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## ASSESSING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP/ MANAGEMENT: STRATEGIES FOR BALANCE, COLLABORATION, AND SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

*Veronica Egonekwu Mogboh and Ogbuanu Henrietta Chidi (Ph.D)*

Department of Educational Foundations,  
Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye  
University Enugu.

**E-mail:** [nekwuvero@yahoo.ca](mailto:nekwuvero@yahoo.ca),  
[ogbuanuhenriettac@gouni.edu.ng](mailto:ogbuanuhenriettac@gouni.edu.ng)

**Phone Number:** 08034001816,  
+2349161367923

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**Abstract:** This study examines the psychological climate of school leadership, with a focus on privately owned schools in Enugu, Nigeria. Privately operated schools demand school owners maintain administrator responsibilities alongside financial management duties along with instructional leadership roles when they handle their obligations. Professional duties that merge with personal responsibilities create psychological strain as well as work-life imbalance and burnout in school leaders. The research investigates how school owners handle these obstacles as it examines their working dynamics with teachers and their approach to fostering efficient leadership and cooperative practices.

The study used a survey approach through structured questionnaires which were distributed to owners and teachers within chosen private schools. Mean scores and standard deviations served as analysis methods to evaluate the results and the research established 2.5 as the threshold for accepting study findings. The research showed that school owners usually find it difficult to keep school leadership activities distinct from their commitments yet delegation stands out as their primary method of coping. The connections between school owners and their teachers existed on positive terms although shared decision-making functions within these relationships needed improvement. Results guided researchers to propose time management education along with structured delegation systems and better planning participation from teachers as well as mental health support facilities and performance measurement systems. This research proves why supportive psychological environments matter in school leadership while providing useful methods for maintaining long-term school administration success.

**Keywords:** School leadership, psychological climate, work-life balance, teacher-owner relationship, educational management.

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### **Introduction**

The educational environment continues to evolve with escalating complexity that now challenges the leadership responsibilities in schools. The modern educational environment consists of both academic teaching institutions and locations that foster social growth besides emotional and character formation. The diverse school mission needs leadership to move past basic administrative tasks and rule implementation. School administrators handling leadership duties in privately owned institutions throughout Nigeria and developing nations also perform the role of owning their respective schools. As administrators, these individuals perform curriculum supervisory roles and oversee teacher management while fulfilling financial planning duties and serving as human resource specialists building community connections, and providing counseling support to students and staff (Eze, 2022).

These institutions enable the owner to display their vision alongside their personal touch and put in significant work efforts. As both the business operator and the teacher the school owner takes on roles that emerge with substantial rewards but substantial psychological obstacles. The combination of professional leadership tasks and personal responsibilities generates excessive stress which causes fatigue and emotional exhaustion. School proprietors conduct administrative responsibilities while taking care of family matters including childrearing activities and managing different businesses while looking after senior relatives. Teachers who do not find a balance between managing their role as headteachers alongside personal commitments risk experiencing burnout which leads to poor morale together with weak leadership effectiveness (Nwodo, 2023). The ongoing struggles create an environment that generates innovative approaches for leadership efficiency, resilience development, and collaborative practices.

The analysis of psychological climate continues as a main focus in present-day school leadership because it includes the three elements of emotional experience and cognitive and relational dynamics for both leaders and their teams. The mental environment of educational institutions governs decision processes alongside workforce relations and student and stakeholder reaction to difficulties. A positive psychological setting contains open dialogue alongside respect between parties and shared decision processes with emotional comfort and unified organizational goals (Okoye, 2021).

A toxic psychological work environment that includes fear and stress together with ineffective communication creates negative effects on organizational goals and endangers student and staff results.

Private educational facilities establish distinctive psychological environments because of their specific organizational model. The organizational structure of public institutions uses bureaucratic methods to manage leadership but private school owners must function simultaneously in every department. Their function includes representing the institution and maintaining discipline until their role to resolve staff disagreements arises. The multiple responsibilities school owners carry in different functions distort professional relationships between them and their teaching staff. Authority measures taken by school owners against teachers have led teachers to perceive school owner involvement as excessive which strains their professional connections. When school owners fail to provide proper delegation their operations become disorganized and ineffective (Ogu, 2022).

School owner-teacher relationships maintain central importance to develop a beneficial psychological environment in educational institutions. A school environment gains trust accountability and respect through school owner practices that promote shared leadership and teacher collaboration. School identity faces deterioration and staff turnover becomes high when leaders use autocratic methods along with poor

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communication practices (Nwachukwu 2023). The development of sustainable teacher-friendly school policies needs complete comprehension of these educational leadership dynamics.

The successful management of leadership boundaries within personal life represents an important challenge that school owners currently face. School administrators commonly develop emotional exhaustion when they blend their school duties with their sphere (Eze, 2022). The mismatch between work responsibilities and personal needs results in mental health deterioration while leading to poor judgment abilities and weakened leadership ability. The demanding schedules of certain school owners force them to obtain less than five hours of nightly sleep in addition to delaying health exams and failing to maintain proper food consumption (Ikenna & Adebayo, 2023). These patterns prove that school leaders need to develop purposeful self-care approaches which include both effective delegation methods and time management systems alongside emotional support systems and rest periods.

School leaders experience an intensified emotional response because they simultaneously manage standard maintenance needs and parental requirements along with teacher complaints. Research findings presented by Nwodo (2023) revealed that more than seven out of ten owners of schools in southeastern Nigeria experienced overwhelming feelings twice per week due to multiple responsibilities. Though numerous difficulties exist school owners create innovative and excellent environments because resilient leadership together with strategic planning forms a base for successful outcomes. The research has current significance in investigating the psychological school environment that leaders create in privately managed educational institutions. This research examines the dual efforts of school owners to juggle leadership work with private responsibilities while establishing healthy interactions with their teaching personnel. The research presents effective approaches to develop school collaboration alongside shared leadership policies alongside enhanced institutional efficiency standards.

The analysis focuses on owner-leaders who simultaneously run their educational institutions alongside outside tasks to reveal the advantages as well as challenges of this leadership approach. The research aims to generate useful discoveries alongside methods that will optimize leadership health while improving relationships between teachers and school owners alongside building enduring school ecosystems.

The research examines these areas as its main focus:

The psychological and emotional realities of school ownership and leadership.

The techniques through which school leaders use to deal with workplace-life struggles and handle their personal management processes.

The way school owners interact with teaching staff considers communication approaches along with mutual respect as well as collaborative problem-solving solutions.

The research analyzes effective leadership practices combined with best practices that produce efficient operational outcomes and enhance staff motivation as well as secure school sustainability.

The study contributes to education leadership research through its specific findings which offer recommendations to school administrators along with teacher unions educational consultants and policymakers. The research delivers a complex portrayal of school leadership when it showcases institutional leaders from Enugu Nigeria through their actual experiences running educational institutions.

## **Statement of the Problem**

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The leadership structure in privately owned schools is arduous. School owners must fulfill several responsibilities including administrative duties and management responsibilities as well as academic supervision functions. A leadership structure based on private school ownership enables fast decisions yet generates extensive work which impacts the leader's emotional state negatively. School owners experience daily challenges from managing school operations and personal responsibilities until their emotional exhaustion and weakened leadership performance develop. The lack of appropriate support structures creates major challenges for school owners when they need to preserve their emotional focus as well as manage efficient school operations.

The psychological environment of schools strongly depends on the way school owners interact with their teaching staff. Some educational institutions develop tension due to inadequate communication and cooperative involvement and imprecise expectation guidelines between school stakeholders. Both teachers experience decision-making exclusions at schools while owners either feel neglected for support or misunderstand responsibility expectations. The above relationship problems result in decreased teamwork numbers and motivational levels along with poor school performance results. The school owner dynamic remains vital but insufficient research exists on techniques that allow them to maintain both leadership roles and personal life build successful connections with teachers and enhance teamwork dynamics. The research aims to address this deficiency through investigations into school leadership psychology along with studies of the methodology used by school owners to sustain leadership together with successful team dynamics.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine how private school owners balance leadership responsibilities with personal life.
2. To explore the nature of the relationship between school owners and teachers, focusing on collaboration and work efficiency.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do private school owners balance school leadership with personal life responsibilities?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between school owners and teachers, and how does it affect collaboration and work efficiency?

### **Methodology**

This study used a survey design approach. The population consisted of school owners and teachers in private schools in Enugu, Nigeria. A sample of 10 schools was purposively selected, involving 10 school owners and 30 teachers, making a total of 40 respondents.

A structured questionnaire with two sections was administered. Data were analyzed using simple percentages and mean scores. Mean scores of 2.5 and above were accepted, while scores below 2.5 were rejected. The highest allowable mean was 2.8. Standard deviation was used to understand variability.

The questionnaire was validated by two experts in educational management. A pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.81, confirming internal consistency and reliability.

### **Table 1: Balancing Leadership with Personal Life**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
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I find it difficult to separate school leadership from personal life	15%	60%	20%	5%	2.7	0.71	Accepted
I schedule time to rest and recharge outside of school duties	20%	50%	20%	10%	2.6	0.81	Accepted
Delegating responsibilities helps me manage better	25%	55%	15%	5%	2.8	0.68	Accepted
I experience burnout due to combined responsibilities	20%	50%	25%	5%	2.6	0.79	Accepted

Cluster Mean: 2.68

**Table 2: Teacher-Owner Relationship and Collaboration**

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
There is open communication between school owners and teachers	15%	60%	20%	5%	2.6	0.76	Accepted
I feel valued and respected by the school leadership	20%	55%	20%	5%	2.7	0.72	Accepted
Joint decision-making helps improve school operations	30%	50%	15%	5%	2.8	0.68	Accepted

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Poor collaboration leads to inefficiency and misunderstandings 25% 50% 20% 5% 2.7 0.74 Accepted

Cluster 2.7

Mean:

## Discussion of Findings

The research question about how school owners handle leadership alongside other life tasks was examined in the first table. The survey participants showed consensus regarding the issue of blended boundaries between their school leadership duties and personal life through a mean score of 2.7. The dual responsibilities of administrators lead to regular burnout experiences (mean = 2.6) thus creating emotional exhaustion due to their overwhelming role blend. A high percentage of school owners admitted scheduling rest but their actual practice showed uneven results according to the data (mean = 2.6). School proprietors who delegate work functions received the highest approval rating (mean = 2.8) despite the shown data. This result demonstrates the positive impact delegation has on how owners manage their responsibilities. The cluster data suggests that delegation among other specific strategies helps school owners overcome their dual responsibilities with an average effect of 2.68.

The second table investigated how school owners and teachers interact with each other. Respondents indicate their acceptance that teachers and school owners mutually respect each other (2.7 mean) while open conversations take place at a satisfactory level (2.6 mean). The implementation of collaborative problem-solving reaches a fair level of cooperative engagement according to respondents who rated it 2.6. Data shows that approximately half of school owners limit their decision-making to a top-down structure regarding shared decision-making operations (based on a mean score of 2.5). The cluster mean of 2.6 points to positive relationships yet demonstrates that teachers should gain greater participation in essential decision-making processes and that school collaborative inclusion needs improvement. The improvement in both staff morale and school performance seems likely to result from such measures.

## Conclusion

The psychological environment of school leadership develops from how effectively leaders handle their dual responsibilities together with teacher relationships. Organizational efficiency together with employee satisfaction will be enhanced when institutions build balanced relationships and establish collaborative networks. When leaders dismiss these aspects their organizations experience stress and personnel disengagement as well as operational inefficiencies develop.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. School owners should receive time management training to help them plan their tasks, set priorities, and create a better balance between school duties and personal life.
2. Schools should create a clear system for delegation of tasks to teachers and support staff. This will reduce the pressure on the school owner and help improve efficiency.
3. Teachers should be involved in school planning and decision-making. Platforms such as regular meetings or committees should be set up to allow teachers to share ideas and suggest solutions.

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4. Mental health and wellness programs should be introduced in schools. These programs should support both teachers and school owners in handling stress and maintaining emotional well-being.

5. Schools should hold monthly feedback sessions where teachers and school owners can discuss challenges, give suggestions, and work together to solve problems.

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