

# Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Toward Disruptive Behaviour and Disciplinary Styles: A Comparative Analysis of England and Nigeria

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## Abstract

The issue of disruptive behaviour in schools has become a major stress and concern to teachers. However, in order to minimize these behaviours, teachers are utilizing various disciplinary strategies. The aim of this study was to examine students' and teachers' attitudes toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles and to compare the views of the participants from Nigeria and England. 285 students and 41 teachers from high school completed the disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles questionnaires which contain behaviours and intervention methods commonly reported in high schools. These questionnaires measure individual's attitudes toward behaviour problems and the strategies used to regulate such behaviour. The results depict that there is a relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. Significant difference was found among nationality, gender, student and teacher toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. Nationality also significantly predicted disruptive behaviour, while aggressive style and relationship based style of discipline predicted juvenile delinquency and school misconduct respectively. In conclusion, the style of discipline adopted in school is associated with students' judgement of behaviour. The implications of the findings to disciplinary styles that may be most effective at regulating disruptive behaviour are discussed.

**Keywords:** Disruptive behaviour, disciplinary styles, attitudes, student, teacher.

## Introduction

Disruptive behaviour among pupils in high school is currently one of the main challenges confronting the school system today. This is because it serves as a source of stress for teachers (Brouwers&Tomic, 2000) and impact negatively on learning because teachers spend too much time on order and control (Infantino & Little, 2005). Also, it weakens students' motivation and energy, dissolves trust and affects the relationship between teachers and students (Charles & Senter, 2005). However, promoting responsible behaviours helps to develop motivation and social skills (Pullis, 1991); academic performance and positive behavioural outcome (Ma & Willms, 2004).

Several studies have been conducted assessing different types of disruptive behaviour in the classroom and the attitudes of teachers toward these behaviours. Romi and Freud's (1999) study employed a disruptive behaviour questionnaire to examine the attitudes of teachers, students and parents towards disruptive behaviour problems in high school and found that over 80% of teachers' attitudes to some specific disruptive behaviours such as verbal and physical violence aimed at students, vandalism involving school property, infringements of school regulations, lies and rudeness to teachers were considered to be most severe. However, this is in contrast with Little's (2005) study which also used survey method to assess troublesome behaviours and discovered that 50% of teachers in junior levels (years 7 and 8) reported "talking out of turn" to be the most troublesome behaviour. It was followed by hindering other children (20%) and disobedience (15%). Teachers in the middle levels (years 9 and 10) also reported talking out of turn to be the most troublesome behaviour (35%), while hindering others and idleness were ranked equally (19%). But at the senior levels (years 11 and 12) there was a difference in result as 42% of teachers indicated idleness to be the most commonly reported behaviour problem, followed by talking out of turn (22%) and lack of punctuality (15%). Moreover, there was also a large gap in another study as the researchers interviewed Chinese teachers in order to examine classroom troublesome behaviour. They discovered that teachers perceived daydreaming to be the most troublesome behaviour (Ding, Li, Li & Kulm, 2008).

Apart from what teachers consider as the most troublesome behaviours in the classroom, Infantino and Little (2005) also investigated students' perceptions of classroom behaviour problems and the effectiveness of different disciplinary methods. In total, 350 secondary school students participated in the study and they were given a modified Classroom Behaviour Problems Checklist so as to identify the most troublesome and most frequent disruptive behaviour. They found that talking out of turn, talking back, being out of seat and eating are behaviours perceived to be most troublesome. However, this is in contrast with Romi & Freud's (1999) study as 60% of students reported theft from schoolmates, throwing things about inside the classroom, verbal and physical aggression aimed at students to be the most troublesome behaviours

Further to this, some similarities and differences were found in the two studies (Infantino & Little, 2005;

Romi & Freund, 1999). Both studies assessed secondary school students' perceptions toward disruptive behaviour in the classroom and also administered structured questionnaires to participants. Nevertheless, there is a minor difference in the questions on the questionnaire. For instance, in the questionnaire used by Infantino and Little, the participants were asked to indicate their perceptions toward physical aggression, while Romi and Freud asked the participants to indicate their attitudes toward physical violence aimed at students. The way the questions were phrased may be one of the reasons for the differences in results. This is because the question that focused on attitudes toward physical violence aimed at students is more specific than the question on attitudes toward physical aggression.

Improving responsible behaviours among students require that teachers cultivate effective behavioural management skill (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). One of the ways to do this is through the use of different disciplinary methods or styles so as to create order and control in the classroom and school environment. There is a considerable amount of empirical evidence on students' perception toward the various disciplinary styles adopted in classrooms. For instance, Lewis et al. (2005) carried out a study which reported students' perceptions of the classroom discipline strategies employed in Australian, China and Israel. They examined data from 748 teachers and 5521 students with the use of questionnaire in order to identify how teachers use the various disciplinary strategies and how it relate to students' misbehaviour, and to also compared the views of students in different national settings. It was found that Chinese teachers were less punitive and aggressive than those in Israel or Australian and more inclusive and supportive of students' voices. Also it was discovered that Australian's students perceived classrooms as having least discussion and recognition and most punishment.

The findings from this study have been found to be consistent with the results of another study conducted in Australia. Lewis (2001) examined classroom discipline and student responsibility and found that teachers are perceived by students to react to classroom misbehaviour by increasing their use of force or aggressive style of discipline. However, the disciplinary style (punishment) Australian students perceived to be the most utilized is regarded by some scholars to be ineffective and serve little or no useful purpose (Caffyn, 1989; Lewis, 2001; Roache & Lewis, 2011). In fact the Lewis' (2001) study which found punishment as the most used disciplinary style by Australian teachers used the same national settings to conduct another study on students' reaction to classroom discipline in Australia, Israel and China. They found that both punishment and aggression distracted students from schoolwork and create negative affect towards the teacher while recognition and discussion with students provided less distraction (Lewis et al. 2008).

Research with teachers (see Burns, 1978, for a review) shows that giving students "a good talking to in private", encouragement of effort, extra work and detention are considered to be most effective styles of discipline. Burns (1978) repeated the study of Highfield and Pinsent (1952) among teachers and pupils in high school, and also used the 15 deterrents and 12 rewards item questionnaire as presented in the original study. Bain, Houghton and Williams (1991) who focused on the effects of a school-wide initiative designed to help teachers to raise the rates of encouragement of students also discovered that encouraging students often helps to manage disruptive behaviour. Nevertheless, the measures used in both Lewis et al.'s (2005) study (which focused on students' attitude towards disciplinary styles) and Burns (1978) study (which focused on teachers' attitude towards disciplinary styles) were observed by the author to have some limitations. Firstly, Lewis et al.'s study used a 24- item questionnaire with six subscales (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement and hinting) in order to examine the range of behaviours associated with each disciplinary style. This perhaps makes the reliability for some of the subscales to be low and moderate. Second, the same questionnaire developed by Highfield and Pinsent (1952) for the National Foundation for Educational Research was also used by Burns (1978) to examine the relative effectiveness of various incentives and deterrents as judged by pupils and teachers. The time difference between when the questionnaire was developed in the first study and when it was used in the second study was 24 years and this could have posed a challenge to the credibility of the results because of the level of change and development that would have taken place within the 24 years since it was not updated or revised for use in the second study.

A study conducted by Veronique, Roger, Badiaa and Faith (2009) examined the effect of age, experience, gender and academic context on the use of sanctions by teachers in the classroom. Two hundred and twenty-two French teachers (64 male, 158 females) took part in a study that employed the use of questionnaire to determine the factors that affect sanction in the classroom. The researchers discovered that for both discipline and schoolwork contexts, the youngest and least experienced teachers were more severe than the oldest and most experienced teachers. Gender was also found not to have significant effect on sanction. Furthermore, there was no difference between teaching level and sanction. That is, both primary and high school teachers judged sanction in the same way. Although the study examined the effect of some demographic variables on teachers' sanction in the classroom, the researchers findings may be restricted if an individual is to examine the effects of these variables on classroom discipline. This is because several scholars have classified the strategies used in regulating students' behaviour into different styles (Burns, 1978; Infantino & Little, 2005; Lewis, Romi, Qui & Katz, 2005). Also, the article may be limited because it focused on the moral judgment of sanction. What an individual or a culture judge to be

morally right is different from the judgment of another individual or culture (George, Maureen, & Kunio, 2006). Thus, French teachers views and understanding of sanction could be different from teachers in other nationalities or settings.

Previous investigations have examined the impact of cultural influences on teachers and students perceptions toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles (Irene, 2004; Monroe, & Obidah, 2004; Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005). Specifically, Houghton et al. (1988) surveyed 251 British secondary school teachers so as to investigate their perceptions of students' misbehaviour. They examine misbehaviour in the classroom that upsets, annoys, distresses teachers and causes trouble. It was found that approximately 55% of the teachers spent too much time dealing with classroom management problems. They also discovered that "talking out of turn and hindering others" were the most troublesome and most frequent behaviours. This finding is in agreement with Little (2005) study that was conducted in Australia, but 68% of teachers claimed that they spent too much time in dealing with classroom behaviour which is higher than the British sample. In addition, this is inconsistent among Chinese teachers as they perceived "Daydreaming" to be the most troublesome and frequent behaviour (Ding, Li, Li & Kulm, 2008).

Furthermore, a study on attitudes of British secondary school teachers and pupils to rewards and punishments discovered that teachers found punishment as an effective disciplinary method in changing students' behavior (Caffyn, 1989). This is consistent with a research carried out on teachers' disciplinary approaches to students' discipline problem in Nigeria secondary schools. It was found that punishments reduced students' misbehavior in school (Nakpodia, 2010). However, another study among British teachers found frequent use of encouragement to be most effective at regulating students' disruptive behavior (Bain, Houghton & Williams, 1991). Caution must be taken when interpreting punishment. This is because different nationalities tend to perceive punishment differently. For instance, British teachers see sending letter home complaining about the pupil and being put on report to be the most effective punishment (Houghton, Merrett & Wheldall, 1988), while Nigeria teachers perceive the use of physical punishment to be effective in correcting and maintaining discipline among secondary school students (Abrifor, 2008).

These reviewed literatures above, provide evidence on the attitudes of students or teachers towards disruptive behaviour in classroom and the disciplinary strategies utilized in regulating such behaviour. But no evidence was found on how both students and teachers perceived these two variables. Also studies on frequent, troublesome and severe behaviour with various intervention approaches among Western and Asian cultures were carried out. However, little or no study compared Africa culture with others. This is an important area to research on because the two studies (Abrifor, 2008; Nakpodia, 2010) above which were conducted in Nigeria with Nigerian's participants found punishments to be an effective disciplinary strategies, which is contrary to some findings in other cultures (See Roache & Lewis, 2011; Shreeve et al. 2002 for review). In addition, although several researchers (Lewis, 2001; Romi, Lewis & Katz, 2009; Lewis et al., 2005; Soleiman, Aida, Samsilah & Sharifah, 2011) use the disciplinary styles questionnaire with six disciplinary strategies (discussion, punishments, reward, involvement, decision making and hinting) in their studies, the author observed the limitation of using a 24 – item questionnaire to measure six different variables. This is because each variable in the questionnaire consisted of 4 items, which is perhaps quite small to substantially cover each construct.

Consequently, this study is designed to examine what teachers and students think and feel about some disruptive behaviour in the classroom and the disciplinary styles adopted. The study also compares the attitudes of students and teachers in Nigeria and England. England is an European country, while Nigeria is an Africa country. The differences or similarities in the two national settings will give insights into students and teachers attitudes toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. It was hypothesized that students and teachers attitudes to disruptive behaviour in classroom is associated with disciplinary styles. Also, it was hypothesized that there would be difference between the attitudes of British and Nigerian; male and female; student and teacher toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. Finally, it was hypothesized that disciplinary styles, nationality, student or teacher and gender would predict disruptive behaviour.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants were recruited in Nigeria and in England. In Nigeria, a total of twenty six high school teachers (9 males, 15 females) and one hundred and six high school students (60 males, 46 females) participated in this study. Both students and teachers were recruited from 3 randomly selected private secondary schools in Calabar, Nigeria. These students were selected from Junior Secondary School Class 3, Senior Secondary School Class 1 and Senior Secondary School Class 2, while the teachers who participated in the study were from Senior Secondary School Classes 1 and 2. The age range of the students and teachers was between 12 to 17 years and 26 to 52 years respectively. The mean age of the participants was 16.3.

In England, a total of fifteen high school teachers (5 males, 10 females) and one hundred and thirty seven high school students (29 males, 108 females) participated in this study. Students were recruited from grades 8, 9

and 10 in two schools with low and average socio-economic class within Lancaster. The teachers were conveniently selected from one of the schools. The age range of the students is between 12 – 17 years, while the age range of the teachers was between 23 – 50 years. All the participants were included in the final analysis.

### Measures

Two standardized questionnaires on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles were used to assess the attitudes of students and teachers towards disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles.

**Disruptive behaviour:** Teachers and students attitudes toward disruptive behaviour were assessed using a 38-item questionnaire designed by Romi and Freud (1999) to identify what students and teachers think and feel about disruptive behaviours in school. The first part of the questionnaire requested the demographic variables of teachers and students such as nationality, age, gender and school type, while the second parts of the questionnaire investigated list of disruptive behaviour that participants were expected to identify the severity of each item. Participants were asked to indicate their responses on a five-point Likert-type scale (1= not severe, 5= most severe). The reliability alpha Cronbach was 0.92.

**Disciplinary styles:** Disciplinary styles were assessed using a 24-item questionnaire designed by Lewis (2001) to measure what teachers and students think and feel about classroom discipline styles. It measures six discipline styles including punishment, recognition or rewarding, discussion, hinting, involvement and aggression. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic variables such as nationality, gender, age and school type, while the second parts requested participants to indicate their perception to the extent each of this disciplinary style is used. Each disciplinary style has four questions. Participants responses were indicated on a five - point likert - type scale (1= strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .86

### Design

The survey research design was used to quantify students' and teachers' attitudes towards the different types of disruptive behaviours display in classroom and the disciplinary approaches used in regulating them.

### Procedure

The 38- items questionnaires on disruptive behaviour and the 24- items questionnaires on disciplinary styles were administered to the teachers and students who participated in the study in a school in both Nigeria and England. The teachers, who were conveniently selected read the information about the research and gave their consent to participate, while the students obtained guidance consent. The teachers filled the questionnaires in their offices and returned them to the researcher. The researcher was given the opportunity to administer the questionnaires to the students in their various classrooms during the free period allocated to each grade. Also, the researcher was available to explain the objectives and importance of the study. It took them 30 minutes to fill the questionnaire. The class teacher filled the consent form on behalf of the students and took them to a class where they filled both questionnaires. Prior to the filling of the questionnaire, the researcher explained the content of the questionnaires and how they are expected to answer the questions. They also took about 30 minutes to fill the questionnaires.

### Results

The results from this study measure the attitudes of 285 British and Nigerian teachers' and students' attitudes toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. The data were analyzed through the use of Factor Analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, Multiple Regression and Independent Sample Test. Three factors (Juvenile delinquency, school misconduct and general) were generated from disruptive behaviour questionnaires, while three factors (aggressive style, relationship based style and reward/punishment style) were also generated from disciplinary styles questionnaire. However, the third factor which is classified as 'general' in disruptive behaviour loaded high in three items that measure different behaviours. Because of the challenge this could pose on interpretation, the researcher decided not to report it in details.

Factor Analysis was employed in order to reduce the data and obtain the latent variables from the observed variables. Also, the relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles and the differences in nationality, gender and student or teacher toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles were found through Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent Sample Test respectively. In addition, the Multiple Regression was use to observe the disciplinary styles and demographic variables that significantly predict disruptive behaviour.

Analysis of the data depicts and did not depict significant relationships, differences and predictions for disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles with other related variables such as nationality, gender, age and student or teacher. Nevertheless, to avoid repetition of data, only significant findings are reported. Details of the results are presented as follows.



### Descriptive statistics of demographic variables

The information below shows the descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and percentage of students and teachers who participated in the study, their nationality, age, and gender. The number of students and teachers involved in this research were 85.5% and 14.4% respectively ( $M = 1.14$   $SD = .35$ ). Among the students and teachers, Nigerians were 46.7% while British were 53.3% ( $M = 1.53$   $SD = .50$ ). The male participants have 36.1%, while the female participants have 63.1% ( $M = 1.64$   $SD = .48$ ). The mean and standard deviation of the participants' age are 16.3 and 6.48 respectively.

### Construction of the disruptive behaviour questionnaire

Seven factors were extracted in order to compare and confirm items that load high with Romi's study, the researcher used three factors solution because they are better explained and appropriate for further statistical analyses. That is, they formed a simple structure which can be categorized into different constructs. From the analysis, all the three factors displayed an eigenvalues greater than 1. The scree plot starts to flatten after factor number 3 but was not very pronounced at factor number 4. The combination of factors 1, 2, and 3 accounted for 41.696% of the total variance and 38.215% after rotation. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also show that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Items 3, 6, 11, 14, 15 and 36 were not further considered due to low loading on all three factors.

Table 1

Factor loading high on items for disruptive behavior

Item no	Description	Factor		
		1	2	3
1	Unauthorized talk in classroom		.48	
2	Failure to do homework		.33	
4	Messing up school premises	.45		
5	Vandalism in school			.70
7	Answering teacher rudely			.93
8	Lying to teacher	.40		
9	Physical violence aimed at students	.82		
10	Verbal violence aimed at students	.64		
12	Breaking social rules	.46		
13	Bringing offensive weapons	.45		
16	Late arrival for lesson		.60	
17	Late arrival for school event		.45	
18	Forced another students against the latter's will	.74		
19	Inattention to class activities		.51	
20	Throwing things about		.50	
21	Eating in class		.66	
22	Drinking in class		.60	
23	Chewing gum in class		.61	
24	Smoking in class	.88		
25	Damaging school property	.87		
26	Sexual abuse or assault	.49		
27	Theft of school property	.85		
28	Copying during test	.68		
29	Theft from school mates			.89
30	Forging parents signature	.30		
31	Non-participation in class activity		.55	
32	Leaving seat without permission		.60	
33	Behaving otherwise than has been requested		.53	
34	Making the rest of the class laugh during lesson			.58
35	Arguing with teacher	.51		
38	Refusing to share with other student		.51	

### Construction of the disciplinary styles questionnaire

Previous analyses have not conducted a factor analysis for this 24- item questionnaire, so a factor analysis was conducted for the 285 participants in this study. From the analysis, three factors were generated. Also, all the factors displayed have an eigenvalues greater than 1. The scree plot starts to flatten after factor number 5. However, 3 factor solution was the clearest in term of attaining simple structure, however, the scree plot did indicate that a 5 factor solution was also a potentially good fit. But the 5 factor solution was not effective because it did not form

a simple structure. The combination of factors 1, 2, and 3 accounted for 37.604% of the total variance and 29.781% after extraction. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also show that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Item 6, 14, 15, 16 were not considered further because of low loading.

Table 2

Factor loading high on items for disciplinary styles

Item no	Description	Factor		
		1	2	3
1	Yell angrily at student who misbehave			.64
2	Deliberately embarrasses student who misbehave			.74
3	Keep the class in or detain the class because some students misbehave			.63
4	Makes sarcastic comments to students who misbehave			.36
5	Describes what the students are doing wrong, and expect them to stop	.58		.
7	Remind misbehaving students about the class rules	.53		
8	Describes how students are misbehaving to make them decide whether to stop or not	.52		
9	Discusses students' behavior with them to allow them figure out a better way to behave in the future	.64		
10	Let students talk about their side of things so that it can be understood	.43		
11	Gets students to understand why their behavior is a problem for others by discussing it with them	.71		
12	Gets student to change the way they behave by helping them understand how their behavior affects others	.62		
13	Organizes the class to work out the rules for good behavior	.39		
17	Rewards individual students who behave properly		.50	
19	Praises individual students for good behavior		.62	
20	Rewards the class when students behave well		.55	
21	Give out consequences to students who misbehave (e.g. move their seat, detention)		.68	
22	Increases the level of consequences if students will not do as they are told (e.g. move seat, detention)		.68	
23	Increases the level of consequences if a misbehaving student argues		.39	
24	Increases consequences if a student continue to misbehave.		.48	

### Relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles

It was hypothesized that there is a relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. Table 3 reports a significant relationship between school misconduct and relationship-based style of discipline,  $r = .16, p < .05$ . Also, juvenile delinquency has a significant relationship with aggressive style of discipline,  $r = .45, p < .05$ . These subscales results suggest that the hypothesis is supported.

Table 3  
 Correlation between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles

	Relationship based	Reward/punishment	Aggressive	Juvenile delinquency	School misconduct	General
Relationship based	1	.31**				
Reward/punishment	.31**	1				
Aggressive	-.06	-.01	1			
Juvenile delinquency	-.07	-.04	.45**	1		
School misconduct	.16**	-.05	-.03	.42**	1	
General	-.03	-.08	.24**	.40**	.22**	1

$P < .001^{**}$

### Nationality differences on disruptive behavior and disciplinary styles

It was also hypothesized that there is a significant difference between England and Nigeria on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. This was carried out in order to observe the influence of cultures on these variables. Table 4 shows means and standard deviation for the attitudes of English and Nigerians teachers and students for the disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles subscales. The following subscales were found to have significant difference: Juvenile delinquency subscale for English ( $M = 43.63$ ,  $SD = 16.38$ ), and for Nigerians ( $M = 27.18$ ,  $SD = 11.50$ ),  $t(283) = -9.68$ ,  $p < .05$ ; school misconduct subscale for English ( $M = 35.60$ ,  $SD = 8.45$ ), and Nigerians ( $M = 31.04$ ,  $SD = 10.90$ ),  $t(282) = -3.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ; aggressive style subscale for English ( $M = 10.67$ ,  $SD = 2.78$ ), and for Nigerians ( $M = 7.79$ ,  $SD = 3.02$ ),  $t(283) = -8.41$ ,  $p < .05$ ; relationship based style for British ( $M = 14.87$ ,  $SD = 4.67$ ), and for Nigerians ( $M = 13.47$ ,  $SD = 4.43$ ),  $t(283) = -2.59$ ,  $p < .05$ . These results suggest that British perceive Juvenile delinquency and school misconduct to be more severe than Nigerians. They also appear to be more supportive of aggressive and relationship based style of discipline than Nigerians. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

Table 4 British and Nigerian attitudes toward disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles

Variable	British		Nigerian		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Juvenile delinquency	43.63	16.38	27.18	11.50	-9.68	.00
School misconduct	35.60	8.45	31.04	10.90	-3.40	.00
Relationship based	14.87	4.67	13.47	4.43	-2.59	.01
Aggressive	10.67	2.78	7.79	3.02	-8.41	.00

### Gender differences on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles.

The independent sample t-test was also used in Table 5 to confirm the hypothesis that significant difference exists between the attitudes of male and female as regard disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. This was tested in order to examine the influence of gender on these variables. The following subscales reveal a significant difference: juvenile delinquency for male ( $M = 31.39$ ,  $SD = 13.74$ ), and female ( $M = 38.54$ ,  $SD = 17.35$ ),  $t(283) = -3.60$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and aggressive style subscale for male ( $M = 8.47$ ,  $SD = 3.02$ ), and female ( $M = 9.81$ ,  $SD = 3.25$ ),  $t(235) = -3.43$ ,  $p < .05$ . These results depict that females perceive the severity of juvenile delinquency more than male. Females also tend to support aggressive style of discipline than males. Thus, the hypothesis for these subscales is supported.

Table 5  
 Male and female attitudes on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles

Variable	Male		Female		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Juvenile delinquency	31.39	13.74	38.54	17.35	-3.60	.00
Aggressive	8.47	2.78	9.81	3.25	-3.43	.01

### Student and teacher differences on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles

The independent sample t-test was employed in Table 6 to demonstrate the differences between student and teacher on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. The following subscales reveal significant differences: Juvenile delinquency for student ( $M = 36.98$ ,  $SD = 16.46$ ), and teacher ( $M = 29.82$ ,  $SD = 15.41$ ),  $t(235) = 2.60$ ,  $p < .05$ ; relationship based style for student ( $M = 14.52$ ,  $SD = 4.58$ ), and teacher ( $M = 12.43$ ,  $SD = 4.40$ ),  $t(283) = 2.72$ ,  $p < .05$ ; reward/punishment style for student ( $M = 13.40$ ,  $SD = 5.33$ ), and teacher ( $M = 11.42$ ,  $SD = 5.76$ ),  $t(283) = 2.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Aggressive style for student ( $M = 9.14$ ,  $SD = 3.28$ ), and teacher ( $M = 10.42$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ),  $t(283)$

= -2.37,  $p < .05$ . The results show that students perceived juvenile delinquency to be more severe than teachers. Also, they are more supportive of relationship based style and reward/punishment style of discipline than teachers. However, teachers appear to be more supportive of aggressive style of discipline than students.

Table 6

*Student and teachers attitudes on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles*

	Student		Teacher		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Juvenile delinquency	36.98	16.46	29.82	15.41	2.60	.01
Relationship based	14.52	4.58	12.43	4.40	2.72	.00
Reward/punishment	13.40	5.33	11.42	5.76	2.17	.03
Aggressive	9.14	3.28	10.42	2.71	-2.37	.02

### Nationality, gender, student or teacher prediction of disruptive behaviour

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis that nationality, gender and student or teacher significantly predicted disruptive behaviour. That is, do the demographic variables predict juvenile delinquency and school misconduct? For instance, does being a male or female determine whether an individual would perceive juvenile delinquency or school misconduct to be severe or not. The demographic variables such as nationality, gender and student or teacher served as the predictor variables, while the subscales (juvenile delinquency and school misconduct) resulting from disruptive behaviour served as the dependent variables. Table 7 and 8 report a multiple regressions that was performed for each subscale. The results of the regression indicated that the predictors explained 25% of the variance ( $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F(283) = 93.66$ ,  $p < .05$ ). It was found that Nationality significantly predicted juvenile delinquency ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The regression also indicated that the predictors explained 5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(283) = 15.75$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Nationality significantly predicted school misconduct ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus, Nationality is a significant predictor of disruptive behaviour.

Table 7: *Regression Analyses for demographic variable predicting juvenile delinquency*

Juvenile delinquency			
Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F
Nationality	.25	.50	93.66

$P < .05$

Table 8: *Regression Analyses for demographic variable predicting school misconduct*

School misconduct			
Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F
Nationality	.05	.23	15.75

$P < .05$

### Disciplinary styles prediction of disruptive behaviour

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was also employed to test if disciplinary styles would significantly predict disruptive behaviour. That is, do teachers' and students' attitudes toward relationship based style, reward/punishment style and aggressive style of discipline predict their perception towards juvenile delinquency or school misconduct. This is very important because it helps to understand the disciplinary styles that are closely related to disruptive behaviour. Table 9 and 10 show the disciplinary styles subscales that significantly predicted juvenile delinquency and school misconduct. The results of the regression depicted that the predictors explained 20% of the variance ( $R^2 = .20$ ,  $F(283) = 72.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ). It was found that aggressive style significantly predicted juvenile delinquency ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In addition, the regression indicated that the predictors explained 3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(283) = 7.26$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and relationship based style of discipline significantly predicted school misconduct ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 9: *Regression Analyses for disciplinary styles predicting school misconduct*

School misconduct			
Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F
Relationship based style	.03	.16	7.26

$P < .05$

Table 10: *Regression Analyses for disciplinary styles predicting Juvenile delinquency*

Juvenile delinquency			
Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	B	F
Aggressive style	.20	.45	72.23

$P < .05$



## Discussion

It was hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. That is, there is a correlation between disciplinary styles subscales (relationship based, rewards/punishments and aggressive style) and disruptive behaviour subscales (juvenile delinquency and school misconduct). It was found that the results were in support of the hypothesis as school misconduct and juvenile delinquency have significant relationships with relationship based style and aggressive style of discipline respectively. This is contrary to the findings of Bain, Houghton and Williams (1991), as it was discovered that relating with students and encouraging them would help to regulate their behaviour. Also Welsh's (2003) study found that fair disciplinary policies such as relationship based style of discipline are associated with less school misconduct. But the finding was based on actual school misconduct and not about the perceptions of school misconduct. They are of the opinion that when teachers focus more on the use of relationship or encouragement approach in the discipline of students instead of being aggressive, they tend to reduce disruptive behaviour. These two studies were further confirmed by Lewis et al. (2008), when they discovered that discussing with students about their behaviour would create a positive relationship for both students and teachers and made them less distracted.

The reason why the result which shows that there is a relationship between relationship based style of discipline and school misconduct was not supported by previous studies may be due to the fact that students want to be understood and encouraged to do what is right and acceptable rather than being forced or yelled at (Lewis et al. 2008). Students who believe that their teachers care about them, respect them, and praise them are more likely to like school, which has been linked to lower incidents of deviant behaviour (Hallinan, 2008). Therefore, some teachers adopt this style of discipline in order to correct misbehaviour or disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

In addition, aggressive style of discipline was shown to be associated with juvenile delinquency. Some studies were found to be in support of the findings that aggressive style of discipline is related to some serious offences displayed by students in school (Gottfredson, Denise, Allison & Nisha, 2005; Lewis et al. 2005). For instance, it was found that students who reported greater level of misbehaviour perceived the use of aggressive style of discipline by teachers (Lewis et al. 2005). Also, one of the findings of Lewis et al. (2008), discovered aggressive and punishment style of discipline created a negative relationship between students and teachers and also increased disruptive behaviour. But this is inconsistent with deterrence theory which states that strict discipline can prevent socially inappropriate behaviour (Gibbs, 1975). Also, disciplinary policies that were perceived to be less aggressive or coercive were associated with lower levels of delinquent behaviours (Gottfredson, Denise, Allison & Nisha, 2005).

This finding is contrary to the belief that students behave appropriately when teachers employ coercive discipline. In fact students tend to become rebellious or misbehave only to increase use of aggressive strategies (Lewis et al. 2005). Therefore, it is very important to understand that aggressive style of discipline can negatively affect students and teachers relationship and also increase delinquent behaviour.

It was also hypothesized that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of students and teachers in Nigeria and England on disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. The results show that the hypothesis was partially supported as a significant difference was discovered between Nigerians and English students and teachers on disruptive behaviour, while for the disciplinary styles, it was relationship based style and aggressive style that was significant. These results confirmed previous research that found cultural differences in disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles (Irene, 2004; Obidah, 2004). Specifically, these current results are consistent with the findings of Abrifor (2008), as it was discovered that Nigerians teachers perceived the use of coercive discipline to be most effective in maintaining order and control, while English teachers perceived the use of encouragement and establishing relationship with the students to be the most effective disciplinary style (Bain, Houghton & Williams, 1991). This result gives a clear picture of the discipline policies adopted in both countries. For instance, in Nigeria although some schools banned the use of physical punishment, it has not yet become a national law. But in England, such disciplinary style is an offence.

Also, a significant difference between Nigerian and British students and teachers on disruptive behaviour was found. This is confirmed in Houghton et al.'s (1988) and Bonke's (2010) studies which employed British and Nigerian participants respectively. The study involving Nigerian participants discovered bullying to be the most troublesome behaviour among some High school students in Nigeria, while talking out of turn and hindering others were found to be the most troublesome behaviour among British participants. However, research with British high school teachers found drug abuse, bullying and destroying to be the most serious problems in school (Mark, 1998). This is quite similar to the findings from Nigerian participants. Nevertheless, some challenges were observed in these two studies with almost similar results. The study conducted in Nigeria involved students, while teachers participated in the study that was done in England. Also, attitudes of students toward the most troublesome behaviour in classroom were examined among Nigerian participants. But for British participants, it was the most serious problems that were examined. So the interpretation of the test on troublesome behaviour and serious problems could have posed a challenge to the results.

It was hypothesized that females would perceive the severity of disruptive behaviour and the use of

disciplinary style more than males' counterpart. The results showed a significant difference between male and female on juvenile delinquency and aggressive style of discipline. Female participants were found to be more supportive of the use of aggressive style of discipline than male participants. It was also discovered that females tended to perceive juvenile delinquency to be more severe than male. This is in contrast with the findings that boys tend to be more disruptive than girls, and also tend to be more aggressive (Wheldall & Merrett, 1993; Wright & Dusek, 1998). A plausible explanation to the result which shows that females are more supportive of aggressive style of discipline may be due to the fact that the content of the aggressive subscale in the disciplinary style questionnaire focuses more on verbal aggression. Kaj (1994) study confirms that males engage more in physical aggression, while females use more verbal aggression. Although the results in these studies show significant difference between males and females on disruptive behaviour and aggressiveness, the researchers only used young boys and girls in high school between ages 13 and 17 without the involvement of their teachers. Also, the disruptive behaviours are range of different behaviours and not specifically juvenile delinquency. However, Stephen (2000) study reveals that there is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female students toward juvenile delinquency.

The hypothesis that teachers would judge the severity of disruptive behaviour and the use of disciplinary styles less than students between students was supported. It was discovered that there is a significant difference between student and teacher on juvenile delinquency, relationship based style, reward/punishment style and aggressive style of discipline. That is, for the disciplinary styles, all the subscales show a significant difference, while for disruptive behaviour it was only juvenile delinquency. From the results, it was observed that students perceived juvenile delinquency to be more severe than teachers. This is in contrast with Romi and Freud's (1999) study on teachers', parents' and students' attitudes toward disruptive behaviour. They found that both teachers and students perceived juvenile delinquency to be severe.

The current result also indicates that students are more supportive of relationship based style of discipline than teacher. This may be because the students are the ones who are being disciplined, so they might tend to value this style of discipline rather than aggressive style. However, two different studies conducted by Lewis et al. (2005) and Lewis et al. (2008) found Chinese teachers to be more relational and supportive of students' voices in their disciplinary approach and also discovered that students perceived discussing about disruptive behaviour with teachers to be more effective than punishment.

In addition, students agree more to the use of reward/punishment style of discipline than teachers. That is, there is a significant difference between students and teachers as regarding reward/punishment. This is consistent with the study of Shreeve et al. (2002). They found that students perceived giving gifts, time and marks to be the most effective reward system, while after-school detentions and a letter home or phone calls to their parents were found to be the most effective method of punishment. But for teachers, they discovered that tangible rewards such as sweets, vouchers, certificates and fastfood were seen to be the most effective reward system, while they were of the opinion that teachers should determine the disciplinary style to be utilized in classroom. This was further confirmed in Burns (1978) study, as he found that students perceived personal achievement to be the most effective form of reward, while teachers saw adult approval to be most effective.

Furthermore, there is a significant difference between students and teachers on aggressive style of discipline. But teachers are more supportive of this style of discipline than students. This may be because teachers are the ones using this approach, so they might not fully understand the impact of such an approach on students. This result is consistent with Australian and Chinese research in which 49% of Chinese and 59% of Australian teachers adopt aggressive behaviours rarely to sometime; 9% of Chinese and 13% of Australian teachers sometimes or more frequently (Riley, Lewis & Wang, 2012), while students perceived the use of aggressive approach to be ineffective and often leads to more classroom misbehaviour (Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000). Although not all teachers are in support of the use of aggressive style of discipline, the two studies provide a clear difference between teachers and students perceptions toward aggressive strategies in classroom.

It was hypothesized that Nationality, gender and student or teacher would have significant effects on judgement of disruptive behaviour. From the analysis, it was discovered that nationality significantly predicts disruptive behaviour. That is, the status of being in a particular nation or belonging to a particular national setting would predict the judgement of disruptive behaviour. It also means that one can predict how individuals would perceive disruptive behaviour in the classroom based on the country they come from or live in. This may be due to environmental factors or cultural influences since each nation has particular cultural norms and expectations. This result supports some studies that were conducted in different nationalities and by different researchers. For example, Romi and Freud's (1999) study on parents' teachers' and students' attitudes toward disruptive behaviour found that 80% of Jewish teachers perceived verbal violence, vandalism of school property, rudeness to teachers and physical violence to be serious problems in the classroom, while talking out of turn, hindering others, idleness and disobedience to teachers were perceived among Australian teachers to be most serious problem in classrooms (Little, 2005).

Also, Chinese teachers are of the opinion that daydreaming is the most troublesome disruptive behaviour

students' display in classroom (Ding, Li, Li & Kulm, 2008). In addition, Houghton et al. (1988) surveyed 251 British secondary school teachers and found that taking out of turn and hindering others were considered the most troublesome behaviour. Although British and Australian are different nationalities, there is a similarity between what teachers in both nationalities perceived to be the most troublesome behaviour in classroom. These findings reveal that an individual nationality can determine the way he or she perceives disruptive behaviour.

Finally, it was hypothesized that disciplinary styles would predict the judgements of juvenile delinquency and school misconduct. This hypothesis was partially supported; aggressive and relationship based style of discipline significantly predicted juvenile delinquency and school misconduct respectively. Lewis (2001) study is consistent with the finding that aggressive styles of discipline predict juvenile delinquency. He reports the perceptions of 3500 Australian students and found that aggressive style of discipline impacted negatively on their behaviour, distracted them from work and made them less responsible. This is further confirmed in Nancy and Christopher's (2004) research. They discovered that harsh and aggressive discipline contributes to youth violence and delinquent behaviour. However, this is in contrast with Abrifor (2008), as he found that this style of discipline is effective in correcting and maintaining discipline among secondary school students in Nigeria. This poses a question on whether individual nationality determines the effectiveness of the disciplinary styles.

A limitation to this current study was that the factor analysis conducted for the questionnaire on disruptive behaviour was quite challenging due to the fact that the final factor loaded high on three unrelated items (item 5, 7 and 29). For instance, in the questionnaire, item 5 was vandalism in school, while item 7 was answering teacher rudely. Consequently, these items which measured different behaviours and loaded high in the final factor posed a challenge to the grouping and interpretation of the disruptive behaviour questionnaire.

Also, the sampling of schools was a main problem in this study. The study did not just compare nationalities; instead it compared a small sample of schools within each nation. 153 students and teachers from two schools in England participated in the study, while 132 students and teachers from three schools in Nigeria were involved in the study. Therefore, considering the population in both nations, it is difficult to generalise with great confidence to the whole nation distinction.

Future research in this area should be conducted with a large population sample in England and Nigerian or any other European and Africa country in order to make generalization of the findings and also ascertain the credibility of the results. Future research should also use the same nationalities to conduct a study on disruptive behaviours displayed by students in schools and the disciplinary styles used by teachers rather than their judgements of disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. In addition, future research should give attention to equal number of male and female participants.

In conclusion, both students and teachers in England and Nigeria perceived that there is a relationship between disruptive behaviour and disciplinary styles. However, participants in each nationality had different opinions as regards the severity of disruptive behaviour and the types of disciplinary styles appropriate in regulating such behaviour. Students and teachers also had different attitudes toward juvenile delinquency and disciplinary styles. But male and female differ only in their attitudes toward juvenile delinquency and aggressive style of discipline. Consequently, it is very important for teachers and school authorities to understand the disciplinary strategies that are appropriate and effective at regulating specific disruptive behaviour and maintaining order or control in classrooms.

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