

The Influence of School Climate on Teachers' Motivation in Government Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria

Joy T. Biukeme, Victor F. Peretomode*

Department of Educational Management and Foundations, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

*Correspondence Author

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ABSTRACT

The study identifies the predominant school climate and examined the influence of school climate on teachers' motivation in Delta State, Nigeria. Two research questions were answered and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of probability. The study is a correlational research method based on the *ex-post facto* design. The study covered teachers and students in public secondary schools in Delta State. The population for the study comprised 11,988 teachers from the 415 public secondary schools in Delta state. The sample consists of three hundred and sixty (360) respondents selected on the basis of multi-stage cluster sampling technique. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Data gathered from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistics – frequency, means and standard deviations, and coefficients of determination – to provide answers to the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics – independent t-test analysis and the regression analysis at .05 level of significance. The findings from the study showed that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools. There is a significant relationship between school climate and teachers' motivation. It was concluded that controlled school climate is the dominant school climate in Secondary Schools. The level of teachers' motivation is very high. There are no significant differences in reported predominant school climate between male and female teachers. It was recommended among others that school principals should regularly undertake leadership training and should continuously evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies to improve school climate to positively impact teachers' motivation and enhance students' learning.

Keywords: Controlled Climate, Government Secondary Schools, Public Schools, School Climate, Teachers' Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are employed at all educational levels, including primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Since they are the primary force behind the implementation and realisation of the goals of the curriculum, teachers are the most valuable resource and the centre of attention in any educational system. The calibre of teachers determines the calibre of education. Nigeria is a country that has recognised education as a means of achieving the much-desired rapid social and economic growth. Therefore, it cannot afford to ignore its teachers. It is crucial that educators are given a supportive learning environment in order for them to carry out their tasks and fulfil their roles in realising the value of education in the advancement of the nation.

When employees join an organisation, they usually expect that their personal needs will be met. In order to accomplish the predetermined educational goals, many institutions, including schools, rely on instructors being able to work effectively in a supportive learning environment. This atmosphere permits teachers and students to freely share ideas, thoughts, and skills. The atmosphere at school ought to be favourable, and not toxic. The feeling or perception of the environment in which teaching and learning occur is referred to as the “school climate”. A welcoming and friendly educational environment allows everyone to remain and work in a reasonably secure and comfortable manner. It refers to the standard and nature of school life, a disciplined setting where students feel appreciated, respected, and capable of cooperating to achieve the common school goals.

Many academics have stressed that a secondary school’s school climate is a crucial component of its overall structure and that a poor school climate has a detrimental impact on teachers, which in turn has a negative impact on the calibre of secondary school outputs (Marshall, 2019). For education to meet its goals and be of the highest calibre, a conducive environment must exist where both teachers and students feel happy, contented, wanted, appreciated, accepted, and safe physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. The principal needs to implement suitable management techniques. For the school to run efficiently, these tactics include organising, directing, planning, coordinating, and controlling.

Despite the fact that teacher motivation is essential to the teaching and learning process, studies have revealed that a large number of teachers in developing nations lack strong motivation. In developing nations, a number of issues have a negative impact on teachers’ motivation and work satisfaction (Michaelowa, 2012).

One crucial area of education research is the study of school climate. The term “school climate” describes the nature and psychological atmosphere of a school, which has a big impact on how well kids learn, behave, and feel about themselves. A school’s physical, social, and emotional features are just a few of the many components that make up its overall atmosphere. It covers things like academic standards, relationships between students and staff, safety, and the general climate of the school.

Brookshire (2016) defines school climate as the ways in which individuals’ experiences of school life are shaped by norms, objectives, values, interpersonal interactions, instructional strategies, and organisational structures. According to Nwagwu (2017), the state of interpersonal relationships within an educational institution’s workplace constitutes the school climate. Wikipedia (2024) and Freinerg (1999) provide one of the most interesting and comprehensive meaning of school climate. They explained that school climate refers to the quality and character of school life and described it as “the heart and soul of school... that essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, and an administrator to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day” (Freinerg, 1999). The National School Climate Council (2007) of United States, postulated that a sustainable, positive school climate promotes students’ academic and social emotional development, and is associated with higher academic performance, better mental health, and less bullying (Thomas and Grimes, 2002).

According to Peretomode (2019), Halpin and Croft (1963) created an instrument called the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) with which they identified six types of organizational climates referred to as open, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal, and closed. Çağlayan (2013) found that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers’ perceptions of the school climate with regard to tenure and other school characteristics. The school climate is understood as the reflections of 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.

Bateman (2016) sees motivation as the crucial driving force that propels people to make effort to take action

to meet needs, accomplish goals, or maintain a sense of worth or dignity. The three most important terms are need, values, and objectives. These are the essential pillars of motivation that sparks action. Teachers are prepared and eager to fulfil their duties. It is a strategy for inspiring others to act in order to accomplish the intended goals. readiness to use their skills to the fullest extent possible. Rasheed (2016) explored how the school climate impacts and promotes high levels of teacher morale. Hassan, Tayyab, and Awan (2018) conducted a study in Multan secondary schools to determine the motivation and self-esteem levels of public school teachers. Rasheed (2016) findings revealed that school climate impacts and promotes high levels of teacher morale.

Education experts and other citizens have expressed serious concerns about the issue of poor quality teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary schools. This becomes relevant because the government's lacklustre attempts to impose discipline in secondary schools, principals' and teachers' lack of commitment, dedication, and loyalty, and a lack of incentives or low teacher motivation and job satisfaction have all negatively impacted the quality of education.

The majority of schools have decaying structures, outdated equipment and materials, staff members who don't always show up for work, lateness, and absenteeism from class, among other issues. Why are things in our secondary schools in such a horrible state? The school climate, teachers' motivation, and the accomplishment of school goals are all impacted by the principals' attitude towards teacher quality and school improvements. It is against this background that the researcher intends to find out the types and dominant school climate on public secondary schools and how this impact on teachers' motivation in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Which is the predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools?
2. To what extent does school climate influence teachers' motivation?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between school climate and teachers' motivation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study employed the correlational research method based on the *ex-post facto* design. The *ex-post facto* research design is appropriate because the cause and effect of the variables of interest have already occurred and the researcher traced backwards to determine if the effect could be traceable to the cause. The population of the study comprised of 11,988 teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State from the 415 schools from the three senatorial districts of the state. The sample size for the study consisted of three hundred and sixty (360) respondents in public secondary schools of the state drawn from the study population using the multi-Stage cluster sampling technique. The main instrument used for the collection of data for the study is titled the "Influence of School Climate on Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire".

The instrument was given to three professors in the Department of Educational Management and Foundations, Delta State University, Abraka, to vet and scrutinize the appropriateness of the items and

determine whether the items were relevant and adequate for the scope of the study. . The suggested improvements were incorporated in the final instrument. This helped to ensure the content and face validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to twenty (20) teachers in public schools in Delta State who were not participating in the study. The instrument was administered on the 20 teachers twice at an interval of two weeks in order to determine the test – retest reliability of the instrument and thereafter applying the Cronbach’s alpha Formula to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. A value of 0.60 was obtained for school climate scale and a value of 0.70 was obtained for teachers’ motivation scale. Data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistics – frequency, means and standard deviation, coefficients of determination – to provide answers to the research questions at a benchmark of 2.50. This means that any item less than the benchmark of 2.51 was rejected while mean scores of 2.51 and above was accepted. The null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics – independent t-test analysis, the correlation / linear regression at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: Which is the predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools?

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation on each of the school climates

S/N	Climate Type	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Controlled Climate	3.26	0.63	Predominant
2	Open Climate	2.96	0.75	Accepted
3	Autonomous Climate	2.18	0.78	Rejected
4	Closed Climate	1.89	0.93	Rejected
5	Paternal Climate	1.50	0.59	Rejected
6	Familiar Climate	1.37	0.72	Rejected
	GRAND TOTAL	2.20	0.73	

Source: Fieldwork (2024): Benchmark = 2.50

Table 1 shows the mean rating and standard deviation on the predominant school climate. The result shows that *controlled climate* has a grand total mean rating of **3.26**, *open climate* has a grand total mean rating of **2.96**, *autonomous climate* has a grand total mean rating of **2.18**, *closed climate* has a grand total mean rating of **1.89**, *autonomous climate* has a grand total mean rating of **2.18**, and *familiar climate* has a grand total mean rating of **1.37**. *Controlled climate* has the highest grand total acceptable mean rating of **3.26** and it is above the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that controlled school climate is the *predominant school climate* in Delta State Secondary Schools.

Research Question Two: To what extent does school climate influence teachers’ motivation?

Table 2: Extent School Climate Influences Teachers’ Motivation

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ² %	Decision
School climate	355						Negative Relationship
	3.25	1.06	-.031	-.000	-.000		
Teachers’ motivation	355						

Source: Fieldwork (2024)

Table 2 shows the extent to which school climate influences teachers’ motivation. The result shows that the correlation coefficient (r), the extent school climate influence teachers’ motivation is -.031, with a coefficient determination of (r²) of -0.000. School climate is -0.00 percent to teachers’ motivation. This indicates that school climate has a minimal negative influence on teachers’ motivation.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools.

Table 3: Independent t-test Analysis of difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male	169	1.96	.76	1.16	+1.96	Accept H _o
Females	186	2.03	.69			

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 3 shows mean scores of 1.96 and 2.03 and a standard deviation of 0.76 and 0.69 for male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State. A t-calculated of 1.16 was obtained and the t- critical observed was +1.96. The t-calculated of 1.16 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 value at an alpha value of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between school climate and teachers’ motivation

Table 4: Model Summary

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	Sig	Decision
School climate	355	3.24	.59	-.031	.000	Ho is significant
Teachers’ motivation	355	3.19	1.25			

Source: Field work, 2024

From table 4, the value of r-cal is -0.031; at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is .000. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between school climate and teachers’ motivation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study’s finding is discussed under the following sub-headings:

Predominant School Climate

The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their reported predominant school climate in Delta State Secondary Schools. This means that, overall, male and female teachers perceived the school climate similarly. In other words, there is no noticeable or

statistically significant gap between how male and female teachers view the predominant atmosphere or environment within the school. It implies that any variations in how male and female teachers perceive the school climate are not substantial enough to be considered statistically significant. Both male and female teachers share similar perceptions of the school environment. This finding is in line with Okorji, Igbokwe and Ezeugbor (2016) who showed that there is no significant difference between the gender of teachers regarding school climate. However, the finding is in disagreement with Çağlayan (2013) findings who revealed that there is a significant difference in the school climate perceptions of male and female teachers in terms of tenure as well as school characteristics.

The finding shows that the *controlled climate* with an average mean score of **3.26** in a four-point Likert type scale is the predominant school climate among the public secondary schools in Delta State. While this could be considered as unfortunate because of its features, it is even more worrisome that this climate type is acceptable to the teachers.

The characteristics of this climate type can be inferred from the works of Halpin (1966), Sharma (1978) and Hasan (2019). They pointed out that controlled climate manifests lesser degree of openness than both open and autonomous climate types. The climate is said to be marked by emphasis on hard work and achievement at the expense of satisfaction of social needs or social life. Teachers work hard and there is little time for friendly interactions. The principal is domineering with directive and particularly not considerate. Employees are expected to get work done and are told personally just how to do it. There are a few genuine, warm relations among teachers but isolation is common. The employer is more production or result oriented, and shows bossism. He/she is formal and impersonal and egocentric. He delegates few responsibilities and does everything to keep the school moving smoothly but is not a model of commitment or dedication. His style is characterized by high hindrance, low loyalty, and low intimacy.

School Climate and Teachers' Motivation

The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between school climate and teachers' motivation. This means there is connection between the overall atmosphere or environment within a school and the level of motivation experienced by teachers. In other words, a positive school climate, characterized by factors like supportive relationships, effective communication, and sense of belonging, tends to correlate with the high level of motivation among teachers. Additionally, when teachers perceive their working environment as positive and conducive to their professional growth and wellbeing, they are more likely to feel motivated to engage actively in their roles, contribute to student learning, and participate in school activities and initiatives. The perception of school climate by teachers has been shown to predict their motivation levels positively. A conducive school climate, characterized by security, comfort, mutual support, and positive relationships within the school environment, plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher motivation. The principal's role in creating a supportive school climate is vital. This finding is in consonance with Rasheed (2016) who revealed that school climate impacts and promotes high levels of teacher morale.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings and discussions of the study, it was concluded that controlled school climate is the predominant school climate in Secondary Schools and this cannot be said to be a healthy and conducive climate for effective teaching and learning. By knowing the dominant school climate, principals and government officials need to take the right measures and working in the right direction to improve the school climates of public schools in Delta State. The level of teachers' motivation is high. That there are no significant differences in reported predominant school climate between male and female teachers. However, there are significant relationships between school climate and teachers' motivation. With favourable climate

in schools, the motivation of teachers will be higher than it is at present. Similarly, teaching effectiveness will be increased and enhanced, so also students' learning behaviour and reduced antisocial behaviour in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings: –

Principals have a great role to play, using appropriate leadership style. Therefore, government should on regular basis organise workshops and seminars for principals on ethical and transformational leadership and effective management strategies in school administration. Teachers' motivation could be enhanced by addressing the school climate in various schools which will explore what intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate them to work harder, smarter and be committed to their duties. Schools should develop strategies to improve school climate to positively impact teachers and students who are the primary stakeholders.

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