

# Students' Indiscipline and Principal Attitude in Ondo State Secondary Schools

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## Abstract

The research study identified the prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students. It examined the effects of indiscipline among students and identified principal's attitude to indiscipline in secondary schools in Ondo State. Descriptive research design was employed. Questionnaire was administered on 500 Senior Secondary Students to know the prevalence, effects and principals' attitude to indiscipline in Secondary Schools. The instrument was validated by experts in tests and measurement, and a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was established using Crombach Alpha at the 0.05 level of significance. The study found out that there is high prevalence of indiscipline among secondary schools students in Ondo State which has significantly affected students' interest in schooling and overall students' academic performance in school. It also observed that most school principals put-up lackadaisical attitude to indiscipline in their schools while some even aid and abet through their actions and behaviour. The study concluded that unbiased appointment of capable and effective principals, and effective monitoring of schools will ensure discipline which will boost the quality of teaching and learning for the attainment of the set goals in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Indiscipline; School Effectiveness; Secondary schools

## 1. Introduction.

Students' indiscipline is a menace that has been hunting the educational system in Nigeria over the years. It is considered a national concern that its threat to school effectiveness is becoming more serious by the day. Infact, all the education stakeholders across the country are concerned with the issue of discipline-related problems in schools because of its visible impediment to national growth and development (Yarosan, 2004).

Indiscipline, a derivative of the word from discipline is, according to the Chambers, (2000), a mode of life in accordance with rules; subjection to control. Also the Oxford Advanced learners' Dictionary defines it as lack of control in the behaviour of a group of people. In other words, it is the inability of a person to live in accordance with rules. Tuluhi & Bello (1985) assert that indiscipline is the breaking of rules and regulations of institutions. Individuals willingly or unwillingly violate laid down rules of an institutions, which hampers the smooth running of the institution.

Discipline in school plays an essential role in the moral development of a child and in creation of a healthy society (Nasibi, 2003). A school which is the concept of the pragmatists is a miniature society in an organization, and like all organizations, it exists to seek certain defined objectives, the accomplishment of which is the "raison d'etre" for its continued existence. According to the Scottish Education Department, (1977), school exists among other things to:

- Enable the children to acquire the basic skills of oracy, literacy, numeracy;
- Develop power of reasoning and the capacity of adapting to changing circumstance;
- Develop skills and attitudes that will enable children to take their place in the world of work;
- Develop reasonable and responsible social attitudes and relationship;
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of the societal physical environment;
- Provide systematic guidance and help, so as to develop in the children ability to make informed choice;
- Provide opportunities for creative self-expression and to encourage effort at and development of initiative and originality;
- Encourage and develop interests that will provide personal satisfaction in leisure time;
- Development of the attitude that education is a life-long process.

In summary, a school exists for the purpose of teaching and learning. All else that should happen in it must subservise and be seen to lead to the attainment of the objectives of teaching and learning. Indeed the effectiveness of a school is determined by the extent to which it achieves the operational objectives and this in turn depends on the amount and quality of teaching and learning that goes on in the school, and determined by the level of students discipline that exist in the school.

According to OECD (2011), classrooms and schools with more disciplinary problems are less conducive to learning, since teachers have to spend more time creating an orderly environment before instruction can begin. Interruptions in the classroom disrupt students' concentration on, and their engagement in, their lessons. Acts of indiscipline as exhibited by secondary students include; dishonesty, lack of respect and lack of consideration for elders and those in authority, rudeness, absenteeism and lateness to school, selfishness, avarice, indolence, gambling, rape, cultism, smoking, loitering, examination malpractices, illicit affair between teachers

and students and among students, disloyalty and other unpatriotic acts, lack of public-spiritedness and consideration for others, drunkenness, indecent dressing to mention a few.

These cases of indiscipline are more pronounced among secondary school student, because at the stage most students would have started observing changes in their body, and when they notice certain biological changes signaling maturity in the course of their growth and development, they tend to misbehave by faulting school rules and regulations (Yarosan, 2004).

All too often, when Principals and Teachers discuss the subject of indiscipline in schools, the tendency is for them to look beyond themselves to find scapegoats who are invariably the students. Precisely the same mistake is made by other member of the society, even clergymen who forgot indiscipline among themselves and talk about indiscipline in schools as if the schools were closed organization, non-interactive with the wider society, unmindful of the fact that indiscipline in school is symptomatic of social malaise in the community.

It is generally accepted that nothing inspires more discipline at the bottom than discipline at the top. The logical assumption therefore is that a disciplined society generally produces disciplined schools, while in the school situation; a disciplined principal produces a disciplined staff which in turn produces disciplined students. The principal as a leader in secondary is seen primarily responsible for achieving stated objectives. His effectiveness is measured by the extent to which he influences his followers to achieve group objectives.

The all-important role of the principal in discipline and operations of the school is further stressed by Pack when he holds as follows: "the ethos of a school depends very strongly on the character of the headteachers and of the programme he/she puts on operation within whatever guidelines are set out by regional authority; which emphasizes the huge responsibilities of the school principals as key leader to ensure proper discipline in the school community". In Wallace's Perspective, five key functions that describe effective principals include; shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. (Wallace, 2012)

In these times of heightened concern for student learning, school leaders are being held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn. They must respond to complex environments and serve all students well (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The principals should play important leadership roles in establishing school discipline through effective administration and by personal example. Principals of well-disciplined staff and students are usually highly visible models. The idea is further corroborated by Leithwood & Riehl (2003) "scratch the surface on an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership. That, at least, is the conventional wisdom. That, at least, is the conventional wisdom. Leaders are thought to be essential for high-quality education". Principals engage in what Duke describes as management by walking around, greeting students and teachers and informally monitoring possible problem areas. Effective principals are liked and respected, rather than feared, and communicate caring for students as well as willingness to impose punishment if necessary (NAESP 1983).

Also good communication and shared values are important elements in this relationship. Ideally, a principal should be able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement. In practice, principals should create consensus by recruiting like-minded staff over the course of years (Duckworth 1984), or by arranging transfers for teachers whose views don't fit in with goals and plans for their school (NAESP 1983). Gottfredson and others (1989) in a study concluded that stable and supportive administrative leadership was the 'overriding factor' determining whether a school is disciplined. Although, Tabotndip (2005) opined that the quality and effectiveness of every education system anywhere in the world is dependent on the competences, effectiveness, efficiencies and devotion of the teaching force. Teachers are seen as the foundation upon which the growth and development of the society depends. But in all, principals' administrative competence is still consider determinant to effective schools discipline.

## **2. Statement of Problem**

The problem of indiscipline in schools has persisted over the years and its becoming a boil in the marrow. These acts include students' absenteeism from school, lackadaisical attitude to duties, persistent lateness to schools, rioting, raping and gang raping, cultism, absenteeism from classes without reason or permission, direct disobedience to school regulation and so on. This trend has affected the attitude of students to study and their perception of school as a whole (Udom, 2010). These acts have militated against effective teaching and learning hence, it has significantly affected the production of useful, acceptable and responsible members of the society, which the primary responsibility of the school. The deplorable state of schools has raised a lot of question on the role of principals in maintaining school effectiveness. It is therefore necessary to investigate the prevalence of indiscipline among students in Ondo State, the level of indiscipline in secondary schools and how school principals have manage indiscipline among students, hence this study.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

Arising from the problems above, the purpose of the study is as follows.

1. To investigate the prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students.

2. To examine the effects of indiscipline on secondary schools students
3. To identify the principal's attitude to indiscipline in secondary schools

#### 4. Research Questions

The study attempts to proffer answers to the following questions based on the purpose of study.

- i. What is the prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students?
- ii. What are the effects of indiscipline on secondary school students in Ondo State?
- iii. What is the principal's attitude to students' indiscipline in secondary school?

#### 5. Research Hypothesis

Ho1. There is no significant effect of principal attitude on rate of students' indiscipline in secondary schools.

#### 6. Scope of the Study

The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study consisted of all Secondary School Students in Ondo State which made up of 36,456 Senior Secondary School Students in Ondo West Local Government. The Local Government was selected based on its high concentration of heavily populated Secondary Schools. Senior Secondary School II classes (SSII) were considered for the study because they were expected to be familiar with the rules and regulation of the school and any intentional attempt to disobey any of the guiding principles amount to indiscipline. Sixteen out of the 31 Public Secondary Schools in the Local Government were selected randomly for the study. The Students sample consisted of 500 SSSII Students, twenty-five students from each school selected by stratified random sampling using specialization as strata for selection. Data collection was carried out with the use of self-constructed questionnaire titled "Students' View on Indiscipline in Secondary Schools" (SVISS). The construct and content validity of the instruments were ascertained using expert judgment. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.84 which was significant at the 0.05 level of significance.

#### 7. Results.

**7.1 Research question one:** What is the extent of prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students?

**Table 1:** Prevalence of Indiscipline among Secondary School Students

Prevalence of Indiscipline	Very High		High		Moderate		Low	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Perpetual late coming to school among students	193	38.6	149	29.8	70	14.0	88	17.6
Fighting in school	137	27.4	206	41.2	117	23.4	40	8.0
Engaging in examination malpractices	223	44.6	141	28.2	86	17.2	50	10.0
Illicit affair between students and students, students and teachers	102	20.4	234	46.8	92	18.4	76	15.2
Cases of cultism among students	112	22.4	140	28.0	138	27.6	110	22.0
Cases of raping or gang raping among students	89	17.8	110	22.0	174	34.8	127	25.4
Students challenging teachers' authority in school	81	16.2	116	23.2	292	58.4	111	22.2
Cases of students using drugs in or outside school	94	18.8	165	33.0	138	27.6	103	20.6
Bullying between senior and junior students	141	28.2	150	30.0	112	22.4	97	19.4
Loitering around school during school hours.	139	27.8	178	35.6	122	24.4	61	12.2

Source: Author's field work, 2013

The table presented the prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students. The table showed that most of the respondents agreed that perpetual late coming to school is rampant among students. Also fighting is rampant among secondary schools students which could either be within or outside the school, examination malpractices as another index of indiscipline which is very high among secondary schools students. Furthermore, illicit affair between students and students, students and teachers is high in secondary schools. Cases of cultism among students is moderate among students, as well as cases of raping or gang raping among students both within and outside the school is observed to be moderate. Also, students' openly challenging teachers' authority is moderate in the secondary schools. In addition, cases of students using drugs in or outside school is high among secondary schools. Bullying between senior and junior students is also high among secondary school students. Loitering around school during school hours is high among secondary school students.

**7.3. Research Question two:** What are the effects of students' indiscipline in secondary schools in Ondo State?

**Table 2:** Effects of Indiscipline on Secondary Schools Students in Ondo State

Effects of Indiscipline	V. High	High	Moderate	Low
Negative Influence on Peers	0.260	0.458	0.166	0.116
Frustration of Students	0.220	0.50	0.194	0.086
Drop-Out of Students	0.234	0.514	0.172	0.084
Poor Academic Achievement	0.264	0.40	0.276	0.060
Hinders Effective Administration of the School	0.244	0.414	0.184	0.158
Moral Decadence in the School System	0.230	0.462	0.206	0.102

Source: Author's field work, 2013

The table presented the effect of indiscipline on secondary school students. The study showed that part of the effects of indiscipline on students is high negative influence on peers who are disciplined. Other effect of indiscipline is high frustration of indiscipline students due to the attitude of others to them. Another effect of indiscipline in secondary schools is the high drop-out of students from school. Another major effect of indiscipline on students is high poor academic achievement. Also, the study observed that indiscipline highly hinders effective administration of the school. Another effect of indiscipline is high moral decadence in the school system.

**Research question three:** What is the principal's attitude to students' indiscipline in secondary school?

**Table 3:** Principal's attitude to students' indiscipline in Ondo State Secondary Schools

Principal's attitude to students' indiscipline	SA		A		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
There is no strict measure against students' indiscipline	88	19.8	163	36.7	129	29.1	64	14.4
Principals' attention is more on monetary benefits than curbing indiscipline	110	24.7	196	43.9	97	21.7	43	9.6
Principals are less concern about students indiscipline ones their position is not affected	121	27.1	197	44.2	86	19.3	42	9.4
Principal sees principalship as a position of rest with less activity	138	31.8	200	46.1	64	14.7	30	6.9
The supervisory and inspectoral role of principal is poor	92	20.8	207	46.7	65	14.7	79	17.8
There is weak cooperation between principal and teachers to combat indiscipline in school	110	22.0	236	47.2	91	18.2	63	12.6

Source: Author's field work, 2013

Table3 presented the principal's attitude to students' indiscipline in secondary schools. The study showed that many of the respondents agreed that there is no strict measure against students' indiscipline in many schools. Also, high percentage of the respondents agreed that principals' attention is more on monetary benefits than curbing indiscipline in school. Moreover, many of the student sample agreed that principals are less concern about students indiscipline ones their position is not affected. Furthermore, high percentage of the respondents agreed that most principals see principalship as a position of rest with less activity. Many of the respondents agreed that the supervisory and inspectoral role of principal is poor. Many of the respondents agreed that there is weak cooperation between principal and teachers to combat indiscipline in school

**7.4 Research hypothesis one:** There is no significant effect of principal attitude on prevalence of indiscipline in secondary schools.

**Table 3:** Effect of Principal Attitude on Prevalence of Indiscipline in Secondary Schools.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.774 <sup>a</sup>	1	0.006		
Continuity Correction <sup>a</sup>	6.412	1	0.11		
Likelihood Ratio	7.929	1	0.006	0.006	0.005
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.647	1	0.007		
N of Valid Cases	500	1			

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 131.10.

Table 3; the chi-square test the effect of principal attitude on prevalence of indiscipline among Secondary School students

The table showed that there is a significant effect of principal attitude on prevalence of indiscipline among Secondary School students ( $\chi^2 = 7.744$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.005$ )

## 8. Discussion of the Findings

The result of the study showed that there is high prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students. The findings of the investigation are in agreement with Yaroson (2004); Zubaida (2009) who found out that indiscipline is more pronounced among secondary school student, this she traced to certain biological developmental changes signaling maturity which makes them to misbehave by faulting school rules and regulations of the school. She lamented the spate of indiscipline amongst secondary school students, in that some are seen roaming the streets freely in their school uniforms. Female students having their classes in the rooms of their boyfriends or men friends, there is little or no respect for teachers any more. Gone are those good days when parents would threaten to report to teachers whenever students were acting against the wishes of their parents.

The finding of the study showed that the effects of indiscipline are seriously taking its toll on the students especially on the percentage of students that are dropping out every year in our schools. Study conducted by Antwi (1985) revealed that delinquent act put up by students affects their capability to cope rigorous school activities which eventually leads to their drop-out. The observed that frustration, poor academic achievement, high moral decadence in the school system as effects of indiscipline on secondary schools. The finding supported the study conducted by Omotere (2011) He envisaged that the major reason for students' under developed potentialities and academic achievement may be in their poor discipline level.

The study showed that principals have lackadaisical attitude to students' indiscipline in school. This affirms the report of prevalence of indiscipline in school. This finding agrees with Leithwood & Riehl (2003) who believe that an excellent school can only be produced by an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership. School discipline depends upon the principals' administrative, supervisory and leadership styles since they are in charge of all the school matters (Okumbe, 1998). Duckworth (1984) confirm some principals do not have any strict measure against students' indiscipline. This ugly situation is rather discomfoting considering the huge resources, both capital and man power channel towards the resuscitation of values and morals and reduction of the scourge in our schools through the establishment of Quality Education Assurance agency in the state.

## 9. Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it is observed that there is high prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students. This shows that the dwindling state of education in the state can be traced to it. The effects of indiscipline on students is huge, this could prevent the actualization of the Millennium goals, if timely intervention is not provided.

Also, the principals attitude support the gross misconduct of many secondary school students, which is aided by the care-free attitude poised to the menace. This means that principals' attitude in school determine the prevalence of indiscipline in secondary schools. The basic conclusion drawn from the investigation is that principal's attitude determines prevalence of students' indiscipline in Ondo State Secondary School.

## 10. The recommendations are as follows:

The findings of the study have revealed that all the factors investigated are important in any attempt to curb indiscipline among secondary school students, hence, the following were recommended:

1. There should be strict measure against school principal whose students are found wanting in adhering to standards.
2. Appointment of principals should be based on qualification.
3. The government should be thorough in the selection of principals. Previous performance as Vice Principle should be a major yard stick to determine their eventual productivity.
4. Quality Education Assurance Agency should be empowered to issue sanction on erring principals in schools.
5. Taskforce assigned to enforce discipline in secondary should be in every school.
6. All schools should have a competent and efficient professional Guidance Counselor.
7. Students should be taught the importance of good behaviour in and outside the school.
8. There should be collective effort by the parents, teachers and all stakeholders to ensure indiscipline free society.

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