

# THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AHOADA WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

by

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## Abstract

This study was conducted in order to determine the school organizational climate and its impact on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Ahoada-West Local Government Area of Rivers State and the influence of healthy school climate on pupils' academic performance. The population of the study comprised all the 850 classroom teachers and 18,350.00 pupils of Primary Schools in Ahoada-West Local Government Area of Rivers State out of which a sample of 520 teachers and 10,620 pupils of primary five and six was drawn. The data collected from both teachers and pupils were statistically analyzed in simple single percentage system. The research instrument used was questionnaire for both teachers and pupils. Oral interview and observation of both school and classroom atmosphere was also used. The results of findings showed that the leadership style had influence on school effectiveness, school organizational climate had influence on pupils' academic performance, there is a significant difference between academic performance of pupils in open school climate and academic performance in closed school climate. The study concluded by coming up with some recommendations.

**Key Words:** academic performance, impact, school climate,

## Introduction

In recent times, there has been a huge cry from all and sundry that the nation standard of education has fallen. Commentaries on educational literature, government reports, school reports, personal views and commentaries over the radios and television relating to education have all given cognizance to the falling standard of education and the factors responsible for this phenomena, the yardstick for measurement of this trend has been mainly the general poor performance of pupils in academic work in the school system. Many factors have been assumed to be contributing to the poor performance of children in academic work in the school system resulting to the fallen standard of education. Some of the identified factors are: teachers' attitude to work as a responsive behavior to government policies, methods of teaching, lack of teaching materials and equipment, learning patterns and behavior of children, parents' attitude and behavior towards their children and teachers and many others.

However, research findings by organization theories have revealed that organizations are found to possess individualized "Climate" specific to such organization. There is a wide range of definitions for an organization in the literature. But for conceptual purposes, it is more useful to say that almost everyone belongs to one or more organizations, business enterprises, school, social clubs, churches and many others. All of them are made up of activities which are rationally coordinated through human and other resources to achieve some objectives and goals. On the other hand, the climate of an organization refers to corporate image, the organization's policies, informal groups and dynamics, persons relationships, the style of management adopted by the

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leader, pay structure and reward systems, power and authority relationships and motivational patterns. A school as an organization, the school system in the nation and individual schools have their own school climate. But nobody has critically looked into this factor as affecting the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Rivers State and the resultant fall in the standard of education. This study therefore is looking into finding lasting solution to this monster of fall standard of education as it affect the impact of school climate on the academic performance in selected primary schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education could be defined as a process of transmitting the cultural heritage and a mean of developing an individual to enable him live effectively in the society. Poor performance of pupil is a reflection of unreached goals of education. It is therefore pertinent for teachers to employ a good and conducive school climate to redress this situation in order to bridge the gap between the desired academic performance and prevalent poor academic performance, especially schools within this area of study which studies of this kind has not been carried out.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major focus of this study is on the impact of school climate of pupils' academic performance. The following are some objectives outlined to support this study, to identify some factors that can assess the impact as contributory factors to the poor academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in Ahoada-West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### **Research Question**

1. To identify climatic factors responsible for poor academic performance of public.
2. To identify leadership styles that affects academic performance of public.
3. To find out whether teacher's attitude towards pupils affects academic performance.
4. To find out whether administrative behavior of the head teachers affect the atmosphere of the school.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study to the classroom teachers, school administrators, the government and pupils cannot be over-emphasized. The result of this research will highlight the importance of school climate as it affects learning. The research also brought to awareness the importance of teachers' motivation and equipment as tools for academic performance. Pupils will also be aware of the school and classroom situation as regards to their academic performance. This research work also enabled the teacher have the basic understanding of the effectiveness of cordial relationships between teacher/pupil, teacher/head teacher/the staff of the school relationships as regards to the academic performance of the pupils and finally, parent/teacher relationships as an important tool for the academic performance of pupils.

### **Methodology**

This chapter deals with the methods that the researcher used in carrying out the study. The areas covered include, research design, population of the study, sampling size, sampling technique, instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study is to a large extent, descriptive. It examined the impact of school climate on the sample for the study.

## Population of the Study

The total population of the study consists of 9,350 pupils and 200 teachers, in the 20 primary schools in the Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

## Sample Size/Sampling Technique

A sample size of 5,880 pupils in elementary five and six classes were drawn from 10 sample schools within the Local Government Area of the Study. The number of pupils is made up of 2,320 girls and 3,566 boys, out of 220 teachers in 20 primary schools in the Local Government Area. All the 160 teachers in the 10 sampled primary schools were used for the study. The teachers were made up of 70 females and 90 male teachers.

## Instrument for Data Collection

This study adopted three research instruments namely, structured items, observation and oral interview. The structured items (questionnaire) focused on the organizational climate of the school and its influence on the academic performance of pupils in terms of head teacher-teacher relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, teacher – pupil relationship and classroom atmosphere. The questionnaire had 20 items structured in a likert scale format viz: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was constructed for both teachers and pupils selected for the study. A total of 5,880 questionnaires were administered on pupils and 160 questionnaires on teachers. The questionnaires were distributed after due consultations with the schools head teachers and teachers of the affected schools in the area of study. In most cases, the teachers assisted in the distribution of the questionnaires to the pupils under the supervision of the researcher. The researcher explained the purpose and significance of the research to the respondents when and where necessary and also assisted the pupils to fill the questionnaire correctly. The answered questionnaires will be retired immediately to avoid been bias.

## Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were systematically analyzed using strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

## Research Question 1

Classroom management affects pupils' academic performance.

S/N	Question	Strongly Agreed (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagreed (D)
1.	Exercises given to pupils are checked and corrected daily for Mathematics and English Language and weekly for other subjects	2000	1450	900
	Percentage	40.00%	29.00%	18.00%
2.	The teacher gives continuous assessment test on his or her subjects, marks and records in the continuous assessment book weekly			
	Percentage	51.00%	31.00%	6.00%

The above analysis shows that the teacher's behavior, policies and practice have significant influence on the performance of pupils. In research question number 1 on the table, about 1,880 which represent 37.60% strongly agree that the teacher teaches and gives exercise to pupils at the end of every lesson while 1,250 responses representing 25.00% agree 1,000 which represent 20.00% disagree and 850 responses representing 17.00% strongly disagree.

In question number 2 on the table which says that exercises given to pupils are checked and corrected daily in mathematics and English Language and weekly for order subjects, about 2,000 which represent 40.00% strongly agreed while 1,450 responses representing 29.00% agreed. 900 which represent 18.00% disagree and 650 responses representing 13.00% strongly disagreed. In question number 6 which says that the teacher gives continuous assessment test on his subject marks and records in the continuous assessment book weekly, 2500 responses representing 51.00% strongly agreed while 1,550 which represent agreed while 300 responses representing 6.0% disagreed and 600 responses which represent 12.00% strongly disagreed.

It is clear from the finding that the school organizational climate has a very remarkable impact on pupils' performance and teachers' effectiveness, teachers' exhibit different characteristics and behaviour which affect pupils' performance either positively or negatively, Akorfi (1981), stated that a successful teacher must have an ability to sense children's difficulties and an honest wish to help them. This idea agrees with Davis (1981, p 104), which stated that organizational climate as human environment with department (classroom) or an entire, organization (school) cannot be seen or touched but it is there like air in the room and it surrounds and affects everything that happens in the organization. He further said that school climate can influence motivation and academic performance of pupils towards high or low performance.

### Research Question 2:

The use of instructional materials in teaching enhance pupils' academic performance.

Responses of the respondents on the effect of instructional materials on the academic performance of pupils.

S/N	Question	Strongly Agreed (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagreed (D)
3.	The use of instructional materials like charts, pictures and other stimulate pupils academic performance	1700	2000	900
	Percentage	34.00%	40.00%	18.00%
4.	Teachers' deliver the lesson in accordance with the lesson note and the use of teaching aids appropriately helps to improve pupils' knowledge.	2,500	1,550	150
	Percentage	50.00%	31.00%	3.00%

The table above depicts responses received from pupils on the use of instructional materials in teaching pupils. The question in number (3) states that the use of instructional materials is necessary because it goes a long way to bring the concept in practical terms visible to pupils. This is very clear when in the first question on the table, about 1,700 which represent 34.00% strongly agree that the use of instructional material better their knowledge in class work,

while 2000 which represent 900 agree. 900 responses representing 18.00% disagreed and 400 responses representing 8.00% strongly disagreed.

The question in number (4) in the table above which states that the teacher delivers his lesson in accordance with the lesson note and the use of teaching aids appropriately helps to improve pupils knowledge, 2,500 response which represent 50.00% strongly agree while 1,550 which represents 31.00% agree. 150 which represent 3.00% disagreed while 800 responses representing 16.00% strongly disagreed. Based on the findings it is clear that the use of instructional materials by teachers in teaching improves pupils understanding of the lesson and enhance their performance. Instructional materials serve to illustrate in practical terms what is discussed in the class. This makes understanding of the lesson easier. However, in using it, the teacher should ensure that what is being demonstrated is seen clearly by everyone in the class. The teacher should devise means and materials to make his or her lesson meaningful and interesting to the pupils. This idea agrees with that of Linger (1972:460) which states that one of the chief role teachers' play as educational psychologists is that of the artist in human relation – the person who works a variety of techniques and forces to produce situations that will stimulate learning.

### Research Question 3:

The organizational climate of my school affects pupils' performance.

S/N	Question	Strongly Agreed (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagreed (D)
5.	The organizational climate of my school is conducive for effective teaching and learning	60	40	25
	Percentage	37.50%	25.00%	15.63%
6.	The head teacher maintains social distance from the teachers	50	45	35
	Percentage	31.25%	28.13%	20.87%
7.	In my school, open school is necessary for effective teaching and learning	48	56	32
	Percentage	30%	35%	20%

From the information on the table above, a greater number of respondents prefer an open school organizational climate for effectiveness. In question number (5) which states that, whether open school climate is necessary. 60 which represents 37.50% agreed strongly while 40 responses representing 25.00% agreed. 25 responses which represented 15.63% disagreed while 35 representing 20.87% strongly disagreed.

A greater number of respondents see the organizational climate of the school as healthy for effective teaching and learning. This, they exhibited when 48 responses which represents 30% strongly agree while 56% responses which represent 35% agreed and 32 which represent 20% disagreed and 24 representing 15% strongly disagreed. It is also clear that by popular responses, the head teacher's behavioral pattern determines the school effectiveness. This is also true since the head teacher maintain social distance from his or her teachers. The data above

confirms this as 50 which represent 31.25% agreed strongly that their head teacher maintains social distance from teachers, while 45 representing 28.13% agreed. 35 response while 300 which represent 19.75% strongly disagreed.

It is clear from the findings that the success or failure of any school depends on the organizational climate, the ability of the head teacher to co-ordinate, both teacher and pupils to work co-operatively and effectively to enhance pupils performance and achieving of goal. This idea agrees with the (NTI, Education Circle 4, 1993) which states that the school head determines the school climate. It further state that some schools termed “good” others “fair” or “bad” at times turned “good” with a change of the leaser. However, it is believed that a cordial teacher head teacher relations foster school effectiveness. Brown (1969), observed that in an open and healthy organizational climate. When a sound new method is introduced, openness correlates with achievement. This explains why some schools perform better than others.

#### Research Question 4

Responses of respondents on the influence of classroom atmosphere on pupils academic performance.

S/N	Question	Strongly Agreed (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagreed (D)
8.	The work module is strictly followed, taught and recorded in the diary.	32	24	48
	Percentage	20.00%	15.00%	30.00%
9.	The teachers are always punctual and regular to school	20	25	45
	Percentage	12.50%	15.63%	28.13%
10.	The teacher actually teaches all the periods allocated to him or her daily.	15	45	60
	Percentage	9.37%	28.13%	37.50%

The above table depicts the responses received on question number (8) which says that the work module is strictly followed, taught and recorded in the diary. It shows that 32 responses representing 20.00% strongly agree, 24 responses which represent 15.00% agreed while 48 responses representing 30.00% disagreed and 56 responses representing 35.00% strongly disagree.

Question number (9) on the punctuality and regularity of teachers in school shows that the teachers are always punctual and regular, as 70 responses which represents 43.74% strongly disagree that teachers are not always punctual nor regular in school, 45 which represent 28.13% disagree while 25 representing 15.03% agreed and 20 which represent 12.50% strongly agreed.

On question number (10) which says that the teachers actually teaches all the periods allocated to them daily, 15 responses representing 9.37% strongly agreed, 45 which represents 28.13% agreed while 60 representing 37.50% disagreed and 40 responses representing 25.00% strongly agreed.

#### Research Findings

From the findings, it is an acceptable fact that some teachers skip the topics in the module, especially when the topics are unfamiliar, and deprive pupils such knowledge. It is also clear that

some teachers actually do not write note of lessons which contents are derived from the module of work as a guide to what the teacher is expected to teach the pupils. All the periods that are allocated daily are also not utilized. Even the few periods that are covered in the lessons are not properly taught with teaching aids.

It cannot be denied that the teachers attitude, his interest towards his job affect pupils academic performance. Teacher's interest and competence allows better understanding of his/her lesson by pupils and also enhances pupils' academic performance. Akrofi (1981) states that a good classroom atmosphere helps the child to make wise choices with which he can live and build up his self-confidence and power of learning.

### **Summary of Findings**

This chapter has concerned itself with presentation of data, data analysis and discussion of findings. The data analyzed in tables were subjected to questionnaire which was calculated in simple percentages. Results obtained were discussed. The major findings of this study are summarized below.

1. Total school organizational climate influence pupils academic performance.
2. The use of instructional material in teaching gives pupils better understanding of the lesson and enhances their performance.
3. Open school organizational climate motivates both teachers and pupils and also produces positive results in terms of pupils' academic performance.

### **Summary**

The research design adopted for this study was survey to a large extent descriptive. The population of the study was made up of 9,350 pupils and 200 teachers in 20 primary schools in Ahoada-West Local Government Area of Rivers State while the sample size for the study consisted of 5,880 pupils and 160 teachers in 10 selected schools using systematic random sampling in the selection of pupils and the stratified sampling technique was adopted owing to the nature of the area where the research was carried out. Simple random sampling was employed in selecting the sample size from the zones for the study.

Relevant data for this study was collected by making use of questionnaire issued to respondents. The instrument used was a 20 items questionnaire for both pupils and teachers. This was used to obtain information on school organizational climate and how it affects pupil's academic performance. The data was analyzed using simple percentage.

### **Conclusion**

The study discussed on the impact of school climate on the academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State. The findings in this study majorly discussed on head teacher/teacher, teacher/pupils, teacher/teacher relationships. The findings of the study states that 60% of the primary schools in Ahoada-West Local Government Area of Rivers State demand open school climate for effectiveness and to enhance pupils' performance. School climate in terms of head-teacher/teacher, teacher/pupils relationship is necessary for positive performance of pupils.

### **Recommendations**

1. The attitude of some teachers and classroom atmosphere have great influence on the academic performance of pupils.
2. Teacher lesson notes and the use of instructional materials make learning meaningful and also enhance pupils understanding of the lesson.
3. To ensure positive academic performance in schools, thorough supervision of both

teachers should be conducted. In the process, emphasis should be placed on head teacherstyle of leadership, regularity and punctuality of both head teachers and teachers, instructional materials, preparation of lesson notes by teachers, continuous assessment test records and others be implemented.

4. Departments of educational management and planning in higher institutions in Rivers State should be at regular intervals, organize seminars for school head teachers and teachers respectively on the elements of school organizational climates such as leadershipstyles and communication patterns and how they can improve the atmosphere that will enhance pupils' academic performance.
5. Rivers State Primary Schools Board, in collaboration with Ministry of Education should organize seminars for schools heads and teachers on school organizational climate and itsinfluence on the academic performance of pupils. This seminar should be organized at least once in every academic session to refresh the minds of both school administrators and teachers on the need to maintain an atmosphere that is favourable to pupil effectiveness in their respective primary schools. This calls for both administrators and teachers to see themselves as colleagues working together to achieve a common goal.

School organizational climate should be one of the course content to be included in all Departments of Educational Management and Planning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State particularly I Ahoada-West Local Government Area. This is necessary for teachers and administrators in order to understand the concept of organizational climate and its influence onpupils' academic performance.

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