Influence of School Culture on Students’ Academic Performance in Public Secondary School in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract: The aim of the study was to find out the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

Result revealed that majorities of the respondents agreed that school culture influences good reading culture, class attendance, doing of assignments and home works, students’ culture of going for academic excursion, students’ preparation for continuous assessments, students preparation for exams, parents buying recommended textbooks for their wards (students) and that the school culture influences student –students collaboration and students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada area council of FCT.

Keywords: School Culture, Students, Secondary school, Academic performance.

1. Introduction

The school system is made of the students, teachers and the school administrations with the materials resources used for teaching and learning. The school is an institution where teaching and learning takes place. The school is an organized institution for interpretation of curricular. It is a formal structured organization which serves as a transitional stage in life between family and the society. School is a place where the child is prepared to function as an adult, and through this transformation by way of teaching and learning process, whose purpose is to bring about in the learner desirable positive and effective change in the behavior through critical thinking in a more conducive environment which is structured to facilitate learning. The school is a micro-society that is made up of attribute of the societies (Wunti, Hafsat & Igbaji 2017). School is also viewed as any organized educational institution where knowledge is transmitted from the teachers to the learners. School can also be defined as a social institution that transmits the culture of the society from one generation to another. School is an agent of socialization.

The school is a product of the society, so school developed its culture in line with its services. Olaniyi (2000) defined school as a formal agency of education established by member of the macro-community/ society to mould the habits interests, attitudes and feelings of children and transmit the societal norms, culture, value and tradition from one generation to another. So, the school since is a product of the societies developed its own culture.

The school culture is the ways and manners the school conducts its affairs relating to teaching and learning. The School culture is the total ways of the school life. Hamilton & Richardson, (1995) observed that school culture affects all aspects of the school, including instruction, student achievement, and professional development. Peterson, (2016) viewed School culture can be defined as the symbols and stories that communicate core values, reinforce the mission statement, instil a shared vision, and build a sense of commitment among staff, students, and parents while Barth (2002) defines school culture as a “complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization”. Deal and Peterson (2016) further submit that the characteristics of an effective school culture is imbibed in their: a mission that focuses on learning for both students...
and teachers; an awareness of the school’s history and goals; values and beliefs that focus on collegiality, performance, and improvement; rituals and ceremonies that reinforce these values; a professional community that utilizes knowledge and research to improve school practices; shared leadership that balances stability and progress; stories that celebrate the successes of others; and a mutual sense of respect and caring for all. The term of school culture is often referred to organizational culture positioned in the educational background (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) which constitutes the primary assumptions, convention and principles shared by school members. School culture is critical because it displays habits, traditions and formalities (Stoll, 1999) and it shapes teacher-student interacts as well as interacts among teachers (Powers, 2009) as cited by Xiaoju, Xiangyun & Kai (2018). Martin (2009) submitted that education is typically thought to only be received within the classroom in a formalized setting; however, it is uniquely shaped by the interaction between people, things, and ideas. Humans form social systems as they interact with one another, which in turn, alter symbolic systems that are transferred from generation to generation. Thus, the interactions that teachers and administrators have with students help shape their attitudes and beliefs. This unwritten curriculum defines the organizational culture of the school. The school system is made up of the students, the teachers and the school administrators in times of human resources. The students have been described as the primary reasons for the establishment of the school.

Researchers are of the opinion that school culture has a great influence on student's classroom academic achievement (Le Clear, 2005; Confeld, 2016), Deal and Peterson (2016) observed school culture of each school describes the shared beliefs of teachers in the school. School with Strong cultures of efficacy, trust and academic optimism provide higher levels of students’ academic achievement otherwise it will intimidate the socio-emotional developments of students. In the recent times, there is a public outcry on the low performance of students in our secondary schools. One of the factors that may be responsible for this poor students’ performance may be school culture that are not supportive to students learning in schools.

There are few studies conducted on the effect of school culture on students’ academic performance. This study examined eight dimension of school culture relating to students. The school is designed for the students to learn. The students learn everything relating to academic programme in the school. A new students admitted to a school, will first learn how things are been done in the school. Are students attending classes? Do they have culture of doing assignment as at when due? etc

There is a research gap on the influence of school culture on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria especially in FCT and in Gwagwalada area council in particular. Based on this research gap, this study is aimed to investigate the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school in Gwagwalada area council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

1.1. Research Objectives

The aim of the study was to determine the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Specific objectives is to:

1. To find out the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary school in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT

1.2. Research Question

The following research question guides the study:

1. What is the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary school in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT?
2. Literature Review

There are many investigations on school culture by different researchers across the world.

Fyans and Maehr in (1990) did a study which examined five dimensions of school culture and the five dimensions includes: academic challenges, comparative achievement, recognition for achievement, school community, and perception of school goals. Fyans and Maehr (1990) discovered that students are more motivated to learn in schools that have strong cultures. The implication of this is that school teachers are more likely to have higher expectations for students, and in turn, positively impact teaching and learning in the classroom.

The School Culture Survey (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998) was developed to measure characteristics of school culture after a comprehensive review of 27 articles, chapters, and books on school culture. After it was administered to 632 teachers, factor analysis was used to uncover six dimensions of school culture: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnership (Gruenert, 1998).

Maslowki (2001) general analysis, students school performance and achievement is being influenced by absence of responsible and clear school culture, teachers’ commitment, and lack of students interest, motivation, study techniques, lack of awareness of parents as to how they could follow up their school children, lack of teachers covering textbook contents, using teaching aids in classrooms, absence of school co-operation, and lack of hard working students in school and classrooms. Lerra and Teka (2014) also noted that there was lack of school leadership support, commitment, incentives, understanding and weak collaboration of stakeholders.

A study by Vadi, (2007) that investigated the relationships between school culture evaluation and actual school performance. The study sampled sixty Estonian secondary schools where school administrators, teachers and supporting staff were interviewed and school culture were measured by an organizational culture questionnaire and school performance was measured based on national examination results and the result showed that organizational culture could affect the performance of schools.

Dragana, Ivan, Milan, Edit & Bojana (2015) investigated into the effects of school culture on the teaching and learning process in primary schools in Republic of Serbia and the study revealed that the culture of the school has a strong and positive impact on teaching and learning in primary schools in Serbia. Multiple regression analysis determines the predictive effect of school culture on the dimensions of the teaching process and learning as well as the elements of the teaching process.

Zoma, Muhammad & Asma (2017) did a study with the objective of measuring the impact of school culture on student’s academic achievement at secondary level in District Rawalpindi. The result collected showed that head teacher does not lead a positive school culture but a school culture is more effective on student’s academic achievement. This study suggested that a positive relationship between school culture and student’s academic achievement with highly significant. School culture also has a stronger impact on student’s academic achievement at secondary level.

Solomon M & Setegni M (2018) carried out a study that focused on investigating the contribution of school culture to students’ academic achievement. The quantitative data confirmed that the contribution of school culture to students’ academic achievement was found statistically significant but slightly above the expected mean. Qualitative data from the respondents showed strong communication among stakeholders during the implementation process. The support system from teachers and other responsible bodies were seen as effective. A guideline that specifies teachers’ responsibility and the program implementation process, such as continuous follow-up and supervision were reported relevant and triggering teachers to live up to the minimum teachers’ professional commitment standard. Generally, both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis results revealed a moderate level contribution of school culture to students’ academic achievement.
Xiaoju D, Xiangyun D & Kai Y (2018) did a study that investigated the relationship among school culture, teachers’ job satisfaction, and school effectiveness in lower secondary and upper secondary schools in Beijing, China. The result revealed that positively significant relationships among school culture, teachers’ job satisfaction, and school effectiveness and that teachers’ job satisfaction partially mediated the impact of school culture on school effectiveness.

There are many factors that influence students’ academic performance in educational institutions and some of the factors include: teachers’ mastery of subject matter, teacher motivation, level of school facilities, class size, instructional materials, poor reading culture, poor coverage of scheme of work etc. The paper worked on the impact of school culture on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Gwagwalada area council of FCT, Abuja.

Methodology

The method adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of 11 public senior secondary schools but only 5 were sampled. The sampled students were two hundred senior secondary school students selected from five public senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada area council of FCT. Forty SS2 students each from the five (5) senior secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique making a total of 200 respondents. The research instrument used was questionnaire tagged’ Influence of School Culture on Students’ Academic Performance in Public Secondary School Questionnaire’. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and was crosschecked by two lecturers from the Faculty of Education University of Abuja. The Questionnaire had two sections, Section A that seeks information on bio-data while section B collected information on the subject matter. The questionnaire was designed on a 4 point-likert scale Strongly Agree-4, Agreed-3, Strongly Disagree-2 and Disagree-1. Pilot study was done using 30 students from a school which was not part of the school enlisted for the study. Split-half method with Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the study and the reliability coefficient of the 0.84 and 0.86 were gotten, which are acceptable. The researcher employed the services of a research assistant for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Result collected was analysed by the use of simple percentages.

3. Result Analysis

Research Question one: What are the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school in Gwagwalada area council of FCT?

Table One: Responses on the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>The following are the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Good reading culture</td>
<td>143(71.5%)</td>
<td>40(20%)</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>10(5%)</td>
<td>7(3.5%)</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>109(54.5%)</td>
<td>91(45.5%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Doing of assignment and home work</td>
<td>123(61.5%)</td>
<td>77(38.5%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Going for academic excursion</td>
<td>135(67.5%)</td>
<td>51(25.5%)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5(2.5%)</td>
<td>9(4.5%)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Preparation for continuous assessment</td>
<td>122(61%)</td>
<td>78(39%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Preparation for exams</td>
<td>141(70.5%)</td>
<td>59(29.5%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents to buy recommended textbooks for their wards (Students)</td>
<td>134(67%)</td>
<td>40(20%)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29(14.3%)</td>
<td>31(15.5%)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students-student collaboration</td>
<td>163(81.5%)</td>
<td>57(18.5%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Excellent academic performance</td>
<td>171(85.5%)</td>
<td>29(14.5%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result from table one item one showed that 143(71.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 40(20%) of the sampled respondents agreed while 10(5%) disagreed and 7(3.5%) strongly disagreed that school culture influence good reading culture in students. This implies that the majorities of the respondents agreed that school culture influenced good reading culture in students which leads to high academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Table one item two showed that 109(54.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 91 (45.5%) of the sampled respondents agreed that school culture influences class attendance culture on students which enable them to stay in classes and learn and performed better. This result indicated that students’ class attendance was influence by the school culture.

Result collected from table one item three revealed that 123(61.5%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed that school culture influences secondary school students to do their assignment and home works and 77(38.5%) the sampled respondents ticked agreed that school culture influences secondary school students to do their assignment and home works. This means that school culture influences secondary school students to do their assignments and home works.

Respondents views in table one item four disclosed that 135(67.5%) of them strongly agreed that school culture influences students culture of going for academic excursion, 51(25.5%) the sampled respondents agreed, 5(2.5%) ticked strongly disagree and 9(4.5%) ticked disagreed that school culture influences students culture of going for academic excursion. This indicated that school culture influences students’ culture of going for academic excursion which increase their practical knowledge and stimulate learning in them.

Table one item five revealed that 122(61%) of the respondents strongly agreed that School culture influences students preparation for continuous assessment in school and 78(39%) of the sampled respondents agreed that School culture influences students preparation for continuous assessment in school. This implies that School culture influences students’ preparation for continuous assessment in school.

Item six table one showed that majorities of the respondents ticked strongly agreed 141(70.5%) and 59(29.5%) agreed that school culture influences students to prepare for their exams. This means that school culture influences students to prepare for their exams which enable them to perform well in their internal and external examinations.

Table one item seven showed that 134(67%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 40(20%) of the sampled respondents agreed, 29(14.3%) ticked strongly disagree and 31(15.5%) ticked disagreed that school culture influences parents to buy of recommended textbooks for their wards (students) which aid the students to read ahead the teachers and learn better. This indicated that school culture influences parents to buy of recommended textbooks for their wards (students).

Respondents views in table one item eight disclosed that 163(81.5%) of them strongly agreed that school culture influences students-student relationship for academic performance and 57(18.5%) the sampled respondents agreed that school culture influences students-student relationship for academic performance.

Respondents views in table one item nine disclosed that 171(85.5%) of them strongly agreed that school culture influences students excellent academic performance in students and 29 (14.5%) the sampled respondents agreed that school culture influences students excellent academic
performance in students. This means that school culture influences students’ excellent academic performance in students.

3.1. Discussion of Findings

Result from table one item one showed that majorities of the respondents agreed that school culture influenced good reading culture in students which leads to high academic performance of students in public secondary schools. John (2012) observed that the culture of the school towards reading and performance influence students. Students newly admitted into new school first learn their ways of life and how things are done. A school with good reading culture definitely will influence students admitted into the school.

Result collected in item two revealed school culture influences class attendance culture on students which enable them to stay in classes and learn and performed better. This result indicated that students’ class attendance was influence by the school culture. Regarding to this, Hoy and Miskel (2008), for example, noted that each culture describes the shared beliefs of teachers in the school. School with Strong cultures of efficacy, trust and academic optimism provide higher levels of students’ academic achievement otherwise it will intimidate the socio-emotional developments of students.

Result collected from table one item three revealed school culture influences secondary school students to do their assignment and home works. Solomon &Setegni (2018) observed that in spite of the above toxic school cultures, home-work, class-work, assignment and other school practices have been believed to have a great role for developing students' academic achievement. The 1994 Ethiopian education policy strongly underlined that students’ academic achievement could not be improved without having students with the culture of hard work. However, students lack motivation to enhance their academic achievement through hard-work at today.

Table one item four disclosed that school culture influences students’ culture of going for academic excursion which increase their practical knowledge and stimulate learning in them. Confeld (2016) noted that if school leaders expect students to become motivated for learning, they must first sustain their own motivation to create schools where students discover that learning is an exciting and rewarding activity.

Table one item five revealed that that School culture influences students’ preparation for continuous assessment in school. Students’ level of achievement test preparation is determined by the culture of the school towards schools. Some schools overtime have developed in their students the culture of preparing for their achievement test and this influences the students to always prepare very well for their exams (John, 2012).

Item six table one showed that majorities of the respondents agreed that school culture influences students to prepare for their exams which enable them to perform well in their internal and external examination. John, (2012) students’ attitudes towards school examination is also influenced by the school culture. Some Schools do not tolerant examination mal-practices and this makes the students to prepare for their exams since the school culture promotes hardworking and determination for success.

Table one item seven showed that school culture influences parents to buy of recommended textbooks for their wards (students) which aid the students to read ahead the teachers and learn better. Buying of recommended text books for students by parents or Guardian is compulsory. It is a culture that some school promote and ensure stakeholders key into the school culture. Parents buys text books and other learning aids for their wards because it is the school culture (Mill, 2011).

Respondents views in table one item eight disclosed that 31(38.75%) of them strongly agreed that school culture influences students excellent academic performance in students and 29(36.25%) the sampled respondents agreed that school culture influences students excellent academic performance in students. This means that school culture influences students’ excellent
academic performance in students. This result is in line with the discovery of Zoma P, Muhammad & Asma (2017) who did a study with the objective of measuring the impact of school culture on student’s academic achievement at secondary level in District Rawalpindi and find out that head teacher does not lead a positive school culture but a school culture is more effective on student’s academic achievement. This study suggested that a positive relationship between school culture and student’s academic achievement with highly significant. School culture also has a stronger impact on student’s academic achievement at secondary level.

In item nine, it was agreed that school culture influences students-student relationship for academic performance. Moreover, an effective and a healthy school culture facilitate teacher-student, teacher-teacher and student-student relationships. It also gives opportunities and venues for togetherness, discussing fundamental values, taking responsibility, coming together as a community and celebrating individual and group success (Brown, 2004).

3.2. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to find out the influence of school culture on students’ academic performance in public secondary school in Gwagwalada area council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The result collected and analyzed showed that school culture influences good reading culture on students, class attendance, doing of assignments and home works, students’ culture of going for academic excursion, students’ preparation for continuous assessments, students preparation for exams, parents buying recommended textbooks for their wards (students) and that school culture influences students’ academic performance excellently in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada area council of FCT.

3.3. Recommendation

Based on the findings, the researchers hereby recommend the following:

1. School administrators of Public Secondary Schools in Gwagwalada should implement all programmes and policies that will enhance positive school culture because its affects the development of the schools and the influence students’ academic performance.

2. School administrators should promote positive school culture among the students by organizing programmes of co curricular activities that fosters good study habits and collaboration among students such as Festivals of Clubs and Societies(FESTOCAS), Cultural day, Reading club, Literary and Debating club day, Excursion among others. This will make the students to be well blended with the norms and values of the school that promote good academic achievement of the students in the schools.

3. School culture that are Students-centred should be promoted in all the public schools in GwagwaladaArea Council of FCT.

References


