



# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL INDISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

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## ABSTRACT

Indiscipline in secondary school has persisted over the years, taking a new and frightening tone that seems like a bone in the throat. This study investigated the influence of parental involvement in terms of interference with child punishment and confronting teachers openly on school discipline of secondary school students. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. The literature review was done according to the variables under study. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population consists of all parents of Public Secondary Schools. Ninety three (93) parents purposively selected from the Parents Teachers Association of the 7 Public Secondary Schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State constituted the sample for the study. A Four (4) point Likert questionnaire titled "Parental Involvement and School Indiscipline Questionnaire"(PIASDQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The validity of the instrument was determined by four (4) experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation units respectively, all from the Department of Educational Foundations. While Crunbach Alpha reliability was used to determine the reliability at .73 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that parents should be encouraged to correct their children's wrongdoings at home as the home is the first school, modalities for effective disciplinary measures should be discussed strongly in PTA meetings to get the views of parents, and also check brutality on the part of the teachers.

**KEYWORDS:** Parental, Involvement, School and Indiscipline

## INTRODUCTION

Basic education is a fundamental requirement for a country's development and a person's assurance of a better life. No country or individual can have a valuable life without quality education.

However, school learning provides the basic education for the all-round development of an individual, to enable him to fit into the ever-changing society. Quality education can only be achieved if students comply or submit to the

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obedience that is applicable in the school setting. Students who fall short of school behavioral requirements are often regarded as undisciplined children whose un-governable nature may not allow them to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and abilities, that will build them up physically, mentally, economically, socially, politically, and otherwise.

Unfortunately, in secondary schools today education stakeholders worry about the high level of indiscipline among school children at different levels of education. Students have been observed to always undermine school rules and regulations. Most students in secondary schools are seen fighting or exchanging words with their teachers, they often engage in unacceptable actions like examination malpractice, bullying, truancy, late coming to school, bringing mobile phones to school, wearing unacceptable haircuts, uniforms, and others as against the schools' laid down rules and regulations, including vandalization of public property (Oba, Ajake & Obindah 2013).

School indiscipline encompasses a wide range of unacceptable conducts that can hinder academic success. School administrators and teachers have cried out loud about the display of indiscipline behaviour among students. In an attempt to remediate the problem of indiscipline in school, professional help and interventions have been considered. Some disciplinary measures have been put in place to checkmate these unwarranted behaviours displayed by students, but it seems the students have a way of scuttling these measures that seem not workable, or perhaps the students have suddenly developed immunity against school discipline.

Most students have been exposed to disciplinary measures as harsh as expulsion, suspension, repeating classes, corporal punishment, manual labour, etc, but all these measures seem to yield little or no results. The dynamic nature of Nigeria's economy, political system, and social structure make the researchers worry more that the display of indiscipline behaviour among students may be a major distraction to their academic pursuit which if not achieved may post serious consequences as they try to fit into the ever-changing society that has become economically turbulent.

Oba, & Ajake, (2014) revealed a high prevalence in truancy, lying, fighting and cheating among secondary school students, and various variables have also been examined as root causes of

these researches, yet school indiscipline remains a major drawback to academic success, which is primarily why school discipline must be enforced. From the aforementioned, the researchers think that since the root cause of school indiscipline is still not unearthed, it is pertinent to examine parental involvement and school discipline among SSI students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State to ascertain if the problem emanates from the home front. The researchers seek to find out if parental involvement in terms of their interference with child punishment, and confronting teachers openly could be the reason for students' display of indiscipline behaviour, since parents play an important part on the overall development of the students (Oyo-Ita & P. U Bassey).

Discipline is the ability and willingness to do that which is expected of you without any form of coercion. It is an internal desire of a person to always abide by the rules and regulations of the society he finds himself (Abubakar,2000). However, Agueba (2009) referred to Douglas McGregor's theory x which explains discipline as an external control that compels one to abide by laid down rules and regulations against their will, probably because of fear of punishment, superior persons, benefits, or possible penalties. Kola (2017) argued that parental interference can subvert the school authority as he presented a suit by a parent over a confiscated mobile phone. Kola maintained that the imposition of harsh penalties is for a reason which may not be only to punish offenders but to serve as a deterrent to others and stressed that maintaining school discipline is very necessary for upholding sound values, order, and decorum in the learning environment. Abang and Amalu (2018) posits that students' indiscipline involves activities that negate principle of order and decency.

Relatedly, Poach (2011) reported that most parents still undermined the attempt by schools to instill discipline in the classroom. He pointed out that students copy the behaviour parents put up at home which downplays school discipline. This was evident in the widespread students' refusal to stop talking, sit down, or pay attention to the teacher. The prevalence of such indiscipline in school undermines the teachers' effort to maintain order in the classroom. Again, Ouwakemi (2018) reported that a Kenyan parent charged a school and other three teachers for allegedly beating up her child, demanding a public apology and compensation. This action

and many other examples made the Kenyan **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL INDISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS** served as one of the most effective disciplinary measures in schools.

In another development, Bell (2021), reported that most parents today decline whenever disciplining their children is discussed by teachers. Their lack of enthusiasm regarding the call for a disciplinary measure to be meted on their children after misbehaving in schools seems rather challenging to the teachers. OECD (2011) stressed that schools and classrooms facing heightened indiscipline problems remain un-conducive for learning activities to thrive since teachers and school administrators will focus more on trying to resolve these challenges. A discipline organization produces discipline members, likewise, a school that fails in instilling discipline in the students will breed indiscipline among them.

The way and manner parents react to discipline can either promote the effectiveness of discipline or be detrimental to the efforts of teachers to put the children on the right path. The ferocity of school indiscipline will adversely or conversely affect learning. A study conducted by Dorner (2006) revealed that when parents teach children gratification, they become accommodative, self-assertive, and obedient to set rules and regulations, while failure to build a sense of social competence in children will cause them to be socially alienated. Clauss – Ehlers (2010) observes that a child's upbringing is far more important for academic success than the school environment. This assertion brings to bear the important role of parents in promoting students' discipline. It is obvious that the attitude of students in school is not determined by the school environment, rather it is predicated on the different levels of interface existing between parents and their children outside the school environment.

Interestingly, the home is an organized institution that should provide a moral compass for students, but that is not the perception of Knight and Roberts (2009) who argued that parents who are aggressive, unruly, and demanding would produce aggressive adolescents. Failure to curb the aggression displayed at home will culminate in public aggression. Okumu (2011), Bekomson, Abang, & Ntamu (2021) supports this claim by adding that aggressive adolescents are prone to involvement in students' unrest as they lack moral value orientation from home and the ability to handle conflicts through dialogue and social responsibility. Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou &

Usanaon Makers, Hale, & Meens Wijsbroek, **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL INDISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS** at the attitude of parents towards discipline in school could be the reason for problem behaviour among students.

Quality education is the bedrock of any nation, no nation can rise above the level of education of its citizens, achieving giant educational strides can only be possible in an environment free of disharmony, rebellion, and breakdown of law and order. The display of indiscipline by students is not only dangerous to the students but depicts failure on the part of the family, teachers, school administrators, and the nation at large. Quality education determines the standard, efficiency, proficiency, and quality of service delivery by the educated to be able to achieve the development agenda of a nation.

Okorodudu (2013) affirms that most parents give children money to buy leaked question papers and pay invigilators handsomely to allow their children to cheat in examinations. Oba, Ajake & Obindah(2013) added that most children express their anger at home by vandalizing household furniture. This trend does not create a healthy learning environment as students who enjoy full support from parents are bound to resist any disciplinary measures put in place to check examination malpractice. Sadly, the lack of seriousness on the part of students, and undue emphasis on parents regarding carrier choices and certificate acquisition left most parents with no choice but to encourage examination malpractice (Ukpepi & Ndifon 2012).

#### **The problem of the study**

Indiscipline in secondary school has persisted over the years, taking a new and frightening tone that seems exasperating. The researchers who happen to be teachers observed that most students in secondary schools in Calabar South of Cross River State, Nigeria, engage in various forms of indiscipline acts ranging from truancy, absenteeism, lateness to school, refusal to do their homework, stealing of school properties, verbal insults, bullying, disobedience, examination malpractice, fighting, among others. This unhealthy trend seems to have a downward toll on students' attitude towards their teachers and their academic activities. Various attempts by the school administration and teachers to curb this unwholesome trend prove abortive. Various disciplinary measures like corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion, have been put in place to correct this anomaly to no avail. The above-mentioned has necessitated the investigation of parental involvement and school discipline.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate parental involvement in terms of:

1. parental interference with school discipline
2. confronting teachers openly;

### **Research question**

1. To what extent do parents interfere with school discipline?
2. To what extent do parents confront teachers openly?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the survey research design. The population consists of all 1866 parents of SS1 students from the 7 public secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government of Cross River State. The sample is made up of 93 parents of SSI students from the public secondary schools in the area. The researchers used all the public schools in the population from Calabar South where 13 parents each were picked from the PTA of the schools. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the schools and the sample. The instrument used for data collection was titled Parental Involvement and School Discipline Questionnaire (PIASDQ) Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

It was based on a 4-point Likert scale thus: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Some examples of the items include: "I don't think any teacher has the right to discipline my child" (negative item); "I like encouraging my children's teachers to discipline them appropriately" (positive item); "I always praise teachers who discipline my children to correct them" (positive item); "I always give a piece of my mind to teachers who discipline my children" (negative item). The positive items were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 for SA,

The instrument's face validity was determined by two experts each from the fields of Educational Psychology and Test, Measurement, and Evaluation. A trial test was performed to determine the instrument's reliability through the use of the Cronbach Reliability Coefficient method by administering it to 20 parents from two public schools (private and public) - 10 parents from each school. The schools were chosen from the population but were not part of the sample. The reliability coefficient was 0.73

Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics – percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

### **RESULTS:**

Items 1 to 6 in Table 1 measure parental interference with school discipline while items 7 to 12 evaluate parental confrontation of teachers who discipline their wards. The table also shows parents' responses, in percent, to each of the questionnaire items which was based on a 4-point Likert scale. The aggregate decision of the majority of the parents and the attendant inference for each questionnaire item based on their percentage responses are given in the table. When the sum of the percentage responses of Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) exceeds the sum of Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) the decision is Disagree and vice versa. Inference as to whether the parent supports discipline is made based on the decision and the wording of the questions. Accordingly, the majority of the parents showed a positive disposition to the disciplining of their wards by teachers (Questions 1 to 6) and preferred not to interfere in the disciplining of their wards. In the same vein, the majority of the parents disagreed with the idea of confronting teachers who discipline their wards (Questions 7 – 12) and chose not to get angry with such teachers.

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TABLE 1

**Percentage of Parents' Responses to the Questionnaire Items on School Discipline**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Responses in Percent				Decision	Inference
		SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)		
<b>Parental Interference with School Discipline</b>							
1	I don't think any teacher has the right to discipline my child	32.3	57.0	3.2	7.5	Disagree	Supports discipline
2	Whenever my child goes wrong, I call the teacher to beg on his behalf	46.2	34.4	14.0	5.4	Disagree	Supports discipline
3	I like encouraging my children's teachers to discipline them appropriately	9.7	5.4	48.4	36.5	Agree	Supports discipline
4	I think I am the only one who can best discipline my child	43.0	41.9	8.6	6.5	Disagree	Supports discipline
5	I prefer to know the kind of discipline the teacher wants to give to my child beforehand	35.5	30.1	19.4	15.1	Disagree	Supports discipline
6	I prefer reporting my child's misbehaviour for proper discipline	17.2	19.4	40.9	22.6	Agree	Supports discipline
<b>Parental Confrontation of Teachers</b>							
7	I get angry with teachers who always discipline my child	33.3	43.0	17.2	6.5	Disagree	Supports discipline
8	I always give a piece of my mind to teachers who discipline my children	22.6	30.1	30.1	17.2	Disagree	Supports discipline
9	Any teacher my child reports disciplines him will face the consequence	32.3	53.8	8.6	5.4	Disagree	Supports discipline
10	I feel happy when ever my child is disciplined by his teacher	4.3	7.5	54.8	33.3	Agree	Supports discipline
11	I respect highly disciplined teachers of my children	5.4	14.0	37.6	43.0	Agree	Supports discipline
12	I always praise teachers who discipline my children to correct them	3.2	6.5	32.3	58.1	Agree	Supports discipline

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In Table 2, the mean and standard deviation for each response were used to assess parents' interference with school discipline and their tendency to confront teachers who discipline their wards using a criterion mean of 2.5. Therefore, a mean score of 2.5 or higher was considered positive, indicating that respondents supported school discipline and opposed challenging teachers who punish their charges. On the other hand, a mean score of less than 2.5 was seen to

be negative, suggesting that parents may not be in favour of enforcing school rules. A mean score of less than 2.5 also indicates that parents are more likely to challenge teachers who discipline their children. According to the findings, the majority of parents support school discipline and would not interfere with it (Questions 1–6). A resounding majority of parents would also prefer to avoid confronting teachers who reprimand their children

TABLE 2

**Mean of Parents' Responses to the Questionnaire Items on School Discipline**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
<b>Parental Interference with School Discipline</b>					
1	I don't think any teacher has the right to discipline my child	93	3.14	.802	Positive
2	Whenever my child goes wrong, I call the teacher to beg on his behalf	93	3.22	.883	Positive
3	I like encouraging my children's teachers to discipline the appropriately	93	3.12	.895	Positive
4	I think I am the only one who can best discipline my child	93	3.22	.858	Positive
5	I prefer to know the kind of discipline the teacher wants to give to my child beforehand	93	2.86	1.069	Positive
6	I prefer reporting my child's misbehaviour for proper discipline	93	2.69	1.011	Positive
<b>Parental Confrontation of Teachers</b>					
7	I get angry with teachers who always discipline my child	93	3.03	.878	Positive
8	I always give a piece of my mind to teachers who discipline my children	93	2.58	1.025	Positive
9	Any teacher my child reports disciplines him will face the consequence	93	3.13	.783	Positive
10	I feel happy when ever my child is disciplined by his teacher	93	3.17	.746	Positive
11	I respect highly disciplined teachers of my children	93	3.18	.872	Positive



#### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL INDISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

##### **Consequently, the two research questions:**

1. To what extent do parents interfere with school discipline?
  2. To what extent do parents confront teachers openly?
- Are answered in the negative which means that the majority of parents do not interfere with school discipline and would not, also, confront teachers openly.

##### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:**

The study results revealed that on parental interference, a greater proportion of parents disagreed with interference with school discipline while fewer parents agreed with interference with school discipline. This means that a higher percentage of parents showed a positive disposition to school disciplining their wards without any interference. The results of this study contradict the report of Bell, (2021) which revealed that parents decline when the issue of discipline is discussed in schools.

The report on the parental confrontation of teachers who discipline their wards revealed that a higher percentage of parents disagreed with the parental confrontation of teachers while a lower percentage of parents agreed with parental confrontation. This means that most parents do not confront teachers who discipline their wards with a high percentage involved. This result also contradicts the report of Oluwakemi, (2018) who revealed that Kenyan parents charged a school teacher and other three teachers for allegedly beating up her child.

Another dimension of the results was presented in Table 2, using the mean score of parents to ascertain their interference with discipline and their tendency to confront teachers who discipline their wards. The results revealed a mean score of above 2.5 which revealed a positive disposition of parents towards the disciplining of their wards, and a mean score below 2.5 which shows a negative disposition of parents to interference and confrontation of teachers who discipline their wards.

The results of this study disagree with the report of Oluwakemi, (2018) who reported that parents demanded a public apology as compensation from teachers who beat up their wards. The report of Poach, (2011) also negates the present

findings with the revelation that most parents still undermine the attempt by the school to discipline their students.

The contradiction with the literature review revealed by the results of this study could mean that most parents are more oriented towards values and understand the place of discipline in child upbringing.

##### **CONCLUSION**

It was concluded that a greater percentage of parents do not interfere with school discipline, neither do they confront teachers who discipline their children.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Parents should be encouraged not to interfere with school discipline, but to allow teachers help them curb their children's misbehaviour.
2. Modalities for effective disciplinary measures should be discussed strongly in PTA meetings to get the views of parents. This will reduce or eliminate the chances of parents confronting teachers.

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