

## **Work Climate and Students' Academic Achievement in Catholic Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This research investigated work climate and students' academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. Two research questions guided the investigation. It employed a correlational survey method adopting ex-post-facto design. The participants included thirty-six principals and vice-principals working in all the Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. The sample for the study consists of the total population, principals and vice principals in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. Census sampling method was utilized for the research. Questionnaire and checklist were self-developed by the researcher. The checklist titled "Students' Academic Achievement Checklist" (SAAC), was utilized to gather data on students' academic achievement using the promotional results of 2021, 2022 and 2023. The checklist was evaluated from A1 to F9, with D7 to F9 denoting failure and A1 to C6 showing a pass rating while questionnaire titled "Work Climate and Academic Achievement" Questionnaire, (WCAA) was used by the researcher to gather information from the respondents. Mean scores and standard deviation, were employed to answer research questions. The finding in the study identified substantial connection between school environment and academic achievement of learners in Catholic secondary education in Lagos State. Moreover, a favourable relationship between conducive environments and higher academic achievement was established. The study highlights the interaction between school environment, retention of teachers and academic attainment of students, emphasizing their benefit in the context of Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. Arising from this research, it was suggested among others that Catholic schools in Ogun State should strive to boost a positive school environment for both tutors and learners. Schools should apply various ways to retain effective, hardworking and experienced teachers. In addition, schools should continuously assess the standard of academic achievement, school environment, and human resource management practices.*

**KEYWORDS:** work climate, students' academic achievement, catholic secondary schools in Ogun State.

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## INTRODUCTION

The transitional period between primary and higher education is known as post-primary or secondary education. This system's goal is to provide learners with a comprehensive, all-encompassing education that prepares them for tertiary education, career prospects, social and emotional competencies. The National Policy on Education defined secondary education as an education obtained by learners between the ages of 11 and 17 following the completion of basic education and before higher level study.

Secondary education fosters creativity, critical thinking, independence in individuals, and the long-term growth of the society. According to Onofe-Overah, Akpotu, and Egwunyenga (2022), preparing students for more advanced coursework and active participation in society is the main goal of secondary education. Considering the importance of secondary education, it is imperative that individuals who gain from it have access to a system that promotes academic success as well as productivity. Helen, Fazlur and Sourav (2020) affirmed that a high-quality education gives all learners the skills they need to become economically productive, create sustainable lifestyles, support democratic communities, and improve individual well-being. Administrators, academic and non-academic personnel, and most especially students are the beneficiaries of secondary education or center of learning.

One of the basic functions of school system is to provide a work atmosphere or climate for effective teaching and learning. It shows the effectiveness of the school leaders. Moreover, it influences the learners' well-being, achievement and improvement or sometimes decline in the three domains of education. Thikryat (2020) believed that school serves as a place of learning where individuals enjoys good health care, establishing life skills such as healthy lifestyles, developing activities and taking into account the peculiarities of child development. School serves as a place of learning where learners develop life skills, create activities, and take into consideration the unique needs of each learner.

Work climate is an essential indicator in any organization or institutions with no exemption of the school system. It is the unwritten charisma and ambience of a school containing its norms, beliefs and expectation. Even though there is no general definition of work climate, there is general understanding of its importance to school system. In the general term, the word "climate" to mean "atmosphere", "relationship" "environment" which is either positive or negative. Syahril and Hadiyanto (2018) defined work climate as a situation formed by a relationship that exists among the principals, members of staff and learners within a school system; that distinguishes a school from others. National School Climate Center (2024) summarized the learning climate in a bigger perspectives which includes safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the environment as well as larger organizational pattern. The nature of the school determines to an extent the feelings

and participation of both teachers and students. It is the unseen element of academic life that is felt by all members (Chirkin and Khavenson 2018).

It is a basic factor that work climate influences academic outcome of any school at different level more importantly, the secondary education. Syahril and Hadiyanto (2018) understand the fact that work climate influence and determine the success of teaching and learning process at schools. Both tutors and learners thrive better in an atmosphere that is healthy, positive, conducive and free of toxic behaviour. Ihekonroye (2020) opined that academic attainment is higher in learners who feel protected, cared for, suitably supported, and gently urged to learn in demanding and meaningful ways. Therefore, school managers have the responsibility of promoting an environment where both teachers and students can excel in their academic pursuit. In addition, they should derive techniques, motivations and other ways to influence educators to showcase their skills, talents and efficiency to the goals of education of the students.

This is important because children spend a greater portion of their time in this centre of learning or work environment. Chan-Antezza (2022) agreed that schoolchildren spend a lot of time in school, learning and developing a variety of abilities that are essential for them to prosper in a global society. Due to their long stay in educational environments, children require a conducive, healthy and balanced climate that is necessary to shape their social interactions, characters, attitudes and other forms of behaviour. All these directly or indirectly have impact on their academic achievement and their adjustment to life situation.

In a school setting, work climate considers the contributions of administrators and tutors, as they are component part of the success story of the students. Enwezor (2021) believed that learners feel more socially, emotionally, and physically safe in schools when there is a healthy work environment. Work climate considers the safety and security of the people, foster a culture in which learners and employees work together in harmony. It also create an environment free of violence, injuries and other external threats to individual safety. Noor (2020) observed that a school that prioritizes health can foster an environment that is conducive to successful teaching and learning, increasing teachers' job satisfaction and placing a special emphasis on students' academic success. In addition, it will promote progress, stability and increase the students' academic performance. The work atmosphere of a school is comprised of its physical, social, and learning environment. These elements directly affect how motivated and adept learners are at studying (Zulfiqar, Ijaz, Ashiq, Muhammad, Ayaz, Ijaz and Muhammed , 2014).

Every educational institution has unique characteristics that is different from one other. Moreover, this distinct element reflects in the academic achievement of students in secondary schools. Academic achievement is usually expressed in terms of learning goals that a student successfully completes within a set amount of time (Ofuebe, Agboeze, Bashir, Nweke, and Cletus 2020). It is the life wire of every academic institutions. It depicts the cognitive domain of the learners such

that parents long to see the outcome of what become of their children in terms of grades, successes and results. Academic attainment is the stage of student performance, success and accomplishment in school (Taiwo, 2018).

Students' academic success, particularly in secondary school, not only indicates how effective schools are, but it also plays a significant role in determining the future of young people in particular and the country as a whole. Learning is the means by which people and the country can accomplish its educational objectives. Everyone is now interested in learning outcomes, which is why academics have been putting a lot of effort into identifying the obstacles to high academic achievement.

Academic achievement reflects in learners' grades, class assessment, internal and external results and so on. It becomes imperative that all those who form these learners should make the environment meaningful for the learners. Because, a negative work climate affects the students' academic progress and at the same time leads to absenteeism, and other social vices among students and staff. Ajisafe and Togunloju (2023) stressed the fact it is the responsibility of the education system to facilitate learning by conducive environment for the child to discover things, especially with a good school should create challenges that can stimulate students' interest in learning. Keeping a healthy work environment and its effect on the academic achievement of learners has been worrisome to all men and women of goodwill who believe in standard of secondary education. Chinleo (2011) agreed to the fact that there is lot of worry about the quality of education received by Nigerians in recent times is low and seems to remain a big problem to the education sector.

It has been verifiable established that there is a connection between work climate and the educational activity of students at all levels. Abeya (2017) investigated an Ethiopian secondary schools, a correlational study method was used to examine the relationship between organizational environment and student accomplishment as well as different aspects of school climate have different effects on student achievement. 32 schools, 973 teachers and 14882 students consist the study. Results showed that work climate has a significant and positive relationship with student achievement in Ethiopia secondary schools. Fakunle and Ale (2018) identified the relationship between educational climate and students' academic achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Ekiti State. It was a descriptive study with the total population of teachers in twenty selected schools. There findings reveled that there was a significance difference in schools with open climate and the academic performance of students in schools having controlled climate.

Good work climate motivates readiness to learn as well as promotes better learning in learners. The physical layout of the school, which includes the classrooms, buildings, laboratory, assembly hall, games area, seats and tables, chalkboards, and other amenities support the teaching-learning

process. Therefore, tutors and learners should have amicable relationship that will bring about a healthy work climate.

Many people have benefitted from Catholic education from its inception. This is largely because of its enormous advantages to those who desire it. But it is becoming worrisome to lovers of education concerning the value of academic and nature of climate offered in these educational institutions especially in Ogun State. For most Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State, work climate and academic programmes are largely determined by the administrators.

### **Statement of Problem**

Based on observations, there is a rapid increase in the population of schools especially secondary education in the Nigerian system; at the same time these schools make provision for adequate, effective and efficient human and material resources. A number of parents and other education stakeholders still express concern regarding the capacity of certain secondary schools meet the academic standards of learners. It has also been noted that although some students performed poorly in their examinations, others show remarkable grades in both internal and external examinations in various institutions. The background to these concerns may be related to the nature or type of work climate provided by the school managers for outstanding academic achievements of learners. Many schools exhibit different types of climate or atmosphere that are tensed, toxic, unhealthy, unsafe and unfriendly. The end results of these bring about absenteeism, health problems, low grades, social disorder, conflicts and many other negative behaviour among learners with their adverse effects on their academic performance. With this in mind, there seems to be a connection between work climate and students' academic performance in secondary schools. In this regards, the study investigates work environment and students' academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the relationship between school climate and students' academic achievement in Catholic Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the level of students' academic achievement of students in Catholic Secondary Schools in Ogun State?

### **METHODS**

This research is a correlational survey method adopting ex-post-facto design. The participants consists of 12 principals and 24 vice principals working in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. The sample include the entire population, 36 principals and vice principals in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State. The research employed census sampling method. A self-developed questionnaire and checklist were used by the researcher. The checklist titled "Students' Academic Achievement Checklist" (SAAC), was utilized to gather data on students' academic

achievement using the promotional results of 2021, 2022 and 2023. The checklist was evaluated from A1 to F9, with D7 to F9 denoting failure and A1 to C6 showing a pass rating. While questionnaire titled “Work Climate and Academic Achievement” Questionnaire, (WCAA)” was used by the researcher to gather information from the respondents. Each sub-scale has four options and respondents are expected to tick (☐) one. The options are Strongly Agree (SA) =4 points, Agree (A) =3 points, Disagree (D) =2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1 point Mean scores and standard deviation, co-efficient of determination, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression were employed to answer research questions

**RESULT**

**Percentage on level of academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools**

Students’ Academic Achievement	2021		2022		2023	
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Ogun State (N = 171)	136(79.5%)	35(20.5%)	94(55%)	77(45%)	129(75.4)	42(24.6)

The table illustrates the percentage of students' academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools across different years (2021, 2022, and 2023) in Ogun State exhibiting an upward trajectory in passing percentages and a downward trend in failing percentages. Notably, in 2023, there is a marked increase in passing rates and a significant decrease in failing rates across all categories, suggesting a relatively high level of academic achievement during that year. Overall, the data indicates a positive academic performance trend, with the majority of students passing in each year and a particularly favourable outlook in 2023

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between work climate and students’ academic achievement in Catholic Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: relationship between work climate and students’ academic achievement**

Variables	Ogun State		R	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> %	Remark
	Mean	SD				
School climate	3.40	.59	.726	.527	52.7	Positive Relationship
Students’ academic achievement	1.70	.45				

Table 2 shows the relationship between school climate and students’ academic achievement. The result shows that Ogun State have mean of 3.40 and 1.70 on school climate and students’ academic achievement. The relationship between the two variables was  $r = .726$  which shows a positive relationship.  $r^2$  of .527 shows that school climate is related to students’ academic achievement by

52.7%. Thus, there is a positive relationship between school climate and students' academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Level of Students' Academic Achievement**

Finding revealed that the level of academic achievement in Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State was high. High academic achievement could be attributed to various factors including work climate, quality teaching, effective school management, well-equipped classrooms, and motivated students. The Catholic school system emphasis on discipline and value-based education might also contribute to improved learners' outcomes. This suggests that Ogun State is equally successful in achieving high levels of academic achievement among students in Catholic secondary schools. Similar teaching methods, curriculum standards, or socio-economic factors could be contributing to this result.

According to Adeyemi's (2014) research, learners Catholic Secondary education in Ogun State, Nigeria, achieved better academically than those in the states' public secondary schools. He explained this by saying that compared to public schools, Catholic schools had superior facilities and more qualified teachers. Afolabi (2015) argued that tutors in private secondary education, Lagos State, Nigeria also performed better academically than those in the state's public secondary schools. He explained this by saying that private schools could afford to devote more funds to their pupils' education. In his investigation, Oladejo (2016) found learners in Catholic secondary schools in Oyo State achieved better academically than those in the state's public secondary schools. He explained this by saying that Catholic schools placed a high priority on academics and offered their learners a nurturing learning environment. Ojo (2017) found that the academic achievement of students in government-owned secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria achieved better academically than those in the state's public secondary schools. He explained this by saying that in recent years, government schools had invested large investments in their facilities and faculty. He attributed this to the fact that government schools had made significant investments in their infrastructure and teaching staff in recent years. Akindele (2018) found that the academic achievement of students in mission-owned secondary schools in Osun State, achieved greater academic success than those in the state's public secondary schools. He justified this by pointing out that mission schools were totally committed to their learners' academic success and had a long history of delivering outstanding instruction.

### **School Climate and Students' Academic Achievement**

The results showed that there is a substantial correlation between tutors' academic achievement and the school climate in Catholic Secondary Schools in Ogun State. This association stems from the realization that the larger learning environment is significantly impacted by the school

atmosphere. Establishing work climate that is both positive and supportive fosters an environment in which children feel appreciated, respected, and part of the community. Students, instructors, and staff all respect one another in this setting, which promotes a feeling of security and belonging. As a result of their emotional investment in their academic path, students are more motivated to participate in learning. Learners are not only encouraged to voice their opinions in such an environment, but they are also given the tools they need to realize their full potential and take on new challenges.

This, in turn, enhances their ability to absorb and retain knowledge, as they are more receptive to the learning process. By prioritizing a positive school climate, educational institutions lay the foundation for effective learning, allowing students to thrive academically and personally. This study's discovery is consistent with a number of supporting findings from other studies, which show how important school climate is in determining students' academic success. According to a study by Brookover et al. (2018), academic accomplishment was more common in schools with a positive social environment, which was assessed by students' and instructors' views of safety, order, and respect. This highlights how important it is for schools to have a positive general atmosphere and healthy interpersonal relationships in order to support students' achievement.

Goddard et al. (2000) explored the idea of collective efficacy, which is the perception among educators that they can teach learners in an effective manner. According to their research, there is a significant positive correlation between student accomplishment and collective efficacy. This demonstrates how instructors' self-assurance in their ability to teach helps to improve students' academic results. Tschannen-Moran et al. (2018) investigated teacher efficacy, which represents teachers' confidence in their ability to instruct and engage pupils, and their findings further supported this idea. Their research showed a favorable relationship between student accomplishment and teacher efficacy, underscoring the significance of teachers' attitudes and self-assurance in determining the quality of students' education.

Kutsyuruba et al. (2015) conducted yet another meta-analysis studies on work climate, confirming the crucial role of a positive educational atmosphere for learners to succeed. Even after accounting for factors like socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity, the association between a positive climate and enhanced student achievement remained robust. This highlights the enduring importance of fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for learners. When taken as a whole, this study provide overwhelming evidence that student achievement is greatly impacted by the school climate. Students who experience a great work climate are more motivated, engaged, and eager to study because they feel protected, accepted, and supported. Schools aiming to enhance student achievement should prioritize creating and sustaining a positive school climate, recognizing its profound impact on the educational journey of students.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes with several remarkable findings on Catholic secondary education in Ogun State, Nigeria. According to the research, learners excel academically at a high level in the state. Additionally, having adequate physical facilities and a supportive work environment helped to improve academic results. The study also demonstrated the link between increased academic success and suitable work environments. It also highlighted the complex relationship between the work environment and students' academic performance, highlighting the significance of both in relation to Catholic secondary schools in Ogun State.

## Recommendations

1. School administrators and other stakeholder in the secondary education system should be more concerned about the academic achievement of the students by providing favourable atmosphere for teacher and learners.
2. Education Board Commission should have a quality assurance control unit for monitoring and evaluation tasks. This is to guarantee that staff members and each school's administration have fruitful and constructive interactions that will bring about positive work climate and at the same time enhance students' academic achievement.
3. Parents, guardians and members of the community should be actively involved in school-related projects. Together, they can enhance student support systems and create a more comprehensive educational experience. parents and the local community in education initiatives. Collaborative efforts can enhance support structures for students and contribute to a holistic educational experience.
4. Promote a student-centered approach when developing curricula and using teaching strategies. Learning achievement can be optimized by aligning teaching strategies to the various learning styles and expectations of learners.
5. Create long-term strategies to maintain the positive outcomes the study discovered. This entails making ensuring that professional development is continuous, modernizing facilities, and modifying human resource procedures to accommodate shifting educational environments.

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