INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE ON STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

1UMAR ALIYU; 2ZANIAB QUEEN DAUDA & 3MARYAM SUNUSI

1&3Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum, 
Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. 
aliyutakolandzu@gmail.com, sunusimaryam4@gmail.com
2Department of Education, Fati Lami Abubakar Institute for Legal and Administrative Studies, Minna, Niger State. zainabdauda87@gmail.com,

Abstract
This research study examined the Influence of School Climate on Students’ Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Two (2) research objectives guided the study. Two (2) research questions and two (2) research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, which were in line with the stated objectives. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The target population of the study was 4,547 respondents which comprises 4,170 senior secondary school teachers, 266 principals and 111 school supervisors from the seven (7) Education Zones in the state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 346 sample of respondents for the study. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that open school climate such as positive attitudes of students towards their teachers, involvement of students in decision making and open door policy of principals improve students’ academic performance. The study recommended that workshops, seminars, and refresher courses should be regularly organized by Niger State Ministry of Education so as update the secondary school staffs’ skills in modern school administration and teaching techniques.

Keywords: School Climate, Open Climate, Controlled Climate, Academic Performance

Introduction
School is a formal organization set up by the society to fulfill its goals and objectives. To effectively achieve the expected objectives, it has to organize itself in a well-coordinated and conducive environment. Secondary education is the second stage in formal education of most countries of the world and captures mostly adolescent children in a systematically structured, democratic or regimented learning environment (John, 2017 & Aliyu, Said & Dauda, 2019). It occupied a strategic position in any nation’s educational system. It has broad goals to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). To achieve the objectives of secondary school, many variables or factors such as leadership style of school head, the decision making process, communication network, maintenance of school discipline, motivation of staff and students, availability of resources among others must be effectively channel toward creating a conducive and favourable school climate for effective teaching and learning process.
At the beginning of each academic year, teachers and school principals might not put emphasis on climate of school in relation to other variables. One of the most obvious aspects that influence students’ academic performance is the school climate (Asrat, 2014). Adejumobi and Ojikutu (2013) defined school climate as a broad term that refers to teachers’ perceptions of the general work environment of the school. It is a relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behaviour, and is based on their collective perceptions of behaviour in school. Rapti (2014) described school climate as a mixture of beliefs, values and behaviors of students, teaching staff, leaders and parents, level of independence, leadership styles and job satisfaction. Aliyu (2015) viewed school climate as those enduring characteristics that describe a particular school, distinguish it from other schools and serve as a major force influencing the behavior of teachers and students. According to Jumare (2018), school climate is the atmospheric setting which covers member’s internal relationship that influences the external relation and shapes the understanding of each other and subsequently determines the success or failure of the school.

Over the years, the six (6) major categorization of organizational climate by Halphin and Croft (1963) has been widely quoted and related to education by scholars such as Roberts (2007), Adeyemi (2008), Manga (2015) and Jumare (2018). These categorizations were enumerated below.

1. **Open Climate.** This climate is energetic, conducive, congenial and lively which provides satisfaction for group members’ needs and attainment of organizational goals. It is characterized by openness, high productivity, low disengagement, good communication machinery, fair play and justice concrete synergy at all levels, collective work and responsibility and leaderships lead by examples (Jumare, 2018). It is the least restrictive and most efficient climate profile. Within an open climate, teachers work together easily and efficiently, promoting a strong sense of team spirit. They are not inundated with continuous tedium, and the group members enjoy friendly relations. The principal demonstrates a belief system that facilitates problem solving from the staff. Teachers work in teams to guarantee the students’ success.

2. **Closed Climate.** Closed climate shows attribute such as high disengagement among staff, low productivity, existence of low trust and poor communication network, careless of supervision by the leadership and their exist powerful informal organizations or groups. This is perhaps the least desirable of the climate profile types. There is hardly any commitment particularly on the part of both the principal and teachers. There is hardly any emphasis on fulfillment of duties; while the principal is engaged in routine activities or trivial matters or in an unnecessary paperwork that teachers respond to with a minimum degree.

3. **Autonomous Climate.** This climate depict an atmosphere where teachers have at their disposal a considerable degree of freedom to act in school. The leader epitomizes the model of enthusiasm and zeal. There are no external threats or influences. Teachers have a strong desire to teach and students are motivated to learn. Under this organizational climate type, leadership acts emerges primarily from the group and rather frequently from the leader of the school. Workers tend to possess complete freedom to conduct their works and fulfill the social needs as they wish. Spirit and intimacy are extremely high, and there is little disengagement or hindrance.

4. **Controlled Climate.** The climate has profile of impersonal, highly task-oriented, highly controlled and fairly restrictive. It denotes a school setting where hard work and commitment to work are highly
emphasized with little attention to consideration and satisfaction of the individual’s personal and social needs. Thus, leadership in this kind of organization concentrates more on goal achievement, neglecting the social needs of staff. Raynolds (2006) observed that, within this climate, workers tend to be quite task-oriented and broke tendency with the social needs. They feel an urgency to complete a given assignment, and usually work individually. Job satisfaction comes from task completion rather than social fulfillment.

5. **Paternal Climate.** This climate profile is fairly restrictive and fairly inefficient. It has the feature of hard-working, dedicated and the role model school head, but, he does work alone, teachers or staff does not follow his footstep due to existences of difference among groups and factions among the teachers. This factor hinders organizational goal attainment. The staff are not overburdened with school activities but do not get along well with one another and tend to form competing factions. The leader is not at all aloof but is instructive and unreasonable in term of emphasis on productivity. The principal is viewed as considerate and somewhat energetic but assumes more the style of a benevolent dictator than a professional role model.

6. **Familiar Climate.** This climate has the features of friendliness, congenial sociability and understanding at the expense of work accomplishment. Social needs satisfaction is extremely high while little is done to control and direct the group activities towards goals achievement. The leader of the organization, though highly considerate on a personal level and not at all aloof, does not emphasize productivity or supervise the work. Job satisfaction tends to be average and is predicated on social relationships (Raynolds, 2006). In short, this climate is an ambiance of friendly but little gets done.

However, the above enumerated school climate types are summarized below.

**Table 1: Characteristic Profile of Climate Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climate Dimension</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Autonomous</th>
<th>Controlled</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Paternal</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disengagement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindrance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espirit</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloofness</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Emphasis</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrust</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: Adapted from Aliyu (2015)**

Table 1 clearly indicated the basic features of school climate which may either make or mar successful implementation of any educational programme. In this regard, Mudassir, Norsuhaily and Ado (2016) observed that the educational process of development occurs in physical, social, cultural and psychological environment. A proper and adequate environment is very much necessary for a fruitful learning of the students. The favorable school environment provides the necessary stimulus for learning.
experiences. The children spend most of their time in school, and this school environment is exerting influence on performance through curricular, teaching technique and relationship (Arul, 2012).

In the recent years, students’ academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools especially in public secondary schools in Niger State has been a source of concern to all stakeholders in the state. The enormity and critical nature of educational challenges in Niger State is evident in the increasing poor performances of students in national examinations. Abdulkadir (2012), Jega (2016), Adedoja (2017), Marafa (2017) and Isaac (2017) revealed that students have not been doing very well in public examination and their performances had been worrisome. There has been a general apprehension about the fallen standard of education in Nigerian educational system. The situation in secondary schools has been deteriorating at such an alarming rate that many critics described the standard of education in Nigeria to have fallen (Akinsolu, 2010; Ige, 2012; Anibueze, 2013, Aliyu, 2017 & Isaac, 2017). This unfortunate trend has become a source of concern considering the great importance of education to national development.

In Niger State, many public secondary schools seem to exhibit different types of climates. In some schools, the atmosphere might be healthy and friendly while in other schools, the atmosphere might be tense. Empirical evidences and reports in literatures indicated that studies related to school climate and student’ academic performance has been conducted at different levels and different locations and from different perspectives. But, evidence from available literatures show that no such study has been carried out or reported in Niger State, hence, the need to fill the existing gap. It is against this backdrop that this research examined the influence of school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria.

**Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were set for the study:

1. examine the influence of open school climate on students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State; and
2. assess the influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does open school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State?
2. In what ways does controlled school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State?

**Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:
1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and school supervisors on the influence of open school climate on students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State.

2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Niger State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. According to Adamu and Ezenwegbu (2016), in descriptive survey design, the researcher usually obtain information or data from other people whose representatives (samples) are used to give information about the larger population. Results are derived from the sample data and used to make inferences regarding the larger population. Since the main thrust of the research was to examine the influence of school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools, the descriptive survey design was relevant. The target population of the study was 4,547 respondents which comprises of 4,170 senior secondary school teachers, 266 principals and 111 school supervisors from the seven (7) Education Zones in the state.

Simple random sampling techniques was used to select three hundred and forty six (346) respondents for the study. The selection of 346 respondents was based on the recommendation of Researcher Advisor’s Table (2006), cited in Charles and Aligba (2017), for selection of sample size. The table suggested that for population of 3,500 to 5,000 at 95% confidential level and 5% margin error, the sample size of 346 respondents suffice. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select two (2) out of seven (7) Education Zones in the state. This implies that, 29% of the seven (7) Education Zones in the state were used for the study. The Education Zones selected were Bida and Kutigi. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtained sample of senior secondary schools from each of the selected Education Zones as well as sample of teachers, principals and school supervisors used for the study.

A self-designed questionnaire of twenty (20) items, tagged “School Climate and Students’ Academic performance (SCASAP)” designed by the researchers was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was structured on a five (5) points Likert’s scale options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Two (2) research experts in Educational Administration and Planning were requested to vet the instrument and their observations and suggestions were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument. The pilot test was conducted in Minna Education Zone, by administering the instrument on 35 respondents which represent 10% of the total sample for the study. These respondents are parts of the target population but not part of the sampled respondents. The data collected from the pilot test was subjected to reliability test using the split half method of reliability and the reliability coefficient stood at 0.81 using Cronbach’s Alpha Formula.

Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the two (2) formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. However, when the mean score of an item is greater than 3.00 set for the study, the item was regarded
as agree by majority of the respondents. On the other hand, when the mean score of an item is less than 3.00, the item was considered disagree. A total of 346 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but only 319 copies were returned. The analysis of the study was therefore, based on the data gathered from the above mentioned number of returned copies of questionnaire.

Analysis of Results

Research Question One: How does open school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State?

Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on the Influence of Open School Climate on Students’ Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statements</th>
<th>SA F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>A F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>U F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>D F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive attitudes of students towards their teachers improve social interaction in school and enhance their academic performance.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Involvement of students in decision making enhance interpersonal relationship with school authority which influence their performance.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Democratic leadership style of principal improves teachers’ and students performances.</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adequate provision of extra-curricular activities improves cordial relationship and academic performance among the students in the school.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mutual understanding between students and teachers enhance academic performance of students in the school.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that statements 1-10 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale mean of 3.00. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that open school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State.

**Research Question Two:** In what ways does controlled school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State?

**Table 3: Opinions of Respondents on the Influence of Controlled School Students’ Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Non-participation of teachers and students in extra-curricular activities affect the academic performance of students.</td>
<td>106 32.5 168 51.5 31 9.5 20 6.1 1 0.3</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Principals’ avoidance of familiarity with teachers and students affect students’ academic performance in the school.</td>
<td>121 37.1 145 44.5 36 11 22 6.7 2 0.6</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principal strictness in maintenance of rules and regulations influence students’ performance.

Disloyalty of teachers to autocratic leader affects the students’ performance.

High aloofness of principals towards the staff and students affects students’ academic performance.

Teachers’ commitment and more time on paper work influence the academic performance of students in the school.

Low level of cooperation between principal and members of staff affects students’ academic performance.

Principal is always in contact with the PTA members in the school and this influence students’ performance.

Effective communication enhances cordial relationship between principal and students and improves students’ performance.

Mutual understanding, trust and cooperation among stakeholders of the school improve teaching and learning process in the school.

Table 2 shows that statements 11-20 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale mean of 3.00. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that controlled school climate influence the students’ academic performance in Secondary Schools in Niger State.

Hypotheses Testing
Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and school supervisors on the influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Niger State.

Items 1-10 in the questionnaire are related to hypothesis one. Respondents’ opinions in respect of those items were collected, analyzed and presented in table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>F-crit.</th>
<th>Sig. (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.253</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.626</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>289.166</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>292.419</td>
<td>318</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. It revealed that the calculated Sig.(P) value of 0.56 is greater than 0.05 level of significant set for the study, while the calculated F-ratio value of 0.971 is less than the 3.03 F-critical value. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby retained. Therefore, there is no significance difference in the opinions of Teachers, Principals and School Supervisor on the influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Niger State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents in the influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Niger State.

Items 11-20 in the questionnaire are related to this hypothesis. Respondents’ opinions in respect of those items were collected, analyzed and presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>F-crit.</th>
<th>Sig. (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.042</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>262.959</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>266.001</td>
<td>318</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. It revealed that the calculated Sig.(P) value of 0.49 is greater than 0.05 level of significant set for the study, while the calculated F-ratio value of 1.87 is less than the 3.03 F-critical value. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby retained. Therefore, there is no significance difference in the opinions of Teachers, Principals and School Supervisors on the
influence of controlled school climate on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Niger State.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the respondents’ opinions, the findings of the study revealed that open school climate enhance the academic performance of students. This implies that positive attitudes of students towards their teachers, involvement of students in decision making, open door policy and democratic leadership style of principals improve students’ interpersonal relationship with school authority and enhance their academic performance in the school. The findings was in line with the findings of researches conducted by Adejumobi and Ojikutu (2013), Olibie, Uzoechina and Eziuzor (2015), Odeh, Angelina and Ivagher (2015) and Mudassir, Norsuhaily and Ado (2016) who revealed that open school climate enriched with intelligent teachers, favorable learning atmosphere, an excellent teacher-student relationship, good school-parent relationship and facilitates learning development result in high academic performance of students in the school.

The study also revealed that controlled school climate affect the academic performance of students. This implies that non-participation of teachers and students in extra-curricular activities, principals’ avoidance of familiarity with teachers and students, principals’ strictness in maintenance of rules and regulations and high aloofness of principals towards the staff and students affects students’ academic performance. In line with this finding, Saje (2014), Olibie, Uzoechina and Eziuzor (2015) and Odeh, Angelina and Ivagher (2015), revealed that there was poor cordial relationship due to improper controlled organizational climate in public secondary schools. This affects the teachers’ productivity and students’ academic performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that open school climate enhanced the academic performance of students. The study also concluded that controlled school climate affect students’ academic performance. In view of the above, the school administrators are expected to provide the appropriate instructional leadership which will assist teachers to contribute maximally to quality education. The inaction of the school administrators towards instructional leadership activities results in problems such as loss of sense of direction, mass failure in examinations, examination malpractice, class absenteeism by both teachers and students, role conflicts, and so on as evident in many secondary schools. All these may determine the type of climate operates in school, which in turn affect the academic performance of students.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Workshops, seminars, and refresher courses should be regularly organized by Niger State Ministry of Education, through Quality Assurance Department, so as update the secondary school staffs’ skills in modern school administration and teaching techniques. Experts within and outside the school could also be invited to serve as resource persons in this regard.
2. Principals should democratize their leadership style in secondary schools and teachers should understand and appreciate the diverse domestic environment of their students, so as to enhance academic performance of students.

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