



## **IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Effective school administration is about creating an environment where student thrive, teachers teach with passion and school community works together towards excellence. It involves clear vision and goal, strong leadership, collaborative culture and effective communication. This paper, therefore examined the impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper discussed collaborative and transformational theories of leadership, institutional climate and its types, leadership approaches, impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration. The paper therefore concluded that institutional climate and leadership approaches play significant roles in improving effective school administration through employee satisfaction and retention, enhanced productivity, better team collaboration, organisational commitment, change management, improved communication among school members and maintenance of unique identity. It was recommended that the school administrators should adopt a positive institutional climate and leadership approach that foster job satisfaction, which is crucial for retaining talented employees and boosting their productivity.*

**Keywords:** Impact, Institutional climate, Leadership approaches, School administration

## Introduction

School administration involves planning, organising, directing and controlling the activities of a school to achieve its goal and objectives. School administration refers to the management and oversight of a school's operations which focuses on creating an environment that supports teaching, learning and student growth. It encompasses various aspects such as leadership, student management, staff management, community engagement, and oversight of school activities. Edu (2024) defined school administration as the processes and actions taken by educational leaders to ensure the smooth functioning of a school. In the context of Nigeria's schools, school administration plays a pivotal role in shaping the work environment, culture, and overall teacher satisfaction. School administration ensures that the school's culture reflects an environment conducive to both teacher and student success. A positive school culture, characterised by trust, effective communication, and professional respect, significantly impacts teacher retention. School administration must focus on creating structures and policies that support teachers' professional growth, well-being, and career aspirations. A well-administered school provides a stable, nurturing environment where teachers are encouraged to develop their skills and feel a sense of pride in their

contributions to the educational system (Edu, 2024).

Effective school administration is about creating an environment where student thrive, teachers teach with passion and school community works together towards excellence. It involves clear vision and goal, strong leadership, collaborative culture and effective communication. Edu (2024) asserted that effective school administration involves the use of various strategies that enhance teacher and student satisfaction and retention. It encompasses various administrative, organisational, and policy-driven interventions that support teacher and student retention.

Institutional climate is defined as a shared perception of behaviours, work environment, and organisational life. It is the psychological atmosphere within the organisation, characterised by aspects such as leadership styles, communication patterns, policies, and practices. Institutional climate constitutes a crucial factor in fostering teaching and instruction, supporting teachers' and students' development, and promoting healthy relationships, which are essential for successful learning (Grazia & Molinari, 2020). Institutional climate acts as a bridge between leadership and learning in schools. Building this bridge occurs by indirectly fostering working conditions, caring about teachers' well-being, and supporting instructional practices (Sims, 2019).

Leadership as an organisational quality that travels through the networks

of actors and roles that constitutes an organization. Otero (2019) described leadership in school system as a system of relationships between principals, teachers, students, families, and communities. Empirical studies have shown that schools with strong leadership and supportive working environments experience lower attrition rates (Adebayo & Ogunyemi, 2019). Therefore, integrating these management practices into Nigerian public schools is crucial for reducing turnover rates and enhancing educational outcomes. Effective leadership is essential in fostering an atmosphere of collaboration, respect, and mutual support, where teachers feel valued and motivated to stay in their roles (Maart, Charumbira, & Louw, 2024). School leaders, such as principals and administrators, are responsible for setting the tone of the school, addressing teachers' concerns, and providing the necessary resources to facilitate teaching and learning. Through participatory leadership, where teachers are involved in decision-making processes, school leaders can increase teachers' sense of ownership and job satisfaction, ultimately reducing turnover rates.

Dojbak, Burton, Obel & Lauridsen (2018) argued that leadership and climate should be in harmony in order to promote the organisational environment effectively. To better understand how the combined characteristics of leadership and school environment impact organisational quality, school climate as measured from

teachers' and principals' perspectives differ. This paper therefore critically examined the impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper discussed institutional climate and its types, leadership approaches, impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration and collaborative and transformational theories of leadership.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper is hinged on leadership theories (collaborative and transformational leadership) propounded by Chrislip & Larson (1974) Burns (1978) respectively recognise the impact of leadership styles on effective school administration. Collaborative focuses on shared decision-making, collective responsibility and partnership among stakeholders and their influence on organizational outcome. The transformational leadership centres on idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration influence the effective school administration

### **Relevance of Leadership Theories**

Collaborative and transformational leadership theories provide a strong theoretical basis for examining institutional climate and leadership approaches for effective school administration. Collaborative leadership theory further explains how shared decision-making, teamwork, and

collective responsibility influence effective school administration. Schools operate as collegial institutions where teaching effectiveness is enhanced through cooperation, peer mentoring, team teaching, and joint research activities. Collaborative leadership fosters a supportive academic culture that maximises available human resources. Transformational leadership theory complements the above perspectives by focusing on leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate lecturers to exceed normal performance expectations. Through vision, recognition, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders encourage innovation in teaching where institutional challenges such as inadequate funding and bureaucratic constraints persist, transformational leadership helps sustain teacher' intrinsic motivation and commitment.

### **Institutional Climate**

Institutional climate refers to shared perceptions of the work environment and behaviours. In the organisational literature, institutional climate represents an internal distinguishing characteristic of an organisation that influences the behaviors of its members (Woodman & King, 2018). Institutional climate is external to the individual, yet cognitively the climate is internal to the extent that it is affected by individual perceptions. In the education literature, students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of

school life socially, emotionally, civically, ethically, and academically represent the institutional climate (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Similarly, Grazia & Molinari (2020) described the moral, relational, and institutional aspects of school life as institutional climate dimensions. Therefore, institutional climate represents a broadly scoped quality and character of school life. It stands as a group phenomenon that includes norms, values, and expectations that support people (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2019).

Moreover, a positive institutional climate is determined by the presence of trustworthy relationships between school stakeholders which is often cultivated by the principal (Kutsyuruba, Walker & Noonan, 2016). Thus, by establishing and maintaining positive institutional climate and healthy working environment, the school leadership shapes teacher and student outcomes (Ozdemir et al., 2022; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). As such, positive institutional climate also represents an indicator of leadership effectiveness. A good institutional climate has multiple benefits, influencing students' affective and cognitive outcomes, such as learning and well-being (Gustafsson & Nilsen, 2016) and also teachers' outcomes, such as beliefs, commitment, and engagement (Dickhauser et al., 2021).

Higher self-efficacy and job satisfaction of teachers are associated with a better institutional climate (Katsantonis, 2020). Furthermore,

institutional climate enhances students' self-concept (Coelho et al., 2020), cognitive engagement and life satisfaction. It is also an inevitable factor for successful learning (Katsantonis, 2020). Lenz, Rocha & Aras (2021) agreed that, institutional climate is distinguished into four domains (academic, community, safety, and institutional environment) that are further subdivided into dimensions. The academic, community, safety, and institutional environment domains refer to the academic atmosphere, leadership, professional development, and instruction

### **Types of Institutional Climate**

Institutional climate can be categorized for effective school administration based on various dimensions and characteristics. These include:

- 1. Authoritative Climate:** This climate is characterized by a high level of control and direction from the top management. Decisions are typically made by senior leaders with little input from lower-level employees. This can lead to a disciplined and orderly work environment but may also stifle creativity and employee autonomy.
- 2. Democratic Climate:** In a democratic climate, decision-making is more decentralized, and employees at all levels are encouraged to participate in discussions and share their

opinions. This fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among employees, leading to higher job satisfaction and innovative solutions.

- 3. Supportive Climate:** A supportive climate is marked by a strong emphasis on employee welfare and well-being. Managers in such environments prioritize empathy, understanding, and support, creating a nurturing and caring workplace. This type of climate enhances employee loyalty and reduces stress levels.

4. **Innovative Climate:** An innovative climate encourages creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking. Organisations with this climate are open to new ideas and approaches, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. Employees are motivated to think outside the box and contribute to the organization's growth.
5. **Rigid Climate:** A rigid climate is characterized by strict rules, procedures, and hierarchical structures. While this can lead to consistency and predictability in operations, it may also hinder flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances.
6. **Laissez-Faire Climate:** In a laissez-faire climate, there is minimal managerial intervention, and employees have significant autonomy to make decisions and manage their work. This can lead to high levels of creativity and independence but may also result in a lack of direction and coordination if not managed properly.

### **Leadership Approaches**

Leadership in schools shapes the organisational culture, sets strategic direction, and determines resource allocation. In recent decades, leadership models that emphasise innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability have gained prominence. The following are the leadership approaches as being used in this paper;

1. **Directive Leadership**  
**Approach:** Directive leadership style is similar to the task-oriented style. The leader who uses this type of leadership style provides teachers with specific guidelines, rules and regulations with regard to planning, organizing and performing activities. This style is deemed to be appropriate when subordinates' ability is low and or the task to be performed is complex or ambiguous. Job satisfaction is increased when the leader gives more directives (Hoy & Miskel, 2018).
2. **Supportive Leadership**  
**Approach:** supportive leadership style is more of a relationship-oriented style. It requires the leader to be approachable and friendly. He/she displays concern for the well-being and personal needs of the subordinates. He/she creates an emotionally supportive climate. This style is effective when subordinates lack self-confidence, work on dissatisfying or stressful tasks and work does not provide job satisfaction (Hoy & Miskel, 2018).
3. **Collaborative Leadership**  
**Approach:** The leader who employs this style consults with subordinates for ideas and takes their ideas seriously when making decisions. This style is effective when subordinates are well motivated and competent.

#### 4. Achievement-oriented

**Approach:** In this style, the leader sets challenging but achievable goals for the subordinates. He/she pushes work improvement and sets high expectations for subordinates and rewards them when the expectations are met. That is, the leader provides both high directive (structure) and high supportive (consideration) behaviour. This style works well with achievement-oriented subordinates (Lussier & Achua, 2022).

### Impacts of Institutional Climate and Leadership Approaches on Effective School Administration

The implications of institutional climate and leadership styles for effective school administration are as follows;

1. **Employee Satisfaction and Retention:** A positive institutional climate fosters job satisfaction, which is crucial for retaining talented employees. When employees feel valued, supported, and engaged, they are more likely to remain loyal to the organisation, reducing turnover rates and associated costs. Madhu & Sharma (2024) found that the organisational climate in schools is shaped by structural, personal, and functional factors, which collectively influence teacher job satisfaction. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the

institutional climate of schools. The degree of autonomy influences their leadership approaches, which in turn affects teacher satisfaction and school effectiveness.

2. **Enhanced Productivity:** An encouraging and supportive climate and leadership approach boost employee morale and motivation, leading to increased productivity. When employees feel that their efforts are recognised and rewarded, they are more inclined to put in their best efforts (Lenz, Rocha & Aras, 2021).

3. **Better Team Collaboration:** A healthy institutional climate and leadership approach promote open communication and trust among team members. This leads to better collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving, as employees feel comfortable sharing ideas and feedback. The leadership approaches are often distinct, primarily due to differences in school governance and organisational structures. Thapliyal & Joshi (2022) highlighted that principals in government schools tend to adopt a more transactional leadership style, which is often task-oriented and focuses on ensuring that regulations are followed. This approach emphasises control, structure, and compliance, and while it may ensure that academic standards are met, it may limit opportunities for teachers to engage in more creative and participatory decision-making.

4. **Organisational Commitment:** A positive institutional climate and effective leadership approaches

strengthen employees' commitment to organizational goals and values. This alignment between personal and organisational objectives results in higher levels of dedication and effort toward achieving common goals (Lenz, Rocha & Aras, 2021).

**5. Change Management:** Organisations with a positive institutional climate and effective leadership approaches are better equipped to handle change. Employees in such environments are more adaptable and open to new ideas, making the process of implementing change smoother and more effective (Lenz, Rocha & Aras, 2021).

**6. Improved Communication among School Members:** Institutional climate encompasses the collective perceptions of a school's environment, including its values, beliefs, and practices. This institutional climate significantly influences communication among teachers, their engagement with students, and their perceptions of their roles within the institution. Leadership approach is pivotal in ensuring effective communication in the school system (Thapliyal & Joshi, 2022).

**7. Maintenance of Unique Identity:** This is the school organisation climate and leadership that gives the school organisation a unique or distinct identity.

## **Conclusion**

This paper examined the impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration in Nigeria. Specifically,

the paper discussed institutional climate and its types, leadership approaches, impact of institutional climate and leadership approaches on effective school administration and collaborative and transformational theories of leadership. The paper therefore concluded that institutional climate and leadership approaches play significant roles in improving effective school administration through employee satisfaction and retention, enhanced productivity, better team collaboration, organisational commitment, change management, improved communication among school members and maintenance of unique identity

## **Recommendations**

Based on the submission of this paper, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school administrators should adopt a positive institutional climate and leadership approach that foster job satisfaction, which is crucial for retaining talented employees.
2. The school administrators should adopt an encouraging and supportive climate and leadership approach that will boost employee morale, motivation and productivity
3. The school administrators should ensure the maintenance of good unique identity of the school

4. The school administrators should adopt a healthy institutional climate and leadership approach that promote open communication and trust among team members to ensure better collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving.

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