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INTEGRITY AWARDS AND BADGES: CATALYSTS FOR POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the potentials of integrity awards and badges in fostering a positive school climate in secondary schools in Nigeria. By recognizing and rewarding students' and teachers' integrity through awards and badges. Schools can promote a culture of honesty, respect and responsibility. This study explored how integrity awards and badges can be a catalyst for a positive school climate, examining how such awards and badges can motivate students and teachers to demonstrate integrity. The study provide insights into the effectiveness of integrity awards and badges in promoting a positive school climate in Secondary schools in Nigeria.
Keywords: Integrity Awards and Badges, School Climate

INTRODUCTION

Education remains a powerful tool which can be used for a nation's transformation. It plays a crucial role in the socio economic and political reconstruction of any nation. Education is also vital for human capital development. The role of education to the society and its occupants cannot be overemphasized; as it supports immensely an all-round development of any nation. In Nigeria, there are three major levels of education which includes the basic, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The secondary level of education is the post basic education which the children receive after a successful completion of the basic level. Secondary schools provide education to students typically aged 11 to 18 years. The importance of secondary education lies in its position both as the bridge between the basic and tertiary education and also as the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society (FRN, 2013). There are two categories of secondary schools in Nigeria; public and private secondary schools. Public secondary schools are owned by the government while private secondary schools are owned by individuals. Private secondary schools, on the other hand, are schools owned, financed and managed by private individuals, missions,

corporate organizations and non- governmental organizations (NGO's). Private secondary schools, according to Etuk (2005), were set up for the reason of providing better teaching and learning conditions than that obtained in the public secondary schools. This level of education prepares its graduates for tertiary institutions or skilled job choices. Secondary schools prepare students for continuing education at the tertiary level. While those not proceeding are prepared for the world of work, wealth creation and entrepreneurship. There is the essential need to encourage students towards keen interest in learning especially in today's generation where it appears that the zeal and enthusiasm for academic pursuit seems to be overtaken by the quest of social media usage and artificial intelligence. Irrespective of the ownership, secondary schools in Nigeria have common objectives to achieve as stated by FRN (2013, p.17-18) as follows:

a. Provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background;
b. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles;
c. Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
d. Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
e. Develop and promote Nigerian Languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
f. Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
g. Foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and
h. Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

The achievement of the above objectives has been the priority of secondary school education in Nigeria whether public or private. The secondary education level is managed by the principal who is responsible for utilizing the available school resources to enhance the attainment of stated goals of the school. The success or failure of a particular secondary school will be attributed to the principal, however, principals alone cannot work in isolation towards the achievement of the goals;

they therefore should work together with their teachers. No educational level in Nigeria (Secondary education inclusive) could rise above the quality of its teachers (FRN. 2013). Therefore, to be able to achieve the goals and objectives of secondary education in Nigeria, there is the need for support on motivation of students towards them having keen interest in the teaching and learning process which can be achieved through various encouraging strategies amongst which includes presentation of integrity awards to students who are exceptionally successful in academics. These awards and badges are carried and hanged with honour and prestige. It also builds confidence and self-esteem on the students. Integrity awards and badges facilitate recognition of outstanding performances to appreciate efforts of those involved in excellent achievements which remains a worthwhile voyage in educational institutions as it aims to motivate individuals within and around the system. School administrators through the structure of the administrative process applaud performances of students and teachers at schools to reinvigorate beneficiaries and encourage others towards such desirable behaviours. Specifically, students involved in such exceptional recognition feel honored with a sense of self confidence and a boast of self-esteem. In another dimension perseverance for success, increase in aspirations and growth of mindset towards learning are kindled in the students, while leaving a feeling of dismay to unwanted behaviours and detestable characters. More so, teachers feel satisfied with their efforts towards job involvement in instructional delivery and learning experiences. By extension, these recognitions add new energy to the school administration, improving the school climate, promoting the school culture and reforming the school structural process. Generally, this development enhances the entire school system and principals of schools stand a chance to experience credibility in the school reputation. Interestingly, desired school atmosphere can best be achieved through the offer of integrity awards and badges to outstanding performances in the school.

Awards are honors given to people in recognition of excellent achievements. According to Fawehinmi (2024) award aims to encourage, promote, celebrate and protect the uncommon principles of openness, honesty, probity, accountability and transparency in public and private life and whistleblowing to deserving persons and bodies. Awards distinguish personalities and cuts across different areas of accomplishment. In Ma and Uzzi (2018) awards identify and confirm distinctive research, advance scientific discoveries, and confer credibility to persons, ideas, and disciplines. Viewed from different perspectives, awards support both personal and professional

development. Though awards come in various types, recipients can concur it creates lasting legacy and upholds integrity. Integrity awards are catalysts to performance. Integrity awards are honors given to those that showed exceptional values, strong moral principles and ethics in their pursuit of a career. American Society for Public Administration (2024) noted that integrity awards are presented to an individual or organization that has made outstanding contributions to responsible conduct. Integrity awards inspire and motivate individuals. University of North Texas (2024) pointed out that integrity awards acknowledge individuals with exceptional ethical behavior through thoughts, words, and deeds. Thus, further asserted that integrity awards value honesty and transparency, express gratitude for others, respect differences, take responsibility for actions, and demonstrate trustworthiness. In educational institutions, related exceptional performances in the cognitive domain are applauded with academic awards.

Academic awards are honors given to students for outstanding academic achievement. It can also be given to faculties or researchers to recognize excellence in a particular field of study. Often documented, academic achievement awards encourage students and motivate them to learn while discouraging intellectual laziness and dropout rates. To a great extent, secondary school principals can explore the opportunity of academic awards to inspire students in both cognitive and character. Character awards in Eyleen (2021) are those awards given to recognize students who consistently display good character and serve as role models to the student body. By recognizing positive character traits and behaviors in the classroom community, teachers can promote respect and relationships throughout their students' development. Character awards offer a very good template for character recognition in schools and it can easily be integrated with a school's existing character educational program to promote school climate (Students' Centered World, 2021). In schools where character awards are effectively observed it can be said that truancy and other violence related activities are bound to be minimized. Feelings of cordial relationships are induced within the school environment and voluntary withdrawal of students due to fear of bullying and intimidation will be curbed. Character awards in schools motivate good moral values and behaviours in students. It is often reiterated that successful academic achievement is simultaneous with character, hence emphasis on the affective domain of learning to educate a learner. Also the psychomotor domain is not left out, thus appreciating students who have excelled in this domain with athletics awards gives every student an opportunity to be celebrated. Athletics awards are honors and prizes given to individuals with outstanding performances in sports. The athletics

award recognizes students who through the pursuit of both sports and studies, develop athletics skills and make meaningful life achievements in the process. An educational system with an accommodating learning environment through a well-coordinated structure creates room for diverse learners to excel in their different endowed skills and talents. Another integrity award capable of improving the school climate is creativity awards. Ijeoma (2014) referred to creativity awards as recognitions of honor to acknowledge and celebrate innovative and creative achievements of persons. Creativity awards identify individuals with exceptional skills, they exhibit excellence in art expression, music, crafts, design, literary works, media and digital related art works. Considering the rapid advancement in technology, today's generation of learners are placed in enclosed related creative learning. They easily adapt to digital innovative education facilitating creativity in their world of learning thus, creativity awards places the school climate in their most cherished education environment. Presentation of badges to students who exhibited commendable efforts in diverse ways through dedication and commitments stimulate students' interest in learning for improved academic achievement. These badges can be reflected as leadership badges, participation badges, community service badges, certification badges, perseverance badges, skill badges, self-improvement badges, as well as teamwork badges. Students who have devoted their time in voluntary services within and out of the school community can be motivated through presentation of visual symbols and garland. Such participation in events as club membership, conference, workshop attendance and volunteer events. Abramovich, Schunn and Higashi (2013) perceived participatory badges as external motivators. Thus, recognition of efforts and involvement of such participation from the students can pave the way for enhancement of the school climate. The gift of badges to students encourages self-esteem, self-confidence and also reinforces students. Presentation of badges inspired the students and positioned them for increased zeal towards learning which invariably will help to create a conducive school atmosphere.

School climate is one of the veritable factors that distinguishes one educational institution from the other. School climate is perceived from the environmental atmosphere in the school which can be observed from the interchangeable relationships that exist among the students, teachers, principals and other non-teaching staff. Syahril and Hadiyanto (2018) opined that school climate is one of factors that determine the success or failure of educational management. Pointing out that a good or conducive school climate can provide support or encouragement to the school principals,

teachers, staffs and students to perform various activities according to their respective duties and functions. School climate helps to manage behaviours at schools promoting good values, morals, beliefs and habits that accommodates cordial relationships among students and their fellow school mates. The orderliness and good working attitude that exists in the school promotes the school climate which can be encouraged through recognition and applause of good behaviours. Thus, the central figure with the responsibility of coordinating such an atmosphere to maintain a positive school climate at the secondary school level are the principals. Sadly, such school climate seemed to be far-fetched, especially in Secondary schools in Nigeria. Studies showed that there are still records of truancy, absenteeism, bullying in public and private secondary schools in Nigeria. Unfortunately, some students who were mostly affected feel depressed and withdraw from school while others are confronted with threats and fear of the unknown. As a result many students lost the zeal of learning and perceived education as a futile venture. Thus, there is the need to reconnect the necessity and confidence of educational pursuit in today's students for positive perception. Although some researchers have conducted different studies to address these negativities perceived in school climates in public and private secondary schools in Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Efforts of those who have performed exceedingly above the expected standard are appreciated to applaud their exceptional achievements. It helps to boost their morale and facilitate more of such desired performances and behaviours. In some schools students are recognized and appreciated as well as the teachers to motivate them and also encourage others to reinforce such performances. Some school authorities organize prize giving day events, some organize career day events to appreciate performances and maintain a higher standard for their schools. In some cases the government at different intervals organizes school talent shows, skills and creative exhibitions for inter school competitions. These shows are followed with some packages of appreciation for distinguished performances of the events. Despite all these efforts, there are still weak feelings on students' perception of school climate in Nigeria. Recent research shows that there are still records of flaws in character, bullying of students by their peers, violence, lack of respect and decorum. Some schools still experience loitering, truancy, absenteeism and increase in dropout rate. Also, unhealthy school environment, ineffective classroom management and decrease in academic achievement were also observed. These situations have kept scholars and stakeholders worrisome. Some researchers have worked on factors such as students' background, students' attitude,

teachers' approaches to teaching and learning and principals' leadership styles as those that could boost school climates in secondary schools in Nigeria, but the problem persists. Thus this situation motivated the researchers to x-ray the place of integrity awards and badges in ensuring a conducive school climate in secondary schools in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Integrity Awards

Integrity awards are honors given to those that have shown exceptional values, strong moral principles and ethics in their pursuit of a career. Integrity awardees are seen to be consistently exemplified with integrity at every opportunity, making ethical choices even when facing challenging situations. Integrity awards are catalysts to performances. According to Archbishop Cranmer (2024) integrity awards recognise those students who consistently uphold honesty, fairness, and ethical behaviour, regardless of external influences. Cranmer stressed further that the integrity award of students revolves around the students' overall commitment to ethical choices in their daily life, in recognition of their internal moral compass and their dedication to living by their values. With reference to the University of North Texas Champion Award (2024) integrity awards not only celebrates the recipients for their commitment to integrity but also serves as an inspiration for others to prioritize ethical behavior in all aspects of their professional lives. In their opinion, motivation for award program strive to foster a culture where integrity is not only valued but actively practiced, contributing to the overall excellence and reputation of the institution. The Integrity award encourages ethical behavior, enhances reputation and credibility. The Integrity award inspires others to emulate values and principles, demonstrating commitment. Such commitment helps to build trust and nurture personal growth which reflects oneself on continuous improvement. Integrity awards of recognition contribute immensely to both our personal and professional lives. It encourages workers and stakeholders in all sectors of the economy. In education, integrity awards tend to be a motivator in the system, both for teachers and students, even stakeholders. Basically integrity awards could relate to fostering a positive environment and atmosphere that encourage students to deeply involve themselves in school programs and activities. Students' interest towards learning could be stimulated and desire for regular attendance to school programs are pulled. In a more explicit context, integrity awards such as academic awards, character awards, athletics awards as well as creativity awards can be efficiently adopted

and utilized for a more conducive and positive school climate, encourage students towards learning and enhance the academic system. These awards will be extensively discussed as follows:

Academic awards

Academic awards are honors given to students for outstanding academic achievement. It can also be given to faculties or researchers to recognize excellence in a particular field of study. Academic achievement awards aim to encourage students and motivate them to learn while discouraging intellectual laziness and dropout rates. To a great extent, secondary school principals can explore the opportunity of academic awards to inspire students in the aspect of cognition achieving stated objectives in the cognitive domain. Studies have shown that academic awards in secondary schools play a pivotal role in recognizing and encouraging student excellence. Related studies also observed that academic awards motivate students to strive for their best, celebrate their achievements, and provide valuable recognition that can enhance college and scholarship applications. Bliven and Jungbauer (2021) noted that recognition of achievement is a motivational factor for college students to remain enrolled in their courses and persist in their coursework to graduate. The study also pointed out that students on the verge of leaving school who receive recognition remain enrolled and engaged in their degree pursuit. The cheer to continue doing well could reinvigorate them to keep up the good work of excellence. Academic awards can be seen as a trigger to improved academic action. Moreso, academic awards could encourage students in adoption of a growth in mindset, focusing on a continuous learning improvement and progress. Relatively, academic awards could also foster a culture of achievement, encouraging educators and students to pursue celebration of outstanding academic accomplishments. Stover, Hoffmann, Iglesia and Liporace (2014) concurred that students who receive recognition and praise become determined to continue their course work with more significant effort. Apparently, academic awards can be seen as relatively synonymous with educational institutions as it tends to facilitate educational activities and programs. It could connect to both students' and teachers' motivation and the entire school in general. When academic awards are effectively utilized, educators could strive for high standards and students aim for outstanding achievements, exhibiting commitment to academic excellence and student success. Prospectively, the eagerness for academic pursuit could be cultivated in fostering positive perception of school climate in the students.

Character awards

Promotion of lifelong learning for knowledge and personal growth in attitude and behaviour throughout one's lifetime is another interesting view. Character awards aim to reinforce and arouse others to emulate shining examples by adopting choices that harmonize with high ethical standards. According to Alutu and Adubale (2020) character education centres round ethics as it attempts to promote the development of positive traits in students as ethical human beings. Observing that the idea of developing character in students is a perennial and global issue. Thus, positive character dispositions could be assessed on the premise of one's conduct and can be tagged as a necessity for a successful life career. Character awards facilitate character education giving a soft landing on achieving instructional objectives stated in the sphere of affective domain on teaching and learning experiences. In university education, conferring degree certification on deserving graduates is usually based on academic achievement and character. Gecan and Mulholland-Glaze in Troutman (2014) asserted that Socrates and John Dewey strongly believe that the passing on of moral traditions is imperative and a part of school duty. In consideration of the goals of education in Nigeria as endorsed in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2013) education is to produce scholars who are morally sound, patriotic and effective citizens and capable of making responsible decisions and wise judgment. In more precise words, character is relatively a complement on academic achievement of students. In schools where character awards are effectively observed it can be said that truancy and other violence related activities are bound to be minimized. Feelings of cordial relationships are induced within the school environment and voluntary withdrawal of students due to fear of bullying and intimidation will be curbed. Character awards in schools motivate good moral values and behaviors in students. Thus, discouraging disruptive behaviours. Moreso when character awards are linked to teaching and learning, building up of motivation and encouragement could relate in students' strive for moral excellence, boost of hard work and dedication. It can also enhance students' confidence and self-esteem as well as develop a positive image for oneself and the school being represented. Character awards can in a larger extent pave the way for a sense of value and respect for students. The school which the students are associated with could be viewed with the perception of portraying a positive climate among the peers and concerned members of the society.

Athletics awards

In education, achievement of instructional objectives of teaching and learning experiences revolve around the three domains of learning known as cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. While cognitive domain is identified with academic instructional objective; affective domain is identified with character or attitude instructional objective. Interestingly, the psychomotor domain is identified with muscular activities which in this study are tagged with athletics and other sporty games or skilled activities. According to Adie, Chom, Bichi and Sani (2023) gifts and presents given to athletes for qualitative performance motivate other upcoming athletes to emulate or even supersede them. Athletics awards give positive energy to both the awardees and the spectators. Students who are not too significantly identified with academic excellence or exceptional moral depositions can be quite outstanding in athletics and other sporting or games related activities and such students ought to be encouraged and motivated with deserving recognition. Onifade and Fasan (2017) concurred that athletes provided with gifts and presents as rewards for a certain performance will strive hard to perform better in subsequent competitions. Thus athletics awards could be such recognition for motivation and encouragement to students which could stimulate their perception of school climate and increase their desire to schooling.

Creativity awards

Creativity awards are recognitions of honor to acknowledge and celebrate innovative and creative achievements of persons. Creativity awards identify individuals with exceptional skills, they exhibit excellence in artistic expression, music, crafts, design, literary works, media and digital related art works. In consideration of the rapid advancement in technology, today's generation of learners are placed in enclosed related creative learning. They easily adapt to digital innovative education facilitating creativity in their world of learning thus, creativity awards places the school climate in their most cherished education. Some researchers were of the opinion that outstanding scholarship and creativity awards are designed to encourage, reward and publicly acknowledge sustained excellence in research and creative activity. Creativity award recognizes excellence in the visual and performing arts, music, entertainment, in the publication of scholarly work, in the completion of research and sponsored projects, and in the development of new and innovative ideas in research and creative ideas and performances. Creativity award is inclusive of all forms of innovative ideas, advancement in skills and inventions. Onkar, Gautam, Meenakshi and

Ravinder (2022) opined that people with creativity can think critically, handle complex challenges and come up with unique solutions thus ought to be motivated. Creativity awards in the current day global technological advancement can go a long way to encourage today's learners in critical thinking and digital explosive ideas. Elisa, Marijn and Andreas (2018) stated that in creativity, divergent thinking is often equated with creative thinking. Emphasizing that true creativity facilitates thinking out of many solutions that could contribute in ways to solving the problems and finishing the task at hand. Thus creativity awards could relate to professional actions or programs that stimulate the zeal for innovation and inventions of ideas for problem solving. Thus, motivating students to have undivided passion for pursuit of education in a conducive school environment devoid of unfavorable climate.

Integrity Badges

Badges are visual objects or symbols being representations of achievements, successful endeavors or renowned skills. Badges could also be a visible symbol of representation for an affiliation or membership that are worn or displayed to recognize and showcase accomplishments. Badges are diverse and can be used to promote engagement, motivation, and recognition. According to Lasse, Tapio and Ari (2015) a badge is typically a graphical icon that appears as a reward for the user after reaching an achievement. Badges can often be used in various contexts, including educational activities. In educational institutions badges are very significant, showcasing a scene of dignity, self-worth and self-respect to as many as that are recognized and applauded. Students who were appreciated with presentation of badges seem overwhelmed with a feeling of self-satisfaction that reinforces oneself and peers. Such actions are deemed to relate to a strong desire that stimulates learning urgently in students. According to Dana (2017) introducing badges in the classes at high school aims to reveal the potentials in boosting students' engagement and motivation to learn. Schools who recognize their students in such ways are bound to be associated with positive perception of the school administrative processes and school climate in general. Badges could serve as a recognition, motivation, credentialed and an identity for oneself. School badges are dignified and worn by students on their uniforms, jackets or berets with a feeling of self-worth, self-respect and boosting of self-esteem. Anzalone (2015) asserted that a badge tells that the bearer has accomplished an outstanding task. These could give students confidence in schooling and pursuit of a career in education. They can also relate to the schools being perceived with a positive

climate even stakeholders and all concerned. Presentation of school badges to students acknowledge and celebrate exceptional achievements while encouraging learners to strive for excellence. Chunqi and Luke (2024) concurred that school badges could support students' learning especially when appropriately designed. Presentation of badges to students could foster a sense of belonging, support and reinforce accomplishment.

Badges can also be in digital form showing an accomplishment which apparently authenticates an online verification. In Minh (2024) digital badge can show more information, validated and verified which offer links to a portfolio and other evidence of skill acquired, knowledge learned, or accomplishment earned. Presentation of badges aims at motivating students' interest towards learning and could stimulate regular attendance to school programs and activities. In a more precise context, badges such as participation badges, leadership badges, community service badges, perseverance badges, skill badges as well as team work badges can be efficiently explored and engaged for an effective school functional system to improve positive perception of school climate, encourage students towards learning and enhanced academic system. These forms of integrity badges will be discussed extensively below:

Participation Badges

Participation badges are visual objects or symbols being representations of one's engagement and commitment for being part of various activities, events, and programs. Participation badges in schools recognize and celebrate the efforts of students' participation in curricular and extracurricular activities which foster a sense of motivation. Engaging oneself in active involvement to become an integral part of an event deemed essential and extensively could relate to personal growth development. It can also go a long way in shaping ideas, experiences and contributing to perfection on such events. Noyes, Welch, Johnson and Carbonneau (2020) pointed out that participatory badges are awarded to learners that fulfil certain tasks or participate in some activities. In schools students can be encouraged for being part of a successful event through presentation of participation badges to the individual participants. Participation badges promote recognition within various contexts especially on students to enhance their interest in learning and could foster continuous zeal towards schooling and other academic activities and programs. Boesdorfer and Daugherty (2020) observed that badges had positive effects on students' learning outcomes such as motivation and engagement. Participation Badges could be given to students on

the basis of events participation such as conferences, workshops, webinars, sports, games, competitions as well as training courses. The aim of participation badges is to encourage the spirit of willingness and engagement in taking part in various related regular school attendance and involvement in academic activities. Presentation of participation badges to deserving students can inspire and facilitate meaningful self-development.

Leadership Badges

Leadership badges are visual objects or symbols being representations of one's engagement and commitment for being part of leadership activities and programs. Leadership badges are visual representations awarded to individuals who demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, qualities and achievements. Leadership badges in schools recognize and celebrate the efforts of students' participation in leadership roles and functions. In Chientzu and Shi-Jen (2016) badges can be effective to incentivize learners to complete specific tasks or increase learning participation including leadership roles. Participation in active leadership roles equips students for the future, thus it is deemed crucial and beneficial for the individual's growth and development for the tomorrow. It could go a long way in equipping the minds of the students, facilitating the ability to develop ideas and experiences and contributing to meaningful coordination of administrative responsibilities. In schools students can be encouraged for being part of a successful leadership planning and roles through presentation of leadership badges to the individual participants. Leadership badges promote recognition within various contexts especially on students to enhance their interest in learning and could foster continuous zeal towards schooling and other academic activities and programs. Leadership badges could be given to students on the basis of school functionaries and class monitors such as senior prefects, deputy senior prefects, sanitary prefects, regulatory prefects, labour prefects, library prefects, chapel prefects, punctuality prefects, refectory prefects and so on. The leadership badges could be worn by the students on the uniforms and berets with a display of self-achievement which boost a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Ege (2024) opined that badges represent accomplishments and milestones. The aim of participation badges is to encourage the spirit of willingness and engagement in taking part in various related leadership roles, regular school attendance and academic activities in schools. Presentation of leadership

badges to deserving students can inspire and facilitate self-growth that supports oneself for the future.

Community Service Badges

Community service badges are visual objects or symbols being representations of one's involvement and commitment for being part of community service activities, events and programs. Community service badges are visual representations awarded to individuals for self-volunteer work and offer of assistance to community service engagement, social impact and other related activities. Community service badges in schools recognize and celebrate the efforts of students' participation in community service roles and assistance. According to Point Park University (2024) community service badges recognize students who successfully complete a course that has been designated as having a component where students are engaged with community based organizations. Participation in active community service roles equip students for the future to inculcate in them love for humanity, fostering peaceful co-existence, health care services, social service needs, and other humanitarian services. Thus, it is deemed essential and beneficial for the individual's growth and development in respect of what the future holds. It could go a long way in equipping the minds of the students, facilitating the ability to develop ideas, experiences and feelings for human needs. Alejandro, Erkan, Alejandra, Miguel, Juan, and Juan (2019) noted that most students perceived badges as positive elements of the course with a variety of reasons that reinvigorate. Students can be encouraged for being part of a successful community service planning, programs and roles through presentation of community service badges to those involved in participation of successful civic responsibility, social awareness and community projects. Such community service badges reinvigorate students' efforts and subsequently promote recognition within various contexts on the students to enhance their interest in learning. Actions as such could also foster unwavering zeal towards the continuous schooling processes and other academic activities. Community service badges could be given to students on the basis of social justice advocate, charitable donations, environmental steward, health care supports, youth mentoring, aged assistance and other self-volunteer services. The community service badges could be worn by the students on the uniforms, jackets and berets with a display of self-value which encourages more services and offer of love and care to the society. The aim of these badges is to encourage the spirit of willingness and involvement in being part of the various related community service

assistance and supports, attracting students' regular attendance to school and effective participation in academic activities. Presentation of community service badges to deserving students can motivate, inspire and facilitate personal growth that supports students for the future. Integration of community service badges presentations to students could relate to reinforcement and stimulation of others interest which might go a long to improve students' perception of the school climate and standard.

Perseverance Badges

Perseverance badges are visible objects or symbols being representations of one's commitment for steadfastness in achievement of a predetermined goal. Perseverance badges are visual representations awarded to individuals for demonstrating persistence, determination, and resilience in challenging situations, obstacles and adversity. Perseverance badges in schools recognize and celebrate efforts of students' who have shown outstanding resilience and continuous efforts in pursuit of a vision. Perseverance often noted, breeds success and equips students with optimistic tools that could enable them to remain focused and anticipate for a promising future. Thus, perseverance is deemed crucial for students' growth and development for a successful career. In Niguidula (2020) students get badges on fulfilling requirements by selecting one of a given set of tasks, which provides some level of choice. Thus, perseverance badges promote growth of one's mindset, encouraging recipients to push through challenges and develop essential life supporting skills for determination and utmost focus to predetermined goals. It could go a long way in equipping the minds of the students, facilitating the ability to develop strong anticipation of visionary ideas. In schools, students can be encouraged for being part of a successful resilience scenario in tough situations through presentation of perseverance badges to the individuals for a show of strong exceptional values of determination. In situations where a student has gone through tremendous challenges in academic pursuit due to lack of support and eventually completed successfully against all odds can be presented with perseverance badges to applaud such outstanding courage and for a show of encouragement. Perseverance badges could relate to promotion and recognition at different contexts especially on students to enhance their interest in learning and could foster continuous zeal towards schooling and various academic activities. Perseverance badges could be given to students on the basis of tasks and results oriented, persisting through academic challenges, completing marathon events, bouncing back from significant failure,

show of grit as well as completing high demanding academic projects. According to Breakout Edu (2023) badges remain a popular instructional tool as they serve as a creative way to motivate and reward student progress towards expected behaviors. The perseverance badges could be worn by the students on the uniforms and berets with a display of self-satisfaction which could boost self-esteem and confidence. The aim of perseverance badges is to encourage students on enthusiasm, willingness and zeal for overcoming successfully. Presentation of leadership badges to deserving students can motivate, inspire and promote self-growth that supports oneself for the future. The view of these could enhance students' perception of the school climate to a greater standard.

Skill Badges

Skill badges are visible objects or symbols being representations of one's outstanding competence and capabilities in achieving set goals. Skill badges are visual representations awarded to individuals for demonstrating exceptional skills, knowledge, or expertise in specific areas. Skill badges in schools recognize and celebrate efforts of students' who have shown outstanding capabilities and creative efforts in pursuit of set targets. In Styliani, (2015) badges are an increasingly popular way to showcase one's knowledge and experience. Skills are deemed essential for students' growth and development for a successful career. Skill badges promote development, competence and recognition enabling students to showcase expertise and to enhance personal and professional growth. It could go a long way in equipping the minds of the students, facilitating the ability to develop strong innovative ideas. In schools, students can be encouraged for being part of a successful skill exhibition process through presentation of skill badges to the students for a show of strong exceptional expertises and creativity. With the rapid advancement in technology, today's generation of learners are placed in enclosed related creative learning. They easily adapt to digital innovative education facilitating creativity in their world of learning thus, presentation of skill badges to students who develop and showcase exceptional skills could relate to a keen desire to acquire relevant skills for excellence. Skill badges could relate to promotion and recognition at various contexts especially on students to enhance their interest in learning and could foster continuous zeal towards schooling and various academic activities. Skill badges could be given to students on the basis of proficiency, mastery, artistry, craftsmanship, competence, expertise as well as prowess. According to Ege (2024), the study concluded that academic badges serve as micro-credentials that enable people to demonstrate their skills in a detailed way. The skill

badges could be worn by the students on their uniforms and berets with a display of self-value which could boost self-esteem and confidence. The aim of skill badges is to encourage students' efforts, zeal and willingness towards acquisition of knowledge, skills and techniques for personal relevance and resourcefulness. Presentation of skill badges to deserving students can motivate, inspire, and promote self-growth and development that supports oneself for the future, also enabling students to facilitate career and professional growth. The view of these could enhance students' perception of the school climate in a positive dimension.

Teamwork Badges

Teamwork badges are visual objects or symbols being representations of one's ability to collaborate, communicate, and contribute to a team's success. Teamwork badges can also be referred to as visual representations awarded to individuals for involvement, commitments and offer of expertise to teamwork projects. Teamwork badges in schools recognize and celebrate the efforts of students' participation in collaborative work. In Ege (2024) badges can be used in real-world situations, have a variety of achievements, such as mastery of an issue, teamwork, leadership as well as technical skills. Active participatory roles in teamwork equip students with spirit of oneness, tolerance and unity in diversity to build in them love for humanity and fostering peaceful co-existence. Thus, it becomes relatively essential for personal growth and development in respect of what the future holds in working together as a group. In Zuzana, Dana and Homola (2019) team projects and group work have proven to be useful and rewarding educational activities that help students develop important abilities and skills. It could go a long way in equipping the minds of the students, facilitating the mutual collaboration, ability to consider and adopt peers' ideas and culture of effective communication. Students can be encouraged for being part of a successful teamwork planning, roles and projects execution through presentation of teamwork badges to those involved. Such teamwork badges can reinvigorate students' efforts and subsequently promote recognition within various contexts to enhance their interest in learning. Actions as such could also foster collaborative ideas and motivation from peers towards continuous schooling processes and other academic programs. Teamwork badges could be given to students on the basis of leadership efforts, innovative efforts, team projects, joint presentation as well as team building. The teamwork badges could be worn by the students on the uniforms, jackets and berets with a feeling of satisfaction as part of a successful project which encourages more participatory services. The aim

of these badges is to encourage the spirit of collaboration and involvement in being part of the various related teamwork services assistance and supports, attracting students' regular attendance to school and effective participation in academic activities. Presentation of teamwork badges to deserving students can motivate, inspire and facilitate personal growth that supports students for the future. Integration of teamwork badges in schools could relate to reinforcement and stimulation of students' interest which might go a long to improve students' perception of the school climate to a greater extent.

INTEGRITY AWRDS, BADGES AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

School climate is one of the significant factors that distinguishes one school from another. School climate relates to the environmental activities in the school which can be observed from the interactions and existing relationships among the students, teachers, principals and other non-teaching staff. Syahril and Hadiyanto (2018) maintained that school climate is one of factors that determine the success or failure of educational management. Stressing that a good or conducive school climate can provide support or encouragement to the school principals, teachers, staff and students to perform various activities according to their respective duties and functions. School climate helps to manage behaviours at schools, promoting good values, morals, beliefs and habits that accommodates peace coexistence and cordial relationships among students and their schoolmates. The orderliness and good working attitude that exists in the school promotes the school climate which can be encouraged through recognition and reinforcement of good behaviours. Thus, the central figure with the responsibility of coordinating such an atmosphere to maintain a positive school climate at the secondary school level are the principals. Positive school climate should be devoid of bullying, truancy, absenteeism, loitering, perambulating, malingering which can discourage students from regular school attendance and in some worse scenarios result in dropout of school by deeply affected students.

Barrett, Zhang, Davies and Barrett (2015) noted that there are growing bodies of research suggesting that the physical learning environment of schools can also predict a range of educational outcomes including academic achievement. In other words, school climate plays a fundamental role in the academic achievement of students. Hrbackova and Hrncirikova (2022) noted that the various interpersonal relationships and social processes that occur in the classrooms and other social spaces in the school shape the overall quality of the school environment. Zandvliet,

Pj, Mainhard and Tartwijk (2014) asserted that how students perceive, experience, and evaluate the school environment can be influenced by their interpersonal relationships and position in the school. Although it can be assumed that the perception of the school climate will vary depending on peer preferences. However, the knowledge regarding how the perception of the school climate and environment differs among students is relatively limited. Nonetheless, greater number of peer interaction may also influence students' perception of school climate. Lunetti, Giunta, Fiasconaro, Arbel, Basili, Thartori, Favini, Gliozzo, Pastorelli and Lansford (2023) concurred that school climate tends to be affected by both the interactions that are established within the classroom, and outside the classroom. School climate can be a multi diverse concept that includes physical, social and academic dimensions. The physical aspect of students' perception of school climate could reflect the appearance of the school building and classrooms, the size of the school, the proportion of students and teachers in the classrooms as well as the s available resources of the school. The social aspect of students' perception of school climate include the quality of interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, the extent of social interaction among students, and the cordiality at which students, teachers and the school administration relates. Moreso, the academic aspect of students' perception of school climate can be perceived from the quality of teaching and learning, stakeholders' expectations on academic achievement as well as students' performance monitoring. Students' perception of school could relate profusely affecting performances, attitudes, behaviors, academic achievements as well as school administration.

From the forgoing, it is not an overstatement to state that integrity awards and badges promote positive behavior such as respect, responsibility and honesty which contribute to a positive school climate. Furthermore, integrity awards and badges can encourage student engagement, motivation and participation in school activities, foster a sense of community and shared values among students, teachers and other members of staff, helps to reduce misbehavior such as cheating, bullying and disrespect. All the aforementioned to a very large extent help in promoting a positive school environment in a typical secondary schools in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Integrity awards and badges has the potential to serve as a catalyst for promoting a positive school climate in secondary schools in Nigeria. By recognizing and rewarding integrity through awards and badges, secondary school administrators can promote a culture of honesty, respect and

responsibility that benefits both students and teachers and other members of staff in both public and private secondary schools in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends as follows:

1. School administrators and policymakers should implement integrity awards programs in secondary schools to foster a culture of integrity that will promote a conducive and a positive school climate
2. School administrators and policymakers should implement integrity badge programs in secondary schools to foster a culture of integrity that will promote a conducive and a positive school climate
3. The government and private individuals should make the necessary logistics available to the principals that will facilitate the implementation of integrity awards and badge programs in secondary schools in Nigeria

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