



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Strategies for instilling discipline in secondary school students in Enugu south local government area, Enugu state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the strategies for instilling discipline in secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses and adopted the survey research design. The population consists of ten thousand two hundred (10,200) students in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government area of Enugu state. A sample size of 120 students was randomly selected using simple random sampling. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The instrument was personally distributed and collected by the researcher. Data collected were analyzed using mean and grand mean scores. The study revealed that corporal punishment, school rules and regulations, Guidance, and counselling help in instilling discipline in students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that extra-curricular activities that project discipline should be introduced for the students, and teachers should set up a mutual relationship with the students to enable them to get attached to the school and maintain good discipline. Additionally, Guidance and counselling units should be provided in schools with seasoned counsellors.

Keywords: Strategies; Managing; Students' Discipline; Secondary School

1. Introduction

A universal challenge, acts of indiscipline manifest in various ways, and several cases have been reported globally. Indiscipline is an act that does not conform to societal values and norms (Dittimiya, 2016). Every society has to set certain norms for people to follow, for a definite set of laws governs everything in this world." Thus, strict adherence to acceptable behavioural patterns provided by a country's laws and ethics of a given society amounts to discipline (Mishra, 2017). There is a growing concern regarding indiscipline in schools, where teaching methods were blamed for the children's indiscipline. The parents were getting anxious and frustrated as they complained of the rising incidences of indiscipline and violence in schools (Agarib, 2016). The concern involved the poor academic performance associated with the growing trend of indiscipline. Thompson (2019), reported the awareness of indiscipline in schools that policy-makers, teachers, parents and the public have been struggling to find solutions to the problem of indiscipline in schools." Furthermore, scholars noted that schools have recently suffered an alarming deterioration in discipline (Mwangi, 2016). Mishra (2017), affirmed that the school head teachers confirmed the existence of gangs in secondary schools. Mgomzulu (2013), noted that discipline is necessary in any educational, political, social, economic, or religious institution. It is equally necessary in informal public settings such as streets, public transport and everyday gatherings.

Corporal punishment is defined as causing physical pain deliberately to change behaviour that could be in the form of hitting, punching, spanking, slapping, and pinching using objects such as sticks, belts, and paddles (Allen, Antonishak and Prinstein, 2015). Dusek, (2016) defined the word "corporal" to refer to any punishment applied on body including

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assault or any means that are meant to cause physical pain or humiliation. Corporal punishment is being used as means of disciplining action against children and students worldwide but as catalyst action of education, it needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity (Amato, 2017). The author viewed that the legitimacy of corporal punishment is still a contentious issue to many societies. From pedagogical perspective, Mwendu, (2015) claimed that "corporal punishment is an assault on the dignity of individual and offensive act against the dignity of the teaching profession". Further, Dada and Siaka, (2014) proposed that corporal punishment reflects a failure on the part of the teachers. Many believe that corporal punishment administered justly ('with love') is necessary and right. The administration of punishment cannot be ruled out in the control and discipline of students. The right and authority of a teacher to inflict punishment on students for offences, who breach school rules and regulations, is enhanced by section 34, sub section (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which specifies peoples' right to personal liberty; and instances in which a person who has not attained the age of eighteen may be deprived of his right to personal liberty specifically, for educative and welfare purposes.

However, punishment must be reasonable and properly meted out to the student on account of the offence committed, it should be moderate and commensurate with the offence committed. Although, it has been emphasized that school authorities have the right to punish students for breach of school regulations, the administration of punishment that entails physical chastisement needs to be done with caution. Corporal punishment must not be inflicted in such a way or with such force as may be considered sadistic, cruel or excessive. Over the years, the infliction of corporal punishment on recalcitrant children has been an accepted method of promoting good behaviour and instilling notion of responsibility and decorum into the heads of mischievous students (Afullo 2015), It is presumed that any parent who sends a child to school gives this authority to school officials. But the desirability and effectiveness of corporal punishment have been called to question in recent times. While some parents, teachers and school administrators favour the use of corporal punishment, others are strongly opposed to its use in schools. Banja (2013) made the following points in support of corporal punishment:

- Some students only respond to corporal punishment.
- Corporal punishment is effective because it makes students think twice before committing the same offence and;
- The use of physical punishment can be a deterrent to other students who might violate a rule in the absence of such punishment.

Rules are defined as a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct within a particular activity or sphere. These include what the group regards as a socially acceptable pattern of behavior expected in every individual of the group (Kochhar 2021). Regulations, on the other hand, are orders made by the authorities with a course of law intended to promote order and efficiency in an organization (Karanja and Bowen, 2017). School rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct to the students; these imply self-control, orderliness, acceptable behavior and obedience to the school authority (Ahmad, 2021).

Rules and regulations are set to maintain proper governance and build respect among the teachers and the students. Balson (2018), after conducting a study on how students view the strict implementation of school rules and regulations, revealed that majority of her respondents did not agree with the idea of the implying strict disciplinary measures because according to most of the students interviewed, they do not like the idea of something, like school authorities and school rules and regulations, controlling their lives. Furthermore, Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015), noted that it has become a habit to some of the students, secondary students to be specific, to break the school rules and regulations impunity resulting to a bigger consequence like having a poor academic result. According to Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy (2021), school's rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct of students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Frels 2020). Also on admission, schools especially at secondary level, students are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations which include compliance with rules and regulations (Feldan, Olds and Papalia 2019). McGrew (2020) perceived the role of guidance and counselling in controlling behaviour as being centered on prevention of indiscipline from occurring. Stone (2016) describe guidance and counselling as a preventive force.

The author opined that optimum development of individuals comes through providing an emotional climate and environment that assist positive healthy attitudes and feelings. Elias and Tobias (2020) reported that people with healthy attitudes and feelings are not likely to involve themselves in behaviour that is not acceptable. Ehiane (2017), stated that one needs to create a positive healthy emotional climate. According to the author, a person who suffers emotion depression or frustration will find life generally miserable and experience adjustment problems. Unpleasant emotions can upset a person's mental and physical wellbeing. It can also lead to stress and anxiety. According to Clarke (2017), an anxious person appears frustrated and may withdraw from social conducts or become aggressive. A healthy emotional climate can be created, for example, assisting new students arriving in the school to adjust to their

environment. They should for instance, be familiarized with names of all staff members, significance of school motto, preparation of time tables and procedure in changing periods (Clarke, 2017).

Considering that most secondary school students are in their adolescent stage, between 12 to 20 years, emotional stability is a central issue. Coombs (2020), noted that emotional changes in this period include: frequent mood shift leading to anger, hostility, frustrations, emotional stress, embarrassment and anxiety. The emotional changes lead to resistance to authority, hyper criticalness towards adults, oversensitivity to adult suggestions regarding friends and appropriate use of time. According to Bedding (2016), disciplinary problems can be prevented if students in secondary schools can be guided and counselled on how to deal with their emotions. A healthy emotional climate can be achieved through guidance and counselling because students who have problems have someone to turn to Krajewski, Martnek and Polka (2018). Lochan (2020), observed that counselling is intended to increase a client's sense of responsibility for his or her own life to help him or her make up his own mind and act upon his decisions, to cope sensibly with situations he or she has hitherto disliked, resented or rejected and come to terms with circumstances which cannot for the moment be changed. Manguvo, Whitney and Chareka (2021), observed that students can be seen as disciplined if they understand that there are some things they have to accept as they are because they cannot be changed. For example, guidance and counselling should help students understand that rioting because there is power failure does not change the situation. According to Mutie (2019), Guidance and counselling can prevent Bad behaviour by taking new students through an orientation process. Orientation is concerned with ensuring that problems involving transition points where students move from a familiar to strange ones are reduced.

The most obvious transition is witnessed from the primary to secondary. According to UNESCO (2012), the aim of Guidance and Counselling is to ensure that students are not overwhelmed by strange or new situations. Students who transfer from one school to the other should be helped to adjust. When students are given proper orientation, they are not likely to break school rules. Base on the fact that student indiscipline is causing a great harm in the educational system, secondary schools and it has led to secondary school students' poor performance in their academics. Unfortunately, no researcher has investigated this in regards to Enugu South Local Government area of Enugu State. This motivated the researcher to carry out research on Strategies for Managing Student's Discipline in Secondary Schools in Enugu South Local Government Area Enugu State.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Discipline is the backbone of national unity. In learning institutions, discipline helps acquire a desirable quality education. The government provides a curriculum that offers an opportunity to instruct and guide students on morality through religious and civic Education. In addition to the syllabus, Guidance and counselling services are provided. Other efforts taken to ensure a good learning environment and behavioural modification of students include in-service management training of the administrators.

However, despite the efforts, acts of indiscipline have continued escalating. This is dwindling the academic performance of the students. It has similarly become a significant problem regarding work effectiveness in secondary schools. Thus, if left uncontrolled, indiscipline will tarnish education standards while destabilizing the country's development. For this reason, this study sought to determine the management measures for indiscipline cases in secondary schools in the South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This study aimed to assess the strategies put in place by secondary schools in Enugu South LGA to manage students' indiscipline. The specific objectives are as follows;

- to determine the impact of corporal punishment in managing students' discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State.
- to ascertain of the impact of school rules and regulations in managing students' discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State
- to find out the impact of Guidance and counselling in managing student indiscipline in secondary schools in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- How does corporal punishment strategy impact the management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the South Local Government Area of Enugu State?
- What is the impact of school rules and regulations in managing students' discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State?
- What is the impact of Guidance and Counselling in managing students' discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State?

1.4. Research Hypothesis

- Corporal punishment strategy has a significant impact on the management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.
- School rules and regulations significantly impact the management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.
- Guidance and Counselling significantly impact the management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

2. Methods

This research work employed the survey research design to determine the strategies for managing indiscipline among secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. Enugu South is located in the Southern part of Enugu State and shares boundaries with Nkanu East, Nkanu West, Enugu North and Enugu East Local Government Areas of Enugu State. The population for the study is all the students in the 8 public secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State, which has a total population of ten thousand two hundred students (10200) (PPSMB, 2024). A sample size of 120 students was drawn using simple random sampling from a total population of 10200 students across the Enugu South Local Government Area secondary schools.

The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The items were constructed to reflect the purpose of the study. The questionnaire contained two sections, "A" and "B". Section "A" deals with the general information of the respondents (Bio Data) and section "B" deals with the identification of the strategies for managing school discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State. It was a self-structured instrument. Two Educational Management experts and one other were given draft copies for measurement and evaluation to ensure instrument validity. Some questions were deleted, and some were changed. Their corrections were taken into consideration before the final draft of items was produced. To establish reliability, the research conducted a test-retest procedure within two weeks using five (5) secondary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State. The data collected were computed using the Pearson formula to get a reliability estimate, and a coefficient of .72 was obtained, attesting to the instrument's reliability.

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to one hundred and twenty (120) students drawn from the secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area. After giving them time to complete the questionnaire, she retrieved one hundred and eight (108) copies, while twelve (12) were not returned, giving a 90% return. The data was analyzed using mean deviations. The decision rule was that any score up to 2.50 and above is considered positive, while scores below 2.50 are considered harmful.

2.1. Research Question 1

What is the impact of corporal punishment on managing students' discipline?

Table 1 Mean response to impact of corporal punishment on managing students' discipline

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	DEC
		1	2	3	4			
1	It commands immediate response for inappropriate behaviour	56	21	20	11	108	3.12	A
2	It halts the offense	71	15	12	10	108	3.47	A
3	It restores order within the school environment	77	11	10	10	108	3.43	A
4	It punishes and prevents aberrant behaviour	46	38	18	6	108	3.14	A
5	It secures or restores order, disciplines the body and motivates the mind	37	48	9	14	108	3.00	A

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

From the table, it is indicated that the respondents agreed that the listed items are positive, with mean scores of above 2.50. This means that all the items in this table are also part of the impact of corporal punishment on managing students discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

2.2. Research Question 2

What are the impact of school rules and regulation in managing students' discipline?

Table 2 Mean response to impact of school rules and regulations on managing students' discipline

	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	DEC
6	To Establish Standards in the School	59	31	15	3	108	3.35	A
7	It provides the daily guidelines by which your teachers, students, and everyone involved must operate and behave.	100	8	0	0	108	3.92	A
8	It Provides Safety and Security for Teachers and Students	53	28	7	20	108	3.05	A
9	Provide Accountability on Both the Students and Teachers	99	8	1	0	108	3.90	A
10	Guides students to good behavior	33	62	8	5	108	3.13	A

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

The table indicated that the respondents agreed that the listed items are positive, with mean scores of above 2.50. This means that all the items in this table are also part of the impact of school rules and regulations on managing students discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

2.3. Research Question 3

What are the impact of guidance and counselling on managing students' discipline?

Table 3 Mean response to impact of guidance and counselling on managing students' discipline

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	DEC
11	Enhance emotional stability	61	22	25	0	108	3.33	A
12.	Guides the students making reasonable decisions	38	46	6	18	108	2.96	A
13	Promotes discipline through individual and group counseling	21	56	20	11	108	2.80	A
14	Guides them towards making right choices	78	11	11	8	108	3.47	A
15	Helps the students to adjust	20	56	11	20	108	2.71	A

Note: SA=Strongly Agree;A=Agree;D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

From the table, it is indicated that the respondents agreed that the listed items are positive, with mean scores of above 2.50. This means that all the items in this table are also part of the effect of Guidance and Counselling on managing students discipline in secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State

3. Discussion of Findings

Research question one sought to determine the impact of corporal punishment on managing students' discipline in secondary schools. The findings showed that corporal punishment commands immediate response for inappropriate behaviour, halts the offence, restores order within the school environment, and prevents aberrant behaviour. Corporal punishment compels students to be disciplined. Corporal punishment is being used as a means of disciplining action against children and students worldwide. However, as a catalyst action of Education, it needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity.

Corporal punishment administered justly ('with love') is necessary and proper. Corporal punishment is being used as a means of disciplining action against children and students worldwide. However, as a catalyst in Education, he suggests that it needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity. Behaviour is not something that can change immediately. It sometimes needs an individual to adjust himself or herself to the desired behaviour; in that case, for students to develop a desired behaviour, several techniques or methods must be applied, including guiding a student, counselling, giving some directives and sometimes, where necessary, punishment can be applied. Inappropriate behaviour is often believed to cease immediately after the applied punishment.

Punishment must be reasonable and adequately meted out to the student for the offence committed; it should be moderate and commensurate with the offence committed. Although it has been emphasized that school authorities have the right to punish students for breach of school regulations, administering punishment that entails physical chastisement must be done with caution.

Research question two sought to determine the impact of school rules and regulations on students' discipline in secondary schools. The response showed that school rules and regulations influence student discipline in secondary schools. School rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct in the students; these imply self-control, orderliness, acceptable behaviour and obedience to the school authority. Also, rules and regulations are set to maintain proper governance and build respect among the teachers and the students. A school with practical discipline is manageable and often results in unmotivated and demoralized educators, leading to the student's poor academic performance and attitude. When there is a practical discipline in a school, practical teaching and learning will take place, thus leading to a more appealing environment that will help achieve more positive academic results and have a better attitude among the students. Widespread violence and misbehaviour exist in many secondary schools, and the administration of rules and regulations can curtail them.

Research question three sought to determine how guidance and counselling impact secondary school students' discipline. School rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct in the students; these imply self-control, orderliness, acceptable behaviour and obedience to the school authority. Also, rules and regulations are set to maintain proper governance and build respect among the teachers and the students. Disciplinary problems can be prevented if students in secondary schools can be guided and counselled on how to deal with their emotions. A healthy emotional climate can be achieved through Guidance and counselling because students with problems have someone to turn to.

Guidance and counselling can prevent indiscipline. This implies that students who are guided and counselled are unlikely to have disciplinary problems. Students can be seen as disciplined if they understand that there are some things they have to accept as they are because they cannot be changed. For example, Guidance and counselling should help students understand that rioting because of power failure does not change the situation.

The focus of Guidance is internal freedom to increase personal control and responsibility in the intellectual and emotional spheres. When students are given proper orientation, they are not likely to break school rules.

3.1. Educational Implication of the study

The educational implications of these findings highlight the need for a multifaceted approach to managing student discipline. While corporal punishment may provide immediate corrective measures, it should be used judiciously and in combination with other methods such as Guidance and counselling and well-established school rules and regulations. By adopting a comprehensive and sensitive approach to discipline, schools can create a positive learning environment

that promotes academic success and personal growth among students. The findings also highlight the need to strengthen Guidance and counselling departments in secondary schools to help students cope with the challenges of adolescence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Extra-curricular activities that project discipline should be introduced for the students
- Teachers should set up a mutual relationship with the students to enable them to get attracted to the school and maintain good discipline.

Guidance and counselling units should be provided for schools.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study revealed that corporal punishment, school rules and regulations, as well as counselling help in instilling discipline in students. Therefore, it is recommended that counselling and teachers attitude to student can aid them adjust from undisciplined to disciplined attitudes which would be suitable for effective growth and development within the society.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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