

Quality of School Climate and Teachers' Classroom Communication Skills as Predictors of Pupils' Performance in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined quality of school climate and teachers' classrooms communication skills as predictors of pupils' performance in Lagos State, Nigeria. Correlational survey research design was used for the study. The sample comprised 120 teachers who were selected from 30 primary schools. Multi-Stage sampling technique was used for the selection. Two research instruments were used to gather data from respondent in the study. The first one was titled "Observational Schedule on School Climate and Teachers Communication Skills (OSSCTCS). The second one was an achievement test titled "Pupil's Achievement Test (PAT) which was used to collect data on the performance of the pupils involved in the study. OSSCTCS was subjected to a reliability test through inter-rater scale technique and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82. While Kuder-Richardson 20 formula was used to determine the reliability of the achievement test. It yielded reliability index of 0.91. Data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of multiple regression. Findings from the study revealed that there was significant composite contribution of school climate and teachers' communication skills to pupil's performance ($F_{(6,113)} = 4.744; p < 0.05$). Again, school climate shows the highest important relative contribution to pupils' performance ($\beta = .504; t = 7.741; p < 0.05$) and it is followed by teachers' communication skills which had the least non-significant relative contribution ($\beta = .015; t = .349; p > 0.05$). Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that training programs, seminars or workshops should be organised by experts in the field of early childhood education to train school heads and teachers on the importance of aesthetically designed early childhood schools. Also, that teachers should be trained on the significant of effective communication.*

Keywords: Quality; School Climate; Teachers' Communication Skills; Pupils' Performance

Introduction

The early years of children to age 5 years plus, is a very critical and remarkable period for young children's growth and development. It is an informative period that children learn faster and acquire diverse skills that determine their future survival. The experiences young children acquire in the early years shape the brain and the child's capacity to learn and get along with every individual present around them (Ehinder, & Ajibade, 2015; Akinbote, Olowe & John, 2017). Every child thinks differently and is distinctive manner of learning due to the distinctive qualities and individuals' learning styles. Despite how important early year learning is, a painstaking observation revealed that the performance of pupils in primary schools is poor (Adeogun, & Olisaemeka, 2011; Ehinder, & Ajibade, 2015; Oke, 2015; Olowe, & John, 2017; Olowe, Oshin, & John, 2019). This poor academic performance of pupils has been a serious issue especially in Nigeria.

Olowe and John (2017) blamed the persistent poor academic achievement of pupils and students on the poor education structure in the country. There is no doubt that a various reasons actually pave way to the pupils' poor academic performance in schools. The scholarly empirical factors given are the inappropriate teaching methodology, poor school climate, lack of effective assessment techniques, poor study habits, indiscipline, teachers' ineffectiveness, lack of available resource materials, inadequate facilities, among others (Odeh, Oguche, & Ivagher, 2015; Shamaki, 2015; & Torupere, 2016). Olowe and John (2017) stated further that teachers' teaching methodology, lack of interest in teaching, incompetency of the teachers, lack of motivation, unavailability and utilization of learning materials among others are also contributing to the consistent poor performance of pupils in Nigerian schools.

There are other areas yet to receive much research study and those areas are classroom atmosphere and teachers' classroom communication skills, which are the interest of this current study. According to Rapti (2012), school climate has to do with cultures, health, values, and safety practices and work, teaching effectiveness, organizational structures, and print-rich that allow the school to fulfill its obligation and to give response when necessary. School climate is distinguished by various types of the school, like the immediate environment that gives a close and good learning with the interacting environment that gives positive interaction and communication to collaborators. Odeh, Oguche, & Ivagher (2015) submitted that the interacting surroundings contribute a vital role in knowing how pupils attend to situations around them. This could be the reason their argument. Now, it is possible to conclude that

school climate expresses the environment or personality of the school, and it is associated with the behaviors of the teachers, pupils and other members and stakeholders of the educational institutions.

It is in light of the above, that Torupere (2016) advocated the policy that schools be spacious. Studies have revealed that the school environment is associated with various positive outcomes for pupils, teachers and schools. This is because there is a positive relationship between school climate and pupils' academic performance in primary schools (Shamaki, 2015).

Another factor that is of interest to this study is communication skills of teachers. Teachers' communication skill, according to Saunders & Mills (2015) is ability of the teachers to convey ideas that require mutual understanding among the venues in which communication occurs. Teachers' communication skills are very important in delivery of instruction to learners (McCarthy & Carter, 2001). Teacher with good communication skills would definitely make learning easier and understandable to learners. They are basic needs of academic success of pupils and professional success of life. Thus, Loss (2000) recommended that teachers should communicate in a clear and understandable manner.

Literature further revealed that given the significance of school culture and teachers' communication skills, much research efforts have been revealed especially in foreign countries. For instance, the study by Ehindero and Ajibade (2015) stated that school environment and teachers' communication skills are good predictors of pupils' good academic performance. Shamaki (2015) discovered there is a strong correlation between leaning environment and pupils' achievement academically. Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) found that there was a significant relationship between school climate, performance and productivity. The study of Lindsey, Brennan and Michael (2014) revealed that school climate and teachers' expressive skills predict pupils' academic achievement. Shamaki (2015) found that there was significant difference between the mean performance of students taught in an ideal learning environment and that of students taught in a dull learning environment.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to reiterate that effective teaching and learning that result to maximum achievement of both pupils and teachers in the classroom largely depends on the nature of environment they found themselves and classroom expressive skills of the human resources particularly the teachers in the environment.

Statement of the Problem

The early stages of children are remarkable periods, which have future implications for their achievements. This is why the federal government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2014), section 2, Page 10, stated that opportunities should be provided for children to develop manipulative skills that would enable them to function effectively in the society within the limit of their capacity. With reviews done on early years in the past studies, empirical evidences have highlighted that academic performance of pupils is poor (Akinsolu, 2010; Kurgat & Gordon, 2014; Ehindero and Ajibade, 2015; Shamaki, 2015), Oke, 2015), Torupere (2016). Boma, 2019; Olowe, John & Oshin, 2019). This has made previous scholars to make remedial efforts to exterminate the issue of poor performance of learners with focus on other factors not interested in this study. Consequently, there is a sizable gap to be filled pertaining to this current study. Hence, the study of this kind becomes highly imperative.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess school climate and teachers' communication skills as predictors of pupils' performance in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. To achieve this, the following objectives seek to:

1. Examine the joint contributions of the independent variables (Climate in schools and teachers' communication skills) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).
2. Examine the relative contributions of the independent variables (climate in schools and teachers' communication skills) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant composite contribution of the independent variables (climate in schools and teachers' communication skills) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).

H₀₂: There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (climate and communication skills) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).

Methodology

The research design used in the study was correlational survey design. The population in the study comprises of teachers in the six educational districts in Lagos State. In all, thirty (30) primary schools and one hundred and twenty (120) primary schools' teachers constituted the sample. sampling technique used in the study for selection of respondents was multi-stage sampling and also, the education district out of six education districts for the study was selected through simple random technique. 120 participants were selected randomly from the thirty (30) primary schools in covered in one of the educational district in Lagos State.

Research instruments used in the study were two instruments. "Observational Schedule on School Climate and Teachers Communication Skills (OSSCTCS), the research instrument was divided into three sections, section (A, B and C). Part A was used to collect the demographic data of the participants, part B was used to observe the atmosphere in the schools covered and part C was used to observe the teachers' communication skills. The response types used for section Band C were poor, fair, good, very good and excellent. The second instrument was an achievement test, which was used to collect data on the performance of the pupils involved in the study. The achievement test was titled "Pupil's Achievement Test (PAT). Thereafter, the reliability of the observation instrument was determined using inter-rater scale and reliability coefficient of 0.82 was achieved. While Kuder-Richardson 20 formula was used to determine the reliability of the achievement test and reliability index of 0.91 was gotten from the analysis. These values indicate high degree of reliability; hence the instruments were reliable. The data were collected by the researchers and five other trained research assistants. When the research assistants got to the schools covered for the study, they sought permission, research instruments was used to know the correlation between school climates and the teachers during classroom activities. The observation technique adopted was non-participatory method. The observation duration was six (6) weeks. Information gathered were analyzed with inferential statistics of multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant composite contribution of the independent variables (classroom atmosphere and teachers' communication skills) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).

Table 1

Summary of Multiple Regression showing Composite Contribution of the independent variables (School Climate and Teachers' Communication Skills) to the dependent variable (Pupil's Achievement).

Model Summary						
R = .449	R Square = .201	Adjusted R Square = .159	Sd. Error of Estimate = 3.364			
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	24.147	6	4.024			
Residual	95.853	113	.848	4.745	.000 ^b	Significant
Total	120.000	119				

Dependent Variable: Pupils' Performance

Predictors: School Climate and Teachers' Communication Skills

Table 1 shows the composite contribution of the independent variables (classroom atmosphere and teachers' communication skills) to the dependent variable (pupil's achievement). The model pointed out synopsis that reveals the independent variables join together, has definite correlation with pupils' achievement ($R = .449$). This means the two independent variables are better determinant of pupils' academic achievement. R square value in the model pointed out synopsis which shows that the independent variables as revealed with 20.1% of the sum variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 \times 100 = 20.1\%$). It shows 79.9% are for other related factors not mentioned in the study. Going further, the F value in the ANOVA shows there is mutual contribution of school climate and teachers' communication skills is statistically significant on pupils' academic performance ($F_{(6,113)} = 4.745$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, hypotheses 1 is not accepted. Summarily, the result from the table implies there is mutual climate between teachers' communication skills to pupils' performance is 20.1%.

H0₂: There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (climate, communication skills and assessment techniques) to the prediction of the dependent variable (pupil's performance).

Table 2.

Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables (School Climate and Teachers' Communication Skills) to the Dependent Variable (Pupil's Performance).

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	6.875	1.711		4.018	.000
School Climate	.177	.508	.504	7.741	.000
Teachers' Communication Skills	.617	.079	.015	.349	.728

Dependent Variable: Pupils' Performance

Table 2 shows the relative contribution of classroom atmosphere and teachers' communication skills to pupil's performance. The table shows that school climate has the excessive relative contribution to pupils' achievement ($\beta = .504$; $t = 7.741$; $p < 0.05$) and it is followed by teachers' communication skills which has lesser handout as revealed with ($\beta = .015$; $t = .349$; $p > 0.05$). The result gotten from the analysis revealed that school climate to pupil's performance is excessive compare to that of the teachers' which communication skills is moderate was not notable. Hence, hypotheses 2 is also not accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The hypotheses tested revealed that there is a remarkable composite definition of the relationship between teachers' morale and the communication skills to the prediction of pupil's performance ($F_{(6,113)} = 4.744$; $p < 0.05$). Again, school climate had notable relative contribution to pupils' achievement ($\beta = .504$; $t = 7.741$; $p < 0.05$), followed by teachers' communication skills which does not have remarkable definition ($\beta = .015$; $t = .349$; $p > 0.05$). The reasons for these findings are unconnected to the fact that effective teaching and learning that result to maximum achievement of both pupils and teachers in the classroom are largely determined by learning environment and the communication skills of the teachers in the environment. These findings substantiate the results of Ehindero and Ajibade, (2015) and Oke (2015) discovered different views that school climate and teachers' communication skills are good predictors of pupils' academic performance. Again, the findings are according to the finding of Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) that there was an important link between school climate, performance and productivity. In same vein, these findings lend credence to the outcome of Lindsey, Brennan and Michael (2014) the environment in schools and instructors' expressive skills predicts pupils' academic achievement.

Conclusion

The study was concluded that both school management and teachers are conscious of the importance of the school environment and teachers' communication skills as they all give something to the holistic development and maximum achievement of pupils. Hence, the issue of the relationship between teachers' morale and the communication skills cannot be belittled when referring to the issues of recording academic success of learners in an educational setting. This points to the fact that rapt attention needs to be directed to the issue of designing well fascinating and captivating school climate.

Recommendations

With findings from the study, recommendations were made that:

1. Training programmes, workshops should be organised by experts in the field of early childhood education to train school heads and teachers on the importance of aesthetically designed early childhood schools. This is because when a school is well designed, it captures children's interest and energies them towards learning.
2. The teachers should also avail themselves the opportunities to attend early childhood training programmes in order to update their knowledge and learn new trends in the field of early childhood education. This is because it will enable them to become more efficient in communication and classroom management. This will bring a desired change in the life of the learners and help them to acquire life skills.

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