DISSERTATION

ASSESSING SCHOOL CLIMATE
USING A SEQUENTIAL TRANSFORMATIVE DESIGN

Submitted by

Shelby Maier

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY SHELBY MAIER ENTITLED ASSESSING SCHOOL CLIMATE USING A TRANSFORMATIVE SEQUENTIAL DESIGN BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Committee on Graduate Work

Cindy Griffin

Ellyn Dickmann

Co-Advisor: Jerry Bigner

Advisor: James Banning

Acting Director: Dale DeVoe

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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As it has been shown repeatedly in the research literature, school climate influences student academic achievement, typically employing a single methodology to collect data: a quantitative organizational climate survey administered to school stakeholders. Utilizing a sequential transformative mixed methods design, I studied how the results of the two methodologies were different and similar. The school climate factors of parental involvement, school safety, and building facilities were studied within 14 K-12 schools. Equity factors were also integrated into the study.

Given that these school climate factors are interdependent, the factors needed to be studied using multiple methods. The ‘sequential’ portion of the research design accomplished this, which first entailed a quantitative organizational climate survey and then a visual ethnography was conducted. The results from the two methodologies uncovered more similarities than differences between higher-ranked and lower-ranked school climates. The ‘transformative’ portion involved critiquing the results from a feminist lens, which produced recommendations for school climate improvement.

This study demonstrated that school climate provides a level of complexity that is difficult to assess. Future studies need to utilize innovative designs and progressive methodologies to ensure any modifications made to the school climate are carried out with intentionality and mindfulness. Last but definitely not least, feminist ideals should be at the forefront throughout the school climate and school improvement processes.

Shelby M. Maier
School of Education
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523
Summer 2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

School climate is one of the most important factors for an effective school (Andersen, 1982 in Van Horn, 2003; Kreft, 1993 in Van Horn, Miller & Fredericks, 1990 in Van Horn; Purkey & Smith, 1983 in Van Horn) and a student's academic success (Brookover, 1978 in Van Horn; Esposito, 1999 in Van Horn; Griffith, 1995 in Van Horn; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Kang, 1991 in Van Horn). School climate influences student success or failure (Comer, 1993 in Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997). The learning environment and student achievement are influenced by school climate (Bossert, 1988 in Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, & Wisenbaker, 1978 in Sweetland & Hoy; Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Purkey & Smith, 1983 in Sweetland & Hoy; Stedman, 1987 in Sweetland & Hoy). Thus, identification of potential barriers to learning within a school's climate is important for the learning environment and student academic achievement.

The purpose of identifying these barriers is to inform changes that can be made to the school climate so that students can ideally gain the education necessary to become a productive member of society. School climate factors that could be potential barriers are: lack of parental involvement, substandard building facilities, lack of school bonding, and a sense of being unsafe. School climate has the potential to either enhance or hinder student academic achievement as well as the perception of

the school as a welcoming, learning environment, which can be partially attributed to a sense of equality and partnership. Therefore, parental involvement, school building facilities, school safety, and equity should be assessed within school climates.

In 1995, the members of the National Education Goals Panel identified parental involvement as a significant factor in student academic achievement (Hong & Ho, 2005). Programs that assist in increasing parental involvement in their child's education have had a positive influence on academic performance (Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999 in Hong & Ho), including academic achievement over time (Epstein, 1991 in Hong & Ho; Keith Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998 in Hong & Ho; Ross & Broh, 2000 in Hong & Ho). Epstein (2001) noted the theory behind involvement as overlapping spheres of influence. It asserts that schools, parents, and the community are important influences on student learning and the more overlap between these contexts the greater benefit to the students' education.

The school climate influences a student's sense of safety and well-being as well as student behavior (Haynes et al., 1997). Additionally, the Safe School Study (Pink, 1982) showed that a school's climate significantly influenced a student's behavior. For example, the Study revealed that a safer school resulted when the principal was strong, committed, and available; students were proud to attend their school (or, bonded to their school); and community members supported the school. Furthermore, the school rules were clear, fair, and consistently enforced and students were held to high yet achievable academic expectations influenced student behavior and, thus, their achievement.

Equity factors are also important to a school's climate. Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker (1977 in Haynes et al., 1997) and Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982 in Haynes et al.) found a relationship between school climate and African American students' achievement more so than for European American students. Furthermore, Brookover et al. (1977 in Haynes et al.) also found an increase in variance when race was used as covariates of student achievement. Given this, parental involvement, school building facilities, sense of security, and equity have the potential to influence student academic achievement.

Organizational climate surveys have been the primary method of examining a school's climate. The first one applied to educational institutions is the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) in 1962 (Halpin, 1966). Since then, there have been numerous revisions to this survey to account for the various members within a school's organization (i.e., teachers, administrators, and students). Another survey instrument is the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) developed by that National Center for Educational Statistics in 1985. Each of these instruments measures school climate factors of interest for the current study: parental involvement, school building facilities, and school safety.

Statement of the Research Problem

These quantitative measurements of organizational climates are limited in that they offer only numerical data to represent the complexities of an organization, or school. Qualitative methods, specifically visual ethnography, provide a more contextualized, evidentiary description of what is being studied in addition to the numerical results. Furthermore, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods

would present a more comprehensive portrayal of a school's climate more so than only utilizing one method of organizational assessment. Therefore, a mixed methods design has been used to assess school climate in this study.

Purpose of the Study

Given that there are various ways to examine school climate, the purpose of this study was to determine the similarities and differences utilizing two research methods: a survey instrument and a visual ethnography. A sample of schools within a school district was studied to determine if the research methods would result in differing conclusions for the schools' climates. There has been a multitude of quantitative assessments of school climate utilizing survey instruments. Ethnography has been a typical qualitative approach to assess school climate. However, visual ethnography is a method of school climate assessment that has not been conducted at the K-12 education level. In light of the background literature and uni-dimensional quantitative measures of school climate, the purpose of this study was to: assess the school climate factors of parental involvement, school safety, and school building facilities using visual anthropological methods of a sample of schools within a school district. The district-level climate, which is the macro-level, was the priority rather than the classroom-level climate, which is the micro-level. Additionally, equity parameters (Banning, Middleton, & Deniston, 2008) were also assessed.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the current study.

1. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by a survey instrument?
2. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by visual ethnography?

3. In what ways are the two climate assessment approaches similar or different?
4. How can the two climate assessments be integrated into a composite portrayal?
5. Given a composite portrayal of school climate, how can this composite picture become informed by critical feminist theory?

Synopsis of the Research Process

This is a sequential transformative mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003) that included an analysis of the School District Organizational Climate Survey and a visual ethnography of individual school climates. The School District Organizational Climate Survey was used as archival data. It was chosen because it quantitatively assessed numerous climate factors within the schools and surveyed multiple stakeholders of the schools.

A visual ethnography was chosen because it provided a contextualized portrayal of the schools and school district. It also offered evidence to verify the School District Organizational Climate Survey. Furthermore, interpretations derived from the photographs revealed more in-depth, descriptive portrayals of the school climates.

Definition of Terms

School Climate—"is the relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior in schools" (Hoy, 1990, p. 152).

Parental Involvement—six types of involvement are: (1) parenting, which entails establishing supportive home environments for children; (2) communication, which means establishing two-way venues to discuss school programs and student progress; (3) volunteering, which includes organizing for parents to help students at home and school; (4) learning at home, which involves offering parents ideas and ways to help students with school work; (5) decision making, which requires a representative

portion of parents to serve as leaders on school committees; and (6) collaboration with the community, which entails incorporating community resources into the school to assist in student learning and school programs (Epstein & Connors, 1992 in Brough & Irvin, 2001; Epstein, 1995).

School Safety—"A safe school is one in which the total school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff, [parents], and visitors to interact in a positive, non-threatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school while fostering positive relationships and personal growth" (Bucher & Manning, 2005, p. 56). This includes physical, intellectual, and emotional safety.

School Building Facilities—includes the school building and other buildings on the schools' property; factors include school building age, temperature factors, lighting, color, acoustics, school size, and amount of space (McGuffey, 1982 in Picus et al., 2005).

Visual Ethnography—using visual research methods (i.e., photography) to produce ethnographic knowledge (Pink, 2001). "A reflexive approach to ethnographic photography means researchers being aware of theories that inform their own photographic practice…" (Pink, p. 54).

School District Organizational Climate Survey—developed by the research team at the Research and Development Center for the Advancement of Student Learning based on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and Student Effort items created by Steinberg (1996).

Limitations and Delimitations

A limitation of the study was the generalizability of the interpretations. Given that the interpretations were subjective in nature, the interpretations from the visual ethnography were different from school to school. Each school had its own climate that influences the interpretations of the researcher. Additionally, the context of the schools (i.e., city demographics where the schools are located) varies, which also limited the generalizability of this study's findings.

Another limitation was that the study is restricted to the physical school setting. The physical school setting was only one element of the school's climate. Other elements that could be assessed were content of school and district newsletters,

attendance at the invitations for parental involvement, and teacher attendance at diversity trainings, and so on.

The study was delimited to the schools within the Rocky Mountain School District. The context of the Rocky Mountain School District was explained in the *Participants and Site* section of Chapter 3. Only Elementary, Junior High, and High schools were included in the current study; which is a second delimitation. The process of school selection was described in detail in the *Sampling Strategy* section of Chapter 3.

Assumptions

An assumption made about the study was that I, as the researcher, was an outsider looking into the schools. Therefore, my interpretations could be viewed as balanced and neutral; however, my biases given my feminist researcher perspective emerged throughout the research process. My perspective was further articulated in the *Researcher's Perspective* section of this chapter. Another assumption was that the stakeholders who completed the School District Organizational Climate Survey had differing perceptions about the attributes ascribed to the individual school climates.

Significance of the Study

The influence that school climate has on student achievement has been assessed using quantitative surveys completed by schools' stakeholders. A visual ethnography of an entire school district to assess the school climate factors of parental involvement, school safety, and school building facilities has not currently been conducted. Visual ethnographic methods offer a more comprehensive description and assessment of the schools' climates. Furthermore, integrating these types of

quantitative and qualitative methods has never been done; the qualitative results could verify the quantitative results. Additionally, the incorporation of equity factors that influence the school climate also adds to the current school climate literature.

In future manuscripts, the researcher will develop an assessment model based on this study to offer other educational researchers to utilize as a mixed methods assessment tool in school climate studies. This type of assessment model could be used by school leadership to modify the climate and, thus, student achievement.

Researcher's Perspective

As a researcher, feminist theory informed my research perspective. Feminism, as defined by hooks, is the movement to eliminate the ideology of white supremacist capitalist patriarchal domination (Foss, Griffin, Foss, 2004) My general version of feminism is, first and foremost, equal social power between women and men with other forms of social equality, such as racial, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical, and so on coming second. Specifically, I endorse Starhawk's (1989) power-with mentality as well as hook's (1994) community involvement. Olesen's (2000) strong objectivity stresses the importance of the researcher's social location and its influence on the research process.

Starhawk's (1989) concept of power-with involves the execution or peformance of power. This is a recognition that power differentials are inherent within our society, but it is how that power is *performed* that is essential. This power differential is inherent throughout the research process; however, in the current study, it was especially important for me to be mindful of this differential when collecting the data, coding the photographs, and interpreting the results. I was cognizant of my

authority and social location while conducting these research steps to ensure that the composite portrayals for each school and educational level was representative of what was actually occurring within the schools, not what I believe should be occurring.

In addition, power is performed between school stakeholders. For example, a power differential can be seen between student and teacher, parent and teacher, teacher and principal, and so on. Thus, it is important to understand how power within these relationships is performed by the stakeholder with the most power (e.g., teacher and principal in the aforementioned examples). From my perspective, Starhawk's power-with suggests that the stakeholder with more power should empower the stakeholder with less power (e.g., students and parents in the previous examples), so that power can be shared by the school's stakeholders. I provide recommendations on how power can be balanced based on this concept and my feminist perspective in the *A Feminist Perspective* of Chapter 5.

hooks (1994) endorsed community involvement. To me, community involvement implies an application of the research results. For this study, an application could be a joint effort of the researcher and the school decision makers utilizing the knowledge gained from the research results and the recommendations offered to improve the schools. Again, I provide recommendations in Chapter 5.

Strong objectivity (Olesen, 2000) refers to my social location and the critical examination of how my social location affects the research process. I am a Caucasian, heterosexual, Midwestern, middle-class, young, able-bodied, post-secondary educated woman. Readers of the study's results should keep in mind these characteristics of my

social location to recognize that these elements have influenced my standpoint and thus, the research process and my interpretations of the school climates.

Furthermore, Maher and Tetreault (2001) conceptualized feminist themes that are a part of educational theory. Mastery, voice, authenticity, and positionality influence power within educational relationships. I believe positionality is most salient in school climates. I focus on how it relates how power is performed within schools.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Significant importance has been ascribed to school climate and how it influences student achievement. Parental involvement, school safety, and school building facilities are key school climate factors. Equity factors have also been deemed as critical to assess within school climates. A review of the background literature for these factors is important to rationalize this study. However, there has been some discrepancy as to whether "school climate" or "school culture" is the appropriate terminology; therefore, a discussion of the history of school climate is necessary to lessen confusion of these two terms.

"School Climate" or "School Culture"

A historical review of the literature displays the evolution of the terms "school climate" and "school culture". First, a brief history of "school climate" is addressed with "school culture" following. School climate derived from organizational research (Van Houtte, 2005). In 1958, Pace and Stern (in Van Houtte) made organizational climate a central variable in educational research. A few years later, Halpin and Croft described climate as the organizational personality of the school concentrating on the social interactions of teachers and school administrators (Halpin, 1966).

By the end of the 1970s, school climate research was well underway analyzing the school's social system and cultural dimensions (Van Houtte, 2005). The

school ethos was the primary factor for describing school differences in school achievement. A commonly used definition of school climate is that it "is the relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior in schools" (Hoy, 1990, p. 152).

Contrary to school climate, school culture is derived from organizational culture, which has its roots in anthropology (Glisson, 2000 in Van Houtte, 2005; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985 in Van Houtte; Reichers & Schneider, 1990 in Van Houtte) with several varying definitions (Reichers & Schneider, 1990 in Van Houtte; Rousseau, 1990 in Van Houtte; Smircich, 1983, 1985 in Van Houtte). The most succinct definition was given by Rousseau (1990): "a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit" (in Van Houtte, p. 74). However, all revolve around the historic anthropological definition of culture: "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior" (Kroeber & Parsons, 1958 in Van Houtte, p. 74).

In 1979, Pettigrew (in Van Houtte, 2005) incorporated culture into organizational climate asserting that concepts such as symbolism, myths, rituals, and so on could be used in organizational research. For the majority of the 1980s, school culture had been all but abandoned. Then, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, educational research re-discovered the culture concept (Maxwell & Thomas, 1991 in Van Houtte; Prosser, 1999 in Van Houtte). And in the rest of the 1990s, culture was one of the foremost characteristics researched within schools.

During the 1990s, climate and culture were used interchangeably. However, they have differences as well as similarities that distinguish them from one another. For example, climate emphasizes shared perceptions of those within the organization while culture accentuates shared assumptions, shared meanings, and shared beliefs (Ashforth, 1985 in Van Houtte, 2005; Cooke & Rousseau, 1988 in Van Houtte; Denison, 1996 in Van Houtte; Rentsch, 1990 in Van Houtte; Rousseau, 1990 in Van Houtte). Therefore, climate measures are based on what the organization's members perceive their colleagues to believe or assume while culture measures are based on what the individual members of the organization believe and assume themselves. Additionally, the elements of a culture (i.e., the norms, beliefs, values) are property of the social system while the element of climate (i.e., organizational member's perceptions) is property of the individuals within the system (Van Houtte).

The connection between school climate and school culture revolves around the composition of an organizational climate. The elements of an organizational climate are: the ecology or physical surroundings (i.e., building facilities), the characteristics of individuals or groups within the organization (i.e., socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, organizational leadership, and so on), the relationships between individuals or groups within the organization (i.e., cohesion, communication, and decision making, which can be perceived as elements of social power) and the culture (i.e., norms, beliefs, values, meanings) (Tagiuri, 1968 in Van Houtte, 2005). According to this, climate can be viewed as the overarching concept with culture as an element within it; thus, school climate encompasses school culture. To capture a comprehensive description of a school climate, all four dimensions should be studied.

There is a difference theoretically and, thus analytically, depending on the view take regarding school climate. Within this literature review and the impending study, "school climate" will be used given that a school's culture is inherent in the larger school climate (Tagiuri, 1968 in Van Houtte, 2005). Further ways to conceptualize a school's climate are discussed next followed by the value and methods of assessing school climates.

Conceptualization of School Climate

There have been three conceptual frameworks that have comprised organizational climate theory. First, multiple measurement-organizational attribute (Forehand & Gilmer, 1964 in Van Houtte) is a set of attributes that describe an organization. These attributes distinguish that organization from other organizations, is enduring over time, and influences the behavior of the people within the organization. According to this framework, climate is an organizational feature.

Second, a perceptual measurements-organizational attribute (Hellriegle & Slocum, 1974 in Van Houtte, 2005) is set of attributes that can be perceived about an organization and/or its subsystems by the organization's members. The attributes may also be brought about from the manner in which that organization and/or its subsystems handle their members and environment. This framework puts weight on perceptual assessment and, as with multiple measurement-organizational attribute framework, regards climate as an organizational feature.

The final framework considers the personal attributes of the organization's members (Schneider & Bartlett, 1968 in Van Houtte, 2005). Along with the perceptual measurements-organizational attribute framework, this framework puts

weight on perceptual assessment by the organization's members. Currently of these three frameworks, the perceptual measurements-organizational attribute framework is most commonly utilized in terms of school climate research (Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2000; Willms & Somers, 2001).

In addition, there are two levels of conceptualizing school climate: school-level property or individual-level property (Van Horn, 2003). School climate can be conceptualized as a school-level property with each stakeholder within the school experiencing the school's climate through their experience with the school (Van Horn). If climate is conceptualized as a school-level property, then all the individuals and groups (i.e., parents, teachers, students, staff, and so on) within the school experience and are influenced by the same climate and student outcomes could be predicted by the school climate at the school level, not by differences between individuals or groups within the school (Van Horn).

However, school climate can also be conceptualized as an individual-level property with school climate being a psychological property of the stakeholders (Van Horn, 2003). If climate is conceptualized as an individual-level property, each individual could experience and be influenced by the climate in a different manner. The school-level conceptualization of school climate is more accurate than the individual-level due to the lack of current information in addition to the limited experience and bias of individuals or groups of individuals within the school.

In the present study, the perceptual measurements-organizational attributes framework is utilized as a way of examining a school climate. Additionally, school climate can be conceptualized as a school-level property; however, the individual-

level property has not been excluded from future analyses. Therefore, school climate should be described as a property of the school experienced by the individuals and groups within the school (Van Horn, 2003).

How to Assess School Climate

As mentioned earlier, Halpin and Croft created a survey called the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) (Halpin, 1966) in 1962, which was the first measurement of organizational climate to be applied to educational institutions. It assessed teachers' and administrators' perceptions of school climate on teacher subscales (i.e., Collegial Behavior, Committed Behavior, and Disengaged Behavior) and administrator subscales (i.e., Supportive Behavior, Directive Behavior, and Restrictive Behavior); subsequent school identification into one of six categories resulted (i.e., open, closed, paternal, familiar, controlled, and autonomous) (Halpin). At this time, students were excluded from school climate research. Therefore, in 1973, Finlayson (in Van Houtte, 2005) expanded the OCDQ to include students. The students were asked about their perceptions of other students as well as teachers. There were further revisions to the OCDQ: the OCDQ-RS, which focused on secondary schools (Kottkamp, Mulhern, & Hoy, 1987); the OCDQ-RE, which focused on elementary schools (Hoy & Clover, 1986); and the OCDQ-ML (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). The revisions to the Halpin and Croft's original OCDQ focused primarily on a school's climate on the open-closed continuum.

The openness of a school's climate affects school effectiveness. School openness is on a continuum from open to closed (Halpin, 1966). A feature of an open climate is the authenticity and integrity of the staff within the school, especially the

school's principal. A closed climate could be viewed as the opposite of open in that the principal is ineffective in leading (i.e., micromanagement, impersonal, aloof, and inconsiderate). Incredibility and dishonesty plague a closed climate (Halpin).

To assess the openness of a school climate, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, Revised Middle (OCDQ-RM) can be used. It was developed by Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, and Bliss (1996) based on Halpin and Croft's (1966) original OCDQ. The OCDQ-RM is a 50-item, Likert questionnaire that measures six dimensions of openness with Alpha coefficients are: Supportive (.96), Directive (.88), Restrictive (.89), Collegial (.90), Committed (.93), and Disengaged (.87). These high reliabilities indicate that the OCDQ-RM is a valid and reliable assessment tool.

Another dimension of school climate is health. A healthy school climate, compared to an unhealthy school climate, promotes growth and development of the individuals and interrelationships between various individuals within the school. Counterproductive turmoil is the main characteristic of an unhealthy school (DiPaola & Hoy, 1994 in Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). This turmoil affects the interrelationships between the individuals of the school creating a climate where learning and academic achievement are hindered. School is viewed as place that individuals are required to be, not a place they want to be (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). Openness and health are not mutually exclusive constructs.

To assess the health of a school climate, the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI-RM) can be utilized (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). Like the OCDQ-RM, the OHI-RM is a 45-item, Likert questionnaire that assesses six dimensions of a school's health. The

dimensions along with their Alpha coefficients are: Academic Emphasis (.94), Teacher Affiliation (.94), Principal Influence (.92), Collegial Leadership (.94), Resource Support (.96), and Institutional Integrity (.93) (Hoy & Sabo).

School climate can also be assessed through quantitative surveys measuring stakeholder perceptions. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) developed the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) School Climate Surveys (1986), which included ten scales: (1) teacher-student relationships, (2) security and maintenance, (3) administration, (4) student academic orientation, (5) student behavioral scales, (6) guidance, (7) student-peer relationships, (8) parent and community-school relationships, (9) instructional management, and (10) student activities. Additionally, each stakeholder group (i.e., student, teacher, parent, school administrator, school staff, and community members) should be asked to participate in a school climate study (NASSP).

Another measurement to assess school climate is the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) (NCES, 1996). The SASS was created in 1985 by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) with four components: the Teacher Demand and Shortage Survey, the School Principal Survey, the School Survey, and the School Teacher Survey. However, other aspects are assessed by the SASS as well, such as principal's and teacher's perceptions of school climate, safety problems within their school, parental or guardian involvement, and characteristics of the student population (NCES).

Use of Photographs to Assess School Climate

Ethnographic studies of educational institutions have been conducted (Banning 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997). However, a visual ethnographic study of multiple schools within a school district has never been conducted. Typically, ethnographers have long-standing involvement within the setting being studied due to the observation of human social interaction. However, visual ethnographers spend a shorter amount of time within the setting because they are using their cameras to capture a "slice of reality" (Collier, 1967 in Banning, 1992).

Visual ethnographic studies have been primarily conducted at the collegiate level assessing messages of sexism throughout the campus (Banning, 1992), heterosexist attitudes on a college campus (Banning, 1995), visual experience of pedestrians on campus (Banning, 1993). These studies revealed that non-verbal, unintended messages are sent to persons either attending the college as well as a pedestrian who may not be familiar with the campus. These could be considered informal learning of the campus culture (Banning). This idea of informal learning via non-verbal, unintended messages on college campuses could also be applied to K-12 educational institutions.

Ball and Smith (1992) discussed the credibility challenges that are unique to photographs compared to other forms of visual representation. Photographs are duplications of the photographer's "reality"; however, realism can not be guaranteed by photographs. However, they represent an instant that is more credible than artistic forms of visual representation; the camera is a "mirror with a memory" (Ball & Smith, p. 16), which, according to postmodern theorists, can be distorted. Therefore,

the photographs taken for this study were my reality, but were guided by the focal factors assessed in the School District's Organizational Climate Survey.

Another credibility challenge of photographs revolves around the idea of staging or faking the photographs (Ball & Smith, 1992). For example, people may be positioned in certain ways or completely removed from the picture and artifacts or activities could be prearranged to depict a significant event. The context in which photographs are obtained needs to be provided to increase the credibility in this area. Given these credibility questions, the process of taking these photographs for this study is explained in Chapter 3.

Factors of School Climate Studies

According to Freiberg and Stein (1999 in Bucher & Manning), the "school climate is the heart and soul of a school (p. 11). There is a multitude of potential factors that school climate studies can assess. Parental involvement, school safety, and building facilities are discussed further here. The culmination of these three factors contributes to how stakeholders' perceive the school as a learning environment. In addition, equity factors intersect with the school climate factors to influence student achievement. Please keep in mind that these factors are not mutually exclusive; all play an overlapping part influencing student achievement.

Parental Involvement

Given the importance of parental involvement placed on student academic achievement by the National Education Goals Panel (Hong & Ho, 2005), further discussion is warranted. According to Epstein and Connors (1992 in Brough & Irvin, 2001; Epstein, 1995), there are six types of parental involvement: (1) parenting,

which entails establishing supportive home environments for children; (2) communication, which means establishing two-way venues to discuss school programs and student progress; (3) volunteering, which includes organizing for parents to help students at home and school; (4) learning at home, which involves offering parents ideas and ways to help students with school work; (5) decision making, which requires a representative portion of parents to serve as leaders on school committees; and (6) collaboration with the community, which entails incorporating community resources into the school to assist in student learning and programming. Programs that assist in increasing parental involvement in their child's education have had a positive influence on academic performance (Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999 in Hong & Ho), including academic achievement over time (Epstein, 1991 in Hong & Ho; Keith Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998 in Hong & Ho; Ross & Broh, 2000 in Hong & Ho).

There are other aspects of parental involvement that should be considered, such as why do parents decide to become involved in their child's education. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) asserted that parental involvement is based on three factors: the belief that they should be involved (role construction), the belief that their involvement will positively influence their child's education (parent's self-efficacy), and the opportunities for involvement at the school. Role construction is socially constructed by personal beliefs on child development and childrearing as well as other important beliefs influencing involvement in their child's academics (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005). According to Bandura (1986, 1997 in Hoover-Dempsey et al.), self-efficacy is the belief that one's

behavior will produce desired outcomes. Parental beliefs of efficacy and role construction were found to increase parental involvement with efficacy producing a positive relationship with parental involvement at home, but not at school. However, parental role construction generated a positive relationship with parental involvement at home as well as at school (Sheldon, 2002). Furthermore, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) concluded that a parent who possesses high self-efficacy typically makes decisions to become more involved in their child's education while overcoming challenges that arise along the way; the contrary is true for a parent who possesses low self-efficacy.

Another aspect to consider is a parent's beliefs and social network and its potential to affect how involved they are in their child(ren)'s education (Sheldon, 2002). A social network is the set of relationships and social connections an individual has with other individuals (Wasserman & Faust, 1994 in Sheldon). Sheldon argued that social networks typically increase social capital, which in turn may influence the level of parent's involvement in their child's education. Additionally, Sheldon reported that parental social networks may be associated with norms about parental involvement in their child's school and education. For example, if the parent's social network converses about their children's education, then the more likely the parent is to become involved.

However, parental involvement declines as a child advances through the grades (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995 in Brough & Irvin, 2001; Eccles & Harold, 1993 in Brough & Irvin; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991 in Brough & Irvin; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996 in

Brough & Irvin; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998 in Brough & Irvin). After the elementary grades, parents have a tendency to feel less qualified to assist their child(ren) with school work (Amato, 1994 in Brough & Irvin; Dauber & Epstein, 1989 in Brough & Irvin; Sattes, 1989) due to the increasing complexity of the subjects and lowered confidence in giving academic assistance (Eccles & Harold, 1993 in Brough & Irvin), which is related to their self-efficacy as just discussed. Additionally, some parents did not think there was a need for their involvement after the elementary school years because there was an increased need for their child's independence, especially during the secondary years of school (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffet, 1999 in Brough & Irvin). On the other hand, Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2004) reported that parents of secondary school students are not involved less than parents of elementary school students as previous literature has shown; parents of secondary school students are involved in different activities such as development of school-community partnerships and participation on decision-making committees while parents of elementary school students are typically involved in more parent-student learning activities such as reading comprehension, writing exercises, math practice (i.e., flash cards), and so on.

Other reasons parents do not get involved in their child's education are: health problems, work obligations, and economic differences between themselves and the teachers (Leitch & Tangri, 1988 in Brough & Irvin). Also, about a third of the parents in the Leitch and Tangri study reported that they had not been invited to become involved in the school. Therefore, extending an invitation to parents to get them

involved in programs and activities provided by the school would increase the likelihood of parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 1997).

Aspects of the school climate, specifically school leadership, may enhance parental involvement by creating a welcoming environment, informing them about student progress, and respecting them, their concerns, and their suggestions (Griffith, 1998). Specifically, a principal who displays an effort to address the needs of the school's stakeholders, visits classrooms regularly, and advocates for the school in a public arena increases the likelihood of parental involvement; these are especially important for schools that serve families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and students who are at higher risk for lower academic achievement (Griffith, 2001). These practices are related to increased parental involvement and student learning (Haynes, Emmons, & Woodruff, 1998; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Sheldon, 2003).

High quality parent-school partnership programs have higher parental participation (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). To create effective partnerships between schools, parents, and the community, Epstein and Connors (1992 in Brough & Irvin, 2001; Epstein, 1995) offer six types of involvement that make up the Action Team for Partnership (ATP) program described earlier. It takes about three years for a high-quality parent-school partnership program to be fully implemented in a school (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis, 2002). Additional support from the district has been shown to facilitate this implementation (Sheldon & Van Hooris). Evaluation of the partnership program (i.e., assessing the successes and barriers) each year assists in maintaining focus and motivation to continue the program (Sheldon & Van Hooris). Also keep in mind that one type of parental

involvement program or activity is not going to accommodate for the diverse families of a school's demographic composition (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1998 in Brough & Irvin); therefore, a variety of opportunities for parental involvement should be offered at educational school level (i.e., elementary, junior high, and high school).

Due to developmental differences between elementary and secondary students, the parental involvement activities associated with the partnership program should correspond to these differences and keep student learning as the focal point (Sheldon & Van Hooris, 2004). For example, an activity for parents of elementary students is reading to and with the student while an activity for parents of secondary students is participating in a decision-making committee. A suggestion for increased parental involvement for middle schools is to assign homework that requires parental involvement for completion (Balli, Wedman, & Demo, 1997 in Broughs & Irvin; Epstein & Connors, 1992 in Broughs & Irvin). A program called "Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork" or TIPS (Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997 in Brough & Irvin) was found to increase homework completion, which then affected the student's grades on report cards, or academic achievement.

The critical factor in parental involvement is invitations for involvement. Invitations from members of the school community (i.e., staff, teachers, students, other parents, and so on) to become involved within their child's school is important for taking the step from a belief to a behavior. The invitations may be the factor that initiates involvement from passive and/or low self-efficacy parents (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

School Safety

"A safe school is one in which the total school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff, and visitors to interact in a positive, non-threatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school while fostering positive relationships and personal growth" (Bucher & Manning, 2005, p. 56). Safety is another factor that contributes to higher student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990; Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989 in Griffith, 1997). School safety explicitly means physical safety, but implicitly means emotional and intellectual safety as well (Kohn, 2004; Merrow, 2004).

Emotional safety involves the absence of teasing, bullying, intimidation, and isolation from other students, teachers, school leadership, and staff (Kohn, 2004). Intellectual safety allows the student to feel comfortable enough to say "I don't know" or "I don't understand" without others laughing at them (Merrow, 2004). Additionally, students can critically think and question what they are learning in an intellectually safe school climate (Merrow). Students may believe that they cannot question what they are learning, which is a significant example of the student-teacher power differential. To create an emotionally and intellectually safe school, there needs to be a sense of community (Astor, Benbenishty, & Meyer, 2004 in Bucher & Manning, 2005; Schroeder, 2005 in Bucher & Manning), student-teacher cooperation, and a common conflict resolution language (Selfridge, 2004 in Bucher & Manning).

Bucher and Manning (2005) presented certain criteria for safety secondary schools, which could be applied to the three forms of school safety (i.e., physical, emotional, and intellectual) as well as adapted to the elementary school level. First,

rather than install metal detectors and surveillance cameras, emphasize a positive school climate focusing on the entire school instead of individual students (Bucher & Manning). Second is the implementation of preventative programs (Bucher & Manning). The most successful programs used to create safe schools combine intervention with continuous preventative actions (Stevick & Levinson, 2003 in Bucher & Manning; Wanko, 2001). One such program is the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, which utilized peer mediation and conflict resolution. This program has been successful as a preventative measure and development of a safe school climate (Selfridge, 2004 in Bucher & Manning; Wanko). Third, eliminate low-level violence such as bullying, teasing, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and psychological maltreatment (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002), which could lead to more violent behaviors. A preventative lesson on such types of violence would assist in the elimination process (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). Lastly, create a school climate that fosters learning and development for all students. “In a school with a positive climate, adults act like role models, staff actions are consistent and coherent, positive message go beyond statements on the bulletin boards, and democracy is in action throughout the school” (Freiberg & Stein, 1999 in Bucher & Manning, p. 59).

Furthermore, Feldman (1998) and Wanko (2001) emphasized the importance of the entire community’s effort in school safety. More emphasis was placed on the adults of the school (i.e., teachers, principal, and staff members), but the larger community was seen as creating an atmosphere conducive to violence or one that inhibits violence. Additional connections between the school and the larger community are important to the development of community service learning and

student engagement (Noonan, 2004 in Bucher & Manning; Wanko). Therefore, the school-community connection is imperative to establish when improving school safety. School safety is also connected to the school's building facilities, which will now be discussed.

School Building Facilities

School safety, with a particular emphasis on physical safety, and the school's building facilities are inextricably linked to one another. According to the AASA, the Council of Great City Schools, and the NSBA, safety and building efficiency have been found essential to schools (1983 in Berner, 1993). Additionally, quality of school facilities, level of assistance from school staff, and school safety are related to student satisfaction and achievement (Griffith, 1997).

Furthermore, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1988) reported that the quality of building facilities influences student attitudes towards education and, therefore, academic achievement. It could send the message that the school building is not important enough to repair or update and, thus, education and the students who are supposed to learn at the school are also not important. This is a message of disregard, which could influence student learning and academic achievement.

Berner (1993) also reported that school facilities influence student academic achievement with an emphasis on the mean income and racial composition of the attendance area. For example, the lower the mean income of the attendance area of the school, the lower the achievement of the students who attend that school tends to be. This is most likely due to the lack of resources to repair or update the school

facilities. Additionally, Berner found that parents can play a significant role in the improvement of their child's school facilities with the most significant factor being the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) budget. Other ways they can influence the improvement is through voting for individuals who value education, participating in decision making for the school, attending school functions, and withdrawing their child from the public school system.

On the contrary to other research, Picus, Marion, Cavlo, and Glenn (2005) asserted that the quality of the school facilities is not indicative of student achievement. They believe it is because there is a lack of knowledge regarding the quality of school facilities in the United States. Additionally, the schools that have data on their school facilities lack the standardized student testing systems that could assess the influence of school facilities on student performance. The studies that do exist contain methodological problems (Picus et al., 2005).

McGuffey (1982 in Picus et al., 2005) determined that school building age, temperature factors, lighting, color, acoustics, and school size were factors that influenced student achievement; however, amount of space did not influence student achievement. The quality of building facilities is one of numerous variables that affect student achievement (Picus et al.). Solely assessing building facilities while omitting other factors, such as parental involvement and school safety would only grasp a fraction of what is happening at a school.

School safety and the school's facilities are intertwined in that the school facilities could be physically unsafe for students. The research behind building facilities and student academic achievement is indefinite (Carnegie Foundation for the

Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Berner, 1993; Picus et al., 2005). However, I believe that even minimal influence exists and, therefore, should be examined.

Equity

Equity intersects with all other dimensions of the school climate that have been discussed thus far: parental involvement, school safety, and school building facilities. Within this study, elements of equity include gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability (Banning et al., 2008). As discussed in the previous section, socioeconomic status of the attendance area and school district are other factors that can influence school climate; therefore, socioeconomic status is also an element of equity. Additionally, I believe that the school's commitment to inclusiveness influences the school's climate and, thus, student achievement.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker (1977 in Haynes et al., 1997) and Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982 in Haynes et al.) found a relationship between school climate and African American students' achievement more so than for European American students. Brookover et al. (1977 in Haynes et al.) also found an increase in variance when socioeconomic status and race where used as covariates of student achievement. However, they also reported that this could have been due to the feeling of uselessness of personal effort in academics (Comer, Haynes, & Hamilton-Lee, 1987 in Haynes et al.).

Furthermore, parental involvement has been shown to influence student achievement across racial groups (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hong & Ho, 2005; Jeynes, 2003). Fan and Chen (2001) contributed an important factor regarding parental

involvement: a parent's educational aspiration for her/his child in relation to ethnic groups. The influence of a parent's educational aspiration for her/his child on academic achievement has been shown to be consistent across ethnic groups (i.e., European American, Asian American, African American, and Hispanic) (Fan & Chen, 2001). Specifically, for European American parents, communication of their child's educational aspirations to their child had more immediate as well as long-term effect on student achievement (Hong & Ho, 2005). Asian American parents who communicated their child's educational aspirations to their child had more short-term effects, but not long-term effects (Hong & Ho). Additionally, for Asian American parents, participation in school and home activities had more short- and long-term effects on student achievement. For African American parents, communication of their child's educational aspirations to their child had a short-term effect on student achievement while parental supervision had more long-term effects (Hong & Ho). For Hispanic parents, parental communication was the only valuable parental involvement method and the effect was only short term (Hong & Ho).

Additionally, parental involvement has been shown to have a positive influence across races as well as across academic outcomes (i.e., GPA, standardized tests, and teacher ratings) (Jeynes, 2003). Overall, African American and Hispanic students benefited from parental involvement more so than Asian American students (Jeynes). This could be due to the large amount of emphasis already placed on education in the Asian and Asian American cultures (Lynn; 1988 in Jeynes; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992 in Jeynes).

An equitable climate can be discussed at the school and classroom levels. However, the literature has focused on the classroom-level environment. Regardless, the classroom-level ideals could also be applied to the school level. Many teachers, especially elementary teachers, spend massive quantities of time creating a classroom environment that is conducive to learning; however, they focus on the traditional academic modalities. For example, posters showing males working in a chemistry lab or wearing a doctor's white coat could send the message that females do not perform these behaviors and are not welcome in these professions. A way to promote gender equity and intellectual safety (Merrow, 2004) is to display posters that exhibit marginalized groups. For example, a poster of Rosa Parks, Susan B. Anthony, or Sandra Day O'Connor could be displayed in the classroom or the halls of the school intertwining their influence on history into the curriculum. The additional inclusion of more diverse races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and physical abilities in posters and artwork would enhance equity and foster intellectual safety (Merrow).

Classroom and school rules established on the first day of school can also be created with equity as well as emotional and intellectual safety in mind (Kohn, 2004; Merrow, 2004). Instead of stating the rules in a negative, "do not" manner, let the students know what is expected of them (Digiovanni & Liston, 2005). For example, "do not put down your classmates" could be re-worded to say "respect the opinions and questions of your fellow students". This can establish an atmosphere that is open to diverse opinions and perspectives that could be based on the student's gender, race, class, religion, and so on, in addition to creating an emotionally and intellectually safe learning environment (Kohn, Merrow).

The crucial idea when discussing intellectual safety (Merrow, 2004) is deconstructing the traditional idea of teacher as omnipotent and all-knowing. This is a power-over position (Starhawk, 1989) that could intimidate those in lesser-power positions to not ask questions. Intellectual safety is needed for an individual in lesser-power to be vulnerable to possible scrutiny of asking questions and saying "I don't know" or "I'm not sure". This all-knowing idea could also be applied to others in positions of power within the school system such as other administrators. An intellectually safe educational environment starts with school administrators and works its way to the students. These are imperative to creating an atmosphere of intellectual safety (Merrow).

Dialogue is one of the most common boundary-crossing interventions (hooks, 1994). Through dialogue, boundaries of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and so on can be crossed and confronted with the intended outcome of awareness and solidarity. A learning community is can be created (hooks). Creating an educational environment that is conducive to asking important pedagogical and policy questions in addition to open dialogue has the potential to produce intellectual safety (Merrow, 2004) and lessen the inherent power differential within the educational system, which crreates power-with, not power-over (Starhawk, 1989).

Given that stakeholder characteristics is an element of school climate (Tagiuri, 1968 in Van Houtte, 2005), welcoming diversity of parent characteristics is crucial for feelings of inclusion, ownership, and thus, responsibility to student achievement and school effectiveness. Additionally, the physical, emotional, and intellectual safety of students could be differing given a student's characteristics and the visual

representation within the school. The culmination of these factors contributes to how stakeholders' perceive the school as a learning environment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Research Problem

Quantitative measurements of organizational, or school, climates are limited in that they offer only numerical data to represent the complexities of a school. Qualitative methods, specifically visual ethnography, provide a more contextualized, evidentiary description of what is being studied. Additionally, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods would present a comprehensive portrayal of a school's climate more so than only utilizing one method of assessment. Therefore, a mixed methods design was used to assess school climate in this study.

Research Questions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the following research questions are addressed in the current study.

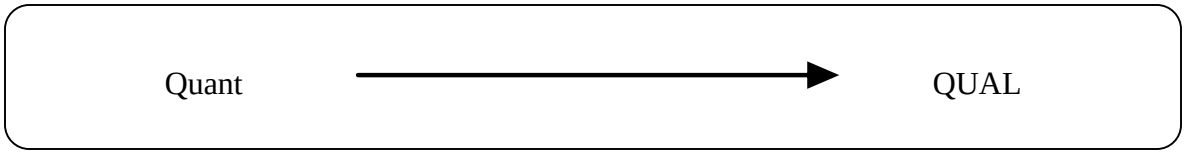
1. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by a survey instrument? (Data driven)
2. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by visual ethnography? (Data driven)
3. In what ways are the two climate assessment approaches similar or different? (Analysis of data)

4. How can the two climate assessments be integrated into a composite portrayal? (Reflective use of data)
5. Given a composite portrayal of school climate, how can this composite picture become informed by critical feminist theory? (Reflective use of data)

Research Design, Data Collection, Instruments, and Procedure

A sequential transformative strategy described by Creswell (2003) was adopted as the research design. This mixed methods approach offered me the necessary elements for conducting the study based on the perceptual measurements-organizational attributes framework (Slocum, 1974 in Van Houtte, 2005) and school-level property (Van Horn, 2003) perspectives. Creswell asserted that the sequential transformative strategy allows me, the researcher, to better advocate for participants and give voice to diverse perspectives. In the current study, I advocate for students to promote their academic achievement through school climate factors as well as for stakeholders who may not voice (or may not be able to voice) their perspectives to school district decision makers. Figure 1 displays the research design. The box highlights the data collection method while the arrow shows the sequence of data collection. Capitalization of "QUAL" indicates the priority given to the qualitative data and analysis (Creswell). (See Appendix A for a visual representation of the research process).

Figure 1: *Sequential Transformative Design* (Creswell, 2003)



First Phase

The first phase is based on a quantitative survey instrument of the School District's Organizational Climate Survey. The factors assessed in the survey are: School Climate, District Climate, School Safety, District Safety, Student Effort, Parent/Guardian Involvement, Attitudes, School Leadership, District Leadership, School Building Facilities, District Building Facilities, School Communications, and District Communications. The school district stakeholder populations sampled were the district's classified and certified staff, school and district administrators, parents and guardians of district students, elementary (4^{th}-6^{th} grade) students, secondary (7^{th}-12^{th} grade) students, and community members.

School District Organizational Climate Survey. The survey was created by the research team at the Research and Development Center for the Advancement of Student Learning from the SASS, as mentioned in the *How to Assess School Climate* in Chapter 2, and Student Effort items developed by Laurence Steinberg (1996). The SASS was developed by the National Center for Educational Statistics in 1985, assessing teacher shortage and demand, characteristics of teachers and administrators, school programs, general school conditions, perceptions of school climate, problems at schools, teacher compensation, district hiring practices, demographics of the student population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Items regarding School and District Climate, School and District Safety, Parent/Guardian Involvement, Attitudes, School and District Leadership, and School and District Building Facilities were drawn from the SASS for the School District Organizational Climate Survey. The participating stakeholders were asked to give their perceptions

based on two Likert scales: (1) *Satisfaction* ranging from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very Satisfied*), and (2) *Problems* ranging from 1 (*Large Problem*) to 5 (*Not a Problem*). School Climate, School Safety, Parent/Guardian Involvement, and School Facilities factors were used in this study's analysis.

Additional items included Student Effort factors. These items were drawn from Steinberg's research (1996) on student educational motivation. Steinberg granted the research team permission to use his Student Effort items. Again, the participants were asked to give their perceptions based on two Likert scales: (1) *Satisfaction* ranging from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very Satisfied*), and (2) *Problems* ranging from 1 (*Large Problem*) to 5 (*Not a Problem*). Student Effort items were not used in the current study's analysis.

The district decision makers also wanted to assess School and District Communications with certain stakeholders. The items for these two factors were created by the research team at the Research and Development Center for the Advancement of Student Learning based this request. The Likert scale for these factors were on *Satisfaction* ranging from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very Satisfied*). Each stakeholder population completed a different, yet corresponding version of the survey. Again, these Communication items were not used in this analysis. (See Appendix B for the Parent/Guardian version of the School District Organizational Climate Survey).

Second Phase

Through the use of visual ethnography, the second phased was comprised of photographs taken of school buildings throughout the school district. Historically,

photographs have been used to illustrate findings of a culture and compliment descriptive text (Ball & Smith, 1992). They were never the primary source of data analysis except in the study of visual arts. In the current study, photographs are one of two primary sources of data analysis.

Photo Sampling Strategy for Visual Ethnography. My camera was guided by the background literature that provides evidence of each factor (i.e., for Parental Involvement, posters and flyers will be photographed to determine the number of invitations/opportunities for parents to be involved) as well as Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's (2008) Taxonomy for Equity Climate. The use of this taxonomy is based on Banning's (1992, 1993, 1995) previous research of educational institutions and the latent messages sent through a school's climate. An in-depth description of Banning et al.'s Taxonomy of Equity Climate is necessary to address its role in the current study as well as the revision based on the current study's research questions.

Banning et al.'s (2008) Taxonomy can be used to evaluate equity within educational climates. It includes four types of artifacts: art, signs, graffiti, and architecture. Art includes paintings, posters, and sculptures on school facilities; they could have been created by students or provided by the school staff or administration. Art is typically used to make a climate more visually pleasing; however, messages regarding the school's commitment to diversity can be sent as well (Banning et al.). Signs are the second type of artifact (Banning et al.). Banning et al. differentiates between the various types of signs. For example, some signs are official (i.e., room numbers and restroom signs) while some are unofficial (i.e., flyers and announcements) (Zeisel, 1984 in Banning et al.). Signs can be functional by

providing directions as well as symbolic by socially positioning one group (i.e., European Americans or males) over another group (i.e., non-European Americans or females). The third artifact is graffiti (Banning et al.). "Graffiti is the action of painting and writing on surfaces, usually outside walls and sidewalks, without the permission of the owner" (Parker, 2007); however, it can also be observed within buildings, such as in school bathrooms, on lunch tables, and so forth. Like art and signs, graffiti can send unintended messages to the stakeholders of that facility (Banning et al.). Architecture is the last type of artifact discussed by Banning et al. It is the "physical structures of organizational and educational settings" (Banning et al., p. 7). Welcoming and safety are two primary messages that can be sent through architecture.

The equity parameters of Banning et al.'s (2008) Taxonomy are: gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability. Additionally, the message that is conveyed about the equity parameters can have unintended effects of socially positioning one group over another group, or power-over position (Starhawk, 1989). There are four message contents in the Taxonomy, which are: belonging (i.e., is the artifact excluding or including members of a group or a whole group of people?), safety (i.e., is the artifact producing feelings of safety or insecurity for an individual or a particular group?), equality (i.e., is the artifact portraying an individual or a group equal or unequal to another group?), and roles (i.e., is the role being portrayed stereotypical of a particular group?) (Banning et al.).

The culmination of these factors can either enhance or hinder the equity of the environment. Therefore, Banning, Middleton, and Deniston (2008) have

determined the influence of the artifact's equity message on the school climate as either: negative, null, contributions/additive, or transformational/social action. A negative message would perpetuate discrimination and lessen equity within the school climate. A null message would neither enhance nor lessen equity; it would be neutral. However, according to feminist theory, a null climate does not exist because one that does not enhance equity ultimately perpetuates the status quo of the patriarchal power differentials that are intrinsic to the educational system; "discouraging by not encouraging" (Whitt, 1994, p. 199). An artifact that conveys a contributions/additive message "support[s] equity, but they represent only those of which the mainstream/dominant culture is comfortable" (Banning et al., p. 11). It is seen as a step towards equity, but it is a superficial attempt to obtain equity. Typically, there is brief mention of it on a certain day (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) or within a particular month (i.e., Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, or Women's History Month); it is not integrated into the curriculum or discussions on a regular basis. On the other hand, a transformational/social action message integrates equity into the curriculum and discussions regularly. "This purposeful approach calls for a commitment to equity through personal involvement and commitment to change" (Banning et al., p. 11). Thus, equity is taken a step further within this approach and is perceived as the most innovative and revolutionary; however, this is also the most difficult to detect.

Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's (2008) Taxonomy was used as working framework for the study's analysis. Figure 2 represents Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's version. However, the framework was modified employing the factors

from the School District Organizational Climate Survey: School Climate, School Safety, Parental/Guardian Involvement, and School Building Facilities. Figure 3 displays the current study's Learning Environment taxonomy, which was revised from Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's Taxonomy for Equity Climate.

Figure 2: *A Taxonomy for Equity Climate* (Banning et al., 2008)

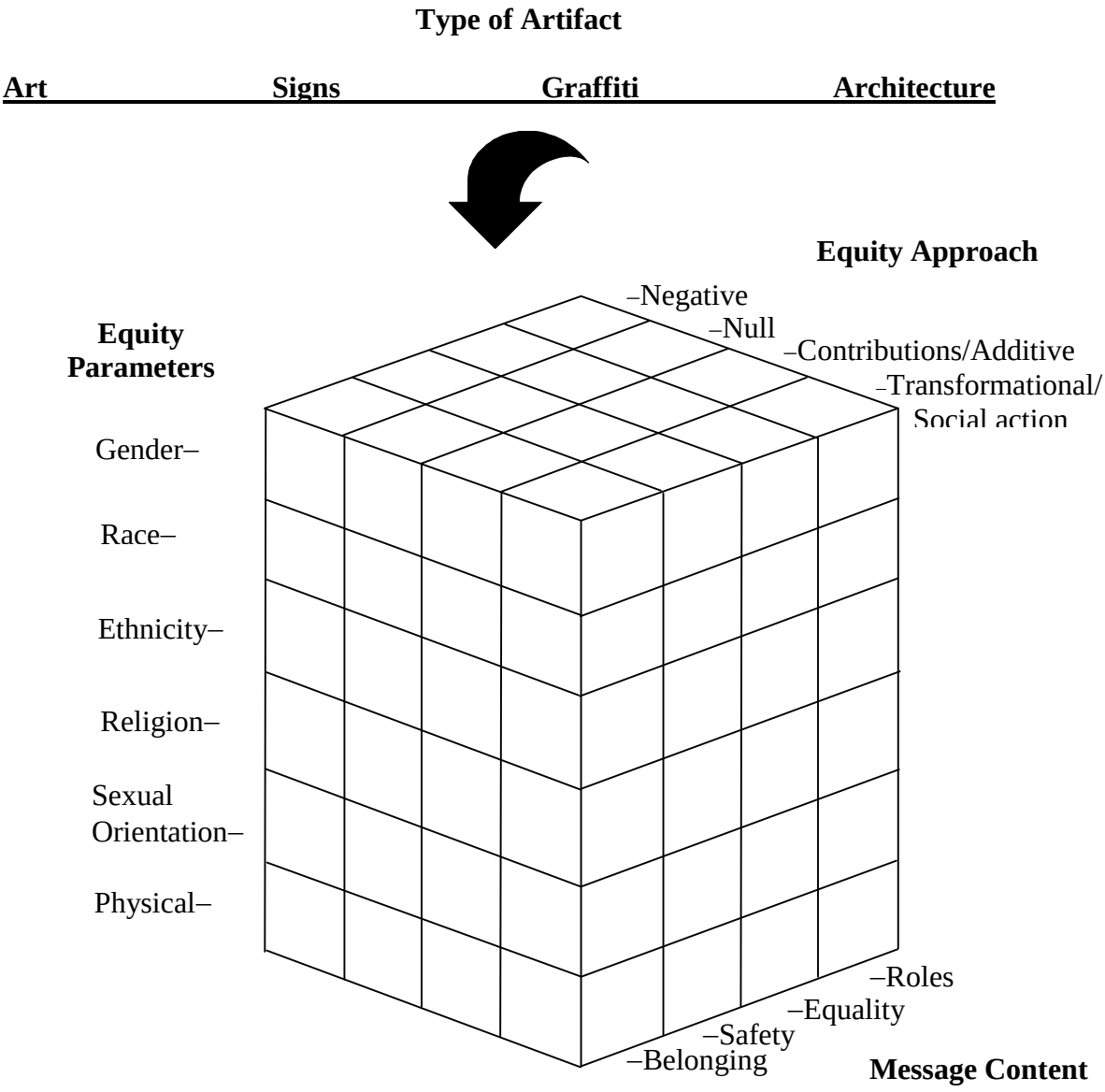
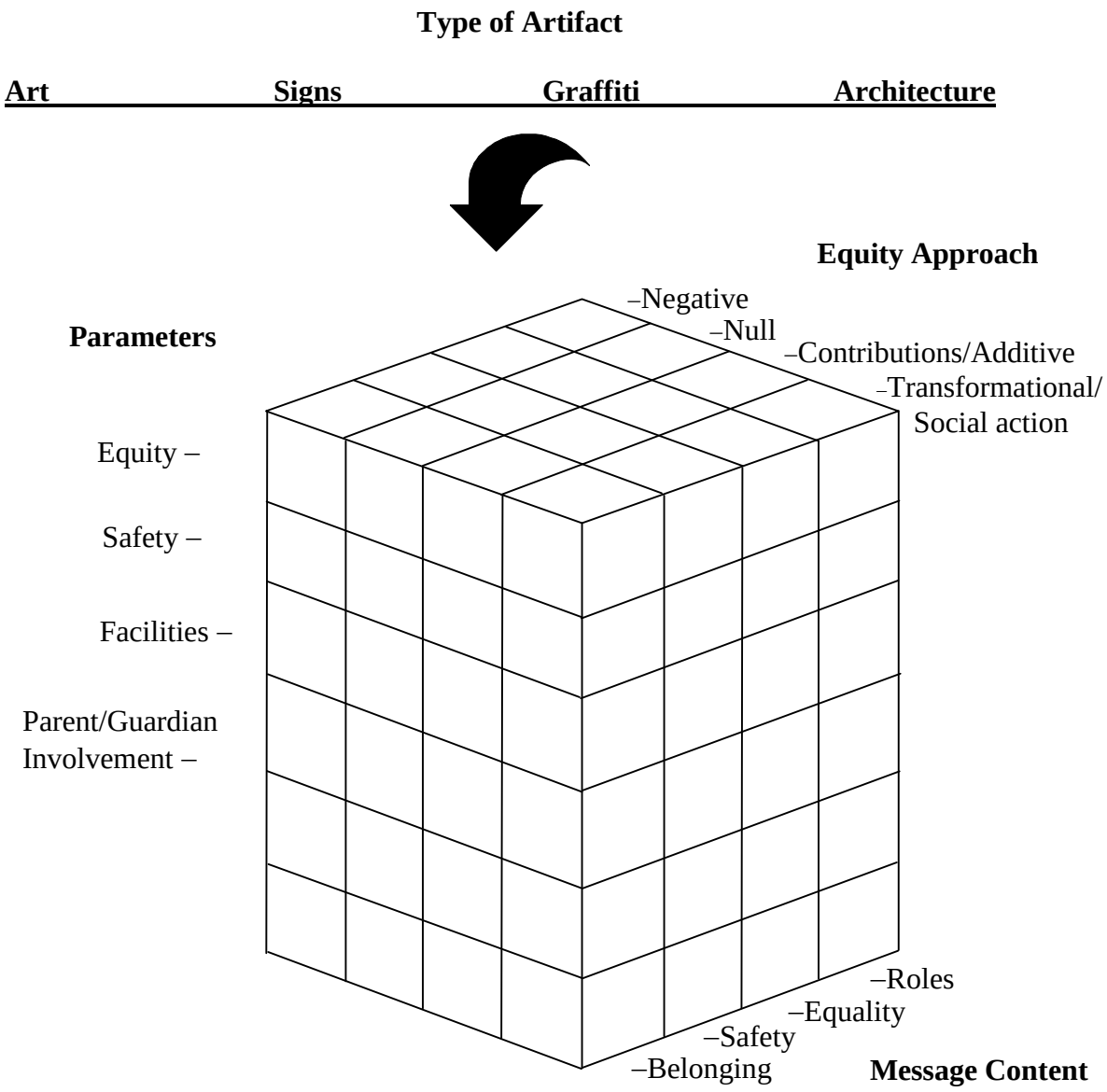


Figure 3: *Learning Environment Taxonomy*



As can be seen, the parameters in the revised taxonomy correspond to the factors of the current study; the term “parameter” is now used instead of “factor”. The Equity parameter is the same as Banning, Middleton, and Deniston’s (2008) Taxonomy, with gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability within this parameter. Within the Safety parameter, I looked at the artifacts for messages of physical, emotional, and intellectual safety. Physical safety is the incorporation of architecture that promotes student physical safety (i.e., closed doors and windows to inhibit dangerous visitors from entering the school). Emotional safety involves the absence of teasing, bullying, intimidation, and isolation from other students, teachers, school leadership, and staff (Bucher & Manning, 2005). Intellectual safety allows the student to say “I don’t know” or “I don’t understand” without others laughing at them. Additionally, students can critically think and question what they are learning in an intellectually safe school climate (Merrow, 2004). The third parameter of Facilities comprises classroom, school building, and extracurricular facilities in addition to other facilities on the school property. With the Parent/Guardian Involvement parameter, I looked for indications of parental involvement regarding opportunities for involvement and support from school staff for parental involvement. The combination of these parameters constructs is what the researcher calls the “Learning Environment”. Simply put, I looked for indications of encouragement of or challenges to student learning and academic achievement.

Please keep in mind that these parameters are not mutually exclusive. They are part of the system of the school’s climate meaning that one parameter may

influence and be influenced by another parameter. Additionally, these parameters are preliminary and create a framework for data collection.

Participants and Site

The Rocky Mountain School District (RMSD), which is a pseudonym, is located in a city in Colorado. Currently, RMSD is composed of 51 educational facilities: two Early Childhood Programs, 31 Elementary Schools, 10 Junior High Schools, five Senior High Schools, and three Charter Schools. There were approximately 22,500 student enrolled within RMSD in 2007.

RMSD's stakeholders were surveyed in the fall of 2006 using the School District Organizational Climate Survey. As mentioned earlier, students, parents/guardians, certified and classified staff, school and district administrators, and community members were invited to complete the survey. A sample of the 14 Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High Schools were studied through visual ethnographic methods for the qualitative phase of the study.

Sampling Strategy of Participating Schools

A purposeful sample stratified by educational level with criterion was used to obtain the individual schools to be photographed. The stratification was based on the educational levels of Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High School. The criterion was based on preliminary analysis of the School District's Organization Climate Survey. The criterion of how schools were selected was based on the ranking within the educational level; these school rankings are called "higher-ranked" and "lower-ranked" for the remainder of this report. The higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools were selected to explore the outliers based on preliminary analysis (Creswell, 2003).

The higher-ranked schools are selected because those schools are perceived by stakeholders more satisfactory than the lower-ranked schools on the school climate factors of parental involvement, safety, and building facilities. The lower-ranked schools were selected because those schools were perceived by stakeholders as less satisfactory. The photographs assisted in visualizing and provide evidence of disparities between the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools in regards to the school climate factors.

The following steps were taken to determine the ranking of schools by educational level. First, a mean composite score was calculated for the Parental Involvement, School and District Safety, and School and District Facilities items. For all populations that responded to these factors and indicated a school that they either attended, worked at, or had children attending (e.g., elementary students, secondary students, certified staff, classified staff, school administrators, and parents/guardians) were the populations used to calculate the mean composite scores. Next, an overall mean composite score was calculated for each school within RMSD. Then, the schools were separated by each educational level. After this stratification, the schools were sorted from highest mean composite score to lowest mean composite score, producing three ranked lists.

Given that each educational level has different number of schools, each level had a differing number of schools in the sample. For the Elementary level, six schools (the higher-ranked three and lower-ranked three schools) were selected. For the Junior High level, four schools (higher-ranked two and lower-ranked two schools) were selected. For the Senior High level, four schools (higher-ranked two and lower-

ranked two schools) were selected. Therefore, a total of 14 schools from RMSD were photographed. The photographs were collected the fall of 2007.

Data Analysis

Given that this is a mixed methods study, there were three phases to the data analysis: first quantitative phase, second qualitative phase, and third integration phases. For the first quantitative phase, the factors assessed were: School Climate, School Safety, Parent/Guardian Involvement, and School Building Facilities. The data collection for the first phase had already been completed and the data was analyzed as archival data. SPSS software was used to maintain the large database and was used for the quantitative data analysis.

As indicated in the *Sampling Strategy* section, preliminary analysis provided the basis for the selection of schools that were photographed. Additionally, the mean composite scores for each focal factor were calculated for the sampled schools. The mean composite scores were obtained using the elementary students, secondary students, certified staff, classified staff, school administrators, and parents data because they were asked School Climate, Parental Involvement, School Safety, and School Facilities items, and they indicated a school that they either attended, worked at, or had children attending.

Template analysis was utilized for the second qualitative phase. Template analysis involves the "looking for themes" (King, 1998, p. 118). Given that the priority was on this phase, an in-depth description of this analysis strategy is justifiable. For template analysis, there is a spectrum based on the researcher's orientation where template analysis could be positioned: more positivistic on one end

with more phenomenological on the other end. Therefore, template analysis can fit somewhere between classical content analysis (Berelson, 1952 in Ball & Smith, 1992), where themes are all predetermined and can be statistically analyzed, or grounded theory, where no themes are predetermined (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in King). This can be challenging when the data is more towards the positivistic end of the spectrum; therefore, template analysis can be combined with elements of quantitative content analysis (King, 1998).

Coding was used to thematically categorize the photographic data. There is hierarchical coding (King, 1998) that are codes grouped together to form a higher-order code. There are typically two to four levels of this type of code. There is also parallel coding (King), which allows the photographs to be categorized into more than one code at the same level. The higher-order parameters were identified a priori based on the School District's Organization Climate Survey, the literature review, and Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's (2008) Taxonomy for Equity Climate, which informed the initial template.

The first step in template analysis was the development of the initial template (King, 1998). "If you are a sole researcher on a project using template analysis, I would strongly suggest the use of one or more outside advisers at this stage" (King, p. 122). There needed to be a balance of having too many and too few parameters. Equity, Safety, Facilities, and Parent/Guardian Involvement were level one codes, or parameters. I considered the current set of parameters a good balance between too many and too few. The research team confirmed the initial set of parameters.

Given the current set of parameters, a second level of codes was applied. The second level of codes for Equity were gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability based on Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's (2008) Taxonomy for Equity Climate described earlier. Physical, intellectual, and emotional are second level codes for Safety. The second level codes for Facilities were classroom, school building, extracurricular, and other buildings on school property. Opportunities and support from school staff were the second level codes for Parental Involvement. These second level codes were based upon the factors within School District's Organization Climate Survey, the literature review, and Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's Taxonomy for Equity Climate. Figure 4 displays the first and second level codes. This template is an abbreviated version of the background literature that provides evidence of each parameter (i.e., for Parental Involvement, posters and flyers were photographed to determine the number of invitations/opportunities for parents to be involved) as well as Banning, Middleton, and Deniston's (2008) Taxonomy for Equity Climate, which guided my camera. Figure 4 depicts the initial template, which is open to new codes that may emerge inductively. In addition, I am cognizant that I am unable to analyze things that are absent in schools, such as the lack of invitations for parental involvement.

Figure 4:
Initial Template from the School District Organizational Climate Survey/Learning Environment (based on King, 1998)

1. Equity
   a. Gender
   b. Race
   c. Ethnicity
   d. Religion
   e. Sexual orientation
   f. Physical Ability
2. Safety
   a. Physical
   b. Intellectual
   c. Emotional
3. Facilities
   a. Classroom
   b. School Building
   c. Extracurricular
   d. Other buildings on school or district property
4. Parental Involvement
   a. Opportunities
   b. Support from school staff

The second step in template analysis is the revision of the initial template (King, 1998). Throughout the coding process, I took notes on potential new parameters and content messages to add to the initial template. Shortcomings in the initial template were illuminated during this process, which then informed the revision of the initial template to produce the final template. There are three types of revisions that could have been made at this step in the analysis: insertion of a new code, deletion of an initial code, and adjustment of the initial code's level (King).

Construction of the "final" template is the third step (King, 1998). It is difficult to determine when the final, exhaustive template has been constructed; therefore, the quotation marks around "final" signify tentativeness about labeling the template as a definitive final template. The decision to stop the coding and revision

process was up to me based on the research questions; additionally, my dissertation advisors assisted in the decision making process. Typically, each piece of data is analyzed three to four times before constructing a "final" template (King). Figure 5 shows the "final" template that I constructed after the decision was made to stop analyzing the photographs.

Figure 5:
"Final" Template from the School District Organizational Climate Survey/Learning Environment (based on King, 1998)

1. Equity
   a. Gender
   b. Race
   c. Ethnicity
   d. Religion
   e. Sexual orientation
   f. Physical Ability
   g. Language
2. Safety
   a. Physical
   b. Intellectual
   c. Emotional
3. Facilities
   a. School Building
   b. Extracurricular
4. Parental Involvement
   a. Opportunities
   b. Support from school staff

Throughout the coding process, I developed coding conventions. These conventions had various meanings related to the school climate. For example, if a photograph was coded at the second level code of emotional safety along with the belonging message content and contributive/additive equity approach, it signified the school bonding was being encouraged. To ensure that this type of coding convention was trustworthy, I performed "quality checks" (King, 2006).

"Quality checks" (King, 2006) were conducted instead of reliability or validity because these concepts do not readily apply to qualitative research. Quality checks include: members of the research team coding a portion of the data with subsequent discussion to revise codes, an "expert" on template analysis coding a portion of the data with subsequent discussion to revise codes, or defending the analytical decision to an "expert panel" (King, 2006). The quality checks used in this study are the rationalization of analytical decisions to a panel of experts (e.g., the oral defense to my dissertation committee).

Interpretation and presentation of template analysis are the final steps (King, 1998), which can be seen in Chapters 4 and 5. Interpretation was delineated by the aims of the research study. Straight descriptive text had been cautioned against due to the depth of most qualitative research which is not typically attained when solely describing codes; thus, photographic examples have been integrated.

Guidelines offered by King (1998) were also used in the interpretation process. The first guideline is listing codes early in the analysis process with some indication of frequency (King). Frequencies were calculated into percentages to provide a consistent measure between the schools as well as to compare to the School District's Organizational Climate Survey. King cautions against making meaningful judgments based on differences in these percentages. Selectivity of codes that are relevant to understanding the research questions at hand is the second guideline (King). Novice researchers have a tendency to want to explain and interpret every code in equal depth; however, this process could go on indefinitely (King). Therefore, percentages that corresponded to the School District's Organizational Climate Survey

were used to answer the research questions. The third guideline balances out the selectivity guideline. It is openness to codes that may not be significant to answering research questions, but became significant as analysis proceeded or contributes to the context of the main codes (King). The Equity parameter coding percentages were included after the research questions were answered, which is in Chapter 5.

King (1998) suggested that interpretation and presentation of findings are not separate steps, but should be viewed as a continuation of the analysis. Throughout the analysis process, I should have "summarize[ed] detailed notes about themes, selecting illustrative quotes, and producing a coherent 'story' of the findings" (King, p. 132). There are three approaches this presentation could take: a set of individual case studies followed by a discussion of similarities and differences; an account organized around the main codes while extracting examples from the data; or, a thematic presentation of the findings utilizing an individual case study for each main code (King). For the current study, individual case studies of the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools for each educational level are described along with their similarities and differences. Additionally, percentages of codes are extracted and presented in a table.

Given this process, there are advantages and disadvantages to using template analysis. One advantage is the flexibility of the process (King, 1998). As mentioned earlier, the researcher can be more phenomenological or more positivistic; template analysis can be modified to correspond with the researcher's abilities as well as the study's research questions. Additionally, template analysis is structured enough to keep the data organized as well as to produce a clear presentation of the data (King).

A disadvantage is a lack of literature on template analysis compared to classical content analysis, which can intimidate and confuse the researcher when making analytic decisions (King). This can lead to an overly simplified or overly complex template. As mentioned throughout, a research team is recommended to assist in the process (King).

The justification for this type of data analysis in the second phase was based on research dimensions provided by Altheide (1996). He offered 11 research dimensions: research goal, reflexive research design, emphasis, researcher involvement, sample, pre-structured factors/themes, training required for researcher, type of data, narrative description, emergent concepts, data analysis, and data presentation.

The research dimensions of pre-structured factors/themes and emergent concepts can be discussed along with the research goal. The research goal of the current study was to determine similarities and differences for the sampled schools buildings based on the visual ethnography and the School District's Organizational Climate Survey in terms of the initial codes (or parameters) of Equity, Safety, Facilities, and Parental Involvement. Moreover, I did not want to be limited to these initial codes; discovery of new codes needed to be available to me in the chance that a significant code emerged inductively during the analysis process.

The reflexive research design and the researcher involvement seem to work together in that the researcher needs to be involved throughout the entire research process for it to be reflexive. Template analysis lends itself as being the most reflexive. For this study, I was involved in all steps of the research process, not only

the data analysis and interpretation steps. Therefore, template analysis was an appropriate selection based on these research dimensions.

For template analysis, little researcher training is required, which is applicable in the current study due to the fact that I am a novice. The research team that assisted in quality checks (King, 2006) also assisted in determining the sampling strategy to ensure the research questions were answered. I utilized a purposive sampling strategy and utilizing quality checks for revision of the initial template (King). Template analysis is the only analysis strategy that provided these research dimensions.

The dimensions of type of data, narrative description, data analysis, and data presentation can be discussed concurrently. Template analysis does not readily allow for photographs to be a data source (King, 1998); however, it seems to be the most flexible to assist in photographic analysis. For the current study, both statistical and photographic analysis were conducted with the results and findings presented as tables, narrative descriptions, and photographs.

Based on the first two phases of data analysis and the rationale for template analysis, the third phase of data integration can now be discussed. The results from each of the data sets were combined into a case study (King, 1998), or composite portrayal of a higher-ranked school and a lower-ranked school for each educational level, giving a total of six composite portrayals. Both quantitative and qualitative descriptions are used to create these portrayals. For the quantitative description, mean composite scores for the factors were utilized to depict the stakeholders' perceptions. For the qualitative description, photographs and descriptive text are used to illustrate what I consider examples of each parameter.

A transformative study such as this typically attempts to advance an ideology or agenda (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, after the six composite portrayals were described, I reflect upon the portrayals through a critical feminist lens as well as my feminist perspective discussed earlier. Lincoln and Guba (2000) discuss critical theory as a paradigm that is primarily feminist that focuses on deconstructing social institutions (i.e., educational institutions) and the power structures inherent within these structures. Identification of the power structures within the portrayals potentially disrupt the oppression that can be produced and perpetuated in this type of social institution. Additionally, mesoanalysis involves the assessment of how societal and institutional forces interact with human activity (Olesen, 2000). Therefore, the *Feminist Perspective* (See Chapter 5.) addresses this and will ideally motivate the school decision makers to formulate modifications within the schools, which could influence the school stakeholders.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an essential part of establishing a study's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Creswell, 1998). Creswell describes eight methods to gain trustworthiness; three of which were used in the current study. One method was to triangulate research methods. Since both quantitative and qualitative research methods were utilized in this study, they assisted in creating trustworthiness because they provided two sources of data and substantiated the results. Another method was "clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study" (Creswell, p. 202). I asserted my biases and assumptions in the *Researcher's Perspective* section of Chapter 1. A third method to ensure trustworthiness was to conduct external audits (Creswell) in

which my dissertation advisors assisted in the research process and helped verify the accuracy of my results. Similar to external audits are quality checks (King, 2006) and team analysis (Robinson, 2000). Both quality checks and team analysis confirmation of the data interpretations with the intent of preventing data analysis bias (Robinson, 2000); thus, enhancing trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter contains four sections: *Overview of the Analysis Process*, *Quantitative Results*, *Qualitative Findings*, and *Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methodological Approaches*. The overview of the analysis process provides a brief synopsis of how the quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. A more thorough explanation is given as the results of each methodological approach are discussed. The *Quantitative Results* and *Qualitative Findings* provide discrete snapshots of the educational climates. The comparison of the quantitative results and qualitative findings offer similarities and differences in methodological approaches. The contents of these sections answer the following research questions:

1. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by a survey instrument?
2. What is the portrayal of school climate when assessed by visual ethnography?
3. In what ways are the two climate assessment approaches similar or different?

Research questions 4 and 5 are answered in Chapter 5.

Overview of Analysis Process

The ‘sequential’ portion of the sequential transformative research design (Creswell, 2003) implies a linear, step-by-step process. In the current study, the quantitative data were collected using the School District’s Organizational Climate

Survey (SDOCS) and analyzed to provide the schools that would comprise the sample for the qualitative phase and the construct means used in the comparison of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. After the qualitative photo data were collected, the analysis process had three phases: quantitative, then qualitative, and lastly a comparison of the quantitative results and qualitative findings. For the quantitative analyses, mean composite scores for the Parental Involvement, School Safety, and School Facilities constructs were computed.

Methodological emphasis was placed on the qualitative data collection and analyses, which warrants further explanation. The data collection was informed by the preliminary analysis of the SDOCS. This analysis produced 14 schools for the three educational levels: six elementary, four junior high, and four high schools. Within each educational level, there were higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools that were selected, based on the SDOCS overall mean composite score. (See *Sampling Strategy of Participating Schools* in Chapter 3.)

For the qualitative data analysis, template analysis informed the coding of the photographic data in the second phase of qualitative analysis. The codes were informed by the initial template, which was then revised during the analyses. (See Figures 4 and 5 in Chapter 3.) Revisions included inclusion of additional codes and elimination of unnecessary codes. A “final” template developed when the researcher and the research team determined that the coding process had been exhausted. Individual case studies of the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools for each educational level resulted from the thematic coding. Additionally, coding percentages were extracted and are presented in the tables below.

Quantitative Results

This section provides the quantitative results from the data collected using the School District's Organizational Climate Survey (SDOCS). The constructs assessed in the SDOCS were: School Climate, School Safety, Parent/Guardian Involvement, and School Building Facilities. For each construct, there were *Problem* and *Satisfaction* scales to assess the degree to which the participant thinks the construct is a problem in the school climate (e.g., "To what extent is the following a problem?") and the participant's level of satisfaction with the school climate (e.g., "How satisfied are you with the following?"). The Likert scale for the *Problem* questions extend from 1 (*Serious Problem*) to 4 (*Not a Problem*) while the Likert scale for the *Satisfaction* questions ranges from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very Satisfied*). For both *Problem* and *Satisfaction* scales, the closer the mean composite score is to 4 (*Not a Problem* or *Very Satisfied*), the better.

School climate "problem" questions addressed: student apathy, lack of academic challenge, tension among teachers, tension between teachers and administrators, and tension among different groups of students. Satisfaction with school climate was assessed by asking participants their level of satisfaction with the school's learning environment, student discipline, student behavior, adequate emphasis placed on academics, and amount of standardized testing. A mean composite score was calculated for the five individual questions of each scale.

School safety "problem" questions addressed: physical conflicts among students, verbal conflicts among students, students' disrespect of teachers, and students' verbal abuse of teachers. Satisfaction with school safety was assessed by

asking participants their level of satisfaction with physical safety while at school, emotional safety while at school, safety around school facilities, and personal influence over school safety policies and practices. Mean composite scores were calculated for the four individual questions of each scale.

Parental involvement was assessed using both satisfaction and problem questions. Problem questions included: lack of parent involvement, lack of opportunities for parent involvement, and lack of parent support for student's learning. Satisfaction questions involved satisfaction with: level of support from parents/guardians, level of involvement from parents/guardians, and support of parent-teacher conferences. Mean composite scores were calculated for the three individual questions of each scale.

School facility "problem" questions included: lack of classroom facilities at the school and lack of extracurricular activities facilities at the school. Satisfaction with school facilities was measured by asking participants their level of satisfaction with the physical facilities of the school and physical facilities of other buildings at the school. Mean composite scores were calculated for the two individual questions of each scale.

The quantitative results for the constructs are displayed in the subsequent tables. Results are presented by the educational level; elementary school results for all constructs are presented first with junior high and high school results following. Tables 1 through 3 present the results for elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools, respectively. As expected, the higher-ranked schools have higher mean composite scores than the lower-ranked schools for every construct; however,

school safety is greater for the lower-ranked high schools than the higher ranked high schools.

Table 1

Elementary School SDOCS Mean Composite Scores by Construct and Scale

Construct	Problem Mean Composite Score		Satisfaction Mean Composite Score	
	Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
School Safety	3.74	3.16	3.47	3.14
Parental Involvement	3.84	2.65	3.66	2.47
School Facilities	3.61	3.20	3.56	2.97
School Climate	3.77	3.18	3.47	2.97

For the school safety, the quantitative SDOCS results indicate that stakeholders perceived almost no problems and high satisfaction for higher-ranked elementary schools. School safety results for the lower-ranked elementary schools were not as favorable on the problem and satisfaction scales. The stakeholders at the lower-ranked elementary schools perceived minor problems and some satisfaction.

The SDOCS results suggest very few problems in terms of parental involvement for higher-ranked elementary schools while lower-ranked school results had moderate to minor problems with parental involvement. Stakeholder satisfaction with parental involvement is at a high level for higher-ranked elementary schools. However, there was a small amount of dissatisfaction with parental involvement at the lower-ranked elementary schools.

For school facilities, there were high mean scores for both higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools on the *Problem* scale, indicating little problems. Conversely, stakeholders at the higher-ranked elementary schools showed a higher level of satisfaction than the stakeholders at the lower-ranked elementary schools.

The stakeholders at the lower-ranked schools also revealed a small amount of dissatisfaction with the school facilities.

The quantitative SDOCS results indicate that stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and adequate satisfaction with the school climate for higher-ranked elementary schools. The lower-ranked elementary schools' results suggest a slightly higher level of problems and lower level of satisfaction compared to the higher-ranked schools. Overall, for both higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools, the SDOCS results indicate negligible problems and adequate satisfaction.

Table 2

Junior High School SDOCS Mean Composite Scores by Construct and Scale

Construct	Problem Mean Composite Score		Satisfaction Mean Composite Score	
	Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
School Safety	3.12	2.41	3.32	2.86
Parental Involvement	3.55	2.80	3.37	2.52
School Facilities	3.62	3.04	3.44	2.74
School Climate	3.46	2.75	3.23	2.72

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived slight problems and moderate satisfaction with school safety for higher-ranked junior high schools. School safety for the lower-ranked junior high schools was not as favorable on the problem and satisfaction scales. The stakeholders at the lower-ranked schools perceived minor problems and some dissatisfaction.

The SDOCS results suggested very few problems in terms of parental involvement for higher-ranked junior high schools while lower-ranked schools had minor problems with parental involvement. Results revealed that stakeholder satisfaction with parental involvement was at a high level for higher-ranked junior

high schools. However, there was some dissatisfaction with parental involvement at the lower-ranked junior high schools.

For school facilities, there were high SDOCS mean scores for both higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools on the *Problem* scale with higher-ranked school results displaying almost no problems; this indicated little problems with school facilities for both school rankings. However, stakeholders with the higher-ranked junior high schools showed a higher level of satisfaction than the stakeholders at the lower-ranked schools. The results for the stakeholders at the lower-ranked schools revealed a small amount of dissatisfaction with the school facilities.

The SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and adequate satisfaction with the school climate for higher-ranked junior high schools. The lower-ranked junior high schools' results suggested a moderately higher level of problems and lower level of satisfaction compared to the higher-ranked schools. Overall, for higher-ranked junior schools, the SDOCS results indicated negligible problems and adequate satisfaction while lower-ranked junior high school results suggested slightly more problems and lesser satisfaction.

Table 3

High School SDOCS Mean Composite Scores by Construct and Scale

Construct	Problem Mean Composite Score		Satisfaction Mean Composite Score	
	Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
School Safety	3.08	3.28	3.19	3.18
Parental Involvement	3.24	2.90	3.02	2.77
School Facilities	3.56	3.46	3.38	3.05
School Climate	3.34	2.99	3.07	3.06

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived slight problems with school safety for higher-ranked high schools. Interestingly, school safety for the lower-ranked high schools was more favorable on the problem scale, indicating fewer problems than the higher-ranked high schools. Stakeholders perceived adequate levels of satisfaction for both higher- and lower-ranked high schools.

The SDOCS results suggested few problems in terms of parental involvement for higher-ranked high schools while lower-ranked schools had moderate to minor problems with parental involvement. Stakeholder satisfaction with parental involvement was at an acceptable level for higher-ranked high schools. On the other hand, there was a small amount of dissatisfaction with parental involvement at the lower-ranked higher schools.

For school facilities, there were high SDOCS mean scores for both higher- and lower-ranked high schools on the *Problem* and *Satisfaction* scales, indicating little problems and adequate satisfaction. However, stakeholders with the lower-ranked high schools had a slightly lower level of satisfaction with school facilities. Overall, school facilities for the high schools were perceived as having little problems and satisfactory.

The SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and adequate satisfaction with the school climate for higher-ranked high schools. The lower-ranked high schools' results suggested a slight higher level of problems compared to the higher-ranked schools with similar levels of satisfaction as the higher-ranked schools. Overall, for higher-ranked schools, the SDOCS results

indicated slight problems and adequate satisfaction while lower-ranked high school results suggested a few more problems and lesser satisfaction.

Qualitative Findings

This section presents the qualitative findings from the data collected by the researcher using the visual ethnographic methodology. A total of 2,735 photographs were collected from 14 schools: six elementary, four junior high, and four senior high. The number of photographs collected at each school ranged from 127 to 307, depending on the size of the school building and property. Senior high school buildings were larger than elementary and junior high schools, offering the researcher more opportunities to take photographs.

Table 4

Number and Percent of Photographs for Each Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Elementary	894	32.7%
Junior High	824	30.1%
Senior High	1,017	37.2%
Total	2,735	100%

Table 5

Number and Percent within Educational Level of Photographs for Each Rank by Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency		Percent	
	Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
Elementary	432	462	48.3%	51.7%
Junior High	347	477	42.1%	57.9%
Senior High	547	470	53.8%	46.2%

The researcher deductively coded the photographs for each of the 14 schools based on the initial template discussed in Chapter 3, which is a culmination of Banning et al.'s (2008) taxonomy and the school climate literature. A Microsoft

Access database was developed to maintain the frequency of all photograph codings. After all photographs were coded the researcher extracted the codes into a Microsoft Excel file and then uploaded it into the statistical software SPSS. The extraction and subsequent analyses produced the frequency of each parameter by content message and equity approach. The location of the photograph and type of artifact were also coded and counted. Table 6 shows the frequency and percent of each parameter. The percent was obtained by using the total number of photographic codings, which is 5,270, as the denominator.

Table 6

Number and Percent of Photographs for SDOCS-Comparable Parameters

Parameter		Frequency	Percentage
Safety	Physical	336	6.4%
	Emotional	575	10.9%
	Intellectual	250	4.7%
	Total	**1,161**	**22.0%**
Parental Opportunity	Belonging	56	1.1%
	Roles	25	0.5%
	Total	**81**	**1.6%**
Building		1,509	28.6%
Total – School Climate		**2,751**	**52.2%**

The photographic codings discussed in this chapter are the "Negative" and "Contributive/Additive" Equity Approaches on the School Safety, Parental Opportunity, and Building Parameters. The following Message Contents correspond to the Safety Parameter: Physical, Emotional, and Intellectual. The Message Contents for Parental Opportunity are Belonging and Roles. The Building Parameter did not have a Message Content; photographs in this category were coded as either Negative

or Contributive/Additive to indicate whether I deemed it unattractive or appealing, respectively.

Exemplary photographs that would represent a typical coding are needed to explain what I viewed and how I coded it. The following pictures are examples of Physical Safety. Figure 6 shows a window was open on the first floor of a school easily allowing someone to enter the school who may not supposed to be there and may cause harm to students and staff. This is an example of Negative Physical Safety. The parking lot in Figure 7 does not have lights for when it is dark outside. This allows for potential unsafe situations when teachers and/or students are leaving the school when it is dark; this is another example of Negative Physical Safety. Figure 8 shows a security camera by an entrance to a school. This portrayed a Contributive/Additive, or positive, sense of physical safety. The sign in Figure 9 illustrates the school staff trying to protect students from physical harm; therefore, it is an example of positive physical safety. Most photographs of physical safety were found around the perimeter of the schools compared to inside the school.

Figure 6: *Example 1 of Negative Physical Safety*

Figure 7: *Example 2 of Negative Physical Safety*

Figure 8: *Example 1 of Contributive/Additive Physical Safety*

Figure 9: *Example 2 of Contributive/Additive Physical Safety*

The following pictures are examples of Emotional Safety. In Figure 10, the signs say “Don’t bother PHOTO TEACHERS!!” at the bottom, indicating that the students are unwelcome to talk with photo teachers about their senior quotes. This is an example of Negative Emotional Safety. Some signs were an indication of being unwelcoming to students because it indicated that they were not allowed into that area as seen in Figure 11; therefore, they were coded as emotionally unsafe. Figure 12 is an example of positive emotional safety and was coded as “Contributive/Additive”. The sign in the photograph shows students that regardless of “skin, intellect, or talents” s/he will be valued at their school. Student art work or classroom work that was displayed was coded as emotionally and intellectually safe, or “Contributive/Additive”, because it let the students feel like their work was valued and worthy of being presented for others to view. Figure 13 is of high school student classroom work. There were fewer emotionally unsafe codings compared to emotionally safe codings.

Figure 10: *Example 1 of Negative Emotional Safety*

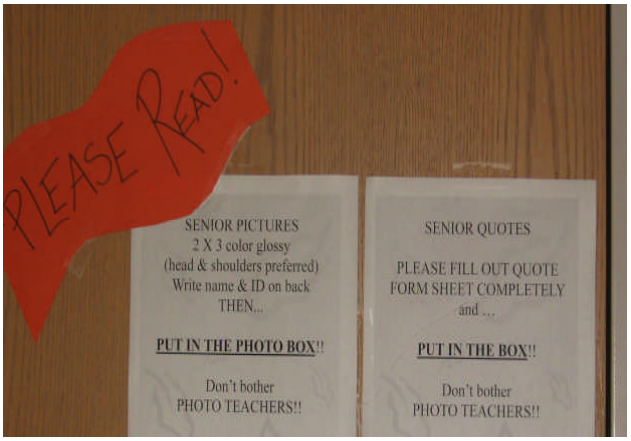
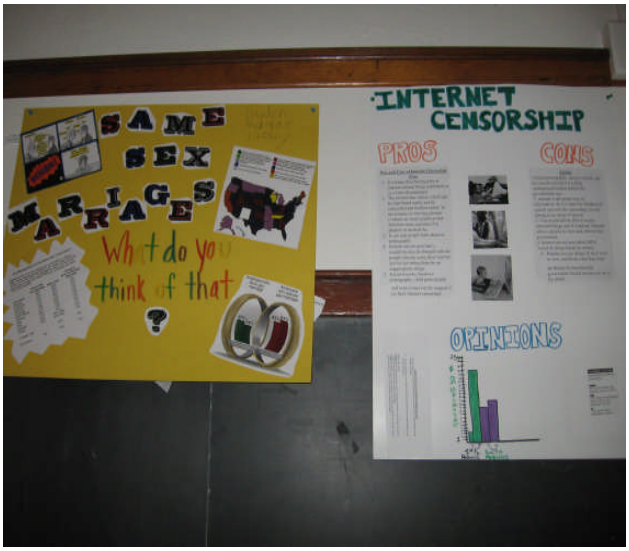


Figure 11: *Example 2 of Negative Emotional Safety*

Figure 12: *Example 1of Contributive/Additive Emotional Safety*

Figure 13: *Example 2 of Contributive/Additive Emotional Safety*



The subsequent figures are examples of Intellectual Safety. The signs in Figure 14 were coded as intellectually unsafe, or Negative, because they seem to be using scare tactics to get students to use their brains and to stay in school. Figure 15 is a poster with "Thinking Allowed" on it, meaning that students are encouraged to think, which is promotes intellectual safety; it was coded as "Contributive/Additive". And as mentioned, photographs of student art and classroom work were coded as intellectually safe.

Figure 14: *Example of Negative Intellectual Safety*

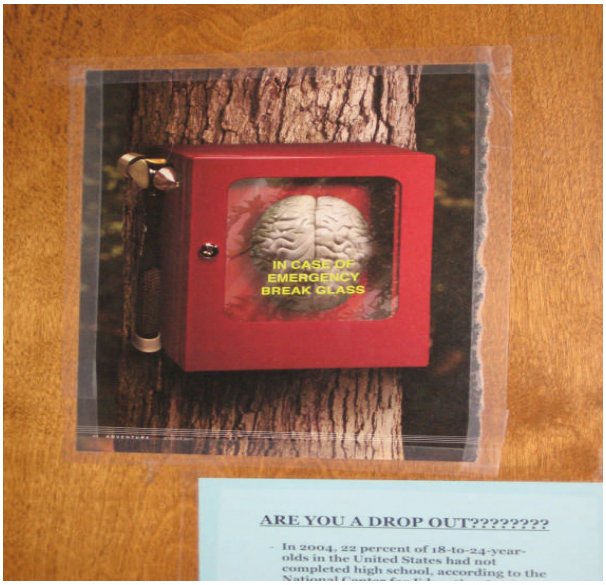


Figure 15: *Example of Contributive/Additive Intellectual Safety*

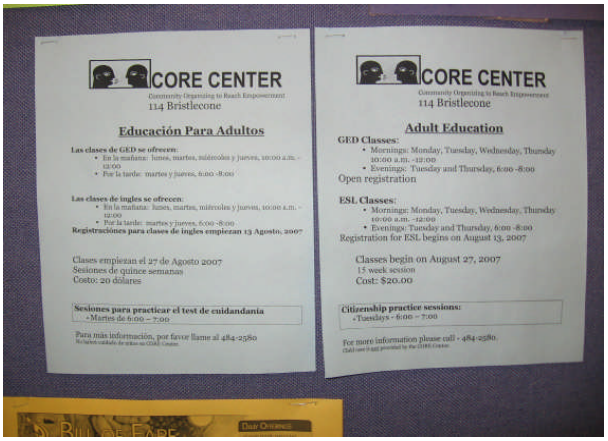
The following figures are examples of the Parental Opportunities Parameter and Belonging and Roles Message Contents. There were no photographs portraying "Negative" parental opportunity in this study at any educational level. Since parental involvement is encouraged (Hong & Ho, 2005), artifacts that would inhibit parental

involvement would not be displayed. Therefore, an artifact displaying a “negative” parental opportunity code would typically not exist in a school. Furthermore, if an artifact was not exhibited in a school, it could not be photographed and, thus, would not be a part of the qualitative data.

A typical photograph of “Contributive/Additive” Parental Opportunity Belonging illustrated chances for parents to join in school activities. Figure 16 illustrates parental volunteer opportunities within the school. Figure 17 is representative of a Parental Opportunity Roles coding. Photographs with this coding show resources for parents (i.e., flu shots, GED classes, ESL classes, and so on) to enhance themselves personally. There were more Parental Opportunity photographs at the elementary educational level than at the junior high or high school educational levels, which supports the what the literature indicated about parental involvement opportunities occurring most often at the elementary level (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004).

Figure 16: *Example of Contributive/Additive Parental Opportunity Belonging*

Figure 17: *Example of Contributive/Additive Parental Opportunity Roles*



Examples of the Building parameter are displayed below. Figures 18 and 19 are illustrative of a "Negative" coding because it was deemed unattractive to the researcher (i.e., torn signs and chipped paint). Figure 20 was also coded as "Negative" because it was space that was unused; however, Figure 21 was also "Negative" because it showed a lack of space in the school. Not using the space available and not having space available for classroom needs or storage does not aesthetically look attractive and is not conducive to student learning. The researcher saw schools where both scenarios (i.e., unused space and lack of space) occurred as well as schools where only one scenario (i.e., unused space or lack of space) occurred; there seemed to be an imbalance of resources (in this case, space) within a school and across schools.

Figure 18: *Example 1 of Negative Building*

Figure 19: *Example 2 of Negative Building*

Figure 20: *Example 3 of Negative Building*

Figure 21: *Example 4 of Negative Building*

On the other hand, there were many examples of “Contributive/Additive” Building codings. Figures 22 and 23were considered aesthetically attractive to the researcher. Also, clean hallways, bathrooms, or other areas were coded “Contributive/Additive” as in Figure 24. Other examples of this code included signs that were newer, well-maintained, and effectively indicated what it was portraying. Figure 25 shows newer technology (i.e., flat screen computer screens), which show the higher level of resources available to the staff and students. Other examples along

similar to this are newer outdoor equipment, energy efficient lights, newer sound system (i.e., speakers, bells, and so on).

Figure 22: *Example 1 of Contributive/Additive Building*

Figure 23: *Example 2 of Contributive/Additive Building*

Figure 24: *Example 3 of Contributive/Additive Building*

Figure 25: *Example 4 of Contributive/Additive Building*

The photographic coding percentages presented in this study are approximately 20% of the total photographic coding percentage. The percentages presented correspond to the SDOCS constructs. The percentages not discussed are primarily for the diversity-oriented parameters (e.g., gender, race, language, ethnicity, and so on). The highest percentage was for the language parameter because the word(s) in every sign and poster were coded. Based on this, the majority of photographic findings did not correspond to the SDOCS constructs and are not discussed here. However, some findings will be highlighted in the next chapter in *A Feminist Perspective*.

Table 7 presents the percentages of codings for the parameters, message contents, and equity approaches for the higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools. The total school climate percentage was calculated by summing the percentages from the safety total, parental opportunity total, and building columns; this was done by rank and educational level. There were a total of 844 codings for the higher-ranked elementary school photographs while there were 928 codings for the lower-ranked elementary school photographs. The percentages were calculated using the total number of photographic codings for each educational level and rank.

Table 7

Elementary School Percentages of Photograph Codings by Parameter, Message Content, and Equity Approach

Parameter		Negative		Contributive/ Additive	
		Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
Safety	Physical	2.8%	3.0%	2.4%	3.2%
	Emotional	0.7%	0%	3.4%	4%
	Intellectual	0.6%	0%	2.7%	4.3%
	Total	**4.1%**	**3.0%**	**8.5%**	**11.5%**
Parental Opportunity	Belonging	-	-	2.7%	1.3%
	Roles	-	-	1.3%	0.9%
	Total	**-**	**-**	**4.0%**	**2.2%**
Building		9.1%	12.1%	9.0%	3.8%
Total – School Climate		**13.2%**	**15.1%**	**21.5%**	**17.5%**

The photographic codings of the safety pictures indicated that the researcher found more examples of negative physical safety at the higher-ranked elementary

schools than at the lower-ranked schools. The lower-ranked schools also did not have any illustrations of negative emotional or intellectual safety while the higher-ranked elementary schools had slightly more illustrations of this. Furthermore, the higher-ranked elementary school photographic codings revealed a slightly lower percentage of positive, or contributive/additive, physical, emotional, and intellectual safety than the lower-ranked schools.

While neither higher- or lower-ranked elementary schools revealed any negative photographs of parent opportunities, the higher-ranked school findings showed a higher percentage of positive parental opportunities than the lower-ranked elementary schools. There were more parental opportunities for parents to get involved at the higher-ranked elementary schools than lower-ranked schools. There were also more resources offered to parents at the higher-ranked elementary schools compared to the lower-ranked schools.

The photographic codings of the school building highlighted the primary differentiation between the higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools. For the higher-ranked schools, there were less negative codings and more positive codings. Comparatively, there were more negative photographic codings and less positive codings for the lower-ranked elementary schools.

The total school climate percentages indicated that there were more negative codings and less positive codings for the lower-ranked elementary schools compared to the higher-ranked schools. The percentages of building codings influenced this differential the most. The percentages for the overall safety codings indicated that lower-ranked schools had fewer negative codings and more positive codings than the

higher-ranked schools. While the higher-ranked school codings revealed more parental opportunities than the lower-ranked schools, the percentage difference was not as great as the difference between the higher- and lower-ranked schools on safety. Thus, the building percentages skewed the total school climate percentages.

Table 8 presents the percentages of codings for the parameters, message contents, and equity approaches for the higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools. There were a total of 651 codings for the higher-ranked junior high school photographs while there were 969 codings for the lower-ranked junior high school photographs.

Table 8

Junior High School Percentages of Photograph Codings by Parameter, Message Content, and Equity Approach

Parameter		Negative		Contributive/ Additive	
		Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
Safety	Physical	2.0%	2.3%	6.1%	4.3%
	Emotional	0.6%	0.2%	5.4%	7.9%
	Intellectual	0.2%	0.2%	4.9%	6.4%
	Total	**2.8%**	**2.9%**	**16.4%**	**18.4%**
Parental Opportunity	Belonging	-	-	0.2%	0.4%
	Roles	-	-	0%	0.1%
	Total	**-**	**-**	**0.2%**	**0.5%**
Building		13.2%	12.3%	8.9%	6.4%
Total – School Climate		**16.0%**	**15.2%**	**25.5%**	**25.3%**

The photographic codings of the safety pictures indicated that the researcher found similar percentages of negative physical safety examples at the higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools. Both school rankings also had very few illustrations of negative emotional or intellectual safety. The higher-ranked junior high schools had a higher percentage of positive physical safety codings while the lower-ranked schools had higher percentages of positive emotional and intellectual safety. Overall, the higher-ranked junior high school photographic codings revealed a slightly lower percentage of positive overall safety than the lower-ranked schools.

The lower-ranked junior high school findings showed a higher percentage of positive parental opportunities than the higher-ranked schools. Furthermore, there were more parental opportunities for parents to get involved at the lower-ranked junior high schools than higher-ranked schools. There were also more resources offered to parents at the lower-ranked schools compared to the higher-ranked schools.

For the total school climate, there were almost equal percentages of negative and positive photographic codings for both higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools. Contributing to this was the higher percentage of negative and positive building codings for the higher-ranked junior high schools. Taken as a whole, there were higher percentages of positive codings than negative codings for both junior high school rankings.

Table 9 presents the percentages of codings for the parameters, message contents, and equity approaches for the higher- and lower-ranked high schools. There were a total of 1,015 codings for the higher-ranked high school photographs while there were 863 codings for the lower-ranked high school photographs.

Table 9

High School Percentages of Photograph Codings by Parameter, Message Content, and Equity Approach

Parameter		Negative		Contributive/ Additive	
		Higher Rank	Lower Rank	Higher Rank	Lower Rank
Safety	Physical	1.7%	0.6%	3.3%	4.8%
	Emotional	0.3%	.6%	2.9%	5.9%
	Intellectual	0%	0%	2.8%	3.1%
	Total	**2.0%**	**1.2%**	**9.0%**	**13.8%**
Parental Opportunity	Belonging	-	-	0.4%	0.3%
	Roles	-	-	0.1%	0%
	Total	**-**	**-**	**0.5%**	**0.3%**
Building		10.1%	13.0%	12.7%	11.2%
Total – School Climate		**12.1%**	**14.2%**	**22.2%**	**25.3%**

The photographic codings of the safety pictures indicated that the researcher found a higher percentage of negative physical safety examples at the higher-ranked high schools while lower-ranked high schools had a higher percentage of negative emotional safety. Both school rankings also had no illustrations of negative intellectual safety. The lower-ranked high schools had a higher percentage of positive physical, emotional, and intellectual safety codings. Overall, the higher-ranked high school photographic codings revealed a slightly higher percentage of negative overall safety and lower percentage of positive overall safety than the lower-ranked schools.

The higher-ranked high school findings showed a higher percentage of positive parental opportunities than the lower-ranked elementary schools.

Furthermore, there were more parental opportunities for parents to get involved at the higher-ranked junior high schools than lower-ranked schools. There were also more resources offered to parents at the higher-ranked schools compared to the lower-ranked schools.

For the total school climate, there were almost equal percentages of negative and positive photographic codings for both higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools. Contributing to this was the higher percentage of negative and positive building codings for the higher-ranked junior high schools. Taken as a whole, there were higher percentages of positive codings than negative codings for both junior high school rankings.

As with the elementary schools, the photographic codings of the school building highlighted the primary differentiation between the higher- and lower-ranked high schools. For the higher-ranked schools, there were less negative codings and more positive codings. Comparatively, there were more negative photographic codings and less positive codings for the lower-ranked elementary schools.

The total school climate percentages indicated that there were more negative codings and less positive codings for the lower-ranked high schools compared to the higher-ranked schools. Again, as with the elementary schools, the percentages of building codings influenced this differential the most. The percentages for the overall safety codings indicated that lower-ranked schools had fewer negative codings and more positive codings than the higher-ranked schools. While the higher-ranked school codings revealed more parental opportunities than the lower-ranked schools,

the percentage difference was minimal. Therefore, the building percentages distorted the total school climate percentages.

Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methodological Approaches

This section presents the SDOCS results and photographic codings. The comparison of the two methodological assessments includes a table displaying the mean composite scores from the SDOCS survey and the percentages from the photographic codings for the constructs on the SDOCS and parameters from the initial template. The SDOCS *Problem* scale is comparable to the "Negative" photographic coding in that "Negative" codings were given primarily when photographs portrayed artifacts that could inhibit learning or were detrimental to the school climate. The SDOCS *Satisfaction* scale is comparable to the "Contributive/Additive" photographic coding because the photographs exhibited artifacts that were conducive to learning or were beneficial to the school climate.

After the table is provided, a comparative description of the results and findings is given. Higher-ranked schools are presented first with lower-ranked schools following by each educational level, starting with elementary schools. As mentioned previously, the *Problem* and *Satisfaction* scales on the SDOCS survey ranged from 1 to 4. For both scales, it is ideal to have a mean score closer to 4 because it indicates a lack of a problem and greater satisfaction with the construct.

Elementary Schools

Table 10

Higher-Ranked Elementary School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	3.74	4.1%	3.47	8.5%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	3.84	-	3.66	4.0%
School Facilities or Building	3.61	9.1%	3.56	9.0%
School Climate	3.77	13.2%	3.47	21.5%

For the higher-ranked elementary schools, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a small amount of problems and satisfaction with school safety. The qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed slight amounts of negative school safety and a higher percentage of positive, or contributive/additive, school safety codings than negative codings. Both methods of analyses revealed low levels of feeling unsafe and high levels of feeling safe, which are desirable within a school climate.

The SDOCS results suggested few problems in terms of parental involvement. The photographic codings do not reveal any negative with parental opportunities due to a lack of artifacts exhibiting this code. Stakeholder satisfaction with parental involvement was at a high level. The qualitative codings revealed some positive parental opportunities for involvement, but to a lesser degree than one would expect.

Interestingly, the percentage of positive parental opportunity codings was comparable to that of the negative school safety codings.

For school facilities, the SDOCS mean scores and photographic codings were similar for both scales. These results indicated that there were few problems with the school facilities and high satisfaction with the school facilities. There were also as many negative building attributes as positive building attributes. Furthermore, the school stakeholders and the researcher had similar perceptions of the school facilities.

As with school safety, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and adequate satisfaction with the school climate. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed minor amounts of negative school climate and a higher percentage of positive school climate findings than negative findings. The two methodological approaches illustrated low levels of problems with the school climate and high levels of satisfaction with the school climate.

Table 11

Lower-Ranked Elementary School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	3.16	3.0%	3.14	11.5%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	2.65	-	2.47	2.2%
School Facilities or Building	3.20	12.1%	2.97	3.8%
School Climate	3.18	15.1%	2.97	17.5%

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a small amount of problems and satisfaction with school safety. The qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed slight amounts of negative school safety and a higher percentage of positive school safety codings than negative codings. Both methods of analyses revealed low levels of feeling unsafe and high levels of feeling safe; this is desirable within a school climate.

The SDOCS results suggested minor problems in terms of parental involvement. The stakeholder results revealed that they were slightly dissatisfied with parental involvement. Furthermore, the qualitative codings revealed little positive parental opportunities for involvement. Both methods of analyses revealed low amounts of positive parental opportunities.

For school facilities, the SDOCS results indicated that there were few problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a high percentage of negative findings. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the two methodologies in terms of negative school facilities; I perceived more negative examples than the stakeholders reported based on the SDOCS results. The same is true for the positive school facilities results in that the researcher found little positive examples while the stakeholders were somewhat satisfied with the lower-ranked elementary school facilities.

Overall, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and some satisfaction with the school climate. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed moderate amounts of negative school climate and a fair percentage of

positive school climate findings than negative findings. When compared to the higher-ranked elementary schools, the two methodological approaches illustrated comparable results.

Junior High Schools

Table 12

Higher-Ranked Junior High School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	3.12	2.8%	3.32	16.4%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	3.55	-	3.37	0.2%
School Facilities or Building	3.62	13.2%	3.44	8.9%
School Climate	3.46	16.0%	3.23	25.5%

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a small amount of problems and satisfaction with school safety. The qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed slight amounts of negative school safety and a higher percentage of positive school safety codings than negative codings. Both methods of analyses revealed low levels of feeling unsafe and high levels of feeling safe.

The SDOCS results suggested very little problems in terms of parental involvement. The stakeholder results revealed that they were satisfied with parental involvement. However, the qualitative codings revealed very little positive parental opportunities for involvement.

For school facilities, the SDOCS results indicated that there were almost no problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a high percentage of negative findings. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the two methodologies in terms of negative school facilities; the researcher seemed to perceive more negative examples than the stakeholders reported based on the SDOCS results. The same is true for the positive school facilities results in that the researcher found little positive examples while the stakeholders were satisfied with the higher-ranked junior high school facilities.

Overall, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a slight amount of problems and satisfaction with the total school climate. The qualitative findings countered the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed a moderate amount of negative school climate. However, the two methodologies found similar results on the positive, contributive/additive side with the high percentage of positive school safety examples skewing the qualitative findings.

Table 13

Lower-Ranked Junior High School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	2.41	2.9%	2.86	18.4%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	2.80	-	2.52	0.5%
School Facilities or Building	3.04	12.3%	2.74	6.4%
School Climate	2.75	15.2%	2.72	25.3%

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a moderate amount of problems and little satisfaction with school safety. The qualitative findings contradicted the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed slight amounts of negative school safety and a much higher percentage of positive school safety codings than negative codings. The methods revealed differing perceptions of school safety with the researcher perceiving a little amount of negative school safety and high amounts of positive school safety while the lower-ranked junior high school stakeholders perceived more problems and less satisfaction with school safety.

The SDOCS results suggested minor problems in terms of parental involvement. The stakeholder results revealed that they are slightly dissatisfied with parental involvement. Furthermore, the qualitative codings revealed very little positive parental opportunities for involvement. Both methods of analyses revealed low amounts of positive parental opportunities.

For school facilities, the SDOCS results indicated that there were few problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a high percentage of negative findings. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the two methodologies in terms of negative school facilities; the researcher seemed to perceive more negative examples than the stakeholders reported based on the SDOCS results. For the positive school facilities, the results in that the researcher found little positive examples while the stakeholders were somewhat dissatisfied with the lower-ranked junior high school facilities. The two methodologies were similar for the positive scale of school facilities.

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a moderate amount of problems and some dissatisfaction with the total school climate. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results on the negative scale in that the qualitative findings revealed a moderate amount of negative school climate. However, as with higher-ranked junior high schools, the positive school safety percentage skewed the total school climate percentage, so that the qualitative methodology revealed a higher positive percentage than the SDOCS results. The SDOCS results suggested that lower-ranked junior high school stakeholders perceived some dissatisfaction with the overall school climate.

High Schools

Table 14

Higher-Ranked High School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	3.08	2.0%	3.19	9.0%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	3.24	-	3.02	0.5%
School Facilities or Building	3.56	10.1%	3.38	12.7%
School Climate	3.34	12.1%	3.07	22.2%

The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a few problems and some satisfaction with school safety. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed slight amounts of negative school safety and a higher percentage of positive school safety codings than negative codings. The methods revealed comparable perceptions of school safety with the researcher perceiving a little amount of negative school safety and higher amounts of positive school safety.

The SDOCS results suggested slight problems in terms of parental involvement. The stakeholder results revealed that they are slightly satisfied with parental involvement. The qualitative codings revealed very little positive parental opportunities for involvement. The methods of analyses revealed contradictory results in that the researcher perceived very little positive opportunities for parents while the

stakeholders were satisfied with the level of parental involvement at the higher-ranked high schools.

For school facilities, the SDOCS results indicated that there were very few problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a higher percentage of negative findings. For the positive school facilities, the findings revealed that the researcher found some positive examples while the stakeholders were moderately satisfied with the higher-ranked high school facilities. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the two methodologies in terms of school facilities.

For total school climate, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived few problems and reasonable satisfaction. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed a similar perception of negative and positive school climate. This means that the researcher and higher-ranked high school stakeholders had similar perceptions of the school climate.

Table 15

Lower-Ranked High School SDOCS Results and Photographic Codings

Construct or Parameter	Problem or Negative		Satisfaction or Contributive/Additive	
	SDOCS	Photographic Codings	SDOCS	Photographic Codings
School Safety	3.28	1.2%	3.19	13.8%
Parental Involvement or Parental Opportunity	2.90	-	2.77	0.3%
School Facilities or Building	3.46	13.0%	3.05	11.2%
School Climate	2.99	14.2%	3.06	25.3%

For school safety, the quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived a few problems and some satisfaction. The qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed very slight amounts of negative school safety and a higher percentage of positive school safety codings. The methods revealed comparable perceptions of school safety with the researcher perceiving a little amount of negative school safety and higher amounts of positive school safety.

The SDOCS results suggested some problems in terms of parental involvement. The stakeholder results revealed that they are slightly dissatisfied with parental involvement. The qualitative codings revealed very little positive parental opportunities for involvement. The methods of analyses revealed similar results in that the researcher perceived very little positive opportunities for parents while the stakeholders were dissatisfied with the level of parental involvement at the lower-ranked high schools.

For school facilities, the SDOCS results indicated that there were very few problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a higher percentage of negative findings. For the positive school facilities, the findings suggested that the researcher found some positive examples while the stakeholders were only slightly satisfied with the higher-ranked high school facilities. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the two methodologies in terms of school facilities.

However, for the overall school climate, the qualitative findings confirmed the quantitative results in that the qualitative findings revealed a similar perception of the overall school climate. The quantitative SDOCS results indicated that stakeholders perceived some problems and reasonable satisfaction. This means that the researcher and higher-ranked high school stakeholders had similar perceptions of the school climate.

In general, the quantitative and qualitative methodologies provided more similarities than differences in assessing the school climates at each educational level. While both methodological approaches offer unique utility and perspective, the integration of the two approaches is where the most comprehensive depiction of school climate is given and where the strength in the sequential transformative methodology lies. In Chapter 5, the composite portrayals of each educational level are discussed by rank.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes four sections: *Composite Portrayals of the Educational Levels, Ideal School Climates by Educational Level, A Feminist Perspective,* and *Researcher's Reflection*. A composite portrayal for the three educational levels is presented describing the quantitative results and qualitative findings for each rank. There are a total of six composite portrayals (i.e., two elementary, two junior high, and two high school) presented. The composite portrayals answer the fourth research question:

4. How can the two climate assessments become integrated into a composite portrayal?

The second section includes characteristics of the higher- and lower-ranked school climates that together would create an ideal school climate for that educational level. The third section is a feminist perspective of power within educational relationships. This section answers the final research question:

5. Given a composite portrayal of school climate, how can this composite picture become informed by critical feminist theory?

Additionally, recommendations are offered on how to make schools have more feminist characteristics, which promotes hook's community involvement (1994) discussed in the *Researcher's Perspective* in Chapter 1. The final section is my

reflection on the data collection, photographic coding, and analysis process. This includes limitations of this study and future research suggestions for conducting a visual ethnography to assess a school climate.

Composite Portrayals of the Educational Levels

The composite portrayals briefly summarize the SDOCS results providing the school stakeholders' perceptions and the photographic findings offering the researcher's perspective. The higher-ranked schools for an educational level are discussed first with the lower-ranked after, including comparison statements to the higher-ranked school. The elementary schools are discussed first with junior high and high schools following.

Higher-Ranked Elementary Schools

The higher-ranked elementary schools demonstrated commendable school safety. The physical, emotional, and intellectual safety were adequate for these schools compared to the lower-ranked elementary schools, which could be improved. Despite this, there were very low levels of feeling unsafe and high levels of feeling safe. These schools exemplified parental involvement and school facilities. Parental involvement was at a high level, which could be due to the abundance of opportunities for parental involvement and resources offered to parents. Furthermore, the school facilities were exceptional. Overall, the school climate for the higher-ranked elementary schools was outstanding and revealed a more than acceptable learning environment for students.

Lower-Ranked Elementary Schools

In general, the lower-ranked elementary schools' results suggest a slightly higher level of problems and lower level of satisfaction compared to the higher-ranked schools. Stakeholders' perceived school safety not as favorable at the lower-ranked schools. However, I found that physical, emotional, and intellectual safeties seem to be slightly better compared to the higher-ranked schools. In terms of parental involvement, there were few opportunities for participation in school activities and few resources provided to parents, which most likely led to the lower stakeholder satisfaction and perception of problems with parental involvement compared to the higher-ranked schools. School facilities were the primary differentiation between the higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools in that the stakeholders revealed a small amount of dissatisfaction and there were a lot of negative characteristics highlighted with the school facilities at the lower-ranked schools. Overall, the stakeholders perceived a minimal amount of problems and some satisfaction with the school climate.

Higher-Ranked Junior High Schools

In general, stakeholders perceived negligible problems and were adequately satisfied with the school climate for the higher-ranked junior high schools. In terms of school safety, they perceived very slight problems and were moderately satisfied. The higher-ranked junior high schools had adequate examples of positive physical safety, but less examples of positive emotional and intellectual safety. Parental involvement had very little problems. Furthermore, stakeholder satisfaction with parental involvement was at a high level. However, there were very few parental opportunities

for involvement and resources. For school facilities, there were few problems, but more negative photographic examples; additionally, there were few positive examples. The total school climate had minimal problems and the stakeholders were satisfied.

Lower-Ranked Junior High Schools

Overall, the lower-ranked junior high schools were the most negative schools compared to all of the school rankings in the study. There was moderately higher level of problems and lower level of stakeholder satisfaction with the school climate compared to the rest of the schools in the study. Stakeholders were dissatisfied with the overall school climate and perceived some problems. Stakeholders perceived a moderate amount of problems and little satisfaction with school safety. However, the lower-ranked junior high schools had more positive examples of emotional and intellectual safety than the higher-ranked junior high schools. Stakeholders for the lower-ranked schools thought there were minor problems and were dissatisfied with parental involvement; however, there were more parental opportunities for involvement and resources for parents to utilize at the lower-ranked junior high schools than higher-ranked schools. There were few problems with school facilities; however, stakeholders were dissatisfied. The high amount of positive school safety examples skewed the total school climate in that it raised the overall percentage to the same level as the higher-ranked junior high schools, but the stakeholders perceived the total school climate unfavorably.

Higher-Ranked High Schools

The school climate for higher-ranked high schools was favorable. There were few problems with school safety, but slightly more problems than the lower-ranked high schools. While the stakeholders did not have many problems and were satisfied with parental involvement, there was a very small amount of opportunities for parents to become involved. For school facilities, positive and negative aspects were highlighted; the SDOCS results indicated very few problems with the school facilities while the photographic codings revealed a high percentage of negative findings. The total school climate was favorable for the higher-ranked high schools.

Lower-Ranked High Schools

The lower-ranked high schools had similar stakeholder ratings as the higher-ranked high schools with the exception of parental involvement. There were similar perceptions of school safety as the higher-ranked high schools; however, the lower-ranked schools had fewer problems. There were very little opportunities for parents to be involved and the stakeholders were dissatisfied with the level of parental involvement. For school facilities, stakeholders perceived very few problems with the school facilities and were slightly satisfied; however, there were slightly more negative examples than with the higher-ranked high schools. The overall school climate for the lower-ranked high schools were somewhat favorable to stakeholders in that they perceived some problems and were reasonably satisfied.

The composite portrayals emphasize the positive and negative aspects of each school ranking at the educational levels. Despite the high level of positive aspects,

they are not necessarily feminist. A feminist perspective of school climate is needed to fully recognize the lack of feminist characteristics in K-12 schools.

Ideal School Climates by Educational Level

This section provides an "ideal" school climate description for each educational level along with example photographs. An "ideal" school climate does not exist; however, school administrators, faculty, and staff can strive to make the school climate the best learning environment possible for the children of that school by modifying the school climate. Modifications made to a school climate must take into consideration the school's contextual factors; this includes and is not limited to the school's stakeholder population (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, and so on), school resources, mission of the school district, the community's political outlook, and so on. Additionally, please note that this 'ideal' is from the researcher's perspective of a model school climate for that educational level and is based upon the background literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the results and findings in Chapter 3. The photographs offered are limited to the photographs the researcher deemed important to that educational level, but could also transfer to the other educational levels when appropriate. The photographs are not comprehensive to all the examples that could be provided in this section.

Ideal Elementary School Climate

An ideal elementary school would exhibit the best of the higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools: school facilities from the higher-ranked schools, safety from the lower-ranked schools, and parental involvement from the higher-ranked schools. An elementary school designed incorporating these approaches would create

an exemplary learning environment for students. Given that the school facilities were the primary distinction between the higher- and lower-ranked elementary schools, the ideal elementary school would have the facilities of the higher-ranked elementary schools. Figures 26 and 27 are examples of building facilities that are ideal. The photos exhibit new, clean, and spacious facilities. Figure 28 displays the advanced technological resources that are commendable.

Figure 26: *Example 1 of Ideal School Facilities*

Figure 27: *Example 2 of Ideal School Facilities*

Figure 28: *Example 3 of Ideal School Facilities*

Additionally, school safety would resemble that of the lower-ranked elementary schools. Figure 29 shows an example of emotional and intellectual safety. Displaying student work promotes a feeling of belonging to the class and enhances student self-esteem; furthermore, it encourages the student intellectually because the teacher displayed their work for everyone at the school to view. Figure 30 is another example of emotional safety. The poster shows students of all different types joined together, which promotes a feeling of belonging based on who they are, not what they do as in the previous example. This could be considered a method a feminist teacher may take to let students know that whatever they look like that they will be accepted for who they are. While all schools had signs saying that school visitors need to check in at the main office to promote physical safety as seen in Figure 31, Figure 32 shows another sign that boosts physical safety. Figure 33 shows another example of protecting students' physical safety by using wood chips on the playground. This is particularly important at the elementary level since elementary students spend a substantial amount of time outside on the playground during recesses.

Figure 29: *Example of Ideal Emotional and Intellectual Safety*

Figure 30: *Example of Ideal Emotional Safety*

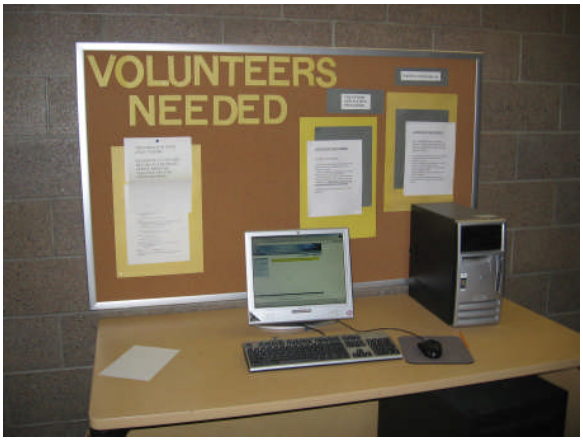
Figure 31: *Example of Physical Safety*

Figure 32: *Example 1 of Ideal Physical Safety*

Figure 33: *Example 2 of Ideal Physical Safety*

Opportunities for school involvement are important especially for elementary students. As mentioned earlier, the level of parental involvement is an indicator of academic achievement (Hong & Ho, 2005) and most often occurs at the elementary level (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004)). Figure 34 shows a great example of a school creating an atmosphere promoting parental involvement in addition to the advanced technological resources provided to make signing up to volunteer as easy as possible for parents.

Figure 34: *Example 1 of Ideal Parental Involvement Opportunities*



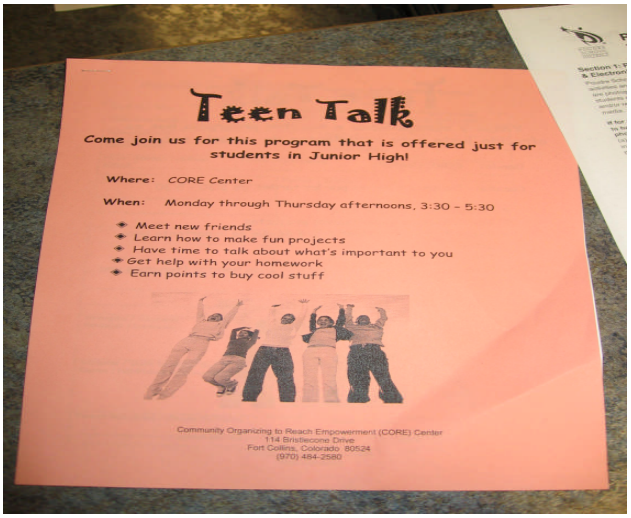
Ideal Junior High School Climate

The biggest difference between higher- and lower-ranked schools happened at the junior high level. The results indicate that the junior high school climate was perceived as less positive and more negative than the elementary and high school climates. Therefore, an ideal junior high school would demonstrate the best of the higher- and lower-ranked junior high schools in terms of safety. Specifically, emotional and intellectual safety would be attained from the lower-ranked schools and physical safety would come from the higher-ranked junior high schools.

Figure 35 shows artwork created by junior high students. Each student is allowed to create her/his own puzzle piece to represent herself/himself to the rest of the school. This approach enhances students' emotional safety in the school and promotes school bonding. Figure 36 displays a program offered to junior high students that fosters emotional and intellectual safety. "Teen Talk" is a mechanism for students to meet other students, discuss what is important to them, work on their homework, and get tutored.

Figure 35: *Example 1 of Ideal Emotional Safety*

Figure 36: *Example 1 of Ideal Emotional and Intellectual Safety*



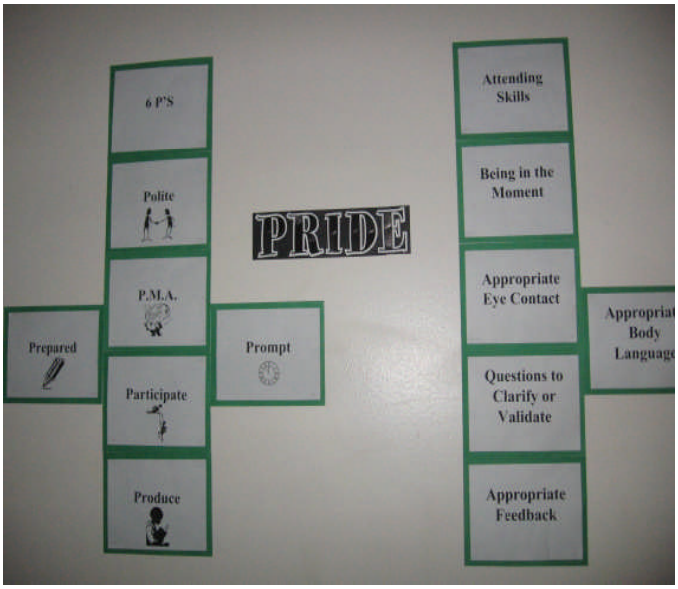
Intellectual safety can be promoted by offering tutoring services. Figure 37 shows tutoring services provided Colorado State University students. It sends the message that students should feel safe with disclosing that they need help with their studies. This school takes it a step further by providing signs for tutoring services in English and Spanish, recognizing that a majority of their student population is Spanish speaking.

Figure 37: *Example 1 of Ideal Intellectual Safety*

Physical safety can be improved by implementing programs that promote conflict resolution (Wanko, 2001). Figure 39 shows that the culture of the school encourages strong students and mediation. This furthers students' sense of physical safety and possibly emotional safety. Furthermore, school safety is enhanced when students have clear expectations for their behavior (Wanko). Figure 40 shows expectations for student behavior through "6 P's" as well as more specific ways to conduct themselves.

Figure 39: *Example 1 of Ideal Physical Safety*

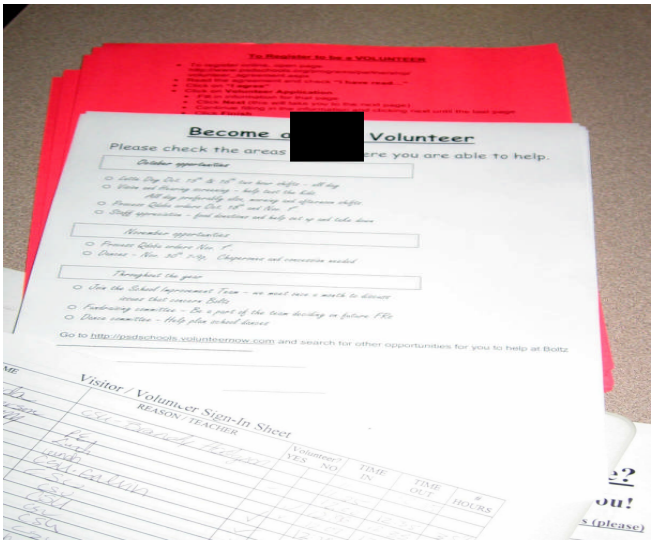
Figure 40: *Example 2 of Ideal Physical Safety*



School facilities and parental involvement would need to be obtained from the higher-ranked elementary and high schools due to a lack of stakeholder satisfaction with the current school facilities and parental involvement. However, Figure 41 shows a rock climbing wall, which is an example of an added benefit for junior high school. The rock climbing wall is a luxury because it exceeds minimum expectations for what is necessary for physical education. Figure 42 shows an example of ideal parental involvement at the junior high level. It also shows security measures that the school administrators take when allowing visitors and volunteers into the school building, which enhances physical safety as well.

Figure 41: *Example of a Luxury in School Facilities*

Figure 42: *Example of Ideal Parental Involvement*



Ideal High School Climate

An ideal high school climate would exhibit the best of the higher- and lower-ranked high schools: safety would be a combination from both the higher- and lower-ranked schools and school facilities from the higher-ranked schools. Figure 43 is an example of peer mediation led by high school students, which enhances students' physical safety. As mentioned before, school safety can be improved by developing

programs that promote conflict resolution (Wanko, 2001). Figure 44 shows an example of a group for students who are GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning) and enhances their feelings of physical and emotional safety at school. Furthermore, this poster indicates openness to diversity which enhances school safety (Wanko).

Figure 43: *Example of Ideal Physical Safety*

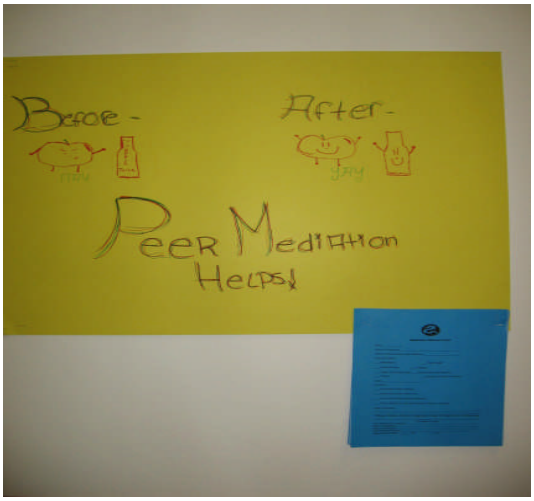
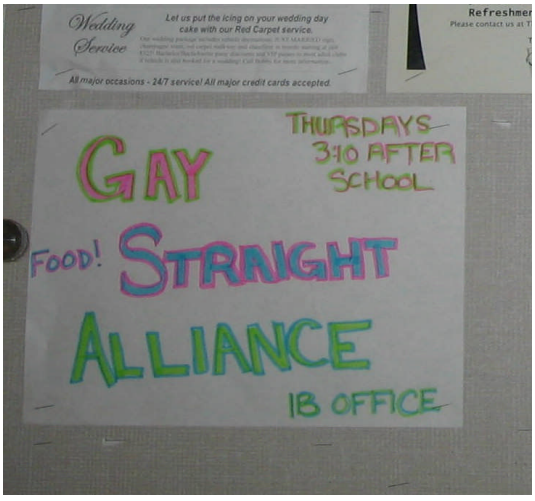


Figure 44: *Example of Ideal Physical and Emotional Safety*



Higher-ranked high school facilities illustrated more luxuries for students compared to the elementary and junior high schools. For example, Figure 45 is a

picture of amphitheater-type architecture for students to utilize. Figure 46 shows that student groups are provided their own space to congregate. The sign in Figure 47 illustrates that physical health is also an important to high school students. Figure 48 indicates that business opportunities are also provided to high school students. These examples indicate that school administrators acknowledge the high school students' developmental need for independence and engaging in socially-responsive behavior (Jaffe, 1997).

Figure 45: *Example 1 of Ideal School Facilities*

Figure 46: *Example 2 of Ideal School Facilities*

Figure 47: *Example 3 of Ideal School Facilities*

Figure 48: *Example 4 of Ideal School Facilities*

Parental involvement would come from the higher-ranked elementary schools since those schools had the most positive results for parental involvement opportunities. Thus, examples from the elementary school level would also apply here. Figure 49 shows an explicit role that parents of high school students are expected to possess. Figure 50 illustrates that parents ought to be involved with their child's educational future and planning. However, Figure 51 is an example of a way for parents of high school students to get involved, not in their education, but in their child's life if there is a drug problem. Parents of high school students play a different role in their child's life and education at the high school level compared to the elementary school level; nonetheless, it does not negate the importance of their involvement in their child's education.

Figure 49: *Example 1 of Parental Involvement*

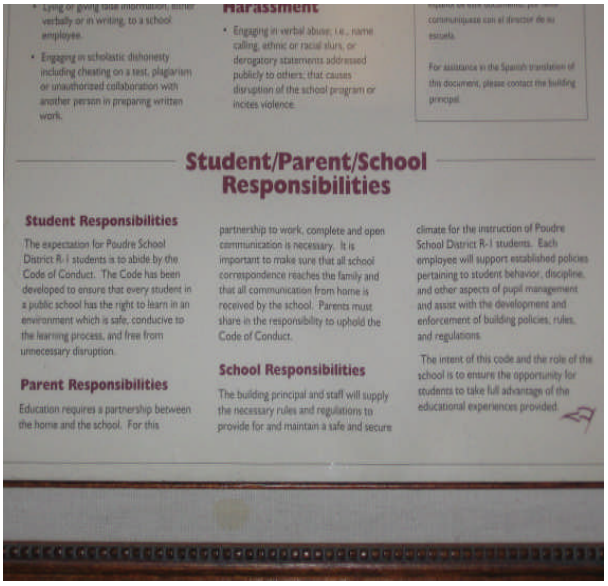


Figure 50: *Example 2 of Parental Involvement*

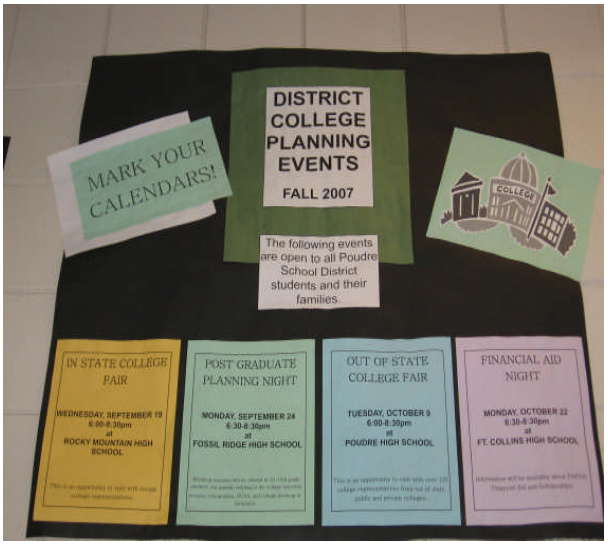
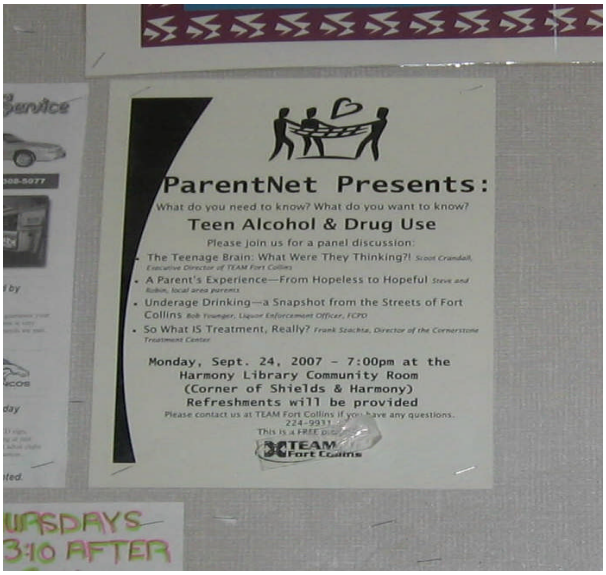


Figure 51: *Example 3 of Parental Involvement*



Based on these ideal school climate recommendations, it can be seen that the students' developmental needs as well as their educational needs are taken into consideration. Elementary students need more parental involvement than high school students. Junior high and high school students need a sense of physical safety. All students, regardless of educational level, need adequate school facilities. Additionally, all students need to feel emotionally safe in their school. Emotional safety can be enhanced by embracing and integrating a feminist perspective.

A Feminist Perspective

Feminist themes of mastery, voice, authority, and positionality can help define the relational power between school stakeholders (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). "Pedagogies of positionality" is the most salient when discussing power within a school setting due to the "complex social dynamics of difference and inequality" that are created through gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and language, and are small representations of the larger culture (Maher &

Tetreault, p. 9). Feminist theorists posit that an individual's social position influences their construction of knowledge and positional factors reflect power within relationships, such as the student-teacher, new teacher-experienced teacher, and teacher-administrator relationships. This concept is not limited to the classroom pedagogies; it extends to the entire school climate.

Additionally, it is not the actual power imbalance that is detrimental; it is how the power is carried out and performed by the school's teachers, administrators, and staff that can create a school climate the helps or hinders student learning (Foucault, 1988 in Gore, 1998; Starhawk, 1989). Power can be implicit or explicit within a relationship. An implicit power disparity may be perceived between new and experienced teachers. Explicit power imbalances can be detected between student and teacher, student and administrators, and teachers and administrators. These power imbalances influence how safe a student feels physically, emotionally, and intellectually, which can impact student learning and achievement. Besides school facilities, school safety can separate the higher-ranked schools from the lower-ranked schools as seen with the composite portrayals. Furthermore, the power imbalance can influence how welcome a parent feels when in the school or talking with teachers and administrators, which in turn will affect their involvement in their child's education.

Given that the student is in a position with the least power in a school compared to teachers, administrators, and staff, recommendations of how to minimize the power differential and maximize equality will be offered in the hopes that it will foster the learning environment, enhance student achievement, and transform school climate. One recommendation that is essential to creating a feminist school climate is

to shift away from the traditional hierarchal approach to education to a more egalitarian, democratic approach. Teachers and administrators can do this by asking themselves is: "How can I position myself and the students…so that we are both agents of [the school]?" (Maher & Tetreault, 2001 p. 206). This question has two intended outcomes: 1) the teachers and administrators recognize that they are in positions of power and; 2) they have the responsibility of promoting power-with relationships throughout the school (Starhawk, 1989). This one question can lead to different standards and modes of teaching (Maher & Tetreault) as well as a safer school climate.

Another recommendation to minimize the power difference is for teachers and administrators to recognize that their personal experiences and knowledge are elements they can utilize when interacting with students to equalize the power differential between themselves and students (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). Providing a personal story (using prudent judgment as to the type personal information revealed) as an example can humanize the teacher or administrator, making her/him seem less authoritarian to the students.

Creating a student-centered educational climate is another method of maximizing equality (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). One student-centered strategy is to display students' classroom work or art in the school hallways. The student may think that the teacher displayed her/his work because the teacher thought it was high quality and worthy for others to see. This fosters feeling of intellectual and emotional safety for the student. I noticed an incongruency between the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools in terms of promoting intellectual and emotional safety through

displaying student work. The lower-ranked schools displayed student classroom work and art more often than higher-ranked schools.

Diversity and inclusivity are fundamental concepts in feminist theories and the qualitative photographic codings yielded from this study should not be excluded. There were numerous photographic examples of artifacts displaying ideals of diversity and inclusiveness. Figure 52 shows a poster on a classroom door; it sign indicates to the student that students are girls and boys in equal roles, can be any race, and may have different physical abilities (e.g., students may be hearing impaired). However, this sign does not show a student who is in a wheelchair. The poster in Figure 53 sends the message that despite outward differences in appearance, everyone expresses happiness in the same way. These posters are probably most helpful for elementary students. Posters similar to these examples promote feelings of emotional safety in school and foster feelings of belonging.

Figure 52: *Example 1 of Promoting Inclusiveness at the Elementary Level*

Figure 53: *Example 2 of Promoting Inclusiveness at the Elementary Level*

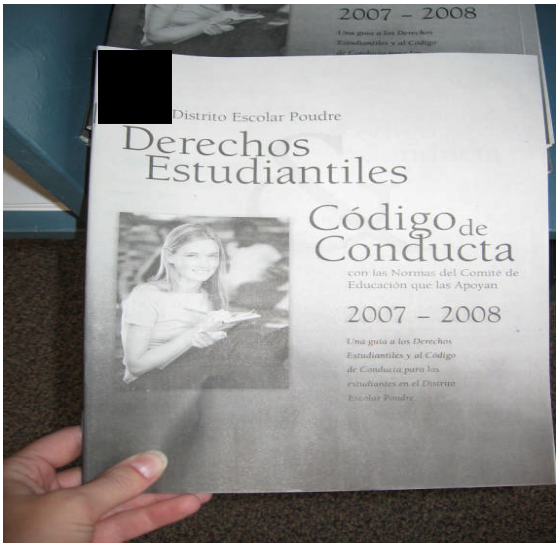
Figure 54 shows a sign outside a classroom. This sign indicates to the student that the teacher recognizes the students are multi-faceted and s/he will be respected in that classroom. This sign is probably most helpful for junior high or high school students. Similar to the poster examples at the elementary level, signs like this example enhance feelings of emotional safety and a sense of belonging.

Figure 54: *Example of Promoting Inclusiveness at the Junior High or High School Level*

Recognition of a student's primary language is an important step to recognizing that power is also created through language (Chomsky, 2006) and is also a strategy a feminist educator may do to lessen the power differential in the classroom. Figure 55 presents a message in Spanish; this reflects that the school administration acknowledge that English may not be the only language that the students speak. Given that this is a highly-visible sign in the school and not a poster on a wall indicates that school climate is welcoming to Spanish-speaker students. Furthermore, the message translates to mean "a dream, a goal", which promotes future-oriented ambitions in the students. Figure 56 shows the recognition that some students' parents are Spanish speaking. Offering materials in the Spanish as well as English promotes Spanish-speaking parents involvement in their child's education.

Figure 55: *Example 1 of Language Diversity*

Figure 56: *Example 2 of Language Diversity*



The pervasiveness of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and language is not limited to the previous four examples. Additionally, these parameters were not discussed in the previous chapter due to a lack of comparable data from the SDOCS survey despite equivalent influence on the school climate and contribution to feelings of inclusiveness that students experiences. The photographic codings for each diversity parameter are presented at the aggregate level in Table 16[1]; as with the SDOCS-comparable parameters, the percent was derived from using the total number of photographic codings, which is 5,270, as the denominator.

[1] Separation by educational level, message content, and equity approach is beyond the scope of this study, but is a recommendation for future manuscripts.

Table 16

Number and Percent of Photographs for Each Diversity Parameter

Parameter	Frequency	Percent
Gender	223	4.2%
Race	178	3.4%
Ethnicity	64	1.2%
Sexual Orientation	25	0.5%
Physical Ability	217	4.1%.
Religion	10	0.2%
Language	1,558	29.6%
Total – Diversity Parameters	**2,275**	**43.2%**

The diversity parameters comprised 43.2% of the total amount of photographic codings while the SDOCS-comparable parameters comprised 52.2%, as shown in the previous chapter. Language was the predominant parameter for all parameters, not jut diversity parameters, because most school artifacts contained some type of language (e.g., English, Spanish, Braille, sign language, and so on). After language and building codings, school safety was coded most often. This is my rationale for placing emphasis on the development of a physical, intellectual, and emotional safe school climate through the feminist recommendations discussed in this section. The next section furthers these safety recommendations and also offers recommendations for school facilities and parental involvement.

Researcher's Reflection

This section includes my experience throughout the data collection, photographic coding, result presentation processes. I also offer suggestions for future researchers who are planning to use a visual ethnographic method to assess a school climate. In the last section, I include the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection took two months to complete. It required coordination a time and date between school principals and custodial staff to allow me into the schools to take photographs while maintaining the safety protocols. The data collection time and date depended upon the after-school activities; photographs were ideally taken when no students were in the building. Despite no students being present, I followed the safety protocols for each school of signing in and wearing a "Visitor" badge; then I would proceed to take 200-300 photographs of the school. In a couple of the schools, I was asked by a teacher or custodial staff what I was doing and after I explained I had permission from the principal and superintendent, she let me continue. I wanted more school staff to be this diligent in wondering why a stranger was taking pictures of the school and walking around the perimeter taking pictures.

Since I was doing the coordination from a distance via email, I was unsure if I would be permitted in the school once I arrived. I was allowed in to all of the schools on the scheduled date with the exception of one school where the assistant principal was not present when I arrived. This was very frustrating and school took even more coordination for data collection to occur. Despite this relatively minor frustration, coordination was unproblematic. My suggestion for researchers is to email the principal and ask her/him for a point person who will assist you through taking photographs in the school. Then, instead of emailing the point person, call her/him to schedule a time and date that works around the school's event calendar. Follow this phone call up with an email the day before the scheduled time and date as a final confirmation. The personal touch of a phone call may help ensure that the point

person meets you at the scheduled time and date and facilitates the data collection process.

Photographing each school took between two and three hours depending upon the size of the school facilities. For example, the high schools took much longer than the elementary schools because the school building and surround facilities was much larger. Thus, it was imperative that I allowed myself adequate time to take the photographs.

My personal safety while collecting data was considered when photographing the schools. Since I collected data in October and November, I had to keep in mind that the amount of daylight after school was reduced, which could have consequences on my physical safety. Therefore, I had to make sure that I had sufficient time to take photographs inside and outside the school while there was still light.

Having the proper equipment ensured that data collection occurred smoothly. Additional batteries were a requirement to guarantee that only one trip to the school was necessary for data collection. I carried 5-6 sets of additional batteries with me when photographing schools. Another suggestion would be to bring a back-up camera in the off chance that your primary camera did not work. I did not do this, but would have been very aggravated if my primary camera broke and I did not have an extra camera with me.

The most significant differences I saw between the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools for all educational levels while collecting data was the geographical location and age of the school building. The higher-ranked schools were located at the southern end of the city, which is notably more affluent that the northern end of the

city. This income disparity has implications on the amount of money in taxes are allotted to schools in the zoning area; thus, the higher-ranked schools receive more tax money than the lower-ranked schools. The higher-ranked school buildings were newer (less than five years old), more up-to-date, was aesthetically more pleasing, and had updated technology. This most likely assisted the schools' stakeholders in perceiving the school more favorably than the lower-ranked schools' stakeholders. However, I felt that the higher-ranked schools were more impersonal, less student focused, and more institutional feeling while the lower-ranked schools, in spite of the lack of visual appeal, were more personalized, more student focused (e.g., student art and classroom work hung up on the majority of walls), and less institutional feeling. I regarded the lower-ranked schools as having a warmer, more student-friendly school climate than the higher-ranked schools. Essentially, the primary differentiating factor between the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools that I observed was the socioeconomic class of the surrounding neighborhoods.

However, one school was the exception to these differences. This higher-ranked school was located in a small mountain community serving a low number of residents in a rural, mountain area. Given the small nature of the community and school, I suspect that the school's stakeholders perceived the school favorably on the SDOCS because they had a more personal connection to the school than other schools' stakeholders in a larger, less personalized school. The two differences that I mentioned did not result in significant percentage differences in the photographic codings.

Photographic Coding

There were a total of 2,735 photographs to code; it is no surprise that this phase in the study took the longest. I spent approximately a year and a half coding the photographs of this study; it was a laborious, sometimes exasperating, process. The first school of each educational level entailed conceptualizing additional parameters based on what emerged from the photographs; thus, these schools took approximately five hours to code. My suggestion would be to enlist the help of an undergraduate or graduate student, preferably from education or women studies departments, that you could train on how to code the photographs. This person could serve as an external audit (Creswell, 1998), quality check (King, 2006), and team analysis (Robinson, 2000). This process would ensure that trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Creswell, 1998) is being preserved, would accelerate the photographic coding phase, and could provide additional college credits and learning opportunities to the enlisted student.

Additionally, I needed to find a data storage and management location to ensure that my photographs were securely stored and organized. A Microsoft Access database was designed and developed to store a hyperlink to each photograph organized by educational level and school. The database also served as the site where the photographs were coded based on the Learning Environment Taxonomy discussed in Chapter 3. Using a Microsoft Access database was simplistic for downloading to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then uploading into SPSS for analysis. Once the photographic coding was completed and the frequency of the codes was uploaded into SPSS, the data analysis went smoothly. The database I used could be modified to

make adding the hyperlinks easier and the resulting Excel spreadsheet easier to read; however, I imagine it would take a higher level of Microsoft Access knowledge or a paid database consultant.

Result Presentation

Presenting the SDOCS and photographic coding results jointly was a key challenge. I had to work through numerous versions of the result tables to determine the most logical and understandable approach. I found the APA guidelines to be ambiguous, so I put it in a format that I considered to meet the APA guidelines yet was also comprehensible to readers. I recommend future researchers to modify the result tables to ensure reader clarity over APA guidelines. Based on this, the result tables may be perceived as a limitation of this paper.

Limitations

Given that the research design and methodology are somewhat innovative, there are numerous limitations to this study. Study limitations include, but are not limited to: predominance of the language parameter, my biased position, exclusion of classroom photographs, and elimination of two parameters from the results.

One limitation is that the language parameter may have skewed the photographic coding findings due to language being the predominant parameter across all parameters, not jut the diversity parameters. This is because most artifacts contained some type of language (e.g., English, Spanish, Braille, and so on), which skewed the frequency and percentages of the other parameters. However, exclusion of them into the results would neglect the pervasiveness and importance of language.

Given that I was the sole person collecting and coding the photographs, interpreting the SDOCS and photographic coding results, and developing composite portrayals from the results, there was only viewpoint provided. Even though assistance was provided by dissertation advisors when needed, I was still the primary researcher and my feminist perspective guided the data collection, coding, analysis, and interpretation phases. This limits the possibilities of what could have been uncovered from the photographs and results, which would inform the interpretation and composite portrayals. Another researcher to assist with taking and coding photographs would incorporate her/his perspective and thus, develop different composite portrayals for the educational levels and offer other recommendations to enhance the school climates.

A third limitation is that the school classrooms were not photographed and incorporated into the assessment of the school climates. Teachers construct the classroom climate based on criteria for the school and best practices for each grade. Classrooms are their own mini-school climates, which affects student learning and influences the larger school climate. They were eliminated intentionally due to the need to focus the study's scope. Furthermore, the focus for this study was the district-level climate, or macro-level, as compared to the classroom-level climate, or micro-level. However, I do not underestimate the importance of classrooms within the school's climate.

Furthermore, there was a lack of transformational/social action equity approach codings, which is a limitation. This deficit leads me to believe that transformational, social action examples are difficult to uncover through photographs

only. Observation of school practices, the conduct of the school's population, and classroom instruction may help to reveal if social action is occurring at a school; in other words, immersing myself more into the daily routine of the school. This could take a higher level of approval from the school district and university review board because it leans more on the authentic side of an ethnographic study.

An additionally limitation is the exclusion of type of artifact in the analysis. Whether it was deemed art, a sign, graffiti, or architecture was not included as part of the analyses of the photographic codings primarily because they did not correspond to the SDOCS constructs. Future research should incorporate the type of artifact into the analyses and result tables.

Another limitation is that two parameters were not discussed: Staff Support and Extracurricular, which comprised 244 photographic codings, or 4.6% of the total amount of photographic codings. These two parameters did not have comparable SDOCS constructs and were not imperative for the current study. In future research, the staff support and extracurricular parameters would ideally be incorporated.

Future Research

Future research would expand upon the current study and ensure that the limitations just discussed are considered. In addition, enhancing this study could include photographing the district buildings. Assessing the district buildings could assist in developing a composite portrayal of the whole district climate. This complete district assessment could be used to determine how the district-level climate influences the school-level climates. There may be ways to enhance the district climate that would permeate the school climates as well.

Furthermore, additional codes that I would like to explore in future studies are: community involvement, commercialization of education, substance abuse prevention, family involvement, future planning, and so on. Despite that these factors do not directly relate to a student's academic achievement, they indirectly influence the learning environment.

Having an assessment team code photographs to assess a school climate would provide multiple perspectives, which is lacking in the current study. Utilizing a participatory action research method called photovoice (Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998) an assessment team could collect and analyze photographs to facilitate change in their school. The assessment team could consist of two or three researchers, students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and district administrators as with the SDOCS survey; however, they would offer an in-depth perspective on the school climate if given the opportunity to take and then code photographs. Student involvement has occurred at the college level (J. Banning, personal communication, October 23, 2004), but not the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Parental involvement in this way would provide an opportunity for parents to have a say in their children's school and give a level of ownership with their children's education. This method puts the power in the hands of the school's stakeholders, not the 'expert', which promotes Starhawk's (1989) power-with concept. The use of an assessment team could also assist toward establishing validity of the findings.

The primary limitation that could further the current research on school climate is to photograph the school's classrooms. It would show how teachers contribute to the school climate based on the arrangement and construction of their

classroom. It could also assist in revealing what the students are being taught, which could indicate more transformational/social action codings that were lacking in the current study. This would provide an additional component to the resulting school climate description.

Given that the essential difference that I perceived between the higher-ranked and lower-ranked schools was the socioeconomic class of the surrounding neighborhood, incorporation of this would take this study a step further. Correlating the proportion of students who have free or reduced lunch status and/or the amount of taxes paid to the schools would validate or invalidate my belief. Also, it could be another source of data to enhance trustworthiness of the study even further.

In future manuscripts, I would like to develop an assessment model based on this study's research process. The model could be used by other feminist educational researchers as well as within other school districts. This potential application of the research process to influence change within schools and school districts could be considered transformative (Creswell, 2003).

Conclusion

As it has been shown repeatedly in the research literature, school climate influences student academic achievement. The studies within the literature employed a single methodology to collect data, typically a quantitative organizational climate survey administered to school stakeholders. Utilizing a sequential transformative mixed methods design, I studied how the results of the two methodologies were different and similar in terms of the conclusions drawn about the school climates. The school climate factors of parental involvement, school safety, and building facilities

were studied within 14 K-12 schools. Equity factors were also integrated into the study.

Given that these school climate factors are interdependent, the factors needed to be studied using multiple methods. The ‘sequential’ portion of the research design accomplished this, which first entailed a quantitative organizational climate survey and then a visual ethnography was conducted. The results from the two methodologies uncovered more similarities than differences between higher-ranked and lower-ranked school climates. The ‘transformative’ portion involved critiquing the results from a feminist lens, which produced recommendations for school climate improvement.

Despite the inventive design and unique methodology used, this study demonstrated that school climate provides a level of complexity that is difficult to assess and even more questions were uncovered about how to research a school climate in a way that actually captures what the school climate is like and how it influences student academic achievement. Future studies need to utilize innovative designs and progressive methodologies to ensure any modifications made to the school climate are carried out with intentionality and mindfulness. Last but definitely not least, feminist ideals should be at the forefront throughout the school climate assessment and improvement processes.

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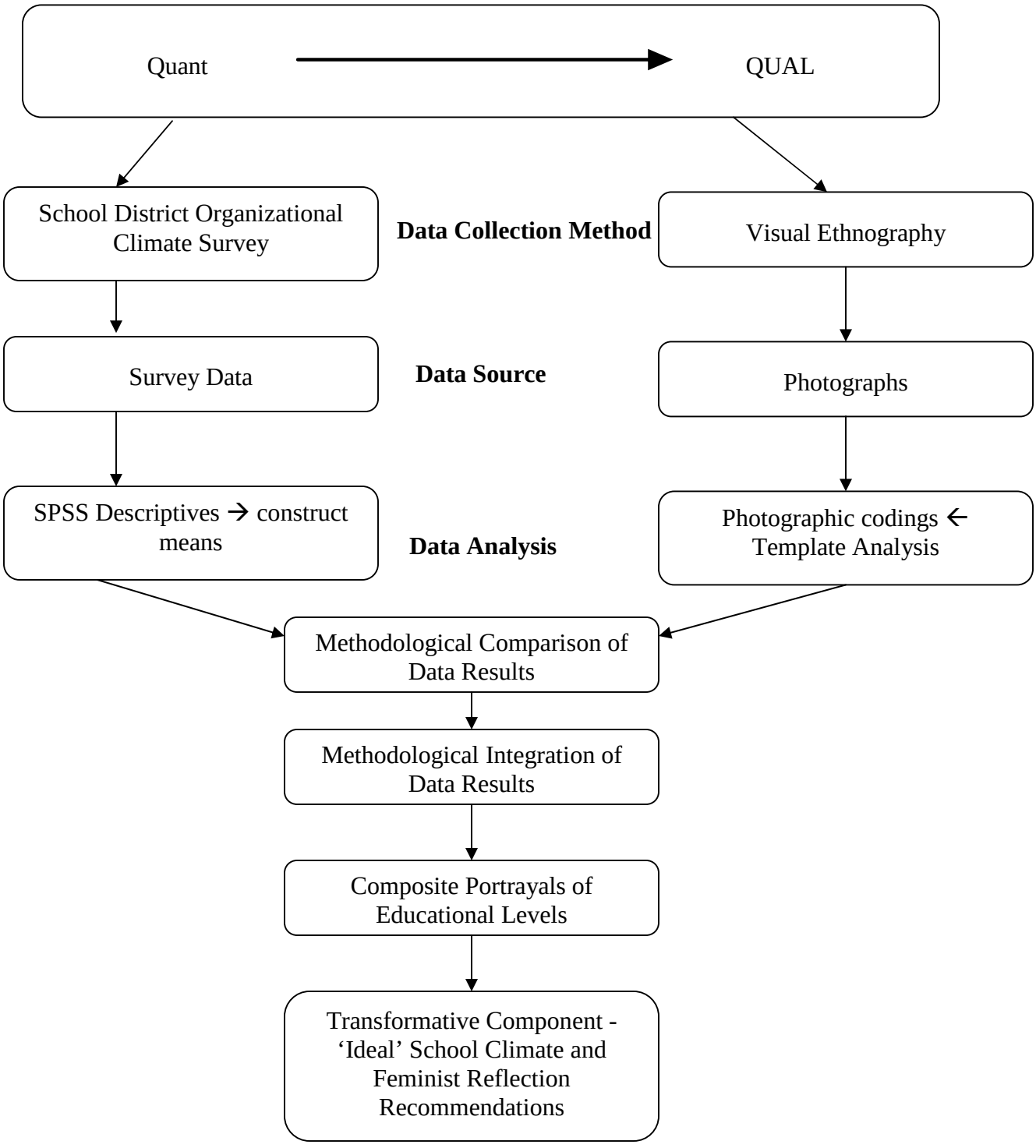
APPENDIX A


Quant
QUAL
School District Organizational Climate Survey
Data Collection Method
Visual Ethnography
Survey Data
Data Source
Photographs
SPSS Descriptives → construct means
Data Analysis
Photographic codings ← Template Analysis
Methodological Comparison of Data Results
Methodological Integration of Data Results
Composite Portrayals of Educational Levels
Transformative Component - 'Ideal' School Climate and Feminist Reflection Recommendations

APPENDIX B

_____ School District

Organization Climate Survey for Parents

Fall 2006

The purpose of this survey is to gather information regarding _____ School District's organizational climate. The district's organizational climate includes the learning environment, school safety, student effort, parent/guardian involvement, and your attitude and the attitudes of other members of the school community.

If you have more than one child, please select the child with the birthday closest to January 1st and keep that child's school in mind when completing this survey. If you would like to complete the survey for each child's school, please feel free to complete as many surveys as needed.

Each area of the organization climate is addressed with specific questions. Please mark or circle one response for each part of the question. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

1. Demographic Information

A. What is your gender?

❑ Male ❑ Female

B. What is your race/ethnicity?

❑ African American/Black (non-Hispanic)

❑ American Indian or Alaska Native

❑ Asian

❑ Hispanic/Latino

- ❑ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ❑ White (non-Hispanic)
- ❑ Multi-racial (more than one race/ethnicity)
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

What is your age group?

- ❑ 18 – 30 years of age
- ❑ 31 – 49 years of age
- ❑ 50 – 64 years of age
- ❑ 65 – 74 years of age
- ❑ Over 75 years of age

C. Which school does your child attend?

[The original survey had school names as response options. Due to protecting the confidentiality of the participating school district, they have been removed here.]

D. How do you rate your level of participation in supporting the school?

- ❑ Very active in the school
- ❑ Somewhat active in the school
- ❑ Not active in the school

E. How do you rate your level of support for your child and his/her learning?

- ❑ Very supportive of my child's learning
- ❑ Somewhat supportive of my child's learning
- ❑ Not very supportive of my child's learning

F. How do you rate your child's motivation to learn?

- ❑ Very motivated
- ❑ Somewhat motivated
- ❑ Not very motivated

G. How many years have you had a child attending this school?

- ❑ This is the first year
- ❑ 1 – 3 years
- ❑ 4 or more years

H. How would you rate this school compared to others your child(ren) have attended ?

- ❑ The best school so far
- ❑ About the same
- ❑ The worst school so far

2. School Climate

School climate is defined as the social atmosphere of the school or "learning environment."

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Learning environment	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Student discipline	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Student behavior	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Adequate emphasis on academics	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
E. Student apathy	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Lack of academic challenge	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Tension among teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Tension between teachers and administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Tension among different groups of students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

3. District Climate

District climate is defined as the social atmosphere of the district or the overall "learning environment."

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Learning environment	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Student discipline	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Student behavior	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Emphasis placed on academics	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Amount of standardized testing	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
F. Student apathy	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Lack of academic challenge	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Tension between schools	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Tension between teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J. Tension between teachers and administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
K. Tension between groups of students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

4. School Safety

School safety relates to how safe people feel while at the school.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Your child's physical safety while at school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Your child's emotional safety while at school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Safety of your child at recess	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Safety of your child traveling to and from school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Your influence over safety policies and practices	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
F. Physical conflicts among students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Verbal conflicts among students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Students' disrespect for teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Students' verbal abuse of teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

5. District Safety

District safety relates to how safe you feel while at other schools, district events, or other buildings within the district.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Your child's physical safety within district facilities	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Your child's emotional safety within district facilities	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Your influence over district safety policies and practices	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
D. Physical conflicts among students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Verbal conflicts among students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Students' disrespect for school staff	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Students' verbal abuse of school staff	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

6. School Choice

School choice refers to how important various factors were regarding the choice of which school your child attends.

How important were each of the following factors in choosing which school your child attends?	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
A. Standardized test scores	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Academic programs	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. School specialty program (i.e. Bilingual, Core Knowledge, School of Science)				
D. Geographical location of school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Existence of student diversity at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Lack of student diversity at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Extracurricular activities/programs (i.e., Chess Club, Odyssey of the Mind, book study, robotics team, after school classes, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Before & After School programs	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Teacher-to-Student ratio (i.e., class size)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J. Special education services	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
K. My child's friends	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
L. School building	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
M. School leadership (i.e., principal and/or assistant principal	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
N. Teaching staff	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
O. School's reputation in the community	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

P. Other:

_____

_____

_____

7. Student Effort

Student effort refers to how much effort students contribute to their learning experience.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Students' motivation to learn	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Parent/guardian support of students' learning	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
C. Student absenteeism	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Students come to school unprepared to learn	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Students dropping out	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

8. Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parent/guardian involvement refers to the extent that parents/legal guardians are involved with the school and student learning.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Level of support from parents/guardians at school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Level of involvement from parents/guardians at school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Support of parent-teacher conferences	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
D. Lack of parent involvement	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Too few opportunities for parent involvement	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Lack of parent support for student learning	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

9. Attitudes

Attitudes refers to attitudes of both yourself and other members of the school community.

How satisfied are you with the attitudes expressed by the following members of the school community?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. Students' attitude towards the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Parents'/guardians' attitude towards the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Teachers' attitude towards the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Administrators' attitude towards the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Your satisfaction with the level of support and recognition from school administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Your satisfaction with the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

10. School Leadership

School Leadership refers to the leadership within the school.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. School administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Teaching staff at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
C. Lack of communications from administrators.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Lack of leadership skills by administrators.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Lack of vision by leaders.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Decision-making process is not communicated	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Decision-making process takes too long.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Mission statement is not followed by administrators.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Policies are not explained.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J. Procedures are not explained.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

11. District Leadership

District leadership refers to the leadership at the district level.

How satisfied are you with the following?	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. School board	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. District administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
C. Lack of communications from administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Lack of leadership skills by administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Lack of vision by leaders	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. Decision-making process is not communicated	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Decision-making process takes too long	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. Mission statement is not followed by administrators.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Policies are not explained.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J. Procedures are not explained.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

12. School Physical Facilities

The physical facilities of your child's school are designed to support the learning of students in the school.

How satisfied are you with the physical facilities of:	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. The school your child attends	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Other buildings at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
C. The lack of classroom facilities at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. The lack of extracurricular facilities at the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

13. District Physical Facilities

The district's physical facilities are designed and utilized to support the learning of students in the district.

How satisfied are you with the physical facilities of:	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. The _____School District, in general	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. The School District compared to other school districts in Northern Colorado	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. The School District compared to other school districts you have knowledge of	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

To what extent is the following a problem?	Serious Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem
D. The lack of facilities in the district	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. The lack of administrative and support facilities in the district	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. The lack of classroom facilities in the district	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. The lack of extracurricular activities facilities in the district	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

14. School Communication

School communication relates to communications between you and your child's school personnel.

How satisfied are you with the following communication efforts in:	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. School's newsletter	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Communication with teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Communication with principal or assistant principal	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Communication with school staff	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. Media coverage of the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. School website	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. Internet grade viewer (only at the junior and senior high levels)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

15. District Communication

District communication relates to communication with and from the district

How satisfied are you with the following communication efforts in:	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
A. District's newsletter (i.e., *Connect*)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. Communication with district staff	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. Communication with district administrators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. Media coverage of the district	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. District's website	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

16. Additional Comments: Please write any additional comments you may have below and on the back side of this paper.