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### Parental Orientation and its Impact on Students Discipline in Secondary Schools in the Buea Municipality

<sup>1</sup> Fondong Angeline Tongfack, <sup>2</sup> Nyamkwi Melvis Nyamko

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon

Corresponding Author: Fondong Angeline Tongfack

#### Abstract

The study investigated parental orientation and its impact on students' discipline in some selected schools in the Buea Municipality. The study generally was aimed at examining the role of parental nurture, parental involvement, parental counseling and home environment on students' discipline. The descriptive exploratory survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured self-built questionnaire for students, questionnaires for parents and an interview guide for guidance counselors and discipline masters. The questionnaire was made up of both closed-ended and open-ended items to collect quantitative and qualitative data from selected participants. The close-ended items were prepared using a four-option Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), with 174 student participants; 16 each for parents and guidance counselors respectively. Pearson Product Movement Correlational Analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental Nurture and

students' discipline ( $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.293$ ) meaning that the higher the parental nurture, the better the students' discipline. Findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between involvement in students' education and students' discipline ( $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.173$ ) meaning that the better parental involvement in student education, the better the students' discipline. Findings equally revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental counselling and students discipline ( $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.408$ ) implying that the better the parental counselling, the better the students' discipline. Findings further unveiled that there is a significant relationship between home environment and students' discipline ( $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.408$ ) meaning that the better the home environment, the better the students' discipline. The findings therefore revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental orientation and students' discipline. It was therefore recommended that parents, teachers and counsellors should work hand in hand to address the issue of indiscipline in school and help students get rid of problems.

**Keywords:** Parental Orientation, Parental Nurture, Parental Involvement, Parental Counseling, Home Environment, and Students' Discipline

#### Introduction

Student's disciplinary problems are in the rise in scope and intensity. They are one of the most serious problems schools and educational authorities are facing today. A close look at our school institutions today reveals that indiscipline is very rampant among secondary school students. Many of them exhibit maladaptive behaviours due to ignorance (Idowu, 1986) <sup>[10]</sup>. Others misbehave voluntarily knowing that they are putting themselves and others at risk.

Different acts of student's indiscipline have been observed among secondary school students. They comprise truancy, bullying, prostitution, abortion, boycotting of classes, disrespect of teacher and school administrators, aggressive acts against teachers and students, gang affiliation, sexual harassment, rape, drug abuse, lying, stealing, and damaging school furniture and many others. These constitute a major impediment to the learning process and the educational system as a whole. They are liable to disrupt school activities and even make other students and teacher fear school and also cause harm to them physically and psychologically.

Indiscipline therefore, is an obstacle to the attainment of educational aims stated by the government of Cameroon. It is viewed as a hindrance to the efforts made by the government to make school environments a place where students learn and socialize. Therefore, solutions must be found in order to efficiently curb student's discipline. Some solutions may be found through

examining the role of parental orientation. Among the underlying causes of student's behaviour in school, the home environment has been found to be one source of student's behavioural problems. Most of the parents may not have control over their offspring because many parents nowadays are too busy in their work to involve with their children and give them proper guidance, nurture or counseling. As a result, when teachers are asked what they think are the main causes of indiscipline in schools, they often think about poor parental orientation.

Contextually, school guidance and counselling programmes have been introduced to assist students overcome the number of challenges they experience at home and at school. Nziramasanga (1999) <sup>[14]</sup> states that because of many pressures imposed on the family, parents tend to have little time with their children to give them the necessary guidance. The parents expect the school to provide solutions to the indiscipline in secondary schools caused by their children. Carr-Hill (2005) adds that African adults have become more concerned with earning money and are less occupied with many traditional practices that formerly contributed to the upbringing of young people. Rapid sociological changes emanating from modernization and urbanization stress students. Generally during adolescence, parent and adolescents do not get on very well. If parents remember that they are dealing with inexperienced persons, then it will be easy for them to be patient. In this light parental counseling should be the key word in handling adolescents, so as to prevent maladaptive behaviour and deviances amongst them. As such, the quality of parental counseling is viewed as an important predictor of students' behaviour.

According to Kottler (2004) <sup>[11]</sup> effective counselling programs are important to the school climate. In this light, Ministries of Education and principals should be aware of the importance of this part of the educational process. In this vein, law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 lays down the provision of Guidance and Counselling in secondary schools in Cameroon. This decree is expected to be enforced by principals who have as responsibility the overall control, tone, maintenance, the promotion of the goals of education, and standards in secondary schools. They are particularly charged with the responsibility of fostering the right atmosphere for child growth and development (Calestine, 2002) <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Statement of the Problem

Recently it has been observed that students gradually withdraw from school activities, and in some cases participate in disruptive behaviour such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, gambling in school during school hours. Some students display negative attitudes towards teachers and other students in forms of insult, bullying, fighting, and even killing them. An example of such an incident happened in Yaounde in 2020 where a form four student of GHS Nkolbisson stabbed his mathematics' teacher by name Tchakounte to death. These students who are disaffected from school tend to create one of the biggest challenges for parents, teachers and school administrators. This study therefore seeks to find out how parental orientations can help improve on students' behaviour in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality.

### Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed generally at examining the role of parental nurture, counseling, involvement in children's education and home environment on students' behaviour in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. Specifically, the researcher seeks to;

1. To find out the extent to which parental nurture influence students' behaviour.
2. Investigate how parental involvement in students' education influences their behaviour.
3. Determine the extent to which the quality of parent counselling influence students behaviour.
4. Examine how home environment can influence students behaviour.

### Methodology

The study area was the Municipality of Buea which is the capital of the South West Region of Cameroon. Buea is a cosmopolitan town located on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon. The Buea municipality has a surface area of 870 sq.km, 67 villages, and four distinct identified urban spaces based on stated criteria (Buea Station, Soppo, Molyko/Mile 17 and Muea). Buea is bounded in the North by the tropical rain forest on the slopes of Mount Cameroon: to the south west by Limbe, to the south east by Tiko, to the east by Muyuka and by Idenau district in the west.

The research design adopted by the researcher for this study was the descriptive exploratory survey research design. The researcher employed a mixed method for the study that is the qualitative and quantitative methods. This design enables the researcher to collect and describe large variety of data from a few people as representative of the entire population under study (Mbua, 2003) <sup>[12]</sup>.

The population of the study includes parents, students, school counsellors and discipline masters of secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The target population of the study was composed of parents of students in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality, students in form 1 to form 5, discipline masters and school counsellors in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The accessible population of the study was made up of parents of students in form one to form 5, students in form 1, form 2 form 3, form 4 and form 5, discipline masters and school counsellors in the selected secondary schools in the Buea Municipality.

A sample of secondary schools was selected with the aid of stratified sampling technique, the schools were first of all grouped into public, lay private and mission or confessional schools. From the strata, schools and subsequently the participants were proportionately sampled to get the sample of 174 students, 14 parents and 16 discipline masters/guidance counsellors.

The instruments used for data collection for the study were, a questionnaire for students and for parents and an interview guide for discipline masters and guidance counsellors. The questionnaire was made up of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data from selected participants. The close-ended items were prepared by using a four-option Likert scale. This scale required respondents to choose from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) response options.

To ensure face and content validity of the instrument, the researcher submitted instruments to the supervisor for scrutiny and corrections. The researcher also presented the instruments to an expert in test and measurement, to check for the appropriateness of the instruments. To ensure that the research instrument measures consistently what it was designed to measure, the instrument was trial-tested using 15 respondents taken from the target population but who did not feature in the sample of the study. The data was tested for reliability using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha method at  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.82$  showing that the instrument was reliable and fit for the study.

The researcher went to the field administered the instruments. To make the data collection procedure smart and unambiguous, the researcher provided orientation for all respondents in the preamble of the questionnaire concerning the objective of the study and how the items would be answered. The entire process of administering the instruments took one week. The quantitative data was analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used were frequency count, percentages and multiple responses set. The hypotheses of the study will be tested using a non-parametric test (Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis). Data from the opened ended questions were analyzed through the method of thematic analysis with the aid of themes, groundings and quotations.

### Presentation of Findings

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between parental nurture and students' discipline.

The findings of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Parental Nurture and Students' discipline. (N= 174)

Variable	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$			
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	p-value
Parental Nurture (X)	5420	171980	153612	0.293	0.000
Students' discipline. (Y)	4899	141717			

$p < 0.05$ ;  $df = 172$ ; critical  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.151$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated -value of 0.293 is higher than the critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value of 0.151 at 0.05 level of significance with 172 degrees of freedom. Also the p-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between parental nurture and students' discipline.

Since there is a significant relationship between parental nurture and students' discipline, a further exploration of the relationship showed that the  $\Gamma_{xy}$  of 0.293 was positive. This indicates that the higher the parental nurture, the better the students' discipline. Of all 14 parents interviewed 11 of these reported that in shaping their children's discipline, they let their children interact with education interested persons. Others go on to say they show a good example for their children to emulate, they provide motivation for good behavior, they monitor their children's movements, they control access to media based on content and need and they distinguish right from wrong whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Discipline masters report that children whose parents fail to nurture them properly at home are seen to exhibit

discriminating attitude, use of poor language and use insulting words at others.

*"Some children are very calm and respectful in school and when their parents come around, you could see this attribute through them"* a counselor wrote.

The finding is also consistent with the studies conducted by Popoi, Agak and Kabuka (2011) [15] on the perceived home factors contributing to violent behaviour among public secondary school students in Western Province of Kenya. To them, low level of home parental nurture was found to contribute to violent behaviour among secondary school students. Parents tend to underestimate the role that they have on their children. According to Rowntown (2007) children who are exposed to bad parenting are two times more likely to misbehave. Inconsistent disciplinary approaches, poor supervision and physical punishment are poor parenting attributes that can negatively affect children regardless of their ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

### Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Parental involvement in student education and students' discipline.

The findings of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Parental involvement in Student Education and Students' discipline (N= 174)

Variable	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$			
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	p-value
Parental involvement in student education (X)	5217	159375	147463	0.173	0.023
Students' discipline. (Y)	4899	141717			

$p < 0.05$ ;  $df = 172$ ; critical  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.151$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value of 0.173 is higher than the critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value of 0.151 at 0.05 level of significance with 172 degrees of freedom. Also the p-value of 0.023 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between Parental involvement in student education and students' discipline.

Since there is a significant relationship between Parental involvement in student education and students' discipline, a further exploration of the relationship showed that the  $\Gamma_{xy}$  of 0.173 was positive. This indicates that the better the provision of students' school needs, the better the students' discipline.

The major themes gather from Parental involvement in student education are: moral/Christian education, cooperation with school authorities and follow up. Parents hold that children do not only need to have physical school needs but the badly need to be equipped with good moral principles and one way of acquiring these is through a good Christian upbringing. It is for this reason that some of them say *"I make sure my children attend church service regularly"* another goes *"we organize devotion every now and then to ensure our child is soaked with good morals and a solid spiritual background as one of the needs in today's complex schools with lots of unhealthy habits."*

*"Knowing we (parents) can obtain information from their (students') teachers, keeps our children alert and thus shape their behavior in school"* reports a parent. Parents

thus aligned to this theme as one of the needs they must give for the success of the children in studies. Children may have all necessary material for lessons yet parents think it is vital for them to follow up what their children are up to. With this awareness, they will be careful in handling their books, bags and other school needs provided to them. *“Following up what my children do in school makes them careful on how they behave, who they interact with and what they do”*, recounts a respondent. *“When parents attend P.T.A meetings, visit the school once in a while and have a cordial relationship with teachers their children avoid being unruly, attend classes regularly and behave well generally”* recounts a discipline mistress. The findings are also consistent with the findings of Adeyemo (2015) [2] who conducted a study on parental involvement, interest in schooling and school environment on academic self-efficacy of secondary school students. The results revealed that parental involvement and interest in schooling have an influence on students' academic self-efficacy. He further recommended that the responsibility of educating the child should not be left to the school alone. Sheldon (2009) [16] states that parental involvement and a supportive home-environment are no less important for academic success than quality teaching and committed and caring teachers are.

### Hypothesis Three

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between parental counseling and students' discipline.

The findings of the analysis is presented in Table 3

**Table 3:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Parental Counseling and Students' discipline (N= 174)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$			
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	p-value
Parental Counseling (X)	5379	169235	152811	0.408	0.000
Students' Behavior. (Y)	4899	141717			

$p < 0.05$ ;  $df=172$ ; critical  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.151$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated  $\Gamma_{xy}$  - value of 0.408 is higher than the critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value of 0.151 at 0.05 level of significance with 172 degrees of freedom. Also the p-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between parental counseling and students' discipline.

Since there is a significant relationship between parental counseling and students' discipline, a further exploration of the relationship showed that the  $\Gamma_{xy}$  of 0.408 was positive. This indicates that the better the parental counseling, the better the students' discipline.

Bad friends, respect, and consequences of good/bad behavior are the themes picked out from interviews with parents on parent counseling.

*“The influence of bad friends can hardly be kept aside from the minds of parents who care about the welfare of children”*, reports a parent. Another says: *“I counsel them on the dangers of keeping bad friends.”* A third says *“I counsel them on disconnecting from bad friends who will only help in derailing them from their good track.”*

Respect it is often said is mutual. Parents interviewed believed that respecting one's self and others ultimately lets other respect you in return. *“I teach my children to respect people at all times, never to throw insults at others be it elderly or younger persons”*, reports a respondent. Another goes on to say: *“I encourage my children to respect their teachers, friends/classmates, and everyone within the community for this will bring them luck and keep them away from trouble.”*

Another theme which parents put forth as an aspect they counsel their children on at home is the consequences of whatever behaviour they put up. They feel reward accompanies good deeds whereas punishment and ill luck follows the footsteps of bad behavior. As a parent puts it, *“I recount to my children stories of people within our community who were well behaved while growing up and their achievements in later years.”*

Discipline masters on their part opine that students whose parents counsel them at home are seen to be well behaved, polite, composed, obedient at all times avoid friends with bad character and always attend classes. A discipline master reports that *“children whose parents counsel them always do dress well and obey school rules and regulations.”*

The finding supports Lakami and Arora's (2006) report that parental acceptance and encouragement are positively related with academic school success and competence. This also agrees with the findings of Ge Conger and Simons (1996), who found that adolescents whose parents displayed the least amount of parental counseling and the highest degree of hostility scored the highest on measures of both depressive symptoms and conduct problems.

### Hypothesis Four

**H04:** There is no significant relationship between home environment and students' discipline.

The findings of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Home Environment and Students' Disruptive discipline (N= 174)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$			
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	p-value
Home Environment (X)	3928	92582	111719	0.293	0.000
Students' discipline. (Y)	4899	141717			

$p < 0.05$ ;  $df=172$ ; critical  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.151$

The findings of the analysis reveals that the calculated  $\Gamma_{xy}$  - value of 0.293 is higher than the critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value of 0.151 at 0.05 level of significance with 172 degrees of freedom. Also the p-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between home environment and students' discipline

Since there is a significant relationship between home environment and students' behaviour, a further exploration of the relationship showed that the  $\Gamma_{xy}$  of 0.408 was positive. This indicates that the better the home environment, the better the students' discipline.

Themes gathered from interview with parents on home environment were:

Enabling environment and provision of basic necessities.

All participants interviewed cited this theme as a major



factor in the acquisition of good behavior for children. They reported that children will tend to be well behaved if they come from homes which are cleaned; parents avoid quarrels and fights, void of discrimination. Moreover, if a home provides a sort of platform in which children are free to act, communicate with one another expressing their views (within the confines of an acceptable way of doing things) then they will certainly behave well. Otherwise, they act in ways which were not expected or thought of. A parent reported that *"we provide a good environment for communication good parent-child relation in order to enable them learn good morals."* Another said *"I do not tolerate quarrels and ensure that issues between my wife and I are solved privately. I also encourage love at home."*

This theme amazingly captured participants' feelings as a key ingredient to acquiring good behavior. They purported that children who have access to basic necessities (food, good health, love, care and others) will not harbor malice within them. They will be kept happy at all times and so would not find reasons for ill mannerism. This view was supported by one parent who said: *"I provide all basic needs at home so that they (children) do not lack and are not pushed outside to go seeking for these elsewhere."*

The family is the first agent of socialization where the child acquires and develops his cognitive and social competencies (Akpan & Umobong 2009). It provides a training ground for all forms of behaviour both good and bad. In the same light, Dienye and Oyet (2011) [9] contended that the way children behave outside to a great extent determines the success of subsequent trainings that the child would receive outside the family. Achumba (2005) also affirm that it is what parents' impact on their children that is reflected in their lives as they mature into adult members of the society.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The aim of this research was to find out how parental orientation influences students' behaviour in some selected secondary school in the Buea municipality. Based on empirical findings, four variables namely parental nurture, parental involvement, parental counseling and home environment were drawn. Results from the data analysis showed a cumulative or conjoint effect of these variables on students' discipline. Students who are inadequately nurtured by parents, whose parent fail to get involve in their academic activities, whose parent do not counsel them or know their whereabouts and who are exposed to marital conflicts are more likely to engage in behavioural problem in school. It was therefore recommended that parents, teachers and counsellors should work hand in hand to address the issue of indiscipline in school and help students get rid of problems.

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