

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AS DETERMINANT OF DELINQUENCY AMONG STUDENTS IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Higher number of delinquent acts among secondary school students in Taraba state still exist due to reasons relating to poor school climate which includes the totality of the school environment. Consequently, this study investigated secondary school teachers' perception of school climate as determinant of delinquency among secondary school students in Taraba state, Nigeria. Descriptive survey method was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 960 teachers from 48 public secondary schools to have an even representation. Researcher designed instrument was used and it was validated, reliability index of 0.77% was established. The data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Percentage was used for the demographic data of respondents while spearman rank order was used to answer research questions while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the research hypotheses. It was revealed from the findings that there are no adequate laboratories, gardens, libraries and school classrooms were not adequately furnished and or ventilated cum inadequate teachers. It was recommended that government and well-meaning individuals should assist to create a conducive school climate to curb delinquency among secondary school students in Taraba state, Nigeria.

Keywords: *School-climate; Delinquency; Secondary School and Teachers' Perception*

Introduction

School climate entails all the needed facilities, resources, cooperation and every other feature that makes a learner to fall in love with the entire school. It is everything that is needed in a school setting to make the school convenient, comfortable and loveable to both the learners and the teachers. Most times, researches and educational practitioners alike all over the world have come to terms with this idea. Some of them have used the term synonymous to "school feelings", "school set-up", "school atmosphere", "school tone, "school milieu" or "school setting". By this, it entails all the facilities, tone, atmosphere, set-up, and setting that makes a student feel comfortable in a school ambiance or setting. Not all or greater percentage of schools in Taraba have been observed not to be conducive for both the learners and the teachers but the learners are usually the ones at the receiving end as learning civilities do suffer setbacks most at times in such scenario. Accordingly, school climate is therefore considered as the quality, quantity and character of the school life which encompasses issues such as safety, instruction, school leadership and the quality of relationships including diversity, collaboration and connection (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009), it simply means the totality of the school. Steffgen, Recchia and Viechtbauer (2013) studied school climate and school violence by examining 145 studies and found that students' self-reported school climate was associated with school violent attitudes and behaviour. According to Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne and Gottfredson (2005), schools characterized by a more positive climate (a perceived high level of student and teacher interest and engagement) may have lower rates of student problem and behaviours, while schools characterized by a negative climate (a perceived lack of school safety or a high level of physical damage or vandalism) may have higher rate of problems behavior in the entire school system. According to Wang, & Degol, (2016), education experts have classified school climate into four core components or dimensions which are safety (physical, emotional, and identity), teaching and learning (academic climate), relationships (community climate), and the environment itself.

Delinquencies are actions and behaviours that violate or are against the stipulated law of the land. It is known as juvenile delinquency or offending when it is committed by a teenager or minor, that is the participation of minors or juveniles (individuals younger than the statutory age of majority) in illegal behaviour (Siegel & Welsh, 2011). Also, Shabbeer (2016) posited that a delinquent is not an individual who is guilty of some certain offence, but someone who has developed an anti-social personality or whose behaviour characteristics, if unchecked, have led to conduct that contradicts the public acceptable behaviours. Adolescents exhibit delinquency in different forms; like vandalism, drug abuse, stealing or theft, alcohol/drug abuse, rape, examination malpractices, school violence,

bullying, cultism, truancy and school drop-outs among others (Sanni, Nsiong, Abayomi, Modo & Eze, 2010). In similar vein, Eke (2004) classified delinquent acts into two, these are; criminal and status offences. The criminal offences include stealing, rape, arson, drug offences, burglary, pick pocket, armed robbery and murder; while status offences involve running away from home or school, noise making, bullying, classroom disruption and this can be attributed to different factors or reasons such as lack of supervision, poor engagement, poor teacher to staff ratio and school environment.

Sanidad-Leones (2006) posited that the urban poor are overwhelmed by high cost of living, financial problems, unstable jobs, lack of education opportunities, inadequate health and sanitation and inadequate housing. These circumstances at times pushes youths into delinquent acts in order to alleviate their suffering. In line with this, Smith (2004) posited that minors who are growing up in poor neighbourhood without parents' supervision or monitoring of their behaviour and activities are at risk of engaging in delinquent act. These factors are also common or related to secondary school pupils in Taraba State are Psychological conditions, Physical conditions, abuse of trust, loneliness or neglect, divorce/separated parents (broken homes), Parenting style, family type, Socio-economic status, Aggressive behavior and or history of involvement in delinquency, maltreatment, Parental involvement in antisocial behaviour and or crime, poverty, laziness, social media addiction, nature of school, peer influence, school location, death of parents or loved one, threat from other students or foes, to gain popularity/recognition among foes, poor teaching environment, poor teacher-student relationship, poor or inadequate teaching and or learning environment like: classrooms, laboratories, seats or desks, textbooks, libraries, gardens, etc, poor or inadequate teachers, high number of students (high teacher-students ratio), poor incentives or motivation of teachers, nature of teachers, nature of school administrator, poor parents-teacher relationship, poor staff-staff relationship, and so on (Researcher's Field Interview, 2019)

Students at times display some kinds of delinquent acts in the school and its environment. These are usually deep-rooted in a number of factors. In view of this, delinquency may not be considered as a disease but a symptom of a disease. For example, delinquent act like stealing is a symptom of a condition which might be traced to the family background, peer relationship, school adjustment, school achievement and perhaps, psychological and sociological aspect of the child's personality. The influence of school and environment on students' behaviour cannot be overemphasized. This is because the school environment is charged with the responsibility of helping students to adjust effectively to the teaching and learning process for better academic achievement. The school environment also help the society to understand the diverse needs of the students and how such could be met so that the students can become self-disciplined individuals, responsible and be optimistic towards a better future (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009). School with good climate is a setting for teaching and learning of safety and life personal relation and institutional environment. It simply refers to the quality and character of school life: the heart and soul of a school that makes every stakeholder look forward to being there every school day for learning and character moulding. That is, apart from the knowledge based purpose or manifest function of establishing a school, it also has the functional role of socialising students to be morally upright and well behaved. In fulfilling this, a school must be such that provide an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning to take place; in terms of befitting physical structure, competent teaching and non-teaching staff, responsible school authority, working school policies, adequate teaching aids and smooth teacher-students' relationship among other things (Nwachukwu, 2018). A school must also be located in places or areas devoid of distraction so as to enhance or enable maximum concentration on the part of both the learners and the teachers. It is unfortunate however, that many Nigerian secondary schools are lacking these essential characteristics needed for making the school environment fascinating and conducive for learning; thus making some students become vulnerable to delinquent behaviours. Taraba State is not an exception of this situation as there exists similar situation in the state even within the capital city of Jalingo. It has been observed that nationwide public schools have become a shadow of themselves since the proliferation of private schools and the public schools in Taraba State are no exception as they lack befitting classroom structures, some schools are located in noisy and decadence saturated areas, while some community remain uncooperative to the upliftment of the school.

Furthermore, in most cases, if the school climate is not favourable, many students result into delinquent acts such as fighting, stealing, bullying, disobedience to school rules and regulations, drinking alcohol, smoking, classroom disruption, truancy and high level of school dropout out, among others and this affects school in a way or the other (Adegoke, 2015). This implies that the school administrator, teachers, counsellors and other staff are very important in the emotional, social, intellectual, physical and moral development of the students. A conducive school climate if equipped with teaching and learning facilities will help the student's develop cognitively, effectively and in their

psychomotor domain (Nwachukwu, 2018). Generally, it is believed that positive school climate has positive academic and behavioural implications for students. For example, a positive school climate helps people feel safe physically, socially and emotionally. In line with this, the National School Climate Council (2007) stated that a positive and sustainable school climate facilitates students' academic and social development. Positive school climate is associated to higher academic achievement, improved mental health and less bullying as well as improved school climate can be used as a preventive approach to reduce delinquent behaviour and increase students' school attendance and facilitation of school satisfaction (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Moreover, Steffgen, Recchia, and Viechtbauer (2013) findings showed that relationship exists between violent behaviour and school climate, in that school climate is a critical factor associated with delinquency in many schools. That is, schools where there are conducive climate always have lower or no delinquency records than those without conducive climates. Turner, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic, and Broomhead (2014) reported that positive school climate is correlated with the reduction of bullying behaviour over time, both for victims and perpetrators.

Statement of Problem

Generally, it has been observed that public secondary schools in Nigeria and Taraba state both in rural and urban areas seem not to have conducive environment for both teachers and learners, thus making the school climate unfavourable for teaching and learning. Schools like this rather promote and favour delinquent activities to thrive. It is not hyperbolic that some public secondary schools in Taraba state do not have libraries, laboratories, fences, adequate classrooms, staff and other needed facilities that constitute a conducive or favourable school climate and these are some of the things that keep students away from delinquent acts. Several researches have been carried out on school climate. For example, Cohen, McCabe, Michelli and Pickeral (2009) revealed in their comprehensive review of literature that positive school climate is associated with and/or predictive of academic achievement, school success and effective delinquent act prevention, students' healthy development and teacher retention. Therefore, positive school climate and location is imperative for the overall achievement of educational goals among the secondary school adolescents. Gongomo (2017) carried out a research on school climate determinants: perception and implications and the study was anchored on the invitational theory to practice the starfish analysis of Pumrey (1995) 86 participant (68 students and 18 teachers). The results revealed the five school climate determinants are significantly related but significant differences were found between teachers and students. Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic and Bromhead (2017) also conducted a study on impact of school climate and school identification on academic achievement: multilevel modelling with students and teachers data and integrated multiple sources into multilevel sources which included staff and students' self-reports, objective school records of academic achievements and socioeconomic demographics. Achievement was assessed using a national literacy and numeracy test (760 staff and 2,257 students from 17 secondary schools). The result showed that students' perceptions significantly explains writing and numeracy achievements and this effect is mediated by students' psychological identification with the school. Staff perception of school climate explains students' achievement on numeracy, writing and reading tests (while accounting for students responses) staff school identification did not play a significant role.

Also, Wang and Degol (2015) carried out a research work on school climate: a review of the construct, measurement and impact on student outcomes. From the foregoing, it can be seen that schools are inevitable mirrors of the community they serve and the environment or atmosphere of the school setting will have influence on the school on the overall adjustment of the students. However, the previous studies were mostly foreign and even the home based do not focus on school climate as determinant of students' delinquency. The variations in the previous studies and this present one are based on locale, population, variables and statistical tools and that is the gap this study intends to fill. This study examined Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency among students in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency among Students in Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought;

- i. the nature of school climate as perceived by secondary school teachers in Taraba State;
- ii. the influence of school climate on delinquency among secondary school students in Taraba State.

Research Questions

- i. What is the nature of school climate as perceived by secondary school teachers in Taraba state?
- ii. What is the influence of school climate on delinquency among secondary school students in Taraba state?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency in Taraba State, Nigeria based on gender.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency in Taraba State, Nigeria based on location.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency in Taraba State, Nigeria based on years of experience.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey. Daramola (2006) describe the descriptive research survey as the systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest factually; it look s critically at a phenomena and describes the way it is. That is, it enables and allows researchers to determine and report phenomena the way they are. To that end, the researcher then consider the survey type as most suitable for this study The population for this study comprised all secondary school teachers in Taraba State, which is 10,461 (Taraba State Ministry of Education, 2019). Based on the estimated population, a sample size of 960 teachers were selected for the study. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to garner the data. At the first stage, the researcher used quota sampling to select two (2) local government areas from each senatorial district. That is North; Jalingo and Zing, Central; Gassol and Bali and South; Wukari and Takum respectively. Again, quota sampling technique was used to select 16 public secondary schools from each of the six selected Local Government Areas. Finally, random sampling technique was used to select 20 teachers from the overall 48 selected public secondary schools across the State. A researcher designed questionnaire with response of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) were administered to the respondents (teachers) to elicit response. The data obtained was analysed using frequency and percentages for the demographic data while Spearman rank order was used for answering of research questions raised. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using *t*-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Respondent's Demographic Data

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	520	54%
Female	440	46%
Total	960	100%

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of male and female teachers. 55% of the respondents are male while 45% of the respondents are females. This shows that the males' respondents were more than females' respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on years of experience

Number of teacher	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-10	212	22%
11-20	444	46%
21 and above	304	32%
Total	960	100%

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of respondents based on years of experience of the number of teachers in their schools. From the table, 22.5% of the respondents claimed they have one to 10 years teaching experience, 46.25% had 11-20 years experiences while 31.25% had 21 years and above experiences.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by location

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural	413	43%
Urban	547	57%
Total	240	100%

Table 3 above shows respondents' perception based on location, that is rural or urban and it showed that 43% (413) of the respondents were from rural areas whilst 57% (547) of the respondents were from urban schools.

Table 4: Nature and influence of school climate on students' behaviour as perceived by secondary school teachers in Taraba State

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Position
There are available infrastructural facilities in my school.	39 (16.0%)	67 (28.0%)	69 (29.0%)	65 (27.0%)	4 th
My school has adequate buildings and teachers.	49 (20.4%)	53 (22.1%)	89 (37.1)	49 (20.4%)	3 rd
The classrooms in my school are adequately furnished and well ventilated	25 (10.4%)	38 (16.0%)	73 (30.3%)	104 (43.3%)	2 nd
There is a functional library, laboratory and garden in my school.	17 (7.0%)	21 (9.0%)	77 (32.0%)	125 (52.0%)	1 st
Schools located in rural areas have same facilities like as those in urban areas	25 (10.4%)	38 (16.0%)	73 (30.3%)	104 (43.3%)	2 nd

Results in table 4 shows the availability adequacy, and functionality of school climate in Taraba state, Nigeria. From the table, the respondents disagreed to the availability of: functional laboratories, gardens and libraries; adequately furnished and ventilated classrooms; availability of infrastructural facilities, schools in rural areas do not have same facilities as their counterpart in urban areas; and adequate buildings and teachers. This implies that there is no stable climate among Secondary School Students in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis1: There is no significant difference in Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency in Taraba State, Nigeria based on gender.

Table 5: t-test analysis of secondary school teachers' perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency among Secondary School Students in Taraba State, Nigeria based on gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	520	37.57	5.879	-0.231	197	0.818	Do not reject
Female	440	37.74	4.614				

The results in table 5 show that the calculated significant level is 0.818 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, hypothesis one is not rejected. This means that male and female teachers do not differ in their Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency among Students in Taraba State, Nigeria based on gender.

Research Hypothesis2: There is no significant difference in Secondary School Teachers' Perception of School Climate as Determinant of Delinquency in Taraba State, Nigeria based on location.

Table 6: Independent t-Test on difference in teachers' perception on school climate based on location

Location	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Urban	547	15.71	2.28	0.29	200	0.78	Do not reject
Rural	413	18.81	2.56				

Results in Table 6 above shows a t-value of 0.29 and p-value of 0.78 which is greater than 0.05 ($0.78 > 0.05$). Since 0.78 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in teacher's perception of school climate as a determinant of delinquency among students in Taraba state based on location.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of school climate as a determinant of delinquency in Taraba state based on location

In order to test hypothesis 3, teachers' perception of school climate as a determinant of delinquency based on years of experience are coded and analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as reported below.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Teachers' Perception of school climate as a determinant of delinquency in Taraba state based on years of experience

Sources	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Remark
0-20 years	18.660	182	9.330	1.62	0.20	NS
21 years above	1131.660	788	5.744			

Total	1150.320	960
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$P > 0.05$

Results in Table 7 shows F-value of 1.62 and p-value of 0.20 which is greater than 0.05 ($0.20 > 0.05$). Since 0.20 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in teachers' perception on school climate as a determinant of delinquency among students in Taraba state based on year of experience.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that, there are no adequate libraries, laboratories and gardens for the students to create a favourable climate and get the students busy to do away with delinquency and that is why they are most times involved in delinquency. This is in tandem with the findings of Steffgen, Recchia, and Viechtbauer (2013) which showed that relationship exists between violent behaviour and school climate, noting that school climate is a critical factor associated with delinquency in many schools because in schools that have conducive climate have lower or no delinquency records than those without conducive climates. Also, Turner, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic, and Bromhead (2014) correlation also stated that positive school climate and reduced bullying behaviour.

Findings also revealed that there is no difference in the assessment of school climate by the respondents based on years of experience or gender. This assertion is in contrast with the works of Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle (2001) whose study was on an all-male high school sample and found out that students in larger schools experienced less aggression than students in smaller schools. Here, students from large and mixed schools are found to be exhibiting the same level of behaviour as there is no difference in the perspective of the respondents.

Furthermore, findings of the study also revealed that all the teachers of different work age were captured and as such, they should know whether or not there has been a stable or favourable school climate for students not to involve in delinquent acts. Also, it was revealed that schools in the rural areas do not have same facilities like their urban counterparts and as such, there may be variation in their delinquent acts.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be inferred that school climate is desirable and required for students to learn conducive school takes students away from delinquent acts or at least reduces it to the barest minimum but if lacking, it allows students to get involved into delinquent acts that are harmful and detrimental to their social, physical, moral and academic development. Accordingly, since delinquency is evident in secondary schools in Taraba state, it is evident that the basic facilities, constituents, or features that constitute school climate are virtually lacking in almost all the government schools. None of the required features are present in these schools and worst of it all, some are located in noisy, or lonely areas as perceived by the teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. The government and other school owners as well as well-meaning Tarabians should provide all the necessary facilities and structures needed for 21st century schools
- ii. Employ adequate staff and provide adequate facilities to create a conducive atmosphere for the students in the state to love school and do away with delinquent acts that are detrimental to themselves, their families and the larger society.
- iii. There should also be provision of same facilities to both rural and urban schools to enable them perform the needed task to reduce or curb delinquency among students and make the schools attractive to both the teachers and the students.

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