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**INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL-PARENT COLLABORATION ON STUDENTS'
DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EZZA SOUTH LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of principal-parent collaboration on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The design adopted descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all the public secondary school principals, teachers, students and parents. in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 2,079 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Principal-Parents Collaboration on Student Discipline Questionnaire (IPPCSDQ)". Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that principal-parent collaboration has strong influence on students' discipline. The study recommended among others orientation for principals and parents on the need to adopt collaborative strategies for the achievement of effective students' discipline.

Keywords: Discipline; Principal-parent collaborative strategy; Communication collaborative strategy; Meeting collaborative strategy; Reinforcement collaborative Strategy

Introduction

Students' discipline has been a burning issue in Nigeria and the world over. This is because without discipline, societies cannot make much progress. The progress of any nation is always hinged on discipline knowingly or unknowingly. Therefore, discipline is very crucial in the life of every society for her to successful. Discipline is self control. It can be

learnt through training and instruction intended for the formation of proper conduct and action. In this training, one acquires the ability to defer immediate gratification. A disciplined student is well mannered, exhibits self-control, obeys stated rules and regulations, and is orderly, responsible, respectful, and assiduous. Syaikhoni, Subandi, Fadillah, and Pratiwi (2021) in support of this assertion maintained that, a deviation from these attitudes and other ethical behaviours is indiscipline. In secondary schools, discipline is the root of every success. A disciplined student is a blessing to both the parents, principals, and the society at large.

With regard to the importance of discipline in the society, Okeke (2021) observed that orderly and lawful life style is desired by society in order to maintain peaceful existence, wealth, and stability. In line with this, every society is always proud to have disciplined citizens who contribute positively towards its growth. If there is no discipline in the society, the safety of the people is not guaranteed. On the other hand, indiscipline hampers societal development and ushers in chaos, violence, and social unrest. Unfortunately, the rate at which indiscipline has gripped the entire Nigerian nation and especially public secondary schools these days is worrisome. That is why there is need for the clarion call for collaboration of parents and principals and indeed the entire school authorities on the issue of discipline in public secondary schools especially in Ezza South Local government Area of Ebonyi State.

According to Salleh and Rosli (2019) the issue of students' discipline has received widespread media attention in the whole world and has sparked heated debate, as it appears to be a never-ending problem. In Nigeria, the present spread of indiscipline among students is most alarming and needs urgent attention of all education stakeholders. Many students are observed to exhibit varieties of behavioural disorder which manifests in their lateness to school and leaving before time, disrespectful attitudes, smoking, drug addiction, dishonesty, stealing, bullying, truancy, cultism, violence, kidnapping, examination malpractice, and other related social crimes (Odebode, 2019). All efforts made by the government and the school principals to curb the web of indiscipline have proved abortive.

In Ezza South Local Government Area, students are generally observed to show some kind of resistance towards discipline. In reality, many students appear to struggle with discipline. A good number of

students demonstrate high level of preference for either school manager or parent who is not strict in handling disciplinary cases. Their lack of discipline has created some mutual distrust and suspicion between parents and principals as they tend to apportion blames on each other for the students' lack of discipline. This is why collaboration between the school principals and parents is vital for the discipline of students. For example, in 2021, according to eye witnesses, many schools including Kpakpaji Secondary School rioted and destroyed school properties irrespective of the principal's effort to instil discipline in them.

It seems however that some school principals in Ezza South Local Government Area have not considered parents collaboration as a determinant factor to achieving effective discipline of their students, and as such find it difficult to single-handedly bring out desirable behaviours in these students. Thus, some students graduate with undesirable behaviours and transit from secondary school to the tertiary institutions as drug addicts, cultists and truants, causing problems to the university management and their parents. Therefore, to help achieve discipline in public secondary schools especially in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebony State, principal-parent collaboration must be enhanced.

Principal-Parent Collaboration (PPC) means, fostering school dialogue, sharing responsibility and working together in a close relationship to achieve a common goal. In other words school discipline, collaboration between school managers and parents should not be absent because according to Kadama (2016) the duty of dealing with student discipline remains a fascinating issue for both school managers and parents. PPC can be an effective way to instil discipline in students. In this regard, Olayemi (2019) suggested frequent communication, regular school meetings, and positive reinforcement as collaborative strategies through which students' discipline can be enhanced. Frequent Communication Collaborative strategy on the other hand refers to the transfer of ideas, pieces of information, feelings etc. from one person (sender) to another (receiver). Olayemi (2019) identifies principal-parents use of frequent communication as an effective collaborative strategy in enhancing student discipline. When principals and parents give each other essential information concerning a student's behaviour at school or at home necessary actions should be

taken immediately by both parties so that the student's life can be transformed. For Kamanda (2013), to uphold discipline, communication must be on time and the means of communication between the stakeholders should be clear, unambiguous, and constant. This communication could be in form of frequent letters to parents, exchange of phone calls, text messages, via WhatsApp platform etc. Others include circulars, memos, notices, suggestion boxes, minutes, reports, printouts, school publications, or students' handbook which is good and less misunderstood. In effect, all the above mentioned strategies will help to improve students' discipline and also modify their behaviour.

Regular meeting of principals and parents is another strategy that can help improve students' discipline in public secondary schools in Nigeria especially in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebony State. Within these meetings a lot of issues concerning students' discipline can be discussed face to face and serious disciplinary actions established by both parties. When this is done no party will blame the other for students' indiscipline in school. Olayemi (2019), sees the use of regular meetings as an effective strategy that principal and parents could adopt in enhancing students' discipline. Habyarimana and Andala (2021) maintain that regular attendance of school meetings helps to promote student discipline. These meetings include; Parents Teachers Association meetings, Loco-Parentis meetings, meetings with parents of a particular class, and other scheduled or emergency meetings. In these meetings, both parents and guardians are sensitized about students' welfare and how to handle them at home. Principals are also updated about students' behaviours at home so as to know how to handle them in school.

Positive reinforcement is also another powerful and effective strategy that principals and parents can use to improve students' discipline in public secondary schools in Nigeria and especially in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebony State. Students tend to do better when they are recognized, motivated or rewarded for their good actions. And principals, parents and other stake holders should never neglect this method because it accelerates students' good behaviours. The essence of these reinforcements is to help the students live a disciplined life style for a better future. This was why Skinner (1992) noted that parents should reward positive behaviours and punish

negative ones, because behaviour is learned and reinforcement plays an important role in achieving positive outcomes. This is why this paper is emphasizing that principals, parents and indeed all stakeholders should work together to achieve these positive outcomes in the area of school discipline..

Statement of Problem

Many schools in Nigeria complain of one problem of indiscipline or the other every now and then. In Ezza South Local Government Area, for instance, many students are noted to be disobedient, lazy, irresponsible, and lack self-control. Some are not only smokers, drug addicts, cultists, thieves, truants and murderers, but have extended to kidnapers. In addition, it is heart aching that principals and parents have lost hope, abandoned their duties and are now consenting to unethical behaviours especially examination malpractice and immodest dressing, as such, students are no longer studious but wait to cheat in examination halls. Despite all the efforts made and measures taken by the Nigerian government and Ebonyi State Ministry of Education to ensure improved students' discipline in public secondary schools, the problem of indiscipline has continued to rise. It is against this backdrop that the study examines the influence of principal-parents collaboration on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of principal-parent collaboration on student discipline in secondary schools in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi state. Specifically, the objective of the study is to:

1. Examine how frequent communication between principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.
2. Determine the extent to which regular school meetings between principal and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.
3. Find out how positive reinforcement by principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. How does frequent communication between principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?
2. How does regular school meeting between principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?
3. How does positive reinforcement by principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

- Ho₁. Frequent communication between principals and parents has no significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.
- Ho₂. Regular school meetings between principal and parents have no significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.
- Ho₃. Positive reinforcement by principals and parents has no significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Govern

Research Methodology

This study was designed after the descriptive survey design. The total population of the study was 12,903 which comprised of 28 principals, 224 teachers, 4,555 parents and 8,096 students of 14 public secondary schools in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The sample of this study was 2,079 principals, teachers, parents and students drawn from eight (8) of the fourteen (14) secondary schools within Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The sampling technique adopted for this study was Simple Random Technique. This technique was used to select the eight (8) participating schools. The number of Principals was 16; number of teachers of JSS2 and SS2 Classes were 224, JSS2 students were 676; their parents were 387; and SS2 students were 388; their parents were 388. Therefore, the total sample was 2,079. This sample was used to make generalizations about the entire population. The instrument used for data collection for this

study was a questionnaire titled “Influence of Principal-Parents Collaboration on Student Discipline Questionnaire (IPPCSDQ).” Two thousand and seventy-nine (2,079) questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to determine the opinions of the respondents on the topic under study. Descriptive and Inferential statistical methods were used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were employed in answering the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1:

How does frequent communication between principals and parents influence students’ discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the influence of frequent communication between principals and parents on students’ discipline

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	P	Remark
Between Groups	1571.701	12	130.975	25.200	.000	P < .05	Significant
Within Groups	5207.781	1002	5.197				
Total	6779.482	1014					

$d/f = 12, 1002$; $F_{\text{calculated}} = 25.200$; $F_{\text{critical}} = 1.75$; $P < .05$; significant

From the table above, the $F_{\text{calculated}}$ which is 25.200 is greater than F_{critical} which is 1.75. Hence, the null hypothesis that frequent communication between principals and parents has no significant influence on students’ discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area could not be retained, but the alternative was accepted. This means that frequent communication between principals and parents has significant influence on students’ discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.

Research Question 2:

How does regular school meeting between principal and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?

Table 2: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing the influence of regular school meetings between principals and parents on students' discipline

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	P	Remark
Between Groups	2238.669	9	248.741	55.053	.000	P < .05	Significant
Within Groups	4540.813	1005	4.518				
Total	6779.482	1014					

d/f = 9, 1005; $F_{\text{calculated}} = 55.053$; $F_{\text{critical}} = 1.88$; P < .05; significant

The analysis above shows that regular school meetings between principals and parents have significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area. This is because $F_{\text{calculated}}$ which is 55.053 is greater than F_{critical} which is 1.88. Hence, the null hypothesis could not be retained but the alternative was accepted.

Research Question 3:

How does positive reinforcement by principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area?

Table 3: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing the influence of positive reinforcement by principals and parents on students' discipline

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	P	Remark
Between Groups	3813.161	9	423.685	143.546	.000	P < .05	Significant
Within Groups	2966.321	1005	2.952				
Total	6779.482	1014					

d/f = 9, 1005; $F_{\text{calculated}} = 143.546$; $F_{\text{critical}} = 1.88$; P < .05; significant

The result of the above table demonstrates clearly that positive reinforcement by principals and parents has significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area. This is because; $F_{\text{calculated}}$ which is 143.546 is greater than F_{critical} which is 1.88. The implication of this is that, the null hypothesis could not be retained but, the alternative was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

How does frequent communication between principals and parents affect students' behaviour in the Ezza South Local Government Area? This is the study's first research question. The corresponding research finding reads: In Ezza South Local Government Area, frequent communication between principals and parents has no discernible influence on students' behaviour.

The second research question was how regular parent-principal conferences at schools in the Ezza South Local Government Area affect students' behaviour. According to the research, regular parent-principal conferences at schools in the Ezza South Local Government Area have no discernible influence on students' behaviour.

The findings of the first and second research questions and their corresponding hypotheses are supported by Olayemi (2019) who conducted a study to examine the role of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in promoting school education. The findings revealed that parents' regular attendance to school meetings especially those called to deal with disciplinary matters, and frequent communication between the school and parents are strategies to curb students' indiscipline.

The third research question states: How does positive reinforcement by principals and parents influence students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area? The corresponding research hypothesis states: Positive reinforcement by principals and parents has no significant influence on students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.

The third research finding is consistent with those of a study conducted by Lynnette et al. in 2021 to evaluate the efficiency of school principals' positive reinforcement approach on the administration of student behaviour in public secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya. The study's conclusions demonstrated the effectiveness of the

principal's positive reinforcement by showing a positive and statistically significant correlation between the variable and how well students were managed in terms of behaviour.

All the findings of this research work are supported by Habyarimana and Andala (2021) who conducted a study on parental involvement and students' discipline in twelve years basic education schools: a case study of Nyarugenge District. The findings of the study confirmed that parents are not adequately involved in students' discipline and control in the areas of effective intercommunication with the school authorities, rewarding students for good behaviours, visiting students for discussing their discipline with teachers and other school authorities and attendance of school meetings on discipline.

However, the findings of this study contradicted the findings of Ngalya (2017) who conducted a study to explore various management strategies used to deal with the students with indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality. The findings revealed that punishment, guidance and counselling and strong discipline committee were management strategies of students' indiscipline cases in public secondary schools.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that principal-parent collaboration has strong influence on students' discipline. This is because, principals, teachers, parents, and students are in support that frequent communication, regular school meetings and positive reinforcement of students by principals and parents are necessary strategies for enhancing principal-parent collaboration in order to instil discipline in students. This means, for positive outcome to be achieved in instilling strong integral discipline in students, principals and parents must collaborate using the earlier-mentioned strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals and parents should be given orientation on the need to adopt frequent communication, regular school meetings and positive reinforcement in working together to achieve effective students' discipline in Ezza South Local Government Area.

2. Positive reinforcement of students should be done by both principals and parents, including the teachers in the classroom so as to encourage the students to reinforce desirable behaviours while eliminating bad attitudes.
3. Ebonyi State government should ensure that necessary facilities such as good network, electricity, good roads, and so on are put in place for effective communication and structure the catchment areas of the schools according to proximity.

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