

School Location and Principals' Management of Teachers' Indiscipline in Akwa Ibom State Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored the influence of school location on principals' management of teachers' indiscipline in Akwa Ibom State secondary schools, Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study. The study population comprised principals and Vice principals from 376 secondary schools. A sample of 450 principals and vice principals were drawn through stratified random sampling technique for the study. One hypothesis guided the study. A validated Likert type research instrument tagged "Management of Teachers' Indiscipline Questionnaire" (MTIQ) was used to elicit responses from the sample. Data collected were analyzed using independent t-test. Findings revealed that school location influences principals' management of indiscipline that were related to teaching activities, school attendance and school ethics but not for non-teaching activities. It was recommended that urban and rural principals should partner to enhance effective management of teachers' indiscipline for improved quality of teacher discipline in the school system.

Key words: School location, principals, management, indiscipline, teachers

Introduction

The principal's effective leadership is considered to be an important element in school functioning. It is the key to success in creating a vibrant and an innovative environment, and in achieving teaching and learning excellence (Hallinger and Heck 1998., Evans and Johnson, 1990). The principal as head is accountable for the success or failure of the school. For the school to achieve its goal, the teachers must be disciplined and committed to their duties. At all times, the principal should provide disciplinary control over the behaviour of teachers for higher level of performance. In Akwa Ibom State of recent, school system has come under scrutiny by managers of education due to inability of school principals to effectively manage indiscipline among teachers. In some schools, one notices that school principals are not forthcoming in management of teachers' indiscipline. Indiscipline behaviour among teachers manifest in truancy, lateness, absenteeism, non attendance of lessons, selling of goods during school hours and so on. The exhibition of these negative attitudes by teachers defeats the goals of education and inhibits the quality of secondary education (Ekpoh, 2007). The Akwa Ibom State government has taken series of proactive actions to contain all forms of indiscipline in school the system. In 2009, school monitoring team was inaugurated by the commissioner for education to move round schools to oversee the activities of students, teachers and principals.

The paramount concern of every school principal is to ensure that teachers are disciplined for the achievement of schools goals through effective management. This requires the knowledge and application of good strategies. Offiong (2002) points out that ensuring effective discipline in schools depends on the ability of the school principal to intelligently utilize the various approaches of staff discipline in order to ensure compliance and good behaviour. The ability to use a particular disciplinary strategy at the appropriate time and condition is fundamental to effective management of school discipline (Ikoya, 2009). Educational institutions are unevenly located in either urban or rural areas. Either of these is said to have its strength and weaknesses. Mulkeen (2005) noted that managing teachers' indiscipline in rural areas presents additional difficulties. One concern is that teacher absenteeism may be higher in rural areas. Mulkeen (2005), further pointed out that monitoring of teachers is difficult in rural areas because of the reason that school principals often travel to urban offices to make administrative arrangements and thus stays away longer from school. Also remote schools are less likely to be visited by external inspectors. A research conducted by Frame (1990) concluded that school location had significant effect on the philosophy, tradition, perspective, discipline and performance of teachers.

Similarly, an empirical research conducted by Anam (2003) on influence of school location on teachers discipline showed that urban teachers were more prone to truancy and higher absentee tendency than their counterparts in rural areas. The thrust of this paper is to find out the influence of school location on principals' management of teachers indiscipline.

Statement of problem

In Akwa Ibom State, government concern and interest in education can be seen in the introduction of free primary and secondary education to all pupils of school going age. However, there is a noticeable trend of lack of interest and poor attitude to work by teachers. This trend has affected the performance of students in external examination in the last couple of years (Udom, 2010). The state government in order to stem the tide of indiscipline in Akwa Ibom schools has initiated the state education monitoring team to go round schools to monitor teachers' attendance and movement in and out of schools and the general performance of duties by school principals. With this new development one wonders what has been the role of principals in school effectiveness. Essentially, in some schools there is orderliness and effective leadership as provided by school principals in the management of schools, but in others, the situation is appalling. There are observed cases of truancy, absenteeism, non attendance of lessons by teachers, persistent lateness to schools, selling of goods during school hours by teachers, and so on. For this reason, the researchers finds it necessary to investigate the extent to which school location affects principals' management of indiscipline among teachers.

Hypothesis

School location has no significant influence on principals management of secondary school teachers indiscipline in terms of:

- (a) Teaching activities
- (b) Non -teaching activities
- (c) School attendance
- (d) School related ethics

Method

The population of this study included principals and vice principals from 376 secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Using stratified random sampling technique, 150 schools were drawn from 376 schools. From the 150 schools, principals and vice principals academic and administration, formed the sample for the study giving rise to 450 subjects. Out of these, 300 samples were drawn from urban schools, while 150 were drawn from rural schools. Teachers were used to assess effectiveness of principals in the management of indiscipline. In selecting teachers, the simple random sampling technique was adopted. Four (4) teachers who had served not less than three years from each of the 150 secondary schools were drawn to assess a principal or vice principal bringing it to a total of 12 teachers in a school. To do this, a list of teachers who had spent at least 3 years in a school was compiled using staff nominal roll. Using simple yes or no balloting, twelve (12) teachers were sampled per school giving rise to 1800 teachers from a population of 8,800 teachers.

An instrument titled "Management of Teachers' Indiscipline Questionnaire" (MTIQ) was created for data collection. The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A comprised demographic characteristics. Section B of the instrument, a five point rating scale, consisted of 32 items grouped into 4 sections in line with the sub-variables of management of indiscipline: teaching activities, non-teaching activities, school attendance and school related ethics. The rating scale ranged from 1: very ineffective, to 5: very effective. The reliability estimate using test re-retest ranged from 0.70 to 0.94 which was considered good enough to justify the use of the instrument. The instrument which was administered by the researchers together with research assistants yielded a 100% return rate. Data were analyzed using independent t-test at .05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis

School location has no significant influence on principals' management of secondary school teachers' indiscipline in terms of:

- (a) teaching activities
- (b) Non-teaching activities
- (c) School attendance
- (d) School related ethics

The independent variable in the hypothesis is school location (with two classification, urban and rural) while the dependent variable is management of indiscipline (with its four dimensions :teaching activities, non-teaching activities, school attendance, school related ethics). The statistical technique employed to test this hypothesis was the independent t-test. The analysis was carried out on each of the four dimensions of management of indiscipline. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test of school location and four dimensions of management of indiscipline

Management of Indiscipline	Location	N	Mean	SD	t	df	sig.
Teaching activities	Rural	150	28.59	3.34	-4.37	448	.000
	Urban	300	30.18	3.38			
Non- teaching activities	Rural	150	28.93	14.30	-.408	448	.683
	Urban	300	29.31	5.39			
School Attendance	Rural	150	27.31	3.44	-2.95	448	.003*
	Urban	300	28.53	4.43			
School related ethics	Rural	150	28.24	3.71	-3.49	448	.001*
	Urban	300	29.77	4.68			

Entries in Table 1 showed that the independent t-test values for teaching activities (-4.37), school attendance (-2.95), and school related ethics (-3.49) were all significant. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected for these sub-variables but not for non-teaching activities (-.408) where the t-value was not significant. It could therefore be said that school location influenced how principals manage indiscipline which were teaching-related, school attendance-related and ethically-related. But rural and urban school principals did not differ in how they managed non-teaching activities. For all the dimensions where these principals differed, urban principals showed a higher capacity to manage indiscipline as indicated by higher mean scores, than rural principal.

Discussion of results

The influence of school location on principals' management of indiscipline was considered in this study. The result showed that the independent t-value for teaching-activities ($t = -4.37$), school attendance ($t = -2.95$) and school related ethics ($t = -3.37$), were all significant. This implied that urban and rural principals differed in the management of indiscipline in these sub-variables. However, the t-value of -.408 for non-teaching activities indicated no difference between the urban and rural principals. The reason for the differences in these three dimensions could be that teaching activities, school attendance and school related ethics occurred at different magnitudes in urban and rural areas. The intensity of these indiscipline problems was higher in urban areas because of the effect of civilization and development, whose attendant effect made teachers to behave in undesirable ways. This fact supports an earlier finding by Anam (2003) who reported that urban teachers were more prone to indiscipline behaviour such as truancy and higher absentee tendency than their counterparts in rural areas largely due to distractions created by the urban environment. The study observed that such distractions include opportunities for further studies, money making opportunities and other forms of urban attractions.

These findings further corroborated that of the National Centre for Education Statistics (1996) report which stated that central city public schools were more likely than those in other types of communities to have higher absentee rates. Since the incidence of teachers' indiscipline behaviour is more prevalent in urban schools, it therefore means that principals in urban setting are more conversant with such problems. Hence principals of urban schools had over time showed a higher capacity to manage indiscipline as indicated by higher mean scores than rural principals. In the case of rural areas whose civilization and development had not permeated so much to the extent that they pose serious problem, the occurrence of these problems might be minimal, as such, the management followed the same pattern.

However, the result revealed that principals in urban and rural schools did not differ in non-teaching activities, indicating that they handled non-teaching activities in the same way. In essence, non-teaching activities such, as non-attendance of PTA and staff meetings or non-participation in extra-curricular activities occurred in the same magnitude; as such their management followed the same fashion.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that principals of urban schools exhibited a higher capacity to manage indiscipline that were teaching related, school attendance related and school related ethics. Arising from this, it is recommended that principals from urban and rural schools should partner to enhance effective management of indiscipline for improved quality of teacher discipline.

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