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SCHOOL CLIMATE AS PREDICTOR OF PRINCIPAL'S MANAGERIAL EFFICIENCY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated school climate as predictor of principal's managerial efficiency. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 542 teachers including the principals of the schools used for the study while the sample size of 168 students and principals obtained through a proportionate random sampling was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire which was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations all in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Crombach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.86 respectively. These coefficient values were considered high enough for the instrument usability.

This is in line with Nworgu (2015) who recommended that co-efficient value of 0.82 or above is adequate for any research work. Findings of the study showed that school climate is a good predictor of principal's managerial efficiency. It was then recommended that school principals should put up good attitudinal disposition, a friendly school culture, a strong security architecture and quality assurance mechanism that will encourage or stimulate students' learning curiosity.

Keywords: School climate, Predictor, Principal, Managerial efficiency.

Introduction

Educational institutions are known as agencies of development. As a typological concept, schools provide opportunities to modify and enhance the cognitive and even the psychomotor of both students and staff as they inter-face with learning. Lee, and Reymolds (2017) defined school climate as the quality and consistency of inter-personal interactions within the school community that influence children's cognitive, social and psychological development. It is created with the intention to evolve opportunities for students in a planned pattern that will allow them acquire life skills and make them contribute meaningfully to the society.

It is an atmosphere where students and staff are made to involve in both extra-curricular and co-curricular activities that constitute integral part of school climate. Moors in (Taylor and Frances, 2015) defined school climate as the social atmosphere or learning environment in which students are exposed to different experiences, depending on the protocols set up by the administrators and teachers. Through these experiences, students learn and practise various physical, social and emotional skills and these three dimensions together with the cognitive, make up the intellectual dispositions of the average educated or reasonable person.

The school climate therefore is shaped to provide the child with the developmental resources that can meet the training needs for acceptable character and learning (Vedavathe, 2017). One of the means of achieving this is discipline. A school climate is in itself an environment for learning and as such, should reflect the intellectual, psychological and physical components of the school. NSCC (2018) states that a positive school climate is associated

with academic achievement, effective risk prevention efforts and positive youth development. School climate they insist is the creation of the school administrator (principal) and that it reflects the quality and character of school life.

The school climate as created by the principal can be measured according to Bear and Yang (2014) by obtaining the opinions or responses of all the members of the school community. The tools or instruments for such measurement as stated by Thapa and Cohen (2013) are school climate questionnaire and school-level environment questionnaire that cover areas like teacher-student relationship, resource adequacy and maintenance, innovative, security architecture, professionalism, achievement orientation, decentralization of administration and reward system. And the above indices of measurement are guided by rules of scholarship.

The ability of the principal to create and communicate such rules that will guarantee conducive teaching and learning environment that is void of violence and can make for a cordial inter-personal relationship which has respect for diversity in terms of language, culture, religion and race determines reasonably the quality or type of school climate in its dimensions (Patrie, 2014).

Dimensions of school climate are the various aspects of school that represent the collegiality of a learning environment. In an extended meaning, it can be explained to encompass school buildings, equipped school library and availability of adequate science equipment in school. Lin, and Dingi (2014) stated school climate dimensions to be a physical environment that is welcoming and conducive for learning, a social environment that promotes communication and interaction, an effective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem, and an academic environment that stimulates learning and self-fulfilment. The creation of a good school climate with functional dimensions as stated above according to Westerberg (2013) explains the managerial efficiency of the school principal.

The principal is the chief executive officer of the school and as such, he is responsible for the academic and administrative activities of the school. He oversees pedagogy and ensures that the administration which he

presides over is working to create and maintain a school climate that produces the total child in character and learning (Ramolow, Currie, and Felder-Puie, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this study was to investigate how school climate can predicate or determine principal's managerial efficiency in public secondary schools in Awka South of Anambra State.

The important of a good school climate cannot be under--estimated. It creates a learning environment that facilitates improved students' academic achievement. It makes for a school environment that ensures safety of lives and property. It creates co-operation between teachers and students as they inter-face regularly through consultation, supervision and mentorship. Contextually, it builds and promotes the collegiality of the school.

However, the school climate in public secondary schools in Awka South of Anambra State needs much to be desired. Teaching and learning is not well co-ordinated as students could go out for break and may not return to class for learning. In most cases, the school day ends at break time. Beyond this is the absence of security in some of the schools. In most of the schools, student population outweighs that of the teachers and as such monitoring is difficult. The teachers themselves in most cases, go out for break and close the day's work from there and the result is that security, monitoring and mentorship are near absent. It is in the light of the above, that the researchers deemed it necessary to ascertain how school climate can predicate the managerial efficiency of principals in Awka South of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. How does school climate assist the principal in creating a school environment conducive for teaching and learning?
2. How does school climate determine principal's managerial efficiency?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between school climate and principal's ability to create a

conducive school environment for teaching and learning.

2. There is no significant relationship between school climate and principal's managerial efficiency.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design according to Nworgu (2015), aims at collecting data on the features or facts about a given population and describing them in a systematic manner. This design was considered appropriate because, the researchers collected data from the population of the study and drew inferences on school climate as predictor of principals' managerial efficiency in public secondary schools in Awka South of Anambra State. The population of the study consisted of 542 teachers including principals of schools used for the study while the sample size comprises 168 teachers and principals. Altogether there are 18 public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area but only 10 secondary schools out of them were used for the study.

A 20-item research questionnaire titled "School climate as predictor of principal's managerial efficiency in public secondary school questionnaire (SCAPPMEPSS)"was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A elicited opinions of the principals themselves while section B elicited responses from the teachers who work with the principals and inter-face with them every school day. Respondents were required to indicate their opinions on four point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree weighted 4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria. Both face and content validity were ascertained. The experts made useful suggestions which were added to the final draft of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of SCAPPMEPCS and it yielded 0.84 and 0.86 respectively. These coefficient values were considered high enough for the instrument usability. This is in line with Nworgu (2015) who recommended

that a co-efficient value of 0.82 or above is adequate for any research work.

The researchers with the help of five research assistants distributed and collected the data from the respondents. The research assistants were trained by the researchers on the procedures for the administration of the questionnaire and on the nature and purpose of the study. A total of 168 questionnaires were distributed and all of them were retrieved, giving a return rate of 100%. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. In answering the research questions of the study, the mean scores that fell between 4.00 – 3.50, 3.49-2.50, 2.49 – 1.50 and 1.49- below were taken to indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively. The two null hypotheses were tested using t-test.

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Results

Analysis of Research Questions

Research question 1

How does the school climate assist the principal to create a school environment conducive for teaching and learning?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on how school climate assist the principal to create school environment conducive for teaching and learning

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1	School climate is the learning environment of a particular school	3.82	0.91	Strongly Agree
2	It consists of the character of the school authority and staff.	3.58	0.89	Strongly Agree
3	It is a learning environment of safety that is void of violence.	3.88	0.79	Strongly Agree
4	It consists of the rules or regulations guiding staff and students' behaviour in the school	3.83	0.71	Strongly Agree
5	It is a school community of free communication that is void of all forms of discrimination.	3.02	0.81	Agree
6	It involves a cordial relationship between staff and students as they interface with teaching and learning.	3.86	0.77	Strongly Agree
7	It is concerned with mentoring and monitoring teachers to enhance their performance	3.76	0.81	Strongly Agree
8	It has to do with monitoring all co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the school	3.78	0.81	Strongly Agree
9	Such monitoring is to ensure compliance of both staff and students to decisions taken by the school authority.	3.84	0.99	Strongly Agree
10	It assists the principal to create a school environment conducive for teaching and learning.	3.04	0.86	Agree

Grand Mean	**3.64**	**Strongly Agree**

Data in table 1 shows that out of 10 items listed, respondents strongly agree that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 assist principals in creating conducive school environment for teaching and learning while they agree on items 5 and 10. The grand mean score of 3.64 indicates that respondents strongly agree that school climate assist principals in creating conducive school environment for teaching and learning. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range. This means that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean responses.

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Research Question 2

How does school climate determine principal's managerial efficiency?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on how school climate determine principal's managerial efficiency

S/N	Questionnaire Items	X	SD	Decision
11	School climate is the creation of the principal.	3.84	0.81	Strongly Agree
12	A good school climate makes teachers to do their work satisfactorily	3.72	0.76	Strongly Agree
13	It makes the principal manage staff appropriately.	4.00	0.98	Strongly Agree
14	It makes principal utilize resources adequately.	3.86	0.78	Strongly Agree
15	It also makes principal maintain facilities properly.	3.76	0.85	Strongly Agree
16	It is concerned with both the principal and staff	3.92	0.54	Strongly Agree
17	It creates mechanism to identify and correct defects	3.88	0.71	Agree
18	It provides feedback mechanism on what is done and to be done.	3.68	0.83	Strongly Agree
19	It also includes infrastructures like school building, library and science equipment.	3.94	0.99	Strongly Agree
20	School climate enhances the principal's managerial efficiency	3.88	0.72	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.84**		**Strongly Agree**

Data in table 2 shows that the respondents strongly agree all the items listed on school climate determine principal's managerial efficiency. Similarly, the grand mean score of 3.84 indicates that school climate determine principal's managerial efficiency. The standard deviation ranged from 0.54

0.99. This shows that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean responses.

Testing of Null Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between school climate and principal's ability to create a conducive school environment for teaching and learning.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of significant relationship between school climate and principal's ability to create a conducive school environment for teaching and learning

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
School climate	168	32.86	2.22	166	2.86	0.00	Significant
Conducive school environment	168	33.18	2.27				

Data in table 3 shows that the t -value of 2.86 at 166 degree of freedom with calculated p-value of 0.00 which is less than the significant value of 0.05 (0.00 < 0.05). This shows that there is a significant relationship between school climate and principal's ability to create a conducive school environment for teaching and learning. The null hypothesis therefore was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between school climate and principal's managerial efficiency

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of significant relationship between school climate and principal's managerial efficiency

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
School climate	168	32.86	2.22	166	3.66	0.03	Significant
Principal's managerial efficiency	168	32.48	1.79				

Data in table 4 shows that the t - value of 3.66 at 166 degree of freedom with calculated p-value of 0.03 which is less than the significant value of 0.05 (0.03 < 0.05). This shows that there is a significant relationship between school climate and principal's managerial efficiency. The null hypothesis therefore was rejected.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that school climate helps heads of schools (principals) to create a good school environment conducive for teaching and learning. Such atmosphere (climate) according to Edumark (2014) stimulates the intellectual curiosity of both staff and students as they work together for effective teaching and learning. It has implications of a good school culture and all the gamut of relationship that make a school a knowledge processing and transmitting agency. It includes the relationship between the principal and teachers on one hand and the relationship between the teachers and students on the other hand (Onu, 2013). In an extended meaning, school climate has a component of the interaction between the school authority and the Parent-Teacher-Association. Such synergy between parents and the school energises the staff and the students for increased academic performance. Beyond this, Edumark (2014) noted that it elaborates the plans for the provision of infrastructure in the school.

Another finding of the study is that school, climate is a good predictor of principal's managerial efficiency. As stated earlier, a good school climate is

the creation of the principal. It is his duty to turn whatever atmosphere prevalent in a school before he assumed duty to favour his administrative disposition.

Edumark (2014) explained that an efficient school principal can initiate actions that will turn any adverse school climate around for his advantage. The ability of the principal to shape his school to an atmosphere good enough for efficient utilization of resource materials and effective communication from top-down explains his managerial efficiency.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is evident that there is a strong significant relationship between school climate and principal's managerial efficiency. School heads (principals) therefore should make efforts to ensure that there is improved attitudinal disposition from the school authority that can allow academic freedom. In addition, the provision of infrastructure should be elaborative so that quality assurance mechanisms that can elicit students higher academic performance would be put in place.

Recommendations

In view of the above findings and conclusions, it is therefore recommended that;

1. Principals of secondary schools should create room for mentoring and monitoring of both teachers and students.
2. Discipline should be maintained to curb excess behaviour of both teachers and students that could cause violence or impair safety in school.
3. There should be free flow of information in school especially from the principal to teachers and from the authority to students.
4. Finally, security of lives and property should be paramount to the school principal. School climate is good when it is void of all forms of insecurity and discrimination.

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