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## Research Paper

### Investigating the Effect of School Organization Climate on Iranian EFL Learners' Burnout Process and Educational Achievement

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#### Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of organizational climate on the burnout process and educational achievement of Iranian EFL learners. In order to achieve the goal, 300 intermediate EFL learners were selected from various foreign language institutions in Tehran, Iran. The participants were aged 19 to 30, male and female learners who were selected based on a convenience sampling method. Three main instruments were used in order to collect data. The results of analyzing the data indicated that there is a significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process. In addition, there is a significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement. It can be concluded that the environment created by schools significantly influences students' burnout and academic performance. A positive organizational climate inside the school may foster an exceptional environment and enhance harmony, hence improving student achievement. Evidence indicates that in schools characterized by open, healthy, collegial professional relationships and a strong academic focus, students experience empowerment, leading to an enhanced normative environment. Analyzing the school environment aids in comprehending and enhancing school operations, and a student's success or failure is significantly influenced by the school's organizational climate.

**Key terms:** Burnout process, Educational achievement, School organization climate

## Introduction

The term "organizational climate" is composed of two components: organization and climate. An organization is a collective of two or more individuals collaborating towards a shared objective. This collaborative framework encompasses several components, including human, physical, work, and cooperative features. Together, these components constitute an organization. Various scholars have provided distinct definitions for the organizational climate (Geleta, 2017). While several firms may exhibit comparable features in terms of their organizational climate, there might be variations in certain areas (Prastiawan et al., 2020). Therefore, the interpretation of the concept of "organizational climate" may vary and is contingent upon the unique environment. In the current context, the term "organizational climate" refers to the climate inside a school. The role of school extends beyond the mere transmission of information, as it is shaped by the interactions between human resources and the overall environment of the educational institution. Poor working circumstances may sometimes give rise to administrative, economic, and political challenges. According to Thomas (1976 as cited in Punia & Bala, 2023), the school may be characterized as an umbilical organization due to its origins from a central administrative body, while maintaining ongoing connections with such authority. The aforementioned ties are evident in the organizational atmosphere of the school, distinguishing it from other educational institutions. The idea of organizational climate is challenging to define precisely, although it has the potential to provide educators with a more comprehensive comprehension of the functioning of schools (Thomas, 1976, as cited in Punia & Bala, 2023). The proper operation of schools is contingent upon this factor, which has substantial implications for comprehending the success of any institution.

The achievement of effective teaching and learning is the outcome of intricate group dynamics and psychological mechanisms. The specific organizational variables and psychological mechanisms behind these processes remain under examination. Determine the methods to enhance students' educational achievements continues to be the focus of ongoing scholarly investigation and a primary goal of government and international organizations. An extensive corpus of research focused on the concept of "school climate" has arisen as a consequence of this interest. School climate encompasses the social aspects of a school, including the interactions between students and staff/teachers, the focus on learning and teaching, the values and norms set, and the common techniques and practices followed (Anderson, 1982; Moos, 1987; Thapa et al., 2013). According to Cohen et al. (2009), school climate encompasses the comprehensive quality and experiences of the educational environment. This encompasses both intangible elements, such as emotional bonds and attachment, as well as concrete elements, such as typical interactions between educators and learners and instructional methodologies (Reyes et al., 2012). The idea encompasses many intrinsic dimensions that distinguish various types of schools and have a substantial impact on school conduct. Considerations such as instructional methods, performance objectives, educational program, and professional growth of teachers influence the establishment of a conducive learning environment (Shindler et al., 2016). In addition to other variables, empirical data have shown the significant impact of school atmosphere on students' academic performance (Brand et al., 2008; Chen & Weikart, 2008; Collins & Parson, 2010).

Given its capacity to lead to many negative outcomes, such as socioeconomic, relational, and socio-professional challenges, the issue of student burnout is very significant (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Derakhshan et al., 2022a). Cornér et al. (2017) suggested that increased workload and sustained academic stress could contribute to the prevalence of student burnout. Crucial to the effectiveness of the educational process in contemporary institutions is the development of relevant abilities and the advancement of academic well-being (Zhang & Zhang, 2020;



Derakhshan et al., 2022a). The significance of a favorable school climate, supportive school environment, and strong teacher motivation has been well acknowledged in the sphere of education for its positive impact on students' academic performance (Grazia, 2022). The extent to which the educational environment provides support for the emotional, social, aesthetic, and psychomotor development of learners directly affects their ability to learn optimally (Cohen et al., 2009).

While previous research has investigated these factors in other academic settings, there was less understanding of how they may appear among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. EFL students may encounter distinct obstacles pertaining to their language skills, cultural disparities, and academic demands. These problems have the potential to influence their encounters with burnout, the school climate, and their educational attainment. Hence, it was important to examine these factors within the framework of Iranian EFL students in order to comprehend their potential influence on academic achievements and burnout among them. The importance of acquiring a second language (L2) in an educational setting has led many academics to investigate the influence of school climate on students' academic performance and their willingness to study. The good and negative characteristics of the school environment and their correlation with students' academic performance have been examined by Malinen and Savolainen (2016) as well as Salmela-Aro et al. (2008). The positive elements of school environment include several characteristics, including but not limited to, the presence of interest, social and academic growth, chances for communication and engagement, and a sense of solidarity among students. Conversely, adverse elements of school environment include communication ambiguity, confrontational dispositions, and unfavorable conduct shown by educators, reluctance to embrace change, disregard for student requirements, and adherence to traditional decision-making processes. The perspective of children may be influenced by the school atmosphere, which gradually changes as they go through higher grades, emphasizing their abilities and performance (Wang & Degol, 2016).

In recent years, the Ministry of Education has endeavored to implement reforms in the instruction of English in schools. A revision was implemented in 2003 to the Iranian pre-university English curriculum. The primary objective was to suggest a departure from the well-established grammar-translation curricular approach towards including instruction focused on developing communicative skills. In 2007, a team within the Ministry of Education produced the first Iranian national curriculum for teaching foreign languages, which was based on the communicative approach teaching framework. The revised curriculum was introduced in 2011, accompanied by significant modifications in the books and assessment system. These revisions were a direct outcome of policy shifts in Iran regarding the instruction of English (Sadeghi & Esmaeili, 2021). Given the present focus on enhancing students' functional abilities, such as acquiring English language proficiency and implementing learner-centred teaching, the educational systems at the school level have faced increasingly significant challenges. The primary viewpoint is that instructors adapt their teaching methods based on the contextual factors of the school (Solomon et al., 1996). Schools serve as the primary location for professional development. In educational institutions, instructors are given the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and actively build knowledge within genuine and practical settings (Maloney & Konza, 2011). School atmosphere significantly influences the implementation of concepts of FRDE and communicative language education, particularly in relation to student needs. This climate is crucial in determining the success of learners and the attainment of pedagogical objectives. Therefore, it is important to determine students' perspectives on the contextual elements of school and establish whether the school environment contributes to their attainment of learning objectives and their level of burnout.



The research expands the existing body of knowledge on student burnout and offers empirical support for the correlation between student burnout and two significant variables, namely perceived school climate and educational achievement, within the specific context of EFL learning among Iranian students. This study contributes to the comprehension of the potential impact of these variables on student burnout and provides a basis for future investigations in this domain. The findings of this research have significant implications for EFL teachers, educational administrators, and policymakers.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions,

**RQ1.** *Is there any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process?*

**RQ2.** *Is there any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement?*

And accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed:

**H01.** *There is any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process.*

**H02.** *There is any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement.*

### Literature review

The concept of school climate encompasses several definitions and focuses on diverse factors. However, a common underlying perspective throughout all definitions is the presence of favorable social ties and interpersonal interactions (Hayness et al., 1997). The concept of school life quality, as defined by Cohen et al. (2009), encompasses various aspects such as norms, objectives, values, interpersonal relationships, learning atmosphere, and organizational structure. It is closely linked to the sense of social, emotional, and psychological safety experienced within the school climate. The examination of school environment has significant academic, social, and psychological implications for students (Koth et al., 2008). According to the definition provided by Emmons et al. (1996), school climate refers to the collective beliefs and values that influence the dynamics of relationships among students, teachers, and administrators. The establishment of a positive school atmosphere is widely recognized as a crucial element in the success of educational institutions (Brands et al., 2003). Schools are required to accommodate the specific demands of each student and support their conceptual growth (Coofey, 2007). The significance of a pleasant atmosphere in fostering high academic success has been recognized by educators and researchers (Thepa et al., 2013). The perception of school climate among teachers has been found to have various implications, including job satisfaction (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995), burnout and attrition (Keiger, 2010), higher levels of teacher commitment (Hoy, 1990), school cohesiveness and trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), cooperation within the school community (Lunenburg, 2010), and the inclination to implement new academic principles and curricula (Beets, et al., 2008). Individual and collective experiences of instructors are influenced by a multitude of intricate internal and external elements, including interpersonal interactions with students and school officials. It is important for school leaders and administrators to endorse the needs and perspectives of community members and create an environment where all members, including instructors, collaborate to accomplish academic goals. Teachers should actively participate in community leadership and take responsibility for their job (Boon, 2010). Indeed, research suggests that the power of teachers and their participation in the decision-making process at school leads to favorable transformations in their profession. According to the findings of Vangrieken et al. (2017), there is a notable impact of school leadership on teacher communities.



The school learning environment is the general milieu in which academic activities take place in an educational setting (Aslam et al., 2012; Weinstein, 1979). As defined by UNESCO (2012), the school environment encompasses the physical, social, psychological, and intellectual factors that support the process of learning within a school setting. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines a school as a dynamic learning environment that facilitates the acquisition of educational experiences by students (OECD, 2018). The school environment encompasses the overall atmosphere, level of parental engagement, and leadership shown inside the school, which together facilitate the acquisition of knowledge (OECD, 2018a). Certain researchers also characterize the learning environment as the physical and social aspects of the classroom that impact the process of learning (Guney & Al, 2012; Malik & Rizvi, 2018).

In 1974, Freudenberger used the term "burnout" to refer to a condition of extreme fatigue caused by factors such as failure, depletion of energy and strength, or unmet desires that affect a person's internal resources (Freudenberger, 1974). Over the last two decades, many studies have been conducted in several commercial domains. The prevailing definition of burnout is the one proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1986), which conceptualizes burnout as a multidimensional phenomenon. The three aspects are referred to as emotional weariness, depersonalization, and personal achievement. Emotional fatigue is the state of having depleted emotional and physical resources, resulting in a lack of energy needed to do a job. Depersonalization is characterized by an indifferent and pessimistic attitude towards many elements of one's employment, and is associated with a lack of emotional and cognitive attachment to the job. Personal accomplishments include emotions of inadequacy, absence of success, and efficiency in the workplace. According to Maslach and Jackson (1984), the dimensions are independent of each other and may manifest at any given moment. According to Conley and You (2014) and Fisher (2011), burnout is a complex process that may manifest in many ways in different work settings. Mental symptoms of burnout include a decrease in self-actualization, depersonalization, and nervous breakdown (Mota et al., 2021).

Several studies (e.g., Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Javadi, 2014; Zed & Koomen, 2016) discussed related notions such as "work stress," but deliberately omitted the specific description of burnout. Furthermore, other research investigated factors that contribute to attrition (Baran et al., 2010; Buck, 2006), rather than burnout. However, the factors mentioned had significant associations with burnout. Conducting research on burnout at a national level became greatly challenging, thereby necessitating the inclusion of studies that combined concepts of attrition and job stress with burnout research. An inherent limitation of including attrition studies is their failure to encompass instructors who experience burnout yet continue to work in the profession. Although attrition studies and burnout studies address comparable issues and symptoms, it is not reasonable to assume that every teacher who departs is experiencing burnout, or that every burnt-out teacher would ultimately leave the profession. This may be shown by the analysis conducted by Hong (2010) on the factors contributing to attrition rates. Additional challenges emerged while attempting to locate scientific research specifically focused on burnout. Although these studies examined many factors that may be considered as causes of burnout, many of them neglected to go further into the ways in which these factors affected other aspects of teachers' lives and how they interacted with one another. Furthermore, the majority of research concentrated on the identification and/or intervention for certain factors that contribute to burnout (Lackritz, 2004). Including studies on attrition in the literature review enabled the researcher to delve deeper into the issue that prompted the study (Fisher, 2011; Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Jones & Youngs, 2012; Kelly & Northrop, 2015). Both the concepts of burnout and attrition are valuable in guiding this dissertation.





Another recurring theme identified in the existing research on burnout was the correlation between burnout and attrition. Previous research has shown that burnout is a strong indicator of attrition (e.g., Fisher, 2011; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012). Upon experiencing burnout, instructors often departed from the profession during the early stages of their careers. Conversely, other research revealed that burnout was really a phenomenon among instructors, although it did not contribute much to attrition. Instead, burnout may serve as a factor in developing resilience and emotional coping mechanisms that help minimize attrition (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Hong, 2012). By some measures, burnout and its correlation with attrition are fairly evident. Observable manifestations of burnout include emotional tiredness, cynicism, and inefficacy. Teachers experiencing any of these three aspects are often more prone to leaving the field. There are many factors that may be identified as contributing to the development of burnout in a teacher, which can be measured, and solutions can be developed and evaluated.

According to literature reports, causes of stress in jobs that serve the public are often associated with burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Research has shown that persons who possess lofty objectives and engage in frequent social interactions are prone to experiencing burnout (Evers et al., 2005). Gaining insight into the factors that cause burnout is crucial in order to avoid and decrease its occurrence (Lambert et al., 2013). Nevertheless, during the last thirty years, a comprehensive burnout model has been developed to elucidate the connections between the possible causes and effects of burnout, as well as the many characteristics of burnout itself (Byrne, 1994). A study done in the field of education proposed that research on burnout should focus only on the influence of environmental variables (Friedman, 1991). Furthermore, burnout arises from the interplay between the work environment and the person. Previous research on burnout has emphasized that the remedies for burnout should be explored within the social context of the workplace (Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Maslach, 1999).

Educational professionals lack agreement on the most effective approach to assess students' academic achievement, which they see as a very difficult undertaking (Chiekem, 2015). The difficulty of the problem lies in the fact that many methodologies might be used to ascertain learning results, including academic achievement (Carini et al., 2006; Lamas, 2015). For example, some research links student academic achievement to test or assessment results (Odeh et al., 2015), while others corroborate it with the attainment of intended learning objectives (Bossaert et al., 2011). Certain scholars have referred to academic accomplishment as a marker of evaluation, such as learning aptitude, academic success attained via cognitive talents, and the functioning of intelligence (Brown et al., 1989; Peng & Kievit, 2020; Yahaya et al., 2012). Secondary literature defines student academic accomplishment as the average grade point score (GPA) of students' scores attained in a course or as feedback on their knowledge of subject matter (Ahmad, 2014; Allen, 2005; Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). The variations in criteria used to evaluate pupils' academic performance have shown the difficulties that educators face in quantifying academic success.

Assessment methodologies may be categorized as either formal or informal, based on their intended objective (Caffrey, 2009). Formal assessment refers to standardized exams administered by an external entity, while informal assessment is conducted inside a school setting. For instance, while encouraging active participation in the classroom, a teacher might use informal assessment techniques to evaluate students' learning requirements for instructional reasons (Black & Wiliam, 2018). This evaluation result may impact which instructional methods most effectively facilitate students in attaining anticipated learning objectives. Informal evaluation implies that it enables instructors to adjust their teaching methods to address the ever-changing student learning requirements in the daily classroom (Lloyd & Koenig, 2008). Similarly,



instructors might utilize the question-and-answer approach to identify pupils with specific learning requirements. This method is efficacious in forecasting the strengths and limits of students in order to provide appropriate academic assistance. Furthermore, the evaluation of students' achievement may also serve as a means of making predictions by analyzing their prior knowledge (Lim et al., 2010; Thiede et al., 2015). A predictive assessment is a goal-oriented evaluation that assesses success according to designated learning goals (Clark, 2012).

Student evaluation may be used for diagnostic reasons to evaluate the functioning and overall competencies of students in relation to their holistic development (Shacham & Od-Cohen, 2009). Diagnostic evaluation allows educational institutions to modify instructional and learning approaches to improve educational achievements (Armbruster et al., 2009). The models ascertain distinct requirements among students, including cognitive, behavioral, and social demands that serve as crucial indications for academic achievement. For example, the feedback obtained from a diagnostic evaluation on a particular topic might reveal deficiencies in teaching methodologies. This information facilitates the monitoring of standards that aim to improve teaching methods (Caffrey, 2009). Based on this assumption, student evaluation is crucial for the environment of school learning and the overall development of pupils. Thus, educational institutions must use thorough evaluation methods that enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Nusche, 2013).

The classification of student evaluation as either summative or formative has historically been based on its roles in the learning process (Nusche, 2013). Summative evaluation assesses students' achievement of learning objectives by employing standardized exam criteria (Taras, 2007). It entails the responsibility to assess students' skills and knowledge throughout the learning process (Dixon & Worrell, 2016). The evaluation process serves as a concise representation of the progress of learning seen over a period of time and is quantified using grading systems (Harlen & Crick, 2002). This suggests that summative assessment serves as a tool to measure students' learning standards according to specific curriculum goals. Specific methods exist to assess the correlation between the school learning environment and academic performance in order to identify differences in students' learning outcomes (De Clercq et al., 2013). These frameworks provide a basis for connecting students' evaluation procedures to academic success and elucidate the impact of the environment on learning results. The context-input-process-output (CIPO) model conceptualizes education as a sequential process in which inputs are transformed into outcomes (Hulpia & Valcke, 2004). A framework consisting of context, input, process, and output is proposed to provide an analytical foundation for evaluating the quality of the learning process (Chang & Lin, 2018). The context encompasses the policies, environment, and methodologies that have an impact on the academic performance of pupils. The input refers to the necessary resources and infrastructure that students need in order to succeed, whereas the process involves activities aimed at attaining learning goals (Martínez-Abad, 2019). Output refers to the feedback that takes into consideration the progress of learning. The given model demonstrates the crucial significance of the school learning environment in both the learning processes and the learning outcomes (Hofman et al., 2009).

The study conducted by Wang and Holcombe (2010) investigated the perspectives of students on their school environment, level of school involvement, and academic achievement in the Eastern region of the United States of America. The study defined kids' school engagement as including school identity, self-regulation skills, and active involvement in educational activities. Students' perceptions consist of the interconnections between the conceptual frameworks and their academic achievements. Grade point average (GPA) is a measure of pupils' academic achievement. The research revealed that the school environment significantly influences the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development of pupils, which is crucial for their academic achievement. The study also confirmed that the help provided by instructors in promoting learning engagement had a substantial positive impact on students' academic achievement.



The study conducted by Lodhi et al. (2019) examined the relationship between school atmosphere and students' academic achievement in Pakistan. This study was carried out in Punjab province and included the participation of students, instructors, and administrators from public high schools. The study's objective was to uncover correlations between the school learning environment and students' academic achievement in the English language. The research revealed that many aspects of the school learning environment, including infrastructure, amenities, teacher competence, instructional methodologies, academic assistance, teacher-student interactions, and school-parent connections, accurately predicted the academic achievement of kids. The study confirmed that a conducive school learning environment augments the academic achievement of high school pupils. These findings support the goals of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) set by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (Osher et al., 2009). According to the CFS method, the creation of a favorable school learning environment improves the well-being of children, allowing them to reach their maximum potential, including academic achievement (Osher et al., 2009b).

Zullig et al. (2011) investigated the correlations between the atmosphere and contentment of a school and the academic achievement of its pupils. The research included pupils attending public middle and high schools in the United States. The objective of the study was to determine the perspective of pupils on their school environment and academic achievement. An assessment of school climate domains was conducted using the school climate measure (SCM) instrument. The evaluation questionnaire included components related to order, discipline, and safety, educational achievements, social interactions, school facilities, and school affiliation. Educational satisfaction refers to the subjective evaluation of students about their educational environment and their grade point average every academic year. The study revealed correlations between aspects of the school environment and the academic achievement of pupils. The research highlighted school climate as a crucial aspect of the school environment that resulted in notable disparities in kids' academic achievement. The dimensions were academic assistance, student-teacher interactions, school cohesion, school organizational structure and discipline, and academic contentment. Research suggests that a favorable educational setting in schools boosts students' motivation to study and promotes their academic achievement (Pianta & Hamre, 2009).

The study conducted by Kibriya and Jones (2020) investigated the influence of a secure school environment on the academic achievement of pupils. The inquiry included students, teachers, and administrators to ascertain the impact of a secure school environment on the academic achievement of children in elementary schools. The research administered the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), and Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME) as its measurement tools. The EGRA was used to evaluate pupils' literacy skills by focusing on orthography, fluency, reading, and comprehension capabilities. Numeracy skills were assessed using EGMA to measure pupils' fundamental mathematics and problem-solving proficiencies. The SSME tool assessed the school learning environment by particularly examining student demographics, management practices, infrastructure, instructional resources, safety measures, and management interactions with the school community. Academic performance assessment of pupils included assessing their standardized exam results in English and math. The research determined that the level of safety in schools was a crucial factor in determining the learning environment and greatly influenced the academic achievement of pupils. Furthermore, the study revealed that the demographic traits and home conditions of pupils had an impact on their learning. Therefore, the investigation determined that a conducive school learning environment might enhance learners' academic achievement.





Baidoo-Anu (2018) examined how the school and family settings affect the academic achievement of kids in Ghana. The study included students and instructors in junior high schools since their perspectives offered a valuable understanding of the teaching and learning challenges that impact academic achievement. This research was conducted in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District to investigate the school and home variables that influenced students' performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The assessment of these aspects was conducted using two well-verified pre-test self-designed questionnaires administered to both students and instructors. At the same time, the instructors' tool evaluated views of home situations, and the kids' instrument measured aspects relevant to schooling. Student academic achievement was assessed by the results obtained in the BECE examination using the WAEC grading system. The research findings indicated a correlation between children's subpar academic achievement and both school and home variables. The school factors included a lack of teaching and learning resources, poor school infrastructure, and dysfunctional school facilities, including the library and classrooms. The home issues included a prevailing absence of family engagement in school matters, particularly in parent-teacher association (PTA) activities. The research also confirmed that the neglect of parents in providing necessary academic assistance to children has a detrimental impact on their academic achievement. According to the study, the academic performance of pupils was significantly influenced by the school teaching environment, parental school participation, and academic assistance. The result suggests that the academic achievement of kids may be enhanced when the teaching methods in schools and the quality of home surroundings are conducive to learning.

The study conducted by Pobbi et al. (2018) examined the relationship between school atmosphere and students' academic achievement in 10 administrative areas of Ghana. The study focused on senior high school students and evaluated prominent school environment elements that influenced academic achievement based on standardized test results. The concept of school climate encompasses the classroom atmosphere, interpersonal dynamics, and academic facilitation. The assessment of academic achievement included calculating the mean scores in Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies using the WASSCE grading scheme. Assessment of school climate was conducted using the Inventory of School Climate (ISC) and the National School Climate Centre (NSCC) instrument. The study identified teaching and learning, interpersonal interactions, institutional environment, and school safety as crucial indicators of school climate that had a substantial impact on students' academic achievement. The research findings indicate that the physical environment of a school significantly influences the academic achievement of its learners.

The study conducted by Asamoah et al. (2020) examined the correlation between the school environment and the academic achievement of students in public senior high schools. The research was carried out in Kumasi city and investigated the relationship between school environment, teacher characteristics, and student variables that contributed to students' low academic achievement in core mathematics in WASSCE. The study included senior high school students and mathematics instructors and used a questionnaire for data gathering. Assessment of academic achievement was conducted by evaluating standardized exam results in WASSCE. The study revealed that the inadequate academic achievement of pupils in public senior high schools may be attributed to characteristics of instructors and the teaching environment. The issues were a lack of essential teaching and learning resources, textbooks for both instructors and students, and insufficient ongoing teacher professional development initiatives. The research also identified that teaching methodologies, teacher expertise in the subject matter, teacher-student interactions, academic assistance for students' learning, and instructor timeliness were indicators of low academic achievement in mathematics. These elements hindered the academic achievement of pupils and were associated with the teaching environment in schools. It may be



deduced that a school teaching atmosphere is crucial for attaining successful instructional results. The result suggests that a school equipped with enough resources for teaching may optimize the process of teaching and learning, thereby enhancing the academic achievement of learners.

The study conducted by Opoku-Asare and Siaw (2015) examined the differences in educational settings between rural and urban areas and the academic achievement of students. This research was conducted in Kumasi metropolitan and focused on senior high school students to identify the variables that contributed to differences in academic achievement in Visual Arts between rural and urban pupils. The study included 120 children and 18 instructors who were chosen at random from six schools. An integrated methodology including questionnaires, observations, and interviews was used for data gathering. Students' academic achievement was assessed based on their grades attained in the WASSCE. The results ascribed disparities in students' academic achievement to variables such as students' initial grades, school infrastructure, school geographical position, students' socioeconomic background, and level of motivation. The study also confirmed that pupils attending urban senior high schools outperformed their counterparts in rural institutions. The discrepancy in performance arose due to the fact that metropolitan institutions tend to recruit scholars with superior initial academic scores. Furthermore, the research revealed that children attending urban schools had greater motivation within their learning environment to attain superior academic performance compared to their counterparts in rural schools. The research findings indicate that the geographical placement of schools and the presence of sufficient school amenities are crucial elements that enhance the learning environment and academic achievement of children.

Kim (2020) conducted research that suggests a potential reduction in academic burnout via the adoption of a growth mindset, which is shown to be adversely mediated by academic grit. In a similar vein, Novotny (2016) examined the impact of mentality and grit on mitigating counselor burnout. The study revealed that counselor self-efficacy served as a protective barrier against burnout. In their study, Yu et al. (2022) examined how maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (ERS) influence the connection between motivation and burnout in EFL learners. The researchers observed that EFL learners reported high levels of burnout and found that burnout had a negative correlation with motivation and maladaptive ERS.

Rahmati (2015) conducted research examining the relationship between academic burnout and self-efficacy levels among academic students. The findings revealed a negative link between self-efficacy, academic burnout, and its various components.

The study conducted by Maricutoiu and Sulea (2019) also examined the influence of self-efficacy on the development of student engagement and burnout. The findings of their research indicated that self-efficacy had a mediating role in both phenomena. In their study, Gong et al. (2021) investigated the association between resilience and student burnout in China. Their findings revealed a negative connection, indicating that a decrease in resilience may be attributed to an emphasis on self-centeredness and underdeveloped coping strategies against stress, both at the individual and societal levels.

## Methodology

### Participants

The current study selected 300 intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from various language institutions in Tehran, Iran. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, where individuals who were easily accessible were chosen. Convenience sampling is a sort of non-probability sampling that involves selecting a sample from the population that is accessible (Ary et al., 2018). They have been learning the English language in various language schools in Tehran. Their level of language proficiency was intermediate based

on the institute's placement test results. The sample consisted of male and female students, with ages ranging from 19 to 30 years. Their first language was Persian.

### **Instruments**

To collect the required data, three instruments were administered to the sample of the study as follows:

#### **Foreign Language Burnout Scale**

The research used a survey instrument designed to assess burnout in English as a foreign language (EFL) student, known as the "Maslach Burnout Inventory-EFL Student Survey" (Liu, 2023). It consists of 10 items and three dimensions: Exhaustion (Ex, four items), Cynicism (Cy, three items). Participants responded to the items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from "completely disagree" to "completely agree." A representative item from the survey is "I have become less enthusiastic about my English studies." Moreover, three TEFL Ph.D. holders, who were faculty members of the Iranian universities with more than 10 years of teaching experience at the time of the study and had the required expertise in the field and the context under study, confirmed the scale's content validity. When its reliability was evaluated, it fell within the allowed range ( $r=.93$ ).

#### **School Organizational Climate Scale**

This study employed the School Climate Measure (SCM) instrument developed and validated by Zullig et al. (2014). The tool was used to investigate how individual students perceived their school environment. The instrument was adapted for this study because it is relevant to the research context. SCM comprises positive student-teacher relationships, academic support, order and discipline, and physical environment constructs. The 5-Likert scale of the constructs includes strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Its reliability was measured, and it was in an acceptable range ( $r=.91$ ). In addition, three TEFL Ph.D. holders, who were faculty members of the Iranian universities with more than 10 years of teaching experience at the time of the study and had the required expertise in the field and the context under study, confirmed the scale's content validity.

#### **Educational Achievement Scale**

It was the researcher-made scale that was designed based on the context of the study. The scale's items were created using the educational achievement criteria for learners that were taken from the relevant literature. There were 20 items in it, and it was a 5-point Likert scale. This scale was developed and administered in English. Additionally, three TEFL Ph.D. holders, who were faculty members of the Iranian universities with more than 10 years of teaching experience at the time of the study and had the required expertise in the field and the context under study, confirmed the scale's content validity. Its reliability was measured, and it was in an acceptable range ( $r=.89$ ).

### **Procedure**

The current study selected 300 intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from various language institutions in Tehran, Iran. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, where individuals who were easily accessible were chosen. They have been learning the English language in various language schools in Tehran, and their level of language proficiency was intermediate based on the institute's placement tests results.

The data collection was conducted at different language institutes in Tehran with the participation of 300 EFL students. For collecting the quantitative data, three questionnaires were employed in



the current study, which were mentioned in the instrumentation section. It took around 15 minutes for the participants to complete each questionnaire. The data was collected during four months. Before administering the questionnaires to students, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the procedure for answering the questionnaires. He explained that the results of the questionnaires were confidential and did not have any effect on their educational record in the institutes in order to minimize the participants' bias in their responses.

After collecting the quantitative data, the qualitative phase was undertaken. Based on Galvin (2015), to elicit reliable information for the qualitative interviews, at least 20 percent of the participants who are less than 50, and 10 percent of the participants who are above 100, should be interviewed. Therefore, from the sample of the study, 30 EFL learners (15 male and 15 female), who were about 10 percent of the participants, were interviewed by the researcher. The questions of the interview were extracted from the results of the scales by the researcher, and they consisted of 12 open-ended questions. The interview sessions were held for two months, and every session took about 15 minutes. They were performed face-to-face. The goal and timing of the interview were explained to the participants prior to the interview sessions. With the permission of the participants, all the interviews were audio-recorded to preserve the spoken words and then transcribed. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data. After reaching data saturation, when the data had stopped developing any new codes and themes, the researcher stopped conducting interviews. The reliability of the data was then confirmed through member checking.

### Results

The characteristics of the descriptive statistics of the research variables and their dimensions are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive indicators of research variables*

	N	Minimu m	Maxim um	Mean	Std. Devatio n	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statisti c	Statistic	Statisti c	Std. Err or	Statisti c	Std. Err or
Burnout	300	1.25	4.95	3.8242	.71097	-1.018	.221	1.617	.438
Climate	300	2.18	4.64	3.7651	.55878	-1.092	.221	1.348	.438
Achieveme nt	300	2.45	4.75	3.2598	.65879	-1.025	.221	1.457	.438

Based on the information in Table 4.1, the descriptive statistics of the variables derived from the indicators within the sample are presented. The mean of the variables in the sample is greater than the cut-off value of 3, which means that in the sample, respondents' burnout, organizational climate, and achievement are higher than the average value, and there is relative agreement in the sample. On the other hand, according to Steven (2002), the dispersion in the answers of people in the sample must be greater than the cut-off value of 0.5 for a variable. That is, it is clear that in the pre-processing section, indifferent people have been identified and



eliminated in each row. Consequently, all standard deviation values of each variable in the sample for the present research are greater than the cut-off value of 0.5.

The normality of the distribution of data obtained from spectra should be checked in the description of observations through two indicators of skewness and kurtosis. The necessary condition is that the indicators (items) must have a skewness value between -3 and 3, and their kurtosis value must be between -5 and 5. In the normality of data distribution of variables, the researcher must act according to two necessary and sufficient conditions to examine the indicators and variables. Since the data of this research have been obtained through a questionnaire and spectrum, the only method for investigation is the skewness and kurtosis indicators, and placing the observations in certain intervals. As shown in Table 4.1, two necessary and sufficient conditions were examined, and it was found that the data distribution of the research variables has a bell-shaped and normal pattern.

### Reliability of Research Instruments

Cronbach's alpha is a criterion for measuring reliability and a suitable measure for evaluating internal stability (internal consistency). A value of Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability.

**Table 2**

*Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients*

Latent variables	Cronbach's alpha
Burnout	0.915
Climate	0.875
Achievement	0.896

According to Table 2, it can be seen that all the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the latent variables are greater than 0.7, and the model has reliability in terms of this coefficient.

### Addressing the First Research Question

The first research question of the present study is as follows, '*Is there any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process?*'

**Table 3**

*Correlation Coefficient*

		climate	burnout
Climate	Pearson Correlation	.415**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the information listed in Table 3, it can be seen that based on the level of significance, this value is less than the error of the first type, the value of which is 0.01. This means that at the 99% probability level, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is rejected, and the  $H_1$  hypothesis, which is the research hypothesis, becomes significant. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process. Based on the correlation coefficient, it is determined that the intensity of the relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' burnout process is moderate.





### Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question of the present study is as follows, '*Is there any significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement?*'

**Table 4**

*Correlation Coefficient*

		Climate	Achievement
Climate	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the information in Table 4, it can be seen that based on the level of significance, this value is less than the error of the first type, the value of which is 0.01. This means that at the 99% probability level, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is rejected, and the  $H_1$  hypothesis, which is the research hypothesis, becomes significant. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement. Based on the correlation coefficient, it is determined that the intensity of the relationship between school organizational climate and Iranian EFL learners' educational achievement is good.

### Discussion

The findings of the first research question align with numerous studies in the literature that corroborate the association between organizational climate and burnout (Cordes et al., 2020; Kaya et al., 2010; Lubranska, 2011; Maidaniuc-Chirila & Constantin, 2017; Martinussen et al., 2007; Yildirim & Dinc, 2019). Recent research found a substantial negative correlation between organizational atmosphere and burnout (Pecino et al., 2019). Cordes et al. (1997) demonstrated that deficiencies in subordinate-manager relationships, coupled with efforts to attain success in a role characterized by insufficient resources, poor management, and coordination issues, lead to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in the context of organizational climate dimensions and job burnout levels. Further research indicated that strained interactions with supervisors heightened emotional tiredness (O'Driscoll & Schubert, 1988). In higher education, studies indicate that organizational atmosphere is inversely related to teacher burnout (Anbar & Eker, 2008; Maidaniuc-Chirila & Constantin, 2016; Taka et al., 2016). Research involving 300 academics in China (Zhong et al., 2009) indicated that managerial roles were predictive of overall burnout levels. Research on academic personnel in South Africa indicated that increased support from superiors correlated with reduced levels of reported burnout (Tytherleigh et al., 2008).

Moreover, the findings align with those of Ali and Kumar Naik (2021), who investigated the relationship and interactive influence of organizational environment on teacher burnout in upper secondary schools, considering gender, area, and kind. Research indicates a substantial correlation between corporate atmosphere and teacher fatigue. The research indicated that organizational environment (positive, neutral, and negative) does not interact with gender and geography to influence teacher burnout in upper secondary schools.

The findings of the second research question are in agreement with those of Akrofi Baafi (2021), who investigated the influence of the school learning environment on students' academic performance in Senior High Schools in Ghana. His findings demonstrated that all facets of the



school learning environment, including student-teacher relationships, academic support, physical environment, and teaching environment, exhibited a robust correlation with students' academic performance. Furthermore, the findings align with those of Brookover et al. (1978, as cited in Maxwell et al., 2017), who performed foundational research that established the connection between student environment and accomplishment. The researchers examined the impact of children's views of school atmosphere on average school success across three samples of racially diverse primary schools. The findings indicated that school atmosphere accounted for a substantial portion of the inter-school variation in average academic performance, with the strength of this correlation being comparable to that of economic position and ethnicity. Variability in accomplishment, beyond individual characteristics and socio-economic position, has been repeatedly elucidated by students' assessments of school atmosphere (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Brand et al., 2008; Collins & Parson, 2010).

The findings are in line with the findings of other research (Goddard et al., 2000b; Heck, 2000; Thapa et al., 2013). Hoy and Hannum (1997) and Tschannen-Moran et al. (2006) discovered a correlation between a favorable school atmosphere and students' academic progress. Conversely, a detrimental school atmosphere has been shown to diminish student engagement in school activities and impede student learning (Chen & Weikart, 2008). The correlation between environment and achievement seems to be strong across students of all grades, backgrounds, and cultures (Gregory et al., 2007; Jia et al., 2009). It seems to persist for years (Hoy et al., 1998), a finding corroborated by longitudinal investigations (e.g., Brand et al., 2008). Moreover, the findings corroborate those of Brand et al. (2008), who investigated the influence of staff climate views on student success, revealing three especially pertinent findings. Initially, educators' views of the school atmosphere were highly correlated with the reading and mathematics findings of eighth graders. Secondly, educators' assessments of students' success orientation showed a substantial correlation with students' performance in mathematics and reading. Third, instructors' assessments of the atmosphere were important predictors of less substantial indicators of accomplishment, such as students' academic efficacy.

Multiple sub-factors of school climate significantly influence academic attainment. For instance, academic attention (Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Goddard et al., 2000b), academic optimism (Smith & Hoy, 2007), and robust teacher-student interactions (Crosnoe et al., 2004; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006) have been shown to be very impactful. Specifically, student-teacher connections serve as a protective factor for school adjustment, including academic performance and behavioral issues, particularly for teenagers transitioning from middle school to high school (e.g., Longobardi et al., 2016).

The findings corroborate social cognitive theory, which has been a prominent theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between atmosphere and accomplishment in both students and staff (Bandura, 1993, 1997). Bandura (1993, 1997) contended that a healthy school atmosphere may augment self-efficacy and motivation by fostering a supportive setting in which people feel esteemed and competent. This may therefore result in elevated levels of accomplishment. Students need collective efficacy to leverage the impact of the school atmosphere, specifically regarding academic pressure, on their performance (Hoy et al., 2002). This methodology has been used to elucidate the influence of staff viewpoints on student performance (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000a). Caprara et al. (2006) discovered a substantial correlation between instructors' self-efficacy views and students' academic progress. Goddard et al. (2000) also discovered that collective teacher efficacy was a strong predictor of children's achievement in reading and mathematics. They determined that a one-unit rise in a school's collective teacher effectiveness score corresponded to an increase of almost 40% of a standard deviation in student performance.



Furthermore, the findings corroborate the self-determination theory posited by Deci and Ryan (1985), which emphasizes intrinsic motivation and the significance of satisfying fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A good school climate, defined by supportive connections, a feeling of safety, and respect, may substantially augment students' intrinsic motivation within the educational setting. When students experience more autonomy and competence in such an atmosphere, they are inclined to participate more profoundly in their learning, resulting in enhanced academic performance. Students and staff must fulfill the psychological fundamental requirements of relatedness, competence, and autonomy for students to succeed (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Roeser et al., 1998; Reeve, 2012; Taylor et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the findings support Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (1979, 1986), which has been examined by analyzing the impact of environmental layers (e.g., individual, family, and school) on student learning (Rosenfeld et al., 2000; Stewart, 2007; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (1979, 1986) underscores the interplay between people and their environment across several systems, including family, school, and community. The idea delineates how these layers, in conjunction with individual circumstances, influence a student's growth and motivation in learning. The school climate is crucial, since a pleasant and supportive environment may improve students' sense of belonging, motivation, and, therefore, their academic performance. This indicates that the quality of the school environment directly affects both emotional well-being and academic success, demonstrating the interdependence of the ecological systems around the student.

### **Conclusion and pedagogical implications**

The results implied that educational policies must prioritize school climate and provide frameworks to foster situations that help students both emotionally and intellectually. Teacher training on cultivating supportive environments may be advantageous. Curriculum developers and syllabus designers are responsible for fostering a friendly and inclusive educational atmosphere by providing courses centered on diversity and equality. The study's findings provide valuable implications for teacher educators, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to foster a pleasant learning environment via the implementation of comprehensive programs and practical activities. This will enhance students' academic performance and engagement while mitigating burnout among EFL students. The findings indicate that fostering a positive school environment might enhance students' academic performance and decrease their burnout rates. The results indicate that educational policymakers and administrators must prioritize fostering a collaborative and supportive organizational climate. Furthermore, suitable programs or tactics must be devised and executed to enhance learner engagement. The research advocates for regular assessments of the language school climate concerning academic performance and student burnout rates to facilitate informed choices or activities aimed at rectifying deficiencies or disparities within the institutions.

### **Recommendations for further studies**

While the research investigated the relationships among school climate, student burnout, and educational achievements, including more variables, such as motivation and emotions, might enhance the knowledge of this phenomenon. Moreover, the use of multidimensional scales is recognized as a means to enhance comprehension of intricate structures, such as classroom atmosphere, and it is suggested that subsequent scholars do similar investigations. This research also did not investigate the possible relationships among the sub-dimensions of school climate, student burnout, and educational achievements. Certain elements of the school climate, such as



teacher-student interactions or academic expectations, may have a more significant correlation with burnout and educational achievements than others. Future studies may investigate these sub-dimensions to get a more nuanced comprehension of the relationship between school climate, student burnout, and educational achievements.

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