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Managerial Strategies for Involving Parents in Children's Education in Public Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated school management strategies for engaging parents in their children's education in public secondary schools within the Oye Local Government Area (LGA), Ekiti State, Nigeria, with a specific focus on exploring managerial techniques that enhance parental involvement in students' academic performance. The study employed a descriptive research design, and the study's participants consisted of 18 government high schools. The total number of academic staff was 2,012. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 (40%) academic staff. The instrument used was the *Parental Participation in Academic Performance Questionnaire (PPAP)*. Simple percentages were used to analyse the research question, while t-test statistics were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level. The following were the findings from the analysis: (1) managerial strategies for involving parents include the use of modern technology such as mobile apps and other digital platforms, Collaboration with the community strategy, organising parental involvement programmes in school, promoting vibrant Parent-Teachers Association (PTA); the use of strategies such as phoning, inviting parents to volunteer, sending letters to the parents, holding report days to involve parents; and the use of cultural and religious sensitivity. (2) The mean ratings of Male and female principals on the managerial strategies for parental participation in public secondary schools were found to be statistically equivalent. It was recommended that educators, policymakers, and school administrators develop strategies to address technology usage and other obstacles in order to promote parental involvement and student success.

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1. Introduction

There has been a general decline in the academic performance of students at all levels, especially at the secondary level, notwithstanding the government revitalising educational policies and attempting, amongst several strategies, to create opportunities for students to engage with their learning in schools. As evidenced in other literature reviews, parental involvement has been positively correlated with students' academic performance, particularly when parents are involved in school-related activities.

About improving parental involvement in children's education, Gulsah and Smith^[1] highlighted that parental engagement was found to be vital for students' exemplary academic performance, and organising parents' day in schools, convening meetings twice a year, and establishing new school strategies, such as the School-Based Management Committee, will improve parental involvement. Owino et al.^[2] concluded that children's academic performance is positively influenced when school leaders involve parents in managing student discipline. However, they cautioned that this method of discipline management is ineffective in the present day. Improvements are needed in this area of student discipline management to help students enhance their study performance.

Similarly, Likoko et al.^[3] found strong evidence that parental involvement has a positive effect on student performance in public day government schools. Haastrup^[4] discovered that when parents participate in school management, it helps ensure and maintain the necessary school facilities that support students' academic performance. The research showed that parents' involvement in school management is crucial for effective school administration. Kaizirege and Biswalo^[5] strategised that encouraging parents to adopt a positive and stimulating home environment is a good strategy for addressing indiscipline and improving students' academic performance in school. Aladejebi^[6] found that issues such as language differences and the type of technology used are significant challenges for parents getting involved in their children's education. The author urges school management to prioritise parents' financial situation and education level

as key factors in improving parent involvement. The scholar added that teachers, administrators, and school staff should plan to address language problems, technology use, and other issues to enhance parent engagement and student learning opportunities, especially in public secondary schools.

The sex of principals in public secondary schools has also been associated with differences in parental engagement strategies. Female principals typically emphasize relational strategies that promote collaboration and trust, such as fostering relationships, using direct communication, and engaging in participatory decision-making. In contrast, male principals tend to rely on formal structures and standardized institutional processes^[7]. These findings suggest that leadership style may matter in relation to the success and/or type of approaches used to involve parents in their children's education. Overall, these findings underscore the pivotal role of school leadership, particularly that of the principal, in shaping managerial approaches that promote parental engagement in public secondary schools. There has been a general decline in the academic performance of students at all levels, especially at the secondary level, notwithstanding the government revitalising educational policies and attempting, amongst several strategies, to create opportunities for students to engage with their learning in schools. As evidenced in other literature reviews, parental involvement has been positively correlated with students' academic performance, particularly when parents are involved in school-related activities. However, this research is essential as it will help develop an understanding of how managerial strategies adopted by public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria, can assist in effective parental involvement in students' learning. Parental involvement has long been recognized as an essential factor in students' academic achievement; however, there has been little consideration of the managerial strategies employed by school principals and administrators to ensure that parental involvement is actively pursued, especially in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria's context. This study provides valuable insights into the methods, challenges, principal gender disparity, and opportunities for parental involvement in public secondary schools.

Public secondary schools are places where students

who have finished primary school can continue their education. These schools serve students from approximately aged 12 to 18 years. A public secondary school is a non-profit day or boarding school, including a public charter schools that offer secondary education as defined by state law^[8]. This term does not include any education beyond 12th grade. The rate of parental detachment from their children's education in public secondary schools in Ekiti State is somewhat disturbing. However, observation and scholarly works have revealed that there are lapses in public schools which include inadequate funding, a shortage of qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, lack of teacher motivation, overcrowded classrooms, poor management and supervision, outdated school facilities and equipment, improper teacher assignments, lack of research-oriented teaching, insufficient professional training, teachers' limited knowledge of technology, nepotism in hiring, politicization of education, inadequate instructional materials, curriculum gaps, cheating in exams, cult activities, school exploitation, poor parental upbringing, diverse systems of education, unsteadiness of staff, low teacher motivation, malfunctioning of guidance and counselling services, poor classroom management, and low-quality education^[9,10]. These, among other things, create fears about the state of their children's education in school. A personal observation indicates that lapses in public secondary schools relate to the presence of several indiscretions, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, unprotected sexual activity, violence, violent crimes, low academic performance, and unsafe driving behaviours undertaken by pupils coming from a state-funded school context. Personal engagement with principals of public secondary schools in the area reveals that students' misdemeanours stem from their homes. Principals of schools argued that they are knowledgeable about strategies for involving parents in their children's education to address the menace of misdemeanours jointly. However, these strategies are not evident in the practical situation of school operations. These practical knowledge gaps spur the researcher to urgently investigate the approaches for involving parents in their children's education in public high schools in Oye LGA, Ekiti State.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The main study specifically seeks to:

- i. Determine the managerial strategies for improving

parental involvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

1.2. Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

What are the managerial strategies for involving parents in their children's education in public secondary schools?

1.3. Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis guided the study at a 0.05 level of significance:

H1. *There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the managerial strategies for involving parents in their children's education in public secondary schools.*

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Managerial Strategies for Improving Parental Involvement in Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Kwaji et al.^[11] discussed ways to enhance parents' involvement in education, including organizing Parents' Day in schools, holding parent-teacher meetings twice a year, and involving parents in organizations such as School-Based Management Committees. Likewise, in their study, Hastrup^[4] stated that parents who help manage schools contribute to the preservation and/or improvement of the physical infrastructure of schools, thereby enhancing or maintaining their children's academic performance. The study found that parental involvement in school management is a cardinal issue in efficiently managing schools. Ikhlas and Mokhtar^[12] concluded that in daily secondary schools, parents should be given a soft landing regarding their involvement in students' formation to ensure their full involvement.

Mecklean et al.^[13] supported the idea that parent involvement improves the discipline of public secondary school students. The study concluded that parental involvement is essential for enhancing student discipline in public secondary schools, and recommended that parent involvement be prioritized first, with less focus on other options.

Owino et al.^[2] suggested that the government, through the Ministry of Education, provide both training and workshops to principals, teachers, and school personnel about the benefits of parental engagement in their children's education, including fostering effective communication, enhancing cultural sensitivity, and providing parents with opportunities for meaningful participation in the course of decision-making. These actions can help create a positive learning environment with beneficial outcomes for students' academic performance.

2.2. Gender Disparity of School Principals in Managerial Strategies for Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Research indicates that the gender of school principals influences the nature of managerial strategies for parental involvement and their effectiveness in promoting parental involvement. Findings suggest that female principals often use relational and participatory managerial strategies that emphasise building trust, empathy, and collaborative networks with parents. For instance, female principals are more inclined to conduct personalised home visits, informal gatherings, and supported parental participation in school decision-making^[7,14], resulting in a sense of shared responsibility and partnership between parents and the school.

Male principals, conversely, may stress formal, structured processes for parental involvement. This includes regular, yet formal, parent-teacher conferences, adherence to a policy-based model for parental involvement, and soliciting involvement through institutionalized committees rather than individual engagement^[15]. While these processes may help ensure organizational consistency, they may undermine the relational quality of engagement that supports parents' active participation in students' education.

In public secondary schools in Ekiti State, success with engaging parents and guardians effectively was generally conditional on the principals' finesse in balancing formal procedures with relational approaches that responded directly to socio-cultural and economic realities at the community level^[16]. Sijia and Huang^[17] stated that principals who combine these approaches, regardless of gender, would likely experience better degrees of parental engagement and potentially enhanced student performance.

3. Empirical Studies

3.1. Managerial Strategies for Improving Parental Involvement in Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Hasbullah^[18] assessed effective school management strategies for increasing parental engagement in education to foster a positive partnership between the school and home. Parental engagement in education has long been recognised for significantly improving children's educational outcomes, including academic success and emotional wellness. The research method employed was a literature review. The findings underscore the crucial importance of clear and direct communication between schools and homes as a cornerstone of effective partnerships. The use of modern technologies, including mobile applications and other digital engagement platforms, helps improve those communications. Furthermore, Hasbullah's research showed that modalities for flexibility and providing rewards and recognition for involvement at school dramatically enhanced the rates of parental partnership and engagement. The findings further emphasised the need for an education and training package for parents, which would both improve their skills in helping their children with academic concepts and improve their engagement with the school community.

Okendo^[19] studied strategies that improve parent participation in the early childhood education delivery in Kisii, Nyamira, and Homabay counties based on Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. This study utilised a convergent parallel design. Data were collected from 223 participants – parents, head teachers, ECD teachers, and programme officers from the three counties. The participants were sampled using probability and non-probability sampling methods. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, interview guides, and observation schedules. A pilot study was conducted in five schools in Kisii South Sub-County to test the validity of the research instruments. Simultaneously, the split-half approach was employed to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, as well as its dependability and credibility, which encompassed the reliability of the interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The results indicated that

community strategy was the most significant factor in the performance of Early Childhood Education (ECE), followed closely by communication from the school, participation in decision-making, and volunteering.

Triegaardt and Diermen^[20] examined management practices that could serve as blueprints for creating opportunities for greater parental involvement in South Tshwane primary schools. Therefore, the conceptual framework that drove this study and served as a reference point is the factors related to the effectiveness of schools^[21], in combination with Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence theory, and her typology of parental involvement (for the remainder of this study). The research design employed a qualitative approach, enabling the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews with six principals from South Tshwane primary schools. This research study involved a literature review and consideration of relevant documents to gather rich and in-depth data. The research revealed that most schools recognize the importance and benefits of parental involvement; however, they lack a concrete framework for structuring parental participation. The recommendation was that schools would be guided to plan, manage, and execute a parental involvement programme, bearing in mind the unique situation of the school context.

Samuel-Okoyel^[22] explored mechanisms to improve and manage parental involvement in Kliptown Secondary School. The study employed a case study research design. Data were collected through a focus group interview with five participants, who shared their perspectives on mechanisms to improve parental involvement. Based on how Creswell^[23] explains the analysis method, the data were analyzed and interpreted using Creswell's six-step model. From the answers, it is clear that Kliptown Secondary School employs several systems and mechanisms to manage parental involvement, including phoning parents, requesting parental volunteers, sending letters to parents, holding report days, and conducting parent-teacher meetings. However, the systems, mechanisms, and strategies employed are limited in number. The school should have more avenues to improve parental involvement.

Haastrup^[4] examined parents' involvement in school management to improve students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. This study

employed a descriptive research design. The study population consisted of 6893 teachers from the 302 public secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The stratified sampling technique was employed, and the study sample comprised 1,200 teachers (respondents) from 60 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study used the stratified random sampling technique. The questionnaire used for the study was "Parents' Participation in School Management for Effective Academic Performance of Students in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (PPSMEAPSSSQ)" as the study instrument. The questionnaire was organised in two sections, with Section A used to collect demographic data and Section B, which contained 18 items that addressed the research question. In addition, the coefficient index value recorded was 0.870, which indicated that the reliability of the instrument was established. Data collected from the study were collated and statistically analysed. The statistical tools used to answer the research questions were Mean and standard Deviation statistics.

On the other hand, the t-test inference tool was used with the specified null hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05. The research found that parents' involvement in school management helps maintain and enhance institutional management, which in turn serves as a precursor to students' academic performance. The research established that parents' involvement in school management is essential for positively influencing school administration at the stated level of alpha.

Kaluku^[24] examined parental involvement as a determinant of students' discipline in Kenya, specifically in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. The study problem was to research the influence of head teachers' involvement in parental engagement on the management of discipline by head teachers in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. The study was grounded in the situational theory of leadership, which describes leadership behaviour in terms of both task behaviour and relational behaviour. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study was head teachers, teachers, and students. The sample for the study was 421. The three sets of questionnaires obtained data. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 22.0. Inferential analysis was performed using chi-square statistics at a *p*-value of 0.05. The study concluded that the head teachers need to deploy

several administrative strategies when managing students' discipline. The study indicated that parental involvement had a statistically significant effect on discipline management ($\chi^2(df(3)) = 21.902; p < 0.05$). The findings from the studies will be helpful for head teachers and other relevant educational stakeholders on a participatory approach to elements of student discipline management in schools.

Owino et al.^[2] investigate the impacts of parental engagement as a discipline management intervention on students' academic success in Siaya County, Kenya. Based on social learning theory, the study was implemented as a convergent parallel mixed-method study. The study was set in public secondary schools and involved principals, teachers, and students. The researchers used student and teacher questionnaires as surveys to collect data and then interviewed the principals using an interview guide. They employed systematic sampling to select 24 schools from a total of 243 schools randomly. They used simple random sampling to select 240 teachers from a total of 2,412 teachers, and 393 students were selected from a population of approximately 24,000 students. All principals from the sampled schools were participants in the study. Quantitative data were analysed with SPSS software and expressed as percentages. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically and also presented as narratives and/or excerpts of direct quotations. The study indicates that when principals involve parents in the process of disciplining their students, a marked impact on student academic achievement was noted. However, the study also concludes that there is no way to implement a discipline management strategy alongside parents.

Mubeshera and Nosheen^[25] examined the extent of parental involvement in educating their children. The authors used a descriptive case study research design. All data were collected through unstructured interviews with 30 parents of children attending primary schools in London, United Kingdom. The findings indicated that parents have a vested interest in their children getting an education and want to get involved. However, the findings also indicated that the majority of parents do not always know how to get involved in their children's education and sometimes feel intimidated by the operational features. The authors concluded that if schools are to involve parents in their school affairs, and alongside their children's education, then some strategies need to be popularised within the school. It has therefore

been deduced that none of the available studies had touched managerial techniques for involving parents in their children's education in the Ekiti State context. The current study hopes to fill this gap in the literature.

3.2. Empirical Studies Examining Gender Disparities among School Principals in Their Managerial Strategies for Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Raya^[26] examined the impact of parental involvement in the education of secondary school students in the Kinondoni District to determine if parental involvement differs depending on the parent's gender. This study reported on several factors related to parental involvement, including communication with teachers, participation in school activities, and support for their child's academic performance. The data indicated that parental involvement was not gender-specific—both fathers and mothers seemed to be equally involved in their child's education. This work suggests that parental involvement is briefly mentioned in terms of gender, reinforcing the critical role of parental involvement in a child's education, regardless of a parent's gender. The author emphasised that educational policies and school-related activities should promote the notion of both parents being encouraged to participate in their child's education, particularly at the secondary school level, as parental involvement helps create an overall educational climate that fosters learning opportunities and goals for both students and parents alike. The research has significant implications for improving secondary school outcomes and parental involvement in education, regardless of whether one parent or both parents are involved.

Nzokurum^[27] investigated how principals encourage parental involvement in school activities, specifically whether gender influences the way principals achieve parental engagement. The study's findings indicate that principals' strategies for engaging fathers and mothers in school-related events showed no difference. The results suggest that parental involvement in school activities is not influenced by gender, indicating that principals are using inclusive approaches regardless of the parents' gender. This study contributes to the understanding of parental involvement dynamics in education and supports the need for efforts to ensure agency for both parents in engaging with the school

community.

Mutune et al.^[28] investigated the impact of head teachers' encouragement on parents' engagement in education-related issues on student retention. Mutune et al.^[28] found that head teachers' engagement with parents, motivating their participation, may have positively affected students' retention. This research supports the idea that effective school leadership is crucial in fostering effective parent-school partnerships, which are linked to student engagement and overall academic success. Their study highlights the role that head teachers can play in creating environments that support parents and students in educational purposes.

A study by Martínez^[29] found that male school principals are more common than female school principals. This lack of gender balance may have implications for the implementation of parental involvement strategies, as principals' leadership types and priorities also differ by gender.

Grissom et al.^[30] indicated that the gender of school principals can influence teacher outcomes, specifically that teachers have less turnover when the principal matches their gender. If principals are of the same gender, it could impact how principals work to involve parents, as principals may have similar communication or belief styles.

Dicke et al.^[31] explored various barriers that women educators face in engaging in educational leadership roles, including gender bias, a lack of support, and work-life balance issues. Depending on these considerations, the barriers that impede women from entering principalship can also impact the diversity of managerial strategies that principals are willing to employ to facilitate the effectiveness of parental involvement.

Eagly^[32] research suggests that female leaders tend to adopt a more transformational leadership style with an emphasis on development, participation, and creatively solving problems. These characteristics can enhance parental involvement by developing an inclusive and collaborative school context.

The UGohain et al.^[33] has identified that women are underrepresented in educational leadership roles despite being a majority in the teaching profession. The underrepresentation of women affects the diversity of voices in developing and enacting parent involvement strategies. A review of the literature shows a substantial void in empirical lines of inquiry into gender differences among school principals in

their management practices for engaging parents in their children's learning (education), particularly within the context of Ekiti State, Nigeria. There is an increase in studies on the issues of gender inequality in education and parental involvement; however, the intersection of these relevant ideas at the managerial level is still underexplored.

4. Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory

The study utilised the sociocultural theory postulated by Vygotsky^[34], which deals with the relationship between people and their environment, comprising physical and social environments. According to this theory, several social and cultural variables affect development and learning. People live with family members and are influenced by their culture. Children's interaction with family members in the community is vital for learning and development. It is because family is the first teacher, and community-family interaction is the first learning. Therefore, children learn about the world through this interaction. Considering the internationalisation of knowledge (know-how), he theorised the zone of proximal development (ZPD), and he then referred to children as having high levels of problem-solving. Vygotsky defined the ZPD as the distance between the actual developmental level, as determined by independent problem-solving, and the level of potential development, as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in Collaboration with a more capable peer^[35]. Vygotsky argued that children can independently learn and achieve at one level of development. However, another level has been introduced, relating to the child's ability to work under the supervision of an adult or a more able peer. For example, cycling is a social tool that transcends a child's ability to learn through working with more able peers or an adult. By emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of learning and development, this theory supports the notion that a child's family life is important and that parents make significant contributions to a child's development and academic success. Importantly, by embracing sociocultural theory in this study, educators can develop a deeper understanding of the complex factors influencing parent involvement and create more effective strategies to support diverse families. By understanding the relationship between sociocultural theory and parental in-

volvement, educators can develop more effective strategies to support diverse families and promote student success.

Researchers have conducted several studies on approaches for engaging parents in their children's education in schools across the country. Researchers have conducted studies that provide evidence to show that parents contribute to the dichotomisation of students' academic outcomes across states, along with their families. Parents positively impact students at the school level primarily through positive behaviours at the high school level. However, there is limited research to support the instructional approaches responsible for parental engagement in their child's education in public secondary schools in the Oye LGA of Ekiti State. It is this literature gap that the current study aims to address.

5. Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey design is suitable for this study because it will provide a systematic approach to collecting data from a large number of academic staff in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. A descriptive survey research design will also enable the researcher to describe and examine the managerial strategies employed by school principals to involve parents in their children's education^[36].

5.1. Population of the Study

The study population consisted of all public Secondary schools in Oye Local Government Area (LGA), Ekiti State. The number of public secondary schools in Oye-Ekiti LGA is eighteen (18), and there are two thousand and twelve (2,012) academic staff members according to data from the Ekiti State Ministry of Education^[37]. Using public secondary schools as the focus of this study allows for a significant depth of insight into the intricacies of parental involvement in education and the relationships between parents, teachers, and students across a range of schools in a representative educational context^[38].

5.2. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 200 academic staff members was constituted as respondents using a proportionate stratified sampling method, selected from 18 public secondary schools in the

Oye Local Government Area (LGA), Ekiti State (representing 40% of the total population). The sample size was determined in accordance with Creswell and Poth^[39], who found that for a population size of a few hundred, at least 40% of the sample size should be comprised of the population. By choosing academic staff as respondents, the researcher deemed that they could provide rich data on parental involvement because they were likely to have detailed knowledge of the educational context, the relationships between parents, teachers, and learners in schools, and could best elucidate parental involvement in schools. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was necessary because it ensures the full representativeness of the sample, minimizes sampling error, and enhances the plausibility of the estimates^[40].

5.3. Instrument for Data Collection

The data gathering tool used was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Part A was used to gather demographic data from the respondents^[41]. Section B consisted of 10 items on managerial strategies for improving parental involvement and was titled "Parental Participation in Academic Performance Questionnaire" (PPAP). The questionnaire was responded to on a four-point modified Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the weighted values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 given a criterion mean score of 2.50, which was used for decision-making^[42]. By using a four-point Likert Scale, the researcher can simplify responses, reduce ambiguity, and increase differentiation, ultimately providing a more reliable and nuanced understanding of the research topic^[43].

5.4. Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the "Parental Participation in Academic Performance Questionnaire (PPAP)" for the study was assured through content validity, which was established by expert review. Educational experts from the Faculty of Education at FUOYE, along with researchers knowledgeable about parental participation and educational management, reviewed the tool to assess its relevance and completeness in measuring managerial strategies for working with parents in children's education. The instrument was subsequently amended based on their response to ensure it was precise

in capturing the critical constructs of parental participation and the associated strategies used by school principals. By validating an instrument, the researcher can ensure accuracy, establish reliability, and increase confidence in the result, ultimately supporting informed decision-making and advancing knowledge in various fields^[44].

5.5. Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha Statistics were used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument on managerial strategies for improving parental involvement^[45]. Reliability testing was conducted on 20 respondents who were not selected for the sample; these respondents were selected from private secondary schools in Ekiti State. Given the similarities between private secondary schools in Ekiti State, it is appropriate to provide an understanding of the current state of education in these institutions. Responses from the respondents were analysed, yielding a reliability index of 0.87. The reason is to ensure stability, establish trustworthiness, and reduce errors, ultimately supporting informed decision-making and advancing knowledge in various fields^[46].

5.6. Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher collected data for the study in person and enlisted the help of three trained research assistants, who were informed on how to detect a valid response and record and collate their responses for analysis. A total of two hundred and ten (210) questionnaires were distributed to the academic staff selected, of which 200 copies were retrieved (83.5%) and used for appropriate statistical procedures.

5.7. Method of Data Analysis

The research question raised was answered using simple percentages. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statis-

tics at a 0.05 significance level to determine the rejection or otherwise. The t-test provides an appropriate method for testing the null hypothesis that the mean ratings of male and female principals do not differ significantly in their managerial strategies for involving parents in their children's education. The t-test is used when comparing the means of two independent groups (male and female principals) to determine whether this difference exists at a statistically significant level. The study involved assessing two groups with continuous data (the mean ratings) and using the t-test to provide a quick analysis that can determine whether gender affects the beliefs about managerial strategies. Therefore, this method is suitable for testing the hypothesis^[47].

6. Results

Table 1 shows that 74% of the respondents agree that using modern technology, such as mobile applications and other digital platforms, is beneficial. In comparison, 26% disagree, and 52.5% of respondents agree that Collaboration with the community is a effective strategy. In contrast, 47.5% disagree, while 91% of respondents agree that organizing parental involvement programs in school is effective, and 71% agree that promoting a vibrant Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) is effective. In comparison, 21% disagree, while 47% of respondents agree that strategies such as phoning, asking parents to volunteer, sending letters, and involving parents on report day are effective, with 53% disagreeing. Finally, 74% of respondents agree that using cultural and religious sensitivity is beneficial, while 26% disagree.

Table 2 reveals that $t_{\text{calculated}}$ (0.512) is less than t_{table} (1.960) at the 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis was retained, indicating that the mean ratings of male and female principals regarding managerial strategies for parental involvement in government post-primary schools did not show any statistically significant difference.

Table 1. Frequency & Percentage of the managerial strategies for improving parental involvement.

Items	SA		A		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
The use of modern technology such as mobile apps and other digital platforms	99	49.5	49	24.5	35	17.5	17	8.5
Collaboration with community strategy	55	27.5	50	25	70	35	25	12.5
Organizing parental involvement programmes in school	110	55	72	36	13	6.5	5	2.5
Promoting vibrant Parent-Teachers Association (PTA)	79	39.5	63	31.5	43	21.5	15	7.5
The use of strategies such as phoning, asking parents to be a volunteer, sending letters to the parents, and report day to involve parents	52	26	42	21	75	37.5	31	15.5
The use of cultural and religious sensitivity	99	49.5	49	24.5	35	17.5	17	8.5

Table 2. t-test of male and female principals on the managerial strategies for improving parental involvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t _{cal}	t _{tab}
Male	88	19.0227	2.47738	198	0.512	1.960
Female	112	19.2054	2.52247			

Not Significant >0.05.

7. Discussion

The analysis revealed that managers' strategies for enhancing parental involvement in learners' scholarly success in public secondary schools are: use of new technology e.g. mobile apps and other digital platforms, community strategy, organise parental involvement programmes in school, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) active, strategies such as phoning, asking parent to be a volunteer, writing a letter to the parents, report day to get parents involved, cultural and religious sensitivity. These results align with Okendo's^[19] findings, which indicate that community strategy achieved the highest performance in Early Childhood Education, followed by communication from school to home, decision-making, and volunteering. The present findings are consistent with those of Kwaji et al.^[11]. Their study also highlights similar approaches, including the use of technology, community engagement, direct communication, and the development of inclusion strategies to facilitate parent involvement in promoting student success. The results align with Samuel-Okoyel^[22], who focused on utilising digital tools, organising parent programs, and implementing inclusive forms of communication to reinforce parental involvement, thereby enhancing outcomes for students in public secondary schools. The results align with the findings of Ikhlās and Mokhtar's^[12] study on parental involvement. They also focused on digital strategies, community involvement, and adopting a more direct approach to parental involvement, as well as acknowledging all parties to strengthen parental participation and support student achievement within public secondary schools. The elements found on managers' strategies to enhance parents' engagement in learner academic success, which comprised technology developments, community strategies, active PTAs, and cultural awareness concur with Owino et al.^[2], as their research also identified the significance of digital platforms, parental programs, providing a community strategy, and being inclusive with direct communication and volunteer opportunities for the improvement of parent's engagement in public secondary

schools. The present findings match those of Kaizirege and Biswalo^[5]. These authors also assert that digital devices, parent programs, direct communication, and inclusivity are effective in fostering parental engagement and ultimately helping students succeed in public secondary schools. The findings aligned with Haastrup^[4], who similarly discusses the use of digital platforms, community approaches, and inclusive communication strategies for successfully engaging parents in supporting student achievement in public secondary schools. The present findings align with Mecklean et al.^[13], who also reported the use of digital tools, community engagement, and inclusive strategies, such as communication and opportunities to volunteer, in order to positively influence parental involvement and student success in public secondary schools.

It was disclosed that the mean ratings of male and female principals regarding the managerial strategies for promoting parental involvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools did not differ markedly. The finding was consistent with Raya^[26], who similarly found that parental involvement in their children's education in secondary school in Kinondoni District was not gender-specific. The finding also aligns with Nzokurum^[27], who found no significant difference in the method used by principals to include parents in school activities based on gender. Mutune et al.^[28] substantiated that the head teachers' efforts to engage parents in educational matters positively influence students' retention. The results of Martínez and De Cabo^[29] align with the present study's findings, which also did not find that gender was an effective variable in determining how principals engaged parents in school. Male and female principals have similar means of engaging parents in their schools. Moreover, strategies for parental engagement may be effective regardless of the principals' gender. The present findings align with those of Grissom et al.^[30], who also found no significant gender-based differences in how principals use strategies to engage parents, suggesting that male and female principals employ similar methods for parental involvement in schools. Given that the mean rating of male and female

principals regarding managerial strategies for parent involvement in government primary schools revealed no significant difference, this finding is consistent with Dicke et al.^[31], who found no difference based on gender in the manner principals rate or use strategies for parent engagement. Both studies indicate that gender (of the principal) is independent of the focus on parental involvement.

8. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concluded that managerial strategies for improving parental involvement in students' educational progress in public secondary schools include the use of modern technology such as mobile apps and other digital platforms, Collaboration with the community strategy, organizing parental involvement programmes in school, promoting vibrant Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs), the use of methods such as phoning, asking parent to be a volunteer, sending letters to the parents, organizing report days to involve parents, and the incorporating cultural and religious sensitivity. This conclusion shows that there are three managerial strategies for enhancing parental involvement in students' educational progress in public secondary schools: (i) modern technology, (ii) community cooperation, and (iii) traditional methods. The findings illustrate a range of parental involvement strategies that are diverse and equally effective. For example, modern technology could include the use of mobile applications and social media platforms to communicate with and engage parents productively. By collaborating with the community through engagement with stakeholders and partner organizations establishes a foundation for shared accountability in the support network for student success, thereby adding value to the process. Elements such as establishing parental involvement programs, a vibrant PTA, and networking opportunities, including phone calls, volunteering, and letter writing, help foster ongoing and meaningful parental involvement. Furthermore, it is essential to incorporate cultural and religious sensitivities to ensure that the strategies employed to leverage parental participation align with the community's values, ultimately enhancing the success of parental involvement. Collectively, it leads to an integrated approach to engaging parents in their children's education that improves sustained educational strategies to support student learning.

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the managerial strategies for involving parents in their children's education in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The finding is supported by statistical analysis using the t-test. The test showed that the mean ratings for male and female principals did not differ significantly, indicating that gender does not influence the managerial strategies employed to engage parents in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This suggests that both male and female principals adopt similar approaches to involving parents, irrespective of gender.

8.1. Recommendations

The following suggestions were made in line with the study's findings:

1. Parents should be encouraged to be actively involved in their children's education. These gestures will positively influence academic success, boosting morale and shifting attitudes, thereby increasing the overall academic performance of children across various subject areas, behaviours, and social adjustment. These, in turn, will improve students' success, enhance the satisfaction of parents and teachers, stimulate a favourable school climate, and promote better school discipline.
2. School principals regardless of the gender should establish an active forum for involving parents in school activities. Such forum can be the use of modern technology such as mobile apps and other digital platforms, Collaboration with community strategy, organizing parental involvement programmes in school, promoting vibrant Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), the use of methods such as phoning, asking parent to be a volunteer, sending letters to the parents, report day to involve parents, and the use of cultural and religious sensitivity. This act will solve the existing problems of misdemeanours prevalent among children in public secondary schools.

8.2. Implications of the Findings for Policymakers, Researchers, Practitioners, and Society

The findings on managers' strategies for enhancing parental involvement in learners' scholarly success and that

of the principals regarding mean ratings on gender disparity in public secondary schools can have several implications across different areas:

8.2.1. Implications for Policymakers

It is possible to have a policy that promotes and incentivises the use of new technologies (mobile apps, digital platforms, etc.) that add to the communication link between the school and parents. This can include provisions for remediation by allocating resources for established community outreach programs, specifically targeting parents. The fundamental thing is that you can create an opportunity to invest dollars and resources in building a digital infrastructure, which schools can then utilize to promote and develop mobile apps and platforms that encourage ongoing parental engagement. Furthermore, schools will need to provide training for parents and teachers on how to engage with that technology. In addition to that, policy should also incorporate culturally and religiously sensitive understanding that promotes parent engagement so that parents can feel respected and comfortable in their involvement in their child's education.

Furthermore, Policymakers can conclude that gender does not influence the perceptions of school principals regarding parent involvement strategies. This finding suggests that policies focusing on increasing parent involvement can be established to be gender-neutral. All school leaders can seek support for the same plan, regardless of their gender. Because there are no significant differences in strategies based on gender, policymakers should focus on policies that are inclusive of all school leaders and allow them to participate in parent engagement in an unrestricted manner. Since both male and female principals find value in parent involvement, policymakers will also be able to share resources evenly among schools and assist all schools in enhancing parental engagement within their school communities. As such, schools will have the best opportunities available to create more meaningful partnerships with parents.

8.2.2. Implications for Research

Further research could examine digital platforms or mobile apps to increase parental involvement and investigate forms of intervention in different types of communities, observing the differences in student success rates. Research could also examine the impact of cultural and religious beliefs on parental involvement more thoroughly. Identifying

barriers and enablers will enable these interventions and the researchers' preferences to be tailored to different demographics, offering more inclusive strategies. The research could also examine the long-term positive impacts of these strategies on student performance, particularly in terms of how long they sustain parental involvement in the learning engagement process through various means and how that affects student success.

Furthermore, given that gender does not appear to influence managerial strategies for parental involvement, researchers could consider examining other factors that may influence principals' management, such as school size, type of school (urban vs. rural), and socioeconomic context. Researchers can study how other factors (like teacher preparation, school culture, or community involvement) impact the effectiveness of parental involvement strategies. A gender-neutral perspective in these studies could lead to more generalised results applicable to all school leaders. Researchers could focus on the long-term impact of the strategies on student outcomes, regardless of whether the principal was male or female, to determine if the strategy results in sustained parental involvement and improved student achievement.

8.2.3. Implications for Practice

Educators, ranging from school managers to teachers, need to engage with parents in every possible way. A combination of mobile apps, phone calls, letters and event-based communication (such as PTA meetings and report days) is essential. When communication occurs in various ways, it provides an opportunity for participation, regardless of the parent's accessibility or technological knowledge. Additionally, teachers and school managers should be trained on using technology to communicate with parents, along with how to support conversations around culturally sensitive topics, ensuring a student's welcome into the school or program. The goal should be to re-engage and energise Alumni and PTAs to create dynamic and participatory community governance focused upon the school and the students' academic progress. Consistent meetings, clear communication around reciprocally set agendas, and collaborative experiences that foster mutual understanding can significantly strengthen and improve relationships between teachers and parents.

Moreover, Practitioners, who include school administrators and educators, should understand that gender provides little to no influence on the selection or application of

parental involvement strategies. As a result, the same best practices related to community involvement, technology, and an active PTA should be considered in all schools, regardless of the gender of the school principal. Professional development designed for school leaders should focus on developing skills in promoting parental involvement without the need for gender-specific revisions. Training should be universally applicable and focus on improving parental engagement and school management for all principals. Since male and female principals shared similar beliefs about the importance of parental involvement, schools could encourage male and female school leaders to collaborate on developing strategies and best practices to enhance parental engagement.

8.2.4. Implications for Society

Parent contributions can help strengthen ties between schools, families, and communities. Through community engagement, possible culturally sensitive means that have been shared could create the social cohesion that families, schools, and communities need to develop a much larger support system for learners. Hopefully, these methods will provide engagement with all parents, including those from marginalised or less-privileged backgrounds, meaning that society can begin to create parity for students by making the process more accessible. This can reduce educational inequities and inform students/parents that they are part of the educational process. Because parents/guardians/members of the community may develop a sense of ownership in the transformation of the educational wreckage, we can encourage a culture of, even, lifelong learning, which will benefit the broader community by reinforcing the value of education.

Secondly, the absence of gender disparity in perceptions of parental involvement supports the development of effective strategies for engaging parents by both male and female principals. This leads to even greater impetus for gender equality in leadership positions, illustrating that gender should not impede effective educational leadership. Similar perceptions between male and female principals can ultimately lead to a more cohesive movement to engage the broader community in supporting students. Gender-neutral approaches to community engagement and parental involvement have the potential to enhance the quality of collaborative partnerships between schools and the communities they serve. The absence of gender differences in strategic perceptions means that the educational community, regardless of

gender, can coalesce over a shared goal of improving parental involvement. This collaboration can lead to shared accountability and commitment to improve student outcomes.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

This research has been reviewed and endorsed by the Institutional Review Board of Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study is conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines, ensuring the safety, rights, and well-being of the participants, as well as their confidentiality.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they participated in the study. All procedures were performed in accordance with relevant regulations and guidelines for studies on human subjects.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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