

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES ON STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN BAUCHI STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

Prof Mrs V.E Okereke

Foundation Education Programme, ATBU, Bauchi
EMAIL: VEOKEREKE@YAHOO.CO.UK

Okunade Joseph Boluwatife

M.Tech Programme, ATBU, Bauchi
EMAIL: OKUNADE1995@GMAIL.COM

Anyanwu George

M.Tech Programme, ATBU, Bauchi
EMAIL: Georgetwingta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to examine the Influence of Principals' Decision Making Strategies on Students' Discipline in Bauchi State Public Secondary Schools, Nigeria. The study was guided by seven research questions. This study was based on the Contingency Theory developed by Fielder's 1970 which says that leaders' ability to lead is contingent upon various situational factors. Descriptive research design was used in this study and Proportional stratified random sampling techniques was applied to select the participant. The sample comprised of 20 principals drawn from the three educational zones in Bauchi. The instrument for data collection was measure on a modified 5 point likert scale named the principals decision making strategies and students discipline questionnaire (PDMASDQ). Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the seven research questions while T-test was used to test the hypotheses. The result of the study revealed that (i) to a moderate extent with grand mean value of 3.8 the principals recognise the problem first before making decision. (ii).to a moderate extent he analyse the information before making decision with mean grand mean value of 3.3 (iii)to moderate extent the principal develop alternative solution which influence students discipline (iv)to a moderate extent he evaluate the alternative solution which influence students discipline (v)to a moderate extent the principal select the best alternative with the grand mean value of 3.3 (vi) to a moderate extent the principal implement decision and it influence students discipline. (vii) to a large extent the principal evaluate and control the decision which influence students discipline. It was recommended among others that: principals should identify the root of problems in school before making decision, principals should plan ahead for the student, principals should allow teachers to exercise their duties freely without any restriction, Students should be sensitized on the importance of adherence to school rules and regulations, principals should always evaluate the decision made and check the effect on student discipline. This will go a long way in guaranteeing respect to the leaders.

Keywords: Decision Making; Decision Making Styles; Discipline; Indiscipline

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Schools as an institutions have rules and regulations guiding the behavior of both staff and students. Good behavior are strengthened and rewarded during speech and prize giving day. Students' indiscipline is a menace that has been hunting the educational system most especially in Nigeria over the years

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough, intelligence plus character that is the goal of true education (Martin Luther King Jr,1948).

Discipline is a rudimentary ingredient that plays a crucial role in school system, which insists on upholding the moral values of students (Schon, 2003). This view is supported by Blandford (2008) who asserts that discipline is essential if any organization including school has to succeed in the attainment of its goals.

Failure to expose student leaders into decision making in early years encourages docility, stereotyping and blind acquiescence to authority. While this might appear good to educators who may not want to be actively engaged with students' concerns, it has far reaching negative implications. Students in decision making establish protection and smooth implementation of such policies with less fear of the violation and undermining by the same. There is a general assumption the earlier student practice making decisions in high schools the better leaders they will become. The school that inculcates the practice is in essence cultivating responsible leadership for future. There are rules, norms and sanctions to control student behavior or discipline

Smith (2009) suggest eight steps in the decision making process including detect problem, diagnose problem, establish decision criteria, develop alternative, evaluate alternative, select best alternative, implement decision, and evaluate decision. It is being noted that principals who allows interaction between parent to make decision always consider the view of most parent before conclusion and making some rules.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of indiscipline in schools has persisted over the years. These acts include students' absenteeism from school, lackadaisical attitude to study, persistent lateness to schools, rioting, and absenteeism from classes without reason or permission, direct disobedience to school regulation and so on. This trend has affected the attitude of students to study and their perception of school as a whole (Udom, 2010). These acts have militated against effective teaching and learning hence, it has significantly affected the production of useful, acceptable and responsible members of the society, which is the primary responsibility of the school. The deplorable state of schools has raised a lot of questions on the role of principals in maintaining school discipline .An example of a serious case of indiscipline problem occurred in one public secondary school within Bauchi city, 2017, March 13 daily post (Odunsi 2017), where students allegedly conducted weddings among themselves in which the government considered to be sexual immorality.

This raises the need for the principal to adopt a suitable decision making strategy that suits their school settings in this era of modern technology. The deteriorating discipline could be occurring due to the influence of the principal decision and other factors since a number of public schools in the city have no boarding facilities. This means that the students are exposed to many evils which might influence their behavior as they go home and back to school. What then is responsible for disciplinary problems in our schools? Does it mean that the strategies adopted by the principal are obsolete? Therefore, it was on this basis that this study sought to establish the influence of principal's decision making towards student's discipline in public secondary school in Bauchi state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to assess the influence of principals' decision making towards students discipline in public secondary schools in Bauchi state. Specifically the study dealt with the seven stages of Decision making process in order to;

- i. Determine the extent to which principals recognize and identify problems and its influence on students' discipline.
- ii. Determine the extent to which principals' analysis information and influence students' discipline.
- iii. Determine the extent to which principals develop alternative solution and influence students' discipline in school.
- iv. Determine the extent to which principals evaluate alternative solutions and influence students' discipline in school.
- v. Determine the extent to which principals select best alternative solutions and influence students' discipline in school.
- vi. Determine the extent to which principals implement decision and influence students' discipline in school.
- vii. Determine the extent to which principals evaluate and control decision and influence students' discipline in school.
- viii. Determine the differences between the principals response to the various decision making processes on the basis of their gender.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide this study;

H₀₁ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' recognizing and identifying problems influence on students' discipline compared to that of their female counterparts.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' analyzing information that influence on students' discipline compared to that of their female counterparts

H₀₃ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' developing alternative solution that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts

H₀₄ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' evaluate alternative solutions that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts

H₀₅ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male principals' select best alternative solutions that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts

H₀₆ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' implement decision that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts.

H₀₇ There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male principals' evaluate and control decision that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative analysis approach was adopted in this study. The research design that was adopted for this study is Descriptive Survey design

Stratified proportionate sampling was used in selecting a sample of senior secondary schools across Bauchi state based on educational zones . The schools were selected from each stratum using random sampling of 10%. The principals in the public secondary school were selected using stratified proportionate sampling. The justification for using Stratification is to ensures that the stratum desired will be represented in the sample in proportion to that existence in the population. Therefore, The total number of 20 principals was used for the study.

The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire which was developed by the researcher and name Principals' Decision Making Strategies And Students' Discipline Questionnaire (**PDMASDQ**)

The data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using Mean and Standard deviation and the Seven hypotheses were tested using T-test.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Questions were analysed using mean scores and rated as follows;

Very Large Extent 5.00 → 4.50

Large Extent 4.44 → 3.50

Moderate Extent 3.49 → 2.50

Small Extent 2.49 → 1.50

Very Small Extent 1.49 → 1.00

Research question 1: What extents do principals' recognize and identify problems and their influence on student's discipline.

Table 1: T-test analysis of principals' recognizing and identifying problems influence on students' discipline

ITEM	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cr	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPAL RECOGNIZING AND IDENTIFYING	1.824	19	.034	2.055	.55000	-.0811	1.1811

* Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed)

The result of the t-test analysis in table 1 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.55). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal, therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected.

Research Question 2: What extents do principals ‘analyses information and their influence of students’ discipline

Table 2: T-test analysis showing principals’ analyzing information that influence on students’ discipline

ITEM	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t. cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPALS ANALYSES INFORMATION	.995	19	.02	2.055	.31000	-.3424	.9624

* Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed)

The result of the t-test analysis in table 2 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.31). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected

Research Question 3: What extents do principals’ develop alternative solution and their influence on students’ discipline in school

Table 3: T-test analysis showing the ways principal’s develop alternative solution and it influence on students discipline in school.

ITEMS	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRICIPALS DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE	.242	19	.002	2.055	.07500	-.5749	.7249

* Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed)

The result of the t-test analysis in table 3 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.0). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected.

Research Question 4: What extents do principals ‘evaluate alternative solutions and their influence on students’ discipline in school

Table 4: T-test analysis showing the principals’ evaluate alternative solutions that influence students’ discipline in school

	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPALS EVALUATE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION	.748	19	.0013	2.055	.22500	-.4044	.8544

The result of the t-test analysis in table 4 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.23). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected.

Research Question 5: What extents do principals select best alternative solutions and their influence on students’ discipline in school

Table 5: T-test analysis showing principals’ select best alternative solutions that influence students’ discipline

Table 5: T-test analysis showing principals' select best alternative solutions that influence students' discipline

ITEMS	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPALS SELECT BEST ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION	.748	19	.0013	2.055	.22500	-.4044	.8544

The result of the t-test analysis in table 5 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.23). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected

Research Question 6: What extents do principals' implement decision and their influence on students' discipline in school?

Table 6: T-test analysis showing the mean rating of male principals' implement decision that influence students' discipline in school compared to that of their female counterparts

ITEM	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPALS IMPLEMENT DECISION	.748	19	.0013	2.055	.22500	-.4044	.8544

* Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed)

The result of the t-test analysis in table 6 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.23). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected.

Research Question 7: What extents do principals' evaluate and control decision and their influence on students' discipline in school.

Table 7: T-test analysis showing principals' evaluate and control decision that influence students' discipline in school

ITEM	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t.cri	t.cal	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
PRINCIPALS EVALUATE AND CONTROL DECISION	.748	19	.0013	2.055	.22500	-.4044	.8544

The result of the t-test analysis in table 7 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score is (3.6). Since the t- critical is greater than the t-cal therefore, there is no significant difference between the variable hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate is rejected.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following findings emerged from the study based on the analyzed data collected from the study

- i. The result of research question 1 reveal to a moderate extent the principal recognize and identify information which have influence on student's discipline.
- ii. It is evidence to moderate extent that principal's analyses information after recognizing the problem to a moderate extent.
- iii. The findings also reveal that principals develop alternatives solution after identifying the problems to a moderate extent.

- iv. To a moderate extent the principals evaluate alternative solutions and it have influence on student's discipline
- v. To a moderate extent the principal selects best alternative solutions and it has influence on students in Bauchi secondary schools.
- vi. To a moderate extent the principals implement decision and its influence students' discipline.
- vii. To a large extent the principal evaluate and control decision and it has influence eon students discipline

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it was evident that principals in their respective secondary schools, needs to identify problems first which is important to solve intending the problem. It is belief that information is paramount, the principals gather more information after identifying the problem to enable him to have accurate analyzing of problems. Hence the seven process of principal decision making is paramount which will help the principals to be a good decision maker in the school

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the study makes the following recommendations;

- i. Principals should identify the root of problems in school before making decision
- ii. Principals should plan ahead for the student
- iii. Principals should allow teachers to exercise their duties freely without any restriction.
- iv. Students should be sensitized on the importance of adherence to school rules and regulations
- v. Principals should always evaluate the decision made and check the effect on student discipline.

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