



### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTONOMOUS SCHOOL CLIMATE AND TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA EDUCATION OF ANAMBRA STATE

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#### Uba Mercy Benedette Ifeoma

Department of Educational Foundational, Alex-Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria  
E-mail: benedictifeoma@yahoo.com, ifeoma4uba@gmail.com

#### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Onitsha education zone of Anambra State. The correlational design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 266 secondary school teachers in the area of the study. The sample for this study consisted of 200 teachers selected using purposive sampling technique. Instruments for data collection were two questionnaires developed by the researcher. The instruments were duly validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The test-retest method was adopted to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. Reliability indices of 0.83 and 0.90 were gotten for SCQ and TJCQ respectively. Data were collected by the researcher through direct hand-delivery process. In answering the research question and testing the null hypothesis, data collected from the respondents were analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences) using Pearson Product Moment correlation method. Findings revealed that there was a moderate positive relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment and secondly it was discovered that there was a positive relationship between controlled school climate and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Onitsha education zone of Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Policy makers should work closely with government to ensure the implementation of their policies in schools in order to achieve their aims and objectives. Seminars should be organized for principals and teachers to help them in handling and managing various organizational climate types in the schools especially in the areas of paternal climate.

#### Keywords

Concept of School Climate, Autonomous; School Climate; Teacher; and Job Commitment.

#### Introduction

The Nigerian secondary school system is an aggregate tool of empowerment, human capital and career development. Secondary schools are institutions for national development which contribute in training manpower for socio-economic, political and cultural development in the Nigerian society. They are citadel of learning established for the development of full capacities and potentials of human resources, as well as the development of competent workforce through the acquisition of practical skills relevant to the world of work (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). Secondary schools as formal institutions are set up with desired objectives which have been indicated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013:17) in the National Policy on Education to include:

- i. provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- ii. offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles;
- iii. provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance
- iv. develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of worlds' cultural heritage;
- v. inspire students with a desire for self-

- improvement and achievement of excellence;
- vi. foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and
  - vii. raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

The aforementioned objectives of secondary education can only be successfully accomplished through combined and committed efforts of the teaching staff, non teaching staff, students and the constituted authority. Invariably, teachers administer the teaching and learning activities in the secondary schools. Members of the non teaching staff participate in the administrative activities of the school.

### **Concept of School Climate**

School climate cannot be defined without describing what a school and climate is. The school as described like scholars as Chike-Okoli (2007) is a formal organization set up by the members of the society or community to fulfill desirable objectives. A school is a place where teaching and learning activities take place and also a system of formally coordinated activities of two or more persons intended to bring about the achievement of educational goals. Therefore, the school is an organization which provides a structural framework in which activities are carried out so as to achieve certain objectives of education. It creates structured relationship among the members of staff for achievement of goals (Atanda & Lameed cited in Chike-Okoli, 2007). A school means an organization of students for instructional purposes on an elementary, middle or junior high school, secondary or high school, or other public school level authorized under rules of the State Board of Education (Zinth, 2005). Rapti (2015) defines the school as an institution where students learn to appreciate what society wants them to contribute to their advancement and development.

Climate as further described by Rapti simply refers to the atmosphere of a place. It is equally the personality of an organization. School climate therefore refers to as a mixture of beliefs, values and behaviours of students, teaching staff, leaders and parents, level of independence, leadership styles and job satisfaction. School climate according to Adejumobi and Ojikutu (2013) is a broad term that refers to teachers' perceptions of the general work environment of the school, the formal organization, informal organization, personalities of participants,

and organizational leadership influence it. School climate 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 schools. It is important to describe and analyze school climate because the atmosphere of a school has a major impact on the organizational behaviour and because administrators can have a significant positive influence on the development of the personality of the school (Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2013).

From the above definitions Rapti (2015) opined that school climate can be perceived as the prevailing atmosphere in the school, which is mainly dictated by the leaders and affects the way and how students and teachers perceive their school and affects their values and attitudes toward school and work. School climate concept has its origins in the late 1950s as researchers in social sciences studied variations in work environments. Andrew Halpin and Don Croft published in 1963 the results of their research on school climate. Thus, the concept was formulated, and their work became the basis of research for other researchers (Rapti, 2015). Rapti further noted that various researchers and educational reformers identified school climate in different ways. Freiberg and Stan cited in Rapti (2015) claim that the climate of the school is the "heart and soul" of a school, the factor that motivates students, teachers and makes them to want it and willing to be there every day. Heart and soul were used as metaphorical terms to highlight the importance of climate change, because it motivates members of a school making them feel attracted by it. In this regard, school climate is what gives life to it and highlights the values that school represents. Hoy and Miskel determined that the school climate is the grouping of features that distinguishes one organization from the behavior and attitudes of the people it consists of. In other words, as the behaviour of specific persons is used to distinguish individuals from one another, the school has its own characteristics according to human interaction.

Halpin's general perception is that school climate is the personality of an organization and that the organization climate is similar to the individual personality. X school climate is different from Y school climate associated with the personality of each of them. Litwin and Stringer have argued that school climate is a facility with "measurable work environment parameters" based on collective perceptions of the people who live and work in that environment. In other words, school climate is more or less the understanding that teachers have on the

amount of kindness and hospitality they receive, while interacting with the school manager. Loukas also cited in Rapti (2015) stated that although it has been difficult to determine a comprehensive definition of school climate, researchers agree that climate is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social and academic dimensions of a school as follows: the physical dimension which includes presentation of the school building and classrooms; the size of the school and the students/teachers ratio in the classroom; the organization of classes in the school; the effectiveness of the tools and teaching resources; and security and safety. Social dimension includes the quality of interpersonal relationships of all members of staff (teacher-leader; teacher-teacher; teacher-student; student-student; teacher-parents); a fair and equal treatment of students by teachers and other staff members; the degree of competition and social comparison among students; and the extent of the contribution of students, teachers and school staff in decision making process. Academic dimension includes the quality of teaching; teachers' expectations for students' achievement; and monitoring of the students progress and immediate reporting of results to students and parents. In fact, the climate of the school is the subject of staff and students perceptions and is measurable.

The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, organizational structures within a school, teaching practices, diversity, leader-teacher relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, parent-teacher relationships, and student-teacher relationships, is the concept of school climate (Loukas in Rapti, 2015). School climate according to the National School Climate Center (2019) refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures. As regards, sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes: norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe. In such climate, people are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators' model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning. School climate is commonly defined as the "quality and character of school life" (National School Climate Council, 2007, p.5). The

National School Climate Council (2007) suggests that school climate encompasses the experiences of individuals in the school, including learning and building relationships, while also capturing the collective beliefs and attitudes that are present within a school. School climate is more than one individual's experience; rather, it is an overarching experience or "feel" of the school. School climate refers to the individual experiences and feelings that students, teachers, and staff have about the school.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that the climate of the school has to do with the atmosphere or feeling that prevails in a particular school. It appears from the relationship between leaders and teachers, teachers and students and between leaders and students. The school as a social interaction system forces the leaders, teachers and students to interact in the planning, decision-making and problem solving fields in an administrative level. They also interact on personal issues that are part of the normal school routine. School climate as described by the researcher in the present study refers to the atmospheric conditions created in administering either a public or private secondary school which affect teachers work in the school environment.

#### **Autonomous School Climate:**

The autonomous climate is a type of climate that portrays an atmosphere where teachers have at their disposal a considerable degree of freedom to act in school. In this climate, teachers have certain amount of freedom to operate. The leader epitomizes the model of enthusiasm and zeal. There are no external threats or influence. Teachers have a strong desire to teach and students are motivated to learn. There is a close relationship between the managers, teachers, students and parents (Rapti, 2015). Okoye (2012) describing the autonomous school climate pointed out that the principal in this type of climate is stereotyped, and therefore more interested in the satisfaction of the needs and disposition of staff and students than in the pursuit of the school goals. Influential groups in the school manipulate courses of action more than the school principal, while spirit and intimacy are relatively high with low disengagement or hindrance. Teachers seem to be very free to conduct their work and fulfill their personal needs. The principal, though a hard worker is relatively aloof with respect to supervision, though considerate of teachers to an average degree.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between autonomous school climate

and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Onitsha education zone of Anambra State.

**Research Question**

The following research question guided this study: What is the relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Onitsha education zone of Anambra State?

**Hypothesis**

One null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools Onitsha education zone of Anambra State.

**Research Method**

This research work is a co-relational study and was carried out in public secondary schools in Awka education zone. The design was entail using two research instruments (that is; questionnaires) to gather information from teachers by conducting a field investigation and draw inferences in order to determine the relationship between school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in the area of the study. The population of the study comprised of 266 secondary school teachers in the 18 public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State (information was collected from Post Primary School Service Commission in January 2020). The sample for this study consisted of 200 teachers. Ten schools were selected by simple random sampling. Twenty (20) teachers were selected from each of these schools using purposive sampling technique. Instruments for data collection were two questionnaires developed by the researcher. The first instrument is titled "School Climate Questionnaire" (SCQ) while the second one is titled "Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire" (TJCQ). Both questionnaires designed for only teachers as the respondents, was constructed in line with the purpose of the study and research questions. Three draft copies of the two questionnaires were submitted to three experts from the Faculty of

Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, for validation. These experts are in the Department of Educational Foundations. To ascertain the reliability of the instruments, the test-retest method was adopted using 20 copies of the questionnaire which was administered twice in one week to 20 teachers in two public secondary schools in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. This yielded indices of 0.83 for SCQ and 0.90 for TJCQ. Data were collected by the researcher through direct hand-delivery process.

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences) using Pearson Product Moment correlation method. The decision rule was that any coefficient between 0.50 to 0.70 was described as a moderate positive correlation and coefficients between 0.80 and above was described as a high positive correlation whereas, coefficients below 0.50 was described as low positive correlation. On the other hand, where the scores are 0 and below, was described as negative correlation, no relationship had existed. The formulated null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was that whenever the t-critical table value of 1.960 is less than t-calculated value at .05 alpha level, then the null hypothesis –  $H_0$  was rejected, thus, and alternative hypotheses -  $H_a$  will not be rejected.

**RESULTS**

This section presents the results of data analysis based on the research question and null hypothesis that guided the study.

**Research Question:** What is the relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Awka education zone?

Data collected from teachers on autonomous school climate (X) were correlated with the data on teachers' job commitment (Y) on the same teachers using a linear model. Revealed of data analysis is presented on Table 1.

**Table 1: Relationship between Autonomous School Climate and Teachers' Job Commitment in Secondary Schools in Awka Education Zone**

Variables	N	Autonomous Sch. Climate	Teacher Job Commitment	Remark
Autonomous School Climate	200	1	0.59	Moderate positive relationship
Teachers' job commitment	200	0.59	1	

Results in Table 1 show that the relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment. The computed  $r$  is 0.59 implying moderate positive relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment. The result indicates that there is moderate relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Awka education zone.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers'

job commitment in public secondary schools in Awka education zone.

Data collected from the teachers on autonomous school climate (X) with job commitment (Y) as the dependent variable was subjected to test of significance at 95% level using the t-test of significance of  $r$ . Summary of data analysis is presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Test of Significance of Relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Awka education zone**

Variables	N	Autonomous Sch. Climate	Teacher Job Commitment	P value	Remark
Autonomous Sch. Climate	200		0.64		
Teachers' job commitment	200	0.64	1	000	Significant

\*  $P < 0.05$ ; Hypo. Rejected

The results in Table 2 indicate  $t$  value of 5.81; a computed  $r$  0.60 and P-value of 0.000. According to the decision rule, researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is significant relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Awka education zone.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings from result of analysis of the research question as shown in table 1 revealed that there was positive relationship between school autonomous climate and job commitment of secondary school teachers in Awka education zone. The finding anchored on the computed  $r$  of 0. Also, hypothesis on table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between autonomous school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Awka education zone, as the alpha level (0.05) is  $t$  (probability) value of 0.000. In all indication, it was revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between school autonomous climate and teacher's job commitment in secondary schools.

This finding on autonomous and job commitment of teachers agree with Hernandez (2004), added that, autonomous school climate is a necessary link between organizational structure, teacher attitudes to their work and student achievement. He further stated that it has an important influence on the way in which teachers perform their duties and obligations.

Through this organizational climate type, teachers used much of grapevine and slang in communicating among themselves. Okoye (2012) describing the autonomous school climate pointed out that the principal in this type of climate is stereotyped, and therefore more interested in the satisfaction of the needs and disposition of staff and students than in the pursuit of the school goals. There is a close relationship between the managers, teachers, students and parents. Influential groups in the school manipulate courses of action more than the school principal, while spirit and intimacy are relatively high with low disengagement or hindrance. Teachers seem to be very free to conduct their work and fulfill their personal needs.

**Conclusion**

The of this study is that there is positive relationship between school autonomous climate and job commitment of secondary school teachers in Awka education zone. Similarly, there is a strong positive relationship between school autonomous climate and teacher's job commitment in secondary schools.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

1. Since the principals are aware and have been demonstrating dynamic application of the leadership styles as evident in the prevailing number of organizational

climate types in public schools, there is need for government to assist them in protecting school rules and regulations by sorting them all the time for effective operation of controlled school climate.

2. Policy makers should work closely with government to ensure the implementation of their policies in schools in order to achieve their aims and objectives.
3. Seminars should be organized for principals and teachers to help them in handling and managing various organizational climate types in the schools especially in the areas of paternal climate.

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