on other factors. To make the climate better, there are five steps proposed by (Fisher & Fraser, 1982), as shown in the following figure.



The implementation of the improvement of the five steps depends very much on the climatic conditions of the class. The more the scale that you want to improve and the farther the gap between what is experienced and what students want, the longer it will take to fix it. Several examples of the implementation of the five steps have been carried out at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels.

Figure 02 Stages of Classroom Climate Improvement

From the graph above, it can also be understood that there are three scales in which students respond in close proximity between what is currently experienced and what is desired, namely on the scale of personalization, involvement, and competitiveness. Meanwhile, on the other seven scales, in general, there is a difference between the current perceived climate and the desired one. For this second condition, concrete efforts are needed from researchers, senior lecturers, supervisors, or university leaders with the relevant lecturers.

Among the examples of research that have been carried out is creating a conducive environment for learning mathematics in higher education (Helsa & Hadiyanto, 2019). The efforts that have been made to increase the scale of familiarity are by carrying out the following activities.

- 1) Forming small groups of class members, this group is a permanent group, where each group is given the task of discussing topics to be discussed at each meeting;
- 2) In addition to carrying out lectures using the lecture method, the lecturer always gives time to students to conduct class discussions, so as to provide opportunities for students to interact with each other in class discussions;
- 3) Emphasize each group member so that one member and another group member must know each other intimately, because each student initially does not know each other because they come from various study programs from different faculties in State Universities Padang.
- 4) Making group variations, namely by creating new groups at certain meetings, so that students can get to know each other better from different group members.
- 5) Establishing close communication between students and lecturers through the WhatsApp group so that it is very possible for group members to interact about academic and non-academic issues because each student already knows the identity and cellphone number of each student and lecturer (Hadiyanto & Afriansyah, 2019).

While efforts are made to increase the scale of innovation, subject lecturers carry out the following activities:

- 1) Displaying the material using the LCD projector as the main basis for presentations by both lecturers and students;
- 2) Using IT-based learning media through e-learning portals and WhatsApp groups to share group exposure materials so that they are distributed to all class members;
- 3) Make optimal use of e-learning facilities as a means and learning media to communicate with students; On the e-learning portal, the lecturer stores learning tools, such as a Semester Learning Plan (RPS) or syllabus, teaching materials, reference books, and learning videos;
- 4) Using e-learning facilities to create learning innovations, for example creating online assignments, online quizzes, online midterm exams;
- 5) Using WhatsApp social media to familiarize group or class members with learning problems, for example sharing presentation materials for groups that will appear, or sharing lecture materials used by students to complete assignments given by lecturers (Hadiyanto & Afriansyah, 2019).

Eventually the respondents were small number but this result stimulates administrators and lecturers in universities to realize the impact of pandemic situations and should put more effort and some better support to learners than usual as follow:

- 1) Learning management preparation and scheduled to learners systematically along with provide teaching documents and upload to learners before teaching;
- 2) Develop ICT skills and digital competencies and apply to online teaching efficiently;
- 3) Make optimal use of integrated application to facilitate the best online climate and environment with quality learning media to communicate with students; develop effective learning tools, such as a Semester Learning Plan (RPS) via Google Class, teaching materials, document, work sheets, experiencing game and learning videos;
- 4) Innovate more experiencing activities and instruments to enforce appreciation, use variety of teaching methods and evaluation;

- 5) Aiming child center and stronger interaction, try harder to stimulate all learners as much as possible, capture their heart with better distancing experiences.

After carrying out remedial treatments with the activities mentioned above for approximately six meetings, the results of the comparison between the actual pre-test, post-test and preferred climate classroom climate are as follows. On the familiarity scale the classroom climate score moved from 2.81 (actual pretest) to 3.10 (actual post-test) to get to the familiarity (3.32) that the student wanted (preferred pre-test). It can be said that the efforts made by subject lecturers as well as researchers at the time of improvement intervention treatment, by carrying out a level of familiarity and making various innovations in the learning process, can be said to have yielded results, namely an increase in intimacy and innovation in the class concerned (Hadiyanto & Afriansyah, 2019).

For the resource adequacy scale and the physical comfort scale, the lecturer concerned cannot do treatment to make the two scales better, because this is the domain of the leadership and policy makers to do so.

Conclusions

On the basis of data analysis and after carrying out the above discussion, some conclusions from the study are:

1. In general, there is a difference between the actual classroom climate and the preferred classroom climate desired by students in all universities in Indonesia;
2. The difference between the actual classroom climate and the classroom climate that students want needs to be followed up with interventions to improve classroom climate collectively by the lecturer in question assisted by researchers or supervisors at the institution concerned;
3. The scale of involvement and scale of competition in higher education in Indonesia tends to be lower than the other scales. Both scales in the desired classroom climate in universities in Thailand are not as low as those in Indonesia;
4. In some scales, the classroom climate during pandemic covid-19 in Universitas Negeri Padang surprisingly higher than that on normal situation dues to the intensive use of e-learning which sharply increase during pandemic covid-19.
5. Based on the general analysis the preferred classroom climate is higher than actual climate; It indicates the need of improvement of the almost all scales of the climate in order to achieve as close as possible the person-environment fit which lead to better achievement of students.

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