

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

Faustina Nkechi OKWUOKEI

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.

faustinaokwuokei@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The paper described organizational climate and innovation in education. Organizational climate and innovation in education is one where creativity and change are encouraged for managing and creating the appropriate climate so that employees can share and build upon each other's ideas and suggestions. The paper established that there is a link between organizational climate and innovation in education. It further explored some of the organizational climate components (structures, standards, responsibility, recognition, support and commitment) and factors that can influence organizational climate and innovation in education such as ideal leadership, innovative behaviours that should be developed in the education or school environment (innovations in curriculum development, use of learning methods, use of instructional media, classroom management, handling of students and ways of assessment), innovative teachers, educational levels, etc. The paper concluded that when there is a favourable organizational climate to stimulate innovative work environments, employees will put in their best. It suggested that the perception of ample support for idea development and implementation as well as for the improvement of skills related to innovation may enhance an individual's confidence in their capability to stimulate and maintain innovative work behaviours.

Keyword: Organizational Climate, Innovation, Education.

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INTRODUCTION

The global higher education trends have leapt towards a dynamic, challenging and competitive environment. This scenario leads institutions to seek pathways in managing and supporting academia in optimizing institutional achievement for sustainability. The achievement can only be realized by committed workforces as they have certain capacities and contributions required by their institutions. Thus, identifying factors to improve organizational commitment relevant to the current needs of the workforce is deemed to be beneficial. According to Balkar (2015), employees are dealing with physical and psychological environments. The vibrant surroundings play an important role in creating employees' perception of organizational support that eventually influences employees' sense of belonging and organizational commitment. This requires organizations to provide adequate support for innovation to increase the organizational commitment among their employees.

Employee knowledge is crucial if organizations are to innovate and develop a competitive advantage. It is therefore essential to know how to create an organizational climate

that cultivates innovation among employees. Meanwhile, Ololube (2024) noted that the deliberate management of organizational climates supportive of innovation is a key challenge, for those who lead and manage organizations. More specifically, Baer and Frese (2003) asserted that failing to innovate can place organizations at risk and thus potentially diminish their ability to sustain or gain a competitive advantage. They argue that the challenge of being competitive can be met if organizations recognize that their ability to innovate is inextricably linked to how their leaders, people, climate, culture as well as structures support innovation and creativity.

The internal environment supportive of innovation is referred to as the 'organizational climate for innovation' (OCI) and is crucial for organizations leveraging on innovativeness to create a competitive advantage and to enhance performance. Baer and Frese (2003) supported this position by arguing that an organizational climate and Innovation is one where creativity and change are encouraged; asserting that a key aspect of managing for innovation is creating the appropriate climate so that employees can share and build upon each other's ideas and suggestions.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate concerns a situation in organizations where perceptions of the working environment are shared and innovative behaviours are rewarded. On another note, Ololube (2024) posited that there is an innovative organizational climate when there is acceptance of norms, values and expectations of innovative behaviour practised by an organization. An innovative organizational climate can be referred to as an organizational climate which encourages shared perception, creativity and innovative behaviour in the workplace. In this paper, it is referred to as support for academics' innovative behaviour and adequate resources provided about time, personnel and funds to be innovative. Specifically, the first dimension of support for innovation (SI) is concerned with the practice of being open to change in the context of individual, encouragement of participation in new idea generation from each colleague and team, and tolerance of the existence of diversity in the workplace.

Innovation

Innovation is crucial to the success of an organization and individual creativity and innovativeness are key to organizational-level innovation. Importantly, organizational climate can have a positive effect on creativity and innovation in organizations (Cooper et al., 2004). The Administrators of education need to ensure that the organizational climate encourages, nurtures, and enhances individual creativity. Employees who have innovative and creative potential are most likely to practice innovation when they perceive strong organizational support. Furthermore, if organizations can develop an organizational climate perceived as positive by individuals, this is more likely to result in higher levels of motivation, commitment, and employee engagement, leading to improved organizational performance.

Creative and innovative behaviour is promoted by a combination of both personal qualities and work environment factors. Autonomy to act is another key issue in this regard, encompassing personal control over how time is allocated and how work is carried out (Parzefall et al., 2008). Importantly, Ololube (2024) argued that in comparison to routine work, non-routine

tasks and jobs are more challenging, and thus require more thought providing opportunities for learning and personal growth which, in turn, promotes innovativeness. Balkar (2015) stated that organizational climate is important in creating conditions to ensure high-performance teachers and encouraging them to demonstrate innovative behaviour both in class and in school. De Jong (2007) also stated that there is a relevant leadership behaviour between organizational climate and innovation in education. Leaders can influence employees innovative behaviour through their actions aimed at stimulating the generation of their more common and everyday ideas and practices.

Organizational Climate Components

According to Ololube (2024), there are six organizational climate components namely:

Structure: This relates to how employees are given an explanation and understanding of the tasks that must be done in the workplace.

Standards: These are a sense of pride that will arise among the employee after completing work.

Responsibility: This is associated with the work of the employee whether it is by the assigned or not.

Recognition: This is a reward that will be given to the employee if they have achieved more work than the standard work.

Support: This is related to the supportive attitude that the coworker provides when the employee is working on the task.

Commitment: This relates to the totality of employees who desire to advance, achieve goals, and provide the best performance for where the employee works.

Sağnak (2012) also points out that there is a significant relationship between innovative climates and teachers' innovative behaviour. So far, organizational climate and innovation in education have more to do with the behaviour of educational leaders and the school environment.

Factors that Influence Organizational Climate and Innovation in Education

Organizations need to increase their flexibility, responsiveness and efficiency due to the volatile nature of the global business environment and the strong need to respond to challenges faced by local and international competition (Noor & Dzulkifli, 2013). This, by necessity, translates to a greater need for continuous innovation of products and services as well as internal processes and behaviours. Some of the factors that influence organizational climate and innovation in education include:

An ideal Leadership: Leadership that provides organizational climate and innovation, and encourages idea generation where ideas are treated in a receptive way and appraised on their feasibility in a fair and supportive way. This can potentially lead to individuals having a greater willingness to try out new ideas and practices. Circumstances may create necessary time, as well as encourage calculated risks and slack which may translate to an improved perception of idea support. In addition, Ololube (2024) noted that if employees perceive their work environment to

be where their creative and innovative efforts are valued and where their ideas are sincerely appreciated and accepted, they will be more willing or open to accept goals related to innovation and thus engage in innovative behaviour. Thus, intellectual stimulation serves as a direct trigger in generating ideas. Apart from such behaviour, De Jong (2007) indicated that this also seems to stimulate reflection among employees. This outcome can enhance individual innovativeness and also suggests that support for new ideas requires leaders who listen and support such behaviour as critical for the further development and implementation of these ideas.

Innovative behaviour: Sari and Ulfa (2013), and Noor and Dzulkifli (2013) revealed that organizational climate has a positive effect on innovative work behaviour, meaning that the better organizational climate perceived by employees the higher the innovative behaviour in the work of the employee. The importance of innovative behaviour in the workplace, especially in educational organizations cannot be over-emphasized. In educational organizations, teachers play one of the most important roles in creating and maintaining effective schools (Balkar, 2015). Teachers who have innovative behaviour are teachers who can work creatively and can provide positive outcomes for the organization where they work. Innovative behaviour can improve teachers' performance (Balkar, 2015). Innovative behaviour also stimulates the generation of more common and everyday ideas and practices (De Jong, 2007).

Currently, innovative behaviour is needed to improve the field of education, organization, government, and other fields of science. In the world of education, innovative behaviour is manifested by a system of advocacy that uses applied methods. It is intended to answer the demands of the development of the era that always requires teachers to behave innovatively in preparing their students to prepare themselves to face various problems that challenge their future (Prayudhayanti, 2014). The innovative behaviours that should be developed in the education or school environment include:

- innovations in curriculum development,
- innovations in the use of learning methods,
- innovations in the use of instructional media,
- innovations in classroom management,
- innovations in the handling of students, and
- innovations in ways of assessment (Prayudhayanti, 2014).

Innovative Teachers: Schools need to have innovative teachers. In addition, teachers who have innovative behaviour are also seen as creative teachers who can create ideas and able to contribute to the progress of the school. Teachers can answer the different needs and characteristics of students by using new strategies that help them express their creativity in the learning process with innovative teaching (Balkar, 2015). Eade (2011) argued that teacher innovation is necessary to enhance student's learning and that the teaching profession requires pedagogy including innovation. Good school climate and work environment are needed to support the effectiveness of the teachers' performance as expected.

Educational Levels: According to Etikariena and Muluk (2014), educational levels are a significant predictor of innovative behaviour in the workplace. It is of essence that an innovative organizational climate exists within the live-work of academia to support their career growth as well as their educational sustainability as this may affect the life stages of the academics in their career and profession as well. Innovative organizational climate practice would influence their

commitment level as well as performance achievement. Mutual obligation is derived from a perceived exchange and experience by both employer and employee. Importantly, innovation derives from the efforts and interaction of people within an organization, all employees must be involved in the innovation process for it to succeed. This view is supported by De Jong (2007) who argued that employees play an important part in the innovation process because their thoughts and actions are crucial for continuous innovation and improvement in attaining better organizational profitability, growth, and market value. Employees' behaviour then is likely to influence an organization's operating performance through the effective application of their knowledge and technological skills to trigger innovative initiatives to enhance their competitiveness.

Emotional Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation: Basrawi (2012) revealed that emotional intelligence and intrinsic motivation have a positive and significant influence on the innovative behaviour of school teachers. Organizational climate dimensions such as autonomy and freedom, as well as the introduction of specialized knowledge and information, appear to have a positive effect on innovative behaviour. Specifically, when individuals work in an environment where freedom is perceived to exist, they may experience greater free will and take greater control of their own ideas and work processes, enhancing their innovativeness (Ololube, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Organizational climate is a factor leading to positive innovative outcomes. Hence, issues on the aspects of support for innovative behaviour and resources provided by an organization have yet to mature, particularly in the education context. Innovative organizational climate has turned out to be more crucial than it used to be as innovation is a vital element in organizational performance and growth both theory and practice have to be alert on adequate innovative organizational climate to optimize organizational effectiveness. Education is a nation's nucleus to nurture excellence of human capital, organizational climate is not only to produce high-quality graduates but also to align quality education delivery that supports innovation. In this vein, academics, through their roles have to adopt creativity and innovative behavioural approaches to attract students to learn and to work effectively in the organization.

SUGGESTIONS

The perception of ample support for ideal development and implementation as well as for the improvement of skills related to innovation may enhance an individual's confidence in their capability to stimulate and maintain innovative work behaviors. To support employees, it is necessary to focus on the organizational climate and innovation dimensions. In this context, our study contributes new knowledge to the literature on organizational innovation by illustrating how various aspects of an organizational climate and innovation can be operationalized and assessed, while showing how individual work behaviour can be influenced, potentially making climate and innovative behaviour more explicit and easier to attribute.

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