



Full Length Paper

Impact 0f School Culture on Students' Academic Performance in Private Secondary Schools in Ogun State

¹Rev. Mrs Aja D.D., and ²Azubuike A.S.

¹Department of Educational Management and Planning, Paul University Awka <u>divineajarevmrs@gmail.com</u> +2348035677048

²Gregory University Uturu Abia State azubuikeamarachi@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the impact of school culture on students' academic performance in private secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The research adopted a quantitative approach and utilised structured questionnaires distributed to a representative sample of teachers. The design used for this study is a correlational research design which can be used to measure relationships. The population was 45000 teachers of private schools in Ogun State. The sample size for this study is 440 teachers, which was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size calculation. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaires structured according to the purpose of the study and research questions titled 'Impact of Culture on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (ICSAPQ). The face validity of the instrument was determined by five (5) experts from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, Paul University, Awka. The reliability of the instruments was determined using the split method of reliability using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test, and a reliability index of 0.70 was obtained, making the instrument reliable. Collected data were collated and coded with the use of the Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using the t-test and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC). Findings revealed that positive school cultures were prevalent and found to contribute substantially to students' academic performance. Recommendations were that educational authorities should develop policy guidelines that encourage adaptive school culture suitable for varying school needs, among others.

Keyword: School Culture, Transformational Leaders, Transactional, Laissez-Faire Leaders

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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the school is ultimately determined by its school culture, which will affect students' academic performance. School culture can be referred to as the unique characteristics of a particular school that make it different from others. School culture can be defined as the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths understood by members of the school community. According to Solomon and Setegni (2018), culture refers to the values, beliefs and norms of individuals in the organisation and is

manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organisation. It can be argued that the culture of the school inevitably has an impact on the learning and academic achievement of the students.

School culture is related to students' performance because if school culture is not hospitable to learning, then students' achievement can suffer. School culture therefore has a more powerful effect on students' achievement than any other variable (Solomon & Setegni, 2018). In a study by Green (2016) on teachers' perception of principal leadership and school culture in Mississippi, it

was discovered that principal leadership style affects school culture, which in turn affects students' academic achievement. The author states that principals with a good leadership style maintain a good and effective school culture. The environment and atmosphere reigning in the school, especially among heads, staff and students, and the values shared by all of them definitely influence the smooth running of the institution. Moreover, a stable and convivial environment within the school, where individuals share the same motivation and norms, is likely to contribute to the effective organisation of the institution (Fatih, Nazim, Engin, & Yusuf, 2015). In support of this, Solomon and Setegni (2018) report that schools with good culture have highly motivated teachers, and these highly motivated teachers have greater success in terms of student performance and student outcomes. Therefore, school head teachers seeking to improve student performance should focus on improving the schools' culture by getting the relationship right between themselves, their teachers, students and parents.

Kisumo, Osman and Ongeti (2013) note that the concept of school culture can offer a permanent solution to improve the performance of secondary schools' students in their national examinations if it is positive. They suggest the reengineering of school culture and present an approach that can be effectively used to improve the performance of students in national examinations. Hence, school culture seems to play a major role in enhancing student academic performance.

Academic performance of students is a key feature in education. It is considered to be the centre around which the whole education system revolves. Igwe, Ndidiamaka and Chidi (2017) define academic performance as the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. The authors added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examination results. Numa (2018) opines that the academic performance of students determines the success or failure of any academic institution. Singh, Malik and Singh (2016) also argue that the academic performance of students has a direct impact on the socio-economic development of a country. There are lots of factors that determine the academic performance of students. Such factors include leadership styles, school culture, and a combination of home, student and teacher factors (Numa, 2018). Other authors add that age, gender and parents' level of education (Khan, Iqbal & Tasneem, 2015). Hence, improvement in the academic performance of students is dependent on a combination of principal, teacher, student, school and parental factors (Okonkwo & Okonkwo, 2018). Academic performance in this study is the results obtained by a student at the end of a specific term in all subjects. Hence, this study tends to find out the impact of school culture on the academic performance of students, especially in private secondary schools.

Private schools are established by individuals, organisations or agencies besides the state-owned ones,

which are termed 'public' or 'government' schools. The major objective of establishing these schools is to make the Nigerian child better for tomorrow through the rest of his/her educational pursuit. Before now private schools were owned by the missionaries, but shortly after the Nigerian civil war (1966-1970), the government took over the control of schools from the missionaries. Starting from that period, the government assumed full responsibility for financing education, providing infrastructural facilities, and rehabilitating classrooms, providing buildina teaching-learning material, and recruiting teaching staff in schools (Omede, 2015). At a time when the federal government found it impossible to finance the running of both primary and secondary schools, the federal government welcomed the contribution of voluntary agencies, communities, and private individuals in the establishment and management of secondary schools alongside those provided by the federal and state Private individuals governments. assumed responsibilities for providing finance, infrastructural facilities, teaching-learning aids, recruiting, promotion and disciplining of teaching staff, and good school administration and management, which brings about good quality education (Omede, 2015).

The private school system has contributed immensely to the development of education and, by extension, the manpower base of the country. It continues to do so even now. Solomon and Setegni (2018) state that private enterprises are where owners of private schools have to run their schools clearly as private property, often paying little attention to laws governing the operations of the education industry. This has presented challenges to the state in a bid to run and deliver education needed for sustainable development of the state. Some of the shortcomings of private schools include unqualified teachers, lack of infrastructure and instructional materials, unstable negative school culture and poor academic achievement. This situation has lured most of them into being special examination centres where the high level of examination malpractices is being perpetrated. This situation has been a major issue of concern to educational stakeholders in the country (Asikhia, 2010). Ofoegbu, Osagie and Clark (2012) reveal that this situation could be the problem of poor leadership style of the principals in such schools.

Nyambuoro (2012), in a study done in selected secondary schools in Homa Bay District, Kenya, indicated that school culture was a totality of all that went on in a school. The author notes that school climate, values, norms, beliefs, traditions, and symbols were artefacts that were subsets of school culture which affected students' academic performance. School culture was also credited for enhancing collegial support that characterised a professional culture.

Green (2016) carried out a study on the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school culture, as assessed by teachers. The research established a weak significance linear correlation between leadership style and school culture as well as with leadership style and school grade.

Mutua (2019) investigated the effects of school culture on students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination in Matungulu District, Machakos County, Kenya. Four research objectives were formulated to guide the study. The objectives sought to establish how school vision, mission and values, frequent communication through school assemblies, motivation through prize giving and continuous assessment tests influence students' KCSE performance. Findings also revealed that there was a positive relationship between leadership style and students' performance. These empirical studies are related to this study by studying school culture and students' academic performance in different states and in other countries, though differently; however, they differ because none of the studies investigated the impact of school cultures and students' academic performance in Ogun State, which this study is undertaking.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to determine the impact of school culture on students' academic performance in private secondary schools in Ogun State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. Find out the prevailing school culture in private secondary schools in Ogun State.
- 2. Find out the impact of school culture on the academic performance of students in private schools in Ogun State.
- 3. Determine the male and female teachers' response to the impact of school culture on the academic performance of private secondary schools in Ogun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- 1. What are the prevailing school cultures in private secondary schools in Ogun State?
- 2 To what extent does school culture impact academic achievement of students in Ogun State?
- 3. What is the gender difference in responses on the impact of school culture on the academic performance of students in private schools in Ogun State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in male and female responses on the prevailing school cultures in private secondary schools in Ogun State.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between school culture and students' academic performance in private secondary schools in Ogun State.

METHODOLOGY

The design used for this study was a correlational research design, which can be used to measure relationships. The area of this study is Ogun State. The population of the study consists of 4500 private secondary school teachers across the 20 LGAs in Ogun State. The sample of the study is 440 respondents taken from the population of 45000 teachers of private schools in Ogun State, determined using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size calculation. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the sample for the study. At the first stage, stratified sampling was used; the state was stratified based on senatorial zones (Ogun Central, Ogun East, and Ogun West) to ensure even geographical representation. At the second stage, proportional sampling was employed, where the private schools were selected proportionally from each zone based on the number of schools/teachers within them. And at the third stage, Simple Random Sampling was adopted, where within each selected school, teachers were randomly selected using the balloting method to ensure fairness and reduce selection bias. At the end of the process 440 teachers were selected. The instrument for data collection was questionnaires structured according to the purpose of the study and research questions titled 'Impact of School Culture on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (ICSAPQ)' and is self-structured. The face validity of the instrument was determined by five (5) from the Department of Educational experts Administration and Planning and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, Paul University, Awka. The reliability of the instruments was determined using the split method of reliability. The researcher will administer the questionnaire instrument to 20 teachers from schools that are not part of the study sample. Data collected on the two occasions were used to compute the reliability coefficient of the instrument using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test. And a reliability index of 0.70 was obtained, making the instrument reliable. Collected data were collated and coded with the use of the Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using the t-test and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC). The mean rating was as follows: 0.00-2.00 = weak school culture: 2.01-2.99 = moderate school culture; 3.00-4.00 = strong school culture. For students' academic performance: 0.00-2.00 = low performance; 2.01-2.99 = moderate performance; 3.00-4.00 = high performance.

Results

Research Question One

What are the prevailing school culture in private secondary schools in Ogun State?

Table 1: Mean score and standard deviation of prevailing school culture of private secondary schools in Ogun State

S/N	Statement items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Collaborative Culture	440	3.06	.763	Strong
2	Innovative Culture	440	3.11	.775	;;
3	Supportive Culture	440	3.17	.743	69
4	Achievement-Oriented Culture	440	3.00	.944	69
5	Respectful Culture	440	3.00	1.020	69
6	Idealized Influence culture	440	3.21	.988	67
7	Intellectual Stimulation culture	440	3.24	.988	69
8	Individualized Consideration culture	440	3.06	.998	67
9	Inspirational Motivational culture	440	3.01	1.153	67
	Grand mean		3.01	0.907	67

Key: Mean rating 0.00-2.00 = weak school culture; 2.01-2.99 = moderate school culture; 3.00-4.00 = strong school culture

Table 1 examines the prevailing school culture of private secondary schools in Ogun State.

The data reveal that the average mean score is 3.01 out of 4, with a standard deviation of 0.907. Specifically, all the prevailing culture mean scores suggest that they practice a strong school culture because their mean scores are above the 2.5 benchmark. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of the items 1

- 9 is 0.907. The standard deviation scores indicate that respondents' opinions were not far apart, adding validity to the mean scores.

Research Question Two

To what extent does school culture impact the academic achievement of students in Ogun State?

Table 2: Mean score and standard deviation of the impact of school culture on academic performance of students in private schools in Ogun State

S/N	Statement items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	A positive school culture has a direct impact on students' academic performance.	440	3.39	.993	High
2	Our school's culture promotes a sense of community and belonging, which enhances students' academic achievement.	440	3.45	.858	ο
3	The school's culture encourages students to take risks and challenge themselves academically.	440	3.44	.883	ı
4	Our school's culture supports students' social and emotional well-being, leading to improved academic performance.	440	3.17	1.039	o
5	The school's culture fosters a growth mindset, encouraging students to persist in the face of academic challenges.	440	3.06	1.121	o
6	Our school's culture promotes high expectations for academic achievement, motivating students to succeed.	440	3.25	1.155	67
7	The school's culture encourages collaboration and teamwork among students, enhancing their academic performance.	440	3.27	1.162	67
8	Our school's culture provides a safe and supportive learning environment, which positively impacts students' academic achievement.	440	3.24	1.215	ø
	Grand mean		3.28	1.053	Positive

Key: Mean rating - 0.00-2.00 = Negative; 2.01-2.99 = moderate; 3.00-4.00 = positive

Table 2 result reveals that the average mean score is 3.28 out of 4, with a standard deviation of 1.053. This grand mean score suggests that the responses are above the 2.5 benchmark, indicating that respondents agreed that school culture has a positive impact on students' academic achievement. This revealed that positive school culture can improve students' academic achievement in Ogun State. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of the items 1-8 is 1.053. The relatively

low standard deviation scores indicate that respondents' opinions were not far apart, adding validity to the mean scores.

Research question three: What is the gender difference in responses on the impact of school culture on the academic performance of students in private schools in Ogun State?

Table 3: Gender differences on the responses of respondents on impact of school culture on academic performance of secondary school students.

GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
MALE	200	3.06	0.548	Agreed
FEMALE	240	3.13	0.596	Agreed

The results in table 3 showed the responses of male and female teachers on the impact of school culture on students' academic performance. The table shows that the mean for male students is 3.06, while that of the female students is 3.13; the female students have a little edge over the male students. However, the relatively low standard deviation shows variation in their responses. The result implies that both male and female teachers

believe that positive school culture can impact positively on students' academic performance under the control of other factors.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teachers on the prevailing school cultures in secondary schools in Ogun State.

Table 4 t-test analysis of significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teachers on the prevailing school cultures in secondary schools

GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation DF	Т	P-value	Remarks
MALE	200	3.27	0.547			
			43	8 -1.1	.234	NS
FEMALE	240	3.45	0.595			

Key: NS - Not Significant

The results of the t-test analysis in Table 4 reveal a non-statistically significant difference in the mean scores of male and female teachers on the prevailing school cultures in secondary schools in Ogun State. Specifically, the calculated t-value of -1.192 and a p-value of .234 indicate that the difference in opinions is not significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the male and female teachers' responses on the prevailing school cultures in secondary schools in Ogun State. This finding implies that both male and female teachers agreed

that these mentioned school cultures exist in Ogun State. This consistency in agreement suggests that the male and female teachers understand what goes on in their schools.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between school culture and academic performance of students in private schools in Ogun State.

Table 5: PPMCC on the relationship of school culture and academic performance of students

Hypothesis Variables		Pearson r p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) Decision			Interpretation
H_02	School Culture	0.840	0.000**	Reject null hypothesis	Strong significant positive relationship
	Academic Performance				

The results of the PPMCC analysis in Table 5 reveal a statistically significant relationship between school

culture and academic achievement among students in Ogun State. Specifically, the calculated r-value of 0.840

and a p-value of 0.000 indicate that the relationship is significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant relationship between the impact of school culture on the academic achievement of students in Ogun State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that all the prevailing culture mean scores suggest that they are practised in private schools by the principals because their mean scores are above the 2.5 benchmark. It also revealed that there is no significant difference in the male and female teachers' responses on the prevailing school cultures in secondary schools in Ogun State. This finding implies that both male and female teachers agreed that these mentioned school cultures exist in Ogun State. This is in consistency and agreement with the study of Omusonga, Kazadi and Indoshi (2018) on the relationship between school culture and students' performance in French in selected secondary schools in Kenya, which revealed that there was a strong correlation between the school culture and students' performance in French, among others. The study by Green (2016), on the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school culture, as assessed by teachers, revealed that the school culture imbibes collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, unity of purpose, professional development, collegial support, and learning partnership. which corroborates with the finding of this present study. The study of Mutua (2019) revealed that the school culture comprises school vision, mission and values, frequent communication through school assemblies, motivation through prize giving and continuous assessment tests. This finding therefore suggests that a lot of school culture exist in the schools which differs ftrom one school to another. However, some are positive while others are negative. Hence, every positive school culture is liable to improve students' academic performance.

Findings revealed that school culture has a positive impact on students' academic achievement. This revealed that positive school culture can improve students' academic achievement in Ogun State. Findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between the impact of school culture on the academic achievement of students in Ogun State. The presence of a positive school culture was confirmed in this study, and it significantly influenced academic performance. This finding supports the assertion by Deal and Peterson (2019) that a strong school culture promotes collaboration, shared values, and high expectations, all of which improve teaching and learning. In Nigeria, Olorunsola and Oyebade's (2021) study revealed that a cohesive and value-driven school environment leads to higher student morale and academic achievement. The study by Green (2016) on the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school culture, as assessed by teachers, is in consonance with this finding, which revealed a weak significant linear correlation between leadership style and school culture as well as between leadership style and school grade.

The finding on gender difference in the responses of teachers on the prevailing school cultures and on their impacts on students' academic performance is not significant. This entails that both male and female teachers were of the opinion that school culture can impact on students' academic performance positively if well managed.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that school culture is a critical determinant of students' academic performance in private secondary schools in Ogun State. It suggests that a vibrant and positive school culture can enhance the effectiveness of any school. Therefore, for any school to achieve their aims and goals, the vision must align with a conducive school culture to achieve optimal academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Experienced school leaders should mentor younger or less experienced principals to build leadership capacity.
- 2. There should be room for policy development, implementation and leadership training.
- 3. School authorities should encourage a school culture that permits discipline, collaboration, inclusivity and respect that supports teaching and learning.
- 4. Conferences, workshops and seminars should be organised annually or biannually for the teachers and principals on the importance of effective leadership and positive school culture on students' learning and achievement.
- 5. Principals should implement a system that recognises and rewards academic achievement, good conduct and innovative practices to motivate teaching practices to motivate both teachers and students.

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