

Principals' Classroom Visitation and School Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. The study was guided by two (2) hypotheses. This study adopted the correlation research methods of the ex-post-facto design. The population was all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in the South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1185 respondents in three (3) States of the South Geopolitical Zone. The instrument for data collection was the "Principals' Classroom Visitation and School Discipline Questionnaire" (PCVSDQ). It was validated through the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument used the Split Half method, and an overall coefficient of 0.76 was established. The outcome confirmed the reliability. The instrument was administered to principals and teachers who were the respondents. Data were analysed using mean rating and standard deviation to provide an answer to research questions, and the benchmark for accepting or rejecting an item was 2.50. A mean score below 2.50 was rejected; 2.50 and above were accepted. Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 significant level. Findings revealed that classroom visitation influences school discipline. Also, the level of school discipline in public secondary schools in the South-South Geopolitical Zone was high. Hence, the States Ministry of Education should encourage school principals to supervise teachers and students to ensure school discipline.

Keywords: *Classroom Visitation, School Discipline, Principals*

INTRODUCTION

A principal heads a secondary school; a principal performs numerous responsibilities in effective administration toward the goals and objectives of secondary education. Such responsibilities include seeking school improvement and providing instructional or academic leadership. Instructional leadership is the most vital role of a school leader to show effective teaching-learning, and it has risen to importance as a guiding principle of leadership in education over the previous twenty to thirty years (Boyce and Bowers, 2018). The principal is the instructional head of the school and coordinates the teachers to ensure effective and

efficient delivery of services for the attainment of quality education for the students and society.

An aspect of principals' instructional leadership responsibility is the supervision of instruction. In an exploration, Adam and Ogunsanya (2000) found that for principals to be deemed competent in instructional supervision, they should be able to effectively perform their supervisory job with different strategies to ensure discipline, successful learning, and attainment of objectives. Principals' utilisation of supervisory strategies such as classroom visitation, clinical supervision, monitoring, and use of closed-circuit television supervisory strategies could make teachers, students, and the non-teaching staff familiar with those indices of indiscipline in the schools (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2012). The supervisory responsibility of the principal is critical for schools to make successful operations (Amirova, 2021). Instructional leadership is the most vital role of a school leader to show effective teaching-learning, and it has risen to importance as a guiding principle of leadership in education over the previous twenty to thirty years (Boyce and Bowers, 2018).

According to Zepeda (2013), classroom visitation intends to promote face-to-face interaction, build a relationship between the teacher and supervisor, and promote capacity building of individuals who are fundamental to the school's goals and objectives. Teseme (2014) expressed that classroom visitation leads to students learning through improvement in instructional practice and the promotion of changes that results in better developmental lifestyles for teachers and students in the learning environment. Thus, it becomes a strategy that helps to implement and improve the teaching-learning process for the advantage of the teachers and the students. Nwokafor (2017) sees the main task of the supervisor as that of creating conducive atmosphere for the teachers to achieve desired changes in the learners with the peculiar needs of the environment.

Discipline creates a good image of a school and allows students to learn productively in an environment. Discipline helps students to succeed in their learning and later in life. Teachers can teach effectively only when the classroom environment is calm and devoid of disruptive behaviour. Poor academic performance of students may be attributed to a lack of discipline in the school. The principal is often blamed for students' and teachers lack of discipline due to poor supervision. Secondary school principals are confronted with numerous challenges daily in the management of schools. These challenges impede the attainment of goals and objectives. Among the challenges is the issue of maintenance of a peaceful school climate and discipline (Abdurasheed & Bello, 2015).

According to Ehiane (2014), discipline has collapsed in schools as learners come late to school, some loiter around during lessons, and fight with dangerous weapons. An individual requires discipline to know how to respect people and obey and apply rules in order not to harm others and establish good relationships with them in the school and workplace. Acts of discipline that an individual exhibits in school impact positively on the individual's growth and development of a personality (Yudhawati, 2018). Practicing good behaviour, obeying rules, respect for others, and self-control are gradually formed over time. Training is one process of formation of a good personality (Handayani *et al.*, 2021). Students'

personalities and character can be developed in school through extra-curricular activities, moral and character education, value training, admonition and counseling, and belonging to voluntary organizations with ethical standards.

Several reports have been available in the electronic and print media, signifying that discipline has collapsed in schools generally in Nigeria and especially in the South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. This observation indicated the level of indiscipline among teachers and students in public secondary schools. Teachers' and students' disciplinary behaviour seems a problem and one of the most contentious in public secondary schools. Researches have shown that problems such as inadequate teaching, indiscipline, and classroom supervision with suitable supervisory strategies besiege public secondary schools in Nigeria. These conditions may have resulted in inadequate students' academic performance, a high drop-out rate, a high rate of examination malpractice, and a poor reading and writing culture among students.

Personal observation shows that secondary schools in the South-South have been plagued with issues of indiscipline among teachers and students. The present wave of indiscipline among teachers and students is particularly troubling and might require the prompt attention of all stakeholders in the school system, particularly the school principals. Indiscipline among students is expressed largely in the numerous disorderly behaviours demonstrated by students in and outside the school. It includes unpleasant behaviours like aggression, fighting, and hooliganism; absenteeism at school; inappropriate attire even when they wear their uniform; moral laxity; gambling; and other immoral practices. Parents have been accused by stakeholders that they have ignored the discipline of their children at home.

Society in general might not be exonerated from the issue of indiscipline in schools. Indiscipline stems from society's ideals, which have been warped and distorted. Society requires the sort of student that it receives. In contemporary culture, there is a great deal of indiscipline, which cannot but rub off on the students. For instance, studies have shown that students who enjoy gambling would conclude that there is no integrity in acquiring money and that hard work is not rewarded by society. Therefore, indiscipline has done more damage than good to education in the country. The school's academic performance has suffered as a consequence. Many students may have neglected their studies as a consequence of their lack of discipline; this has led to their involvement in examination fraud and other academic and social vices. Since indiscipline is the norm in most schools, students often believe that their actions are acceptable. With such a mindset, students may never cease engaging in wrongdoing as they mature. The issue of indiscipline in schools exceeds expectations. It begins slowly in schools and eventually wreaks havoc on the country's reputation.

The above scenario might not be sufficient for the researcher to state that principals' supervisory strategies could help deal with the issue of school discipline since they are mere observations, personal experience, speculations, and studies conducted outside the shores of the South-South Geopolitical Zone. Thus, there is a need to investigate principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in the South-South geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.
2. There is significant relationship on the level of school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was hinged on reinforcement theory which was propounded by B. F. Skinner in 1969. It evolves from the assumption that teachers will change their behaviour to receive definite rewards. According to reinforcement theory of Skinner (1969), people behave in a certain way because of reinforcement or stimulus they received in the past for the same behaviour. If the outcome of a particular behaviour is satisfying, positive reinforcement occurs and the person is expected to behave the same way again. The person is likely to change the behaviour if the reinforcement is negative. Skinner documented three distinct types of reinforcement. They are positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment. In positive reinforcement, a positive outcome support repetitive behaviour. Negative reinforcement of some behaviour occurs when unpleasant consequences are removed.

Classroom visitation is a formal or informal observation of teaching in the classroom and observation of other areas of the school (Balogun, 2020). Classroom visitation provides us with a rare opportunity to draw on the experience and insight of our peers to become better teachers. Classroom visitation is a much misunderstood supervisory phase. It is neither the only, nor the best, method of improving instruction, but it must stand as one of the many tasks a supervisor must perform within his school. It has been chosen for special attention here because it is still looked upon by teachers and many supervisors as inspection and rating alone. Classroom visitation helps to ensure teachers' regular attendance, punctuality and the use of appropriate resources and methods.

Classroom visitation is a procedure by which the principals' leaders can assist or aids the teachers to improve both their instructional strategies/techniques and the learning processes of the students (Peretomode, 2001). The main objective of the principals' visitation is for the improvement of the teaching-learning process as well as enhancing the capacity development of the teachers.

Classroom visitation and observation strategy is also seen as clinical supervision (Cogan, 2003). It is one of the techniques principals can adopt to ensure effective supervision of instruction in schools. Using this strategy, the principal visits the classroom to observe the teacher teach the students. Classroom visitation should be adequately planned by the principals to enhance discipline that will ensure quality education. Classroom visitation and observation is a clinical cycle involving lesson planning, lesson presentation, teacher/student

relationship, students' active participation, teacher personality and teacher knowledge of the subject matter (Edegbe, 2019). Classroom visitation and observation is a powerful technique through which an instructional leader possessing great wisdom can provide assistance to teachers to improve their professional practice and enhance students' learning (Ekpo & Eze, 2015). Every supervision strategy focuses on elements of school behaviour. To enhance school performance, principals should be able to employ measures that are real, measurable and certain. Schools perform better in a climate characterised by a strong discipline and effective teachers and student's relationships. Classroom observation has two main tasks namely: the teachers' tasks to teach the students and the supervisor's task which is to supervise the lesson and document the occurrence during the classroom encounter. Data can be collected during classroom observation either through recording verbatim all that happens in the classroom or recording selected specific areas. The recording can be through video-taping or audio taping to be reviewed later.

Classroom observation is one of the common ways of reflecting on pedagogical practices which can help teachers evaluate their strength and weaknesses (Atkinson & Bolt, 2010). After classroom visitation by the principal, a reflective conversation with the teacher about his or her instruction takes place. Classroom observation lasts for 3 to 5 minutes and focuses on instructional practices, students' engagement and curriculum issues (Nevenglosky, Cale, & Panesar Aguilar, 2019). Classroom walk through process can transform supervision into a partnership, focused on reflective practice and enables principals to obtain a clearer picture of teachers' performance (Suphasri, & Chinokul, 2021).

Classroom visitation allows principal as a supervisor to assess the curriculum in action and thus understand the status of the curriculum. Through regular classroom visitation, the principal can find out defects in the curriculum as well as defects in the instructional process. During classroom visitation, the supervisor should be friendly so that the entire class to be free to express themselves. Njogu (2020) notes that the principal or supervisor can have an insight into quality benchmark and performance through classroom visitation. Weeramunda (2008) in a study in Srilanka on discipline in schools found that indiscipline among teachers and students is increasing on a daily basis. An effective learning environment influences discipline and quality education and discipline implies regulation of teachers and the maintenance of order. These rules clarify the expected standards behaviours and performance.

Reports of West African Examination Council (2008) and National Examination Council (2008) declared that the high failure rates in senior secondary schools in Nigeria could be attributed to inadequate job devotion by teachers, teacher's high work-load, poor student/teacher ratio and poor supervisory job performance (Eze, 2006). Numerous teachers are just on the job to search for better jobs. The regular absenteeism, lateness to school, illegal movement from schools and indiscipline is a huge problem to the performance of objectives in secondary schools. Regular observation helps to progress quality education, discipline and it is usually recognized that schools are required to pass on habits, values and morals.

Classroom observation aims at enhancing the skills of teachers which improve discipline, students learning and offers expert support to unskilled teachers. Brookover (2009) found that performing principals frequently visited classroom, presented ground breaking programmes and supervisory strategies which enabled staff to communicate issues relating to school level of performance. They met with small groups of teachers to converse issues on discipline, students' performance and teachers' training programmes. Further Findings showed that inadequate classroom visitation negatively influenced school discipline, teaching, learning and discipline of teacher's processes. In today's school, principals in their supervisory jobs should treats teachers as an essential part of the process; quality is measured constantly; modification is an essential aspect of performance and challenges are measured with systemic strategies. With regular supervision of instruction with classroom visitation, the principals can identify indiscipline behaviours and other issues affecting teachers and offer immediate advice to them, which could help improve on their job performance (Asiyai, 2009).

Arubayi (2006) investigated the regularity of visits of education inspectors to primary and post primary in Delta and Edo States. The target population was all the primary and post primary schools in Delta and Edo States in the 2002/2003 academic session. The researcher sampled 15 % of the entire local government areas in both states which were stratified by senatorial districts. Four local government areas such as Oshimili South, Ethiope East, Warri South and Burutu local government areas were selected in Delta State. Three local government areas such as Oredo, Akoko Edo and Esan Central local government areas were selected in Edo state. In every chosen local government areas in each state, 10 % of the primary and post primary schools were arbitrarily chosen Public and private schools were used in the sample in Delta and Edo States. Delta state was made up of 26 primary and 16 secondary schools and Edo state was made up of 29 primary and 24 secondary schools. Findings showed that the regularity of instructional supervisors visit to the classroom monthly, termly and quarterly is a pointer that there is still lack of personnel to perform regular instructional supervision.

However, school discipline is a vital concern in education. The welfare of the general community depends upon its youth accommodating consensual principles and acting consequently. However, their potential may differ amongst schools and depend on communal awareness of ultimate behaviour as implicated in diverse traditions. In a school situation, indiscipline can be a serious obstacle to learning, and this has become a major concern of the educators and the public.

Numerous nations around the universe are faced by the prevailing predicament of student misbehaviour. The misconduct of students in classrooms to intercede with schooling and learning is contemplated to be the predecessor to afterward abandoning of school and comparable unenthusiastic social effects. Severe infringement of school regulation guiding principle can have discerned to unconstructive results on educators (Slavin, 2013). Instructors may be manipulated to violence or experience therefore having fears towards their security, lack of intellect distinction at work, extreme experience of anger, embarrassment or

humiliation, seclusion and depression. However, a number of young people may on no account divulge the nature of the happening or its effects on them. The self-self-belief of the educator therefore gets undermined and his/her intellect of private security desecrated and the executor not being authorized in such instances. According to Otieno (2012) discipline is a scheme of guiding the learners to make rational decisions. He further observes that good management of discipline saves substantial resources and time for the stakeholders.

METHOD

This study adopted the correlation research methods of the ex-post-facto design. The design allows for an appropriate measure of the degree of relationship between numbers of variables and gives an indication of this relationship simultaneously. The target population of the study was 33,968 principals and teachers in the public secondary schools in the South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria which was made up of Akwa- Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross–River, Delta, Edo and River States. The sample for the study consisted of one thousand, one hundred and eighty-five (1185) principals and teachers in three (3) states of South Geopolitical Zone.

The breakdown of the respondents was 289 principals and 896 teachers drawn from the population of the study and represented 50% of principals and 10% of teachers. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used for the study to ensure that respondents needed for the study was well represented. This was done by selecting three states from the six states in South-South Geopolitical Zone geopolitical zone which included Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Rivers States representing 50% of the entire states in the zone. Thereafter, the three States selected were stratified for adequate representation of respondents. Upon this, the researcher divided the population into strata on the basis of states. After which, a random sampling was drawn in each stratum separately and the results were combined to form the sample. The outcome showed 365 principals and teachers from Akwa Ibom State, 308 principals and teachers from Bayelsa State and 512 principals and teachers from Rivers State.

Table 1: Sample of Principals and Teachers in Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers States

S/N	States	Principals	Teachers	50% of Principals	10% of Teachers	Total Sampled
1	Akwa Ibom	152	2891	76	289	365
2	Bayelsa	184	2164	92	216	308
3	Rivers	241	3914	121	391	512
	Total	577	8969	289	896	1185

The instrument that was employed for collection of data was a questionnaire titled “Principals’ Classroom Visitation and School Discipline Questionnaire” (PSSSDQ). The instrument was in two sections. Two procedures were used to establish the validity of the instrument. These are the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using the “split half reliability method” on sixty four (64) respondents not

included in the sample size. For the split half method, the data collected were divided into the halves using the odd number items and the even numbers for the others, and as a result, a correlation formula was applied to the coefficient. The Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (r) test was employed to connect the sets of scores. The coefficient obtained was 0.76.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires on all the respondents in their respective schools. The study made considerable use of tables for the presentation and analysis of data. Percentages were utilized in analyzing the data on the demographic variables in the study, while the Pearson Correlation 'r' was employed in analyzing the data based on the two (2) hypotheses tested. The criterion for rejecting or retaining of the null hypotheses was on r or F-calculated values. When the r or F calculated was greater than the r or F-critical table value at a 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, but when the r or F-calculated was less than the r or F-critical table value at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline

Variables	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ² %	Remark
Principals' classroom visitation	2.95	.52	.157	.025	0.25	Related
School discipline	2.59	.93				

Data in table 2 shows relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline. From the table, principals' classroom visitation had a mean rating of 2.95 and SD of .52, while school discipline had a mean rating of 2.59 and SD of .93. The computed r value of .157 shows that there is a relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline. The r² value of .025 revealed that principal's classroom visitation is related to school discipline by 0.25% in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Table 3: Mean rating and standard deviation on level of school discipline

S/N	Level of school discipline	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	There is increasing case of absenteeism among teachers in school.	2.39	.96	Low
2.	Some teachers are frequently late to school	2.85	.85	High
3.	There is unauthorised movement of teachers in my school.	2.72	.91	High
4.	There is increasing case of lateness to school among teachers	2.69	.92	High
5.	Some teachers engage in trading during school hours	2.73	.91	High
6.	There are increasing verbal aggression among teachers in school.	2.57	.81	High
7.	There is low level of teachers' commitment in schools.	2.41	1.28	Low

8.	There is increasing usage of foul language among teachers in school.	2.39	.78	Low
9.	There is increasing lateness to schools among students	2.57	.88	High
10	Classwork is not adequately performed by students.	2.60	.81	High
11	loitering around the school premises during lesson is prevalent in my school	2.50	.88	High
12	Students use mobile phone in the class when lessons are going on	2.46	.91	Low
13	There are increasing cases of bullying behaviour among students in school.	2.62	.89	High
14	There are increasing disruption of classes among students	2.76	.92	High
15	There are high rates of truancy among students	2.77	.89	High
16	There is increasing absenteeism from school among students	2.67	.88	High
17	Some students take drugs during school hours.	2.37	1.43	Low
Average Mean Rating		2.59	0.93	High

Data in Table 3 showed mean rating and standard deviation on level of school discipline. Result on the table revealed that respondents agreed on some teachers are frequently late to school, there is unauthorised movement of teachers in my school, there is increasing cases of lateness to school among teachers, some teachers engage in trading during school hours, there are increasing verbal aggression among teachers in school, there is increasing lateness to schools among students, classwork is not adequately performed by students, loitering around the school premises during lesson is prevalent in my school, there are increasing cases of bullying behaviour among students in school, there are increasing disruption of classes among students, there are high rates of truancy among students and there is increasing absenteeism from school among students with mean rating above 2.50 benchmark.

Although, respondents disagreed on there is increasing cases of absenteeism among teachers in school, there is low level of teachers' commitment in schools, there is increasing usage of foul language among teachers in school, students use mobile phone in the class when lessons are going on and some students take drugs during school hours with mean rating below 2.50 benchmark. It could therefore be concluded that with average mean rating of 2.59 and standard deviation of .93 the level of school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria was high.

Table 4: Pearson r on principals' classroom visitation and school discipline

		Principals' Classroom Visitation	School Discipline
Principals' Classroom Visitation	Pearson Correlation	1	.157**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	879	879
School Discipline	Pearson Correlation	.157**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	879	879

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

Data in Table 11 shows, Pearson r on principals classroom visitation and school discipline revealed that a strong positive relationship between principals classroom visitation and school discipline with $r=.157$ and significance $p=.000$. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South geopolitical zone, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Table 14: Pearson r on level of school discipline

		Level of school discipline
School Discipline	Pearson Correlation	.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.698
	N	879

Data in Table 14 shows, Pearson r on level of school discipline revealed that school discipline with $r=.013$ and significance $p=.698$. Thus, the null hypothesis that there was no significant relationship level of school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria was retained.

The findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. In addition, the level of school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria was high.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, the following conclusion were made that in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria, principals commonly employ classroom visitation in ensuring school discipline. It was also, concluded that the level of school discipline was high

in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. Furthermore, classroom visitation was significant to school discipline in public secondary schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education in South-South Geopolitical Zone should encourage school principals to supervise teachers and students in school, this would ensure that there is discipline in the school.
2. Since school discipline was high in South-South Geopolitical Zone, school principals should ensure that they maintain their standard and reduce school indiscipline.

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