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Maintaining Discipline and Orderliness in Secondary Education System for National Development (Pp. 399-411)

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Abstract

This study, a descriptive survey research design investigated strategies for maintaining discipline and orderliness in secondary schools in awka Education zone, Anambra State. Population was all the 68 principals and 2085 teachers in secondary schools in Awka Education zone. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The researcher-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and the reliability co-efficient of 0.83 was obtained using PearsonProduct Moment Correlation Co-efficient. Data collected were analysed and tested using means, standard deviation and t-test respectively. The result revealed that all the strategies investigated were suitable for maintaining discipline and order and that neither principals nor teachers differ in their Mean Rating on the possible strategies for maintaining discipline and orderliness. It was recommended among others that

principals, teachers and parents should be worthy models for the students and that government should post military personnel to help principals restore and maintain discipline in schools.

Introduction

In the education system of Nigeria, secondary education represents a critical stage. This is because it provides further educational and vocational opportunities for completers of primary education and also lays the foundation for academic and career pursuits at the tertiary level. Based on this laudable objectives and structure, there is need to maintain discipline and orderliness in this level of education so as to prepare the individual for useful living within the society, hence a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour... and live as good citizens (FGN, 2004).

Majority of the secondary school students in Nigeria are adolescents, that is, within the age range of 12-19 years. Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. At this developmental stage great changes occur in all their developmental dimensions and tend to create disequilibrium in their personality that they find it difficult to obey school rules and regulations (Louttit, 2000). Supporting this view, Fatola (2005) noted that 20% of the adolescents experience serious psychological conflicts, which may result in problem behaviours like truancy and delinquency. Thus, it became imperative that discipline and orderliness should be effectively maintained in secondary schools to enable the students learn as well as lead to the development of individuals with well-rounded characters.

Discipline and orderliness ensure a conducive environment for the development of the whole child. It is a habit or a way of training that promotes obedience and self-control for the purpose of bringing about steady growth and development. Discipline concerns with the establishment and maintenance of order and harmonious functioning in the home, school and in the larger society. The school principal as a matter of fact, has the responsibility to effectively maintain discipline and orderliness to the best of his ability and in accordance with the stated directives in order to create an atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning. Naturally, schools have reputation for high standards of discipline. Discipline helps the individual student to be well adjusted, happy and useful in the society. When discipline and orderliness is established and maintained in the school,

pushing, injury and brutality will be prevented. Hornby (2001) posited that discipline is a practice of training people to obey rules and orders and punishing them if they do not. Order presents a controlled state of affairs. Specifically, discipline and order results from training and leads children to develop socially desirable habits such as neatness, punctuality, obedience, honesty, industry etc.

Maintenance of discipline and order in Nigerian secondary schools today is very challenging. This is because the growing incidence of discipline problems in our secondary schools today is alarming and has become complicated that most teachers find it difficult to maintain and keep their classes in order. Discipline problems in schools abound. There are incidents of absenteeism, fighting, lateness, truancy, sleeping in the class, stealing, cheating in examinations, chewing gums/eating in the class, quarrelling, wandering about, noise making, lying, bullying, dressing shabbily, mishandling of school property and other issues reflecting unsatisfactory state of our institutions.

Unfortunately, much has been said and done by the general public, teachers, religious bodies, voluntary organizations, parents and the government to reduce the discipline problems, for instance the War Against Indiscipline (WAI). Yet, the discipline problem persisted. It is even taking a new dimension in thuggery, vandalism, senseless destruction of school property, gang fighting, drug abuse, unrest, smoking, armed robbery, students/ parents beating up teachers when they punish them/their children, secret cult and so on. It should be pointed out that all segments of the Nigerian society, in a way share in causing discipline problems in the schools. For instance,

Some parents have lost moral and social credibility before their children. Most parents' negative attitudes such as interfering unnecessarily in the disciplinary measures taken by the school against their erring children, divorce, persistent fighting before the children, who are mere reflections of the negative behaviour and parents' irresponsibility at home such as leaving their parental responsibility to their children in the hands of house helps, who may not in themselves be disciplined. This negative exposure influences the thoughts and actions of the children and resultantly, they carry the poor attitudes to school and into the larger society.

The society we have today is hostile. The children grow within this society that its hostile nature impact so much on their mode of thinking and actions. Pathetically, corporal punishment, which used to be one of the weapons for enduring discipline in schools, is no longer enforced. Teachers therefore were left with mere sermonizing. By the level of indiscipline and disorder in the schools today, mere preaching without the cane cannot make any appeal for change in the lives of Nigerian secondary school children. Something urgently needed to be done.

The school as an extension of home generate discipline problems, for instance, both the principals' and teachers' leadership styles can affect the level of discipline in the school. If students lack adequate flow of information from the school authority, and are not permitted to take part in decision-making or have knowledge of the objectives of some school policies and philosophy, the gap in information in most cases, may result in discipline problems like rioting in the school, truancy, poor teacher-student relationship etc. Also, if the principals and the teachers would want their students to be disciplined they themselves must be disciplined and live by example. No matter how well a principal can lead without disciplined attitude he is bound to fail. It should also be noted that teachers' devotion and quality determines the school effectiveness. The teachers are the hub of any educational systems. In other words, the school cannot be better than their teachers. On this, Paln & Bodunde (1999) observed that the teacher is supposed to mould or build a character especially of the young ones in his custody, but it is not exactly obtainable today. Most teachers lack sincerity and devotion to duty; respect for the authority and thus renders the school administration ineffective; are professionally incompetent that they are unable to motivate and keep students busy in their role as learners; and are not worthy role models to the students because of their moral laxity and so unable to control discipline problems arising from students own personality or learning abilities on time. The worst is that some teachers are unduly familiar with some students and wouldn't want to hurt their feelings thereby creating complicating problems in the school. This is a worry because no meaningful national development can be achieved under this condition in our secondary schools since the set educational goals, inter aria is to prepare the individual for useful living within the society (FGN, 2004).

Based on these discipline problems currently hampering achievement of secondary education set goals and also impeding effective school administration, it therefore became very necessary to identify the causes of the discipline problems and the strategies that could be adopted by principals to effectively maintain discipline and ensure harmonious functioning of the child is established for national growth and development.

Problem of the Study

The purpose of discipline in schools is to promote learning. Schools are established and maintained so that students will learn. In order to learn, a certain standards of behaviour must be in place. Unfortunately, students today, love luxury. They show disrespect for parents, principals and teachers; while away their times by doing all sorts of disrespectful and dangerous activities, contradict their parents, practice examination malpractice because (like the students would say) we do not have enough time to read. Sometimes, they harass their teachers and other students when they refuse to help them pass their examinations; and out in the society they become useless. The *raison d'être* being that while in the school discipline problems existed. It should be noted that where discipline problem exists, learning rarely occurs because limited teaching occurred. Today the society is in disarray and students fail their examinations in hundreds as evidenced by the 2009 SSCE result. This result was worrisome and education stakeholders point accusing fingers in several directions painfully. Although accusing fingers point to the direction of poor learning facilities, inadequate number of qualified teachers, poor students' preparation, location of the schools, poor school administration, students' attitude to learning and so forth, yet, nobody thought it wise to look in the direction of the students' standards of behaviour/discipline, which is an imperative to effective learning.

Today, discipline problem is common in secondary schools; hence the call on other education stakeholders to help save this important level of education from imminent collapse due to indiscipline acts. In the words of (Ifulennu, 2007 and Obiozor, 2009), learning could be disrupted by discipline problems. Obviously, under this condition, one may be tempted to ask: Can the students learn under such unhealthy environment? Can the predetermined goals of secondary education be achieved? Can the school administrator optimally deliver his administrative services in the school? etc. The simplest answer to these questions is no. No wonder Nwankwo (2006) observed that there has been problem of achieving the national educational goals at all

levels in Nigerian educational system. Something must be done otherwise crises may erupt.

Therefore, thinking in that direction, the study sought to identify the factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and orderliness in secondary schools and the strategies principals could adopt to maintain discipline and order in the schools so that effective learning can take place in schools as well as help students to function well as good citizens in order to make Nigeria grow and develop.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated the strategies for maintaining discipline and orderliness in secondary schools in Awka Education Zones of Anambra State. It specifically x-rayed:

1. The factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in secondary schools.
2. It also sought the possible strategies principals could use to maintain discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What factors impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What possible strategies can principals adopt to maintain discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Null Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the identified strategies for maintaining discipline and order in secondary schools in the state.

Methodology

The study utilized the survey research design. According to Marczyk, Dematteo & Festinger (2005), this is a type of design in which the investigator gathers data from a large number of people on their behaviours, attitudes and opinions. This design was appropriate for the study because it

involved collecting data from principals in order to determine the strategies for maintaining discipline and order in secondary schools in the state.

The population studied was all the principals and teachers in government owned secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. Data obtained from Anambra State Post Primary Education Board on 23rd September, 2008 reveals that there are 68 secondary school principals and 2085 teachers in Awka education zone of the state. All the principals were used in the study because the population is small and can conveniently be studied by the researchers, while 20% (417) of the teachers' population was sampled.

An instrument, Strategies for Maintaining Discipline and Order (SMDO), designed by the researchers was used to collect the data. The questionnaire has three sections namely; section A, which contains respondents Biodata. Section B, which consisted of 10 items on the factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order and section C that consisted of 13 items on the strategies for maintaining discipline and order in the secondary schools. The instrument was structured on a 4-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with rating scale of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. A score of 2.50 and above was accepted as agree while any score below 2.50 was considered as disagree by the respondents.

Two experts in the department of Education Foundations of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, validated the instrument. They offered useful suggestions and modified some items of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. The researcher administered the same instrument on 10 principals and 20 teachers of Delta State secondary schools at an interval of four weeks. The two sets of scores were computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula. The reliability co-efficient obtained was 0.83, which indicated a correlation between the responses obtained during the two periods of administration. It was therefore, considered high enough for the study.

The instrument was personally administered on the 485 respondents in their respective schools. A hundred percent return of the instrument was made. The data collected were analyzed using means and Standard Deviation. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 significant level.

Results

Table 1 showed that both the principals and teachers' mean rating for all the items was 2.50 and above. This is an indication that all the identified items are possible factors that impede effective maintenance of order and discipline in secondary schools in Anambra State.

As shown in Table 2, both the principals and teachers' Mean Ratings (MR) for each of the 13 items range between 2.50 and 3.90. The MR range suggests that both the principals and teachers unanimously agree that the 13 items listed are strategies for maintaining discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Data on Table 3 showed that the calculated t-value of 1.23 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with 485 degree of freedom at 0.05 significant level. This implies that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of both principals and teachers in Awka education zones of Anambra State on the possible factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in the state. The null hypothesis was therefore, accepted.

The t-test analysis on Table 4 also, revealed that the H_0 of the study was accepted since the obtained t-value of 1.47 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with 485 degree of freedom at 0.05 levels of significant. In other words, both the principals and teachers are in agreement in their approval of the 13 items as dependable strategies for maintaining discipline and order in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion

The result of this study has showcased some of the factors that impede effective maintenance of order and discipline in secondary schools. It also revealed some strategies principals would use in maintaining discipline in secondary schools in Anambra State.

In the analysis of data based on research question one as shown on Table 1, it was observed that all the itemized factors have mean ratings above 2.50. This shows that principals and teachers unanimously accepted them as factors that impede effective maintenance of order and discipline in the schools. These include; teachers and students lack materials for teaching and learning, most of the teachers lack knowledge of the teaching subject and are unable to recognize and protect the students' right and so on. This finding is not surprising considering the fact that almost all the principals visited are worried by the level of the discipline problems found in the schools. It is an

indication that they are responsive and alert to the social ill. This finding agrees with Offorion (2008) assertion that poor knowledge of the teaching subjects as well as inability to notice and protect the students' rights engenders discipline problems in schools. Okolo (2006) in his own opinion described discipline problems as a virus. It is everybody's problem.

The t-test analysis of the null hypothesis one presented on Table 3 confirmed the authenticity of this findings. Observation shows that teachers and the principals of Awka education zones do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in the schools. This is in congruent with Odawn (1999), who noted that where there are unconducive environment and lack of facilities, such situation could usher in acts of indiscipline and lawlessness among staff and students

The major findings for research question two was that the principals should among other strategies set good behaviour standards for the students as well as provide opportunity for constant interactions with the students in order to maintain discipline and order in secondary schools. The finding is in line with the opinion of Chieji (2006) that if schools should provide opportunity for constant interaction with students and set good behaviour standards for the students, effective discipline and order can be maintained in schools. Also, the study revealed that principals should facilitate parental involvement in the decision taking and teaching/learning processes as one of the strategies for maintaining discipline and orderliness in schools. The finding agrees with Ofojebe (2008), who noted that parents help in maintaining school discipline to a great extent. Evidently, the findings from the t-test analysis on Table 4 revealed that both principals and teachers do not differ significantly in their opinions on the strategies for maintaining discipline and order in secondary schools in the state.

It is the opinion of the writers that discipline problems in schools could be alleviated if principals could face discipline problems squarely and strive to excel in their management through quality service, leading by example, cleanliness and application of participatory decision-making pattern. Apparently, when principals are available in the school they would provide adequate supervision of the staff to ensure that note of lessons and other records are well done and kept and lessons delivered satisfactorily to the students. In this respect he moves around the school observing, encouraging, reprimanding and helping the staff members where they need help in the

management of the students. Principals should as much as possible stay close to the school in order to identify such discipline problems on time and determine what to do, identify needs of students, teachers, parents etc as well as make effort to promote staff welfare and empower them to ensure discipline and harmony, create and maintain good environmental climate that gives staff/students sense of belonging hence, promote staff commitment/high morale, high productivity and satisfaction, especially through the application of participatory decision making pattern. In the same vein, teachers should be committed to their duty and care of the students. This is because according to Odiba and Ejeh (2008) the teacher is responsible for pursuing the knowledge that is needed to change the behaviour of an individual learner within a given environment so as to make a profound contribution to the overall development of the environment.

Conclusion

In fact, discipline promotes learning, as well as helps the students to live and work with others harmoniously. It is therefore essential that principals should embrace the identified strategies to maintain a level of discipline and order, which will ensure effective teaching and learning, the well being and safety of the students under their care. It is hoped that if students imbibe proper regard for the rights and privileges of others while they are in the school, they may retain this throughout life.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is obvious that discipline problems are common in all the schools in view of the mean scores of the principals on the causes of discipline problems and the strategies to curb the discipline problems. Therefore it is recommended that:

- i. At home, parents should endeavour to respect and love each other dearly, work hard for the good of their home and set good examples for their children. Charity they say begins at home. This will help the children to adjust quickly to the school rules and regulations.
- ii. Government should consider posting military personnel to schools to help principals restore and maintain discipline and orderliness.
- iii. Principal should ensure effective form of supervision takes place in the school every time to ensure a quiet working atmosphere in the classrooms and prevent misconduct by the teachers and learners

- iv. Principals should be fair/impartial in handling disciplinary actions/problems and ensure they follow necessary procedures.
- v. Teaching is a position of trust, therefore, government should ensure only people of integrity are positioned to handle the students so as to set good example the students.
- vi. Principals and parents should be worthy models for these future generations.
- vii. Principals should establish good human relation with the students. Good human relation helps.
- viii. Principals should encourage parents to try and understand the need to educate their children at home properly and make them responsible for their actions.

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Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of principals and teachers responses on the possible factors that impede effective maintainance of discipline and order in secondary schools

	Factors	Principals(No=68)			Teachers (No=417)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	<i>Teachers and students lack of materials for teaching and learning</i>	2.92	0.53	Accept	2.50	1.33	Accept
2	Teachers poor knowledge of the teaching subjects	3.77	0.76	„	3.75	0.70	„
3	Inability to recognize and protect the child's right	3.50	0.88	„	3.77	0.72	„
4	Inability to respond to pressing needs of the child.	3.70	0.72	„	3.75	0.68	„
5	. Insufficient assignment to students	3.68	0.73	„	3.61	0.67	„
6	. Poor identification of tell tale signs of child abuse	3.01	0.48	„	2.89	0.56	„

	on time before it generates psychological problem						
7	Staff neglect of school rules	3.68	0.56	..	3.77	0.72	..
8	Use of unusual punishment to discipline a child.	3.68	0.56	..	3.77	0.72	..
9	Poor feeding	2.75	0.64	..	2.83	0.46	..
10	Keeping of bad friends.	2.96	0.84	..	2.91	0.42	..
	Grand Mean	3.26			3.28		

Table 3: t-test result on the Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on the possible factors that impede effective maintenance of discipline and order in Anambra State.

Source of variatio	No	X	SD	Df	To	Tc at 0.05	Sig. At 0.05
Principals	68	3.26	.59	483	1.23	1.96	Ho Accepted
Teachers	417	3.28	1.01				

Table 4: t-test analysis of the principals and teachers' Mean Ratings on the strategies to adopt in maintaining discipline and order

Source of variables	NO	X	SD	Df	To	Tc at 0.05	Sig. At 0.05
Principals	68	3.25	1.05	483	1.47	1.96	Ho Accepted
Teachers	417	3.29	.61				