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WORKPLACE HOSTILITY AND CLOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AS PREDICTORS OF LECTURERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined workplace hostility and closed school climate as predictors of secondary school teachers' job performance in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 3,214 public secondary school teachers in Anambra State, from which a sample of 380 teachers was drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled "Workplace hostility questionnaire, closed school Climate questionnaire and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaires (WHQ, CSCQ and TJPQ)". The instruments were validated by three experts; internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha and reliability coefficients of 0.81 for workplace hostility, 0.79 for closed school climate, and 0.84 for job performance were recorded. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that workplace hostility significantly and negatively predicted teachers' job performance. On the other hand, closed school climate significantly and positively predicted teachers' job performance. It was concluded that interpersonal and organizational dynamics within secondary schools substantially determine teaching effectiveness. It was recommended, among others, that school administrators should formulate clear policies against workplace incivility and foster supportive school climates to enhance teacher performance.

Keywords: Workplace hostility, closed school climate, job performance, secondary school teachers.

Introduction

The quality of education of any given nation largely depends on the quality of its teaching workforce. Teachers in secondary schools occupy very significant position in ensuring that the expected policy delivery is achieved through their job performance. Teachers' Job performance encompasses all that a teacher executes in terms of instructional delivery, administrative, and extracurricular duties, including lesson preparation, classroom management, punctuality, assessment practices, and commitment to institutional goals. While traditional discourse emphasizes pedagogical competence and continuous professional training as primary performance drivers, organizational behavior research increasingly highlights the psychological and social environment as crucial determinants of teacher effectiveness over time.

A critical dimension of the work environment is workplace hostility. Workplace hostility is characterized by bullying, emotional abuse and lack of support for lecturers in universities. Oguegbe and Chukwu (2023) pointed out that workplace hostility is a harmful volitional behaviour enacted by employees towards the organization or other organizational members. Continuing, Oguegbe and Chukwu asserted that workplace hostility takes the form of physical or psychological abuse, sabotage, theft, and counterproductive behaviours. Workplace hostility is associated with issuing physical threats, making derogatory remarks and engaging in verbal insults among members of staff in an organization. Ekta, Pragati, and Charu (2024) asserted that examples of workplace hostility include reacting rudely on a phone call, sending a disrespectful email to employees, or exhibiting abusive behaviour in front of other employees. Work hostility can lead to strained relationships, reduced trust and trigger gossip among lecturers in a university

Closely linked to workplace hostility is the construct of closed school climate. A closed climate, in contrast, is characterized by limited cooperation, disunity, intolerance, strained relationships, and restricted consideration of staff needs. Obiekwe, Egboka and Obiekwe (2024) stated that a closed school climate represents an unfriendly, negative and not welcoming school environment where management is rigid, unsupportive and controlling while staff are intolerant, disrespectful, divided and inefficient. Akpoguma and Nwogbo (2024) maintained that universities operating under a closed climate tend to rely heavily on formal structures and bureaucratic procedures in the performance of institutional tasks, which may discourage lecturers from exercising initiative in their duties. Similarly, Ajisafe and Togunloju (2023) described a closed climate as one characterized by hindrance, high work intensity, strong emphasis on productivity, and low consideration of staff needs. In such an environment, management tends to exercise substantial control over institutional activities, while lecturers have limited influence over decisions affecting their work. The resulting restrictive atmosphere may reduce lecturers' sense of involvement and discourage initiative; thereby creating working conditions that may be unfavorable to effective job performance

While studies have examined institutional climate and hostility in tertiary environments (Oboreh et al., 2022; Amauche et al., 2026), empirical evidence evaluating workplace hostility alongside closed school climate specifically in relation to lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State remains un-researched. Given that university environments possess distinct operational dynamics compared to other levels of education, evaluating these predictors within this specific context is essential. It is against this background that this study was conceived.

Statement of the Problem

Lecturers' job performance in teaching, research, and community service is fundamental to achieving the goals of university education. High-performing lecturers are expected to deliver quality instruction, conduct impactful research, supervise students effectively, and contribute meaningfully to community development. However, there is growing concern that some lecturers in public universities exhibit poor job performance, evidenced by lateness to lectures, failure to complete course content as scheduled, delayed feedback on students' projects and assignments, low research output, and other counterproductive work behaviours. These shortcomings may compromise students'

learning outcomes, reduce institutional effectiveness, and hinder the achievement of the objectives of university education.

Reports suggest that some lecturers' experience workplace hostility in the form of disrespect, rude treatment, exclusion from decision-making, defamatory remarks, and social isolation by colleagues and university administrators. At the same time, some universities appear to operate under a closed organizational climate characterized by poor communication, limited support, inadequate participation in decision-making, and restricted access to relevant information. If these issues persist, public universities in Anambra State may continue to experience poor service delivery, declining academic standards, and diminished public confidence. To address this challenge effectively, research-based intervention is required hence, this study.

Purposes of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether workplace hostility and closed organizational climate predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to find out the predictive value of;

1. Workplace hostility on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. Closed organizational climate on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of workplace hostility on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What is the predictive value of closed organizational climate on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

1. Workplace hostility does not significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. Closed organizational climate does not significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The target population comprised 2954 lecturers from the two public universities in Anambra State. a sample of 563 lecturers drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure participated in the study. Data collection was executed using a structured instruments titled "Workplace Hostility Questionnaire, Closed School Climate Questionnaire and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (WHQ, CSCQ and TJPQ)," formatted on a 4-point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). Face validity was established by three experts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Internal consistency was determined via a pilot test on 30 lecturers outside the study area, using Cronbach's alpha statistics, reliability coefficients

of 0.81 for workplace hostility, 0.79 for closed school climate, and 0.84 for job performance were obtained. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance

Results

Research Question one: What is the predictive value of workplace hostility on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 1: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Workplace Hostility as a Predictor of Lecturers' Job Performance

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
Workplace Gossip	561	-0.795	-0.633	-0.632	0.17547	Strong Negative

Table one revealed that the predictive value of workplace hostility on lecturers' job performance is -0.795 with a coefficient of determination of -0.633. This shows that 63.3% negative changes in lecturers' job performance could be attributed to workplace hostility. The regression coefficient r of -0.795 indicated that workplace hostility is a strong negative predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis One: Workplace hostility does not significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table two: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Workplace Hostility as a Significant Predictor of Lecturers' Job Performance

Predictor	N	R	R^2	*F*	*P-value*	Remark
Workplace Hostility	561	-0.795	-0.633	962.784	0.000	*S

*Significant

As shown in Table two, the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0. While the R^2 is -0.633 showing that workplace hostility makes 63.3% negative contribution to the variance in lecturers' job performance. The *F* (1/561) =962.784 and the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, workplace hostility significantly predicts lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research question two: What is the predictive value of closed climate on lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table three: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Closed Climate as a Predictor of Lecturers' Job Performance

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
Closed Climate	561	0.312	0.162	0.1160	0.24877	Weak Positive

Table three revealed that the predictive value of closed climate on lecturers' job performance is 0.312 with a coefficient of determination of 0.162. This shows that 16.2% positive changes in lecturers' job performance could be attributed to closed climate. The regression coefficient r of 0.312 indicated that closed climate is a weak positive predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis two: Closed climate does not significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table four: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Closed Climate as a Significant Predictor of Lecturers' Job Performance

Predictor	N	R	R^2	*F*	*P-value*	Remark
Closed Climate	561	0.312	0.162	198.143	0.000	*S

*Significant

Result of data analysis in Table four revealed that the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0.312 while the R^2 is 0.162 showing that closed climate could explain 16.2% positive changes in lecturers' job performance. The *F* (1/561) =198.143 and the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, closed climate significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that workplace hostility is a strong negative predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding lends support to the position of Anderson and Pearson (1999), who observed that hostile behaviours violate the norms of mutual respect expected within an organization and, when tolerated by management, escalate through an incivility spiral that deepens interpersonal conflict. Cortina and Magley (2009) similarly argued that hostility is often disguised as ordinary interaction, which makes victims reluctant to report it while its cumulative effects steadily erode employees' confidence and psychological well-being. The present finding is also consistent with the meta-analytic evidence of Han, Harold, Oh, Kim and Agolli (2022), who established that hostile interpersonal behaviours are associated with lower job satisfaction, weaker organizational commitment and poorer performance across a wide range of occupational settings. It agreed with the finding of Arubayi (2023), who reported that workplace hostility had a strong negative relationship with the job performance of personnel in the Nigerian armed forces in Delta State. The convergence of these findings, drawn from different occupational contexts and periods, strengthens the argument that hostility undermines performance through a broadly similar

psychological pathway: it creates conflict and anxiety that distract and demoralize employees irrespective of the sector in which they work. Workplace hostility could equally trigger retaliation, leading to dissatisfaction that adversely affects the job performance of staff, and could make lecturers absent themselves from work to avoid hostile colleagues, thereby reinforcing the strong negative predictor of lecturers' job performance obtained in this study.

Lecturers who are victims of hostility often feel unvalued, a condition that Yao, Lim, Guo, Ou and Ng (2022) linked to heightened stress, anxiety and work-withdrawal behaviour among employees exposed to hostile interactions, thereby reducing their enthusiasm to invest extra effort in their duties. It was found that workplace hostility significantly predicts lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding aligns with the position of Cortina and Magley (2009) that repeated hostile treatment has substantial consequences for employee functioning, and it is in line with the finding of Arubayi (2023), who indicated that workplace hostility had a significant relationship with the job performance of employees. It further corroborates the meta-analytic conclusion of Han, Harold, Oh, Kim and Agolli (2022) that hostility constitutes a significant organizational problem capable of shaping work behaviour across diverse settings. The significant predictor of lecturers' job performance by workplace hostility is expressed in the negative sense, indicating that as hostility intensifies, the job performance of lecturers in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria will significantly decrease.

Closed Organizational Climate and Lecturers' Job Performance

The result of the study revealed that closed climate is a weak positive predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding is possibly due to the fact that closed climate is associated with rigid rules, lack of support and excessive control, which hinder creativity and contribute to the weak positive predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. This agreed in magnitude with the finding of Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Ogbo, Ekweogu and Anyanwu (2020), who showed that closed climate was a weak predictor of teachers' job performance in secondary schools in the same state, and is broadly consistent with Obiekwe, Egboka and Obiekwe (2024), who similarly found that closed school climate was only a weak predictor of teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The recurrence of a weak association across these studies, all conducted within the same geographical location, suggests that the limiting effect of closed climate on performance-related outcomes may be a fairly stable feature of the local educational context, even though the magnitude reported by Akpoguma and Nwogbo (2024) for lecturers' job commitment in Delta State was comparatively moderate, indicating that the strength of the relationship may still vary with the specific outcome and institutional setting examined. Closed climate is also associated with rumors, lack of role clarity and misunderstanding, which could be responsible for the weak positive predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Lecturers who work in a closed climate struggle to receive the information and support necessary to effectively discharge their duties and this could contribute to the weak positive predictor of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. It was found that closed climate significantly predicts lecturers' job performance in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. This affirmed the finding of Bentil (2021), who showed that closed school climate significantly related with teachers' job performance

in secondary schools, and is consistent with Obionu, Ughamadu and Obiagwu (2024), who found that closed climate related negatively and significantly to teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Oviawe (2020) similarly characterized closed climate as one marked by high disengagement, low morale and low consideration, conditions that could plausibly account for its limited, though still significant, contribution to lecturers' job performance in this study. The significant predictor of lecturers' job performance by closed climate is in the positive sense, indicating that when closed climate is high, the job performance of lecturers will weakly increase in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that workplace hostility is a significant negative predictor of lecturers' job performance while and closed school climate is a significant but weak positive predictors of lecturers' job performance in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings it was recommended among others that:

1. University management should institute and consistently enforce zero-tolerance policies against workplace hostility
2. Government should discourage university management from operating a closed school climate through workshops and seminars.

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