INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INDISCIPLINE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KEFFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Abstract

The continuous rate of indiscipline in schools has become a societal tumor and a great concern not only to school administrators, but to parents, the society as well as the government. The study investigated the causes, effects and solutions to indiscipline in secondary schools in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Qualitative research approach of the case study type was used. The population consisted of senior secondary school students, teachers and school administrators. Convenience sampling procedure was adopted to obtain the sample. Focus group discussion and Key informants interview were used to obtain information from students, teachers and school administrators. Discussion groups made up of six members who volunteered to participate in the study were constituted for teachers and students. Sixteen discussion groups were constituted for students while teachers had twelve. Focused group discussion was employed to collect data from the groups guided by sets of questions while key informant interview was employed to collect data from school administrators. Data obtained were qualitatively analysed. It was discovered that lateness to school, irregular attendance and truancy, noise making in the class, fighting with each other within the school and with neighboring schools, indecent dressing[19], smoking of cigarettes and Indian hemp, drinking of alcohol among others constituted forms of indiscipline. It was recommended that there should be adequate use of rewards for hardworking teachers and students as well as punishment for defaulting ones.

Keywords: Indiscipline, Causes, Effect, Solutions, School

Introduction

Members of the wider society, including operators of the educational system are governed by norms and laws that direct the affairs of an individual member. The school for instance is a social unit established as a formal agency for providing formal education where people learn about the customs, attitudes and ways of doing things in the society.

In order to ensure peaceful co-existence in schools, the authorities often make rules and regulations that guide and control the 269ehavior of students with a view to setting high standards of discipline. The infringement by any student on such established school rules and regulations constitutes offence which is subject to appropriate retributive punishment. Such rule may compel the entire students to exhibit character that is inconformity to the societal laws and order.

Indiscipline in school may literally mean the opposite of discipline, but in a comprehensive form, indiscipline in school may refer to improper 269ehavior exhibited by an individual, student or group of students within the school or community. Olusegun (2005) defined indiscipline as the improper training of the mind and body which can produce desired control necessary for an individual to perform positive roles required for the achievement of organizational or community goals and aspirations. An undisciplined student is likely to be an uncontrollable child who may be capable of causing any damage not only in the school but even at home and the community at large. Such a student may violate the school rules and regulations at will.

The rate of indiscipline in secondary schools in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State tends to be on the increase despite various measures taken by school authorities to curb the menace among students so as to bring about a socially stable society. This general increase in students' negative 269ehavior to constituted authority appears to be negatively influencing students' learning and development. Johnson (2010) pointed out that indiscipline in school is detrimental to effective teaching and learning and its multifarious manifestations include disorderliness, smoking, examination malpractices, bullying, disobedience, stealing and dishonesty. Students are the future leaders of any nation and are the symbol of creativity. When they indulge in destructive acts they put the future of the country in great danger.

Students indiscipline in schools can be blamed on the parents who have neglected their duties in proper upbringing of their children at home (Madziyire, 2010). It is very common among modern parents especially the working class and those in the business sector to ignore their duties of proper upbringing of their children leaving it in the hands of house helps and other care givers; little time is spent with these children. The resultant effect is seen in the increased moral laxity as exhibited by students especially in Keffi Local Government Area of

Nasarawa State. Kiprop (2012) observes that our society cannot be exonerated either as indiscipline is a societal problem that originated from our twisted and corrupted societal values. A society demands the type of students it gets. There are a lot of indiscipline acts going on in our society and this rubs off on our students (Paul, 2009). A student who is found gambling in the school has come to realize that there is no honest way of making money and that hard work is not recognized in society (McManus, 2009).

Zubaida (2009) identified various forms of indiscipline among secondary school students such as truancy, lateness to school, drug abuse, insulting/assaulting, stealing, rioting, sexual activities and many other social vices. Kounin (2008) on the other hand argues that indiscipline among students manifests mainly in various unruly 270ehavior exhibited by students in and outside the school like violence, street fighting and hooliganism, truancy and improper dressing. A study conducted by Amado and Freire (2009) reported the incidences of indiscipline to be conflicts among peers and conflicts within teacher-student relationship, which might be taken on proportions of violence and even delinquency and that there is likely to be a link between inconsistent disciplinary action from teachers based on punishment and control and more frequent occurrence of undisciplined 270ehavior in teachers, the latter presents a minor frequency than the former (Amado, 2005).

Empirical evidence revealed that there are varied causes of indiscipline among secondary school students. A study by Gutu.za and Mapolisa (2015) Tsav & Bua (2014) found that the most prevalent causes of students' indiscipline were abuse of drugs, indecent dressing, bullying/fighting, bunking lessons, late coming as well as love affairs, peer pressure, abolition of corporal punishment, teachers' 270ehavior, abuse of drugs, home background, closed school climate as well as community leaders.

Peer pressure and the abolition of corporal punishment were the most common causes mentioned. Although, these cases of indiscipline they said did not occur at the same level of preponderance, they were all existing in alarming levels. Idu and Ojedapo (2011) in their investigation reported that indiscipline of students is as a result of parental influence, teachers' attitude, government activities and peer-group influence. Onyije aid Ojedapo (2010) identified some factors that cause indiscipline among students such as government nonchalant

attitudes to education, parental factors and teachers' attitude. Other cause of indiscipline among students are home factors which include a history of drug and alcohol abuse, violence and socioeconomic status of the family; school factors such as unsafe school environment, inappropriate classroom management, teachers' humiliating remarks and teacher-pupil relations that are too strict (Baleina korodawa, 2009; Moseki, 2004; Banja, 2002). A study by Zubaida (2009) identified various causes of indiscipline among secondary school students such as truancy, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse, insulting/assaulting, stealing, rioting, and many other antisocial vices.

According to Zubaida (2009), a number of these acts of indiscipline were directed against constituted authorities and established rules. An example of this is refusal to wear the right school uniform and going out of bounds without permission.

The effects of indiscipline among secondary school students can be divided into two main areas: namely educational and work related as well as social 271ehavior related effects (Bandura, 2010). Indiscipline manifests itself through disruptive 271ehavior making it difficult for disciplined students to learn (Bandura, 2010). It is in line with this that Kipron (2012) advises, where students are involved in the selection of their leaders (prefects), they are most likely to work harmoniously with them and not against them and this may reduce capes of indiscipline. The effect of indiscipline among secondary school students can lead to disruptive classroom behaviours which cause harm in classroom. When students misbehave they learn less and keep their peers from learning. Teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing 271ehavior271or, rather than teaching (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). These researchers assert that this creates stress for teachers when they are distracted from academic time. The time and energy needed to cope with some descriptive students can be physically draining and emotionally exhausting.

Empirical evidence revealed that indiscipline among secondary school students can result to disruptive classroom behaviours which in turn cause harm in classroom (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). Findings by Finn, Fish and Scott in a survey of 805 members of the American Federation of Teachers Union as reported in Magwa and Ngara (2014) demonstrated that 17% of teachers lost over 4 hours a week to disruptive 271ehavior, while an additional 19% of teachers lost between 2 and 3 hours a week to disruptive 271ehavior and assert that this creates

stress for teachers when they are detracted from academic time. The implication of this is that when students misbehave, they learn less and distract their peers from learning; teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehaviour rather than teaching. This time and energy needed to cope with some disgruntle students can be physically draining and emotionally exhausting. Freire and Ariado (2009) in a qualitative study found that the effect of indiscipline in school could result to students having trouble relating with teachers, emotionally tense relationship, lack of communication between teachers and students and general bad relationship among students and teachers. Students are the future leaders of any nation and are the symbol of creativity. When they indulge in destructive acts they put the future of the country in a great danger.

In order to curb acts of indiscipline among secondary school students, Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) opined for the democratization of prefect selection system, use of encouragement, affirmation and rewards, working with parents/guardians, community leaders and the use of sanctions among secondary school students. Other measures such as punishment, scout and guide youth services, praises for good behaviour, relevant and clear guidelines for teachers' behavior were also suggested (Bedding, 2006; Banja, 2002). In an attempt to find out solutions to disciplinary problems among secondary school students, Hamman-Tukur, Atsua and Adamu (2013) reported some disciplinary measures that can improve indiscipline acts among students.

From the disciplinary measures that have high frequency of response students were more inclined to disciplinary measures that are supportive. This is because 63% of the students would want to be given warning, 66% would want to be involved in the formulation and maintenance of school rules and regulations and 75% would want to be told instantly their right and wrong.

To have an effective and conducive school environment that will guarantee effective teaching and learning, teachers and school administrators at various times have employed different disciplinary measures to manage students' behaviour during instructions. Generally it is believed that school administrators and teachers who use consistent disciplinary strategies would exercise more effective control over students in the school environment. However due to the peculiar nature of our school system and the changing nature of the society, school administrators and teachers have at various times applied

disciplinary measures but failed to produce the desired result. For instance, the infliction of corporal punishment on students which has been an acceptable method of promoting good behaviour among students over a long time has now failed to produce the desired result. Other disciplinary measures like expulsion, suspension and exclusion among others have also failed to yield the desired result. This unfortunate scenario has left one to wonder what actually is responsible for the rising tide of students' indiscipline in the school system. It is based on this premise that the study raised the following questions:

1. What are the common forms of students' indiscipline?
2. What are the causes of students' indiscipline?
3. What are the effects of student' indiscipline?
4. What are the solutions to students' indiscipline?

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research design and employed a case study approach to identify the causes, effects and solutions to students' indiscipline in secondary schools in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The population of the study consisted of senior secondary school students. The researchers were not able to access the entire population to enable them have representative sample therefore, homogenous sampling method was used.

As a result, the sample that participated in the study may not be representative of the entire population. Sample for the study was derived from two senior secondary schools in Keffi Local Government Area (one boarding co-educational and one co-education). Twelve SS I - III students in the sampled schools constituted two distinct groups each while twelve teachers constituted two distinctive group of six in each school. In all sixteen discussion groups participated in the study making a total of one hundred and forty four (144) students and twenty four (24) teachers that participated in the study. Two principals of the two schools, two Vice Principals in each school participated in the study. In all one hundred and seventy four (174) participants were used.

Focused Group Discussion and Key Informants Interview were employed to collect data from the groups guided by sets of questions.

The groups were identified as the researchers visited each of the schools. Permission to conduct the study was obtained by the researchers from the principals of the sampled schools. The purpose of the study was clearly explained and members volunteered to participate in the discussion. There were twelve members in each of the students group while that of teachers had six members in each group.

The Key Informants Interview was conducted one on one in the offices of the Principals and the Vice Principals respectively. The discussion was guided by a set of structured questions where the researchers served as moderators during the sessions. This was done on a round table where views and opinions of participants were written down and recorded for content analysis. Responses were transcribed through content analysis where responses of the groups or individuals were categorized according to questions answered by identifying patterns, diversity and editing the content to fish out repeated responses to get the pattern and diversity of response.

Data obtained from the field was immediately transcribed and the manual inductive approach (Thematic analysis approach) was used to analyze the data. A pilot test of the structured questions was done in a school that did not constitute the sample of the study. The pilot test allowed for edition and restructuring of the questions for the study. The results of the patterns and diversity in views and opinions of participants were presented in the section called results and discussion.

Results and Discussion

Findings on common forms of indiscipline in secondary schools revealed that lateness to school, irregular attendance and truancy, noise making in the class, fighting with each other within the school and with neighboring schools, refusal to do assignments given by teachers, non-participation in class activities, indecent dressing, smoking of cigarettes and Indian hemp in or before coming to school, drinking of alcohol in school or before coming to school, not taking notes during class, students bullying their counterparts, gambling among students, students chewing gums in the class, students using abusive language against one another and students bringing in and operating phones during class hour. One of the student discussants said that:

There are some students here that belong to gangs in the town, they smoke cigarettes and Indian hemp and drink alcohol before coming to school. You can easily identify them even in the school here. They dress indecently even in the school (Student in Group 2).

These findings aligned with Zubaida (2009) who identified various forms of indiscipline among secondary school students as truancy, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse, insulting/assaulting, stealing, rioting, and many other antisocial vices. The result is also consistent with Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) who found that the most prevalent forms of indiscipline were abuse of drugs, bullying/fighting, bunking lessons, late coming as well as love affairs, peer pressure, abolition of corporal punishment, teachers' behaviour, abuse of drugs, home background, closed school climate as well as community leaders. Kounin (2008) argued that indiscipline among students manifests mainly in various unruly behaviour exhibited by students in and outside the school like violence, street fighting and hooliganism, truancy at school and improper dressing, justify the results of the study.

Findings on the causes of students' indiscipline revealed that students' home background, teachers home background, overcrowded classroom, irregular payment of teachers' salaries, favouritism by the school administrators towards a particular student or teacher, the nature and quality of previous school attended by both the teachers and the students, peer pressure are causes of students' indiscipline in schools. These findings agree with Onyije and Ojedapo (2010) who found similar results. Idu and Ojedapo (2011) in their investigation reported similar results that indiscipline of students is as a result of parental influence, teachers' attitude, government activities and peer-group influence. The implication of this finding is that students' indiscipline in school cannot be attributed to a single source.

On one hand, teachers and administrators identified parents as major contributors to students' indiscipline in schools and enumerated instances such as parents insulting teachers in the presence of the students, parental conflicts/fights, parents exposing their children to wrong habits such as smoking, drinking of alcohol or sending them on errands to buy such, inability of parents to release their wards early

enough for school, parents coming to school to fight teachers for punishing/flogging their wards, inability of parents to financially provide for their wards to cater for their needs, parents refusing or delaying in payment of school fees and dues and parents engaging their wards in hawking before going to school. One of the teachers said that: "*...parents come to school to fight teachers just because their child was punished for disobedience. We have an incidence where a parent came and fought a teacher in our neighboring school...*"

These findings underscore Idu and Ojedapo (2011) investigation that reported indiscipline of students as a result of parents influence. Similar result was reported by Onyije and Ojedapo (2010) to include parents' factors and government nonchalant attitudes to education. The implication of these findings is that there will hardly be a convenient atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place in schools where incidences of students' indiscipline are on the increase. This is capable of affecting students' performance in school negatively. It could results into schools producing students that may not be competent to contribute to the development of the society.

The school administrators rather differed slightly on some causes of indiscipline in schools attributing it to teachers lateness to school, teachers not attending classes to teach as at when due, teachers leaving school without permission, teachers staying and discussing in the staffroom when they ought to have been in class teaching, teachers absenting themselves from the school assembly, teachers giving students their notes to copy on the board on their behalf, teachers using abusive words (curses) on their students and teachers creating fear and anxiety in the minds of the students. One of the school administrators said that "... *let me differ a little here because there are some teachers who come to school late, some do not attend to their classes on time, and some even give students note to copy on the board...*"This result aligned with Amado and Freire (2009) who reported the incidences of indiscipline among peers and conflicts within teacher-student relationship, which might be taken on proportions of violence and even delinquency and that there is likely to be a link between inconsistent disciplinary action from teachers based on punishment and control aid more frequent occurrence of undisciplined behaviour in teachers.

Findings on effects of indisipline among secondary school students revealed that disruptive classroom behaviours cause harm in classroom, loss of lesson hours, it creates stress for teachers when they are

detracted from academic time, students learn less in the classroom, teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehaviour rather than teaching, teachers are emotionally exhausted, students having trouble relating with teachers, emotionally tense relationship, lack of communication between teachers and students and general bad relationship among students and teachers. These findings aligned with Magwa and Ngara (2014) who found that disruptive classroom behaviours cause harm in classroom. Freire and Amado (2009) in a qualitative study reported the effect of indiscipline in school to have stemmed from students having trouble relating with teachers, emotionally tense relationship, lack of communication between teachers and students and general bad relationship among students and teachers. This implies that students indiscipline can affect both teaching and learning and may have a devastating effect on the school system and to a large community the co unity and nation at large. This could also explain the level of disorderliness in our society to where queuing, honesty and integrity is an aberration because a large proportion of the Nigerian population have passed out or graduated from one school system or the other and yet those who are presumed to have attended school do not set a good example for the populace and especially the younger ones to emulate.

To curb the menace of students' indiscipline, respondents agreed that the school and the society at large should identify in definite terms what indiscipline is, time books should be provided in schools to record the time-in and time-out of students and teachers, punishment should be meted out to students who are found wanting, government should ensure prompt payment of teachers' salaries, there should be a well-controlled class size, teachers should be up to task with their teaching profession and should provide feedback on assignments given to the students, parents should provide proper home training for their children and students should have free access to library facilities as this will keep them busy. This result is in consonance with Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) study who suggested that democratizing the prefect selection system, use of encouragement, affirmation and rewards, working with parents/guardians, community leaders and use of sanctions could curb acts of indiscipline among secondary school students. Other measures suggested by the study of Bedding (2006) and Banjasuch as punishment, scouts and guides youth services, praise for good behaviour, relevant and clear guidelines for teachers' behaviour have underscore the findings of the study.

Teachers and school administrators suggested that there should be thorough monitoring programmes for schools, teachers and students by the State Ministry of Education, students should be well screened before admitted into any school, the school, society and the government should set up task force against students' indiscipline, parents should on a regular basis be checking up on their children in schools, any student found outside the school during school and class hours should be arrested and punished to serve as a deterrent to others, the school administrators and teachers should be accessible to the students and schools and teachers should stop extorting money from students as understanding fees for assistance during examination. The findings of Hamman-Tukur, Atsua and Adamu (2013) that there are disciplinary measures that can improve indiscipline acts among students underscore this result. This is because from the disciplinary measures that have high frequency of response, they reported that students were more inclined to disciplinary measures that are supportive hence, students would want to be given warning, would want to be involved in the formulation and maintenance of school rules and regulations and would want to be told instantly their right and wrong. These measures if carefully taken would get students involved in the management of students' indiscipline right from their formative years in the school and would give them a sense of responsibility in managing their own affairs.

As expected in focus group discussion, certain trends and diversity of patterns characterized the responses of discussion participants. There tends to be similarity on reported effect of students indiscipline by discussants. However, views vary on the causes of students' indiscipline in schools. Students identified home background of students and teachers overcrowded classroom, irregular payment of teachers' salaries, favoritism from the school administrators towards a particular student or teacher, the nature and quality attended by both the teachers and the students and peer pressure as the major causes of students' indiscipline in schools. Teachers and administrators identified parents as major contributors to students' indiscipline in schools enumerating instances such as parents insulting teachers in the presence of the students, parental conflicts/fights, parents exposing their children to wrong habits such as smoking, taking of alcohol or sending them on errands to buy such, inability of parents to release their wards early enough for school, parents coming to school to fight teachers for punishing/flogging their wards, inability of parents to financially provide for their wards to cater for their needs, parents

refusing or delaying in payment of school fees and dues and parents engaging their wards in hawking before going to school. School administrators rather differed slightly on some causes of indiscipline in schools attributing it to teachers indiscipline which takes the form of teachers lateness to school, teachers not attending classes to teach as at when due, teachers leaving school without permission, teachers staying and discussing in the staffroom when they ought to have been in class teaching, teachers absenting themselves from the school assembly, teachers giving students notes to copy on the board on their behalf, teachers using abusive words (curses) on their students and teachers creating fear and anxiety in the minds of the students.

Conclusion

The study has shown that indiscipline exists in secondary schools due to some factors. Among them include poor administration, irregular payment of teacher's salary, and bad association among students. Indiscipline among students is an act of decay in behaviour which students demonstrate when they do not follow the rules and regulations of the school. Most parents are no longer concerned with the moral and academic performances of their children as they give more time to their businesses than they do to the moral training of their children. The absence of this home training affects to a greater extent the moral and academic performance of students in schools. Asides, school supervision are one of the most essentialing redients of our school system that has suffered the worst neglect. This neglect has caused our education a lot of moral, intellectual, psychological, social and economic derogations. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to correct the ills in schools in our communities to ensure discipline among senior secondary school students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made to stakeholders in the educational sector based on findings of the study.

i. There should be prompt and adequate use of rewards for hardworking teachers and students as well as punishment for defaulting ones. Teachers and students who are not committed, even after warning should be expelled from the school.

ii. There is the need for school administrators to check overcrowding in classes so that teachers can have adequate control of their classes and established a close rapport between them and the students.

iii. The teachers should learn to behave well with the students; treating them like their own sons and daughters.

iv. The use of corporal punishment should be reintroduced in secondary schools.

v. Teachers' salaries and other welfare packages should be paid regularly by the government in order to boost productivity and also discourage them from lip services.

vi. Religious studies should be taken seriously by making it compulsory in schools irrespective of whether students are science or art oriented.

vii. Government can promote discipline in schools by providing each school with the necessary facilities, qualified ad motivated teachers who are able to show commitment to students' welfare.

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