

A Study of Teachers' Perception of Schools' Organizational Health in Osun State

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Abstract

This study examined the teachers' perceptions of school organizational health (i.e. resource support, job satisfaction among staff, morale boosts, institutional integrity and initiating structure). Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The sample was composed of 330 secondary school teachers randomly selected from 283, 826 secondary school teachers in Osun State. Data collected was subjected to t-test analysis. It was found that there is higher homogeneity within the group of male and female secondary school teachers and public secondary school teachers have a higher perception than their private counterpart. In conclusion, governments at various levels who are the proprietor of public schools have the best of teacher who are committed to having good organizational health in the schools. Thus, with little motivation and encouragement this commitment to good organizational health could be transformed into commitment to work and thus, leading to better academic performance of students in the public schools.

1. Introduction

It is common knowledge today in Nigeria and the rest of the World, to estimate or judge the quality or standard of a school by considering the essential features of healthy organizations. This can be appraised using various dimensions: task needs, maintenance needs and developmental needs which can be subdivided into a number of sub-factors as are pointed out by (Miles, 1969). However, effective teaching is a function of interrelationship between the teachers and other school personnel as well as community to which the school is situated. One concept that is important in this regard is that of school organizational health. A healthy organization can be describe as one which succeeds in concentrating exterior disruptive influences and keeping the school organization directed towards achieving its proposed objectives (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Organizational Health refers to an organization's ability to achieve its goals based on an environment that seeks to improve organizational performance and support employee well-being. While these two perspectives are very different, a nexus between them means issues in one affect the other. Improving organizational performance involves applying a systems thinking approach at organization, process, and role levels, and supporting employee well-being involves addressing both employee satisfaction and employee health (physical, mental, and social). It is an organization's ability to function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within. Within the frame work school, one of the best perspectives for analyzing the nature of the workplace is organizational health. Organizational Health (OH) is a concept that has been developed to reflect the effectiveness of an organization in various environments and how the organization reacts to "changes in circumstances (Janice, 2000).

The health metaphor was initially used by Matthew Miles (1969) to examine the properties of schools. A healthy organization is one that not only survives in its environment, but continues to grow and prosper over the long term. An organization on any given day may be effective or ineffective, but healthy organizations avoid persistent ineffectiveness. In Osun state, government established a Teaching Service Commission in 1993 with the aim of providing an institutional

framework for the effective administration of the Public Secondary Schools in the State, yet the purpose to which it was established has not met, this perhaps may be due to the fact that dimension of organizational health was not properly considered. Miles, (1969) developed a configuration of healthy organization that consists of ten important properties. The first three aspects reflect the task needs of a social system; the second sets of properties describe its maintenance needs; and the final group of characteristics are growth and development needs all of which forms the dimensions of organizational health.

The task needs are termed goal focus, communication adequacy, and optimal power equalization. Healthy organizations have a *goal focus*. Participants understand the goals of the organization and accept them as realistic ends. Moreover, the goals must also be appropriating, that is, consistent with the demands of the environment; in fact, appropriateness may be the most critical feature. Since organizations are typically much more complex than small groups, the communication of information is essential to the well being of the system. *Communication adequacy* is critical in healthy organizations. Information needs to travel reasonably well. The system must be relatively distortion free with members easily receiving the information they need to function efficiently. Such an efficient communication system enables the organization to sense internal strain and conflict and then promptly deal with them. In healthy organizations there is *optimal power equalization*. That is, the distribution of power and influence is equitable. Subordinates exert influence upward and they perceive that their superiors can do likewise. The exertion of influence, however, rests on competence and knowledge rather than position, charisma, or other factors not related to the problem at hand. Collaboration rather than coercion imbue the healthy organization.

A second group of properties deals with the internal state of the organization, specifically with the maintenance needs of its members. These elements are resource utilization, cohesiveness, and morale. Healthy organizations use their resources, especially their personnel, effectively (*resource utilization*). There is minimal internal strain; the people are neither overloaded nor idle. The fit between the personal needs of participants and the role demands of the organization is good. People in healthy organizations like their jobs and have a positive sense that they are learning and growing as they contribute to the organization.

Cohesiveness refers to a clear sense of identity participants have with the organization. Healthy organizations have members who are attracted to the organization, take pride in their membership, and wish to remain. They are influenced by the organization and exert their influence in a collaborative fashion. In brief, they are proud of the organization and glad they are part of it. *Morale* is a group concept. It is the sum of individual sentiments, centered on feelings of well-being and satisfaction as contrasted with feelings of discomfort and dissatisfaction. In healthy organizations the dominant personal response of organizational members is a sense of well-being.

Finally, there are four more properties of organizational health. Innovativeness, autonomy, adaptation, and problem-solving adequacy deal with the organization's needs for growth and change. Healthy organizations invent new procedures when confronted with problems, procedures that enable them to move toward new objectives, produce new products, and diversify themselves. Such systems grow, develop, and change rather than remain formalized and standardized.

Innovativeness is the organization's ability to invent new procedures, move to new goals and objectives, and become more differentiated over time.

Autonomy describes the organization's relationship with its environment. Healthy organizations do not respond either passively or destructively to the environment. Rather, they demonstrate an ability to remain somewhat independent from negative forces in the environment; they use the environment constructively.

Adaptation is closely related to autonomy. Healthy organizations have effective contact with their surroundings. When environmental forces do not match organizational objectives, a problem solving and restructuring strategy emerges to cope with the issue. In short, the organization has the ability to bring about corrective changes in itself.

All organizations, indeed all social systems, have problems and strains. Healthy organizations, just as healthy people, have troubles. *Problem-solving adequacy* describes the way organizations handle their difficulties. Argyris (1964) suggested that effective systems solve their problems with minimal difficulty, and once solved, they stay solved. In the process, problem-solving mechanisms are not weakened but rather strengthened.

Thus Miles (1965) postulated that healthy organizations are characterized by goal focus, communication adequacy, power equalization, resource utilization, cohesiveness, morale, innovativeness, autonomy, adaptation, and effective problem solving.

Teachers commitment has been recognized as an effective route to school success while the reasons why teachers behave differently in the schools continues to attract the attention of educational researchers (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt,

2001; Oplatka & Herts-Lazarovits, 2006). This area of research has taken on greater importance because the most current research in education has revealed that the school personnels' (teachers, principal and guidance counsellors) impact on student achievement is not a direct one, but rather an indirect one mediated by the health of the school (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). Lack of a specific profile of teachers' perception that had more impact on organizational health than another profile. It was evident that most of school teachers' impact on the school health was affected by their underlying needs, of which teachers are often unconscious while some teachers were often aware of the principals' perception towards the schools' needs and could accurately describe them. Interestingly, principals did not seem to be as aware of their need as were their teachers.

The manner in which secondary school teachers interact and behave in relation to the school organizational health using the various dimension of organizational health (i.e. resource support, job satisfaction among staff, morale boosts, institutional integrity and initiating structure) has become issues of interest as the educational emphasis in the Nigeria continues to be placed on student achievement. Knowing fully well that teachers are a vital pre-requisite for students' attainments of educational goals and objectives. In her study on internal efficiency of Osun State public secondary schools teachers from 1997/98 to 2002/2003 academic session, Akinsolu (2005) reported that public secondary schools teachers are inefficient and all efforts of government on them is mere a wastage. As revealed by the results of Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in 2010, only 20% of students that sat for the examination passed five good subjects that would give them the opportunity of getting admission to higher institutions. This corroborates Akinsolu's findings that out of every one Nigerian Naira (N1) spent by the government, 45 Kobo (N 0.45) were wasted in the period of study as a result of high repetition, high failure and dropout rate in the system. Beside this, it is believed generally that most of public secondary schools in the state are running under the dilapidated buildings while most of the private schools are not up to the standard because of low quality teachers and insufficient educational facilities that would facilitate smooth teaching-learning process which will in turn lead to quality performance of students. The justification for teacher's efficiency would not be adequate without focusing on various dimension of school organizational health in order to identify the root cause(s) of low performance of students in public examinations. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions of school organizational health in Osun State.

2. Research Hypothesis

Two Hypotheses were raised. They are:

- (a) There is no significance difference in private and public school teacher's perception of school organizational health.
- (b) There is no significance difference in perception of male and female teachers toward organizational health.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Data was collected from a large sample for school aged in-service secondary school teachers. Their responses to the items were taken to represent that of all the secondary schools teachers in Osun State through generalization.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population consists of all the secondary school teachers in Osun State. There exist 30 local governments in Osun State of Nigeria. In addition, there are 283,826 secondary schools and 6721 secondary school teachers out of which 587 and 249 are public and private secondary school teachers respectively (Osun State Ministry of Education, 2010). Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample. Firstly, the state was partitioned to three senatorial districts. From each district, one local government was selected using purposive random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select a total for 114 teachers totaling 344 across the state. In each of the selected local governments, 4 private secondary schools and 6 governments owned secondary schools were selected by disproportionate sampling technique. In all 10 secondary school were selected from each local government making a total of 30 secondary schools for the study. Finally, 11 teachers were selected by convenient sampling procedure, this sum up to give the total of 330 teachers for the study.

3.3 Research Instrument

The instrument used for the study was 40 item scale tagged Organizational Health Inventory for Secondary Schools (QHSS). It was adapted through the item on the Feldman (1985) scale, it was modified and restated, and additional items were generated. Item were generated to tap the technical, managerial and institutional levels of the organization. At the technical level, issues of morale, cohesiveness, trust, enthusiasm, support, academic, order and achievement were

highlighted. The managerial level was described in terms of the behaviour of the principal. In particular, interest centered on task and achievement oriented behaviour, collegial and supportive behavior, ability to influence superiors, and ability to provide adequate resources for teachers were critically focused. At the institutional level issues like schools ability to cope successfully with outside forces. The instrument contained 5 subscale factors (resource support, job satisfaction among staff, morale boosts, institutional integrity and initiating structure) from which the items were generated. The response format for the scale was the Likert (1932) type with the options of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. As shown in Table 1 below, a Chrombach's Alpha of 0.833 was obtained. In order to prelude the possibility of taking wrong inference in the reliability of the scale, the data was also subjected to split-half, Spearman-Brown Coefficient (equal length) and Gultman Split half coefficient analysis and the results were obtained as reflected in the table 4 above. The value of the Spearman Brown Split half coefficient for the scale is 0.840 (equal length). Also, the Gultman split half is 0.803. The two coefficients are high and good enough to declare that the scale is reliable. All the coefficients were significant and good enough to conclude that OHISSs is reliable.

<Table 1 about here>

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected by the researcher with the assistance of the Principals of schools and actual administration was supervised.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using t-test and appropriate reliability analysis technique. Crombach's (1951) coefficient, Alpha Guttman, split half and Spearman Brown coefficient were used to determine the reliability of the scale. Inter-school comparison of responses was carried out to investigate the influence of school ownership structure and gender, as well as teaching experience on organizational health. Student t-test was used to determine the influence of gender as well as differences in public and private school teachers' perception towards organizational health.

3.6 Analysis of Results

To test the first hypothesis of this study that is "there is no significant different in private and public school teachers' perception of school organizational". The overall mean scores of the 132 private school and 198 secondary school teachers on the OHISS were determined and t-test statistics was used to determine the strength of the differences that was notice in their means, the Table 2 below presents the result.

<Table 2 about here>

Table present the overall means of private and public secondary school teachers on the scale, it could be observed that private secondary school teachers have a higher mean scores of 95.71 as against 82.32 for teachers in public secondary schools. The t-test result ($t = 8.634$) implies that the difference that is noticed is significant. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

In testing the second hypothesis "there is no significance difference in the perception of male and female teachers towards organizational health", the teacher's scores that made up of the scale were sorted out and attempt was made to determine the means of the teachers on the scale. Descriptive and t-test statistics was then used to test the hypothesis.

As shown in below Table 3, it could be observed that the numbers of male and female teacher that responded to the items were 185 and 145 respectively. The mean score for male and female teachers are 89.22 and 89.90 respectively. The strength of the little difference noticed was established by the t-test result ($t = -0.398$) to be non significant. This means that there is higher homogeneity within the group of female secondary school teacher and group of male teacher secondary schools teachers. Hence, the hypothesis, that there is no significance difference in the perception of male and female teachers towards organizational health is confirmed.

<Table 3 about here>

4. Discussion

This study was carried out to investigate the teachers' perceptions of school organizational health. From the findings, it can be concluded that if taken into consideration the dimensions (i.e. resource support, job satisfaction among staff, morale boosts, institutional integrity and initiating structure, cohesiveness etc) of organizational health, there is a higher homogeneity in the perceptions of male and female secondary school teachers in Osun State. This simply means that the sex of the teachers has no influence on the organizational of secondary schools. Also, public secondary school teachers had a higher perception towards school organizational health than their private counterpart. This probably might be

explaining why people prefer to work in the public schools than in private schools. Teachers in the public schools have passion for executing their duties than their counterparts in the private secondary schools. The overall difference in the perceptions of public and private secondary school teachers as indicated is significant. However, the degree of job satisfaction of the teachers if compared with other factors is relatively lower, this perhaps may be as a result of attitude of school owners towards factors that influence job satisfaction like salary/wages, fringe benefits, opportunity for career advancement, the quality of teachers' relationship with their employers, the quality of the physical environment in which they work and the degree of fulfillment in their work which require adequate attention by government and private owners which will translate to job efficiency.

5. Conclusion

It's being established in the study that ownership of schools has a significant influence on teachers' perception of organizational health of the secondary schools. Good organizational health is expected to lead to good performance. In terms of a school good performance, it implies good academic performance of the students in the internal and external examinations. Having established the fact that public school teachers have intense for good organizational health of the schools, governments at various level are advised to motivate and encourage the teachers to transform this to performance which will invariably lead to better academic performance of public schools students. In addition, school proprietors/proprietresses must cultivate the habit of rewarding their teachers like their counterparts in the public school schools, this may not only be in term of salary but fringe benefits. This could be done by rewarding appropriately, making sure that rewards are for genuine contributions to the organization, by being consistent in reward policies. The schools owners must facilitate and encourage good relationship with their teachers especially in term of rapport, they must also maintain and improve on the physical environment where their teachers work in order to motivate them to do even more their best for the organization so as to increase the degree of efficiency that will translate to excellent performance of students in their internal and public examinations.

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Table 1. Subscale Reliability of factors

Subscale Reliability of Factors	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	No of Item	Chronbach'a
Resource support	20.0821	37.617	6.13324	8	0.850
Job satisfaction among staff	16.2973	25.653	5.06486	8	0.796
Morale boosts	15.1058	32.635	6.95414	8	0.825
Institutional integrity	22.0078	34.245	7.90453	9	0.842
Initiating structure	24.6201	30.273	6.60448	7	0.851
Total/Average	19.6226	32.084	6.53225	40	0.833

Table 2. T-test table showing the differences in private and public school teachers' perception of organizational health

School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Private	132	95.7189	14.99880	8.634	.000
Public	198	82.3270	13.54061		

Table 3: T-test table showing the differences between the perception of male and female teachers

Sex of Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	185	89.2251	14.91190	-.398	.691
Female	145	89.9085	16.89922		