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OPEN SCHOOL CLIMATE AS PREDICTOR OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive values of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra state. The population of this study comprised all the 5,949 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 2, 913 teachers sampled using the multi-stage sampling procedure. Data for this study were collected by means of structured instruments developed by the researchers. Three experts: two experts in Educational Management and Policy and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation (Department of Educational Foundations), all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka validated the instruments. The reliability of the instruments was determined through a trial testing in 5 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The data were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability co-efficient values of 0.81, and 0.87 were obtained respectively for SCQ and EESDI. The instruments were administered on the respondents in their schools by the researchers with the help of five research assistants who were briefed and guided on the modalities for the administration and collection of the instruments. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression were used in the data analysis. The hypothesis was tested 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that there is very high significant predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the government should make conscious effort to formulate policies that will impact positively on open school climate since an enhancement of open school climate can lead to increase in effective educational services delivery.

Keywords: Prediction; Open School Climate; Effectiveness; Education; Services Delivery.

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as an instrument for social, political, scientific and technological development. This is the reason why no society can afford to toy with the education of its citizens as this could result in a snail speed development. Education is generally seen as an aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops his/her

abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of value to the society in which he lives. It is a conscious training of the young to a life which would be useful to him and to the society to which he belongs. Hence, education has continued to be important and this is why there has been a growing concern in the last few years about the quality of education that is offered in the nation's schools, especially in secondary level of education. This is because secondary education is a prerequisite for the scientific and technological development of the nation. According to Asiyai (2010), secondary education is the facilitator, the bedrock, the power house and the driving force for the strong socio-economic, political, cultural, healthier and industrial development of a nation. Secondary schools need efficient and effective educational service delivery.

Educational service delivery is a set of principles, standards, policies and constraints to be used to guide the designs, development, deployment, operation and retirement of services delivered by academic institutions as a service provider with a view to offering a consistent service experience to learners or students in a specific education context. Benedict (2023) noted that the capabilities of a service provider are arranged into services that will take an effective leadership strategy to ensure services delivered are of the best quality. To be effective, services possess these attributes communication status, reliability status, responsibility status, accessibility status, competence status, courtesy status, credibility status, understanding the recipient and security. Effective educational service delivery is reinforced by the desire of parents is to bequeath qualitative and functional education to their children. This is in compliance with the axiomatic truth that quality education is the only permanent legacy that parents can pass on to their children to ensure their future success (Abbas, 2016). The researchers view effective delivery of educational services as all the activities pertaining to effective teaching and learning provided by the schools in attaining set standards. Effective delivery of educational services is a product of the school climate. The focus here is on open school climate.

An open school climate has the same characteristics with a positive or healthy school climate. According to Rapti (2015), an open school climate is chiefly associated with its expressive characteristics. An open climate can be easily utilized to account for both the space and authenticity between relationships of principals, teachers, students and parents. This implies that the open climate reflects the supportive, welcoming and positive role of the principal (manager) towards teachers' ideas as well as their attachment and devotion to work. According to Makewa, Role, Role, and Yegoh (2011), in such climate the leader shows genuine concern over the teachers. He or she supports staff members; the staff members are given their freeway in undertaking tasks in the best way possible they can manage; the leader is particularly careful so as not to allow the daily tasks to interfere with the responsibilities of teachers. In an open school climate teachers are portrayed as being tolerant, helpful and to be revered in the profession.

Teachers here in this climate are attentive to and ready to provide for the needs of students by working hard in order for the children to succeed in their pursuits; teachers turn out to be reaching out, help each other at the professional level, including the personal one too. Rapti (2015) opined that teachers work in teams to guarantee the students' success. Teachers and their leader alike make themselves available to maintain close relationships with students and parents. An open climate is therefore breeds a healthy climate in which teachers enjoys full support of the top management of the school. The more open the school climate, the more dedicated, loyal and pleased the teachers will be in such a climate. The more open the school climate, the more productive students will be in their school performance. There is a broad consensus across the body of literature on school climate which emphasizes that the open school climate pretty much favours the promotion of positive outcomes in students' academic performance by contributing in turn to a good mental and spiritual health as well as to job satisfaction of teachers and principals. Pretorius and Villiers (2019) summarized the characteristics of an open school climate as a healthy one which is as follows: an open or healthy school is a pleasant place. It is protected from unwarranted intrusion (high institutional integrity). The principal's behaviour is open, concerned and supportive. As noted by Njagi (2018), the principal listens and is open to teachers (high supportiveness), gives faculty freedom to act on their professional knowledge (low directiveness), and relieves teachers of most of the burdens of paper work and committee assignments (low restrictiveness). Teachers like the school, the students, and each other (high teacher affiliation). They see the students as diligent in their learning (high academic emphasis). They see the principal as their ally in the improvement of instruction; the principal is approachable, supportive and considerate, yet establishes high standards of teacher performance (high collegial leadership).

Teachers rely upon the principal to foster a structure in which learning can take place and, at the same time, to be a leader who is sensitive to the social and emotional needs of the group. The principal has influence with organizational superiors and is seen by the teachers as someone who delivers the teaching resources they need (high resource influence). A healthy school climate has no need for forced cooperation; because committed professionals cooperate naturally and are in basic agreement about the task at hand.

An open school climate improves student motivation and achievement. It has a positive impact on the mental and behavioural health of students including contributing to a decrease in risky behaviour and depressive symptoms and an increase in feelings of belonging. In such a climate, teachers are highly committed and task accomplished. Furthermore, Rapti (2015) and Wheelock (2015) used certain parameters in describing the open climate as they include safety, academic climate, community and institutional environment. Under safety, all humans in an open school climate need to feel safe socially and physically. Feeling safe in school influences students' learning and their general development. However, many students do not feel safe in schools. Most students are not

necessarily exposed to physical violence, but many students are exposed to social, emotional, and intellectual violence. An open school climate, according to Douglas (2010), means the feeling of physically and emotional safe, and having clear and consistent rules to maintain order and discipline. Safety in essence in an open climate includes physical safety, identity safety, emotional safety and order and discipline. Physical safety is the degree to which violence, aggression, and physical bullying are present. It also refers to the strategies used to eliminate violence (example, security guards and metal detectors). Identity safety refers to how a school can promote positive relationships and opportunities to learn where students feel they are welcomed, supported and valued as a member of the learning community. Emotional safety includes available school-based mental-health services (e.g. counseling services, caring and supportive staff), an absence of verbal bullying, and positive attitudes about individual differences. It is also affected by the students' and staff's attitudes about bullying and their response to it.

In a school that practices open school climate, there is a supportive, welcoming, friendly and positive environment that creates opportunities whereby teachers' ideas as well as his attachment and devotion to work are highly promoted. In this kind of school, there is positive relationship among individuals and groups, and teachers can contribute immensely towards the school improvement.

It is a fact that the aims and objectives of secondary education in Anambra State cannot be achieved until and unless educational services are properly and effectively delivered and evolving the climate for this to take place is the basic responsibility of principals of the schools. They are supposed to play very active part in educational service delivery by promoting appropriate school climate and must be a change agents to face the incoming challenges of the system. According to Okoye (2012), the principal is a planner, director, controller, coordinator, organizer, advisor and a problem solver. He/she is a person who identifies and shoulders the set goals and objectives of institutions which are according to national needs.

Observations made by the researchers and comments by some major stakeholders including parents however show that certain behaviours manifested by principals of some secondary schools in Anambra State leave much to be desired. For example, they are weak, uncoordinated and lack administrative skills. According to Oborah (2019), some do not have administrative knowledge or skills. Personal observation also confirmed that some principals in the state seemly do not possess the charisma, or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. Most are characterized by obsolete traditional personnel administration style. As a result of the poor school climate and ineffective educational service delivery, a lot of programme of activities are not carried out in the schools (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2022). Such principals seemingly do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the systems performance in that, teachers and other workers in the school can

resort to nonchalant attitudes toward work and hence no sustainability or continuality of good track records of performance in the system.

Research Question

One research question guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance:

1. Open school climate will not significantly predict effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra state. The population of this study comprised all the 5,949 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 2, 913 teachers sampled using the multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, four education zones were sampled using simple random sampling technique. Data for this study were collected by means of structured instruments developed by the researchers. The first instrument is titled "School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ)". The second instrument is titled "Effective Educational Services Delivery Inventory (EESDI)". Three experts: two experts in Educational Management and Policy and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation (Department of Educational Foundations), all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka validated the instruments. The reliability of the instruments was determined through a trial testing in 5 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The data were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability co-efficient values of 0.81, and 0.87 were obtained respectively for SCQ and EESDI. The instruments were administered on the respondents in their schools by the researchers with the help of five research assistants who were briefed and guided on the modalities for the administration and collection of the instruments. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression were used in the data analysis. The hypothesis was tested 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What is the predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation on the predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	Open School Climate	Effective Educational Services Delivery	Remarks
Open School Climate	2, 911	1.00	.940	Strong Prediction
Effective Educational Services Delivery	2, 911	.940	1.00	

Results in Table 1 show the predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. With r-value of 0.940, the results indicate that there is very high significant predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis One: Open school climate will not significantly predict effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of Significant Prediction of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

N	Regression Co-efficient (r)	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Remarks
2, 909	0.68	0.4624	46.24	Sig. Prediction

Data analysis on Table 2 revealed the predictive coefficient value of 0.68 and r^2 of .04624. This shows a significant prediction existing between open school climate and effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Furthermore, the adjusted r^2 of 46.24 explains that 46.24% of variance in effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State is accounted for by open school climate.

Summary of Findings

The following findings emerged from this study:

1. There is very high significant predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is a significant prediction existing between open school climate and effective educational services delivery as 46.24% of variance in effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools

in Anambra State is accounted for by open school climate.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Correspondingly, the hypothesis tested whether open school climate can significantly predict effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Findings indicated that there is very high significant predictive value of open school climate on effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also found that there is a significant prediction existing between open school climate and effective educational services delivery as 46.24% of variance in effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State is accounted for by open school climate.

The findings of the study show that there is very high positive correlation existing between open school climate and effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that a unit increase in the level of open school climate will lead to a unit increase in the effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. That is to say, an increase in the level of openness in the school climate can result in an increase in effective educational services delivery in the secondary schools.

This finding is consistent with Okoye (2012) who found that the school organizational climate influences educational innovations. According to the findings by Okoye, open school climate has a positive influence on educational innovations and service delivery. The researcher therefore recommended that school administrators be trained to be conscious of this so that their leadership style will produce conducive climate for innovations to thrive. This is also consistent with effective educational services delivery in the public secondary schools. As found by Mbon, Omorobi, Owan, and Ekpenyong (2019), the quality of educational resources has a significant relationship with effective of instructional service delivery. On this note therefore, an increase in open school climate will lead to increase in effective educational services delivery and vice versa.

Conclusion

Based on the interpretations of the findings, the data collected and analysis and discussion of results, it is concluded that there is very high predictive power of open school climate on effective educational services delivery. The findings of this study revealed that open school climate has predictive power over effective educational services delivery in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The implication is that positive school climates in secondary schools in Anambra State can be encouraged and improved in order to ensure effective educational services delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The government should make conscious effort to formulate policies that will impact positively on the school climate since an enhancement

of open school climate can lead to increase in effective educational services delivery.

2. The government should set up special intervention programmes geared at sensitizing principals on the need for open and conducive school climate as this will improve effective educational services delivery in the secondary schools.
3. The Post Primary Schools Service Commission should pay more attention to open school climate because positive school climates are necessary for effective educational services delivery in the schools.

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