

## A Study of Principal Supervisory Strategies and Secondary School Discipline

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**Abstract** *This study examined the different supervisory strategies employed by principals in the resolution of discipline problems. It also determined the relationship between principals' supervisory strategies and maintenance of discipline in the schools, with a view to address students' discipline problems in schools. The population consisted of the principals and students in the state public schools. Sixty principals and 400 students were selected by purposive sampling technique from the 40 public secondary schools in the state. Two instruments, 'Principals' Supervisory Strategies Questionnaire (PSSQ)' and 'Students Disciplinary Traits Questionnaire (SDTQ)' were used to collect relevant information. Data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. The results showed that principal sex has no significant relationship with their supervisory strategies. It also showed that there is no significant differenced relationship between either junior or senior secondary school and the supervisory strategies employed by the principals. However, it was observed that there was a significant relationship between supervisory strategies used by school principals and students discipline problems. It was therefore concluded that principal should endeavour to use supervisory strategies that will reduce students' disciplinary problems to the barest minimum in their schools.*

**Keywords:** *supervisory strategies, school discipline*

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### 1. Introduction

The importance of education in national development is recognized by economists and educationist alike. There is a general belief that education is not only important for national transformation but also for individual self-actualization and enhancement. The idea of monitoring and reviewing the teaching and learning processes makes supervision of instruction imperative in our educational institution in order for these instructions to live up to expectation and to realize the objectives set before them. Though the role of the principal as instructional leader is widely advocated, it is seldom practiced. Principals spend most of their time dealing with managerial issues. The principal's role is primarily that of a manager. Stronge (1998) calculated that school principals spent 62.2% of their time on managerial issues and 11% on instructional leadership issues even after undergoing training or in-service for the role of instructional leader.

Hallinger (1989) attributes this reality to the fact that there has been little or no provision for enhancing or supporting these new skills in the instructional leadership domain. Technical assistance, adjustment in the role expectation and policies designed to support the use of these knowledge and skills are for the most part lacking. Thus the image of instructional leadership has become entrenched in the professional rhetoric but most of the time is lacking in administrative practice.

Fullan (1991) posited the role of the principal has become dramatically more complex, overloaded and unclear over the past decade. It is a state of transition, progressing from the principal as instructional leader or master teacher, to the principal as a transactional leader and also to the role of transformational leader. The improved education of our children requires improved instructional leadership. Stronge (1993) was of the opinion that if principals are to heed the call from educational reformers to become instructional leaders it is obvious that they must take on a dramatically different role. The principal as an instructional leader is the pivotal point within the school who affects the quality of individual instruction, the height of student discipline and the degree of efficiency in school functioning through supervision.

Supervision as defined by Kerry and Burke (1989) is the instructional leadership that relates perspectives to behavior, clarifies purposes, contributes to and supports organizational actions, coordinates interactions, provides for maintenance and improvement of the instructional programmes and assesses goal achievements. It is also the general leadership role and a coordinating role among all school activities concerned with learning. It is an important part of education. It is required to prevent misbehavior and protect students who are studying in school. The best approaches will often differ, depending on the school and the situation within the school.

Swearinger (1962) observed that supervision is a consciously planned programme for the improvement and consolidation of instruction. It is the constant and continuous process of guidance based on frequent visits which focus attention in one or more specific aspects of the school and its organization.

Effective supervision of instruction makes administrators to reinforce and enhance teaching practices that will contribute to improved student learning. It skilfully analyses performance and appropriate data with which administrators can provide meaningful feedback and direction to students who can have a profound effect on the learning that occurs in each classroom. Due to the fact that students' learning is the primary function of quality educational programmes for all students, administrators must be held responsible for providing an appropriate and well-planned programme which includes teaching strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of all students in our complex society. The level of responsibility of principals as assumed is compounded by the pressure for improved education quality that already exists in most developing countries. The enrolment growth at the secondary school level has increased the attention to improve the quality of education. A consequence of this increased attention to quality, is that administrators at all levels of the education section particularly school principals, need a better understanding of the teaching and learning processes and the actions that are likely to improve the quality of education. Even when resources are available, the problem principals' face in improving school quality is identifying which inputs and actions will lead to improved teaching and learning. The principal as an instructional leader is charged to implement innovative teaching methods that engage students in more active rather than passive learning. The principal is expected to create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning: work towards improving students performances and be accountable for results: support and supervise teachers' work of instruction and classroom management: supervise the use of the curriculum and its localization to ensure its relevance to the school and ensure effective staff development programmes that are operational in the school and that teachers improve their professional competence.

The present situation of supervision in schools as reported by Ezekwensili (2007) showed there has not been thorough supervision of schools in recent past decades. This lack of supervision in the past in schools has been the bane of failed educational policies. A system not supervised and evaluated is in dire need of collapse. The National Policy on Education (2004) sees supervision as an aspect to ensure quality and continuous monitoring of instruction and other educational services. In many schools there is lack poor or ineffective supervision of instruction. It is the duty of the school administrators to supervise and monitor instruction regularly thereby reducing inequalities within the horizontal and the vertical instructional delivery system of the school. When supervision is absent, it leads to lack of communication, which leads to the indiscipline of students in the school. Students will become rude to the teachers, principals and to one another, low grade shall be recorded in their academics, crimes of various types shall be exhibited--absenteeism, lateness, talking in the classrooms, disrupting the activities in the classroom and others. Less supervision causes gross negligence and often the cause of low morale and low productivity amongst students. Discipline in schools is the readiness or ability of students to respect authority, observe and obey school rules and regulations to maintain high standard of behavior necessary for the smooth running of the teaching and learning processes. Cotton (2005) posited that discipline is the business of enforcing simple classroom rules that facilitate learning and minimize disruption. The rules on students discipline are aimed to enhance positive and constructive paradigm of values. Principals are trends and they provide for a proper learning ambience. Different measures of school discipline include facing the wall, smacking, writing

sentences, standing in the corner with your face to the wall and so on. These measures were developed and were meant to sanction the misbehavior of students. In addition, students are given rules and regulations on admission into the school; they were also placed in classrooms around the school and in their term planners. The pupils were aware of the good behavior and also the bad behavior as they register in the school. Verbal warnings are given, units are provided to keep stubborn students in check. Break time detention is given to the student to prevent the pupil from going out for break.

Roger (1998) indicated that measures of school discipline is to develop students' self-discipline and self control to enable them be on track with learning, it also enhance students' self esteem, it encourages individual students to recognize and respect the right of others, it affirms cooperation as well as responsible independence in learning. Once rules have been communicated in, fair and consistent manner, enforcement helps students respect the school discipline system. Consistency will be greater when fewer people are responsible for enforcement.

Students are admitted into institutions of learning to improve their learning and moral attitude. They sometimes behave in positive or negative ways in school. Some of the students see the school as a free ground to exhibit some forms of indiscipline. By conceptualizing students' behaviour as facet of the school milieu, administrators may discover additional causes for and solutions to misbehavior of students. Wayson (1995) reported that four or five discipline incidents of students may originate in organizational characteristics, including how we organize and run schools. Gottredson (1984) found out that school organizational factors had a significant effect on delinquency rates.

Gregory and Smith (1983) posited that in effectively disciplined schools, students perceived that they belong, that they are respected and recognized for their efforts. Even alternative schools have been shown to better meet students' needs than regular school in three areas: self esteem, social and self actualization. It can be said that today's students are different. They are louder and more active, busier than ever before. There is more responsibility and less time to attend to them. They are more outspoken and at times can lead to lack of respect to the school authorities. Supervision creates a conducive climate for cooperation, friendliness and mutual understanding to the extent that students and teachers can profit by their experiences and that of the principal. If a nation's educational system must develop and attain a glorious height, supervision of schools, especially students' behavior, must be accorded high priority. Therefore, dynamic supervision must be essentially oriented towards moderating teaching and learning.

The prevalence of societal vices in schools poses managerial and administrative challenges for school principals. Hence this study is designed to determine the relationship between the supervisory strategies of school principals and students' disciplinary problems in public secondary schools in Osun State.

It is the duty of school principals to ensure students' discipline through various supervisory strategies. However, the prevalence of cases of indiscipline among students in public secondary schools raises doubt as to the effectiveness of supervisory strategies adopted by principals which are directing and controlling, stimulating and initiating, analyzing and appraising, designing and implementing. Hence there is the need to examine the principals' supervisory strategies in relation to types, trend and magnitude of indiscipline among students in public secondary schools in Osun state. The general objective of the study is to examine the relationship between the principals' supervisory strategies and students' discipline problems in public secondary schools in Osun State.

## 2. Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What type of indiscipline symptoms are exhibited by students in Public secondary schools?
2. What are the types of supervisory strategies used by the principals in Osun state public secondary schools to maintain discipline?

### 3. Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between sex of the principals' and their supervisory strategy.
2. There is no significant relationship between levels of school (Jss and Sss) and principals' supervisory strategy.
3. There is no significant relationship between supervisory strategies used by school principals and students' discipline problems.

### 4. Method

This study adopted survey design. It entails the collection of information using questionnaire. The design is aimed at obtaining information on the supervisory strategies used by school principals in the process of regulating disciplinary problems in the public secondary schools. The target population for the study comprised all public secondary school students and principals in Osun State Nigeria. Ten schools were randomly selected from each of the six educational zone of the state consisting of 5 junior secondary and 5 senior secondary schools per zone. Thus a total of 60 schools were selected for the study. From each school 30 students were randomly selected. In whole a total of 1800 students and 60 school principals were used as the study sample. Two sets of questionnaire were used to collect data for the study. The first questionnaire was titled "Students' Disciplinary Trait Questionnaire" (SDTQ) it has two sections, A and B. Section A seeks information on the personal data of the students while Section B had 18 items. The items of the SDTQ elicited information on the disciplinary problems among the students. The second instrument was titled 'Principals' Supervisory Strategies Questionnaire' (PSSQ). It consisted of sections A and B. Section A elicits information on each principal's personal data, while section B seeks information on the supervisory strategies used by the principals in managing the disciplinary problems in the schools. Internal consistency reliability of the SDTQ and PSSQ, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, were respectively .86 and .94. A test-re-test reliability of the SDTQ and PSSQ was estimated to be .85 and .97 respectively.

### 5. Results

The results are presented in the order of the research questions and hypotheses raised.

**Research Question 1:** What are the types of supervisory strategies used by the principals in Osun State public secondary schools to maintain discipline?

To answer this question, principal responses to the Principals' Supervisory Strategies Questionnaire (PSSQ) were scored. The items were sorted into different types of supervisory strategies and each principal was rated on each of the strategies. The strategy on which a principal has the highest score was considered to be his/her adopted strategy for this study.

**Table 2. Principals Supervisory Strategies Used in Maintaining Discipline in Schools.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Directing and Controlling	18	30.0	30.0
Designing and Implementing	14	23.3	53.3
Stimulating and Initiating	15	25.0	78.3
Analysing and Appraising	13	21.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

From Table 2 it could be observed that 18 (30%) out of the 60 school principals were considered to be using directing and controlling while 14 (23.3%) were using designing and implementing strategy. Fifteen and thirteen principals respectively were considered to be using stimulating and initiating and analyzing and appraising.

**Research Hypotheses 1:** There is no significant relationship between sex of the principals and their supervisory strategy.

To answer this question principals' response to the PSSQ was sorted into sex after which it was sorted into the different supervisory strategies. The data that arose from this operation was then cross tabulated to determine the chi-square value. Table 3 presents the result of the analysis.

**Table 3. Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between principals' supervisory strategy and principals' sex**

Principals' Sex	Principal's Supervisory Strategy				$\chi^2$	Df	P
	Directing and Controlling	Designing and Implementing	Stimulating and Initiating	Analyzing and Appraising			
Male	9 (27.3%)	9 (27.3%)	9 (27.3%)	6 (18.2%)	1.23	3	>.05
Female	9 (33.3%)	5 (18.5%)	6 (22.2%)	7 (25.9%)			

From Table 3 it could be observed that a total of nine (27.3%) male principals practice each of the following supervisory strategies (Directing and Controlling, Designing and Implementing, Stimulating and Initiating, while six (18.2%) male principals engaged the use of analyzing and appraising in maintaining discipline in their schools. The Table also revealed that 33.3% of the female principals engaged the use of directing and controlling while 25.9% and 22.2% respectively maintained discipline in their schools through the use of stimulating and initiating and analyzing and appraising supervisory strategies. The chi-square value ( $\chi^2 = 1.23$ ,  $df = 3$  &  $p > 0.05$ ) indicates that the relationship between principals' sex and supervisory strategy engaged in maintaining discipline is not significant. That is the use of supervisory strategies by the principal is not sex based.

**Research Hypotheses 2:** There is no significant relationship between levels of schools (Jss and Sss) and principals' supervisory strategy.

To answer this question principals' response to the PSSQ was sorted into school where they work (i.e. junior and senior secondary schools) after which it was sorted into the different supervisory strategies. The data that arose from this operation was then cross tabulated to determine the chi-square value. Table 4 presents the result of the analysis.

**Table 4. Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between principals' supervisory strategy and principals' Schools**

Principal's School	Principal's Supervisory Strategy				$\chi^2$	Df	P
	Directing and Controlling	Designing and Implementing	Stimulating and Initiating	Analysing and Appraising			
Junior Secondary	8 (26.7%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)	7 (23.3%)	3.11	3	>0.05
Senior Secondary	10 (33.3%)	9 (30.0%)	5 (16.7%)	6 (20.0%)			

Table 4 revealed that 26.7% and 33.3% of junior and senior secondary school principals respectively engaged the use of directing and controlling supervisory strategy while 33.3% and 16.7% of the junior and senior secondary schools respectively engaged the use of stimulating and initiating supervisory strategy to maintain discipline in their various schools. The chi-square value ( $\chi^2 = 3.11$  df = 3 &  $p > .05$ ) is an indication that the relationship between principal school level and type of supervisory strategy engaged in maintaining discipline the schools is not significant.

**Research Hypotheses 3.** There is no significant relationship between supervisory strategies used by school principals and students' discipline problems.

To answer this question principals' response to PSSQ was sorted into supervisory strategies that is being engaged in maintaining discipline in their schools. Students' response to the SDTQ was also sorted into discipline and not discipline groups based on the scores obtained on the SDTQ. A student with a score that ranged between 18 and 44 was considered not to be disciplined while a student with a score ranged between 45 and 72 was considered disciplined. The students grouping were then matched with the supervisory strategy of the principal of their various schools. Cross tabulation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between principals' supervisory strategies and students' discipline. Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5. Chi-square showing the relationship between Principals' supervisory strategies and students' discipline problems**

Principal Identified Supervisory Strategies	Student's Disciplinary Trait		$\chi^2$	df	P
	Discipline	Not Discipline			
Directing and Controlling	390(72.2%)	150(27.8%)	107.76	3	< .05
Directing and Implementing	396(91.7%)	36(8.3%)			
Stimulating and Initiating	406(90.2%)	44(9.8%)			
Analysing and Appraising	256(71.1%)	104(28.9%)			

As contained in Table 5, 150 (27.8%) out of 540 students whose principal engaged the use of directing and controlling in maintaining discipline in their schools were found not to be disciplined also 104 (28.9%) out of 360 students whose principal engaged the use of analyzing and appraising were not disciplined. However, 91.7% and 90.2% of the students whose principals engaged the use of designing and implementing as well as stimulating and initiating respectively were found to be disciplined. The cross tabulation of principals identified supervisory strategies with students' disciplinary problems yielded a chi-square value ( $\chi^2 = 107.76$ , df = 3 &  $p < .05$ ), which indicated that there is a significant relationship between supervisory strategies used by school principals and students' discipline problems in Osun State public secondary schools.

## 6. Discussion

The different supervisory strategies of the principals which are directing and controlling, stimulating and initiating, designing and implementing, analyzing and appraising were used in schools to maintain discipline. The findings derived from Table 2 were sorted out and rated according to the principal's strategies in the highest percentage directing and controlling ranked first with (30%), stimulating and initiating (25%) while designing and implementing, analyzing and appraising came third and fourth respectively with (23.3%) and (21.7%). This study disagrees with the study of Wurtz, (1997) who conducted a study on supervisory practices of principals in the schools in the U.K and came out with the findings that most of the principals used stimulating and initiating strategy, compared to the school administrators in Osun state, the strategy

used was mainly directing and controlling in the school. The principals use this strategy to instil discipline on the students because they felt that it was the most appropriate strategy to use in the school to prevent discipline problems.

This finding agrees with Doyle (1998) who contends "order" in the classroom to achieve students' cooperation and to follow along the unfolding event". He emphasized that within accepted limits, the students are to follow the program (lesson) to be realized in the situation. Hence, it becomes obvious with this attitude that the head is. In contrast, the study of Wurtz (1997) that stimulation and initiation were the strategies used by principals to prevent discipline problems in schools.

The findings of the relationship between sex (gender) of the principals and principals' supervisory strategy shows that there is no significant relationship in the supervisory strategy used by principals and their sex (gender) in maintaining discipline in the school as shown in Table 3 which shows that the relationship between principals' sex and supervisory strategy of the principal is not sex based. It was observed that nine (27%) male principals practiced directing and controlling, designing and implementing, stimulating and initiating supervisory strategies. While six (18%) male principals only engage in the use of analyzing and appraising supervisory strategy in maintaining discipline in their schools. 33% of female principals engaged the use of directing and controlling supervisory strategy while 25.9% and 22.2% maintained discipline in their schools through the use of analyzing and appraising, stimulating and initiating and (18.5%) of female principals use the designing and implementing supervisory strategy in their schools. This study agrees with the study of Munn and Johnson (1990) on all school heads in Scotland, both male and female head teachers use the referral system to curb students' discipline problems in the schools. In addition, most of the head – teachers agree that with well defined schools rules and regulations early identification of pupils discipline problems will be detected. On the contrary, Gougeon (1991) reported that "female principals show more concern for people than male principals who tend to show more concern for task" in the school.

In addition, Gray (2002) viewed male principals to be positive at work because of their competence and skill while female principals are considered to be doing an effective job when they show their caring, consideration and dedication. Shakeshaft (1989) opined "Although women and men principals overall tend to do the same thing in carrying out their work, the differences may just be on the importance of tasks.

This study when compared to the principals in Osun state we find that the female principals were the ones who engage in the strategy of directing and controlling more than the male principals. It contradicts Gray's study who reported that female principals' show more care than the male.

The relationship between principals' supervisory strategies and school of the principals as indicated in Table 4 shows that there is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory strategies and their school either junior or senior category. 26.7% and 33.3% of junior and senior secondary school principals engage in the use of directing and controlling supervisory strategy, while 33.3% and 16.7% of the junior and senior secondary school engage the use of stimulating and initiating supervisory strategy to maintain discipline in their various schools. This finding agrees with Walker et al (1996) who reported that policies and procedures are provided for the school buildings to guarantee the safety of the students whether junior or senior secondary school (school plant) to achieve its aims and objectives for the development of the school. Places like the cafeteria, playground; hallway and so on requires adequate supervision in order to ensure students' safety and to provide conducive teaching and learning environment for the pupils, teachers and the school head-teacher.

The findings of Colvin, (1997) reported that intervention should be done with the students when entering or leaving the school building, with adequate supervision the incidents of behaviour problems reduces. This is also the situation with most of the schools in Osun state. There are rules and regulations, guiding the activities of the school. Postal are pasted and writings are done on the boards of the schools to control the activities of the students both inside and outside the classrooms and around the school premises.

The findings in Table 5 indicate that there is a significant relationship between supervisory strategies used by school principals' and students' discipline problems. It was observed that (91.7%) and (90.2%) of

students whose principals engaged in the stimulating and initiating supervisory strategy and the designing and implementing supervisory strategy were more disciplined than students (27.8%) whose principals engage in the directing and controlling and analyzing and appraising supervisory strategy.

This study agrees with the study of Ijaluola, (2007) that the success of any school administrator lies in the degree of participatory leadership the principal has with his students. He also reported that the development of a plan or strategy is needed to solve discipline problems in the school. This study agrees with the findings in the schools in Osun state that the head – teachers use different strategies of supervision to monitor the activities of the students when they are in the school. Though the strategies may differ from one another but they are out to achieve the same goal. Metzler, (2001) also opined that behavior problems can be prevented when the behavior of the students are monitored and feedback is given. Students' behaviour should also be reviewed regularly by the head-teachers and should also be rewarded at the end of the session.

In addition, the researcher interviewed and had discussion with some of the students in the different schools on the study of discipline problems among students in schools. Most of them agreed that the level of discipline in schools have declined drastically. Some attributed it to poor upbringing, peer group influence and in order for them to get noticed in class. They provided some solutions to the discipline problems in schools.

They agreed that there must be adequate supervision done in schools to monitor erring students. They suggested that parents should be invited to school when their wards misbehave in school. Most importantly they were of the opinion that regular parents Teachers Association should be held in their schools.

## 7. Conclusion

The major problem confronting the principals in the supervisory strategy of students is analyzing and implementation. This is when principals examines and apply plans to improve the school. When this is not done it affects the realization of the school goals and also causing poor performance of the school administrator in the smooth operation of the school. When the plans of the school are not reviewed or not put into practice it encourages high rate of indiscipline in students.

The strategy of directing and controlling used by most principals to prevent indiscipline of students is not sufficient/enough. It can therefore be concluded that principals lacked the essential strategy to effectively deal with disciplinary problems in schools.

## 8. Recommendation

There is no doubt that supervisory strategies is very essential to the development of education, it is an avenue that allows for monitoring of the teaching and learning process in schools and more importantly check the quality of instruction passed on to the students.

Based on the findings and the conclusion therefore the following recommendations were made.

1. Conferences, seminars/workshops on supervision should be provided and held to improve the relationship with the students. This will also serve as a refresher training programme for school administrators.
2. The school administrators should imbibe the policy of democratic rule in the administering of their school. This will bring the students to respond and abide by the policies of the school.
3. Constant interactions should be done by school administrators with students. They should also be involved in the activities of the school. Duties should be assigned to them to make them feel responsible. This will improve instructional and other co-curricular activities in the school.

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