



Impact of Discipline on Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary School in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The research investigated impact of discipline on students' academic performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were posted to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted. The population consists of 8,367 public junior secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Multistage sampling technique was used to sample Junior Secondary School teachers from 2 LGAs with the population of 400 teachers. The researcher with the help of research assistants distributed 430 copies of questionnaire, but retrieved 400. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled, impact of discipline on students' academic performance questionnaire (IDSAPQ) it comprised 10 items which measured discipline. Cronbach Alpha was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.94 for the instrument. The instrument was validated by 2 experts in Educational Management Department of faculty of Education in Rivers State University. The research questions posed were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance using z-test. Finding of the study revealed that adequate provision of set of rules for ensuring compliance will go a long way to impact academic performance of student and cautioning, corporal punishment of students will also go a long way to impact discipline and enhance high level of academic performance. It was recommended that a system be planned by head of schools whereby members from best performing secondary schools have an opportunity to meet frequently with least performing schools community members to share experiences on discipline related matters vis-à-vis academic performance. Their mutual understanding can be expected to help both side to look into and act upon the variable that weaken their side, also since students are targeted beneficiaries of school rules and academic interventions, there is a need for management of schools to devise ways of involving the students more in matters relating to formulation and implementation of school rules and regulations for an effective non-oppressive school discipline.

Keywords: Impact, Discipline, Students, Academic, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Provision of quality education and training is the ultimate goal of any educational system. The success of teaching is reflected by academic performance of students. This goal can never be achieved without school discipline. How students are disciplined has been an issue since the inception of public education. In 1770, William Blackstone applied the phrase *in loco parentis*, which literally means in place of the parents, to educators. *In loco parentis* gave teachers the ability to act in place of the parent in response to disciplinary actions (Conte, 2000). *In loco parentis* was implemented in schools in the early 1900s, and with it came corporal punishment.

Victorian era parents believed children who were lazy and insubordinate were alienating themselves from God, and teachers were thought to be the perfect authority figure to ensure alienation did not occur (Parker, 2010). During this time period corporal punishment was viewed as necessary to produce citizens who conformed to the norms of society, beat out sin, and ensure learning occurred

(Parker, 2010). The book of Proverbs in the Bible advocates the use of a rod, i.e. corporal punishment, to save children's souls from death.

Therefore, teachers began administering corporal punishment for acts of wrong doing by their charges (Conte, 2000). Recently scholars have written more on indiscipline among students and its effects on learning outcome and their progress in schools. Discipline in school is a very important aspect towards academic excellence, while lack of it usually gives rise to a lot of problems such as lack of vision and mission, poor time management, irregular attendance and punishment. It also plays a vital role in the acquisition of sense of responsibility in learners as well as educators. Gawe, Vakalisa and Jacobs, (2001) express cooperative learning if academic performance is to be achieved among students.

Effective discipline helps in the achievement of goals, expectation and expectation and responsibility in students (Dunham, 2001). Good discipline creates a good image of the school and prepares learners for the future. Disruptive behavior amongst learners eliminated if there is good discipline at school. The implementation of effective discipline at school is a key for the learner in his journey to adulthood. By definition discipline refers to the ability to carry out reasonable instructions or orders to reach appropriate standards of behaviors. It is understood to be that abstract quality in a human being which is associated with and manifested by a person's ability to do things well at the right time, in the right circumstance, without or with minimum supervision (Ngonyani, 2005). Various studies have been conducted on issues pertaining to schools' academic performance, such as those by Malekela (2000), Galabawa (2000) and Mosha (2000).

They have pointed out some factors that lead to varying levels of performance in schools, including availability of teachers, availability of teaching and learning materials and language communication. Omari (2015) talked about school discipline as one among aspects that influence performance in schools. School discipline is an essential element in any educational institution if the students are to benefit from the opportunities offered to them. Omari (2015) argues that it is difficult to maintain order and discipline in schools where teachers have no space to sit, prepare and mark students' work. In other words, Omari (2015) supported the above scholars that availability of teaching and learning materials has an impact on school discipline.

Indiscipline in schools, and consequently, school strikes, destroy the teaching- learning environment. Occasionally there are protests, riots and violence and sometimes the police have to come in to intervene to protect school property. Some schools become virtual prisons as they construct huge walls and expensive fences to protect good students, teachers and property against undisciplined students. Ohsako (2007) argued that violence is a sensitive issue that provokes anxiety, arouses emotions and has negative impact on school performance.

Despite the rules endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training but they are not followed by many of the students and their teachers in some government and private schools, who misbehave wherever they are outside the school environment. As Omari (2015) observed, the most important thing is not so much to have written rules pinned in the office of the head teacher or discipline master as to have rules actually implemented. School rules and regulations should facilitate administrative work, should focus on the creation of a good atmosphere for teaching and learning.

For several years now there have been concerns by various people and groups regarding the deterioration of the quality of education in secondary schools. Schools vary in categories some school have maintained standard other school standard decline. It's time to look the circumstances surrounding differential performance among them; as well as the varying levels of discipline associated with different school categories.

Types of Discipline

According to this study only two types of discipline were investigated: positive and negative discipline as identified by Umba (2001), Bull (2006) and Okumbe (2008). The first type, positive discipline is sometimes known as self-discipline. Self-discipline is the kind of discipline that comes from the aims and desires that are within the person, where there is no element of fear (Umba, 2001). Okumbe (2008) related positive discipline with preventive discipline, providing gratification in order to remain committed to a set of values and goals. It is encouraged self-control, individual responsibility in the management of time, respect of school property, school rules and authority, good relationship between students and teachers.

The second type of discipline, negative discipline, occurs when an individual is forced to obey orders blindly or without reasoning. The individual may pretend to do good things or behave properly when superiors are present but once they are absent quite the opposite is done. For example, a teacher may behave well before his/her head of school, perhaps in pursuit of something like promotion or other favors'. Likewise, students may behave well when their teachers are present, but resort to mischief as soon as they are out of sight.

Positive Discipline

In order to increase positive discipline, disruptive behavior needs to decrease in schools to create an environment that is conducive for learning. Cotton (2006) suggested that rules and the consequences of breaking them should be clearly specified and communicated to parents, learners, and teachers. Once rules have been communicated, the fair and consistent enforcement of the school rules, and providing a hearing process for students to present their side of the story, will also increase learners' and parents' perceptions of fairness.

Disciplinary policies should also set out the different categories of offences, depending on the circumstances or seriousness of the offence.

Gaustad, (2002) reported on research in 600 secondary schools in which they found that unclear or unfair rules which are inconsistently enforced are associated with poor discipline in schools. Gaustad, (2002) stated that although "good behavior is necessary, it is not sufficient to ensure academic growth". Gaustad (2002) argued further that effective school disciplinary strategies should seek to encourage responsible behavior and provide all learners with a satisfying school experience as well as discouraging misconduct. These are learners, however, who, in spite of schools trying their best to make education a satisfying experience for them, still dislike school.

Research has shown that learners, who dislike school, perform poorly academically, have limited career objectives, and are more likely to be disruptive Cotton (2006). Therefore, researchers believe that social involvement in school activities could help learners to be more positive about attending school. Cotton (2006) recommended that underachieving learners should be helped through a remedial program, which would also create a more positive attitude towards schoolwork if the learners in question start to show signs of improvement. Teachers' positive attitude to their profession also plays a significant role in learners' attitudes toward school. Gaustad,(2002) found that commitment, on the part of the staff, to establish and maintain appropriate learner behavior as an essential precondition of learning, is the chief component of preventive discipline.

According to Gaustad (2002), the creation of an accepting social climate, characterized by a genuine concern for learners as individuals, is also typical of a well-disciplined school. Making the curriculum interesting for learners, so that they will want to come to school to learn and also be prepared and well-trained, shows that teachers are serious about what they say and, in turn, earns them respect as professionals. Charlton and David (2007) concurred that learners' misbehavior may be a logical and not unreasonable response to a timetable which includes subjects and material in which they have little or no interest, and/or which is administered to them in a manner that is uninteresting and which discourages their involvement.

Bumbarger (2009) concluded by saying that to train teachers in effective classroom management may increase the consistency of discipline, potentially reducing unnecessary exclusions and preventing the erosion of the deterrent effect of suspension and expulsion.

Researchers appreciate that discipline is an important component of human behavior and assert that without it an organization cannot function well towards the achievement of its goals (Ouma, Simatwa, & Serem, 2013). In the context of a school system, a disciplined student is that student whose behaviours, actions and inactions conform to the predetermined rules and regulations of the school (Ali, Dada, Isiaka, & Salmon, 2014). However, discipline ideally means more than adhering to rules and regulations and entails the learner's ability to discern what is right or wrong (Gitome, Katola, & Nyabwari, 2013). Discipline is widely acknowledged to be essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to sound academic performance (Masitsa, 2008). It is a basic requirement for successful teaching and learning in schools and a subject of concern for teachers (Eshetu, 2014). According to Gitome et al., where there is good discipline, there is improved academic performance. In other words, discipline is vital for students' academic performance (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). Furthermore, it is necessary for effective school management and accomplishment of its goals

(Nakpodia, 2010). Lack of discipline is called indiscipline. Therefore, indiscipline can be seen as any action considered to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society (Omote, Thinguri, & Moenga, 2015).

The literature revealed that student indiscipline is experienced in schools globally (Ali et al., 2014; Moyo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2014; Omote et al., 2015; Rahimi & Karkami, 2015; Yahaya et al., 2009). A study in West Virginia in the United States of America (USA) revealed that about 29.6% of 160,480 students (from grade 3 to 11) had one or more referrals for inappropriate behaviors (Whisman & Hammer, 2014). In Africa, researchers have pointed out the seriousness of indiscipline in schools in various countries. The countries include Ghana (Gyan, Baah-Korang, Mccarthy, & Mccarthy, 2015), South Africa (Marais & Meier, 2010; Masitsa, 2008), Botswana (Garegae, 2008), Nigeria (Okiemute, 2011; Nakpodia, 2010; Umezina & Elendu, 2012), and Tanzania (Yaghambe & Tshabangu, 2013). Umezina and Elendu for instance, observed that indiscipline among students in Nigeria was high and experienced at all levels including public Junior secondary schools. In Rivers State, lack of discipline in schools has been one of the challenges facing schools (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014).

The vital role of discipline in students' academic performance is revealed or implied by a number of previous studies carried out in Rivers State (Dawo & Simatwa, 2010; Gitome et al., 2013; Sureiman, 2010; Tikoko & Bomett, 2011) and in other African countries (Ehiane, 2014; Keating & Rossouw, 2009). This is supported and corroborated by a number of studies in European, Asian and American countries (Bodovski, Nahum-Shani, & Walsh, 2013; Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Ning, Van-Dammme, Yang, & Gielen, 2013; Pasternak, 2013; Whisman & Hammer, 2014; Zhao & Kuo, 2015). A few studies however suggest that discipline has minimal, uncertain or no significant influence on students' academic performance or achievement (Gakure et al., 2013; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014). Therefore, findings on impact of discipline on students' academic performance are inconsistent and somehow inconclusive. Furthermore, only a few of the stated previous studies (i.e., Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Pasternak, 2013; Zhao & Kuo, 2015) were correlational in design. Nevertheless, in their measure of student discipline, the few correlational studies focused on self-discipline and excluded social skills such as obedience, politeness, and social competence (i.e., ability to get along with other people). In addition, Rivers State students' academic performance has received little research attention in relation to discipline. The inconsistency of findings and the identified gaps suggested the need for more research on students' academic performance in relation to discipline. To address the identified gaps, the current study focused on Etche and Obio-Akpor descriptive survey design was adopted in examining the impact of discipline on students' academic performance. It also adopted a wider perspective of discipline by considering discipline generally as a personal attribute characterized by obedience, politeness, social competence (i.e., ability to get along with other people), orderliness, and academic efficiency (i.e., competence in undertaking academic tasks and obligations).

Students' motivation and engagement play an important role in learning and academic performance. Closely related to motivation is self-discipline, the ability of students to monitor and control their own behaviour. Students who are highly self-disciplined may be able to better focus on long-term goals and make better choices related to academic engagement. The concept of self-discipline focuses on students' own ability to engage in or refrain from engaging in a particular behaviour, rather than reliance on external motivations, rewards or punishments.

According to Duckworth and Seligman (2006), the key to establishing good discipline at school lies in students accepting the teachers' authority to manage their behaviour and their progress in learning. Learning activities cannot take place effectively in a classroom of thirty students or more unless one is given authority to control, manage and direct what is going on as, when and how appropriate. Much of the authority as an educator is derived from the status he has in that role and the respect and esteem for educators generally held in society and the one particularly conveyed to students by their parents and other sources of influence. In order to exercise managerial control, students' behaviour needs to be guided by the school rules and regulations. Such school rules may be explicitly stated by the educators or simply inferred from educators' actions. This means that all schools should draw up a code of conduct and implement it.

Clearly, students need order in the classroom if the activities which take place are to facilitate effective learning. The most important point to bear in mind in considering discipline is that creating

the necessary order is more to do with the skills involved in effective teaching in general than it is to do with how one deals with learner behaviour itself. If the learning activities are well-planned and prepared; if the presentation elicits and maintains students' attention, interest and involvement and if the activities are challenging and offer realistic opportunities for success, then the necessary order and discipline will be established.

Most students' misbehavior is quite trivial. The types of students' misbehavior most frequently cited by educators are:

- (i) excessive talk,
- (ii) being noisy (i.e. shouting at another),
- (iii) not paying attention to the teachers,
- (iv) not getting on with work required
- (v) being out of their seats without a good cause
- (vi) hindering other learners and
- (vii) arriving late for lessons.
- (viii) destroying school's property

Nevertheless, a well-managed lesson coupled with a relationship based on mutual respect and rapport will do much to minimize students' misbehavior in schools. This will be influenced by the teacher's behaviour and expectations as well as the expectations students bring with them and the prevailing ethics in the school.

Statement of the Problem

Discipline is one factor that helps in giving a student a self-direction, to be studious in his or her academics which in turn influence his or her academic performance. Unfortunately, some students lack discipline and this influence their habit for example, some lack reading culture, some do not attend classes, some are not regular in school etc and all these influence their academic performance negatively. Based on the above, the researcher intends to evaluate the impact of discipline on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Impact of discipline on students' performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. investigate how self-discipline of students impact on academic performance of public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. investigate how punishment of students impact on academic performance of public junior secondary school in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent does self- discipline of students impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- 2) To what extent does punishment of students' impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion of male and female teachers on the extent self-discipline of student impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H02: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion of male and female teachers on the extent punishment of student impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design because it provides a vivid description of the entire condition of a given phenomenon by collection of data from the population. The population of the study was 8,367 public junior secondary school teachers in Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB) 2020. The sample of 400 Junior Secondary School teachers 224 male and 176 female was selected from schools in Etche and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State using a stratified random sampling technique. The researcher distributed 430 copies of questionnaire and retrieved 400 copies. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled impact of discipline on students' academic performance questionnaire (IDSAPQ). It comprised 10 items which

measured discipline. The items were designed in the pattern of modified 4 point likert-type scale of Very High Extent (VHE 4), High Extent (HE 3), Low Extent (LE 2), Very Low Extent (VLE 1). This enables the respondents to state the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each of the question item. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the Faculty of Education of the Department of Educational Management. The study employed a statistical tool called Cronbach Alpha to determine the reliability index which was 0.94. The study employed mean (\bar{x}) statistic and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested with z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does self- discipline of students impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean Response of Teacher on the Extent of Self-Discipline of Students Impact on Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

SN	Questionnaire Items	Male \bar{X}_1	SD_1	Remark	Female \bar{X}_1	SD_2	Remark
1	Arriving school early VHE	2.73	0.92	VHE	2.81		0.89
2	Always submitting assignment as at when due	3.03	0.88	VHE	3.04	0.91	VHE
3	Adhering to rules and regulations	2.8	0.87	VHE	2.7	0.86	VHE
4	Frequent utilizing of library	2.5	0.95	VHE	2.54	0.92	VHE
5	Regular class attendance	2.9	1.05	VHE	3.0	0.9	VHE
Total		13.96	4.67		13.09	4.48	
Grand mean		2.8	0.93		2.6	0.89	

The result of the Table 1 above shows that all the items in the table indicates positive response with means scores 2.73, 3.03, 2.8, 2.5 2.87 3.04 2.7 2.54 and 3.0 respectively. The analysis shows that all the respondents agreed with the items, thus the arrive in the school on the opening day, have copy of rules and regulations, permission before leaving school ground, doing all classes and school activities, were school uniform have impact on academic performance of students the grand mean of 2.8 and 2.6 were also obtained and criterion mean of 2.5

Research Question 2

To what extent does punishment of students' impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Response of Teachers on the Extent to which Punishment of Students Impact on Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

S/n	Questionnaire Items	Male X_1	SD ₁	Remark	Female X_1	SD ₂	Remark
1.	Punishment increase class attendance	3.4	0.94	VHE	3.25	0.86	VHE
2.	Punishment increase respect to teachers and other students	3.25	0.7	VHE	3.15	0.75	VHE
3.	Punishment make students come to school on time	2.7	1.04	VHE	2.8	1.2	VHE
4.	Punishment make student avoid drinking, smoking and fighting	3.56	0.84	VHE	3.4	0.92	VHE
5.	Punishment make student keep quite in the absence of teachers	2.88	1.05	VHE	2.94	1.2	VHE
	Total	15.79	4.57		15.54	4.93	
	Grand mean	3.2	0.91		3.11	0.98	

Table 2 results show that all the items were accepted with mean scores of 3.4,3.25, 3.56,2.88,3.25,3.15,2.8,3.4 and 2.94 respectively. The analysis reveals that the respondents agreed with the items punishment increase respect to teachers, increase class attendance, makes students come to school on time, make students to keep quiet on the absence of teachers have impact on students' academic performances. The analysis showed grand means of 3.2 and 3.11 while criterion mean of 2.5 was used.

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference between the mean opinion of male and female teachers on the extent self-discipline of students impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test of the Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent Self-Discipline of Students Impact on Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary School in River State

Variable	N	\bar{X}_1	Std dev.	DF	P	Zcal	Zcrit.	Decision
Male teachers	224	2.8	0.93	398	0.05	0.21	1.96	Accepted
Female teachers	176	2.6	0.89					

Data in the Table 3 above shows that the z calculated value of 0.21 is less than the z critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significant levels, with 398 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female teachers on the extent self-discipline of students' impact academic performance of public junior secondary school in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference between the mean opinion of male and female teachers on the extent punishment of student impact on academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test of the Difference Between Male and Female Teachers on the Extent Punishment of students Impact on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{X}_1	Std dev.	DF	P	Zcal	Zcrit.	Decision
Male teachers	224	3.1	0.91	398	0.05	0.95	1.96	Accepted
Female teachers	176	3.11	0.89					

From the data in Table 4, the z-calculated value of 0.95 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significant levels, with 398 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is hereby accepted this shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the extent punishment has impact on academic performance of public junior secondary school in Rivers State.

Summary of the study

The findings revealed that adequate provision of set of rules for ensuring the compliance will go a long way to impact academic performance of students in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The study also revealed that cautioning, corporal punishment of students will also go a long way to impact discipline and enhance high level of academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is well established that adequate rules and regulations, self-discipline and punishment will in no doubt impact academic performance of students and the realization of educational goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and conclusion arising there from, it was recommended that:

1. A system should be planned by head of schools whereby members from best performing secondary schools have an opportunity to meet frequently with least performing secondary school community members to share experiences on discipline-related matters vis-à-vis academic performance. Their mutual understanding can be expected to help both sides to look into and act upon the variables that weaken their sides.
2. The government, in collaboration with community local authorities, should exert more effort aimed at motivating teachers in least performing schools, through adequate and timely salary payments, improved conditions of service, availability of teaching-learning materials and improved school infrastructure. This gesture can only raise teachers' self-esteem and the status of the teaching profession, leading to a reduction in the malpractices that negatively impact on school discipline and academic performance.
3. Parents and teachers are the most powerful impact on the child's life experiences, especially on educational outcomes. There should be parent -teacher relations so as to control indiscipline among students in school. To this effect, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) should be established by head of schools as a matter of policy for all schools, where some parents could be elected as "school representatives" within the community.
4. Since students are targeted beneficiaries of school rules and academic interventions, there is a need for management of schools to devise ways of involving the students more in matters relating to formulation and implementation of school rules and regulations for an effective non-oppressive school discipline.

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