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SCHOOL CLIMATE AND TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN KWARA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

R. L. ABDULKAREEM

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out if there was any significant relationship between school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Ilorin West Local Government Area Secondary Schools. To guide the study, one main and one operational hypotheses were formulated. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. Ten schools were surveyed and a total of 100 teachers were randomly chosen for the study. The instruments used for data collection were "School Climate Questionnaire" (SCQ) and "Students' Academic Performance Pro-forma" (SAPP). The main hypothesis formulated was tested using Pearson Moment Correlation technique because it dealt with relationship between two variables and the operational hypothesis was tested using t-test because it dealt with difference between two variables. The findings revealed that; there was a significant relationship between school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State Secondary Schools, there was significant difference between teachers' effectiveness in schools open climate and teacher also a effectiveness in schools with closed climate in Kwara State secondary schools. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that principals should involve teachers in decision-making process, not operate a fixed and flexible schedule and strive to promote group spirit among teachers.

Keywords: *School Climate, Teachers Effectiveness, Student academic performance*

Introduction

A school is a learning organization which comprises educators that should be committed to the attainment of the school's goals. The sustainability of the social environment is connected to the school environment. This is because the school is where the systematic process of bonding into the social environment begins. Schools provide the citizenry education, and education gives them knowledge of the world around and develops in them a perspective of looking at life (Fakunle, 2010). The education secondary schools provide has an integral role to play in the entire process. In Nigeria, secondary schools prepare individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education (FGN, 2004). These aims are more likely to be achieved when secondary schools have the right organizational climate for teachers since, according to Fopiano and Nons (2001), a school with the right climate for teachers is more likely to have committed teachers. Organizational climate refers to the working condition among super ordinates (principals) and their subordinates (teachers) in a bid to achieve the objectives of the school (Adeyemi, 2006).

On what constitutes school climate, Houstin (2001) argued that some schools are cheerful and hum with excitement and purpose. Others seem to lack enthusiasm. Some classrooms are alive with expectancy. Others appear moribund. Some people who work and study in schools see each new day and each new person as opportunities for improving their

understanding of the world around them. Others fear that today may be worse than yesterday. These feelings of satisfaction and productivity constitute school climate. De Villiers (2006) defines school climate as “an aggregate of indicators both objective and subjective that conveys the overall all feelings or impression one gets about a school”. School climate can be understood by applying the metaphor of health. Douglas (2010) describes a healthy school climate as one that exhibits reasonably clear and reasonably accepted goals (goal focus); where communication is not distorted but flows vertically and horizontally across boundary lines (communication adequacy); where there is equitable distribution of influence to all levels of the organization (optimal power equalization); and where there is effective and efficient use of inputs, both human and material (resource utilization). This type of climate reflects a sense of togetherness that binds people together (cohesiveness), a feeling of well-being among staff (morale), self-renewing properties (innovativeness), and an active response to its environment (autonomy and adaptation). According to Bolman and Deal (2002), schools with positive climate are “good places: the people like each other, and they like their schools. Trust, commitment and teamwork are the hallmarks of the schools”. It is against this background that this study examines the relationship that exists between school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been carried out in the area of school climate and teachers' effectiveness. Adeyemi (2006) carried out a study on the relationship between organisational climate and teacher's job performance in primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. De Villiers (2006) conducted an investigation on the relationship between school climate and teacher commitment with special focus on elementary schools in North-East Alabama, USA.

There are several areas on school climate and teachers' effectiveness that are yet to be covered by these scholars. These areas include familiar school climate, peculiar school climate and school effectiveness, relationship between school climate and students' academic performance, especially in Kwara state. This study on school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State secondary schools therefore endeavour to fill part of these gaps yet to be covered.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to find out if there is any relationship between school climate and teacher effectiveness in Kwara State secondary schools. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to examine if there is any difference in teacher effectiveness in schools with open climate and teacher effectiveness in schools with closed climate in Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses

One main hypothesis and one operational hypothesis were set to guide the study.

Main Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between school climate and teacher effectiveness in Kwara State Secondary Schools.

Operational Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in teachers' effectiveness of schools with open climate and teacher effectiveness in schools with closed school climate in Kwara State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive research design using survey approach. This research design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect data from a sample of a population, arrive at findings from the analysis of these data and make reasonable conclusion and recommendations about the whole population.

Proportional sampling technique was used to select 20 secondary schools. Nine, six and five secondary schools were selected from South, Central and North senatorial districts respectively. Ten respondents were then selected from each of the 20 schools amounting to 200 respondents that constitute the sample of the study. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire titled; "School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ)" and "Student Academic Performance Pro-forma (SAPP)". The SCQ was designed to elicit information about school climate from the teachers while the SAPP was designed to elicit the information about the performance of the students in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE). The SSCE students result was used to determine the school effectiveness. Pearson moment correlation coefficient statistic was used to test the main hypothesis because it dealt with relationship between two variables while t-test was used to test the operational hypothesis because it dealt with difference between two variables.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Main Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between school climate and teacher effectiveness in Kwara State Secondary Schools

Table 1: Relationship between School Climate and Teacher Effectiveness

Variables	No.	Mean	SD	df	Calculated r-value	p-value	Decision
School Climate	200	1.22	.416				H_0
Teacher			198	0.228	0.000		
Effectiveness	200	1.44	.499			Rejected	
0.05 level of significance							

Source: field survey, 2014

From the table above, the p-value is 0.000 while 0.05 is the level of significance. Since the p-value is lesser than the level of significance, the main hypothesis is therefore rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State Secondary Schools.

Operational Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in teachers' effectiveness in schools with open school climate and teachers' effectiveness in schools with closed school climate in Kwara State Secondary Schools.

Table 2: Difference in Teachers' Effectiveness in Open Climate and Close School Climate Schools

Variables	No.	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Open Climate	200	1.80	.402	198	0.242	0.196	H_{01}
Closed Climate 200	1.44	.499					Rejected

Source: field survey, 2014

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value is 0.242 while the critical t-value is 0.196 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and 198 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, operational hypothesis one is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in teachers' effectiveness in schools with open climate and teacher effectiveness in schools with closed school climate in Kwara State Secondary Schools.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the testing of the main hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between school climate and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State Secondary Schools. This finding conforms to the findings of Adeymi (2006) which revealed a significant relationship between school climate and teachers' job satisfaction. Adeyemi (2006)'s findings are corroborated by those of Gary (2005) who conducted an investigation in the relationship between school climate and teacher commitment with special focus on elementary schools in North-East Alabama, USA. Thirty-four elementary schools consisting of 522 teachers took part in the study. The teachers completed two survey instruments: the Organisational Climate Index (OCI) and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Descriptive statistics were utilised in the analysis of the characteristics of the sample and respondents. The inferential techniques of regression and correlation were used to test hypotheses. The results indicated that "teacher commitment is related to school climate"

School climate is one of the important factors that determine students' perception of life and shape their ability to respond to daily challenges. Fopiano and Norris (2001) argued that a supportive and responsive school climate fosters a sense of belonging, promotes resiliency, and reduces possible negative circumstances of the home environment. These scholars add that social and emotional needs are congruent with learning needs and, therefore, they need to be addressed so as to facilitate learning. Students who experience negative circumstances at home can find a favourable school climate helpful because, according to Fakunle (2010), they are more likely to thrive and become more socially and emotionally stable if they are in a school environment where they enjoy warm and caring relationships with their teachers.

Findings from the testing of the hypothesis one revealed that there is significant difference in teachers' effectiveness in school with open climate and schools with closed school climate in Ilorin – West Local Government Area secondary schools, Kwara State. This finding conforms

with the finding of Houstin (2001) state that an open climate reflects the head teacher and teachers' co-operative, supportive, and receptive attitudes to each other's idea and their commitment to work. This kind of atmosphere enhances teachers' effectiveness. The head teacher in schools with open school climate shows genuine concern for teachers; he/she motivates and encourages staff members (high supportiveness). He gives the staff the freedom to carry out their duties in the best way they deem appropriate. He/she does not allow routine duties to disrupt teachers' instructional responsibilities (low hindrance)

Also in a school characterised by open climate, teachers are portrayed as tolerant, helpful and respectful professionals (low disengagement). They are caring and willing to assist students when need be. Teachers work hard so that students can succeed (high commitment). They care, respect, and help one another as colleagues and even at personal levels (high collegial relations). As a team they work for the success of students. Basically open climate reflects disengagement, low hindrance, high intimacy, high morale, and high consideration. In this type of climate, nothing is hidden from teachers, and both the head teacher and teachers are accessible and approachable and maintain close relationship with students and parents (Douglas, 2010). Gilley and MayCunich (2000)'s findings reveal that high supportive head teacher behaviour, low directive head teacher behaviour, high engaged teacher behaviour, and very low frustrated teacher behaviour are attributes of open/healthy organisational climate.

However, in closed school climate the opposite is the case. The school head displays an autocratic kind of leadership style that does not involve the teachers in decision making and the interpersonal relationship between the head and the teachers is not as cordial as in open school climate. The implication of these on teachers effectiveness is likely to be negative as student academic performance tend to be poor.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the findings of the study is that school climate is either positively or negatively related to teacher effectiveness. A positive relationship of school climate to teacher effectiveness in a school is indication of an openness of the climate while a negative relationship reflects a closeness of that climate.

A school with an open climate exhibits reasonably clear and reasonably accepted goals. In that school, the principal is high on supportiveness. The result is that the teachers are low on disengagement, high on commitment and on collegial relations. The teachers enjoy greater autonomy for closed supervision. Teachers will readily work together and view themselves as close friends. They will respect their students irrespective of their background, language, or ethnicity. They will believe in collaboration with others. All these will combine to enhance their effectiveness.

Closed climate on the other hand depicts an unhealthy social environment and, by extension, an unfertile ground for teacher effectiveness. This is because in a school with a closed climate, the principal is low on supportiveness, high on restrictiveness and on hindrance. It then follows naturally that the teachers are high on disengagement, low on commitment and on collegial relations. Frustration then sets in among the teachers who then become uncommitted to task accomplishment. A closed school climate is, therefore, undesirable. Thus, teachers in schools with closed climate lack the effectiveness to contribute to the

desired student outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

The practical implications are that since open climate has been empirically established as a good predictor of teacher effectiveness, school principals should demonstrate a greater commitment to the creation of open climate to enhance teachers effectiveness. Principals are in a unique position in their respective schools to influence school climate through the formation of enduring relationships built on trust and integrity.

Specifically, principals should:

- involve teachers in decision-making process
- not operate a fixed and flexible schedule
- strive to promote group spirit among teachers
- maintain collaborative and arm relationship with their staff
- demonstrate greater concern for students' achievement
- work to promote high-quality interpersonal relationship between staff and teachers
- be easily approachable
- work to promote high-quality student-student relationship
- strive to promote high-quality parent-teacher relationship
- always ensure that any responsibility assigned to a subordinate is accompanied a delegation of adequate authority to accomplish the task
- establish directions and pursue clear-cut goals in all policies that govern the day-to-day business of the school.
- through relevant educational agencies the school should always organise workshops for principals to be trained in the art of relational leadership.

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