

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 and the study population embraced all teachers and principals in public secondary in Ekiti State. Out of this population, a sample of 1455 teachers was selected for the study from twenty secondary schools selected using Stratified Random Sampling Technique. Questionnaire survey on school climate and student academic performance was used to collect data which were analyzed using Percentages, Z-Test, Correlation and Multiple Regression Analyses. Findings revealed significant relationship between school climate and student academic performance in schools. It also revealed a significant difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and the academic performance of students under controlled climates. Availability of human resources was the best predictor of students' academic performance in schools. Based on the findings, it was suggested that Principals should endeavour to combine both controlled and open climates in day-to-day running of their schools because of the continued poor academic performance of students found in the study. Furthermore, Government should endeavour to employ sufficient qualified teaching and non-teaching personnel to meet-up with population of students. Government should make provisions for more classrooms; equip their libraries with up-dated textbooks and materials in laboratories. Favourable climate should be created to enhance better job performance among teachers which will give more attention to effective supervision of teachers and students during teaching and learning period.

KEY WORDS: School climate, academic performance, public schools, principals, teachers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, education is regarded as both an investment and a commodity for consumption. Therefore if the students' 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 Examinations 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 distinguish one school from the other.

Schools play critical roles in the development of academic abilities of young people. Schools also serve as places that assist students in developing an understanding of society and commitment to political and civic

engagement. According to Torney-Purta and Vermeer (2004), schools can help foster the knowledge, skills and dispositions that the young need to develop into politically aware and socially responsible individuals. Characteristics of schools, such as the physical structure of a school building and the interactions between students and teachers are two diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. According to Homana (2005), school climate refers to the impressions, benefits and expectations held by members of the school community about their school as a learning environment, their associated behavior and the symbols and institutions that represent the patterned expressions of the behaviour.

Salako (1999) and Ajala (1999), asserted that the way a person perceives his surroundings influences the way a person actually behaves in those environments 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 there in. A school's 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-teacher, teachers and students may find pleasure in working together while in another school, it might be discontent among these school functionaries. Also, in one school, teachers might appear well organized, competent and may exhibit confidence in whatever they do; whereas, in yet another school, there might be tension as the head-teacher loses 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 schools, the relationship between the super-ordinate and the subordinates (teachers and students) should be cordial. Such conducive work environments should ensure open, closed, controlled, paternal, familiar and autonomous climate, (Fakunle, 2010). Kuperminc et.al (1997), Johnson and Johnson (1997) discovered that a positive school climate can yield positive 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.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many schools seem to exhibit different types of climates. In some schools, the atmosphere might be healthy and friendly while in others, 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 Schools Examination in Ekiti State, Nigeria Secondary Schools as related to school climates constitutes the problem which this study intends to examine. In addressing the problem, the following questions were raised.

1. Does schools climate relate to students' academic performance?
2. What type of school climate is predominant in secondary schools in Ekiti State?
3. What is the level of students' academic performance in S.S.C.E?
4. Is there any difference between students' academic performance in school having open climate and school having controlled climate?
5. Which of the variables of school climate best predict students' academic performance in schools

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive Survey Research Design was adopted for the Study. 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 Techniques. A questionnaire on school climate and students academic performance was used to collect data and the data were analyzed using Percentages, Means, Z-Test, Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 Level of Significance.

4.0 RESULT OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: Does schools climate relate to students academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Summary of School Climate and Students' Academic Performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	DF	R-Cal	R-Table
School Climate	1455	71.65	24.52	14.53	0.428	0.195
Students' Academic Performance	1455	32.41	14.78			

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012 (P<0.05)

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: Types of School Climate in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

School Climate Variables	N	High		Moderate		Low	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Open Climate	430	222	51.6	15.4	35.8	54	12.6
Controlled Climate	620	350	56.5	185	29.8	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

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012

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 S.S.C. Examinations?

Table 3: Students' 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

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012

Table 3: Less than Seventeen Percent (17%) of the students had A1-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 S.S.C.E Examination was low.

Research Question 4: Is there any difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and schools having controlled climate?

In addressing the problem, the following hypothesis was raised. There is no significant difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and schools having controlled climate.

Table 4: Z-Test of Students' Academic Performance in School Having Open and Controlled Climate.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Df	Z-Cal	Z-Table
Open Climate	430	26.65	17.05	1048	2.37	1.96
Controlled Climate	620	50.26	20.10			

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012 (P<0.05)

As shown in Table 4, the Z-Cal (2.37) was greater than Z-Table (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there was a significant difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and the academic performance of students in schools having controlled climate. Students in schools having controlled climate had better result than students from schools having open climate. The significant difference in performance is reflected in the high mean (50.26%) for schools having open controlled climate as against the lower means score (26.65) for school having open climate.

Research Question 5: Which of the variables of school climate best predict students' academic performance in schools?

In examining this problem; the research question was transformed into the following hypothesis.

Ho: None of the variables of school climate is a good predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis of School Climate Variables and Students' Academic Performance.

Variables	B	Std error	Beta	T	Sig. T
	3.535	0.604		5.853	0.000
Principals' Leadership Styles	0.000635	0.008	-0.004	-0.076	0.004
Human resources availability	0.00726	0.014	0.029	0.394	0.000
Physical resources available	0.00570	0.014	0.029	0.394	0.000
Disciplinary ability	0.00052	0.008	0.004	0.076	0.002
Effective supervision	0.000513	0.008	0.004	0.076	0.002
Motivational ability	0.00915	0.033	0.004	0.059	0.004

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012 { $Y=3.535$ to 0.00716 (Human Res, Av.) $+0.00570$ (Phy. Res.) $+0.00052$ (Disciplinary Ability) $+ 0.000513$ (Effective Super) $+ 0.00196$ (Motivational Ability) $+ -0.00063$ (Principals' Leadership Styles)}

Analysis of Variance

Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
	F = 2.41	Sig. F = 0.000
Multiple R-	0.711651	
R Square	0.71651	
Adjusted R Square	0.61124	
Standard Error	1.55757	

As indicated in the Table, all variables entered the Regression Equation. Though each of them made low contributions to academic performance of the students because the probability was less than 0.05 for all the variables; this shows that there was a significant relationship between all the school climate variables and students' academic performance. The best predictor of students' academic performance was human resources availability. It contributed (0.00716) to the criterion variable. This was followed by physical facilities availability which contributed (0.0057). The contributions of others predictor variables to the regression equation were as follows: Disciplinary Ability (0.00052); Effective Supervision (0.000513); Motivational Ability (0.00195) and Principals' Leadership Style (-0.00063).

R^2 of 0.611.24 shows that 62.1% of Variation in Academic Performance is accounted for by the variations in school climate variables. The balance of 38.9% may be accounted for by the variations not considered in this study.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The foregoing analysis showed the relationship of school climate to students' academic performance in public secondary school in Ekiti State, Nigeria. In the analysis, it was found that the controlled climate had the highest number of respondents 620 (56.5%). This was followed by the open climate with 430(51.6%) and closed climate with 405(45.9%). This finding was contrary to earlier findings by Adebayo (2002); Adeyemi (2004) whose studies found the 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 climate could be wedded together for effective realization of 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 un-conducive learning environment in most of the schools as found in 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 that school environment plays an important role in influencing and stimulating the drive to make pupils learn. This researcher's finding was in agreement with the findings in the studies conducted by earlier researchers such as Beare (1989), Redwood (1993); and Ibukun (2001).

The finding showing a significant difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and the academic performance of students in schools having controlled climate implies that the types

of climate in a school may affect students' academic performance. This is in agreement with the findings of researchers like Manning and Saddlemire (1996); which stated that if school climate is positive, it can provide an enriching environment with adequate facilities which can determine the educational achievement attaining by each student. The finding indicating that the availability of human resources was the best predictor of students' academic performance in the schools lends credence to the findings by Adaralegbe (1983); Schragger (1986); Civic Missions School Report (2005).

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have led the researcher to conclude that the controlled climate was the most predominant climate used in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Evidence in this showed that students' academic performance was low in the major subjects of the school curriculum. This suggests that the performance of the students were below expectation.

It was also concluded that all the school climate variables were all significantly related to students' academic performance. This suggests that school climate variables are critical variables in students' academic performance. The significant difference between students' academic performance in schools having open climate and students' having controlled climate suggest that students' academic performance is a function of the type of climate in the school system.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals of schools should endeavour 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 favourable 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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