



PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS AND INDISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ETIM EKPO L.G.A OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the psychosocial associated with indiscipline students in Etim Ekpo L.G.A of Akwa Ibom State. This was done by enrolling one hundred and sixty-seven (167) students with ages from 11 to 22 years and an average age of 14.51 years (SD = 4.56) in a descriptive cross-sectional design. Purposive sampling method was utilized to assess the main variables of interest in the study. Government secondary schools located in Etim Ekpo L.G.A served as the research area and in order to get data from participants with regards to factors responsible for indiscipline, standardized instrument measuring students, teachers and parents was utilized. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, means, standard deviation and percentages were employed to test the four hypotheses. Employing descriptive statistics, results confirmed the first hypothesis which stated that society's influence will contribute to indiscipline due to economic recession. In the same way, poor parental training and not being able to provide adequate facilities in the school system was confirmed to be sources of indiscipline in the second hypothesis; the third hypothesis which stated that bad role models in the entertainment, fashion, and political industry will contribute to the problem of indiscipline was confirmed; and the fourth hypothesis which stated that use of social media/phones will contribute to the problem of indiscipline was supported. Based on the findings, strategies to reduce indiscipline among secondary school students were proffered, while conclusions and implications for policy implementation were made.

Keywords: Student's indiscipline, parents and teachers, psychosocial variables, education, school guidance.

Introduction

Indiscipline as seen among secondary school students is now a source of worry for educators in Nigeria. In recent times, some youngsters are seen to be

disrespectful, stubborn and recalcitrant. This position has been so from time immemorial but may have probably gotten worse in recent times; hence, the

need to investigate deeply on the phenomenon all over again. Indiscipline among students as defined by Koutseline (2002) has to do with any student behavior which is at variance to the school's rules and regulations. Also, indiscipline as defined by Wango (2010), is the grooming of the mind and character directed towards producing self-control, organized behavior and tactfulness. Zubaidia (2009) cited in Dare *et al.* (2004) on their part established the fact that discipline connotes respect for laws as well as the maintenance of such laws and regulations through acceptable behaviour in terms of self-control, restraint and respect for oneself/others. Any behaviour at variance to the aforementioned standards can readily amount to indiscipline. This is probably why various schools around the globe are making concerted efforts to ensure that students are trained to be disciplined, dynamic and responsible citizens. This is why indiscipline is an issue that every educationist is battling to combat.

Basically, indiscipline among students has to do with an activity which negates the principles of decency and orderliness; incorporating acts such as malpractices, lateness, loitering during school hours, indecent or improper dressing, disrespectful to authorities, dishonesty, constituting nuisance, hooliganism, bullying and the rest – which directly or indirectly has a negative effect on students and students who are disciplined always perform very poorly. Others are truancy, drug abuse, gang behaviour,

verbal and physical assault, theft, riotious behavior etc. (Abayomi et al., 2022; Canter et al., 2004).

To resolve this problem, measures to tackle indiscipline and adopted by some school authorities such as corporal punishment, signing of undertaking by parents of concerned wayward students, manual labour, counseling, withdrawal of privileges, suspension, and in extreme cases, expulsion. Researchers have taken purposeful steps to understudy the impact of variables such as parents' socio-economic status, location, class size and student's age on discipline. In view of this, psychologists opine that physical punishments may worsen indiscipline among students as their bodies gets accustomed to such punishments. This may explains why youngsters that are not disciplined become aggressive or abusive parents later on in the future (Myers, 2003 cited in Curwin et al., 2004). A probable explanation of this is that punishment has a way of creating sense of low esteem and helplessness which may heighten the chance of them becoming aggressive and depressed, thereby creating a sense of helplessness (Curwin et al., 2004).

Some scholars have countered the use of corporal punishment as an effective form of discipline for erring youngsters and that in some cases, it may be counter-productive, causing more behavioural problems in its wake (UNICEF, 2010 cited in William, 2009). The quality of schools in Nigeria was relatively high



until the end of the civil war in January 1970. Thereafter, things began to take a downward trend. More so, teachers and parents were more intentional and lived up to their responsibility in most cases unlike what is obtainable now. This was consistent with one of the cardinal objectives of education based on the 2004 National Policy on Education (revised), which is to cultivate the right type of values and attitudes for the betterment of Nigeria. In view of the foregoing, urgent steps are needed to properly understand the dynamics and causes of indiscipline among young people so as to better equipped with what is needed to tackle indiscipline amongst students. Based on this, the study set out to find out factors responsible for indiscipline among students in order to provide workable solutions and a way forward in the educational system and to guide policy makers in the educational sector; which will eventually aid in curbing indiscipline behaviours that may be found among students in secondary schools within Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

In as much the subject of indiscipline is highly debated topic among scholars, the perception of students as well as teachers has not really been adequately considered in charting an effective strategic path to eliminate indiscipline. It was Onyije and Ojedapo (2010) who in their time were able to identify some factors that may cause indiscipline such as nonchalant attitude of government to education, parental factors and teachers' attitude to work. Amado and Freire (2009) also

described indiscipline as incidents of disruption that is capable of affecting social interaction. Similarly, Nyaga (2009) expounded on some disciplinary cases recorded in secondary schools. In all of these, scholars have not dwelt on student's perceptions and strategies to intervene on this social problem especially in Akwa Ibom State.

The problem of indiscipline with in schools has continued over time and there is no iota of doubt that student's indiscipline militates against effective teaching and learning in the school environment which may negatively affect the kind of products or people that are graduated to eith continue with the university education or sent out into the society as it were. Worse, still, some parent have not also done their best, but rather in some cases, have even abandoned the responsibility. Thus, researches that focus on indiscipline in order to capture suggestions ideal or improvement are pertinent (Shahzad, 2007). An investigation by the researcher shows that scanty studies indiscipline, especially in this region under study. This work therefore intends to close the research gap by beaming the searchlight on the psychosocial factors that may impact on students' indiscipline in Etim Ekpo LGA of Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is hinged on exploring student's perceptions regarding the cause and ways that can be adopted to minimize and possibly eradicate indiscipline in Etim

Ekpo LGA of Akwa Ibom State. However, the specific objectives of this study are:

1. To explore students' perception (society's influence) as a probable cause of indiscipline.
2. To examine poor parental training and lack of facilities/equipment in the school as major sources of indiscipline in secondary schools.
3. To assess bad role models in the entertainment, fashion, and political industry's major sources of indiscipline in secondary schools.
4. To investigate the use of social media/phones as major sources of indiscipline in secondary schools.

Literature Review

According to Mohapi (2013), indiscipline among students is a major school concern which concerns mainly parents, scholars, educators and politicians. Onyeama-Obioma (2023) sampled 125 senior school students and showed that achievement motivation and self-efficacy were significant on student's attitude towards cheating. In their study, Matsayi *et al.* (2020) after recruiting 436 JSS II students, investigated perception of psychosocial factors in the classroom environment and found high level of positive relationship between the psychosocial factors and students' performance

School-Based Sources of Indiscipline

Considering this, factors that can be deduced from the school environment

include late coming to work by teachers and students, indecent or dirty uniforms, use of psychoactive substances, theft and bullying amongst others (Mohapi, 2007). While Yaghambe and Tshabangu (2013) have reported that the Education Act endorsed corporal punishment as a mechanism to curb address students' acts of indiscipline. This was in line with the position of Adams (2003).

Environment-Based Sources of Indiscipline

The theory of nature vs. nurture has a lot to contribute in this case. This is because environmental influence is key in the determination of behavior (Soet, 2005). Curwin and Mendler (2000) in their study discovered that children who had about 18,000 violent television watch hour, become aggressive at their adolescent age. Hence, for principals to succeed in this fight, proven effective strategies that are legal have to be deployed managing pupil discipline, they have to use effective methods (Anyango *et al.*, 2013).

Effectiveness of the Strategies to Mediate Indiscipline

One of the ways of reducing indiscipline among students is by getting them involved in the evaluation process as well as in the instruction program or in drafting the rules and regulations guiding the schools. Another way is by getting them being involved in planning the curriculum, in implementation of the curriculum and in controlling students' behavior (Anyango *et al.*, 2013). In view of this, the present study will investigate



the impact of psychosocial factors and indiscipline among secondary school students in Etim Ekpo L.G.A of Akwa Ibom State.

Hypotheses

1. Perceptions of teachers and students (society's influence) will be major sources of indiscipline in Etim Ekpo secondary schools.
2. Poor parental training and lack of facilities/equipment in the school will be a source of indiscipline in Etim Ekpo secondary schools.
3. Bad role models in the entertainment, fashion, and political industry will be sources of indiscipline in Etim Ekpo secondary schools.
4. The use of social media/phones as will be a source of indiscipline in Etim Ekpo secondary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

The research adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design in order to respond to the research questions and hypotheses, through gathering information from respondents on their opinions on possible factors that can lead to indiscipline among students.

Study Area

Etim Ekpo was selected as the area of study in this research. Hence, the study was conducted in Etim Ekpo LGA of Akwa Ibom State; comprising of seventy villages that are categorized into five clans: Utu, Obong, Ikono, Uruk and Utu Annang. The population of residents of

Etim Ekpo is over 105, 418 people (National population census NPC, 2006). The LGA was selected on the basis that no such study has been conducted within the location as regarding indiscipline among students in Etim Ekpo LGA, thereby being capable of providing a miniature prevention strategy in Akwa Ibom State.

Study Population

The population in this study has one or more features that are common and may be of interest related to the subject matter: indiscipline. And virtually all secondary schools in Etim Ekpo LGA served as participants for this study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling was utilized to select the secondary school students that were recruited in this study. Descriptive results indicated that out of the one hundred and sixty-seven (167) participants recruited in this study, age of participants ranged from 11 to 22 years, with a mean age of 14.51 years and SD of 4.56. Their gender analysis revealed that 64 (38.3%) were male, while 103 (61.7%) were female. Participant's educational level indicated that 67 (40.1%) were SS1 students, 85 (50.9%) were SS2 students, 11 (6.6%) were SS3 students and 4 (2.4%) were members of staff.

Instruments for Data Collection

In order to measure indiscipline, Inventory for Students and Teachers and Parents as developed by Kiwale (2017) was adopted as the instrument for this study. Some questions that made up the questionnaire are: "Can you list three

things that you consider to be the source of indiscipline in many schools?”, “Can you please explain why you think these are the key sources?”, and “What three main strategies that schools use to minimize indiscipline?” To guarantee the validity of the inventory (Orodho, 2003), the designed questionnaires for student and teachers together was subjected to validity test in a pilot study so as to guarantee the reliability and usability of the instrument. The inventory was then pre-tested by and 20 students and 8 teachers, of which result reveals that the Cronbach’s alpha of the instrument is 0.79 which indicates adequate internal consistence was obtained for the main study.

Method of Data Analysis

The first step taken by the researchers in this was study was to obtain permission from relevant school authorities and then from potential participants after creating adequate rapport with them in Etim Ekpo LGA. The researchers then move forward to give students the questionnaires to fill. Once they were filled, they were retrieved for data analysis via descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS Statistical software, v. 23.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health, while informed consent of the participants was obtained from the participants before embarking on the study. In addition, participants were duly informed and they participate without any form of coercion.

Results

Table 1: Psychosocial factors and indiscipline among students in Etim Ekpo L.G.A

Sources of Indiscipline Secondary Schools	N	%
Inadequate facilities in the school environment	18	10.8
Society’s influence contributes to indiscipline due to economic recession	98	58.7
Society’s influence on indiscipline due to bad role models	13	7.8
Poor parental training	18	10.8
The use of social media/phones	11	6.6
Poverty/Hardship	9	5.4

In the process of the survey, it was observed that a lot factors were outlined as major discipline problems or sources of indiscipline in secondary schools within Etim Ekpo L.G.A. Top on the list was “society’s influence contributes to

indiscipline due to economic recession” accounting for 58.7% response. In view of this, the first hypothesis which stated that society’s influence will be a major contributory factor to indiscipline due to economic recession among Etim Ekpo



secondary school respondents was confirmed.

Further analysis indicated that “poor parental training” and “not providing adequate facilities/equipment in the school” accounted for 10.8% of indiscipline among students. This outcome addressed and confirmed the second hypothesis which stated that poor parental training and “not providing adequate facilities/equipment in the school” will be a contributory factor of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents. Another interesting finding was that ‘bad role models’ found in the entertainment, fashion, and

political industry also contributes to the problem of indiscipline accounting for 7.8%. Although, this percentage is not overwhelming; however, we can accept the third hypothesis which stated that bad role models’ found in the entertainment, fashion, and political industry will be a sources of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents. Finally, the use of social media/phones was assessed and the outcome accounted for 6.6% cause of indiscipline among students. This confirms the fourth hypothesis which stated that the use of social media/phones will contribute to the problem of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents.

Table 2

What strategies are in place to reduce indiscipline among students in Etim Ekpo LGA Strategies in place to mediate or reduce indiscipline	N	%
Counseling students mandatorily once a year	10	6.0
Engage students with skill acquisition programs	23	13.8
Constructive-active teaching process	46	27.5
Rewarding disciplined students to spur undisciplined ones positively	56	33.5
Mentoring undisciplined students who will later mentor others	32	19.2

Furthermore, several opinions were raised regarding the strategies to put in place in order to reduce indiscipline among secondary school students. Out of the 167 participants, 56 (33.5%) opined

that “rewarding disciplines students to spur undisciplined ones positively” as the highest factor. This was followed by “constructive-active teaching process” with 46 (27.5%) respondents. Mentoring

undisciplined students was another students with skill acquisition programs accounting for 19.2% and engaging accounting for 13.8 percent.

Table 3

How effective are strategies in reducing indiscipline among students in Etim Ekpo LGA?

How effective are strategies in reducing indiscipline among student	N	%
Very effective in improving academic performance	31	18.6
Effective in reducing cases of indiscipline	100	59.9
Very effective in improving student’s attendance	15	9.0
Effective in wearing of proper uniform	21	12.6

Finally, the stated strategies were reviewed on how effective they were in reducing indiscipline among participants. Findings indicated that strategies were being very effective in dispensing corrective punishments to cases of indiscipline by students or staff which accounted for 59.9% (N =100). Second is being very effective in improving academic performance (N = 31, 18.6%); followed by very effective in wearing proper uniform (N = 21, 12.6%) and lastly, improving student’s attendance to class/lectures (N=15, 9.0%).

Discussion

The study investigated the factors responsible for indiscipline among secondary school students in Etim Ekpo L.G.A. The first hypothesis which stated that society’s influence will contribute to indiscipline due to economic recession among Etim Ekpo secondary school

respondents was confirmed. This finding was consistent with Onyeama-Obioma (2023) who revealed that achievement motivation and self-efficacy that are part of society’s influence were necessary on student’s attitude towards cheating which is an act of indiscipline. An explanation of this finding is that young people learn a lot from imitation and modelling especially when they do not have the resources needed and proper guidance; of which this could be a major source of indiscipline.

The second hypothesis which stated that poor parental training and “not providing adequate facilities/equipment in the school” will be major sources of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents was also confirmed. This finding is in consonance with the study of Matsayi *et al.* (2020) who investigated perception of psychosocial



factors in the classroom environment and found high level of meaningful relation existing between psychosocial factors and students' performance (both good and bad). The possible explanation of this finding is that young people are highly impressionable and suggestible and may not hesitate to compromise if they are not presented with facilities and resources that they need to thrive.

The third hypothesis which stated that bad role models' found in the entertainment, fashion, and political industry will be major sources of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents was accepted. This finding resonates with the work of Curwin and Mendler (2000) who in their study, asserted that children who viewed about 18,000 acts of television violence may be more aggressive and anti-social by the time they become adolescents than those who have viewed less. An explanation of this finding is that celebrities and the media has a significant impact on the lives of youths and the image fashion and people in power leaves in youths imagination may be so profound to the extent that they may go to any length in order to be like them even if it will involve breaking societal rules and regulations.

The fourth hypothesis which stated that the use of social media/phones will contribute to the problem of indiscipline among Etim Ekpo secondary school respondents was accepted. This finding is in line with the work of Onyeama-Obioma (2023) who amongst other

things stresses that, children has a 'spongy' kind of memory that soaks in and retains whatever it comes in contact with– which is tantamount to what they see on social media or in their Internet connected phone devices. More so, the indiscipline seen among the students may be argued to reflect the ongoing corruption and lawlessness in the society.

Policy Implications

From the study findings, it is evident and clear that indiscipline among students is a menace bedeviling the educational sector of Nigeria. One thing was clear though, that the hard times or poverty, poor parental training and bad government policies such as inadequate funding of the educational sector coupled with bad role models and use of social media/phones were predicting factors of indiscipline. Hence, concerted effort by all stakeholders is urgently needed for this ugly trend to be upturned.

Limitations of the Study

The following challenges were observed and served as limitations:

1. The study was also limited by its descriptive nature because causality cannot be ascertained on student's indiscipline.
2. Secondly, results may be prone to bias due to the type of measures employed.
3. Thirdly, the possibility of a socially desirable response exists especially as data was collected through face-to-face approach.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. A similar study should be conducted in Uyo L.G.A of Akwa Ibom state in order to get compare the areas in terms of rural and urban demographic characteristics.
2. Future studies should carry out longitudinal studies so as to ascertain the long term factors responsible for indiscipline among students.
3. More members of staff should be recruited in future studies to understand more from the angle or dimension of staff rather than just the students who were 163 out of the total 167 participants.
4. Other correlating variables such as personality type (introvert or extrovert) and family type (monogamous or polygamous home) should be added to expand the frontiers of factors responsible for indiscipline among students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were outline based on the findings of the study:

1. Disciplined students should be rewarded in order to spur undisciplined ones to take a new leave and reexamine their behavior.
2. Adopting the constructive-active teaching process were students are taught to construct learning and be active learners rather than being passive learners.
3. The process of mentoring students should be re-established in the educational sector.
4. And finally, engaging students in skill acquisition programs accounting such as hair making, shoe making, software training etc. Such program will help to make these students to be productive and will give them less opportunity or avenue to misbehave.

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