

School climate as determinant of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the relationship between school climate and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the study population embraced all teachers involving principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. Out of this population, a sample of 1455 teachers was selected for the study from twenty secondary schools through Stratified Random Sampling Technique. A questionnaire on school climate and students' academic performance was used to collect data and the data were analyzed using means, percentages, Z-test and correlation analysis. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference between students' academic performances in schools having open climate and the academic performance of students in schools having controlled climate.

Keywords: School climate, open climate, controlled climate, students' academic performance, public schools, principals, teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, education is regarded as both an investment and a commodity for consumption. Therefore if the student academic performance in school work is poor, it means that money invested on their education would not yield the expected result. Common observation shows that some parents have lost confidence in the ability of most of the public secondary schools to guarantee successful academic performance of their children. It has equally been observed that while some students passed their Senior Secondary Certificate Examination in some schools, others failed the examinations in some other schools. It is assumed that the type of school climate of an organization is responsible for this because a school has unique characteristics and these characteristics of the school tend to distinguished one school from the other.

Characteristics of school such as the physical structure of a school building and the interaction between students

and teachers are two diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) defines school climate as an aggregate measure of school characteristics such as relationship between parents, teachers, administrators as well as physical facilities on the ground.

According to National School Climate Council (2007) quality of school in regard to school climate is based on patterns of school life, experiences, norms goals values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structure. Scholars such as Bergen (2014), Mariita (2012) and Nyamosi (2013) have as well asserted that school climate factors such as social economic status, parent involvement, attendance, school size teaching-learning resources and interpersonal relationships affect teachers' job satisfaction and this can affect student academic performance.

Ravhudzulo (2012) argues that there is low learners' performance due to lack of management, skills and capacities, non-upgrading of teachers based on qualifications and skills as well as a lack of teacher commitment. Education International Survey Report (2007) also established that in East African countries, teachers had low morale due to lack of salaries, heavy teaching loads and poor conditions of service which is also applicable in Nigeria.

Bergren (2014) conducted a study on the impact of school climate on student achievement in the middle schools of the common wealth of Virginia. The findings revealed that selected school climate factors such as social economic status, attendance and school size collectively had an influence on students' academic performance and teachers' job satisfaction. It was also asserted by some earlier researchers that the way a person perceives his surroundings influences the way a person actually behaves in those environments because some environment are more conducive than others. This goes a long way to show that the surroundings or climate of a school would surely have a great impact on the people therein. A school environment or climate may indicate a great deal of cooperation among the various groups in the school setting while another might reveal a climate of tension, friction and even lack of cooperation among the groups. That is to say that the school climate of school could influence the performance of both teachers and students positively or negatively as the case might be. In one school, the head-teachers and students may find pleasure in working together while in another school, it might be discontent among these schools functionaries. Also, in one school, teachers might appear well organized, competent and may exhibit confidence in whatever they do, whereas in another school, there might be tension as the head-teacher losses control (Evans, 1968; Clinton, 1999).

It has been perceived that the school as a social organization for learning and exchange of ideas should be conducive for learning and for the realization of academic excellence among the students. However in an attempt to realize the goals and aspirations of academic excellence in school, the relationship between the super-ordinate and subordinates (teachers and students) should be cordial. Such conducive work environments should ensure open, closed, controlled paternal, familiar and autonomies climate (Fakunle, 2010)

It has been observed that physical facilities especially classrooms are inadequate in many public schools. This resulted into overcrowded classes which is inimical to good academic performance. It is also noticeable in most schools that some teachers are teaching some subjects that are not in their area of specialization due to lack of adequate qualified in their area of specialization due to lack of adequate qualified teachers and this may affect effective teaching and learning. Also, in some schools there are dilapidated buildings, ill equipped laboratories,

obsolete equipments, empty libraries at times with archaic textbooks and unconducive learning environment. All these can affect teaching and learning and students' academic performance

Kuperminc et al. (1997) and Johnson and Johnson (1997) discovered that a positive school climate can yield educational and psychological outcomes for students and personnel; whereas a negative climate can prevent optimal learning and development. Therefore, it can be stated that school climate, if possible can provide an enriching environment, both for personal growth and academic success. Considering all these issues, this study examined performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Many schools seem to exhibit different types of climate. In some schools, the atmosphere might be healthy and friendly while in other, it may be tensed hence, students' academic performance seems to be a function of the school climate. In this regards, the dwindling performance of students in their senior secondary school examination in Ekiti State, Nigeria secondary school as related to school climates constitutes the problem which this study intends to examine. In addressing the problem, the following questions were raised:

- i. Do schools climate relate to student's academic performance?
- ii. What type of school climate is predominant in secondary schools in Ekiti State?
- iii. What is the level of students' academic performance in S.S.C.E.?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The term 'survey' is used for a wide range of studies which involves observing a situation as it is without any attempt to manipulate variables. The research is also a survey type because a large area was covered and information was gathered from the representative sample of the entire teachers' population in the selected secondary schools about their school environment and school administration.

The study population embraced all teachers involving principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. Out of this population, a sample of 1455 teachers was selected for the study from twenty secondary schools through stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire on school climate and students' academic performance was used to collect data and the data were analyzed using percentages, means and correlation analysis. All hypotheses were tested at

0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research question 1: Do schools climate relate to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

In Table 1, the R-calculated (0.0428) was greater than R-table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between school climate and students' academic performance in the schools.

Research question 2: What type of school climate is predominant in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Table 2 shows that controlled climate had the highest number of respondents of 620 (56.5%) followed by the open climate with 430 (51.6%) and closed climate with 405 (45.9%). This shows that the controlled climate is the common feature in all the schools.

Research question 3: What is the level of students' academic performance in SSC examination?

As shown in Table 3, less than seventeen percent (17%) of the student had A – C6 in English language, Mathematics and Biology while the students had 51% in Economics and 85% in Yoruba. However, while 22.7% of the students had D7 – E8, 65% of the students had F9 in English, Mathematics and Biology. The above findings show that the level of students' academic performance in their SSCE examination was low.

Table 1. Pearson correlation summary of school climate and students' academic performance.

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	D.F	R- Cal	R.Table
School climate	1455	71.65	24.52	14.53	0.428	0.195
Students' academic	1455	32.41	14.78			

Table 2. Provide legend.

School climate variables	N	High		Moderate		Low	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Open climate	430	222	51.6	15.4	35.8	54	%
Controlled climate	620	350	56.5	185	29.5	85	13.7
Closed climate	405	186	45.9	153	37.8	66	16.3
Total	1455	758	154	492	103.4	205	42.6

Table 3. Student' academic performance in 2011 senior school certificate examinations.

Subject	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	Total A1-C6	D7	E8	Total D7-E8	F9
English	3.51	2.52	1.52	0.55	2.55	3.55	13.7	9.2	12.1	21.3	65.0
Mathematics	2.52	1.51	1.02	2.04	1.52	3.52	12.13	12.2	10.5	22.7	65.2
Biology	6.07	5.06	1.02	1.52	1.02	0.55	16.26	8.05	12.6	20.7	63.04
Economics	7.87	7.11	4.09	8.03	10.64	13.42	51.16	10.25	6.68	16.93	31.91
Yoruba	9.14	8.12	11.7	15.7	17.5	22.3	84.5	5.11	6.04	11.2	4.6

DISCUSSION

Under the presentation of the results of this study, the analysis of data for the study was made. It was observed that controlled climate had the highest number of respondents 620 (56.4%). This was followed by the open climate with 430 (57.6%) and closed climate with 405 (45.9%). This finding was contrary to earlier findings by

Adebayo (2002) and Adeyemi (2004), whose studies found open climate as the most predominant climate in schools. The high level of controlled climate in this study might not have been unconnected with some principals' habit of wedding two climates together for the effective and efficient realization of the school goals. This finding is in agreement with Halpin's (1967) findings, which indicated that two climates could be wedded together for

effective realization of the school goals.

The level of students' academic performance in Senior School Certificate Examination was low in the schools used for the study. This might have been the result of the type of climate in many schools and the uncondusive learning environment in most of the schools as found in this study. This finding contradicts the work of Adebayo (2002) while it supports that of Adeyemi (2004).

The significant relationship found in this study between school climate and students' academic performance might have resulted from the fact school environment plays an important role in influencing and stimulating the drive to make pupils learn. This research's finding was in agreement with the findings in the studies conducted by earlier researchers such as Beare (1989), Redwood (1993), Ibukun (2001) and Olaogun (1991) who found out that there was absence of major infrastructure and material aids to teaching and learning in most of the schools and this consequently affected the performance of the students in the core subjects areas observed.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that the controlled climate was the most predominant climate used in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria, due to some principals wedding two or more climates together. The findings of this study are essential to all stakeholders in education. Therefore it becomes pertinent to ensure provision of good learning environment such as adequate class rooms, good laboratories, well equipped libraries, adequate qualified teacher and conducive working conditions. Schools must be allowed to run as full organizations and not outpost of the Ministry of Education or Teaching Service Commission. Based on the findings that students' academic performance was low in the major subjects of the school curriculum, there should be a more conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning so that students were below expectations the academic performance of students will improve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals of schools should endeavor to combine two climates together preferably controlled and open climates in their day to day running of their schools because of the continued poor academic performance of students. They should create a favorable climate to enhance better job performance among teachers and give more attention to the effective supervision of teachers and students during teaching and learning. The state government should provide all necessary resources and facilities in schools and ensure the effective utilization of these resources in order to enhance academic excellence in schools.

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