

## **THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HOME TOWARDS STUDENTS' INDISCIPLINE**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to find out the types and the home background of a child is responsible for the cause of indiscipline in some selected secondary schools in Rivers State. Applying survey method through questionnaires, it used samples from some secondary schools students in Rivers State. This study, as much as possible has revealed that such factors as parent's lapse in their responsibilities towards their children contributes to indiscipline and poor performance in schools. The theory of classroom discipline and reinforcement by Skinner was adopted in this work. The instrument used was questionnaire constructed by the investigators. Items on the questionnaire were designed to elicit information on the likely determinants of cases of students' indiscipline and the role of the home (parents) of the students. The results were calculated in percentages. The findings indicated that certain parental factors contribute to students' indiscipline. And these factors have adverse social and psychological effect on academic growth of the students. Based on the findings, suggestions are made to the appropriate agencies dealing with students' discipline and academic growth. It is hoped that these suggestions will check the existence of indiscipline in schools which may be on stride to ornament good academic performance by students.

### **Introduction**

In recent times, indiscipline among Post-Primary School students has provoked comments and concern in educational institutions in the wider society. The issue of indiscipline is becoming an increasingly frequent topic of discussion in an educational system, as well as social circles. There seems to be a growing body of opinion in favour of devoting more time and effort in the nation schools to help students to achieve greater understanding and awareness of the moral values of our society. Hence, when people talk of lack of discipline in our schools they immediately attribute it to the declining standard of social norms among school students.

Indiscipline has however continued to be a problem in our schools for the past ten (10) to fifteen (15) years according to Gbuhe (1984). But the Federal Government has not lost sight of this fact. This is evident in the present policy in which indiscipline has been viewed from a totally new dimension. This time, not schools but the whole system has been their focus. This led to the launching of “War Against Indiscipline” (WAI), on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1984. This has given the schools an added responsibility of not only seeing that children imbibe the principles of the ethics of society but “to be an agent of socialization to the society at large”, Asuka (1999, p.74).

It has been suggested that lack of moral development among school children has been responsible for deviant behaviour in our school setting, Fafunwa (1982). Others have argued that for some time now, the main emphasis in our educational system has been the intellectual development while moral education has been ignored nearly out rightly. As a result, students in recent years have lapsed into various forms of indiscipline which invariably has affected their academic performance, Wanton (1998). Furthermore, indiscipline has been so pervasive among children nowadays that it seems to be a nation-wide problem if not worldwide. Different authors who have written on the incidents of indiscipline among children in schools identify various forms, causes and its adverse effect on the lives of children. Conferences have also been organized on school discipline, with aims of proposing solutions to the problem of indiscipline.

Speaking to the principals’ conference on discipline and motivation in school held in 1977, General Obasanjo lamented the seriousness of cases of indiscipline in our schools. He regretted the unsatisfactory standard of discipline in our schools. In fact, he mentioned how it has become such a serious national issue that he brands it a “*National Emergency*” cited at independent monitor (1987). He urged the participants to deliberate on the issue with the aim of finding lasting solutions to the problem of indiscipline in our institution of learning and the society at large.

### **The Contribution of the Home towards Students’ Indiscipline**

Research has shown that the home has a log of influence on the upbringing of children. The home background of children varies in many respects. They vary culturally, in their religious indications, socio-economically etc. The behaviour displayed by parents in their marriage and their dealings with fellow human beings also influence children’s behaviour. According to Bowlby (1992, 32) and Burf (1987, 49), the major factors responsible for the delinquency of secondary school students is family conflict”. This according to him includes broken homes and poverty. They stated that “if students are made to fee persistently stupid, bad and ugly at home, they will not have hopes for themselves as they grow and socialize with other school, the resultant effect is an act of such student”.

When societies were very simple, education of the young ones was handling by parents and adult relations without any form of specialization. The home is the first external world which shapes the behaviour of the child.

The social character of human condition usually begins with the mother-child relationship. It is the earliest and perhaps the most basic of all human relationship. Psychologist has found some effect of home influence on the behaviour of the child. Neurotic parents are often directly responsible for similar traits found in their children. Children who are rejected by their parents are very likely to be aggressive, disrespectful, quarrelsome, rebellious or untruthful. According to Balogun (1981), who found out that in Nigeria, and everywhere in the world, the function of the home is to lay the foundation on which child is to live, they reiterated that “thus foundation comprises the moral and social economic responsibilities as well as spiritual, cultural and intellectual values of society.

But Lovel (1979) tried to explain that “in homes where there has been over protection of children, in harmonious relationship and defective authority. The resultant effect is maladjustment to school regulations among such students at secondary school and eventually, they result to acts of indiscipline. The home is thus important agency of learning because the education of the child starts from the home before it extends to the school and the world at large. Therefore, it is necessary to inculcate good (disciplined) behaviour in the child. According to Okafor (1981, p.49), “the most important period of man’s education is that of the early years of his development when his mind is tender and flexible. And the Holy Bible say (Proverbs 22:6) “train up a child in the way he should go and when he grows up, he will not depart from it”.

This saying is true since various studies have shown that “children who grow up in homes where their parents fight and quarrel themselves always, and homes where prostitution is the order of the day, grows up to be undisciplined and lawless. Therefore, it affects their study life and academic performance in school” (Anthony et al. 2000, p.22). Since the home is the child’s first and closest social environment where the child receives his earliest education, Taylor (1985), view that “it is assumed that what educates deeply is the immediate environment of the child”. Because parents are the first teacher and have to provide the child with comfort, security, and support to enable him grow into a socially and psychologically balanced individual. Parents should present themselves as an appropriate model for the children to follow and also to teach them acceptable ways of the society. In essence, if the family does not play its part very well, it can hinder the child’s learning behaviour and academic performance.

## **Basic Causes of Indiscipline among Secondary School Students**

The phenomenon of students' indiscipline on the academic performance of secondary school can be caused by a lot of other factors to include the psychological aspect of the life of secondary school students and other external factors. According to Amirinze (1995, p.45) "Factors that cause students to exhibit undesirable behaviours lie around maladjustment i.e. mental, emotional, social and other forms of disorganization of child's normal life and development which arise from the following factors:-

### **Peer group/neighbourhood factor**

Apart from the home and school, much of what the child learns and becomes is as a result of the interaction he has with member of his age grade. The attitude he puts up, the style of dressing he takes to and other aspect of his/her life especially as students, are shaped by peer influence Sutherland and Gressway (1990) found out that "individual learn bad behaviour from other within intimate peers based on sub-culture to which they are exposed to". A child's behaviour or motives is based not just on his own basic need and drives as Maslow (1954) would want us to believe but also on the stimulation provided by his peer in the classroom, thus in First Corinthians (15:33) the Bible, says that evil communications corrupt good manner. In other words, if a reserved and disciplined child follows a child that is unreserved and undisciplined, he will become unreserved and undisciplined before he knows it. According to Matza (1960, p.79), "these children conform to group norms in order to retain their identity and status i.e. to feel among.

### **Teacher's behaviour as a factor**

According to Ukeje (1960, p. 97), "The teacher occupies a very important position in the educational system. For this reason, his utterances, actions, leadership style, knowledge of the subject he teaches and share in teaching are considered as important factors having implication for student learning. Studies show that teacher's personality and expectations of a student can promote or inhibit his learning behaviours. According to Wrightsons (1987, p. 114), "a teacher's personality influences the emotional and social climate in the classroom", there are many teachers in some schools who are poorly trained or incompetent and psychological ill-suited to working with young people, or who are overly concerned with personal and professional self-interest. Bassert (1979, p.76) says that "effective classroom management depends on the teacher's personality." He believes that positive personality trait will lead to effectiveness in controlling the class. Personality does not mean the physical look or build of the teacher but rather his projection of his social self.

Sheffield (1984) pointed out that most of the teachers liked by students were largely student oriented i.e. those who respect, care for and consider students

as being important. Hanson (1994) found that the teacher's behaviour and attitude towards students and teaching are sometimes considered to be more important than methods and techniques. Blount and Klausmier (1988) confirm that a teacher who is a dictator creates an interesting classroom climate which is characterized by absence of students' initiative participation and consequent failure to be maximally productive. On the other hand, the democratic teacher induces a sense of involvement and psychological ownership in students and is the best tool in maintenance of good classroom discipline.

### **The Social – Economic and other Factors**

The socio-economic status of parent has been found to have profound influence on the behaviour and education of their children. A child from low socio-economic status homes tends to be adversely affected in their education pursuits. They may not go to school always due to financial limitations and in this way they lose interest in their studies and more other things while others are in school. According to Green (1986, p.24) "The socio-economic factor include increasing disorganization of social and family integration and cohesiveness arising from economic downturn, inflection, unemployment, child labour and the dehumanization of the dignity of human life", Lippitt and White (1993) further reiterated that these factors make the role of the parents as the standard. If the behaviour and controlling authority in the home diminish, the child goes his/her way to look for a way of survival either by stealing or prostituting. And those from rich and enlightened homes where there is enough space and objects of simulation which can be used to be the education advantage of children tend to become proud, arrogant, pompous and feel nobody even the teachers have the right to address them the way they want, thereby they thwart school orders and behave the way they want. The above mentioned situation no doubt can hinder the child's academic performance.

### **I.Q and Genetic Factor**

Research findings and social statistics show that incidents of indiscipline occur more in dull sub-normal and slow learning children, as stated by Mecandes (1983, p.13), "intellectual dullness and backwardness in the school subjects could lead to students indiscipline thereby affecting academic achievement of secondary school students", This is further heightened when Caspari (1976, p.15) , said "that severe learning disabilities". This is because the conflicts that they cause prevent them from concentrating on their work. The origin of such conflicts is sometimes genetically inherited. Anthony et al (2000, p.29) pointed out that "genetic origin and connections cause indiscipline and anti-social behaviour in the lives of individuals" the genetic origin they said "is referred to as psychopaths: such persons do not have a properly developed conscience and they are usually ruthless and inconsiderate with a diminished sense of responsibility. They are sadistic even as

children”. According to Richardson (1982) genetic factors could also include physiological aspects of the student’s life when he said that “between the ages of about seven and twelve, the child will be relating himself to the society by learning to do the things his parents, teacher and peer groups do. It is during the secondary school years that he is striving to discover his own separateness and uniqueness as a person by doing what he wants to do.

Finally, Wiegert (1997, p.41) in his study of the adolescent noted that “the adolescents is a problematic stage in one’s life circles and the reason for this societal/school expectation of passing examination etc, result in frustration and discontent which leads to acts of indiscipline and further resulted in poor academic performance.

### **Research Question:**

How does the home contribute to students’ indiscipline in secondary school?

Statement 18-22 were used to test this question, the results are shown in the table below:

**Table 4**

S/N	Statement	Yes	Percentage (%)	No	Percentage (%)	Total	Percentage (%)
18	Parent being divorced	105	70	45	30	150	100
19	Parental negligence on the education of their children	55	37	95	63	150	100
20	Parent influence on the student’s choice of subject	90	60	60	10	150	100
21	No fluent rapport with parents	43	29	107	71	150	100
22	Allow their children/wards stay out of school for no reason	66	44	84	56	150	100

Statement 18 in the above table indicates that 70 percent of the students responded positively while 30 percent of the students responded negatively.

Statement 19 in the above table indicates that 37 percent of the students responded positively while 63 percent of the students responded negatively.

Statement 21 in the above table indicates that 29 percent of the students responded positively while 71 percent of the students responded negatively.

Statement 22 in the above table indicates that 44 percent of the students responded positively while 56 of the students responded negatively.

From the analysis of data in table 4, we can confirm the following as the way they contribute to students' indiscipline in secondary school:

- (a) Parents being divorced
- (b) Parental influence on the student's choice of subject

The home backgrounds of children vary in many respects. They vary culturally, in their religious indications, socio-economically etc. The behaviour displayed by parents in their marriage and their dealings with fellow human beings also influence children's behaviour. This is evident in the opinion of Bowlby (1992, p.32) and Burt (1987, p.49), when he said "the major factors responsible for the delinquency of secondary school students is family conflicts". This according to him includes broken homes and poverty. They stated that "if students are made to feel persistently stupid, bad and ugly at home, they will not socialize with others in school. The resultant effect is an act of such student.

### **Summary of the Analysis**

The responses of the survey as observed in the tables indicate that most students who filled the questionnaire were involved in one act of indiscipline or another. The teachers' response testifies to this also. Students were each either guilty of one offence or the other. There was none of the acts of indiscipline listed out in the questionnaires that at least, a student was not involved in, these ranged from breaking bounds, drinking alcohol, fighting, quarreling, truancy and cheating in examination hall, which are all against school rules and regulations.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From the findings within the limitation of this study, the following areas have been identified as the causes and types of indiscipline and bad behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

- (1) Poor administration
- (2) Lack of basic teaching facilities
- (3) Bad Association
- (4) Parental laxity
- (5) Unqualified teaching staff
- (6) Fighting on regular basis
- (7) Disobedient to their seniors at school
- (8) Being rude to their teachers
- (9) Cheating in examination hall

- (10) Smoking India hemp and practicing prostitution
- (11) Lack of supervision
- (12) No disciplinary measure
- (13) Parent being divorced and
- (14) Parent influence on the student's choice of subject

Therefore, these areas mentioned above are summarized under these factors

- (i) Parental factor
- (ii) School management/teachers' factor
- Students' attitudes to discipline and learning factor

### **Parent Factors Contributing to Indiscipline among Students**

One of the major problems facing the school however is parent non-attendance regarding the progress of their children in school academically or character wise. Some children are delinquent because of "maternal deprivation". The present unbecoming attitude of some students in areas of indiscipline is regarded by parents as a manifestation of the inability of the school to control the behaviour of students. But, unknowingly parents share in the blame of their children who are students. This is because, parents appear to have abdicated their responsibility towards their children and tend to look on school as glorified baby-sitting agencies.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this research study, the following conclusion was drawn; that teachers in secondary schools are aware of the academic performance problems bothering their students. From the responses to the questionnaire, the research would conclude that:

1. The six (6) selected secondary schools in Rivers State which were used for this study believe that, poor administration, bad association from among youths influence academic performance.
2. Lack of basic teaching facilities, unqualified teaching staff.
3. Bad behaviour such as; destroying school property, smoking Indian hemp, practicing prostitution, fighting on regular basis, disobedient to their seniors at school and being rude to their teachers. All these are areas where indiscipline behaviour is manifested by students and they influence their academic performance negatively.

The findings of this study also have its education implication in the following areas:

1. Lack of adequate financial upkeep can demoralize students, as it's the popular sample opinion indicated in student's responses. Invariably, apart from stealing, or keeping friends of the opposite sex, student academic performance could be negatively affected.



2. The tendency of parents to send their children on errands while lessons are in sessions is detrimental to their good academic performance. This happens mostly to students who come to school from their homes. This also places students in a fix because they cannot refuse to go on errands for their parents. At this time, they are forgoing their studies. This behaviour on the part of some parents indicate that, they do not understand the school system and that missing lessons could have a negative effect on their children academic performance.
3. The fact that students absent themselves from school at the beginning of a term amounts to improper preparations on the part of the school authority for the immediate start of studies, they tend to keep students busy by making them cut grasses. This in turn keeps those who do not want to cut grass away from school. In as much as it is necessary to keep the school premises clean, it should be incorporated into the regular school programme and should go hand in hand with commencement of studies right from the start of a new term. If this is done, students will definitely return to school in a larger number at the beginning of a term.
4. Lack of punctuality by some principals and staff to morning devotion is a serious thing that will enhance unseriousness on the part of students. This is because a principal has the duty of spelling out the norms of behaviour in his school. This in effect means that the moral tone of the school depends on his/she being a model for other subordinates to emulate. He is supposed to be “a good commander that leads a good army”. If on the other hands, the principal is incompetent and cannot even keep to his own rules. This means he cannot also establish his authority among his students and staff. He is bound to meet with many difficulties in maintaining discipline in school. This can lead to a total breakdown of rules and regulation of the school and thereby results to poor academic record.
5. The scarcity of water in these areas has adverse effect on the behaviour of students. This is solely not of their own making or the principal’s per se. this amounts to lack of proper planning by the government to provide at least certain basic minimum facilities before the takeoff of school. Though, it has been a kind of gesture on the part of government in bringing education nearer to the people. But it all amounts to nothing when inadequate provision is made for the takeoff or continuance of such institutions. This has adverse effect on students studies since they definitely need these basic amenities e.g. water and dormitories to keep the teaching/learning situation in progress.
6. The idea of students absenting themselves from class because of uninteresting teaching methods is a real serious problem to tackle. These are related to lack of qualified teachers on one hand and lack of devotion to teaching on the other. This has many implications. One of such is that the teaching and learning process will be adversely impaired.
7. The idea of keeping students in the class for hours with boring poorly designed lessons or materials that cannot make use of their real interest, nor their actual capabilities, behaviour problems will emanate, students will either keep away from such lessons or they engage in disturbing the learning of other students in the class.

8. Bad teaching promotes cheating. If a child is given materials which is too difficult for him or if he has specific deficits that prevent his progress and cannot earn reinforcement in a legitimate manner obviously, cheating is likely to occur.

9. Finally children who are frequently absent from school show poor academic attainment and adjustment to school.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be alive to their obligations for up-bringing of their children
2. Parents should improve in their efforts to spend more time with their children so as to be able to correct them when they go wrong.
3. The school should be able to maintain a code of conduct which spells out clearly the moral tone of the school. This code of conduct should be effectively popularized amongst students and also implemented so that offenders could be squarely dealt with to serve as deterrents to others.
4. Furthermore, with the current handover of schools to private owners in Rivers and Bayelsa States, the Government and these agencies should jointly, in the interest of improving the quality of education provide adequate and qualified staff to all schools.
5. Through the school administrators, the government should make provision to improve the quality of teachers, through seminars, workshops and in-service schemes.
6. It is also necessary that both the government and private owners of schools enhance the status of the teachers as a deliberate policy to make teaching more attractive than any other job.
7. The government and proprietors should also endeavour to reduce the present rate of school fees to enable parents meet up their financial obligations to their children to enable them have a steady and regular studies throughout the term.
8. It is also suggested here that the government in conjunction with school proprietors, should provide hostel accommodations for all students in the area of this study. This should be accompanied with the provision of water to the school community. The government's current policy of phasing out boarding facilities does not augur well for a coherent and effective learning due to the distance of some students who have to walk to school.
9. Invariably also, I would suggest that accommodation be provided for teachers within the vicinity of the schools to enable them relate closely with students outside the classroom environment. This is likely to expose students' behaviour in a wider perspective to teachers. And this will help the teachers to know the students better. Thus, the teacher should be the major force and source of guidance to the children.
10. Finally, as part of disciplinary measures rewards or awards could be given to best well-behaved students at the end of every term.

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