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Research Article

Compliance to School Classroom Norms and Perceived School Climate among Senior High School Students in a Private University in Manila, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study aimed to determine the correlation between senior high school Grade 12 students' perception of school climate and compliance with school classroom norms in a private university in Manila, Philippines. A sample of 249 Grade 12 respondents who were randomly selected answered the online self-administered questionnaire composed of modified scales to explore the two variables, with Cronbach tests exhibiting an acceptable level of internal consistency (perceptions school climate = 0.88, compliance of classroom norms = 0.86). The study found a positive perception of school climate (M = 4.19, SD = 0.40) and a very high level of classroom norm compliance (M = 3.40, SD = 0.32) among the respondents. The Pearson R test revealed a significant moderate positive correlation between their perception of school climate and their level of school classroom norm compliance and (r = 0.554, p ≤ 0.001). This implies that their compliance or adherence to school classroom norms increases as their perception of school climate positively increases.

Keywords: school climate, compliance with school classroom norms, senior high school Grade 12 students, school discipline, social order

Introduction

Promoting and the maintenance of order and discipline in school setting is a challenging task for the school administrators. A positive school climate plays a significant role to achieving a successful and effective school (Koth et al., 2008) as it is defined as the school environment that is experienced by respondents and based on collective perceptions within the school that affects individual behavior (Hoy & Hannum, 1997). School climate is recognized as an influential and impactful area for student outcomes as it incorporates several factors that

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eventually create a sense of community within the school. In addition, a positive perception of school climate decreases the rates of dropouts and increases the level of connectedness in school (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Shukla et al., 2016). It has also been claimed that creating systems with strong school climate components affects student behavior and in turn, increases other school-level characteristics like healthy school interactions, student achievement and decreases recurrence of negative behavior such as bullying (Shukla et al., 2016; Stewart, 2006; White et al., 2014). The students' positive perception of school climate is assumed to affect or influence their compliance to school norms which regulates the students' and teachers' behavior (Stewart, 2006).

Compliance to school-classroom norms builds better social and school climates in educational institutions. Norms in general, are the rules or expectations of behavior and thoughts based on shared beliefs within a specific setting (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). These norms determine what is acceptable and not acceptable in society as they are mainly seen as restrictive behavior, mainly formal or informal laws. Norm compliance is better understood in terms of the preferences for following behavioral rules which apply to different cases of social interactions (Bicchieri et al., 2018). Other researchers have supported the claim that norms and conduct in the classroom setting could widely affect student behavior (Gasser et al., 2017). In fact, norms could function as stronger affectors to school discipline and school climate outcomes rather than laws (Suarez, 2010) as norms affect the classroom setting more directly. According to Naumann (2010), group norms affect individuals' actions towards others by applying the concept of descriptive norms. Descriptive norms are the act of observing the actions of others in a specific situation and applying these to themselves (Naumann, 2010) by exhibiting typical behaviors when interacting with other people. Group norms contribute to how individuals formulate decisions by showing helping behavior towards others which can be explained through theories such as the social learning theory (Naumann, 2010). According to Nabavi (2012) social learning theory promotes the importance of analyzing and imitating another's behavior or attitude especially those that are positive, as it takes both cognitive and environmental factors to create an impact on human learning and behavior. Furthermore, human behavior is a continuous reciprocal interaction between environmental, behavioral, and cognitive influences (Nabavi, 2012). Norms in the school setting are better defined as interpretations of school rules and roles that allow respondents to further share and coordinate their activities in the classroom setting (Turpen, & Finkelstein, 2010). However, it can also be interpreted through the relationship of compliance and sanctions as groups may resist social control, resulting in the group acting against the sanctions and discipline (Heckathorn, 1990). Moreover, McGuire et al. (2015) discovered that school norms are also explored as a positive indicator of relationships with other peers (McGuire et al., 2015) that could increase apositive environment within the school setting. Thus, school norms are also associated with the formation of students with outside factors that would result in informal rules, formal policies, and cultural norms within the school setting (Gregory et al., 2010). Norms, being a socially constructed concept, can be seen in informal and formal forms of discipline depending on the intent and authorities that enforce them. It is also a form of classroom management that emphasizes preventing classroom disruption alongside discipline which is more represented as how teachers handle student mis-behaviors (Lewis, 1999). Examining the link between students' positive perception of their school climate and their compliance to school norms is crucial to promote order in the school setting. This cross-sectional quantitative study therefore aimed to determine the correlation between the senior high school Grade 12 students' perception of their school climate and their level of compliance to their school classroom norms through the use of modified scales which were contextualized in the Philippines setting.

Methods

Sampling and Ethical Considerations

A total of 249 senior high school Grade 12 students (margin of error = 0.05, 95% level of confidence) from a private university in Manila, Philippines, from the 549 who submitted their accomplished consent/assent and parent's consent forms, took part in the online survey through Google Forms. Invitations via email were sent to those who randomly selected. Email addresses were drawn through the help of the Senior High School research coordinator.

In the data collection, a brief description of the study and its objectives in the cover letter were provided as well as the informed consent form that stated information like the study procedure, confidentiality, protection of the data, and contact information of both the researchers and the research ethics committee to provide for adequate ethical considerations and information. Respondents were also informed that they could refuse to join or withdraw from the study at any time without question nor consequence. A checkbox that asked for the informed consent/assent of the respondents was included before proceeding to the actual questionnaire so as to secure consent, and a copy of the entire questionnaire including the informed consent/assent was emailed to the respondents upon completion of the online form. Those who were below 18 years old were asked to submit their parent's accomplished consent form before the Google form link was sent to them.

Survey Questionnaire

The study utilized a self-administered survey questionnaire with two sections to determine 1. the student's perception of school classroom climate and 2. the students' level of compliance to classroom norm.

The students' perception of the school classroom climate section addressed matters relating to "student perceptions of the strictness of school rules, student perceptions of the fairness of discipline, student attitudes toward the legitimacy of school-based authority, and student perceptions of teacher-student relationships (Way, 2011)." It used the Meriden

School Climate Survey- Student Version as its reference to measure the School Climate (Gage et al., 2016) but contextualized to fit into the Philippine condition. From the seven domains of school climate from the mentioned reference instrument, the current study only used five domains namely 1. teacher's support, 2. safety, 3. respect, 4. home support, and 5. peer support which were adjusted to better fit in the local context to measuring school classroom climate.

The second section of the survey instrument measured the students' level of schoolclassroom norm and the instrument was constructed from the ideas drawn from the previous literature reviewed which was contextualized to reflect the private university's Integrated School Student Handbook Discipline policy on general norms of conduct inside the classroom through behavioral statements. Domains covered to measured compliance to school norms were: 1. fairness, 2. authority, 3. teacher-student relationship, and 4. strictness.

Likert scale was used to measure their perception of their school classroom climate (ratings of agreement from strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree) and compliance to school classroom norms (from never, sometimes, often to always). Cronbach's testing of the two tools yielded an acceptable level of internal consistency (compliance of classroom norms = 0.86, perceptions school climate = 0.88).

Data Analysis

The study used JASP version 14.0 to process the quantitative data. The data analysis used descriptive statistics and correlation tests (Pearson R) to look at the association between the two variables (school classroom climate and compliance to school classroom norms). The following guides were used as a measure of interpretation for the results: 1. perception of school climate: 1 – 1.79, Very Highly Negative; 1.8 – 2.59, Highly Negative; 2.6 – 3.39, Moderate; 3.4 - 4.19, Highly Positive; 4.20 - 5.00, Very Highly Positive; and 2. level of compliance of school classroom norms: and 2. level of compliance of school classroom norms: 1 -1.59, Very Low Compliance; 1.6 – 2.19, Low Compliance, 2.2 – 2.79: Moderate Compliance,

2.8 – 3.39, High Compliance: 3.40 – 4.00, Very High Compliance.

Result and Discussion

Perception about school classroom climate

Table 1 shows the high level of perceived school climate among senior highschool Grade 12 students of a private university in Manila (M = 4.19, SD = 0.40). Measuring the collective perceptions of the students regarding the school classroom environment was contextualized through domains of teacher support, safety, respect, home support, and peer support. Safety, which is the students' view that their holistic safety in school is secured and free from violence and bullying (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015), scored very high across statements with only one statement regarding feeling safe to leave belongings garnering high agreement perceptions (M = 3.77, SD = 1.07). Apart from this, data shows very high agreement in the school climate indicator of safety resulting in the highest observed weighted mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.50 in the questionnaire. This is closely followed by Teacher support, which involves a positive relationship of students to teachers which increases classroom interaction and reduces problematic behavior (Cabello & Terrell, 1994), which showed a very high level of agreement with a weighted mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.53. The statement, "my teachers want me to work hard and do well" rated very high (M = 4.41, SD = 0.63) alongside the statement that teachers listen to the respondents (M = 4.30, SD = 0.70), treat students with respect (M = 4.26, SD = 0.65) and appreciates students when they do a good job (M = 4.21, SD = 0.76), showing a positive relationship in classes. Statements regarding having teachers who care about the respondents (M = 4.19, SD = 0.80) and that the respondents can trust (M = 4.05, SD = 0.93) on the other hand were found to lower means with high levels of agreement among the grade 12 respondents but still showing positive indicators of agreement for the institution. Peer Support, fosters a sense of connectedness in the classroom environment (Dwyer et al., 2004) and affects students' social development (Zullig et al.,

2010), is shown to have a very high level of agreement in the school climate scale (M = 4.22, SD = 0.67). The study shows that there is a very high agreement that the respondents have friends in class that can help in their requirements (M = 4.56, SD = 0.74), a friend that they can really trust (M = 4.53, SD = 0.75), a friend whom they could talk about their personal problems with (M = 4.33, SD = 0.94), and a friend that cares about them (M = 4.33, SD =0.89). The study also shows that there is a high level of agreement that the class listens to the respondents (M = 3.92, SD = 0.84) and that the respondents can approach anyone in class (M = 3.63, SD = 1.15). Thus, it can be shown that wider class interaction is present but less agreed upon. The same case with safety could be observed with the domain respect where five statements scored very high levels of agreement and one statement scored high levels of agreement only. The students perceived the domain respect, which in this study is seen as a characteristic of the environment with unbiased, supportive and motivating peers, teachers, or administrators (Holley & Steiner 2005) to be observed within the school since having peers open to new ideas (M = 4.35, SD = 0.69), students respecting differences of other students (M = 4.30, SD = 0.72), teacher respecting students (M = 4.30, SD = 0.66), teachers respecting student opinions (M = 4.24, SD = 0.71), students having good skills to express themselves (M = 4.23, SD = 0.73) and teachers being unbiased (M = 3.54, SD = 0.94) were all rated with very high agreement except the latter. Conversely, the data showed more spread-out student views on the school climate domain of home support from moderate to very high agreement. The data shows that statements involving family members wanting the respondents to do their best (M = 4.66, SD = 0.61), family members who expect respondents to follow rules (M = 4.29, SD = 0.85), and family members who care about the respondent's school work (M = 4.22, SD = 0.84) possessed very high levels of agreement while home support in the form of a space to work (M = 3.97, SD = 1.10) and a family member who listens to the students (M = 3.82, SD = 1.13) reporting high levels of agreement, with only the statement involving a

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family member who will help with school work (M = 3.36, SD = 1.30) showing moderate agreement. The home support domain serves as a multidimensional construct on the expectations on achievements, interest in the child's schoolwork, level and type of help provided when the child does homework, and reinforcement behaviors of the child's achievements (Fan, 2001) that are strongly associated with students' behavior at school and the attitude towards learning (Gonzales et al., 2002) personality development and academic performance (Chohan & Khan, 2010). Thus, the more

varied results point to a possible point of development. Overall, the school climate result shows that the senior high school Grade 12 students have a highly to very highly positive perception of their school classroom climate, and that only one statement in the home support domain received a moderate score, that is referring to "having a family member who can help in homework". Thus, this implies that the respondents seek for the visible presence of family support to their academic needs and requirements.

Table 1. Levels of Compliance on School Classroom Norms

	-		
Classroom Norms	М	SD	Qualitative Description*
Fairness			
I advocate for equality for classmates who are	3.78	0.56	Very High
struggling in academics			
I do my fair share of work in the assigned group	3.74	0.48	Very High
work			
I call for transparency within the grading system	3.65	0.60	Very High
I see that male and female student are equally	3.65	0.57	Very High
treated	0 5 5	0.40	
I am held to the same standards as my classmates	3.55	0.63	Very High
I support that there is no favoritism amongst	3.31	0.81	High
teachers	2 (1	0.20	
Weighted Mean	3.61	0.39	Very High
Authority		~ 	
I seek permission before I speak in class	3.64	0.57	Very High
I listen to my homeroom adviser and teacher	3.61	0.58	Very High
I follow school rules and regulations	3.52	0.55	Very High
I ask permission before leaving the classroom	3.41	0.75	Very High
I do not write on the board without permission	3.25	0.82	High
I attend classes prepared	3.03	0.63	High
Weighted Mean	3.41	0.42	Very High
Teacher-Student Relationship			
I answer the teacher politely when called	3.92	0.28	Very High
I show respect towards the teacher when he/she	3.83	0.43	Very High
enters and leaves the class.			
I humbly and respectfully accept what my teacher	3.75	0.46	Very High
tells me			
When there are issues, I can privately and	3.51	0.70	Very High
respectfully address it with the teacher			
I can openly share my thoughts and opinions	2.71	0.90	Moderate
inside the classroom with my teacher			
Aside from academics, I can discuss personal	2.19	1.00	Moderate
issues with my teacher			

Weighted Mean	3.32	0.42	High
Strictness			
I observe cleanliness and orderliness inside the	3.55	0.61	Very High
classroom			
I comply with classroom norms	3.44	0.57	Very High
I come to class on time	3.32	0.71	High
I strictly observe the rules enforced in the	3.18	0.64	High
classroom			
I turn off all lights, fans, and air conditioner when	3.10	0.93	High
leaving the room			
I ensure silence in the classroom	2.90	0.76	High
Weighted Mean	3.25	0.43	High
Overall	3.40	0.32	Very High

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*Legend: 1 – 1.79: Very Highly Negative; 1.8 – 2.59: Highly Negative; 2.6 – 3.39: Moderate; 3.4 – 4.19: Highly Positive; 4.20 – 5.00: Very Highly Positive

Compliance to School Classroom Norms

Table 2, on the other hand, shows the levels of compliance on school classroom norms among the respondents characterized by positive behavior in matters relating to "student perceptions of the strictness of school rules, student perceptions of the fairness of discipline, student attitudes toward the legitimacy of school-based authority, and student perceptions of teacher-student relationships (Way, 2011)." Classroom norms involving fairness which look into students' belief, knowledge, and understanding in the school rules systems reported a range of high to very high compliance and the highest weighted mean of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 0.39 reporting only one statement yielding high compliance which involves not supporting favoritism (M =3.31, SD = 0.81). This points to a preference on positive discipline paradigms over-restrictive ones like authority and strictness compliance. Statements of norms advocating for equality in academics (M = 3.78, SD = 0.56), doing fair share of work (M = 3.74, SD = 0.48), calling for grade system transparency (M = 3.65, SD =0.60), gender equality (M = 3.65, SD = 0.57), and similar expectations with classmates (M = 3.55, SD = 0.63) all reported very high compliance of students on school norms involving fairness in the classroom. Statements that measured student's compliance with authority, which involves disciplining mechanisms of rule or school personnel-based authority (Irby & Clough, 2014), was the domain with the second-highest level of compliance with a weighted mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.42, showing high to very high compliance and observance to personnel-based authority like teachers and advisers and rulebased authority with norms and regulations. The classroom norms of seeking permission to speak (M = 3.64, SD = 0.57), listening to homeroom advisers and teachers (M = 3.61, SD =0.58), following school rules and regulations (M = 3.52, SD = 0.55), asking permission to leave the classroom (M = 3.41, SD = 0.75), refraining from writing on the board (M = 3.25, SD = 0.82) and attending classes prepared (M = 3.03, SD =0.63) was the order of the norms of authority from the highest to lowest level of compliance among grade 12 students showing a slightly higher classroom norm compliance towards personnel based authority rather than specific examples of rule-based classroom norms. Only teacher to student relationships, which measure student compliance of norms attributed to social interactions among students with teachers (Koth et al., 2008), reported a wider spread of levels of compliance in the classroom norm questionnaire from moderate to very high compliance. Out of the entire scale of Classroom Norm Compliance, only two statements regarding sharing thoughts with teachers were rated moderate; both of which fall under this domain with the first involving sharing opinions and thoughts in the classroom (M = 2.71,

SD = 0.90) and the second involving discussing personal issues with the teachers (M = 2.19, SD = 1.00) which is also the least observed in the whole Classroom Norm Compliance survey. Despite this, it is also in the teacher relationship domain where the statement which rated the highest level of Compliance on the School Classroom Norm questionnaire was measured. This statement was regarding students answering teachers politely which rated very high compliance (M = 3.92, SD = 0.28). Aside from this, classroom norms of respecting teachers when they enter and leave the class (M = 3.83, SD =0.43), humbly accepting teachers' input (M =3.75, SD = 0.46), and being able to privately address issues with the teacher (M = 3.51, SD =0.70) also scored very high compliance within the domain. Moreover, for the final domain of classroom norm compliance, the data shows that there is a high to very high compliance in behaviors regarding strictness which aims to

deter misbehavior (Gage et al., 2016) however, it is the domain with the lowest weighted mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.43 but still a high level of compliance. Regardless ratings of positive behavior relating to cleanliness and orderliness inside the classroom (M = 3.55, SD =0.61), followed by compliance with norms (M =3.44, SD = 0.57), punctuality (M = 3.32, SD =(0.71), strict observance of classroom rules (M =3.18, SD = 0.64), classroom maintenance (M =3.10, SD = 0.93) and ensuring silence (M = 2.90, SD = 0.76) were recorded with very high to high descriptive values still. Thus, it can be said that, as a whole, the data shows that the grade 12 students have a very high level of compliance (M = 3.40, SD = 0.32) with the different school norms in the classrooms. The respondents thus observed and continue to adhere to the rules and guidelines reflected in the private university's Integrated School student handbook.

School Climate Indicators	М	SD	Qualitative Description	
Safety				
I encounter physical bullying inside the	4.64	0.84	Very High	
classroom*				
I am free from structural harm in the classroom	4.40	0.68	Very High	
I encounter verbal bullying inside the classroom*	4.26	1.00	Very High	
I feel secured inside the class	4.26	0.78	Very High	
Equipments are properly maintained in the	4.21	0.76	Very High	
classroom				
I feel safe leaving my belongings in class	3.77	1.07	High	
Weighted Mean	4.26	0.50	Very high	
Teacher Support				
My teachers want me to work hard and do well	4.41	0.63	Very High	
The teacher listens to me when I have something	4.30	0.70	Very High	
to say				
Teachers treat students with respect	4.26	0.65	Very High	
The teacher appreciates me when I do a good job	4.21	0.76	Very High	
There are teachers who care about me	4.19	0.80	High	
There is a teacher whom I can trust	4.05	0.93	High	
Weighted Mean	4.24	0.53	Very high	
Peer Support	4.56			
I have a classmate, who is also a friend, who can		0.74	Very High	
help me in my academics				
Among my classmates, I have a friend whom I can	4.53	0.75	Very High	
really trust				

Table 2. Level of Agreement of Perceptions of School Climate Indicators

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I have a classmate, who is also a friend, whom I can talk to about my personal problems	4.33	0.94	Very High
I have a friend in my class that really cares about me	4.33	0.89	Very High
My classmates listen to me	3.92	0.84	High
I can approach anyone in the class	3.63	1.15	High
Weighted Mean	4.22	0.67	Very High
Respect			
Students are open to new ideas from other people in the class	4.35	0.69	Very High
Students respect differences in other students	4.30	0.72	Very High
Teachers respect students in the class	4.30	0.66	Very High
Teachers respect students' opinions	4.24	0.71	Very High
Students have good skills in expressing their thoughts	4.23	0.73	Very High
Teachers are not biased	3.54	0.94	High
Weighted Mean	4.16	0.55	High
Home Support			
I have an adult who always wants me to do my best	4.66	0.61	Very High
I have an adult who expects me to follow school rules	4.29	0.85	Very High
I have an adult who cares about my school work	4.22	0.84	Very High
I have my own space to do my homework	3.97	1.10	High
I have a parent or adult who listens to me when I	3.82	1.13	High
have something to say			
If I need help with homework, a parent or adult will help me	3.36	1.30	Moderate
Weighted Mean	4.05	0.44	High
Overall	4.19	0.40	High

*Legend: 1 – 1.59: Very Low Compliance; 1.6 – 2.19: Low Compliance; 2.2 – 2.79: Moderate Compliance; 2.8 – 3.39: High Compliance; 3.40 – 4.00: Very High Compliance.

Correlation between Perceptions of School Classroom Climate and their Compliance to School Classroom Norms

Table 3 reveals a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between their perceptions of school classroom climate and their compliance to classroom norms (r = 0.554, p ≤ 0.001). Thus, showing that as their perception of school climate positively increases, the level of their compliance to school classroom norm also increases.

Table 3. Correlation Between Perception of School Classroom Climate and Compliance to School Clssroom Norm (n=249)

Correlations	М	SD	Pearson's r	р	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Classroom Norm Compliance	3.40	0.32	-			
Perceptions of School Climate	4.19	0.40	0.554	<.001	0.462	0.635
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001						

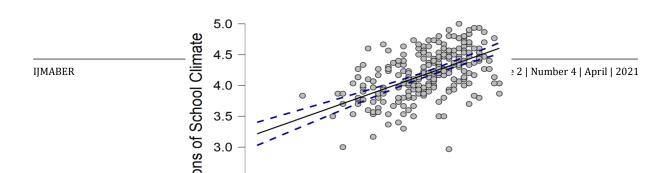


Figure 1. Scatterplot of Perceptions of School Climate and Compliance of School Norms (n=249)

The results therefore support the study of Nabavi (2012) that behavior like compliance or adherence to norms is learned not only from cognitive factors but also from the environment. A positive school environment promotes compliance to school rules which make the students coordinate their activities in the classroom setting. The results also supports that studies of Lewis (1999) and McGuire et al. (2015) that a positive environment within the school setting is associated with formation of students discipline.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The senior high school Grade 12 student's perception of their school classroom climate revealed to be highly positive. Four of its domains got a very highly positive perception of their school classroom climate except for the home support that received high positive ratings. As all the domains received very high ratings from the respondents, the home support calls for attention and that the respondents seek from the family's visible presence and support to their academic needs and requirements. Home support proved to be more varied with high to very high levels of material and emotional support but less direct help with school matters by the family members as evidenced by the moderate level of agreement. No one can deny that the role of the family in the academic life of a student is crucial and has a

big role to play in the student's academic performance. The school may remind the parents' of the important role that they have in the academic life of the student.

Regarding compliance to school classroom norms, the respondents revealed to have a very high level of compliance with school classroom norms stipulated in the student handbook. Areas of improvement were in the domain of teacher-student relationship, where moderate compliance was reported, which shows that students are not as able to discuss their thoughts or personal issues with their teacher. Ensuring silence as well attending classes prepared also scored among the lowest complied norms in the study despite being within the high level of compliance rating. These imply that respect for teachers, answering to them politely, and advocating for equality in learning within the classroom setting were the most highly complied norms, belonging to the teacher-student relationship and fairness domain. Compliance with classroom norms regarding fairness which stems from the understanding and belief in the rule-based systems of the school was also noticeably higher than classroom norms involving strictness which serve as deterrents to misbehavior, and authority, which are the school disciplining mechanisms. A small but noticeable difference in compliance favoring personnel-based authority enforced by teachers and homeroom advisers rather than rule-based classroom norms was

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likewise observed; showing a preference for active enforcement rather than more passive established rules.

A statistically significant positive moderate correlation between classroom norm compliance and perceptions of school climate was recorded through Pearson R test. This concludes that as their perception of school climate positively increases, the level of their compliance to school classroom norm also increases. It also implies that their school norms' compliance or adherence to school rules escalates as their positive perception of their school classroom climate also escalates. Thus, a positive perception of the school classroom by the students is crucial to ensuring compliance or adherence to school norms or rules and regulations, and thus advancing a system of order in the school classroom setting.

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