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**Teachers' Participation in Students' and Staff's Discipline in secondary schools as  
determinants of teachers' Morale in Imo State**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the extent of teachers' Participation in Students' and Staff's Discipline in secondary schools as determinants of teachers' Morale in Imo State. The population of this study consisted of all 5047 teachers in the 275 public secondary schools in Imo State under the six (6) Education Zones. The study adopted Correlational Survey Design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Data was obtained using a research questionnaire tagged "Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ) and Teachers Morale Questionnaire (TMQ). Data obtained from the respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. It was concluded that there is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in staff's discipline and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary Schools. On the other hand, it was observed that there is significant relationship between teachers' participation in students' discipline and morale of teachers, in Imo State Secondary Schools. One of the recommended was that teachers should be allowed to participate in maintaining discipline among students and teachers, so that there will be a conducive environment for teaching and learning which will boost their morale as well as improving and promoting effective learning.*

**KEYWORDS: Staff' Discipline, Students' Discipline, teachers' Morale, Secondary Schools, Imo State**

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**Introduction**

People are integral part of organisations as they spend much of their lives working in them. The school is a social organisation which is primarily a service – goal oriented social system. The school is a social arrangement in which the activities of students are systematically planned. Education administrators like managers in private and public establishments face the dilemma on how to improve the effectiveness of decision making. Governance in any organisation like the secondary school is best done as a shared

responsibility because it creates in the teachers a sense of belonging, boosts their morale and increases their enthusiasm and zeal.

Nwankwo (2001) asserts that when all group members participate in school governance, members tend to be more committed to their duties and it boosts their morale. Governance refers to all processes of governing whether undertaken by a government, market or network, formal or informal organisation and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that leads to the creation, reinforcement or reproduction of social norms and institutions. In its most abstract sense, governance is a theoretical concept referring to the actions and processes by which stable practices and organisations arise and persist. These actions and processes may operate in formal and informal organisations of any size, and they may function for any purpose. Governance conveys the administrative and process oriented elements of governing and it involves aspects of power (Bevir, 2013). School governance holds the keys to schools' success and survival. Governance is to organisations what blood vessels are to human beings.

Governance in an organisation like the school is often seen as a rational process involving individuals inside and outside the school. It is a fairly straightforward process. Governance is the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or any organisation the way in which a country is governed or a company or school is controlled. It is the sole responsibility of all schools' administrators to reflect on the organisations' objective, policies, plans and the totality of decisions from the organisation itself. The notion of governance in a general sense refers to the 'pattern of rule' or pattern to govern which are concerned with regulation to direction and procedure (Farrell and Law, 2008).

The solid foundation of any successful school is its teachers. Teachers represent a source of knowledge and ideas, but often times those resources remain untapped. Involving teachers in the governance of the school, not only empowers them to contribute to the progress of the school, but also makes for an increase in productivity, positive attitude and it improves morale. School governance and management style are also important factors, which can either motivate or lower teachers' morale and commitment. Teachers' satisfaction with school governance determines their involvement and commitment to duty. It is pertinent that cooperation and team work are needed from the academic staff and school administrators for the smooth running of the school.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers' morale is a key psychological factor that shapes the staff's feelings, attitude, interest and commitment to the organisation which in turn determines the staff's level of productivity. In the education enterprise, the teacher, who is the hub upon which education wheel revolves at the secondary school level, must be well lubricated with high morale. It is stated that when teachers' morale are high, their level of commitment and performance are also high. There is a general lack of commitment and dedication among teachers in the school system despite several attempts by Imo State government to improve their work conditions. Teachers do not cooperate with the school administrators to enforce orders or implement the decisions of the school because these teachers see themselves at the receiving end—merely taking order even on issues they are not well briefed and are not comfortable with. When situations like these arise, the teachers tend to behave differently and there will be conflict indices with several dysfunctional effects which may bring down the teachers' morale and resultant poor school climate. This leads to an assumption that the schools' administrators do not operate participative school governance with respect to staff discipline and students'

discipline, where teachers are allowed to participate in decision makings in the administrative process of the school.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between teachers' participation in school governance and their morale in secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the objectives were:

1. To determine the relationship between teachers' participation in staff discipline and their morale.
2. To determine the relationship between teachers' participation in students' discipline and their morale.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. How does teachers' participation in staff discipline relate to their morale?
2. How does teachers' participation in students' discipline relate to their morale?

### **Null Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in staff discipline and their morale.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in students' discipline and their morale

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of School Governance**

School governance is the key to preventing corruption. Being a nurturing ground for the young generation, it is essential for the school management to set a model of good governance and uphold an ethical culture in school. According to Akube (2004), under the Education Ordinance, each aided school is required to establish an Incorporated Management Committee to manage the school. It is a major responsibility of all administrators, in that their governance reflects the organisation's objectives, policies and plans and the totality of decisions to give direction to the organisation itself. Okoroma (2000) said that governance is the core process of administration and the main duty of a leader or administrator is that of governance. The difference between successful and unsuccessful organisation is in their governance ability, that all other administrative activities or functions are dependent upon administrative governance.

The running of a school does not only involve the Principal and a team of general support staff, but also the teachers who are assigned administrative duties. Like any organisation receiving Government financial assistance, schools are facing rising public expectation of good governance in their operations. Ukeje (2007) stated that it is imperative for those responsible for the management of schools to ensure that there is good governance and

adequate internal control in school operation. This checklist aims at providing a user-friendly guide to help schools set up a good governance structure and adopt internal control measures in their operations.

### **Teachers' Participation in Staff Discipline and their Morale**

Staff discipline involves self-control, restraint and respect, for oneself on the part of both teaching and non-teaching staff. Byanga, (2004) stated that teachers would always perform well on the job and administrators would never need to impose discipline. The kind of discipline and the manner in which it is administered affects the morale of the staff who is subject to discipline as well as other staff in the school. The right kind of discipline ensures better teachers' performance in the future and can even raise staff morale. According to Ogankwu (2010) teachers who know what is expected of them on the job perform better and feel more secured in their work. Written rules that address aspects of the job such as dress codes, working hours, breaks, personal phone calls, use of emails and other common disciplinary situations, along with expected discipline, for disregarding company rules or policies, puts the responsibility for proper behavior on the employees.

It is therefore important to have rules in the workplace, you do not want to make draconian restrictions, so teachers feel their every move is scrutinized and they have no personal freedom. This level of control backfires and lowers employees' morale. In the work of Gay (1996), as cited in Obot (2003) a supervisor or the principal, worried that teachers' performance is sub-par, supervises the staff more closely and disciplines him more often. The intention is to guide the teachers to better performance, but the result is that a teacher feels he has no control and is overly scrutinized. Bieketty (2004) stated that if staff morale drops, job performance suffers even more. In contrast, teachers who are given more autonomy often see this as a sign of management's confidence. Their morale soars and they perform even better.

Eric (2001) sees discipline as it works best if it is progressive and teachers can see this progression. Instead of doing nothing until a situation is dire and then enacting harsh discipline, principals should speak to teachers about problems when the problem is still minor. If the problem continues, moderate disciplinary measures are taken. If the problem continues to worsen, discipline escalates. In this approach, discipline serves first to teach and correct problems, before it becomes a means of punishment. Ikube (2004) stated that, to keep discipline from lowering morale, teachers need to perceive that discipline is meted out equally. Supervisors or principals do not ignore infractions from favored staff and punish more severely less-favored staff. Kato (2007) states that evenhanded discipline keeps up staff morale and it protects the school from charges of discrimination. The author further states that written rules and standard punishments help keep discipline evenhanded and hold everyone in the school to the same standards (Emunemu, 2009).

Hopkins (2003) states that discipline must be maintained in any culture, including the culture of schools. Principal has a legitimate right, if not an obligation, to expect teachers to meet acceptable standards of performance and behavior, including maintaining satisfactory attendance, performing work in a careful, accurate and efficient manner, following job instructions, following safety rules and practices, and accepting job assignments or instructions from supervisors. Ukeje (2007) opines that in most cultures, most individuals conform to the expected standards of performance and behaviour. According to Nwankwo (2014) when the principal's expectations are not satisfied, the need for a disciplinary process arises. When this occurs, not too frequently, employers typically impose improper discipline, delayed discipline, or no discipline at all. Ineffective or improper discipline of employees

contributes to the filing of costly litigation, including wrongful termination of duties. It also results in decreased productivity and poor employee morale and the increased filing of grievances. On the other hand, effective or proper discipline usually has the following positive impact:

- Increased supervisory self-confidence;
- Earlier teachers' problem resolution;
- Increased productivity and staff morale;
- Reduced turnover in absenteeism due to sickness, disability, etc.;
- Greater respect for management;
- Improved labour relations climate

### **Teachers' Participation in Students' Discipline and their Morale**

In Nigeria today, there has been a public outcry on the problem of discipline. Rules and regulations are no longer kept by students. They do not obey their teachers and school authorities. Discipline according to Nakpodia (2010) is a necessary thing that generates the right attitude to work, develop the norms of the society and train youths to show good character. Ikediugwu (2008) opined that discipline involves self-control, restraint, respect for self and respect for others. The researcher defines discipline as one's ability to correct him/herself from those negative behaviours and tries to focus on the right norms. Okah (2005) sees it as a valuable asset to school administration but must at all times have its limits according to education law. A disciplined group of teachers and students are signs of a successful school administration. Discipline is connected with a conducive environment for learning to take place and removal of unfavourable and unethical behaviours that impede desirable learning outcomes.

In the early days of education in this country, and until just before independence in 1960, discipline in schools was almost synonymous with punishment. The early teachers were remembered for their use of whip and other forms of corporal punishments for the instilling and maintenance of discipline among their students. They were conscious of the golden Maxim "spare the rod and spoil the child". Things have changed for better as far as the concept of discipline in our schools are concerned.

Discipline in the best sense is training of the mind and character to produce self-control and habits of obedience. A disciplined person is guided in his behaviour by moral and social principles. He does what is right and good. Present day educators are in general agreement that although discipline still involves the establishment of rules and regulations, the major emphasis should be on securing a high degree of self-discipline in students. A disciplined person believes that such behaviours are better than actions that can harm other people, he does the right thing. In schools where students obey rules and regulations, teachers are bound to do well both in teaching, learning and overall administration of the situation, which in turn will result in better performance on the part of the students and teaching staff. But a situation where students lack discipline, the reverse becomes indiscipline.

## METHODS

### Design of the study

The research for this study is a Correlational Survey Design. This design is found fit for the study as it attempts to find out the relationship between teachers' participation in school governance and their morale.

### Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Imo State.

### Population of the study

The study population comprised all 5047 teachers in the 275 public secondary schools in Imo State under the six (6) Education Zones (Imo State Education Board and Statistics Department, 2015).

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The six education zones constituted the clusters from which 20% of schools in each zone were selected through Simple Random Sampling by balloting technique. At the second stage 62% of teachers in each of the selected schools from the zones were selected using Simple Random Sampling, giving a total (teachers) sample of 1012. Three of these were discarded after collection due to improper completion (see Table I for the sample frame).

**Table 1: Sample frame of the respondent**

S/N	Education zones	No. of Schools per Zone	No. of Schools visited (20%)	Teachers population in the sampled schools	Sample of Teachers for Schools (62%)
1.	Okigwe Zone I	30	6	117	73
2.	Okigwe Zone II	34	8	167	103
3.	Orlu Zone I	62	12	191	118
4.	Orlu Zone II	36	7	117	73
5.	Owerri Zone I	66	13	778	482
6.	Owerri Zone II	47	9	263	163
	Total	275	55	1633	1012

**Source: Field Survey**

### Instrumentation

Two researcher developed instruments were used for data collection tagged Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ) and Teachers Morale Questionnaire (TMQ).

### Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instruments, (PSGQ) and (TMQ), the face validity was used. The research instruments were scrutinized by the researcher's supervisors and two experts

from Measurement and Evaluation. Their inputs helped to check for the appropriateness of the items, clarity of language, relevance of items to the research questions and hypotheses.

### Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was pre-tested randomly with 30 secondary school teachers, respondents who were not part of the sample for the study. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique was used to ascertain the reliability of instrument tagged: “Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ). The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained for participation in school governance while the reliability for Teachers Morale Questionnaire was 0.78.

### Statistical Treatment of Data

Each research question was answered with descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used in testing the null hypotheses at .05 alpha level of significant.

### Data Analysis

The result of the analysis based on each research questions and hypotheses are shown as follows:

**Research Question 1:** What is the Nature of the Relationship between Teachers Participation in Staff Discipline and their Morale?

**Table 2: Nature of relationship Between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Discipline and their Morale (N = 1009)**

Variable	Mean	SD	r-Cal	Decision
Teachers Participation in Staff Discipline	15.20	2.36	0.22	Low positive relationship
Teachers’ Morale	29.64	2.95		

Table 2 reports the strength of the relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Discipline and their Morale. The correlation coefficient r, (0.22) show that there is a positive relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Discipline and Teachers’ Morale. This means that as teachers participation in staff discipline as it rises in the school, gives a reciprocal response to teachers’ morale.

**Research Question 2:** What is the Nature of the relationship between Teachers Participation in Students discipline and their morale?

**Table 3: Nature of Relationship Between teachers’ Participation in Student Discipline and their Morale (N = 1009)**

Variable	Mean	SD	r-Cal	Decision
Teachers Participation in Student Discipline	15.59	2.77	.171	Low positive relationship
Teachers’ Morale	29.64	2.95		

Table 3 reveals the strength of the relationship between the independent variable, students’ discipline and the dependent variable, teachers’ morale. The correlation coefficient r (.171)

shows that there is a positive relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Students’ Discipline as it rises in the school, gives a reciprocal response to teachers’ morale.

### Testing of Research Hypotheses

**Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in staff discipline and their morale.

**Table 4: Result of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis of the Relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Discipline and their Morale (N = 1009).**

Variable		Teachers Participation in Staff Discipline	Teachers Morale
Teachers participation in staff discipline	Pearson correlation	1	.022
	sig. (2 tailed)		.486
	N	1009	1009
Teachers Morale	Pearson correlation	.022	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.486	
	N	1009	1009

Table 4 reports the relationship between teachers’ participation in staff discipline and morale of teachers. The calculated correlation coefficient ( $r = .022$ ) is smaller than the critical  $r$  of  $.062$  at  $.05$  alpha level with  $1008$  degree of freedom. The result is not significant therefore; the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in staff discipline and teachers’ morale is upheld. The result means that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in staff discipline and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary Schools.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in students’ discipline and their morale.

**Table 5: Result of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis of the Relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Student Discipline and their Morale (N=1009)**

Variable		Teachers participation in Students’ Discipline	Teachers’ morale
Teachers participation in Students’ Discipline	Pearson correlation	1	.171
	sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	N	1009	1009
Teachers Morale	Pearson correlation	.171	1
	sig. (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	1009	1009

Table 5 reports the relationship between teachers’ participation in students discipline and teachers’ morale. The calculated correlation coefficient ( $r = .171$ ) is greater than the critical  $r$  of  $.062$  at  $.05$  alpha level with  $1008$  degree of freedom. The result is significant. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The result means that there is significant relationship between teachers’ participation in students discipline and morale of teachers, in Imo State Secondary Schools.



## **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings is done based on the variables studied and presented as follows:

### **Participation in Staff Discipline and Morale of Teachers**

The testing of the hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in staff discipline and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary schools. This is because the calculated correlation coefficient of .022 is less than the critical R-value of .062 at the .05 alpha levels with 1008 degree of freedom. This result could be linked to the fact that teachers have traditional believe that their opinion or suggestion are not required or implemented on matters relating to staff discipline. The study further revealed that the morale of teachers who participated in staff discipline were not statistically different from those who did not participate in staff discipline. This could be attributed to the fact that principals adhere to every disciplinary measure documented in the staff code of ethics laid down over the years. The result of this study is in agreement with an earlier work of Ejiogu cited in Peretomode (2006) who discovers that teachers do not care whether they participate or not in staff discipline decision-making as long as there is good and regular salary, their morale are not affected.

### **Teachers' Participation in Students' Discipline and Morale of Teachers**

The testing of hypothesis two showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' participation in students' discipline and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary schools. This is because the calculated correlation coefficient of .171 is greater than the critical R-value of .062 at .05 alpha levels of significance with 1008 degree of freedom. The result is attributed to the fact that teachers' participation in students discipline has its unique characteristics that could influence their morale. The result may also be attributed to the fact that teachers as professionals are conscious of the fact that they need to discipline themselves and act as role models to students. Besides, the teachers and students could have had understanding that most disciplinary measures are corrective and not punitive. The result could also have been due to the fact that everyone knows that the art of teaching has strong association with discipline. This holds true because in the classroom where the teacher is ultimate controller, he/she has to discipline the students to ensure effective teaching and learning. Also, the teacher assumes full responsibility to ensure that the students behave in accordance with the acceptable standard of behavior or laid down rules and regulations of the school. A study conducted by Ehigie and Akpan (2004) on the relationship between teachers' participation in students' discipline and teachers' morale in South-Eastern Nigeria is in support of this study. The result of the study showed that teachers' participation in students' discipline significantly impacted teachers' morale in South-Eastern Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the data analysis and findings, the following conclusion is drawn. That significant relationship exists between teachers' participation and students' discipline. This shows that these variables are necessary and should be taken care so as to boost teachers morale but that does not mean that these variables are hundred percent but that other variables could be used to explain morale of teachers while participation in staff discipline had no significant relationship with morale of teachers. This is because teachers were not allowed to participate in the above. Teachers should be allowed to participate in staff development programmes as it will affect morale positively. Teachers should be allowed to take part in project development as it will showcase their area of specialization.

## **Recommendations**

From the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should be made partners in the school governance process
2. teachers should be allowed to participate in maintaining discipline among students and teachers, so that there will be a conducive environment for teaching and learning which will boost their morale as well as improving and promoting effective learning.
3. Teachers should be involved in the promotion exercise and the financial benefits paid as at when due.

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