

# Teaching Engagement and Preschool Practitioners' Disciplining Practice in Post-Corporal Punishment Era: A Correlational Quantitative Evaluation

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## **Abstract**

*Studies have been conducted on the disciplining practices adopted by preschool teachers at the post-corporal punishment era. However, there is dearth of empirical evidence on the nature of the relationship between the preschool teachers' disciplining practice and their teaching engagement. Thus, the researchers explored the relationship between preschool teachers' disciplining practice and their teaching engagement using school type as a possible moderator. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the research using a sample of 156 preschool teachers. Teacher disciplining practice and teaching engagement questionnaires were used for data gathering. These instruments were face validated and trial tested yielding internal consistency reliability indices of 0.79 and 0.82 respectively using the Cronbach alpha method. Linear regression analysis was conducted to answer the research questions and test the corresponding null hypotheses at 5% probability levels. The results of the analysis showed that preschool teachers' disciplining practice had a significant ( $p < .05$ ) positive relationship with teaching engagement. It was also revealed that school type had significant ( $p < .05$ ) moderating*

*influence on the relationship between preschool teachers' disciplining practice and teaching engagement. This implies that when preschool teachers adopt better classroom disciplining practice, they will have good and effective teaching engagement.*

**Keywords:** *Disciplining practice, Preschool teachers, School type, Teaching engagement*

## **Introduction**

Since the abolishment of corporal punishment in some countries on the world, the issue of classroom teaching engagement has been the worries of educators especially those in early childhood. In with the above, Ying et al. (2021) opined that one of the key elements of child well-being during the preschool years is the development of positive social skills through teachers' effective teaching engagement. Teaching engagement has to do with the teacher doing what he/she is assigned to do as a teacher without any form of prejudice. According to Greenier et al. (2021) properly engaged teachers demonstrate good faith in their work, show high dedication to duty, tend to be full of energy, and passionate about their job among others. The current changes in educational system require that teachers need to be properly engaged in their teaching to improve the quality of education for children (Juliana et al., 2021).

Teachers' teaching engagement is shaped by factors such as felt responsibility for educational outcomes and teachers' self-efficacy (Lauermann & Berger, 2020). Zhao et al. (2021) opined that analyzing teachers' classroom behavior can help to measure teaching engagement of teachers. It has been observed that not minding the place of situational factors to classroom engagement, engagement has been traditionally conceived as student characteristics but not teachers (Braak et al., 2021). The researchers observed lack of empirical evidence on the relationship between preschool teachers' classroom disciplining practice and their teaching engagement. Few studies found were not directly conducted in primary schools. Thus, despite numerous studies on students' engagement in the academic field, there is dearth of such studies at the primary education level (Khun-inkeeree & Pimjan, 2021).

Emotional regulation and psychological wellbeing of teachers are significantly related to their work engagement (Greenier et al., 2021). It was found that teachers' teaching engagement is significantly but negatively related to job demands but significantly and positively related to job resources (Juliana et al., 2021). Teachers' professional engagement is significantly related to their motivational beliefs (Lauermann & Berger, 2020). Teachers' classroom involvement contributed significantly to the classroom teaching engagement of teachers (Olivier et al., 2021). Han et al. (2021) revealed that teachers' classroom behavior and efficacy had a significant positive relationship with teaching engagement and satisfaction. It was revealed that teachers' classroom closeness with the students relate positively with teaching engagement (Engels et al., 2021). The disciplinary practices of teachers to a large extent determine the condition of the children within schools and classrooms (Mendenhall et al., 2021).

Teachers' ability to communicate their classroom expectations with the learners as disciplinary measure relate positively with teachers' teaching engagement vis-à-vis the behavioural norms and standards of the students (Tan et al., 2021). Teachers' classroom organization as an aspect of disciplining practices acts as a positive predictor between teachers' classroom engagement and children's social skills (Ying et al., 2021). Found that teachers' disciplinary practices lead to a sustained increase in the frequency of students' engagement in teaching and learning encounters (Evans et al., 2021). Teachers' teaching perspective had a significant relationship with improved students' engagement (Khun-inkeeree & Pimjan, 2021).

Based on the review of the available literature, it was found that studies on the relationship between disciplining practices of preschool teachers and their teaching engagement are lacking. To the best knowledge of the researchers informed by the in-depth review of literature, no such study has been conducted in the global context not to talk of Nigerian context. This constitutes gap in literature in which this study sought to fill. Thus, the main research question sought in this study was: what is the relationship between preschool teachers' disciplining practice and their teaching engagement? It was therefore, hypothesized that preschool teachers' disciplining practice had no significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationship with their teaching engagement.

## **Method**

### ***Design of the study***

Within the quantitative research approach, the researchers adopted correlational survey research design. This kind of design tries to establish the magnitude of the association between two or more variables. In similar context, Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2021), Ugwuanyi, Okeke, et al. (2020), Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020), Ugwuanyi et al. (2020), Achagh et al. (2020), Eya et al. (2020), Ezema et al. (2019), Gana et al. (2019), Okenyi et al. (2019), Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020) have adopted the design.

### ***Participants***

A sample of 168 preschool teachers in a population of primary school teachers in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State constituted the study participants. These participants were randomly sampled for the schools in the Zone using balloting method of simple random sampling technique.

### ***Measures***

A two clustered questionnaire on teachers' disciplining practice and teaching engagement was used to gather necessary data for the study. Cluster A of the instrument had 34 items that sought information on the preschool teachers' disciplining practice while Cluster B had 16 items that sought information on the preschool teachers' teaching engagement. Both clusters A and B were structured on 4-point scale of Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree. The measure was properly face validated by test development experts and educational psychologists to ensure that it measured what it was purported to measure. Besides, the validated measure was subject to trial testing to ascertain the internal consistency reliability of its items. Cronbach alpha method was used to estimate the reliability indices of 0.79 and 0.82 for clusters A and B respectively.

### ***Data collection procedure***

The researchers obtained ethical clearance from the research ethical committee of University of Nigeria, Nsukka before gaining access to the schools to conduct the research. Thereafter, the participants were presented with informed consent forms to fill and sign before the actual data collection. Having done that, the researchers administered the copies of the measure to the participants in their respective schools and waited for them to complete the copies. Thus, the completed copies were retrieved from the participants and processed for data analysis.

**Data analysis**

Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to run the analysis. Regression analysis and PROCESS software helped in analysing the data to answer the research question and the corresponding hypothesis at 5% probability level.

**Results**

**Table 1**

*Regression analysis of the relationship between teachers’ discipline practice and teaching engagement*

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5905	.3487	23.4577	28.7370	3.0000	161.0000	.0000

  

Model						
coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	58.0008	9.1374	6.3477	.0000	39.9563	76.0454
Discipl	-.0166	.0845	-.1966	.8444	-.1834	.1502
Schtype	-18.3458	5.8231	-3.1505	.0019	-29.8453	-6.8464
Int_1	.1697	.0545	3.1154	.0022	.0621	.2773

***Coeff = Coefficient, Discipl = Disciplining practice, Schtype = School type***

Table 1 showed that the correlation coefficient between teachers’ disciplining practice and teaching engagement is 0.590 with a coefficient of determination of 0.3487. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between teachers’ disciplining practice and teaching engagement. The analysis further showed that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers’ disciplining practice and teaching engagement,  $F(3, 161) = 28.7370, p < .05$ . This implies that 34.87% change in teachers’ teaching engagement is due to their disciplining practice.

Table 1 also revealed that there is a significant moderating influence of school type on the relationship between teachers’ disciplining practice and teaching engagement,  $r = -18.3458, t = -3.1505, p = .0019$ . This implies that the variation in the teachers’ teaching engagement as a result of their disciplining practice is dependent on the school type (private and public).

## **Discussion**

Owing to the dearth of literature on the relationship between teachers' discipline practice and their teaching engagement in primary schools, the researchers undertook this research. It was revealed that teaching engagement of preschool teachers depends largely on the classroom disciplining practice adopted by the teachers. It was found that large proportion of teachers' teaching engagement depends on their disciplining practices with school type as a potential significant moderator. Therefore, ensuring proper class sitting arrangement, reorganizing the sitting positions when needed, reviewing the activity going on when there is interruption, confirming that the physical facilities are developmentally appropriate for children, confirming that the classroom routines are being followed, introducing interesting program for transiting from one activity to the other, confirming that all the learner categories, among other disciplining practices determine the classroom teaching engagement of primary school teachers. These findings are in total agreement with recent related studies.

Teachers' ability to communicate their classroom expectations with the learners as disciplinary measure relate positively with teachers' teaching engagement vis-à-vis the behavioural norms and standards of the students (Tan et al., 2021). Teachers' classroom organization as an aspect of disciplining practices acts as a positive predictor between teachers' classroom engagement and children's social skills (Ying et al., 2021). Found that teachers disciplinary practices lead to a sustained increase in the frequency of students' engagement in teaching and learning encounters (Evans et al., 2021). Teachers' teaching perspective had a significant relationship with improved students' engagement (Khun-inkeeree & Pimjan, 2021).

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## Conclusion and recommendations

This research explored the relationship between teachers' classroom disciplining practices and their teaching engagement at primary school level. It was revealed that teachers' teaching engagement depends significantly on their classroom disciplining practices. Therefore, the researchers concluded that disciplining practices adopted by the preschool teachers determine their teaching engagement. Based on that, therefore, the researchers recommended that preschool teachers should be able to adopt effective classroom disciplining practices so as to be effective in their teaching engagement.

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