School Climate Dimensions as Predictors of Principals’ Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

Innocent C. Igbokwe¹, Dr. Perpetua N. Okorji² and Dr. Emmanuel C. Asiegbu³

¹,²&³Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State, Nigeria
c.asiegbu@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract
This study investigated the school climate dimensions as predictors of principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. It adopted a correlational study design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study embraced all the principals from 283 secondary schools in the six education zones of Enugu State. Out of the population, a sample of 177 principals was selected through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used to collect data were Organizational Climate Index and Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire, adapted and developed by the researchers, respectively. The two sets of questionnaires were duly validated by three experts in while Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instruments which yielded 0.83 for the Organizational Climate Index and 0.94 for the Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire. Data collection was done by the researcher and 12 trained research assistants. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient and Multiple Regression were used for data analysis. The findings showed among others that: there was a moderate positive relationship existing between the two variables—school climate and principal’s job performance. It was also found that the components of school climate (collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) made joint significant contribution in predicting principals’ job performance. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that principals should embrace the collaborative and collegial style of administration where teachers are included and free to share ideas and concepts for managerial and school effectiveness.

Keywords: School climate dimensions, Principal’s job performance, and Secondary schools

Introduction
Some authors describe school climate as an aspect of school environment connected with attitudinal and effective dimensions and belief systems of the school (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Therefore, school climate is an interaction between human and material resources in any learning environment. It is the sum total of organizational resources and structures within a school that determine the school behavior whether that of students, teachers, head-teachers, supporting staff or administrators. It is the overall characteristics or feelings of the school that cause it to behave differently from others. It reflects the behaviours which encourage cordial interpersonal relationship within an organization or institution (Rowe & Humphries, 2000). School climate is the life of the school since it shows the pulses,
practices, structures, values, goals, relationships of the school with its environment. The National School Climate Council (2014) explains that school climate is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. These characteristics distinguish one school from another or one institution from another. Each school has its own characteristics which are measurable or verifiable. The difference in effectiveness and performances of different secondary schools appear to be a function of several aspects of school climate, including events inside and outside the classrooms. Positive school climate does not exist by chance; it is shaped (O’ Hanlon & Clifton, 2004). People working in schools are expected to help shape and create positive working environment in schools (Heller, 2002). Taylor (2002) argues that the existence of quality relationships between the head teacher and teachers, among the teachers, and between the teachers and students, and among students reflect a positive school climate.

Although there is not yet a consensus about which dimensions are essential to measuring school climate accurately, this work used the dimension developed by Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002). This is because their dimension has a well developed standardized measure for school climate, inherent in the dimension. The dimensions include collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability. Collegial leadership is the process by which the principal and the teachers contribute ideas and collaborate with one another to ensure implementation (Adeyanju, 2012). In a school climate where there is considerable number of professional staff, collegial leadership advocates democratic practices that ensure that both the principal and the teachers are well represented in terms of decision-making. Every professional teacher is assumed to have the right to participate in the wider decision making process. This is most logical because the teachers will also be part of the implementation process.

Professional teacher behaviour is the attitude of the teacher that is consistent with the school rules and policies. For instance, the teacher observes of school dress codes. Again, the teacher presents oneself in a professional manner appropriate to the time, place, and type of teaching/learning activities that are prevalent in an area. Here, the teacher makes positive efforts to improve himself. He participates in professional development activities, conferences, and workshops. He uses the knowledge acquired from these events, resources, and publications to inform teaching and professional practice. Professional teacher behaviour describes good relationship between the teacher and his fellow teacher which does not exclude other members of the school community. Enyi (2015) sees this professional behaviour as teachers’ efficient use of time and move in a planned and systematic direction; demonstration of commitment to students and the profession, and is self-confident, poised and personally in control of the situation; enthusiastic with standards and expectations for students and self; willingness to alter plans and directions in a manner which assists people in moving toward their goals, and constancy in the quest for knowledge. Institutional vulnerability deals with the nature of school-community relationship. Put simply, it shows the extent to which parents and community interfere in the functioning of schools.

Generally, the involvement of parents of students and community in the school activities, directly or indirectly affects the climate of the school. Almost all parents are interested in the moral upbringing and academic success of their children (Constantino, 2003). The involvement of parents in the school tends to promote learning (Small, 2003), and
significantly increase academic performance of the students (Reosenblatt & Peled 2002). It promotes a healthy climate when the involvement is moderate and friendly. It promotes unfriendly climate when the involvement is inordinate and excessive. High vulnerability leaves the teachers and the students unprotected.

This dimension describes the relationship between the school and the students. It includes how teachers and students strive for academic excellence. This is also referred to as academic press. It describes a school that sets high but achievable academic standards and goals (Hoy et al, 2002). Students persist, strive to achieve and are respected by each other and teachers for their academic success. Students’ behaviour whether active or passive, directly affects the climate of the school. The aspects of the students’ behavior that have great impact on the school climate include: learning, discipline, involvement in extracurricular activities and so on.

Meaningful learning takes place in a school climate that is supportive and comfortable. Also, students’ involvement in extracurricular activities, which is, activities outside the normal timetable, whether on the school premises or outside it, enhances the health, creativity, thereby creating a climate that is positive. Students’ involvement in extracurricular activities promotes team spirit and cooperation (Oyetunji, 2006). This will invariably contribute positively to the school climate. It is worthy of note that these dimensions, without the principal’s disposition to the job (performance), will certainly not lead to improved school climate.

Principals’ job performance is the ability of the principals to attain educational goals and objectives by efficiently and effectively using available resources. These resources involve both human and material resources. Well defined job description can enhance performance and also assist in its measurement. A number of management enhancing factors determine principals’ performance. Some of these management enhancing factors include principals’ background, his personality, his knowledge level, how others perceive him and his work in the social setting in which he works, and especially, how well he can function in such a setting, can constitute the criteria for determining the principals’ effectiveness. Unfortunately, job performance of principals does not seem to be always stable. It moves up and down. One of the factors of this instability in the principals’ job performance is condition of service. Excessive work load is another enemy of principals’ job performance.

It does not seem that the climate at which principals do their legitimate duties in Enugu State is friendly. Some principals do not seem to consult the teachers before decisions are taken concerning them. Some teachers alleged that teachers’ academic welfare is not encouraged, teachers’ health not considered, and that sometimes teachers fight among themselves in the school. These appear to reveal that the principal is not effective or actually in control. A visit round some secondary schools in Enugu State seems to suggest that some teachers are not committed to their duties. Absenteeism and truancy are rampant among teachers. Personal observations by the researchers reveal that some teachers even quarrel with each other in the presence of their students. Students do not care if a teacher, the vice principal or even the principal is around when they are breaking bounds.

Furthermore, the rate of examination malpractice and cultism appears to be high in secondary schools in Enugu State. Secondary schools in Enugu State grapple with a rise in the magnitude of different kinds and forms of students’ indiscipline which make the school climate less conducive for principals to encourage teaching and learning. Parents sometimes undermine the efforts of the school at inculcating discipline in the students by writing
constant letters of protest to the principal. More worrisome is that some communities demand that schools located in their communities go on vacations for some days during their Masquerade festivals. These and many other factors make the school climate in secondary schools in Enugu State unfriendly and unconducive for teaching and learning. This has motivated the researcher to correlate the relationship between these two variables.

**Purpose of the Study**
The main purpose of this study is to determine the school climate dimensions as predictors of principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study aimed at determining:

1. Whether school climate predicts principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Whether school climate dimensions make joint contribution in predicting principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. Whether school climate dimensions make unique contribution in predicting principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State

**Research Questions**
The following research questions were formulated to guide the research.

1. Does school climate predicts principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Do school climate dimensions make joint contribution in predicting principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. Do school climate dimensions make unique contribution in predicting principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Hypotheses**
The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. The contribution of school climate in predicting principals’ job performance is not significant.
2. The dimensions (collegial leadership, teacher professional behaviour, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) of school climate will not make significant joint contribution in predicting principals' job performance.
3. The dimensions (collegial leadership, teacher professional behaviour, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) of school climate will not make significant unique contribution in predicting principals' job performance.

**Methodology**
The study employed a correlational research design, which helped the researchers to determine within the study framework if school climate had relationship with principals’ job performance. The population of the study consisted of all the 283 principals in the public secondary schools in the six education zones of Enugu State, from which 177 principals were selected with the help of simple random sampling technique. The researchers used two research instruments, namely: Organizational Climate Index (OCI) and Principal Self-Assessment Questionnaire (PSQ), which were dully validated by three experts. A pilot study was carried out to determine the internal consistency of the instruments using the Cronbach Alpha in which the reliability index of the Organizational Climate Index and Principal Self-
Assessment Questionnaire, were 0.83 and 0.94 respectively. Thus, the instruments were considered highly reliable.

Data was collected by the researchers with the help of twelve trained research assistants. The selected schools were visited and the copies of questionnaire were administered and collected on the spot. Out of the 354 copies of the questionnaires administered, four copies were invalid while 350 copies were collected back and used for the analysis. The data collected were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SSPS). The findings showed among others that: there was a moderate positive relationship existing between the two variables- school climate and principal’s job performance. It was also found that the components of school climate (collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) made joint significant contribution in predicting principals’ job performance. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that principals should embrace the collaborative and collegial style of administration where teachers are included and free to share ideas and concepts for managerial and school effectiveness.

Results
Research Question One
1. Does school climate predicts principals’ job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 1: Correlation between School Climate and Principals' Job Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals' Job Performance</th>
<th>School Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals' Job Performance</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1 .495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in table 1 shows a Pearson's correlation coefficient, r. =.495. This indicates that a moderate positive correlation exists between school climate and principals' job performance.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant relationship between school climate and principals' job performance.
Table 1: Test of Significance of Correlation between School Climate and Principals' Job Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals' Job Performance</th>
<th>School Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals' Job Performance</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-value .000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 175</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .495</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-value .000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 175</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 displays correlation coefficient, r = .495 and P < 0.05. Since the P is less than the stipulated significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between school climate and principals' job performance.

Research question and Hypothesis two

1. The dimensions of school climate do not make significant joint contribution in predicting principals' job performance

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis with School Climate Dimensions as Predictors of Principals' Job Performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Collegial Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher Professional Behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Achievement Press</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Institutional Vulnerability</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>34.300</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown by the summary of simple regression analysis, the regression coefficient (R) was .668, the coefficient of determination (R²) was .447, F = 34.300 and P = .000. This means that 44.7% of the variance is accounted for by the four predictor variables when taken together. In other words, the four dimensions of school climate contributed 44.7% in predicting principals' job performance. This contribution was statistically significant since the significance of the composite contribution is tested at P < 0.05. In brief, the dimensions of school climate (collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and vulnerability) make significant contributions in predicting principals' job performance.

Research question and Hypothesis three

The dimensions of school climate do not make significant unique contribution in predicting principals' job performance.
Table 3: Regression Coefficients of School Climate Dimensions as Predictors of Principals' Job Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Entered as Predictors</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>60.448</td>
<td>7.571</td>
<td>.7984</td>
<td>4.094</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial leadership</td>
<td>1.379</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.291</td>
<td>4.252</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Professional Behaviour</td>
<td>-1.058</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>-.342</td>
<td>-3.754</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Press</td>
<td>1.285</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>5.271</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Vulnerability</td>
<td>-1.191</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>-.478</td>
<td>-7.840</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 3, all the four dimensions of school climate made significant contribution to the prediction of principals' job performance as all their beta weights (βs = .291, -.342, .470 and -.478) had P-values less than 0.05. Specifically, institutional vulnerability made the highest contribution in predicting principals' job performance (β = -.478). Since this is a negative contribution, it shows that a unit increase in institutional vulnerability will lead to -.478 unit decrease in principals’ job performance. This was followed by achievement press and teacher professional behavior which had βs = .470 and -.342 respectively. Collegial leadership had the least contribution with a β = .291.

Summary of Findings
From the analysis, the following were found:
1. There is moderate positive relationship between school climate and principals’ job performance is significant.
2. There is components of school climate (collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) make joint significant contribution in predicting principals’ job performance.
3. Specifically, institutional vulnerability makes the highest unique contribution in predicting principals’ job performance, which is a negative contribution.

Discussion of Results
School Climate and Principals’ Job Performance
The study found that a moderate (.495) positive correlation exists between school climate and principals’ job performance. The above finding is strengthened by the results presented in table 1 which indicated that there was significant relationship between school climate and principals’ job performance. This shows that school climate is a significant factor in principals’ job performance. A healthy and friendly school climate tends to have positive increase in the principals’ job performance. This is in line with the study of Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002), that climate predicts the behavior and performance of the members of school community. This finding is also in agreement with the assertions of Bush (2003), that
school climate is a vital predictor of school effectiveness and positive increase in principals’ job performance.

School Climate Dimensions as Predictors of Principals’ Job Performance
The study from Table 2 (hypothesis 2), revealed that the four dimensions of school climate contributed 44.7% in predicting principals’ job performance and this contribution was also statistically significant. This implied that the dimensions of school climate (collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability) make significant contribution in predicting principals’ job performance. This means that 44.7% of the variance is accounted for by the four predictor variables when taken together and the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant. The other variables not included in this study may have accounted for the remaining variance. Thus, independent variables which include collegial leadership, teacher professional behavior, achievement press and institutional vulnerability have significant contribution to principals’ job performance. Hypothesis 3 tested the significant unique contribution of the dimensions of school climate made in predicting principals’ job performance. As shown in table 3, all the four dimensions of school climate made significant contributions to the prediction of principals’ job performance. Specifically, institutional vulnerability made the highest contribution in predicting principals’ job performance with a negative contribution. This means that a unit increase in institutional vulnerability predicts -.478 unit decreases in principals’ job performance. This finding agrees with Rosenblatt and Peled’s (2002) who argued that the involvement of community/parent would only yield a positive contribution if principals of schools intentionally develop and implement appropriate practices of partnership with parents.

Conclusion
In all, there was a statistically significant relationship between school climate and principals’ job performance. The correlation coefficient indicated a moderate positive relationship. It was observed that school climate significantly predicts principals’ job performance. Thus, it was recommended that principal is a lead player in a school environment should make effort to create a climate that is friendly and favourable to the school community in order to boost his job performance.

Recommendations
The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of the study:
1. Principals should embrace the collaborative and collegial style of administration where teachers are included and free to share ideas and concepts for managerial and school effectiveness.
2. Principals should create an atmosphere that is supportive, comfortable, friendly, productive, and relaxed, to motivate school community’s greater participation in learning and achieving educational goals.
3. The students should be made to understand the “why and how” of the expectations set by the school. This will make them show interest, get ready for the challenge and, this will invariably favour job performance of principals.
4. Community and parents of students should be encouraged by principals to see themselves as stakeholders, behave accordingly, work in partnership with principals,
and play other positive roles in the education of their children. In the light of this, Parents Teachers’ Association is to be nurtured and fostered through regular meetings.

References


