

Predicting Students' Social Movement Citizenship based on Open Classroom Climate, Political Efficacy and Civic Knowledge

Sakineh Jafari^{1*}, Maryam Ostadrahimi²

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran (Corresponding Author).

2. PhD Student, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran.

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Purpose: The purpose of the present study was to predict students' social movement citizenship based on open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge.

Methodology: This study was an applied research according to the purpose and is a type of descriptive-correlational researches on the basis of data collection method. The statistical population of the study consisted of all the students of the college of education and psychology at Semnan University in the academic year 2018-2019. The participants were 227 students (107 male students, 120 female students) who were selected using stratified random sampling method. All of them completed open classroom climate, political awareness, civic knowledge and social movement questionnaires. The data was analyzed by SPSS and LISREL software and Pearson correlation coefficient technique and path analysis model.

Findings: The findings showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge with students' social movement citizenship. Open classroom climate has not a direct and significant effect on students' social movement citizenship. Open classroom climate has a significant indirect influence on students' social movement citizenship through mediation of political efficacy. Open classroom climate has a significant indirect impact on students' social movement citizenship through mediation of civic knowledge.

Conclusion: The results of this study indicate the importance of paying attention to the role of open classroom climate, political awareness and civic knowledge in increasing students' social movement citizenship.

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* Corresponding Author Email: sjafari.105@semnan.ac.ir

1. Introduction

Nowadays, there is a serious competition in different fields among universities, including national and international management of faculty members and students and funding and research management. They need to keep their reputation and fame, produce high-quality research projects, and satisfy students, faculty members and responding their increasing needs (Findlow, 2012). Accordingly, the demands for higher education is increasing every day and due to the rise in unemployment rate and economic crises, people attempt to get a decent job by acquiring enough qualification and skill. Therefore, higher education must provide better service to people and students' merits and improvements can play a pivotal role (Alexander et al., 2012). However, responding the new responsibilities in universities and understanding the concept of a polynomial university has shed the light on students' growth from the policymakers and top managers in higher education. Therefore, universities reaction to students' growth (as the main people referred to universities) has always been a debatable subject at universities so that universities and higher education institutes gradually realized that they need plans to fundamentally help them develop in management, development and improvement of this asset as universities are the cornerstones of education, training, transference of information and virtue (Little et al., 2007).

University is regarded as an entity which has an important role in students' socializing. Apportioning duties and responsibilities and also clarifying the role of students in social activities make the students pay more attention to social discipline; their achievements are also used to advance the affairs and achieve the educational goals; so, universities have a crucial role in preparing today's and future young generation to accept the responsibilities in social movement citizenship and hence lead to their higher engagement in political, social, and economic movements of society.

Also, one duty of universities is making students familiar with the condition of the society. During socializing process, a person learns to cooperate with other members of the society and follow the social norms. The amount of cooperation in different social movements and their responsibility shows their social growth which takes place at universities (Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015). Moreover, the notion of a citizen as a person who undergoes his duties and regards this self-efficacy as a presupposition to his participation is a way that makes many organizations legitimate. Citizenship is an approach referring to different rights within a society and leads to interaction between a person and a society. It also gives a person the right to involve in political power and benefit from social and citizenship rights; therefore, a modern human being is an active and aware citizen who feel responsible toward doing his responsibilities in a society. As the efficacy and responsibility toward the society increases, people's voluntarily participation will increase and they will have a more important share in society development (Tremblay et al., 2012); therefore, training efficient citizens is an important role of universities, as people need new skills in 21st century and developing human capital will be meaningless without education (Avrlev & Efimova, 2015); so, providing an appropriate background to activate students in social fields of citizenship seems necessary.

The results of conducted studies reinforce the attention to students' social movements and improve and extend them as they are the most fundamental foundations of educational policies to prepare the learners for living in a society (Geboers et al., 2013; Congmin, 2016). Accordingly, higher education authorities need to recognize elements which are effective in students' social movements citizenship and placing *teaching citizenship movements* in curriculum using different learning techniques is emphasized (Navarro-Medina & Alba Fernandez, 2015; Blandford et al., 2015). In this regard, open classroom climate seems to be a factor affecting students' social movements and awareness (Galston, 2007; Serek & Machackova, 2017). According to Raviv et al. (1990), classroom climate refers to factors such as accessibility to fixed perceived personal educational goals, stability and quality of classroom, and engagement in class movements. Classroom climate consists of different components and in a study, West Alliance for the Study of School Climate (WASSC) (2004) has mentioned classroom climate quality, classroom interactions (the amount of students' dependence on and their relationship with each other as classmate, teachers and other classes), discipline environment (providing

discipline in order to make the learning environment more meaningful and directing students' tendency in an optimal way), learning (learning is a rather stable process in behavior or behavioral potential which is the result of experience); evaluation (a systematic process for collecting, analyzing and interpreting the information to achieve the goal); attitude (a reflection of a person's feeling toward a topic or a thing) and culture (a system of values common among all members of a group).

Classroom climate is mostly determined through teacher-student interactions; therefore, teachers should provide a learning motivation, increase self-esteem, decrease disappointment and create an atmosphere for the learners to experience autonomy and provide the ground for citizenship movement and motivation for them (Brown et al., 2010); also, when teachers turn the class into a dynamic and supportive environment, students will be less worried about their rights and statements in the society and will share their ideas and thoughts comfortably (Dinger et al., 2013). The results of Torney-Purta's research (2002) revealed that schools will perfectly get to their civil goals by teaching the contents of citizenship skills, guaranteeing open classroom climate to talk about different topics and reinforcing the importance of election procedure and encouraging participation culture in schools. The results of Yuen (2013) and Geboers et al. (2013) showed that classroom open and democratic climate where conversation takes place significantly improves students and develops their citizenship movements (Congmin, 2016). Moreover, an official educational program which includes citizenship projects and educational courses can be effective for education and citizenship movements. Therefore, teachers should facilitate significant educational goals by providing an open classroom climate (Koster & Dengerink, 2008) and a suitable ground for developing social citizenship movements for students (Tremblay et al., 2012).

As well as this, students should get enough efficacy in social interactions which happens in sociability process about the policy mechanisms and its related movements; therefore, they need to increase their political efficacy in this field to be able to get over the political issues in this way (Palizban, 2011), as lack of informing the citizenship and political rights leads to students' identity loss but also makes them suffer from fundamental gaps in social and citizenship identity followed by social issues like decreasing participation and fading out their citizenship role (Bahrami, et al., 2016).

Generally, young generation's efficacy acts as a strong engine which has an important role in a society's success or failure. The reason is that people with high level of efficacy do not let villainous and cruel people to rule and they also do not let the authorities to pass over their responsibilities; therefore, powerful organizations, associations and parties in a country shows people's maturity in that country. Students are regarded as the open-minded people of a society who can highly analyze social affairs and political events academically and realistically and hence have an important role in a society (Beaumont, 2010). Students' passion for politics is a necessity as far as they care about the society's and their destiny and also about interior and foreign affair. Explaining a university's function as a cultural organization shows the necessity of students' political participation. One of the most important effects of sociability by students is that they can participate in different social and political movements such as supporting political parties, voting, participating in political demonstrations, election campaigns, political advertisements, taking part in associations, etc. (Ghafari-Hashjin et al., 2010). Studies have shown that open classroom climate increases political efficacy and political efficacy has a positive relationship with social citizenship movements (Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015; Hoskins et al., 2017; Akin et al., 2017).

Civic knowledge is another decisive factor in evaluating educational superiority and students' social citizenship movements. Civic knowledge consists of fundamental notions and information and is a factor which helps the citizens to identify and perceive their interests as members of groups (Galston, 2007). All modern societies worry with regard to how they should prepare people for citizenship life and teach them how to participate in social movements. Undoubtedly, one important duty of educational systems and a reason as for their formation throughout history is preparing dedicated, active, and creative residents. In fact, higher education is a tool which deals with transferring a set of knowledge, skills, values and social beliefs with regard to

citizenship (Zhang et al., 2012). Citizenship education affects young people's active participation by taking part in political and cultural gatherings and proceedings. In order to do this, it is necessary that students observe democratic rules practically and provide opportunities for students to undertake their citizenship commitments inside and outside the classroom (Navarro-Medina & Alba Fernandez, 2015) as any society needs citizens with high efficacy according to its social and cultural backgrounds so that they can do their social and political movements based on their rights and duties. Acquiring optimal civic knowledge can predict development of students' social movement citizenship (Sigauke, 2012; Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015).

Studies show that there is not a cohesive and systematic planning about social citizenship fostering in Iran's higher education system and topics about citizenship fostering were neglected. Therefore, the following study aims to investigate the factors which are important in increasing students' social citizenship movements. In fact, this study tries to answer the question that to what extent is the students' development of social citizenship movements affected by the classroom climate, civic knowledge and political efficacy of learners? In my opinion, students' citizenship movements and factors which affect them are needed to be looked at more carefully as the society needs people who are aware and can take part actively in social life and contribute to people's health and welfare in different ways. Paying attention to students' merits with regard to their activity in social citizenship movements (as an important factor in efficiency of educational system) is one of the most fundamental subjects in educational systems. In this regard, this study tries to predict students' social citizenship movements based on open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge. There are four variables in this study, including open classroom climate (independent variable), civic knowledge and political efficacy (mediating variable) and students' social citizenship movements (dependent variable) (figure 1).

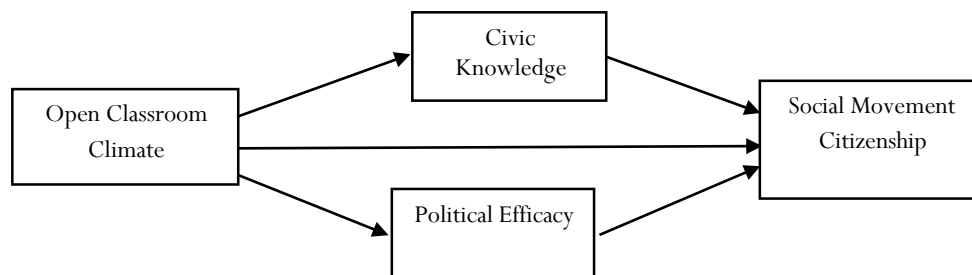


Figure 1. Final Model of the Effect open classroom climate, civic knowledge and political efficacy on students' social movement citizenship

In line with the objective and conceptual model of research, the following hypotheses were considered and tested:

1. Is open classroom climate a direct predictor of students' social movement citizenship?
2. Is open classroom climate a predictor of students' social movement citizenship activities through mediation of political efficacy?
3. Is open classroom climate a predictor of students' social movement citizenship through mediation of civic knowledge?

2. Methodology

The present study examines the prediction of the students' social movement citizenship based on open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge. Among students and in the schools of Babol in the academic year of 2018-2019.

Participants

Accordingly, the purpose of the current study is applicable, and according to its data collection method it has a descriptive-correlational research design. The statistical population of the study includes undergraduate students (8100 students) and postgraduate students (2850 students) of Semnan University (total 10950 students) in the academic year 2018-2019. Given the assumed paths, there are 12 parameters must be estimated, including 4 parameters in the Gamma matrix, 3 parameters in the Beta matrix, 4 parameters in the Phi matrix and 1 parameter in the Psi matrix. In this way, the sample size should be at least 5 to 50 times the desired parameters (Muller, 1996).

Participants

To do this, 227 people were chosen using stratified random sampling method (defining their category based on studying BA or MA). Among this number, 120 were girls (52.9%) and 107 were boys (47.1%). Moreover, 146 people (approximately 64.3%) of the students were studying BA and 81 (about 35.7%) were studying MA. Also, 70 were 16-20 years old (about 35%), 118 were 21-30 (about 59%) and 12 were 31-40 (about 6%). In this study, five instruments were used, including:

A) **Open classroom climate questionnaire:** In order to assess classroom climate, open classroom climate questionnaire, which had 6 items, was used (Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015). The questionnaire used five-point Likert scale questionnaire (ranging from 1 meaning strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by Knowles and McCafferty-Wright (2015) using Cronbach Alpha (0.871). The researcher has calculated the reliability via Cronbach Alpha as 0.772.

B) **Civic knowledge questionnaire:** In this research, Knowles & McCafferty-Wright's civic knowledge questionnaire (2015) was used which included 10 items. This questionnaire used five-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by Knowles and McCafferty-Wright (2015) using Cronbach Alpha (0.790). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by the author using Cronbach Alpha (0.864).

C) **Political efficacy questionnaire:** In order to measure the level of political efficacy, Knowles and McCafferty-Wright's questionnaire of political efficacy (2015) was used. The questionnaire contains 6 items. It used five-point Likert scale questionnaire (ranging from 1 meaning strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by Knowles & McCafferty-Wright (2015) using Cronbach Alpha (0.801). The researcher has calculated the reliability via Cronbach Alpha as 0.820.

D) **Social movements citizenship:** Due to the aim of the study and in order to measure the students' social movements citizenship, Knowles and McCafferty-Wright's social movements citizenship questionnaire (2015) was used which included 4 items. This questionnaire used five-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by Knowles & McCafferty-Wright (2015) using Cronbach Alpha (0.790). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by the author using Cronbach Alpha (0.865).

E)

Data analysis

The total questionnaire distributed in this study was 250 cases. After collecting and reviewing the questionnaires by the researchers, 227 cases could be used. To analyze the data, SPSS version 19 and LISREL (linear structural relations) version 8.5 Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation were tallied. Also, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship between research variables. Finally, the research hypotheses were tested with the path analysis model and the final model of fit was reported.

3. Findings

To determine the mean variables of professional leadership of managers, trust and cooperation among teachers, and professionalization of teachers, descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix were used (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients between research variables

Variables	Mean	Std	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
open classroomclimate	3.034	0.725	-			
civic knowledge	3.254	0.749	0.199*	-		
political efficacy	3.246	0.645	0.288*	0.837**	-	
social movement citizenship	2.595	1.066	0.283*	0.824**	0.891**	-

In the investigated university, the per capita of students' social movements citizenship ($M = 2.595$) in a 5-stage period show that students have regarded their social movements citizenship less than the average, but the average of open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge was higher than the average. Students' social movements' citizenship has a significant relationship with open classroom climate, political efficacy and civic knowledge. The intensity of the relationship between social movements citizenship and civic knowledge was higher than other variables ($r = -0.891$, $p < 0.05$). Students' social movements citizenship has a significant relationship with open classroom climate ($r = 0.283$, $p < 0.05$). To test the hypothetical model of this study, the pattern of correlative relationship between the variables was considered. Kurtosis and skewness were first investigated. The kurtosis level of open classroom climate was (-0.039) and skewness was (-0.353); the kurtosis level of political efficacy was (0.456) and skewness was (-0.321); the kurtosis level of civic knowledge was (0.681) and skewness was (0.007); and finally the kurtosis level of social movements citizenship was (-0.779) and skewness was (0.194). This shows that variable distribution has a normal skewness and kurtosis. So, fit index of hypothetical model was investigated. According to the calculations, the number of estimated parameters in the model was more than the number of observed variance-covariance ($p > c$), so the hypothetical model is an over-identification model. So, to investigate the fit index of hypothetical model, path coefficient and their significance was investigated.

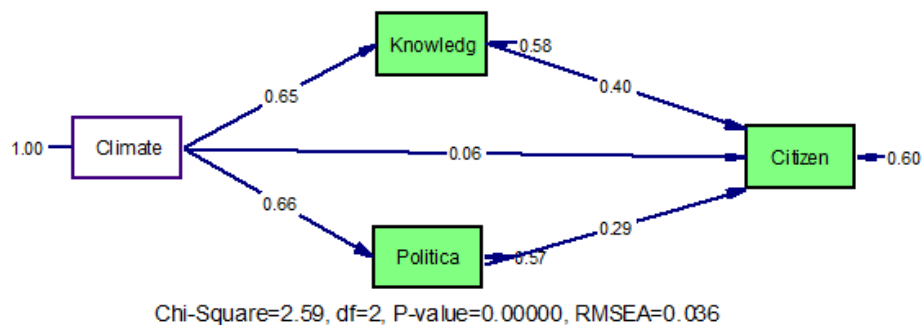


Figure 2)Final Model of the Effect open classroom climate, civic knowledge and political efficacy on students' social movement citizenship

* The standard coefficients have been reported.

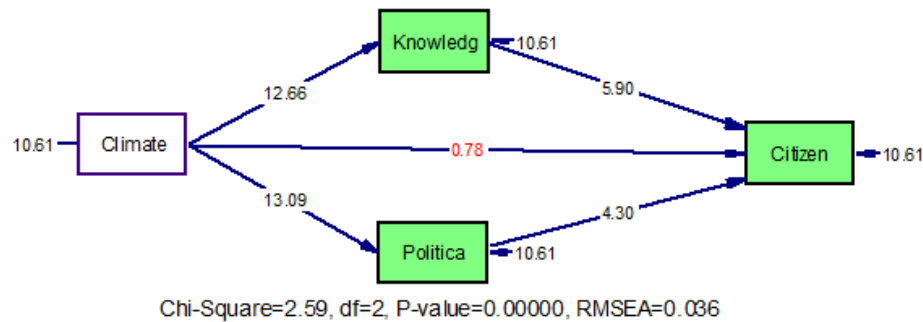


Figure 3)Final Model of the Effect open classroom climate, civic knowledge and political efficacy on students' social movement citizenship

* Significant coefficients have been reported.

Data fitness – the model was analyzed and the model was reported in figure 2. The results in the final model reveal that open classroom climate does not have a significant effect on social movements citizenship ($\gamma_{11} = .06$, $t = .78$, $p \geq 0.5$). Open classroom climate does not have a significant effect on students' civic knowledge ($\gamma_{12} = .65$, $t = 12.66$, $p \leq 0.5$) and has an effect on students' civic knowledge ($\gamma_{13} = .66$, $t = 13.09$, $p \leq 0.5$). Civic knowledge has a significant effect on social movements citizenship ($\beta_{11} = .40$, $t = 5.90$, $p \leq 0.5$) and civic knowledge has a significant effect on students' social movements citizenship ($\beta_{21} = .29$, $t = 4.30$, $p \leq 0.5$). Based on the above results, open classroom climate, with the mediating role of civic knowledge, has an indirect role (0.26) on students' social movements' citizenship; also, open classroom climate with the mediating role of civic knowledge has an indirect and significant effect (0.191) on students' social movements' citizenship. According to the result of table 2, fit indexes reveal that the final model has a roughly optimal fit with the data.

Table 2. Model Fitness Indicators

Indices	Source	Expensive Domain	Amount	Result
X ² /df	-	3-5	1.295	OK
RMSEA	MacCallum (1996)	RMSEA ≤ 0.08	0.051	OK
GFI	Bagozzi & Yi (1988)	GFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	OK
AGFI	Bagozzi & Yi (1988)	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0.92	OK
NFI	Fornell & Larcker (1981)	NFI ≥ 0.90	0.99	OK
CFI	Hu & Bentler (1999)	IFI ≥ 0.90	0.99	OK
IFI	Shah & Ward (2007)	IFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	OK

Shows the fitting indices of the model indicate that the final model has a relatively good fit with the data.

Table 3. Direct, indirect, and total effect of the open classroomclimate, civic knowledge and political efficacy on social movement citizenship

Effect	Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Extraneous on Internal	Open classroomclimate on the social movement citizenship	0.06	0.451**	0.521**
	Open classroomclimate on the civic knowledge	0.65**	-	0.65**

	Open classroomclimate on the political efficacy	0.66**	-	0.66**
Internal on Extraneous	civic knowledge on the social movement citizenship	0.40**	-	0.40*
	political efficacy on the social movement citizenship	0.29**	-	0.29**
total effect	Open classroomclimate by mediating role of civic knowledge on the social movement citizenship	-	-	0.26**
	Open classroomclimate by mediating role of political efficacy on the social movement citizenship	-	-	0.191**

The coefficients have been reported metrically. * P<0.05 ** P<0.001

4. Discussion

The first finding of the study stated that open classroom climate does not have a significant effect on students' social movements' citizenship. This is due to the fact that basically, students' participation in social and group movements is affected by various indexes and aspects. Participation in social movements is a process affected by social and citizenship self-learning and participation in movements require a change in mental state in all social levels; therefore, higher education is a factor which can make students mentally ready to take parts in organizations. The results of this study are not in line with that of Knowles and McCafferty-Wright (2015). By recognizing the effective communicative obstacles and familiarity with methods to improve classroom climate, teachers can achieve their educational goals and also create a climate full of joy, friendship and liveliness, as the classroom is a place to prepare the students for real-life situations in the everchanging world and helps them to provide a ground for their social and personal development. Problem solution, making constructive and effective relationships with students, attention to their needs and interests and active teaching methods can make classroom climate and educational process enjoyable. These experiences can affect students' beliefs in achieving optimal results in life and also increases the possibility of students' social movements citizenship inside and outside the university (Serek & Machackova, 2017), as the students are regarded as one of the most important human capitals of a country and their activity in social movements citizenship can lead to sustainable development of a country.

According to the findings of the study, open classroom climate affects students' political efficacy, political efficacy affects social movement's citizenship and open classroom climate with mediating role of political efficacy indirectly affects social movement's citizenship. The results of the studies done by Torney-Purta (2002), Yuen (2013) and Ghafari Hashjin et al. (2010) approves these results. According to these studies, the experience of teaching an ideal citizenship in democratic atmosphere should enable students to gain a deep efficacy about the political and economic system so that they can understand the strengths and weaknesses of democracy and attitudes towards being a good citizens, discuss the important and potentially challenging points, and gain information about social citizenship organizations. This efficacy should lead to skills in interpretation of political communications and involvement in conventional civic behaviors; therefore, in a democratic atmosphere, higher education should include equal levels of civic preparation and tendency to participate in social groups by the students. As an example, students' efficacy ideally makes them participate in the society's citizenship organizations during elections. Having said that, political efficacy is a factor which can affect students' political participation and education and educational atmosphere plays an important role in students' political movements. In this regard, according to Serek and Machackova (2017), increase in political efficacy depends on the quality of existing relationships in a classroom; in other words, relationships with classmates can play a key role in young people's political efficacy.

Finally, the results show that open classroom climate can affect civic knowledge and civic knowledge as a mediating variable can affect students' social movements' citizenship. In this regard, although open classroom climate does not directly affect students' social movements, it increases students' social activities through civic knowledge. In a classroom, everything happens through interaction between the teacher and the learner verbally or nonverbally. Interaction is an inseparable part of the inherent quality of learning in a class and affects all class processes. The type and amount of interaction can be a decisive factor in a class success; therefore, the quality and compatibility of school climate affects interpersonal interactions of students and hence social, cognitive and mental development (Hoffman et al., 2009). In this regard, after families, educational systems play the most important role in increasing people's efficacy of their civic rights & duties. To achieve this aim, educational institutes foster students as the representatives of the society and reflector of a certain school of thought in a way that they have high engagement in political, citizenship and social movements (Sharifi & Islamiyah, 2013) as the young generation, known as the educated population, is in close relationship with collective understanding and public efficacy and need to be familiar with their rights, duties and social values and acquire the required skills and knowledge to be a useful citizen (Bahrami et al., 2016). Generally, it must be said that higher education should help students in dealing with the upcoming challenges and provide them with the knowledge, understanding and values which are necessary for their active engagement in securing the society's welfare nationally and internationally. The findings of this section are in line with those of Schulz (2007) and Congmin (2016).

Like any other research, the following research has some limitations. One of these limitations is its measurement instruments. This study has opted for a questionnaire for the measurement and questionnaires normally have measurement errors and lack self-observation and socially acceptable answers. Moreover, concerning the results of the study and by considering the observations and evidence, some suggestions are provided to improve classroom climate and social movement's citizenship and increase students' political efficacy and knowledge:

Attention to factors which are effective in social movements citizenship which was dealt with in this study; it is suggested that there should be more emphasis on behaviors based on increasing civic knowledge and political efficacy; creating a suitable climate to discuss subjects with regard to civic culture and concepts like collectivism, civic responsibility, comprehensive participation, democracy and freedom in class given by teachers; holding workshops in the university concerning civic rights and duties to increase students' efficacy; providing a ground for students' participation in social movements through founding entities, associations, and autonomous groups; creating a sense of trust among students and allowing them to freely state their political beliefs and ideas without any anxiety; creating a course about teaching citizenship skills in different social, political and cultural aspects.

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