

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE CAUSES OF INDISCIPLINE ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UMUAHIA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of indiscipline on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. The study was conducted in the 5 public secondary schools in Umuahia North Local Government Area. The study employed descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. The target population consisted of 243 teachers and 5,650 students. The sample included 20 teachers and 180 students. The samples were drawn using simple random sampling technique. To ensure reliability and validity, a pilot study was carried out. The data was collected through questionnaire administered to teachers and students by the researchers. The data was analyzed using mean scores. The findings of the study revealed that the causes of indiscipline were due to influence from the environment and their homes, namely, mobile phones, responsibilities at home among others. It was also found that Indiscipline influences the academic achievement of students negatively. Recommendations were made based on the findings which included that school administrations should establish active mandatory school – based families and put in place intensive parent – mentoring programmes which is aimed at sensitizing parents on their parental duties among others.

Introduction

Indiscipline is a state of disorder where school rules and regulations are not adhered to. It is a behaviour disorder that is classified as an act of delinquency. The trend in secondary schools in the present time is indiscipline of all sorts. Okumu (2014) states that indiscipline can be said to be the unwillingness of students to respect the constituted authority, observe and obey school rules and regulations and to maintain high standard of behaviours conducive for teaching learning process and essential for the smooth running of the school to achieve the educational objectives with ease. Indiscipline can also be seen as any action considered to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society. Akinboye (1980) as cited in Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) states that indiscipline is any act or behaviour of an individual or group of people that is not in conformity with the generally accepted pattern of standard norms in the society. It involves lack of obedience to constituted authority. According to Igwe (1990) as cited in Ali et al (2014) school indiscipline is any behaviour, action and conduct which deviates from the established and approved rules and regulations of a school and the acceptable mode of behaviour, action, norms and ethics of the society in general. Therefore, behaviour that does not conform to acceptable and permitted standards are considered as acts of indiscipline. Mbiti (2007) asserts that indiscipline is the breaking of rules and regulations of institutions. The individuals who are willingly or unwillingly violate laid down rules of an educational institution which hampers the smooth running of the institution are said to be exhibiting indiscipline acts.

Students indiscipline in schools has been blamed on the parents who have neglected their duties in proper upbringing of their children at home (Madziyre, 2010). It is common among modern parents especially the working class parents and those in the business sector to ignore their duties of proper upbringing of their children leaving it in the hands of house helps and other care givers. They spend little time with their children. The resultant effect is seen in the increased moral laxity. A society demands the type of students it gets. There is a lot of indiscipline acts going on in our society and this rubs off on our students (Paul, 2009). A student who is found gambling in the school may have come to a conclusion that there is no honest way of making money and that hard work is not recognized in society.

Indiscipline acts in schools is not an obscure problem or phenomenon that its causes cannot be ascertained. Ozigi and Canlan (1979) as cited in Ali et al (2014) presents seven likely causes of the phenomenon in schools and which include:

- (a) the idea of democracy with its emphasis on the rights and freedom of the individual;

- (b) the generation gap in ideas, beliefs and values about the nature of man, life and society. There is a wide difference of opinion in these matters between the two generations, the young and the old;
- (c) the high level of sophistication of young men and women compared with that of the old generation;
- (d) the influence of the media (i.e. the newspaper, the radio and television) which carry regular reports about students power against authority;
- (e) the failure of the adults, both in society and at school to set standards of good behaviours for young men and women to follow;
- (f) the failure of many homes to provide basic and essential moral training in the upbringing of the children and the failure of parents to set good examples and
- (g) the failure in communication between young men and women insisting on their right and the authorities who tend to see the issues involved simply from the “official” point of view.

Morongwa (2010) identifies eight factors as the causes of indiscipline among secondary school students which include: Parental/home influence, Teachers/educators; Political, social and economic factors; Learners with emotional problems, Head teachers/principals factor; Influence of gender and race; and Public schools versus private schools.

Mobile phones are very useful gadgets, but when smuggled into school, may be a source of severe indiscipline. A majority of day school students carry their mobile phones to school. This is a malpractice that is a big headache in many countries. Siringi (2011) notes that some parents facilitate cheating by bringing mobile phones to students in boarding schools during the prayers day ahead of the start of the exams.

Another major cause of indiscipline is the head teachers’ absence from school. Mugambi (2005) points out that the blame on indiscipline could be laid squarely at the feet of the head teachers. An absentee head teacher who is perpetually out of school is likely to meet the wrath of students.

The influence of indiscipline among secondary school students can lead to disruptive classroom behaviours which cause harm in classroom. When students misbehave they learn less and keep their peers from learning. Teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehavior rather than teaching (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). In Freire and Amado (2009) in a qualitative study found that indiscipline in schools resulted in students having trouble relating with teachers, emotionally tense relationship, lack of communication between teachers and students and general bad relationship among students and teachers. Students are the future leaders of any nation and are the symbol of creativity. When they indulge in destructive acts they put the future of the country in greater danger.

In a school situation, indiscipline can be a serious obstacle to learning, and this has become a major concern of the educators and the public. School indiscipline has been over time an issue of concern for educators, policy maker, and public opinion in general, owing to the outbreak of aggressiveness among peers, violence with teacher-student relationship and vandalism as well, leading to perpetual existence of problem of drop out, deviant behaviour, examination malpractice, lateness and poor academic performance among students. Acts of indiscipline if allowed to incubate under current favorable conditions by education providers and consumers could hatch a monster that will be difficult to exterminate (Idu & Ojedapo 2011).

Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014) state that schools teach roles, traditions and norms of the community; how to behave and behave and the virtue of sharing and competing responsibly just to mention but a few. Indiscipline among students has its root in the school, society and in the mind of students. Reports in the media indicate that school children have taken up to violence on their teachers and colleagues. Schools today have to deal with the problem of weapon recruitment into criminal groups, rivalry, drugs and substance abuse trafficking and youth radicalization Okumbe (2001).

Academic achievement is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Chen (2007) defines academic achievement as “a student’s academic performance in school”.

The measures to deal with indiscipline are barely adequate given the fact that there exist no administrative or legal guidelines which could be referred to in such cases. Actions taken are often ad-hoc and uncoordinated both within and across schools of the same type. Teachers most prominently feel disempowered to deal with cases of indiscipline because of lack of support from relevant authorities, political interference and an incapacitated school administration. Despite the rules endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Training Centres but they are not followed by many of the students and their teachers in some government schools, who misbehave wherever they are outside the school environment. The performance of students in external examinations like West African School Certificate examination is alarming. For several years now there have been concerns by various people and groups regarding the deterioration of the quality of education in secondary schools. It is against this that the researchers examined the influence of indiscipline on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

When there is discipline in schools rules and regulations are obeyed and students’ achievement improves. As teaching and learning take place in a conducive atmosphere. Zubaida (2009) defined discipline in schools as respect for

school laws and regulations and the maintenance of an established standard of behaviour. Indiscipline among students in public high schools is a problem that has persisted over the years throughout the world, Nigeria inclusive. Acts of indiscipline by students sometimes result into destruction of property and poor performance in examination among others. The high rate of failures in external examinations is alarming. The number of cases of students' indiscipline keeps on escalating, manifesting itself in various forms, sometimes leading to loss of life. If the situation is not addressed and appropriate mitigating measures put in place, there will be no effective teaching and learning in Nigerian public secondary schools in general and Aba North local Government Area in particular. The question is what is the cause of indiscipline in the study area? How does indiscipline influence the academic achievement of students? These questions are the onus of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of indiscipline on the academic achievement of secondary students in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify causes of indiscipline among secondary school students.
2. find out the effect of indiscipline on students' academic achievement.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study include:

1. What are the causes of indiscipline among students in Umuahia North Local Government Area?
2. What are the effects of indiscipline on the academic achievement of students?

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the teachers and students in Umuahia North local Government Area in Abia State. There are 5,650 (Five thousand, six hundred and fifty) students and 243 (Two hundred and forty three) teachers from the 8 secondary schools in Umuahia North Local government Area of Abia State. A sample of two hundred (200) respondents made up of 5 teachers and 15 students each from five public secondary schools were used for the study. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size from the population. A self-structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher titled 'Causes and Influence of Indiscipline on the Academic Achievement of Students (CIIAAS)'. The items were measured, using the 4-point Likert type scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. Two experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Department and the other from the Department of Educational Management

validated the instrument. Reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test- retest method. Consequently, a reliability coefficient of 0.61 was obtained. The instrument was administered with the help of two briefed research assistants. The data collected were analysed using frequency count and mean. The bench mark for acceptance mean score was 2.50. This implies that any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted value, while any item with the mean below 2.50 was considered not accepted value.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the Causes of Indiscipline among Secondary School Students?

Table1: Mean Scores of Respondents on the Causes of Indiscipline among Secondary School Students

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
7	Lack of appropriate discipline by parents	360	240	20	10	630	3.15	A
8	Overcrowded classroom	160	300	60	30	550	2.75	A
9	Irregular payment of teachers' salaries	400	240	40	-	680	3.4	A
10	Absenteeism by the principals and teachers	360	300	40	-	700	3.5	A
11	Peer group pressure	320	210	40	30	600	3	A
12	Parents neglect of their responsibilities at home	400	210	40	10	670	3.35	A
Cluster mean							3.13	A

Table 1 shows that the causes of indiscipline in secondary schools are lack of appropriate discipline by parents (3.15), (2.75), irregular payment of teachers' salaries(3.4), absenteeism by the principals and teachers (3.5), Peer group pressure(3) and parents neglect of their responsibilities at home(3.35). Their cluster mean of 3, 13 is greater than the cutoff mean of 2.50.

Research Question 2: What are the influences of Indiscipline on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Respondents on the effect of Indiscipline on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
13	Disrupts classroom behaviour causing harm to the students	400	210	40	10	670	3.35	A
14	Loss of lesson hours	320	300	20	-	650	3.25	A
15	It creates stress for teachers when they are distracted from academic time	320	210	100	50	680	3.4	A
16	Students having trouble relating with teachers	400	150	60	20	630	3.15	A
17	Lack of communication between teachers and students	200	225	70	40	535	2.6	A
18	Teaching contact is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehaviour rather than teaching	280	210	60	30	580	2.9	Reject
Cluster mean							3.11	Accept

Table 2 shows that the possible ways indiscipline can be reduced in secondary schools include use of encouragement, affirmation and rewards(3.05),punishment should be meted out to students who are found wanting(3.5),government should ensure prompt payment of teachers' salaries(3.5),there should a mentoring policy to sensitize parents(2.9),teachers should be up to task with their teaching profession(2.5) and parents should on

regular basis be checking up on their children in schools(2.6).Their cluster mean of **2.8 is greater than the cutoff mean of 2.50.**

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveals that the causes of indiscipline in secondary schools are lack of appropriate discipline by parents, overcrowded classroom, irregular payment of teachers' salaries, absenteeism by the principals and teachers, peer group pressure and parents neglect of their responsibilities at home. This is in line with Ozigi and Canlan (1979) as cited in Mbiti (2007) presented seven likely causes of the phenomenon in school and which include: (a) the idea of democracy with its emphasis on the rights and freedom of the individual; (b) the "generation gap" in ideas, beliefs and values about the nature of man, life and society. There is a wide difference of opinion in these matters between the two generations, the young and the old; (c) the high level of sophistication of young men and women compared with that of the old generation; (d) the influence of the media (i.e. the newspaper, the radio and television) which carry regular reports about students power against authority; (e) the failure of the adults, both in society and at school to set standards of good behaviours for young men and women to follow; (f) the failure of many homes to provide basic and essential moral training in the upbringing of the children and the failure of parents to set good examples and (g) the failure in communication between young men and women insisting on their right and the authorities who tend to see the issues involved simply from the "official" point of view.

This agrees with Morongwa (2010) who identified eight factors as the causes of indiscipline among secondary school students which among other things include: parental/home influence, teachers/educators; political, social and economic factors; learners with emotional problems, head teachers/principals factor; influence of gender and race; and public schools versus private schools.

The result of the study shows that indiscipline disrupts classroom behaviour causing harm to the students, causes loss of lesson hours, creates stress for teachers when they are distracted from academic time, students having trouble relating with teachers, lack of communication between teachers and reduces students and teaching contacts as more time is devoted to managing misbehaviour rather than teaching thereby leading to poor performance in examinations. This agrees with Magwa & Ngara (2014) who stated that teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehavior rather than teaching. This supports Freire and Amado (2009) who in a qualitative study found that the influence of indiscipline in school should result to students having trouble relating with teachers, emotionally tense relationship, lack of communication between teachers and students and general bad relationship among students and teachers. All these lead to poor academic achievement of the students.

Conclusion

Indiscipline is a state of disorder where school rules and regulations are not adhered to. Types of indiscipline include the use of slang language, stealing, lateness to school, absenteeism and possession of mobile phones among others. Various factors are responsible for indiscipline of students in schools namely, responsibilities at home, poverty, matau menace and mobile phones. It is important for teachers and administrators to identify these factors and purpose to mitigate their influence on students. Indiscipline influences academic achievement of students negatively.

To stamp out indiscipline, they should all work together to fight against it. Also it is important that teachers should be exemplary in behaviour, parents should find or recommended good peer groups for their children. Government must see to teachers problems, especially concerning prompt provision of teaching aids. The training of children must be the concern of teachers, parents and governments.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. School administrators should work towards provision of adequate facilities for co-curricular activities and effective programmes should be put in place to promote student discipline.
2. Qualified teachers should be posted to schools to handle the different levels of students.
3. The teachers should be supervised periodically in their work to make sure that they are applying required methods and skills and that they adequately supervise the activities of students.
4. The Ministry of Education should train teachers on how to handle Life skills education, with the number of lessons being increased to two lessons in a week.
5. Guidance and counseling in schools should be strengthened through capacity building of all the teacher counselors. It should be popularized by provision of counseling rooms and by use of group counseling and peer counseling techniques, which helps in improving students' attitudes towards counseling.

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