International Journal on Integrated Education (IJIE)

e-ISSN: 2620 – 3502
p-ISSN: 2615 – 3785

Volume: 9 Issue: 4 | December 2026

https://journals.researchparks.org/index.php/IJIE

Article

Principals' Management Strategies and Organisational Climate in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated principals' management strategies and organisational climate in public senior secondary schools in Abia state, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and three hypotheses. The study employed a descriptive correlational research design. The population of the study was made up of 15,957 Teachers. The sample size of 377 teachers was used. This was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. Data were gathered using Principals' Management Strategies and Organisational Climate Questionnaire (PMSOCQ) and was validated by the experts in the field of Educational Administration and Planning. The validated copy was subjected to a reliability test, and the reliability index stood at 0.76 using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, mean and standard deviation for research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) at a 0.05 significance level for the null hypotheses. Findings indicated that Principals' Conflict management, Stakeholder engagement and Resource management strategies enhanced school-community relations; and the extent of the organizational climate health was to a very high extent in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Also, there was a significant relationship between principals' management strategies and organisational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should consistently apply effective leadership strategies that promote openness, trust, and collaboration in order to further strengthen and sustain a positive organizational climate in senior secondary schools.

Keywords: Principals' Management Strategies, Organisational Climate, Secondary Schools

Citation: Dada M. S., & Uba, N. C. Principals' Management Strategies and Organisational Climate in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Abia State, Nigeria. International Journal on Integrated Education (IJIE) 2026, 9(4), 53-63.

Received: 10th Sep 2026
Revised: 11th Sep 2026
Accepted: 24th Sep 2026
Published: 20th Oct 2026

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1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental instrument for developing individuals' knowledge, skills, values, and competencies, thereby enabling them to contribute meaningfully to societal development. As a continuous social process, it promotes the intellectual, social and economic advancement of both individuals and communities. The attainment of these educational objectives depends largely on effective school leadership. Principals' management strategies, including conflict management, stakeholder engagement, and prudent resource management, play a critical role in fostering productive relationships between schools and their host communities while creating conditions that support effective school functioning. These strategies shape the organizational climate by influencing the quality of interpersonal relationships, staff motivation, collaboration, trust, and commitment within the school. A positive organizational climate, characterized by open communication, mutual respect and shared purpose, enhances teachers' morale and encourages stakeholder participation in school activities [1]. Onyeukwu indicated

effective application of different types of school organizational climate by the principals can enhance teachers' job satisfaction among others enhanced teachers' job satisfaction. Conversely, ineffective management practices, such as poor communication and limited stakeholder involvement, may create an unfavourable organizational climate marked by low staff motivation, diminished job satisfaction, and weakened school-community relationships.

Organizational climate is a critical indicator of the quality of the work environment within educational institutions, influencing the attitudes, behaviours, and performance of both staff and students. According to Prastiawan and Gunawan, organizational climate refers to employees' perceptions of the characteristics of their work environment, which shape their behaviours and attitudes within the school. Similarly, Punia and Bala define school climate as the feelings and attitudes generated by the school environment, encompassing interpersonal relationships, leadership styles, organizational structures, and patterns of interaction among members of the school community [2]. A healthy organizational climate is characterized by trust, collegiality, effective communication, shared responsibility, mutual respect, and commitment to organizational goals. Where these conditions prevail, schools are more likely to function effectively and achieve their educational objectives[3].

The quality of organizational climate is largely influenced by the management strategies adopted by school principals. Effective leadership, participatory decision-making, communication, conflict management, stakeholder engagement, and resource management are essential strategies that shape the working environment and determine the level of cooperation among school stakeholders. Supporting this view, Atasoy established a significant relationship between principals' management strategies, school culture, and organizational change management capacity, while Ramson reported that transformational and transactional leadership styles significantly predict school culture and organizational change [4].

Conflict management constitutes an important dimension of principals' management strategies because disagreements frequently arise among teachers, students, parents, and community members [5]. De Dreu and Van Vianen found that principals who adopt integrative conflict resolution approaches, such as mediation and collaborative problem-solving, maintain stronger relationships with parents, government agencies, and community organizations [6]. Similarly, Owens and Valesky reported that schools characterized by participatory conflict resolution recorded higher teacher job satisfaction and stronger staff collaboration, while Blasé and Blasé observed that conflict resolution practices founded on fairness, transparency, and inclusiveness significantly reduce workplace tensions and improve staff morale [7].

Stakeholder engagement is another indispensable management strategy that strengthens collaboration between schools and their communities. It involves the active participation of teachers, students, parents, community leaders, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations in school affairs [8]. Fullan argued that meaningful stakeholder engagement promotes trust, shared ownership, and sustainable school improvement by encouraging collective participation in educational processes [9].

Equally important is effective resource management, which includes the prudent management of financial, human, physical, and instructional resources to support school improvement. Kungu and Mumo found that principals who effectively manage human resources through continuous professional development, equitable workload distribution, and staff recognition cultivate a more positive organizational climate [10]. Likewise, Bello and Jakada reported that participatory resource management involving teachers, parents, and community representatives promotes stronger stakeholder relationships and a more cohesive school culture. Conversely, Lunenburg and Ornstein observed that inadequate

instructional materials, poor facilities, and insufficient technological resources contribute to teacher stress, low morale, and an unfavourable organizational climate [11].

Despite the recognized importance of effective principals' management strategies in promoting a healthy organizational climate, concerns continue to be expressed regarding the quality of management practices in many public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Empirical evidence from Nigeria has revealed variations in principals' management practices with implications for organizational climate. However, the extent to which principals' management strategies are associated with organizational climate in public senior secondary schools in Abia State has not been adequately established. It is against this background that this study investigated the relationship between principals' management strategies and organizational climate in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria [12].

Research Questions

The following research questions are generated to guide this study:

1. What conflict management strategy do principals adopt to strengthen organisational climate in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?
2. How do principals adopt stakeholder engagement strategy to enhance organisational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?
3. What resource management strategy do principals implement to improve organisational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?
4. To what extent is the organizational climate healthy in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between conflict management strategy adopted by principals and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship among principals' adoption of stakeholder engagement strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between principals' resource management strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. The population comprised 15,957 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. A sample of 377 teachers was selected for the study. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table, as cited in Bakwai. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Principals' Management Strategies and Organisational Climate Questionnaire (PMSOCQ). The instrument consisted of 25 items developed on a modified four-point Likert rating scale.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning. Their observations regarding clarity, ambiguity, and wording of the items were incorporated to improve the validity of the instrument. Thereafter, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on 25 teachers who were not included in the main study to avoid contamination of the study sample and enhance objectivity. The internal consistency of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.76, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the study.

For data collection, three trained research assistants were engaged, one from each of the three educational zones in Abia State. The research assistants were adequately briefed on the purpose of the study and the procedures for administering and retrieving the questionnaires. Of the 377 questionnaires distributed, 350 were correctly completed and retrieved, representing a response rate of 92.8%, and these were used for the data analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision-making; mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as accepted, while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as rejected. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was retained when the p-value exceeded 0.05 and rejected when the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What conflict management strategy do principals adopt to strengthen organisational climate in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?

Table 1. Responses on Conflict Management Strategy and Organisational Climate

N=350

S/N	Items	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Promotes mediation to resolve conflicts between the school and the community	168	154	28	-	3.40	.639	Very Effective
2	Ensures that grievances from teachers, students, and community members are addressed fairly and promptly	154	140	49	7	3.26	.777	Very Effective
3	Adopts a collaborative approach to conflict resolution by involving all relevant stakeholders in decision-making	175	140	35	-	3.40	.670	Very Effective
4	Implements policies that prevent and minimize conflicts within the school and the community	154	175	21	-	3.38	.602	Effective
5	Encourages a culture of respect and understanding to maintain a healthy organizational climate	196	112	42	-	3.44	.705	Very Effective
	Sectional Mean/SD					**3.38**	**.679**	**Very Effective**

Table 1 presents the result of the analysis of perception of the teachers on principal conflict management strategy and organisational climate. The result reveals that principal conflict management strategy was effective in strengthening organisational climate in Abia State, Nigeria as this recorded a sectional mean of 3.38 and SD of 0.679, which is above the threshold mean of 2.50 [13].

Research Question 2: How do principals adopt stakeholder engagement strategy to enhance organisational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?

Table 2. Responses on Principal Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Organisational Climate

N=350

S/N	Items	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
6	Involves parents, local leaders, and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes	217	77	49	7	3.44	.812	Very Effective
7	Organizes regular meetings and forums to engage stakeholders in discussions about school development	161	112	56	21	3.18	.919	Very Effective
8	Collaborates with community organizations to improve school programs and facilities	91	175	84	-	3.02	.714	Effective
9	Encourages stakeholder participation in school activities such as mentorship programs, fundraising, and volunteering	119	119	98	14	2.98	.892	Effective
10	Values and implements suggestions from stakeholders to enhance organizational climate	140	147	63	-	3.22	.737	Effective
	Sectional Mean/SD					**3.17**	**.815**	**Effective**

Table 2 presents the result of the analysis of perception of the teachers on principal stakeholder engagement strategy and organisational climate. The result reveals that principal stakeholder engagement strategy was effective in enhancing organisational climate in Abia State, Nigeria as this recorded a sectional mean of 3.17 and SD of 0.815, which is above the threshold mean of 2.50.

Research Question 3: What resource management strategy do principals implement to improve organisational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?

Table 3. Responses on Resource Management Strategies and Organisational Climate

N=350

S/N	Items	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
11	Encourages transparency and accountability in the management of school funds and resources	217	70	21	42	3.32	1.039	Very Effective
12	Encourages stakeholders' involvement in resource allocation and budgeting decisions	112	147	77	14	3.02	.845	Effective
13	Grants communities to use school facilities	126	119	70	35	2.96	.989	Very Effective
14	Encourages that school resources, such as classrooms, learning materials, and facilities, are adequately maintained and fairly distributed	203	112	28	7	3.46	.734	Very Effective
15	Encourages sustainable resource utilization to support long-term healthy organizational climate	182	133	7	28	3.34	.872	Very Effective
	Sectional Mean/SD					**3.22**	**.896**	**Very Effective**

Table 3 presents the result of the analysis of perception of the teachers on principal resource management strategy and organisational climate. The result reveals that principal resource management strategy was effective in enhancing organisational climate in Abia State, Nigeria as this recorded a sectional mean of 3.22 and SD of 0.896, which is above the threshold mean of 2.50.

Research Question 4: To what extent is the organizational climate healthy in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria?

Table 4. Responses on the Existing Organisational Climate

N=350

S/N	Items	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
16	The school leadership fosters a supportive and collaborative environment among staff	231	84	35	-	3.56	.675	Very High Extent
17	Communication between school administrators and teachers is open and transparent	133	182	21	14	3.24	.744	High Extent
18	Staff members are treated with respect and professionalism by school management	147	140	63	-	3.24	.744	Very High Extent
19	There is a strong sense of teamwork among teachers and staff	161	154	35	-	3.36	.663	Very High Extent
20	The school encourages innovation and professional growth among teachers	252	63	21	14	3.58	.785	Very High Extent
21	Conflict resolution is handled fairly and constructively within the school	161	147	35	7	3.32	.741	Very High Extent
22	Teachers feel safe and comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns	147	140	21	42	3.12	.982	Very High Extent
23	The school's policies and procedures are implemented consistently and fairly	126	182	21	21	3.18	.800	High Extent
24	Morale among staff is generally high	133	147	56	14	3.14	.833	High Extent
25	There is a shared vision and clear goals that guide the school's activities	189	126	7	28	3.36	.875	Very High Extent
	Sectional Mean/SD					**3.31**	**.784**	**Very High Extent**

Table 4 presents the result of the analysis of the responses of the respondents on the extent of the organizational climate healthy in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. The result reveals that organisational climate health was to a very high extent in Abia State, Nigeria as this recorded a sectional mean of 3.31 and SD of 0.784. Details of the analysis shows that the school leadership fostered a supportive and collaborative environment among staff and communication between school

administrators and teachers is open and transparent as these recorded a mean response of 3.56 and 3.24 respectively [14].

The respondents agreed that staff members are treated with respect and professionalism by the school management as well as there was a strong sense of teamwork among teachers and staff as these recorded a mean score of 3.24 and 3.36 respectively. Also, respondents unanimously agreed that the school encourages innovation and professional growth among teachers and conflict resolution was handled fairly and constructively within the school as these recorded a mean score of 3.58 and 3.32 respectively.

Furthermore, the respondents agreed that teachers felt safe and comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns and the school's policies and procedures are implemented consistently and fairly as these recorded a mean score of 3.12 and 3.18 respectively [15]. Lastly, respondents unanimously agreed that morale among the staff was generally high and there was a shared vision and clear goals that guide the school's activities as these recorded a mean score of 3.14 and 3.36 respectively. From the analysis, it can be deduced that organisational climate health in public senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria was to a very high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between conflict management strategy adopted by principals and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 5. Summary Data of PPMCC for Relationship between Conflict Management Strategy and Organizational Climate

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r	Sig.	Decision
Conflict Management Strategy and		3.38	0.434				Significant
	350			348	0.791	0.000	
Organisational Climate		3.31	0.605				

Significant at P < .05

Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 5 show that the correlation coefficient ® is significant at P < .05 (r = 0.791, P <. 05). This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between conflict management strategy adopted by principals and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria is not accepted. This implies that there was significant relationship between conflict management strategy adopted by principals and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship among principals' adoption of stakeholder engagement strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 6. Summary Data of PPMCC for Relationship between Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Organizational Climate

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r	Sig.	Decision
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and		3.17	0.625				Significant
	350			348	0.783	0.000	
Organisational Climate		3.31	0.605				

Significant at P < .05

Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 6 show that the correlation coefficient (r) is significant at P < .05 (r = 0.783, P <. 05). This indicates that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' adoption of

stakeholder engagement strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria is not accepted. This implies that there was significant relationship between principals' adoption of stakeholder engagement strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between principals' resource management strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 7. Summary Data of PPMCC for Relationship between Resource Management Strategy and Organizational Climate

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r	Sig.	Decision
Resource Management Strategy and		3.22	0.728				Significant
	350			348	0.745	0.000	
Organisational Climate		3.31	0.605				

Significant at P < .05

Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 7 show that the correlation coefficient (r) is significant at P < .05 (r = 0.745, P <. 05). This indicates that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' resource management strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria is not accepted. This implies that there was significant relationship between principals' resource management strategy and organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria.

4. Discussion

The result showing that principals' conflict management strategies strengthened organizational climate underscores the critical role of constructive conflict resolution in educational settings. By adopting fair, proactive and dialogue-oriented approaches to conflict management, principals are able to address disagreements before they escalate into crises that could damage school-community trust. The significant relationship with organizational climate indicates that schools where conflicts are managed constructively tend to exhibit healthier climates marked by cooperation, emotional security, and sustained professional commitment among staff. This is in line with the finding of De Dreu and Van Vianen, who found that principals who adopt conflict resolution approaches maintain stronger relationships with parents, government agencies, and community organizations. Also, Blasé and Blasé observed that conflict resolution practices founded on fairness, transparency, and inclusiveness significantly reduce workplace tensions and improve staff morale.

The finding that stakeholder engagement strategies enhanced organizational climate reflects the value of deliberate and sustained involvement of key stakeholders in school affairs. Principals who actively engage parents, community leaders, alumni and other partners create networks of support that strengthen the school's social capital. The significant relationship with organizational climate suggests that meaningful stakeholder engagement contributes to a climate of inclusiveness, support, and collective efficacy, thereby reinforcing both institutional stability and educational effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Abia State. Fullan argued that meaningful stakeholder engagement promotes trust, shared ownership, and sustainable school improvement by encouraging collective participation in educational processes.

The evidence that principals' resource management strategies improved organizational climate health indicates that prudent and transparent use of resources enhances both trust and internal morale. Effective resource management, including financial accountability, optimal utilization of facilities and equitable allocation of materials, signals competence and integrity on the part of school leadership. The

significant relationship with organizational climate implies that well-managed resources contribute to a stable, orderly and motivating school environment that supports teaching, learning, and collaborative relationships. Kungu and Mumo found that principals who effectively manage human resources through continuous professional development, equitable workload distribution, and staff recognition cultivate a more positive organizational climate.

The finding that the organizational climate health of public senior secondary schools in Abia State was to a very high extent reflects the cumulative influence of effective leadership practices, positive school-community relations and sound administrative strategies. A healthy organizational climate is indicative of supportive leadership, collegial relationships among staff, clear communication and a shared commitment to institutional goals. This result suggests that the prevailing conditions within these schools are conducive to effective teaching, learning and professional growth. Such a climate not only enhances staff satisfaction and performance but also provides a stable foundation for sustained collaboration with the community and continuous school improvement. This finding agree with Onyeukwu's finding that effective application of different types of school organizational climate by the principals can enhance teachers' job satisfaction among others enhanced teachers' job satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that principals' leadership strategies are pivotal in enhancing a healthy organizational climate in senior secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. It found that practices such as conflict management, stakeholder engagement and efficient resource management significantly contributed to a positive and conducive organizational climate. Overall, the strong and healthy organisational climate established through effective leadership were shown to play a significant role in sustaining a productive and healthy school environment. To sustain and further strengthen this positive organizational climate, principals should adopt structured and proactive conflict-management strategies, including mediation and dialogue mechanisms, to maintain harmonious relationships within the school. They should continue to broaden stakeholder engagement by actively involving parents, community leaders, and other partners in school programmes and activities, while ensuring the efficient, transparent, and accountable management of school resources. Principals should also continuously monitor and nurture the existing healthy organizational climate through supportive leadership, staff motivation, and inclusive practices to ensure sustained effectiveness in school operations

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