

School Climate Variables and Teachers' Attitude to Work in Nigerian Secondary Schools

Nwite Onuma and Aja-Okorie

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Abstract: This study examined some social climate variables and teachers' attitude to work for effective school management. A correlation survey design was adopted for the study, while a sample of 300 teachers were randomly selected from the population of 1, 157 in Abakaliki Educational zone of Ebonyi State. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The research questions were answered using mean (\bar{x}) statistical scores and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The result of the study revealed that teachers' attitude to work was highly related to the style of leadership style adopted by school principals. It was also discovered that participation in school decision-making by teachers could move teachers towards high productivity.

Key words: School Climate • Variables • Teachers' Attitude • Work

INTRODUCTION

Education is said to be a roadmap to national development. To this end, Akubue [1] viewed education as a vehicle used in conveying the solutions to societal problems and for total realization of nation's potentials and aspirations. As a medium, Eneastor in Ndu, Ocho and Okeke [2] stated that "various categories of manpower are developed". Within the framework of education, teachers are at the focus of any human development and also the major agent through which the curriculum find its fulfillment and actualization.

To realize the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria, the teachers must be happy on the job, highly motivated to carry out the task of teaching with good school climate conditions. Such climate conditions include appropriate temperature and positive psychological conditions associated with the teacher in his work place, precisely in the classroom. This implies that teachers need to be highly productive if immediate and long term objective of education are be achieved. The importance of the teacher as the key agents of curriculum implementation has been recognized by the Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN, 3] "In recognition of the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels teachers education shall continue to be emphasized in educational planning and

development encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers. p56". Ukeje [4] further observed that "teachers are the hub of any educational system and as the wheel rotates around the hub, the educational system rotates around the teachers". Indeed no educational system can be better than its teachers. Therefore, teachers from all indications occupy copious and important position in Nigerian educative process and any amount of financial resources spent on their welfare with regard to training, improving their effectiveness and productivity are investments made in the right direction.

Education, according to Ugbong [5] has enjoyed a significant share of budget allocation from 1998-2006. Despite the interest and huge investment made in the filed of education, it has been observed by scholars like; Babalola [6], Ukeje [4] and Fafunwa [7] that most institutions of learning still turn out weak school leavers and graduates. This may be attributed to some school climate variables and attitude to work by teachers.

In Nigeria today, there is a debate as to what is responsible for poor performance of students of our institution and teachers' attitude to work. Some people blame the teachers or school principals. Others blame government and adverse experience of whether extremes as a clear indication of the impact of climate variable. Therefore are exposed Davis [8] opined that individuals,

organization, schools and government of developing countries like Nigeria are more occupied with problems which they perceive as being urgent and tangible than responding to the threat of climate change. In this context, the implication is that some school principles have not taken the right steps in providing necessary adaptive measures for climate impact in schools variables.

According to UNICEF [9]

Fulfilling the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) requires not just getting all children into school, . . . but making sure that all schools work in the best interest of the children entrusted to them.

It is worthy to observe that, in institutional administration, every school has its own unique tone, culture or climate. This is what may set one school organization apart from the other. To Hoy and Miskel in Ukeje [10] the set of internal characteristic that distinguishes one school from another that influences the behaviour of people in it is the organizational climate. In the words of Gibson in Ugbong [11] defined climate "as a set of prosperities of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by employees who work in the environment and is assumed to be major force in influencing their behaviour on the job p.17."

For Scholze, Knon, Amel and Prentice [12] climate change is an environmental, social and economic challenge on global scale. Zaifada and Mohammed [13] listed temperature, precipitation, pressure and winds as elements of climate with far-reaching global influence United Nation (UN, [14] reported that indices of climate change in both developed and developing countries of the world include the influence of Green House Gas (GHG) emission in the levels of these emission has effected teachers job performance in relation to harsh atmospheric whether conditions of schools.

Odjugo (2015) and United Kingdom Environmental Network (UKEN, [16] affirmed that causes of climate change are emissions and global warming which invariably increases rise in sea level treating to submerge coastal towns and cities in Nigeria. This is evident in 2010, 2013 and 2015 unprecedented seasonal floods due to overflowing of Ebonyi and Benue Rivers. The floods effected not only social but educational programmes of affected communities around these rivers. Teachers and school children suffered dislocation of school activities as the flood lasted.

School climate in this regard is an end product of the school groups-students, Teachers, school administrators as they work to balance the organizational and individual aspect of the school. The school climate has to do with general work environment of the school; it is influenced by formal organization, material organization, personalities of participants and organizational leadership. The school climate reflect physical and psychological aspect of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide preconditions necessary for teaching and learning Ugbong, [11]. Ugbong futher described school climate as an orderly environment in which the school family is able to pursue her mission free from disruptions. In his assertion, Isangedighi [17] affirmed that if school organizational climate is not satisfactory, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to effect a change towards a positive direction.

The climate of the school and moral of the staff can have a positive effect on the students' attitude. Anderson [18] posited that conducive school environment foster high school academic achievement and enhance positive attitude to work. In this context, the researcher views school climate variables as the physical, social and psychological factors, conditions and circumstances and influences which interact to give a school unique congenial learning/working environment and peculiar image. These factors may include inter-personal/social relationships between and within groups, leadership behaviour of the school principal, decision-making, school working facilities, general teachers' attitude towards teaching and learning, school tone and motivation.

In this regard, therefore, the rationale for investigating some school climate variables, identify their dimension and how to improve on the dimensions to bring about positive attitude in working in school organization.

Statement of the Problem: Issues of school climate variables have been of great concern to school administrators, teachers, students and parents. Teachers appear to have taken advantages of some prevailing climate variables in becoming non-chanllant and uncommitted to their work and school programmes. Some display cold and unconcerned attitude to work. Display of autocratic leadership style by school principles, non-involvement of staff in school decision-making and lack of harmony may affect teachers' output and effectiveness. The challenges here is to fashion out selected school climate variables that affect teachers' attitude to work in teaching environment.

Therefore, the problem of this study is to find out the relationship between teachers' attitude to work and selected school climate variables in improving standard of education in Nigerian secondary schools sector.

Purpose of the Study: Specifically, the study sought to correlate some school climate variables to teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Nigeria and also to correlate:

- School social climate variable to teachers' attitude to work.
- Leadership style of the principle to teachers' attitude to work.
- Teacher's participation in decision-making to their attitude to work.

Scope of the Study: The study is delimited to school climate variables and teachers attitude to work in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Ebonyi state is located in South-East zone of the country, Nigeria. The state is also located in tropical wet or dry climate, the state has five months of heavy rainfall. The study area has four (4) Local Government Areas (LGAs) with a population of 1, 157 secondary school teachers.

Research Questions: The study provided answer to the following questions:

- To what extent does school social climate variables relate to teachers' attitude to work?
- To what extent does leadership style of the school principals relate to teachers' attitude to work?
- To what extent does teachers' participation in school decision-making relate to their attitude to their work?

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were tested by the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceived level of school social climate variables and their attitude to work.
- There is no significant difference between teachers' perception of the principal's leadership style and their attitude to work.
- Teachers' participation in school decision-making does not significantly relate to their attitude to work.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted correlation survey design. This design was considered appropriate because it sought to determine the degree of relationship between some selected school climate variable and teachers' attitude to work. Correlation design seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables (Akuezuilo and Agu, [19]). The population comprised all the 59 public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State of Nigeria with 59 principals and 1098 teachers. The 59 principals were all studied while simple random sampling technique was used to select 241 out of 1098 teachers making a total of 300 (25.9%) as the sample of the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire on School Climate Variables and Teachers' Attitude to Work (SCVTAW). A four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) was provided for the respondents to respond to the questionnaire items. Data obtained from responses of teachers from trial testing were used to estimate reliability of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient of instrument was determined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The estimate of internal consistency computed for the instrument was 0.88. The research questions were answered using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) based on extent of relationship that exist between independent variables (teacher attitude to work) and dependent variables (school climate variable). The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level using Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does social climate variables relate to teachers' attitude to work? The findings of the study are based on the research questions and null hypotheses as presented on Tables 1-6.

Table 1 revealed that principals attitude towards in a social climate is autocratic with mean score of 2.62, student share their problem freely with other students ($m= 2.68$) and that teachers are friendly with themselves ($m = 2.80$) while item 2 and 4 had low mean scores of 2.38 and 2.41) respectively the grand mean score of 2.58 is an indication high relationship of social climate variables with teachers attitude to work in their work place.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Relationship between Social Climate Variables and Teachers' Attitude to Work (N = 300)

Sl. No.	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	x	SD	Decision
1.	My principal is autocratic and difficult to work with	58	70	98	74	2.62	1.06	GE
2.	Our principal takes prompt action on teachers complaints	66	180	70	56	2.38	1.10	LE
3.	Teachers in the school are very friendly among themselves	39	56	128	78	2.80	.97	HE
4.	Teachers come together around themselves when in difficult	90	66	67	77	2.41	1.16	LE
5.	Student share freely their problems with their teachers	60	42	122	76	2.68	1.08	HE
	Grand mean					2.58	1.06	HE

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Relationship between Leadership Style of the Principal and Teachers' Attitude to Work (N = 300)

Sl	Item	VH	H	L	VL	X	SD	Decision
6.	My principal welcome suggestions for conflict resolution among member staff	98	80	62	60	2.30	1.10	LE
7.	Principal settle conflict after due consultation with staff	105	79	70	46	2.18	1.08	LE
8.	My principal uses various strategies to get every staff carryout their responsibilities	70	93	65	72	2.45	1.10	LE
9.	Principal allow teachers to use their initiatives to decide on problem and issues in the school	100	90	70	39	2.12	1.10	LE
10.	Principal takes most decisions in school matter alone	60	42	122	76	2.68	1.08	HE
	Grand Mean					2.31	1.11	

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Relationship between Teachers' Participation in School Decision-Making to Teachers' Attitude to Work

Sl.	Item	VH	H	L	VL	X	SD	Decision
1.	My principal carry most of the teachers along in most decision –making	60	87	100	53	2.48	1.10	LE
2.	Principal involve teachers in decision -making process	60	86	101	53	2.51	0.90	HE
3.	Principal hold regular meetings with teachers to seek their opinion on serious school affairs	80	106	80	34	2.22	0.99	LE
4.	Principal relay on collective opinion of teachers to move the school forward	68	64	99	72	2.59	1.10	HE
5.	Most staff meeting conducted in the school are more briefings by the school principal	80	62	100	58	2.45	1.10	LE
	Grand mean					2.31	1.11	

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between School Social Climate Variables and Teachers' Attitude to Work (N = 300)

Variable	X	SD	r-value
Social climate	64.94	11.38	0.013
Teachers attitude to work	69.18	10.30	

P < 0.05 crit-r = 0.062 df 298.

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Teachers' Perception on their Principal's Leadership style and their Attitude to Work (N = 300)

Variable	X	SD	r-value
Leadership style	64:36	11.38	0.013
Teachers attitude to work	69.18	10.30	

P < 0.05 crit-r = 0.062 df 298.

Table 6: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Teachers Level of Participation in Decision-Making and Teacher Attitude to Work

Variable	X	SD	r-value
Decision-making participation	64:36	11.38	0.013
Teachers attitude to work	69.18	10.30	

P < 0.05 crit-r = 0.062 df 298

Research Question 2: To what extent does leadership style of the school principals relate to teachers' attitude to work?

Table 2 showed low leadership management quality principal with his staff in terms of suggestion from teacher (m = 2.30), non-consultation with staff in conflict resolution (M= 2.18) principal do not allow teachers to use their initiative to decide their problem (m=2.12) and on the contrary, principals alone take most decisions in school matters (M= 2.68).

Research Question 3: To what extent does teachers' participation in school decision-making relate to their attitude to their work?

Table 3 indicated that principal hardly carry their teachers along in most decision making in school administration (m= 2.48), principals irregularly hold staff meeting to seek their opinion in school matters (m= 2.22), likewise item 15 (m= 2.45), the grand mean of 2.31 is an indication that teachers are not given full participatory opportunities in decision making process in social school administration.

Ho₁: The result of the analysis on table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.013 is less than the critical value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significance at 298 degree of freedom. Since the calculated r-value is less than the critical r-value, it upheld that teacher's attitude to work was not affected.

H₀₂: The result of the analysis on table 5 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.013 is less than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significance at 298 degree of freedom. This means that there this a significant relationship between teachers perception of principals' leadership style and teachers attitude to work

H₀₃: The result of the analysis on table 6 indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.013 is less than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was upheld. This implies that teachers level of active participation in decision making influence teachers attitude to work.

DECISSION

The findings on Table 1, revealed a high relationship between school social climate variable and teachers attitude to work with an average mean (\bar{x}) of 2.58 and Standard Deviation of (SD) 1.06. This is an indication that the existence of social climate variable in school bears of high relationship with teachers' attitude of work. This finding implies that whether or not there is peaceful and cordial interrelationship among staff, this alone does not relate to their attitude to work. That is, teacher-teacher, teacher-student or teacher-principal relationship does not influence and relate to their work attitude. The finding corroborates with the findings of Ochong [20] and Ugbong [5] who discovered that it does not necessarily follow that positive teacher/ principal relation lead to teachers' productive to their attitude to work. On the contrary, United Kingdom Environmental Change Net-Work [16] and Udida [21] in their separate findings observed that harmonious interaction between teacher-teacher, teacher-student in school organization promotes a peaceful working attitude and working environment.

Generally, good teacher-student, teacher-teacher relationship leads to conducive work environment, development of area of valves, emotional and psychological acceptance, confidence and collaborative relationship as against bitter and uncooperative and uncompromising relationship that may lead to psychological tension, unnecessary anxiety, low-self image, lack of trust and unproductive work environment and attitude to work.

The findings on research question 2 as presented on Table 2 showed that there is a high relationship between principals leadership style and teachers attitude to work with an average mean of 2.31 and standard deviation of

1.11. This implies that teachers' attitude to work is related to the style of leadership adopted by the school principal. This finding is supported by Eneastor [22] who observed that autocratic leadership style reduces the quality of work, work out put, attitude to work since teachers' need and interests are hot considered.

The last research question 3 on participation in decision-making presented on table 3 revealed that there is a low relationship with an average mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of 1.04. This implies that if teachers are given opportunity to participate freely in school decision-making, it will enhance their attitude towards their work; The findings are in agreement with Nwokenna (23) who posited that participatory in school decision making by teachers could move teachers towards high productivity.

H₀₁: The results of the hypothesis four was upheld. The implication of this result is that whether or not there is cordial or peaceful relationship in the school, it does not affect teachers' attitude to work. This could be attributed to teachers' level of understanding and respect for the ethics of the teaching profession in secondary schools in the state. In view of this backdrop, social climate variables in schools are not predicament to teachers' attitude to work in Ebonyi state secondary schools.

H₀₂: The results of hypothesis 2 (table 5) were all rejected. Null hypothesis two shows that there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of their principals' leadership style and their attitude to work. This implies that the relationship between principals leadership style and teachers attitude to work is strong and positive.

H₀₃: Hypothesis three also show a strong relationship between teachers' level of participation in school decision making and their attitude to work. From the result, there is a strong indication that when teachers are allowed to participation in school decision-making process, there is going to be a positive attitude to work as against denial of opportunities of participating. Therefore, depriving teachers from participating in decision-making tend to low productivity and redundancy is encouraged. The implication of these findings is that participation in decision making increase teachers' level of satisfaction, effectiveness, enthusiasm for school job and positive attitude towards work in the school social environment.

CONCLUSION

Correlation statistics was utilized in this study to establish the extent of relationship between climate variables and teachers attitude to work in public secondary school in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Based on the results, whether or not there is cordial or peaceful relationship in the school, it do not affect teachers' attitude to school work. However, shared activities and harmonious atmosphere encourage hard work and peaceful working environment. Again, to encourage teachers' positive attitude to work, democratic leadership style was preferred by teachers who are given the opportunity to participate freely in school decision-making since involvement in decision-making process in all school affairs leads to effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Recommendations: In the strength of the above, the following recommendations are made:

- The school authority should always endeavour to develop and maintain cordial working relationship with their teachers and staff of the school to achieve the objectives of the organization (school system).
- Principals should not limit themselves to a particular leadership style that may not stimulate teachers' attitude to work. Adoption of all embracing leadership style enhances positive attitude to work by teachers in secondary schools.
- To foster the development of positive attitude to work by teachers, principals should in all ramifications and in accordance to the principles of school administration allow teachers to participate in school decision-making freely.

REFERENCES

1. Akubue, A., 2002. The key to effective resource management: a look at the over looked. *Interdisciplinary Education Journal (INTEJ)*, 4(2): 1-6.
2. Ndu, A., L.O. Ocho and B.S. Okeke, 1997. *Dynamics of educational administration and management: The Nigeria perceptive*. Onitsha: Meks Publishers Ltd.
3. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004. *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
4. Ukeje, B.O., 1983. *Educational Administration*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
5. Ugbong, B.I., 2004. *School climate variable and lectures attitude to work in higer institutions of learning in cross river state*. Unpublished M.Ed Thesis, University of Calabar.
6. Babalola, U.B., 2009. *Education that can raise productivity in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Awemark Publishers.
7. Fafunwa, B.A., 1974. *Towards better school administration and supervision of instruction*. Ibadan: Canton Press Ltd.
8. Davis, J., 2007. *Climate change and its impacts young children*. <http://www.earlychildhood Australia.org.au> retrieved July 20, 2014.
9. UNICEF, 2009. *Child-friendly school manual* Retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/28407318/child-friendly-manual>.
10. Ukeje, B.O., 1996. *Teacher education for national development*. In *teacher education: An imperative for national development*. National colleges of education commission (NCCE).
11. Ugbong, B.I., 2010. *Selected school climate variables and teachers attitude to work in post-primary schools in cross River State, Nigeria*, Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
12. Scholze, M., W. Knoon, N. Amel and W. Prentie, 2006. *A climate change risk analysis for world ecosystem*. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 103(13): 116-120.
13. Zaifada, B.I. and H. Mohammed, 2010. *Climate change and classroom management in Borno State primary school*. *Nigerian Journal of Education Administration and planning (NAEAP)*, 10(2): 57-67.
14. United Nations (UN, 2010). *Conference on climate change and statistics*. Oslo, Norway, 14th April 2008. <http://unstates.un.org/unsd/climate-change/un-agencies/htm> Retrieve July 2015.
15. Odjugo, P.A.O., 2010. *Regional evidence of climate change in Nigeria*. *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning in Nigeria*, 3(6): 142-150. <http://www.academicjournals.org/JGRP>. retrieved 20th October 2015.
16. United Kingdom Environmental Network (UKEN, 2010). *The impacts and effects of climate change*. <http://www.united-kingdomenvironmental.net.htm>. Retrieved July 2014.
17. Isangedighi, A.J., 2003. *Improving school climate for achievement*. *Journal of Faculty of Education University of Calabar*, 3(2): 45-54.

18. Anderson, L.R., 1982. Leader behaviour attitude and task performance of inter-cultural discussion groups. *Journal of School Psychology*, 56(3): SOS-SID.
19. Akuezulo, E.O. and N. Agu, 2002. Research and statistics in education and social science: methods and application. Awka: Nuel Centi Publication and Academic Press.
20. Ochang, C.D., 2005. Influence of motivation on teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Unpublished M.Ed Thesis University of Calabar, Nigeria.
21. Udida, L.A., 2004. Work environment and productivity among academic staff of University of Akwa Ibom and Cross River State University of Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Calabar.
22. Eneastor, G.O., 1997. Towards improving teachers productivity in Nigerian schools. *National Teachers Institute-Bio Annual Journal of Education*, 1(1): 20-25.
23. Nwokenna, E.N., 2010. Strategies for motivating teachers to high productivity towards the realization of school music education. *Journal of the Academy of Education*, 6(3): 140-148.