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SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT:
IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR ROLES

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of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
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ABSTRACT

This study shows that whilst the emergence of school climate as an educational issue of major importance is being recognised in the more recent schooling effects literature, the actual concept remains somewhat elusive and vaguely defined. A severe lack of knowledge and need for study into the area, particularly of primary school climates, is also evident.

The actual concept of climate is thus discussed and analysed and evidence in support of the need for its assessment is presented. Past measures used for climate assessment are then reviewed with the aim of selecting an appropriate instrument to identify school climate perceptions of primary school students in this study. Here a new area of school climate information - the quality of school life - was introduced. The Quality of School Life Questionnaire which enabled differentiation between a number of climate dimensions, was selected as being the most appropriate instrument for minor modification and use in this study. The refined version titled School Life was administered to 587 students from 23 classes in 12 A.C.T. primary schools.

Data was analysed to provide detailed information concerning students' views of the positive and negative aspects of their school climate. To determine the validity of these results and to strengthen the study as a whole students with very high/very low school climate

perceptions were then interviewed. This enabled more detailed discussions of these students' perceptions of school life. Also, it enabled examination of the possibility of employing school counsellor intervention techniques at both the school and personal levels aimed at assisting such students in coping more adequately in their school systems.

The results indicate that school climate assessment can provide important information which could be utilized by school counsellors. In this Study, such assessment led to actual identification of the high/low quality areas in school climates and led to identification with reasonable accuracy of individual students not coping in their existent climates.

Thus the possibility and the value of school counsellors working towards 'individualizing' school climates through either modifying the actual climate or climate dimension/s to better match student needs, or through employing intervention techniques aimed at helping individual students not coping in their particular school climates is examined and emphasized.

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