

Relationship Between School Climate And Principals' Job Performance In Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between school climate and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. It adopted a correlational study design. Five research questions and five hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study embraced all the principals from 283 secondary schools in the six education zones of Enugu State. Out of the population, a sample of 177 principals was selected through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used to collect data were Organizational Climate Index and Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire, adapted and developed by the researcher, respectively. The two sets of questionnaires were duly validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and Educational Management and Policy. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instruments which yielded 0.83 for the Organizational Climate Index and 0.94 for the Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire. . Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. The findings showed among others that: there was a moderate positive relationship existing between the two variables- school climate and principal's job performance. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that principals should embrace the collaborative and collegial style of administration where teachers are included and free to share ideas and concepts for managerial and school effectiveness. It was also recommended that principals should create an atmosphere that is supportive, comfortable, friendly, productive, and relaxed, to motivate students' greater participation in learning and achieving educational goals.

Keywords: School Climate, Principals' Job Performance and Secondary Schools

Introduction

Education plays important roles in the development of people and nations. No wonder the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014) declares education as a vehicle for and indicator of development. Admittedly, the educational system in Nigeria in general and Enugu State in particular has gone through series of policy and structural changes. In Enugu State, formal education has been one of the major focuses in the government's development policy. In 2013, the Enugu State Government bought buses for the office of all the principals in the state and provided some necessary facilities for their schools.

In spite of this lofty stride, the educational system in Enugu State is still contending with challenges such as poor implementation of educational policies, poor funding, misappropriation of fund, inadequate facilities, dilapidated structures and unfavourable school climate (Enugu State Ministry of Education, 2010; Igbokwe, 2011). In 2014, there was massive failure of students in internal and external examination in Enugu State secondary schools. The Commissioner for Education, Enugu State, while reacting to the 70 per cent mass failure in the 2014 May/June Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) admonished both the principals, the teachers, and the students to wake up to their responsibility (Okoro, 2014). Hence, there appears to be a relationship between job performances of not only the teachers but also the principals with students' academic outcomes and school effectiveness.

In the first place, the differences in school effectiveness, students' behavior and academic outcomes seem to be influenced by the principals. The activities of the school appear to be determined and controlled directly and indirectly by what the principals do; their values are contagious, their integrity instill trust in the system, their communication stress what is necessary, their public display become the image of the school and most importantly, of the teachers and students who see them as models.

Pursuing this further, principals' performance is greatly influenced by the nature of the principals' personality and experience. Principals' job performance includes all the organizational and structural duties of principals that enhance school effectiveness and students' academic achievement. Wilmore (2004) states the diverse roles of principals as ranging from effecting educational policies, to keeping track of all activities within the school to ensure that their schools run smoothly. Instructional (or functional) and leadership roles are the two main types of duties performed by the principals (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). Instructionally, the principal helps students to grow and become productive citizens. He does this through emphasis on training and educating children by creating motivating and challenging activities to aid the students' development. Secondly, the

principal carries out the leadership roles to successfully implement the instructional or functional roles. Leadership role of the principal comprises both personnel management and decision making. He manages both the teachers, students and other staff. Evidently, every principal works in a climate.

To begin with, school climate where the principals perform their duties can lead to the success or failure of any school in terms of educational goals attainment. School climate represents all the constituent aspects of the school: the physical, social, academic and affective aspects of the school. It is the set of dimensional characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviours of each members of the school community. According to Tableman and Herron (2004), school climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. Hoy, Smith & Sweetland (2002) described school climate as a general concept that captures the atmosphere of a school: it is experienced by teachers and administrators, describes their collective perceptions of routine behavior, and affects their attitude in the school. Most researches emphasize caring as a core element of school climate (Ray, 2005) while others emphasize safety (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Mattingly, 2007). School climate could be affected by material (external) or immaterial (internal) factors. According to Adeyanju (2012), external factors include location, size, student population, educational policies and socio-economic changes while internal factors include the interactive behaviours between administrators and principals, between principals and staff and between staff and students. Open and Closed climate are the most prominent types of school climate.

Open school climate reflects a school climate where the key players in a school - the principal and teachers cooperate and support one another. The principal is more supportive and less directive, while the teachers are more engaged, tolerant, helpful, respectful, caring, committed and less frustrated (Collard, 2003). Closed school climate describes a school where the principal is rigid, inconsiderate, unsupportive, uncommitted and controlling, while the teachers are intolerant, disrespectful, frustrated, divided and inefficient (Collard, 2003). This kind of climate is sick and socially tense.

The open climate is healthy while the closed is unhealthy. A healthy (positive) school climate consists of combined interaction between members of the school community unlike the closed climate. The open climate is both friendly and favourable. It is a fact that to achieve the objectives of the school, the school climate has to be friendly and favourable.

An experienced principal seems to be aware that the school climate determines the rhythm of the day to day activities in the school. In one school, the principal, teachers and staff may find pleasure in working together, while in another school, there may be displeasure among the staff. Thus, school climate refers to factors that contribute to the tone of the schools, and attitudes of staff and students towards their schools. Researches show that unhappy workers are usually less productive (Robbins, Judge, Millett & Waters-Marsh, 2008). Some factors of school climate that might relate to principals' job performance include fringe benefits, salary, promotion, students' attitude, school location, leadership style, inter-personal relationships, professional growth, job security, student population, educational politics, and composition of students among others. These varied school climate factors on principals' job performance can be assessed under four dimensions (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002): collegial leadership, professional teacher behaviour, achievement press and institutional vulnerability. However, this study is more interested in two dimensions of collegial leadership and professional teacher behaviour as they relate to principals' job performance.

One major dimension of school climate that might relate to principals' job performance is leadership. Some principals employ different leadership styles in their various schools such as autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire. Some of these styles are more rigid than others, some are more open, some are more participatory, and others are sometimes manipulative. Some of the leadership styles are friendly while others are not. Each leadership style creates its own climate that appears to relate to school effectiveness. Barker and Williams argue that the style of leadership does dictate the type of climate prevalent in the school system (Barker 2001; Williams 2001). O' Hanlon and Clifton (2004) agree that principals' expectations, examples and values shape the climate of the school.

Interactions with some teachers in Enugu State revealed that teachers are not trusted by their principals in some schools and are sometimes not involved in decisions concerning them. The fact is that when teachers are not carried along in decision making due to lack of trust, the implementation of such decisions becomes difficult since the teachers are the primary enforcement agents of most decisions in the school. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) agree that school climate can be one that cultivates trust or makes trust difficult. Trust is necessary for openness and for a positive school climate, it seems that trusted teachers impact more on students and thus, are more disposed to achieve educational objectives.

Also, professional teacher behaviour is another dimension of school climate that might relate to principals' job performance. Professional teacher behaviour or teacher's professionalism describes the relationship between

teachers themselves, marked by respect for colleague competence, commitment to students, cooperation and support to principals (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002). It is expected that professional teacher behaviour should enable the teacher to relate well with a fellow teacher and the rest of the school community. Professional teacher behaviour informs the general attitude of teachers in terms of social, moral and academic development in the school. Teachers should display signs of friendliness, diligence, orderliness, gentleness and evoke similar qualities in the students. Good relationships among teachers enhance the school climate and more so, teaching and learning. As Enyi (2015) put it, a teacher's presence and appearance can induce students to be orderly and obedient. A teacher who is always respectful to fellow teachers, who is punctual to classes creates a good school climate and evokes such qualities in others, consciously or unconsciously.

Some parents tend to arrogate the blame of low academic performance of students in secondary schools in Enugu state to the principals. This corroborates the view of Oyetunji (2006); that the principal is expected to accept responsibility for whatever students and staff do both by word and action, creating a school climate that facilitates effective teaching and learning. Dunklee (2000) holds the opinion that the differences in students' behaviour and academic outcomes are influenced inter alia by the principal. Every behaviour in the school is influenced directly or indirectly by the principal. This is because the principal is the image that is copied by the teachers and students.

Very often, principals' job performance and by extension, students' academic achievement seem to hinge on the levels of support, relationship, structure, collaboration and overall setting provided to them by school climate. Thus, it appears that the principals' job performance impinges on the school climate. This has motivated the researchers to correlate the relationship between these two variables.

Statement of the Problem

Several factors contribute to the poor educational growth, which seems evident in Enugu State secondary schools. Some blame the government while others blame the principals for this educational decline. Who are the people responsible? If the principals are responsible, is it because of the school climate? But there seems to be a missing link between school climate and principals' job performance. It is consequently against this backdrop that this research has been conducted on the relationship between school climate and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between school climate and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Specifically, the study aimed at determining:

1. The relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. The relationship between professional teacher behaviour and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research.

1. What relationship exists between collegial leadership and principals' job performance?
2. What relationship exists between professional teacher behaviour and principals' job performance?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The relationship existing between collegial leadership and principals' job performance is not significant.
2. The relationship existing between professional teacher behaviour and principals' job performance is not significance.

Method

The study is a correlational research study. Correlational research design indicates the direction and magnitude of relationship between variables (Nworgu, 2015). It is correlational design because the study sought to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationship between school climate and principals' job performance.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 283 principals in the public secondary schools in the six education zones of Enugu State. At the time of this study, the numbers of secondary schools in Enugu State education zones were 45 for Agbani, 53 for Awgu, 26 for Enugu, 59 for Nsukka, 47 for ObolloAfor and 53 for Udi. This gave a total of 283 secondary schools in the state (Enugu State Post Primary School Management Board, 2013).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study was 177 principals randomly sampled out from the population. Firstly, four out of the six education zones were sampled out through simple random sampling technique. These four education zones (Agbani, Agwu, Enugu and Udi) had 177 principals. These 177 principals were used as the sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two instruments, namely: Organizational Climate Index (OCI) and Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire (PSQ) were used for data collection. The Organizational Climate Index (OCI) was used to measure school climate and was administered on the principals. It is a short descriptive measure for schools developed by Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002), and was adapted for the current study. In adapting it, the subheadings of variables that indicate where every item belongs in the questionnaire were removed and some questions were clarified with brackets. The OCI is a combination of the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ), and the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). It is a 27-item questionnaire that assesses critical aspects of the school workplace. Each item consists of description of the property of the school. The OCD has a four-point scale with response mode of Very Often Occurs (VFO)- 4 points, Often Occurs (OO)-3 points, Sometimes Occurs (SO)-2 points, Rarely Occurs (RO)-1 point.

On the other hand, the Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire (PSQ) was used to collect information on principals' job performance. It is self-assessment guide for measuring principals' job performance developed for the current study. Principals were asked to assess themselves using a four-point scale with response mode of VH-Very High-4 points, H- High- 3 points, L- Low- 2 points, VL- Very Low- 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

The instruments were validated by experts: one in Measurement and Evaluation, and two in Educational Management, respectively from the Department of Educational Foundations and Department of Educational Management and Policy in the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts' corrections were effected to strengthen the final copy of the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was carried out to determine the internal consistency of the instruments using the Cronbach Alpha and the reliability index of the Organizational Climate Index and Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire,

were 0.83 and 0.94 respectively. Thus, the instruments were considered reliable in line with the view of Gliem and Gliem (2003) that the closer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected with the help of five research assistants. These assistants were briefed on how to distribute copies of the questionnaire. The selected schools were visited and the copies of questionnaire administered and collected on the spot. The researchers and their assistants administered 354 copies of the questionnaires. Four copies were invalid and 350 copies were collected back and used for the data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions and test hypotheses. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Accordingly, calculated Probability value (P) was compared with stipulated level of significance so that where the P value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected but where the P value was greater than the stipulated level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

In answering the research questions, the following rule suggested by Best and Kahn (2006) was used for judging correlation in this work: .00-.20 (negligible), .20-.40 (low), .40-.60 (moderate), .60-.80(substantial),.80-1.0 (High to Very High)

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question One

What relationship exists between collegial leadership and principals' Job Performance?

Table 1: Correlation between Collegial Leadership and Principals' job performance

		Collegial Leadership	Principals' Job Performance
Collegial Leadership	Pearson Correlation	-	.431
	N	175	175
Principals' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.431	
	N	175	175

As shown in table one, the correlation between collegial leadership and principals' job performance was .431. This shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between collegial leadership and principals' job performance.

Research Question Two

What relationship exists between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance?

Table 2: Correlation between Teacher Professional Behavior and Principals' Job Performance

		Teacher Professional Behaviour	Principals' Job Performance
Teacher Professional Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.117
	N	175	175
Principals' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.117	1
	N	175	175

As shown in the data displayed in table 2, the correlation between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance was .117. This is an indication that a negligible positive relationship exists between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance.

As indicated in table 3, a low positive relationship exists between achievement press and principals' job performance. This is shown by the $r = .258$

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance.

Table 5: Test of Significance of Correlation between Collegial Leadership and Principals' Job Performance

		Collegial Leadership	Principals' Job Performance
Collegial Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.431
	P-value		.000
	N	175	175
Principals' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.431	1
	P-value	.000	
	N	175	175

As shown in table 5, the correlation coefficient, $r=.431$ and $P<0.05$. This shows that there is a significant relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between professional teacher behavior and principals' job performance.

Table 6: Test of Significance of Correlation between Teacher Professional Behavior and Principals' Job Performance

		Teacher Professional Behavior	Principals' Job Performance
Teacher Professional Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.117
	P-value		.123
	N	175	175
Principals' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.117	1
	P-value	.123	
	N	175	175

Table 6 displays a correlation coefficient =, $r = .117$ and $P>0.05$. Since the P is greater than the stipulated significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, the relationship between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance was not significant.

Discussion of Results

The result of the analysis revealed that there was a moderate (0.431) positive correlation between collegial leadership and principals' job performance. The above finding is reinforced by the results which indicated that there was a significant relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance. This shows that collegial leadership positively relates to principals' job performance and the relationship is significant. That is to say that any unit increase or decrease in the level of collegial leadership also increases or decreases principals' job performance. This shows that the process whereby the principal and teachers contribute ideas and collaborate with one another to ensure implementation of educational policies enhances the job performance of principals. This finding is consistent with Smith (2009) insistence that the job performance of both principals and teachers improves when the principal fosters and nurtures collegial environment. This is also in line with the opinion of Robbins (2004) that the principal works more effectively when he works with and through other people in the school setting.

Another finding showed that there was correlation between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance. This is an indication that a negligible positive relationship exists between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance. Again, the result showed that the relationship between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance was not significant. The finding disagrees with that of Smith (2009) that collective norm of the teacher behaviour predicts the job performance of the principal. The researcher is compelled to attribute the cause of the disagreement to geographical locations or time of the studies.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there was a statistically significant relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance. The correlation coefficient indicated a moderate positive relationship between collegial leadership and principals' job performance. There was no significant relationship between teacher professional behavior and principals' job performance. The correlation coefficient indicated a negligible positive relationship.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of the study:

1. Principals should embrace the collaborative and collegial style of administration where teachers are included and free to share ideas and concepts for managerial and school effectiveness.
2. Principals should create an atmosphere that is supportive, comfortable, friendly, productive, and relaxed, to motivate students' greater participation in learning and achieving educational goals.

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