

INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE ON MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN FCT ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explored the influence of school climate on the management of public secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria through the lens of Henry Fayol's administrative theory. It focused on four key dimensions—physical, social, academic, and safety climates—and their influence on school management practices. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 283 respondents drawn from a population of 2,809 through simple random sampling. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. It was validated by two experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation demonstrated with reliability index of (0.71). Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and chi-square tests at a 0.05 significance level. Results showed that a supportive physical environment, strong social relations, sound best academic structures, and robust safety protocols significantly enhance school management. The study concluded that a positive school climate is the central role of achieving effective administration and therefore recommends that strategic improvements in infrastructure, social engagement, academic rigor, and security should be the hallmark of any administrator. These insights are crucial for policymakers, educators, and administrators aiming to foster efficient school environments.

Keywords: School climate, Education management, Physical environment, Social interaction, Academic framework,

Introduction

Education is a *sin-qua-non* for any societal development. This is because of its parts in the development of an individual and the society at large. Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals and societies, contributing to national development, economic growth, and social stability (Dewey, 1938; UNESCO, 2017). Secondary education, in particular, is crucial as it acts as a bridge between basic and higher education as well as workforce entry. The environment in which students learn, commonly referred to as the school climate, has been increasingly acknowledged as a significant factor impacting educational outcomes. School climate encompasses various dimensions, including the physical, security and safety, social, and academic climates, which together influence students' academic performance, behavior, and emotional well-being (Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013).

Management in secondary schools is essential to ensure that educational goals are met and that students and staff thrive. School management refers to the processes and practices implemented by school leaders, administrators, and teachers to maintain an environment conducive to learning (Bush, 2011). In secondary schools, management responsibilities include ensuring efficient resource allocation, maintaining discipline, fostering teacher professional development, and promoting student welfare. Research emphasizes the importance of a

supportive school climate in facilitating effective school management, as it fosters trust, cooperation, and motivation among students and staff alike (Fullan, 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

The physical climate of a school refers to the tangible aspects of the school environment, including the school infrastructure, facilities, and general upkeep (Maxwell, 2016; Schneider, 2002). These factors play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of their school environment, impacting their motivation and engagement in school activities. Studies have shown that well-maintained classrooms, proper lighting, ventilation, and adequate learning resources contribute to a positive learning experience and promote academic achievement (Earthman, 2004). Inadequate facilities, on the other hand, are often associated with decreased student and teacher morale, which can impede learning and teaching effectiveness (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, as in other regions, some secondary schools face challenges related to physical climate, such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching aids, and limited access to modern learning technology. Addressing these physical challenges is essential for creating an environment that supports effective learning and management (Owolabi & Odebiyi, 2012).

The social climate of a school includes the quality of interpersonal relationships among students, teachers, and administrative staff, as well as the school's culture and values. Positive social climates are characterized by mutual respect, inclusivity, collaboration, and emotional support (Thapa et al., 2013). When students feel safe, respected, and valued, they are more likely to be engaged in school activities and exhibit positive behavioral patterns (Wang & Degol, 2016). The social climate also significantly impacts on teachers' morale and job satisfaction, which are critical for effective school management and student success (Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt, 2010).

The academic climate refers to the general attitude toward learning and achieving academic excellence within the school. A strong academic climate is often characterized by high expectations for students, supportive teaching practices, and a curriculum that challenges students to think critically (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Teachers play a vital role in fostering an academic climate by employing engaging instructional methods, providing constructive feedback, and supporting students' individual learning needs (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

In FCT Abuja, academic climate of the public secondary schools is an area of concern due to the challenges such as inadequate teachers, Teacher training, limited instructional materials, and large class sizes. However, schools that prioritize academic climate implement clear academic goals and provide professional development for teachers and resources to support student learning to foster an environment for students learning and academic achievements (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016).

The physical security of the school facilities is very important in creating a safe learning environment. Measures such as controlled access to school premises, monitoring of visitor access, and surveillance systems, especially at this time of insecurity help to reduce the risk of unauthorized individuals entering the school, hence, protect the students and staff from potential threats. Conoley and Goldstein (2004) emphasize that visible security measures, like the presence of security personnel and clear emergency protocols, can provide reassurance to students and staff. However, they also caution that overemphasizing physical security without

attending to students' emotional well-being may inadvertently create a climate of fear rather than safety. Schools must, therefore, balance physical security with efforts to foster a supportive, trusting environment. In addition to physical security, emotional safety plays a critical role in school climate. Students are more likely to thrive academically and socially when they feel respected and valued in their school community. Wang and Degol (2016) posit that fostering emotional safety involves creating an inclusive and respectful environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of bullying or discrimination. They continued by stating that, anti-bullying policies, conflict resolution programs, and supportive counseling services are essential components of enhancing conducive teaching and learning climate, helping to reduce incidents of aggression and providing students with resources to manage conflicts constructively. Teachers' involvement in promoting safety is a critical aspect of effective school management. Teachers play a central role in creating an emotional safety environment by modeling respectful behavior, intervening in conflicts, and supporting students' social and emotional needs. Osher et al. (2008) emphasized that positive teacher-student relationship contributes significantly to students' sense of safety and connectivity within the school.

The influence of school climate on management practices is evident on how resources are allocated, disciplinary policies are implemented, and academic expectations are set. In a positive school climate, administrators can allocate resources more equitably and effectively, as they have the trust and cooperation of staff and students. Similarly, disciplinary practices are more likely to be constructive and restorative rather than punitive, which contributes to a safer and more inclusive environment (Osher et al., 2010).

The researcher however, observed several challenges with school climate that hinder effective management in secondary schools. Issues with safety and security, such as bullying, inadequate facility security, and insufficient emergency protocols, often create an environment where both students and staff feel unsafe, impacting their performance and engagement. Academic expectations and support can also be inconsistent, leading to low student motivation and uneven achievement levels, which complicates the administration's ability to foster a high-performing academic atmosphere. Poor staff relationships, characterized by limited collaboration and inadequate professional development, may diminish morale and reduce the effectiveness of teamwork in addressing school goals. Additionally, limited parental and community involvement may weaken the school's support network, reducing accountability and community investment in school initiatives.

Statement of the Problem

The management of secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, has been significantly influenced by various aspects of the school climate problems, which include physical, social, and academic climates, as well as safety and security. These elements collectively shape the overall environment in which students learn, teachers teach, and school administrators manage educational processes. However, despite their importance, the intricate relationship between school climate and effective management has not been sufficiently explored, creating a gap in understanding how these factors interrelate to impact school performance.

The physical climate of a school encompasses the infrastructure, classroom facilities, resources, and the overall environment of the school building. In FCT Abuja, many schools face challenges in maintaining functional and conducive learning environments due to inadequate infrastructure, poorly maintained facilities, and overcrowded classrooms. These issues not only hinder the academic growth of students but also impact teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction. The poor physical climate within many schools in the region results in increased stress and frustration among teachers and students, which affects their engagement and productivity.

The management of secondary schools is therefore challenged in ensuring that the physical environment is conducive to learning, which is an essential aspect of educational success. In addition to the physical climate, the social climate within secondary schools plays a pivotal role in determining how well schools are managed. Social climate refers to the interpersonal relationships, communication, collaboration, and overall atmosphere within the school community. In schools across the FCT, the social climate often reflects the level of support among staff, students, and parents, as well as the presence or absence of healthy social interactions. When a school fosters a positive social climate, characterized by mutual respect, support, and effective communication, it leads to better cooperation between students, teachers, and administrators. However, when the social climate is toxic, marked by bullying, conflict, and lack of support, it creates a hostile environment that undermines the smooth management of the school, reducing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this was to examine the influence of school climate on management of public secondary schools in FCT Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the influence of physical climate on the management of secondary schools in FCT Abuja, Nigeria.
2. Determine the influence social climate on the management of secondary schools in FCT Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Question:

1. To what extent does the physical climate influence the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja?
2. How does the social climate influence the effectiveness of management practices in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja?

Hypotheses:

H0₁. There is no significant influence of the physical climate on the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

H0₂. The social climate has no significant impact on management practices in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is used to systematically describe characteristics of a population, phenomenon, or field of interest without influencing the variables. This design is suitable as it enables the researcher to gather data on the current state of the subject under investigation in this case, the influence of certain variables on the research focus in public secondary schools within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The population for this study comprises of all the public secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This includes principals and teachers across the six area councils within the territory. The target population was broken down into 56 public secondary schools, 56 principals, and 2,753 teachers, making a total of 2,809 participants. The sample was 283 respondents. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data, after validation by some experts and a reliability index of 0.71 was realized.

Result

Research Question One: To what extent does the physical climate influence the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja?

Table 4.1: Mean and standard deviation showing Physical Climate Influence on School Management

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1. The condition of physical facilities affects the daily management of the school.	80	150	40	13	3.18	0.79	Accept
2. The availability of modern infrastructure impacts management efficiency.	90	130	50	13	3.19	0.81	Accept
3. Poorly maintained school buildings hinder effective administration.	70	160	40	13	3.14	0.77	Accept
4. A clean and organized school environment improves management.	100	120	40	23	3.25	0.79	Accept
5. Adequate classroom space and ventilation are essential.	90	140	30	23	3.18	0.76	Accept
Cluster Mean					3.18	0.78	Accept

The mean values in table 4.1 suggest that respondents agree that physical climate such as infrastructure, cleanliness, and classroom space, significantly influence school management in FCT Abuja. The standard deviations are relatively low, indicating consistency in responses.

Research Question Two: How does the social climate influence the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation showing social Climate Influence on School Management

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1. The relationship between teachers and students affects school management.	120	120	30	13	3.32	0.74	Accept
2. The presence of a supportive school community positively influences management.	100	130	40	13	3.23	0.76	Accept
3. Conflicts among staff and students impact management.	90	130	40	23	3.21	0.78	Accept
4. Social behavior and student attitudes influence school management.	110	120	30	23	3.30	0.75	Accept
5. Teacher collaboration and communication are key in effective management.	100	130	40	13	3.23	0.77	Accept
CLUSTER MEAN					3.26	0.76	Accept

The mean values suggest that social climate factors, such as teacher-student relationships, community support, and collaboration, have a strong influence on school management in FCT Abuja. The responses are also consistent, with low standard deviations.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were tested at 0.05 level of significant using the Pearson product moment correlation. The hypotheses tested are presented and interpreted below.

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of the physical climate on the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Table 4.1.2.1: Chi-square analysis showing significant influence of physical climate on the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

S/N	Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	X ² -cal	X ² tab	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
1	Agreed	230	234	235.51	14.067	7	0.02	0.05	
2	Disagree	4							

Analysis in null hypothesis one shows the chi-square calculated of 235.51 is greater than chi-square table value of 14.067. P-value of 0.02 is less than the alpha level of significant 0.05 calculated at 7 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is significant influence of physical climate on the management of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

Null hypotheses Ho2: social climate has no significant influence on management practices in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

Table 4.1.2.2: chi-square analysis showing significant influence of social climate on management practices in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

S/N	Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 tab	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
1	Agreed	225	234	249.21	14.067	7	0.02	0.05	
2	Disagree	7							

Analysis in null hypotheses two show the chi-square calculated of 249.21 is greater than chi-square table value of 14.067. P-value of 0.02 is less than the alpha level of significant 0.05 calculated at 7 degrees of freedom. This implies that social climate has significant influence on management practices in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

Discussion of findings

The first findings of this study confirm that the physical climate of a school significantly influences its management. This aligns with the work of Earthman (2002), who emphasized that the quality of the physical environment, such as classroom ventilation, furniture, lighting, and availability of instructional materials, plays a critical role in creating conducive conditions for teaching and learning. The physical infrastructure not only affects the comfort and health of teachers and students but also impacts their productivity and engagement. Empirical studies support this assertion. For instance, Lyons (2001) highlighted that well-maintained school facilities positively correlate with improved student performance and teacher effectiveness. Similarly, Adewuyi and Akinbode (2018) found that schools with adequate physical resources in Nigeria recorded better administrative efficiency and academic outcomes. Hypothetically, when the physical climate is conducive, school managers experience fewer challenges in planning and implementing educational activities, leading to improved overall performance.

The second findings also reveal that the social climate within schools has a significant impact on management practices. This encompasses the relationships among staff, students, and parents, as well as the broader community's involvement in school activities. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), a positive social climate fosters collaboration, respect, and mutual understanding, which are critical for effective decision-making and conflict resolution in schools. Empirical support for this finding is evident in the study by Uko et al. (2015), which showed that schools with harmonious relationships among stakeholders had higher levels of efficiency in implementing management policies. Similarly, Ololube et al. (2019) found that a supportive social climate reduced teacher turnover rates and promoted students' academic success. Hypothetically, schools with strong social bonds and effective communication channels are better positioned to manage challenges and implement policies that cater to the diverse needs of their stakeholders.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that school climate significantly influences the management of secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The physical, social, and academic environments, along with robust safety and security measures, collectively shape the effectiveness of school administration. The study highlights that a positive school climate fosters better resource utilization, improved interpersonal relationships, and enhanced academic outcomes, ultimately contributing to the overall success of secondary schools. School administrators must prioritize these dimensions to create environments that support both student and staff well-being while advancing institutional goals.

Recommendations

1. Governments and school administrators should invest in improving the physical climate by renovating existing facilities, constructing new ones, and ensuring the availability of teaching and learning resources.
2. Schools should organize regular team-building activities and professional development programs to strengthen social ties among staff and students. Emphasis should also be placed on fostering inclusive and respectful communication.

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