LEADERSHIP CLIMATE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	6th December 2023	The study investigated the relationship between leadership climate and employee performance in some selected Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study was to examine the relationship between the leadership climate and goal attainment and growth (measures of employee performance). The quantitative study sampled 280 employees of QSRs in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria which included both senior and junior staff of the firms. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. A total of 280 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. The Kendall's tau-b Correlation Statistical Tool with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to test the two hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between leadership climate and goal attainment and growth respectively. The study concluded that management should have the interest of employees at heart so as to know their needs and methods of satisfying those needs. It was therefore recommended that: QSRs should employ positive leadership climates practices to achieve consistent and improved results in their employee performance, and management should develop new concept of authority, motivation and leadership. Most importantly, developing competence in emotional intelligence will afford them the opportunity to understand and manage human behaviour appropriately in the workplace.
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INTRODUCTION

Fast food restaurant is one of the fast food establishments, which is focused on providing customer with food as quickly and efficiently as possible. Food is essential to life and it is served in most fast food establishments in Port Harcourt. Food is cooked bulk and served to people in the medium in which they deserve. The aim of most of these restaurants is to sell quality food to customers, serve them in very decent environment, with the aid of well trained and motivated employees. Fast food is an establishments that gives customers the choice to select, eat in the venue, reduce cost, improved quality and quantity of services, with the aim of making profits.

It is also essential to point out that in orders to achieve the profit, the organization is always faced with some organization climates which in some situations affects positively or negativity to the performance of the establishments, some of these organizational climate include safety, ethical measures, leadership styles and reward systems available in the organization. The industry stakeholders are finding it difficult to recognize, maximize and utilize some of the variables responsible for these challenges affecting the employee's performance in the fast food restaurant particularly in Port Harcourt such as organisational climate.

The concept of organizational climate was developed in the late 1930s by the social scientist, Lewin et al (1939) they used social climate term to describe subjective feelings or atmosphere they encountered in their studies of organizations since 1980s the concept of climate has lost its appeal to organizational researcher (Isaksen et al, 1995). Ekvall (1996) noted that

the organizational climate literature contained two main contradictions. One relates to ontological issues, which include theories of organizational climate (Gwon, 1973; Ekwall, 1996; Altan, 2000) and the other on values, norms and beliefs system (Schneider et al 1996). According to Ekvall (1996), these demarcation runs between theorist who conceive "Climate" as a common perception arising from interaction amongst members of an organization, and those who perceived "climate" as an objective property of an organization.

Despite the huge spread of the establishment and course quest upon the facing out of high standard fast food restaurants, researchers have not deem it necessary to research on the possible effects or issues responsible for the facing out some high standard fast food restaurant, such as Mr. Biggs, Fantacy, Relicks just to mention a few particularly in Port Harcourt Municipality.

The employee's bahaviour in an organization is meaningful construct with significant implication on the general climate of the organization (Allen, 2003). Ruche and Monica (2017), described organizational climate as the act of unique characteristics and feature that are perceived by the employees about their organization which serves as a major force in influencing their behaviour.

Maclhukar and Sharma (2017), defines organizational climate as a function of a person and their interaction with the organizational environment. It describes the set of attribute specific to a particular organization that may be induced from the way that organization deals with its members and its environment, thus creating an essential role in the organization and impacts on the perception of employees' which influence their practices and behaviours, leading to a better performance in organization.

Extant literature has identified some organizational climate such as safety climate, ethical climate leadership climate and reward climate as organizational climate factors that are capable of influencing employee performance. Safety climate is widely as the shared perceptions with regard to policies, procedures and practices in an organization (e.g; Zohar 2011, p.143). Safety of life and property is a panacea for employee performance if management pays more attention to it. Ethnical climate stipulates the values and morals expected of the employee in the discharge of their duties. Having strong work ethics make good business sense because employees want to work for a company which they are proud of and with colleagues they know act with integrity. Leadership style or leadership climate the shows how leaders impact organizational performance by manipulating the environmental determinants of motivation, consciously or unconsciously, effective leaders arouse and direct the motivational energy that compels people to action.

Most fast food establishments do not pay attention to the organizational climate thereby making the workplace and job hectic within the working environment. A company's ability to effectively manage, influence and increase employee efficiency is required to achieve organizational goal. Employees performance and job satisfaction decrease if procedures are not followed correctly, especially when combined with an ineffective leadership style. The fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt where this research is cantered, suffers from a lack of consistency in quality and low labour efficiency, which might be linked to the organization's leadership style.

In spite of the forgone, there are not much research done particularly on the organizational climate and employee performance in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt which would possibly address particularly those fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt that have come to stand on their feet completely. Obeng, et al (2020) examined the moderating support on the associations amongst organizational climate and organizational commitment, organizational commitment with employee performance. In another research the researcher find a work on exploring academic staff perception of organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior (Chinenye Maureen and Nuel-Okoli (2002).

Aazirammad Mashhadr and Quziliaz-u Rehman (2012) researched on impact of external environment on the performance of the fast food industry in South Africa. All these point to the fact that research gap exist. There seems to be less studies on the relationship between leadership climate and employee performance in the context of quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt. This current study is designed to fill this gap in literature. The specific objectives were to:

1. Determine out the relationship between leadership climate and goal attainment of quick service restaurants.

2. Ascertain the relationship between leadership climate and growth of quick service restaurants.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theoretical Foundations
Organizational Support Theory

Research on perceived organizational support began with the observation that if managers are concerned with their employees' commitment to the organization, employees are focused on the organization's commitment to them. For employees, the organization serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources, such as respect and caring, and tangible benefits, such as wages and medical benefits. Being regarded highly by the organization it helps to meet employees' needs for approval, esteem, and affiliation. Positive valuation by the organization also provides an indication that increased effort was noted and rewarded. Employees, therefore, take an active interest in the regard with which they are held by their employer. Organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2002;) holds that in order to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived organizational support (POS) would increase employees' felt obligation to help the organization reach its objectives, their affective commitment to the organization, and their expectation that improved performance would be rewarded. Behavioural outcomes of POS would include increases in role and extra-role performance and decreases in stress and withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover. Although there were relatively few studies of POS until the mid-1990, research on the topic has burgeoned in the last few years. Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) meta-analysis covered some 70 POS studies carried out through 1999, and over 250 studies have been performed since. The meta-analysis found clear and consistent relationships of POS with its predicted antecedents and consequences.

For an organization to prosper in all its ventures then their employees must behave as good citizens by engaging in positive behaviors (Organ et al., 2006). Generally speaking, these Organizational climate are aimed at supporting both the social and psychological environment of any organization and they determine the success of any organization (Bolino, 2004). Organizational climate can maximize on the efficiency and productivity of both the employees and the organization which will ultimately contribute to the effective functioning of an organization. Employees who exhibit citizenship behaviour can be described as good soldiers or good citizens of that organization. When employees are treated with kindness and given favourable treatment they will reciprocate by exhibiting citizenship behaviour (Smith et al, 2008). Organizational climate has a positive impact on organization and its members and it helps the managers to be able to create a cooperative environment that can increase effectiveness of employees (Podsakoff, 2006).

Leadership climate

Leadership climate is defined as shared perceptions of the policies, procedures, and processes through which leadership is enacted. The authors use the term "enactment" to encompass both the behaviours of leaders that are observed within an organization, as well as the broader systems that communicate leadership roles. A shared leadership climate assumes that individual members of a given organization, who have common leaders, are exposed to a similar leadership environment in terms of the behaviours and actions of the leaders. This common leadership environment is manifested in a shared leadership climate within the unit. Research specifically addressing a construct of leadership climate has tended to focus on leader behaviours. For example, Chen and Bliese (2002) defined leadership climate as a shared group-level climate variable based on perceptions of the extent to which leaders provide direction and support. At the organizational level, Walter and Bruch (2010) investigated transformational leadership climate in terms of shared perceptions of behavior across the organization. These behavioural approaches to leadership climate have focused on the degree to which leaders direct similar behaviours toward their subordinates. Shamir and colleagues (Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998) outlined a process for (p. 108) aggregating individual assessments of leadership to a general unit-level variable. A second perspective of leadership climate is derived from studies of broader organizational climate.

The climate dimension of leader facilitation and support reflects the perception of leaders' behaviours "such as the extent to which the leader was seen as helping to accomplish work goals by means of scheduling activities, planning, etc., as well as the extent to which he was perceived as facilitating interpersonal relationships and providing personal support" (Jones & James, 1979, p. 219). In a meta-analytic investigation of the relationships between the climate dimensions and work outcomes, Parker and co-authors (2003) found that perceptions of leader behaviour (along with work group and organization) were most predictive of employees' work attitudes. Similarly, perceptions of leader behaviour were also predictors of employee motivation and job performance. Perceptions of job and perceptions of leaders were the two strongest climate predictors of employee well-being. Results from these studies support the idea that leadership facilitation and support are important elements of leadership climate However, many of these studies were conducted at the individual level (p. 109) of analysis and were limited in the degree to which they reflected the shared nature of organizational climate. Studies that systematically address the shared properties of leadership climate have aggregated constructs such as transformational leadership (e.g., Walter & Bruch, 2010) or focused on specific types of climate such as safety climate (e.g., Zohar & Luria, 2005).

Employee Performance

Performance is a multi-component concept and on the fundamental level one can distinguish the process aspect of performance, that is, behavioural engagements from an expected outcome (Borman, & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell et al.,

1993; Roe, 1999). The behaviour over here denotes the action people exhibit to accomplish a work, whereas the outcome aspect states about the consequence of individual's job behaviour (Campbell, 1990). Apparently, in a workplace, the behavioural engagement and expected outcome are related to each other (Borman, & Motowidlo, 1993), but the comprehensive overlap between both the constructs are not evident yet, as the expected outcome is influenced by factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities than the behavioural aspect. Performance in the form of task performance comprises of job explicit behaviours which includes fundamental job responsibilities assigned as a part of job description. Task performance requires more cognitive ability and is primarily facilitated through task knowledge (requisite technical knowledge or principles to ensure job performance and having an ability to handle multiple assignments), task skill (application of technical knowledge to accomplish task successfully without much supervision), and task habits (an innate ability to respond to assigned jobs that either facilitate or impede the performance) (Conway, 1999). Therefore, the primary antecedents of task performance are the ability to do the job and prior experience. In an organizational context, task performance is a contractual understanding between a manager and a subordinate to accomplish an assigned task. Entrusted task performance is broken into two segments: technical–administrative task performance and leadership task performance. The expected job performance comprising of planning, organizing, and administering the day-to-day work through one's technical ability, business judgment and so on are called as technical–administrative task performance. Leadership task performance is labelled through setting strategic goals, upholding the necessary performance standards, motivating and directing subordinates to accomplish the job through encouragement, recognition, and constructive criticisms (Borman, & Brush, 1993; Tripathy, 2014). Borman, and Motowidlo (2017) defined job performance in the context of task performance as "effectiveness with which job occupants execute their assigned tasks, that realizes the fulfilment of organization's vision while rewarding organization and individual proportionately."

Growth: Growth is something for which most companies strive, regardless of their size. Small firms want to get big, big firms want to get bigger. Indeed, companies have to grow at least a bit every year in order to accommodate the increased expenses that develop over time. With the passage of time, salaries increase and the costs of employment benefits rise as well. Even if no other company expenses rise, these two cost areas almost always increase over time. It is not always possible to pass along these increased costs to customers and clients in the form of higher prices. Consequently, growth must occur if the business wishes to keep up. Organizational growth has the potential to provide small businesses with a myriad of benefits, including things like greater efficiencies from economies of scale, increased power, a greater ability to withstand market fluctuations, an increased survival rate, greater profits, and increased prestige for organizational members. Many small firms desire growth because it is seen generally as a sign of success, progress. Organizational growth is, in fact, used as one indicator of effectiveness for small businesses and is a fundamental concern of many practicing managers.

Goal attainment: Given the importance of goal-setting for predicting organizational behaviours and outcomes, it is essential to develop a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting firms' decisions to pursue a specific set of goals. In this paper, we present a review of existing theoretical and empirical evidence on organizational goals, and develop an analytical framework emphasizing the variety of goals pursued by business organizations, their antecedents, formation processes and outcomes, the role of context and feedback loops. We then provide an overview of the papers published in this special Organizational goals can be broadly defined as desired organizational outcomes that can be used to guide action and appraise organizational performance (e.g. Mohr 1973), but distinct from measurable targets (March & Simon 1958). There has been much debate about what actually constitutes an organizational goal, and different theoretical traditions offer different conceptualizations. In classic economic theory, firms were traditionally seen as monolithic actors that, under the assumption of perfect rationality, pursue a unitary goal of profit maximization. However, this perspective was critically extended over the years. For example, scholars have argued that 'official' goals stated in vision and mission statements do not always accurately reflect what actually drives organizational behavior (e.g. Perrow 1961). Most notably, in the seminal book A Behavioral Theory of the Firm, Cyert and March (1963) noted that people have goals, but collectivities of people do not. Subsequently, researchers have put substantial effort into understanding the individual goals of those individuals who are most able to influence what the organization actually does, including emphasis on major decision-makers, the executive core or the dominant coalition (Connolly et al. 1980). Cyert and March (1963) argued that organizational goals are not unitary and given, and emphasized that the firm is a coalition of shareholders, managers, employees and other parties, each with their own goals. Thus, organizational goals are the result of continued bargaining and stabilization processes among relevant parties within the firm, leading to multiple dimensions along which organizational goals are set, including production, inventory, sales, market share and profitability. Moreover, behavioral theory suggests that organizational goals influence firm behavior through processes of satisficing, search, adaptive learning and sequential attention (Cyert and March 1963; March and Simon 1958). These basic insights had a tremendous impact on subsequent theory and research (Argote and Greve 2007), resulting in a variety of related perspectives, each putting emphasis on different dimensions and characteristics of organizational goals.

Leadership climate and Employee Performance

Leadership climate affects results. According to Dessler in Suparno (2015), there are five variables in evaluating success: task performance, job quantity, leadership, discipline, and contact. Leadership is one of the variables that will explain the success of workers. Leadership analysis also indicates that improved leadership would enhance the willingness to complete work with the amount and consistency of the expectations established by the Office to boost efficiency (Abbas & Yaqoob (2009), Fauzi (2012), Suddin & Sudarman (2010) and Wahyudi. & Suryono (2006). Factors that play a part in job success are endogenous and extrinsic factors, according to Herzberg in Suparno (2015). The more profound dimension of the atmosphere in which workers operate is a determining factor in employees' success. The work atmosphere includes all things that function and react to the body and mind of employees. In organizational psychology, the physical, emotional, and social conditions in which workers live and work must be studied to increase success quality. Its fundamental goal is to build an atmosphere that guarantees ease of operation and prevents all sources of frustration, concern, and anxiety. When the job atmosphere is friendly, frustration, monotony, and exhaustion are reduced, and efficiency is maximized. Study on the job climate often indicates that the better the work atmosphere, the more excitement or love for work rises to boost efficiency (Zareen et al. (2015), Gunaseelan (2014) and Gardjito (2014).To increase workers' efficiency, the role of job incentive would affect employees to improve their performance. This incentive is strongly connected to wants, so that corporate leaders ought to give greater heed to workers' needs to empower employees properly. Increased enthusiasm for jobs in an organization is often highly motivated by the organization's working climate (Sahilmi & Azis, 2014). Analysis of the work environment by inspiration often indicates that the better the work atmosphere, the higher the employee's work satisfaction would be to boost results (Thushel, 2015; Kusworo, 2015; and Permanasari, 2013). It could therefore be hypothesised that;

H1:   Leadership climate has significant relationship between leadership climate and Goal attainment in quick service restaurants.

H2   Leadership climate has significant relationship between leadership climate and growth of quick service restaurants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study examined the link between leadership climate and employees performance in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt; and as such, it is a casual research. The researcher adopted a cross-sectional design aspect quasi-experimental design. The study adopted quantitative Methodological approach and thus, used questionnaire to collect data from our study subjects. The cross-sectional approach is therefore used for selected teaching hospitals in the south-south region of Nigeria. This study was conducted in a non-contrived environment; hence the researcher hand no complete control of elements of the research.

Population of the study: The population of this current study comprised of employees of selected Quick service Restaurants (550) in Rivers state. The number of registered fast food firms in Rivers state is estimated at 35 (CAC, 2017). Genesis, Kilimangero, The Promise, Happy Bite, Crunches, and Chicken Republic were selected for the study.

Sampling and Sampling Technique: As a result of the population of this study, and the time frame given for this work, the sample size for this study was determined to be 280 with Taro Yamani formula for determination of sample size with known population. A judgemental sampling technique was adopted for the study

Method of Data Collection Methods/Instrumentation

The data for the study was obtained from primary sources only. The primary data was collected through administering of questionnaires to respondents. Copies of the questionnaires were administered to the marketing executives; sales executive managers, public relation managers, sales representatives of some selected fast food firms in Rivers State. The instrument of data collections was structured in sections.

Validity and Reliability: The validity of this research is supported by fact that all sources used resulted to good quality and result of research. The contents of the questionnaires were based on theoretical framework in order to establish the genuineness of the theories and findings. The results of reliability analysis for the research instrument provided a Chronbach Alpha value of .848. The implication of the result indicates internal consistency as the Chronbach Alpha on all items were greater than 0.7.

Method of Data Analysis

The relationship between the independent variable (leadership climate) and the dependent variable (employee performance) was statistically evaluated using the Kendall's tau-b Correlation Coefficient. In addition, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The study considered leadership climate and employees performance in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt. The Kendall's tau-b Correlation Statistical Tool is appropriate for our analysis because the variables in this study were measured in ordinal scales.

The formula is given as:

$$T_B = \frac{n_c - n_d}{\sqrt{(n_0 - n_1)(n_0 - n_2)}}$$

Where

$n_0 = N(n-1)1/2$

$n_1 = \sum_i u_j(u_j - 1)/2$

$n_2 = \sum_i u_j(u_j - 1)/2$

n_c = Number of corcordant pairs

n_d = Number of discordant pairs

t_1 = Number of tied value in the ith group of ties for the first quantity.

n_j = Number of tied values in the jth group of this for the second quantity.

Data Presentation
Demographic Profile of Respondents
Out of the 280 valid responses, 155(55.%) were males, while 125(44.7%) were females.In terms of age, 40(14.2%) were between ages 25-35,120(42.8%) were between ages 35-45, 80(28.5%) were between ages 45-55,while 40(14.2%) were 55 and above. The analysis indicated that out of the 280 valid responses, 25 (8.9%) were diploma holders, while 35(1.25%) were HND holders,160(57.1%) were BSC Holders,60(21.4%) were Msc Holders. In terms of experience, 70(25.0%) had 5-10 years' experience, 155(55.3%) had 10-20 years of experience, 55(19.6%) had 20-30 years of experience.

Bivariate Analysis
Testing of Hypotheses
The hypotheses stated in chapter one of this study were tested statistically in this section using Kendall tau-b. The result of the statistical testing was used to either support or not support the hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

H1: Leadership climate has significant relationship with Goal attainment in Quick Service Restaurant.

Table 1 Kendall's tau_b Tests Output
Correlations

			Leadership climate	Goal attainment
Kendall's tau_b	Leadership climate	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.812**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Goal attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.812**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the result of the above Table, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.812) between Employee between leadership climate and Goal attainment in Fast food establishment is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.55) indicates that 55% of change in goal attainment in QSRs can be explained by leadership climate. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the hypothesis was supported. Therefore, Leadership climate has a significant relationship with goal attainment in QSRs.

Hypothesis 2

H2: Leadership climate has significant relationship between leadership climate and growth of Quick Service Restaurants.

Table 2 Kendall's tau_b Tests Output

Correlations

			Leadership climate	Growth
Kendall's tau_b	Leadership climate	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.717[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.717[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the result of the above Table, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.717) between leadership climate and growth of QSRs is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.51) indicates that 51% change in growth of QSRs can be explained by the application of leadership climate. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the hypothesis was supported. Therefore, Leadership climate has a significant relationship with growth of QSRs.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
Based on the hypotheses tested, findings have revealed that that there is a positive and significant relationship between the Independent variable, leadership climate and employee performance (growth and goal attainment) in QSRs in Port Harcourt. . From the study, it can be also being seen organizational climate is a necessary tool for employee performance. The findings were supported by Studies form Crim & Seijts, 2016) that have shown that there is a relationship between positive organizational climates and employee engagement in enhancing employee performance. Employee performance is positively related to the effective relations that exist between the managers and the employees. As a result of that he stressed the need for managers to properly connect with their employees. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) succinctly added that a lower employee engagement in an organization can be as a result of the negative work environment. They noted that such situations brings about low productivity. In every human being, there is that innate desire to be respected, valued, recognized for abilities and competence, and also to have freedom or control over the discharge of work. The inability of an organization to recognize these make up of human nature, will create a situation where man-agers will treat their employees in a disdain manner. This action therefore culminates in the employees becoming de-motivated.

CONCLUSION
The study focused on leadership climate and employee performance in QSRs in Port Harcourt. Based on the discoveries made in this study it can be established that leadership climate is critical to the success of any organization. Therefore, management should have the interest of employees at heart so as to know their needs and methods of satisfying those needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
- ❖ The study recommends that QSRs should employ positive leadership climates practices to achieve consistent and improved results in their employee performance.
- ❖ Management of QSRs in Port Harcourt is to develop new concept of authority, motivation and leadership. Most importantly, developing competence in emotional intelligence will afford them the opportunity to understand and manage human behaviour appropriately in the workplace.

AREA OF FURTHER RESEARCH

There is need for more research work on leadership climate and Employee performance of QSRs in Port Harcourt. This research work is delimited to QSRs in Port Harcourt. Not much has been done on all the dimensions of organizational climate in manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The researcher therefore suggests that a similar research work should be carried out in other firms and states, as a way of comparing results.

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APPENDIX 1
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION