



Influence of Schools' Climate Effectiveness on Secondary School Student's Behavioural Outcomes in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The first major purpose of a school is to create and provide a climate that is hospitable to human learning (Barth 2001). Children and adolescents spend a considerable amount of their time in school, and the school environment is therefore of importance for child behavioral outcomes. Generally, school climate effectiveness comprises of physical dimensions, social dimensions and academic dimensions. This study was an attempt to investigate the influence of school climate on students' behaviour outcome. Survey design was employed in this study. The area for the study covered all public secondary schools in Bauchi metropolis. The population for the study comprises all SS2 (583,251) students in public schools in Bauchi metropolis. Four hundred students were drawn from eighteen schools using Yemanes sampling technique. Four objectives, four research questions and four hypothesis were stated and formulated respectively to guide the study. The data was analysed by using mean, chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance by ranks. The instrument was a structured questionnaire adapted from School Level Environment Questionnaire Developed by Johnson and Stevens (2006) which was pilot tested and reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.61 was obtained which shows that the results was acceptable. An adapted integrated model of school climate effectiveness (scheerens, 1990) was adapted to reflect the interaction between the school climate dimension and students behavioural outcome. The theory that anchored this study was system theory propounded by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy (1973). Findings have revealed that all most the school failed to provide favourable climate for learning as a mediator of students' behavioural outcome. Also a synergy should be created in the forms of annual assessment of the school climate and the results should be published to the schools and the community at large.

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INTRODUCTION

School climate plays predominate role in the students' behavioural outcome of many nations

as it has been identified as a bed rock of school reform success of most nation of the world. According to Amrit, Jonathan, Shawn, &Ann, (2013), some organisational bodies like

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the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have focused on school climate reform as an evidence-based school improvement strategy that supports students, parents/guardians, and school personnel towards creating safer, supporting more engaging learning processes. Gregory, Henry, and Schoeny, (2007), disclosed that school climate is an important factor in the successful implementation of school reform programs as school environments vary greatly. Whereas some schools feel friendly, inviting, and supportive, others feel exclusionary, unwelcoming, and even unsafe. The feelings and attitude that are elicited by a school's environment are referred to as school climate (Alexandra, 2007). Thus school climate could be effective due to the positive adherence to school norms. Whereas the ineffective schools have the tendencies of portraying negative outlook.

According to Astor, Guerra, and Van Acker (2010) schools without supportive norms, structures, and good relationships, students are more likely to experience violence, peer victimization, and punitive disciplinary actions, often accompanied by high levels of absenteeism and increase students' negative behavioural outcome, this in a nutshell portray such schools as ineffective.

Recent research suggested that positive school climate could be associated with reduced aggression and violence, Fan, X, Sheras. P and Huang, F., (2010), reduced bullying behaviour (Birkett *et al.*, 2009), and reduced sexual harassment, regardless

of sexual orientation (Attar-Schwartz, 2009). Research has shown that in schools where students perceive a better structured school, fair discipline practices, and more positive student-teacher relationships, the probability of behavioral problems is lower (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Hamre and Pianta, (2001) mentioned that if a teacher-student relationship is negative it is more likely that the student will have behavioral and academic problems. Also, teachers' interactions with students can directly affect students' behavioral and emotional engagement in the classroom. Research supports the notion that a positive school climate promotes students' abilities to learn, cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, and mutual trust. These particular aspects have been shown to directly improve the learning environment (Kerr, Ireland, Lopes, Craig, & Cleaver, 2004). Student-teacher relationship is related to later academic success and positive behavioural outcomes for students (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). A series of correlation studies have shown that school climate is directly related to students' behavioural outcome.

Today, both private and public schools have recognised the distinctive roles that schools' climate play in students' behavioural outcome which strongly influences students' emotional, physical and academic success, because school climate can be seen as a starting point for improving the students' behaviour (Dorina, 2013). Over the past two decades, educators and researchers have increasingly acknowledged that a safe and healthy school environment is important for promoting students' positive behaviour (Hymel, Schonert-

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Reichl, & Miller, 2006). Researchers have suggested that school success is optimized within caring, supportive, and safe environments (McCombs, 2004). With regard to student-student relationships, bullying has been viewed as a major threat to creating a safe school environment (Luiselli, J. Putnam, R, and Handier, M, Feinberg, A., 2005) and is now recognized as a serious problem in schools around the globe (Espelage & Swearer, 2003), with evidence that involvement in bullying affects children's mental and physical health. Children who frequently experience physical, verbal, or psychological abuse by their peers are at risk for various forms of psychological distress, including depression (Rigby, 2000), anxiety (Kaltiala-Heino, R, Rimpela, M, Rantanen, P, and Rimpela, A. 2000), psychosomatic symptoms (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 2000), and suicidal ideation (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 2000). Students who are victimized by peers are likely to demonstrate negative behaviour outcome (Konishi, C and Li, Z 2006).

Similarly, supportive teacher-student relationships have been associated with improved students behavioural outcome (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007) and lower rates of student dropout (Lee & Burkam, 2003). Positive teacher-student relationships may foster students' sense of belongingness in school and promote a warm school climate, which in turn may facilitate students' academic success through their association with motivational, emotional, and behavioural factors related to students' school engagement (Vieno, Perkins, Smith, & Santinello, 2005). Consequently, research suggests that positive

interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities in all demographic environments can increase school achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behaviours (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). The quality of school facilities has been found to affect student achievement through school climate as a mediator (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

School climate is defined as the character and quality of life within a school that is shaped by its organizational structure, physical environment, instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, and overarching values, objectives, and customs (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). School climate can be defined as patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Council (NSCC), 2007). In a school where climate is not favourable, students may perform woefully, teachers' attendance and students discipline are not likely to improve, school safety could be compromised and teachers' retention may be negatively affected (NSCC, 2007).

School climate is determined by some parameters based on shared perceptions of climate rather than an individual person's belief (DPS-DCTA partnership, 2009). It is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social, and academic dimensions.

The physical dimension includes:

- i. Appearance of the school building and its classrooms;
- ii. School size and ratio of students to teachers in the classroom;

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- iii. Order and organization of classrooms in the school;
 - iv. Availability of resources; and
 - v. Safety and comfort.
- The social dimension includes:
- i. Quality of interpersonal relationships between and among students, teachers, and staff;
 - ii. Equitable and fair treatment of students by teachers and staff;
 - iii. Degree of competition and social comparison between students; and
 - iv. Degree to which students, teachers, and staff contribute to decision-making at the school.
- The instructional dimension includes:
- i. Quality of instruction;
 - ii. Teacher expectations for student achievement; and
 - iii. Monitoring students' progress and promptly reporting results to students and parents.

Behaviour problems and poor school climate might lead to academic and social difficulties in the early years, and later consequences such as educational failure, unemployment, psychiatric problems, and criminality, Moffit (2006). Intervening early is crucial because behaviours of a kinds become more difficult to change as children get older, Kazdinn, (1997). Schools have the potential to exert powerful positive influences on student's behavioural outcome is an important time in student's development. It is the period during which students' transition into formal schooling and contexts other than the family, such as school and peers, become increasingly influential. Development during this time can both alter detrimental trajectories initiated in secondary schools and establish successful trajectories.

During secondary school period, students' cognitive, academic and socio-emotional skills fully developed. There are several key elements of behaviour development in students, including a child's sense of their own competence, interpersonal relationships and self-control. Increases in children's cognitive abilities at this age mean they are more able to reflect on their capabilities and weaknesses. Changes in self concept lead students to begin making social comparisons in that they judge their abilities and behaviour in relation to those of others. Through successful experiences in a range of settings students can gain a positive sense of self, which is an important component of student's social well-being at this age Guerra & Bradshaw,(2008). In addition to a sense of competence, social skills in schools involve positive interactions with peers and others. During this developmental period, children begin to spend less time with their parents and more time with peers and other adults. They become sensitive to what matters to other people and must learn to manage conflicts and negotiate differences in what is expected by adults and social goals of the peer group (Eccles, 1999). Through positive interactions with peers and adults, children gain a sense of connectedness and belonging (Guera & Bradshaw, 1999).

Finally, developmental and neurological changes at this age contribute to increases in self-control, which is necessary for goal-oriented behaviour.

Indicators of student's behavioural development include both positive social skills as well as negative behaviour problems. Positive

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social skills are a crucial component of student's ability to successfully interact with and adapt to the demands of their environments, especially in school.

Student's behavioural problems commonly fall into two categories: externalizing behaviours and internalizing behaviours. Gumpel, 2010. Externalizing behaviours are characterized by overactive, impulsive, and aggressive behaviours. Internalizing behaviours include depressive, anxiety-related symptoms and social withdrawal (Reynolds, 2010). Likewise, externalizing and internalizing behaviours can inhibit the development of positive social skills. For example, children with internalizing behaviours such as sadness and anxiety may avoid social interactions and thus decrease their opportunities for developing interpersonal skills (Rubin et al., 2003). Students with externalizing behaviours may also be more likely to draw out negative feedback from others, which can both exacerbate internalizing symptoms and hamper the development of interpersonal skills (Rudolph et al., 2000). On the other hand, students who have developed social skills may be better able to manage their emotional responses and control aggression (Elias & Haynes, 2008). While there are many factors and contexts that contribute to students behaviour development in adult, the role of schools climate is of particular interest because of the amount of time students spends in schools, as well the role of schools in socialization.

Students' behavioural outcome can be defined as students' success in meeting short or long term goals in education which can be positive or negative (Bossart, Doumen, Boysc and Verschveren, 2011).

The foregoing discourse suggests that the influence secondary school climate and students' behavioural outcome are not yet empirically established in Bauchi State context. In view of the forgoing discourse, this study seeks to carry out empirical study aimed at establishing the effects of school climate and students' behavioural outcome in public senior secondary schools in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework below reflects the multiple dimensions that influence school climate effectiveness on secondary school's Students behavioural outcome, and highlights the interaction that will be examine in this study, with the bold boxes representing the primary interest of the study (School Climate dimension) Middle box represents process factors. The school organizational climate dimension that were identified are the independent variable. Students' behavioural outcomes, the bold box on the right, are the outcomes of interest. The primary aim of the study is to examine the bold horizontal arrow together with factors of the school climate as attributable to students' behavioural outcome.

Conceptual Frame work of school climate dimensions

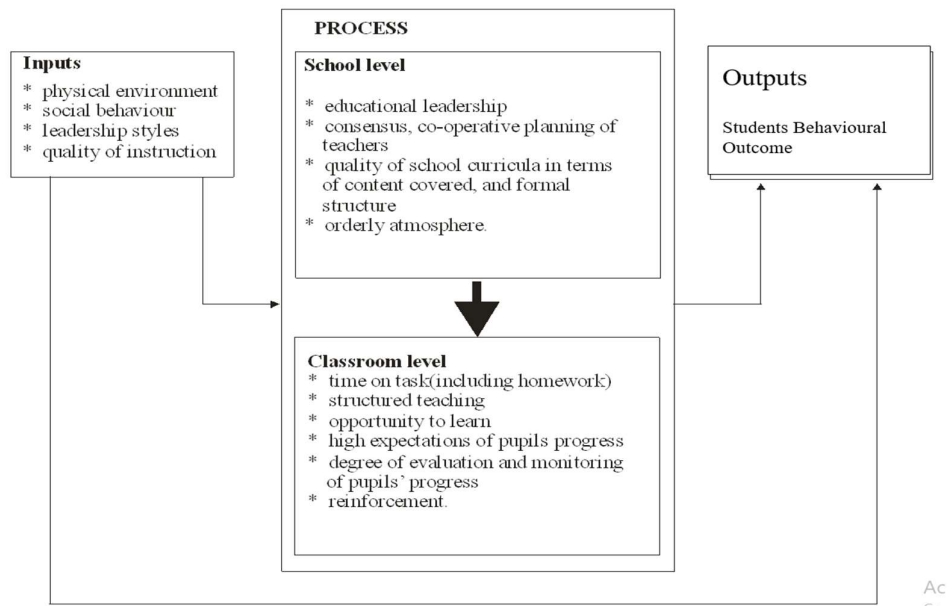


Figure 1: An adapted integrated model of school effectiveness (Scheerens, 1990)

Over recent years, state and federal government have increased allocation to a restructure the school climate to meet the present education challenges in the state in terms of reconstruction physical dimension of the school, and allowances for the teachers.

The school climate and students are inseparable and their good relationship improves the quality of school climate in tunes of good behavioural outcome in students. Mahuta, (2007) was of the view that school as a social institution is regarded as a place to skilful knowledge and it possess the power to mould and shape the character of individual. For the school to perform its role effectively there is a need for favourable school climate.

Numerous problems continue to bedevil school climate after Boko Haram terror groups have destroyed even the pre-existing infrastructures in

secondary schools such infrastructures is vital toward necessary improvement of school climate. Boko Haram terror groups have diverse effects on the educational sector in Northern Nigeria (Sa'ad et al., 2014). The insurgency has caused the internal displacement of over 2 million citizens in Northern state. Furthermore, even if 1.2 million student who are out of school decided to get back, they became burden on teachers and school environment because there are lesser classes to accommodate them. Recent research suggested that positive school climate could be associated with reduced aggression and violence (Brookmeyer, Fanti, and Henrich, 2006), reduced bullying behaviour (Birkett., Espelage, and Koenig, 2009), and reduced sexual harassment, regardless of sexual orientation Attar-Schwartz (2009). Furthermore, research has shown that in schools where students perceive a

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better structured school, fair discipline practices, and more positive student-teacher relationships, the probability of behavioral problems is lower (Gregory and Cornell, 2009).

Behaviour problems and poor school climate might lead to academic and social difficulties in the early years, and later consequences such as educational failure, unemployment, psychiatric problems, and criminality, Moffit (2006).

Though Bauchi State Commissioner for Education, www.vanguardngr.com Mr. Aliyu Tilde, on Friday 10th Sep. (2022), said the government has concluded plans to separate male and female students in secondary schools in the state. Tilde stated this while addressing newsmen after the State Executive Council (SEC) meeting in Bauchi, noting that it would only be executed whenever and wherever it was possible. He explained that the idea was to address moral decadence, which he said has become prevalent among students of secondary schools. According to him, males students would be attending their academic activities in one institution and the females in another separate institution. The commissioner further explained that where they cannot be separated completely, their seating arrangement would be in such a manner that the males would occupy one side of a classroom and the females at the other side of the classroom. Yet this provision is not being thoroughly addressed the issue of effect of school climate on students behavioural as Bauchi Secondary Schools being in the front-burner.

Purpose of the Study

The main thrust of this study was to investigate the influence of school climate effectiveness on

secondary school students' behavioural outcome on the basis of gender, school location, school size and school type. Specifically, the study was set to attain the following objectives:

1. To determine the extent to which the physical dimension of the school climate could affect students' behavioural outcome on the basis of gender.
2. To examine the influence of social dimension of school climate on students' behavioural outcome on the basis of school location.
3. To find out the impact of leadership styles of school climate on student's behavioural outcome on the basis of school size.
4. To determine the influence of academic dimension of school climate on students' behavioural outcome on the basis of school type.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent does the physical dimension of school climate influence students' behavioural outcome on the basis of gender?
2. To what extent does social dimension of school climate influence students' behavioural outcome on the basis of school location?
3. To what extent do the leadership styles of school climate influence students' behavioural outcome on the basis of school size?
4. To what extent does academic dimension of school climate influence students' behavioural outcome school type?

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METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey design. Denga, (1993) contended that among other methods descriptive research survey is the best to collect the wide range of information and reliable. No other research method can provide this broad capability which ensures a more accurate sample to gather targeted results in which to draw conclusions and make important decision and survey design allows respondents to answer with more candid and valid answer.

The population for the study comprised of all SS2 (583, 251) students in public schools in Bauchi metropolis in which 400 students were drawn from eighteen school using Yemanes.

Data collected on five-point scale were analysed using weighted mean, chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance by Ranks. Because, the Kruskal-Wallis H- test as described by Blalock (1981) which is non-parametric is seen as appropriate for this study.

Table 1: Summary of Ranked School Climate Effectiveness Dimension

Physical Dimension			Social Dimension			Academic Dimension			Leadership Dimension		
Dimension	Mean	Rank	Factor	Mean	Rank	Factor	Mean	Rank	Factor	Mean	Rank
School Appearance	2.6333	4	Interpersonal	3.5000	15	Quality of instruction	3.3111	11	Effective Leadership	2.7111	5
School Size	2.9333	7	Equitable fair treatment	2.9333	8	Teacher expectation	3.3222	12	Capable teaching	3.0889	9
Order class	2.8667	6	Degree of competition	2.4667	2	Monitoring of students	2.5889	3	Flexibility and autonomy	3.2889	10
Resources	2.4667	1	Decision making	3.4000	14				High time	3.0889	9
Safety	3.3556	13									
Total		31			39			26			33

Table 1, gives the mean ratings for each of the 16 identified School Climate Dimension variables grouped under 4 major sub-groups namely Physical Dimension, Social Dimension Academic Dimension and Leadership Style. As presented in table 11, the mean distribution of all the students reveal that Interpersonal relationship among staff and students ranked (15) as $X=3.50$ was the highest. The other followed in the sequence in descending order: teachers and

student's involvement in decision making (14), safety and comfort in the School (13), teacher expectation (12), Quality of instruction (11), flexibility and autonomy (10), high time in School (9), capable teaching force (9), equitable and fair treatment (8), class enrolment (7), orderliness in class (6), Effective Leadership (5), Appearance of the School (4), monitoring the students' progress (3) degree of competition (2), availability of resource(1).

Table 2: School Climate Effectiveness Factors Interdependence on some Schools features in 4 x K Contingency

Variables	Physical Dimension	Social Dimension	Academic Dimension	Leadership Dimension	DF	Kruskal Wali	Kruskal Wali X ²	Remark
Caculated						Calculated		

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Gender	Male	.026	.136	1.631	.910	3	5.703	7.81	Sig
	Female	.873	.713	.202	.240				
	Total								7.831
Location	Rural	.062	.050	.255	.705	3	1.63	7.81	N.S
	Urban	.803	.823	.614	.401		2.641		
	Total								4.271
School Size	Large	.048	.004	1.749	1.597	3	5.398	7.81	Sig
	Small	.827	.951	1.186	.440				3.404
	Total								8.802
School Type	Mixed	.803	5.935	1.327	.008	3	8.073	7.81	
	Single	.370	.015	.249	.929		1.563		
	Total								9.636

Table 2 above presents the summary of a 4 x K classification of the mutual relationships of some School Climate dimension and student's behaviour. As described in the table 2 three variables shows to be significantly have influence on the Students Behavioural Outcome are: Gender, School type and School Size. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and it alternative was upheld at $\alpha = 0.05$ significant level. However, School Location failed to be significantly dependent on School Climate Dimension as their computed χ^2 value of 5.052 and 5.878 at the 0.05 level.

CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion of this study is that students who received this favourable school climate dimension felt more connected to the school and had better behavioural outcome. Astor, Guerra, and Van Acker, 2010 opined that students felt unsafe in unsupervised areas of the school building. The quality of school physical dimension such as buildings has also been related to student attitudes and behaviour, including vandalism, absenteeism, suspensions, disciplinary incidents, violence, and smoking (Schneider, 2002). The result

has shown that school climate as a tools for school effectiveness have no bias for school type and school locations. It is clearly shown that both academic dimension and leadership dimension are significantly influenced student's behavioural outcome irrespective of school type and school size.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Constructions Systems Development (SCSD) should endeavour to include such educationally significant components like physical dimension into periodic assessment and improvement irrespective of school size, school type and location. And safety measures in their designs when capturing building systems project for schools. This will help school administrators/planners make good judgement as regards educational needs.

Improving and maintaining school climate should not be limited to the school governing bodies alone. All and sundry should be given the chance to maintain the available facilities and leave them in a functional state. Government should ensure that, by means of regular inspection and reassessment control, facilities are kept in their functional state.

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School - community partnerships should be encouraged in order to mobilize a system of school support networks. There should be practical involvement of interested parties between the school and the outside world. This will cause people to be more committed and cooperative in seeking solutions to the dearth of functional academic dimension in our schools. Regular training and workshop should be organized to sensitize and imbibe good leadership training on both teachers and school administrators.

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