

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND COMPLIANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS TOWARDS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY IN IBADAN NORTH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

One of the objectives of school discipline policy is to instill discipline among students. However, in-spite of the availability of this policy in various public secondary schools in Nigeria, there seems to be numerous cases of indiscipline among students and this has become a source of concern to all stakeholders in the education sector. In an attempt to proffer possible solutions to this unending challenge, the study investigated the influence of knowledge and attitude on compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was employed to collect the requisite data. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select 570 respondents out of 10,979 students (population) as the sample for the study. The instruments used for data collection were knowledge, attitude, compliance and school discipline policy questionnaire. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.78. The data collected were analyzed using statistical measures of Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings of the study showed that knowledge and compliance of school discipline policy among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State were significantly related ($r = 0.330$, $p < 0.05$). The study also revealed a significant relationship between attitude and compliance of school discipline policy among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State ($r = 0.593$, $p < 0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that school rules and regulations should be emphasized and given more

awareness for easy compliance. Also, students should be encouraged to portray positive attitude towards their respective rules and regulations.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Compliance, School Discipline Policy, Oyo State

Introduction

The Nigerian secondary education has important functions to perform in the society. One of these is to shape students' lives so as to become useful and acceptable members of the society. This is clearly evident in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) that the broad goal of secondary education shall be to prepare individual for useful living within the society and for higher education. In an attempt to achieve this laudable goal, virtually all school administrators, particularly at secondary school level, have put in place reasonable discipline policies which are meant to be observed not only by students but also by teachers as part of the efforts to promote positive behaviour and achieve academic excellence (Ehiane, 2014).

School discipline policy, in the context of this study, can be described as a set of laid down rules and regulations or code of conduct that guide school activities in order to promote positive behaviour, maintain peace and order as well as an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning. On admission, secondary school students are given school handbook, which spell out what students should do and what they should not do. The reason for this is to instill discipline so as to bring about a desirable change in behaviour (Okumbe, 1998).

However, in spite of the discipline policies formulated in various secondary schools, there seems to be numerous cases of indiscipline among students which they see as normal behavioural patterns of life (Ukala, 2018). For instance, students who are supposed to be in their schools are seen roaming the street, riding motor bike "okada", being bus conductors, smoking Indian hemp and engaging in other social vices (Ayodele, Olotu and Olanike, 2015). Similarly, Ekundayo (2010) noted that indiscipline which manifests in form of absence from school, lateness to school, stealing, insubordination to school authority, smoking, examination malpractices among others are daily happenings in Nigerian Secondary schools. Ehiane (2014)

lamented that in our secondary schools today, learners are habitual late comers, leave school premises without permission, do not bring their books to school, refuse to do their homework, reject any kind of authority and resist any disciplinary measures taken against them.

Many students are found telling lies, playing truancy, stealing, disturbing the class, harassing their female colleagues and teachers sexually, disobeying the school rules and regulations and involvement in risky sexual behaviours. Since these acts of indiscipline are not curbed in the Nigerian schools, many students have advanced into robbery, vandalism, political thuggery and involvement in a high level of terrorism across the globe (Ukala, 2018).

To buttress the above assertions, an ugly occurrence happened on 27th October, 2016 when some secondary school students went on rampage in Oyo State and in the process burnt their own school buildings. Shortly after that, students of Anglican Secondary School in Oyo State, Nigeria reportedly unleashed mayhem on their teachers and destroyed billboards bearing the then Governor's picture, Abiola Ajimobi (Babalola, 2016). Recently, one of the researchers of this study, during his field work, was an eye witness of an incidence that happened in one of the schools under study where a teacher was beaten by a group of students on the ground that he was too strict for their liking. According to some of the students that were interrogated, the man usually disciplined any student that came late to school and failed to do his or her assignments. These events, no doubt, paint a very grim picture of the high level of indiscipline prevalent amongst the country's young generation.

Meanwhile, in those days, teachers commanded a lot of respect from their students and no student would dare contravene an order of a teacher or regulations of a school. The few who were bold enough to go against the accepted norm were rusticated or dealt with in some form (Babalola, 2017). However, in recent time, experience has shown that several students have become unwilling to comply with discipline policies governing their respective schools. Although, several efforts have been made over time by school administrators to nip these challenges in the bud, but it has not yielded the desired output. This has therefore become a source of concern to all and sundry because if the antisocial behaviour patterns persist and not checked, it may escalate over time becoming a chronic behavioural disorder (Isaiah,

2015). Apart from its effects on students, it is also disadvantageous to the educational system.

A number of studies such as Adi (2009), Fuentes (2003) and Simatwa (2012) have examined factors responsible for non-compliance of school discipline policies. Such factors include peer group, parenting style, family background, socio-economic status and a host of others. However, factors such as knowledge and attitude were examined in this study.

In this context, knowledge deals with students' basic understanding of what constitute school discipline policy and implications of violating it. Knowledge does not stop at understanding phenomenon only, but equally extends to application of what is learnt (Adi, 2009). In the same vein, it can be stressed that knowledge implies understanding and application of what is known.

In the words of Gyan, Baah-Korang, Mccarthy and Mccarthy (2015), knowledge acquired helps children especially secondary school students to behave positively. Similarly, Ehiane (2014) stated that when school discipline policy is well understood, it, in a long run, prescribes the standard of behaviour expected of students and teachers. Therefore, when schools effectively communicate school discipline policy, set high expectations and provide frequent feedback, the need for discipline will likely be infrequent (Lukman and Hamadi, 2014). This invariably means that when policies are unclear and not well understood, students tend to violate it. In other words, when students are clearly and specifically informed of the rules and regulations that govern their respective schools, they will not violate them. It can therefore be deduced that the cause of moral decadence among the Nigerian students is traceable to poor knowledge of their respective school policies. This means that if students must obey the rules and regulations, sound knowledge of the school discipline policy is required. If this statement is actually true, does that mean that students who misbehave are not familiar with school discipline policy? Does that mean they do not know the rules they are to obey? Does that mean they do not know the risks and consequences involved if they fail to obey? Does that mean they do not know the impact of their anti-social behaviour to the larger society? How true this is will be revealed at the end of this investigation.

Attitude is another factor that could influence compliance with school discipline policy. Levinger (2003) described attitude as thoughts, feelings and opinions that serve as guide posts for choices individuals make in matters that they perceive themselves to be stake holders. According to Bavel and Cunningham (2012), attitude can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, events, activities, ideas or just about anything in your environment. According to them, right attitude formation is a core part in the implementation of school rules and regulations. However, in Nigeria, particularly in the location under study, it appears most public secondary school students have negative attitude towards school rules and regulations. This could be as a result of the fact that most of them are in their adolescent stage where they exhibit a rebellious attitude towards what is meant to benefit them.

From the literature reviewed, several studies on school rules and regulation have been conducted by scholars. More emphasis seems to be on students' perception of what constitutes school discipline and strategies for managing discipline among students. However, few studies have been able to investigate the relationship that exists between students' knowledge, attitude and compliance towards school discipline policy. It is against this background that this study investigated students' knowledge, attitude and compliance towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

It appears Nigerian secondary schools, no doubt, have been plagued with cases of gross indiscipline. It is not uncommon to see students displaying one form of deviant behaviour or the other which shows that there is lack of discipline in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in the area under study. For instance, students who ought to be in school premises during school hour are seen in various places and are engaged in different activities that are not academically enhancing, as such may be commercial in nature or corrupt in its practices owing to their unwillingness to comply with school discipline policies. This has therefore become a source of concern to the stakeholders in the education sector because if the antisocial behaviour patterns persist and not checked, it will escalate over time becoming a chronic

behavioural disorder. In all the reviewed studies, there appears to be a gap in terms of examining the relationship between knowledge, attitude and compliance towards school discipline policy. Thus, there was need to examine the relationship between students' knowledge, attitude and compliance towards school discipline policy in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Research Questions

- i. What is the level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State?
- ii. What is the attitude of students towards rules and regulations in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between knowledge and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between attitude and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The target population for this study consisted of all the 10,979 senior secondary school students I, II and III from all the 36 public senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Through a multi-stage sampling procedure, 570 respondents representing 5.2% were selected as sample for the study. Self-developed structured questionnaire titled "Knowledge, Attitude and Compliance of School Discipline Policy Questionnaire" (KACSDPQ) was used to collect data for this study. The instrument was face, content and construct validated. The research instrument was given to experts in the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria to check and give proper correction where

necessary. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered on a sample of 20 secondary school students who were randomly drawn from different schools that were not part of the study. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was 0.78. The questionnaires were administered together with a research assistant. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation to provide answers for the research questions 1 and 2 while hypotheses 1 and 2 were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question One

What is the level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 1: The level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State

No	Statement	SA F %	A F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean	Dec.
1.	My school has laid down rules and regulation to follow	181 31.8%	269 47.2%	96 16.8%	24 4.2%	3.06	Accepted
2.	My school provides a written copy of rules to all students on admission	177 31.1%	145 25.4%	123 21.6%	125 21.9%	2.66	Accepted
3.	I am familiar with the rules and regulation governing our school	89 15.6%	103 18.1%	198 34.7%	180 31.6%	2.18	Rejected

4.	The rules are clear to interpret	102 17.9%	97 17.0%	141 24.7%	230 40.4%	2.12	Rejected
5.	I am aware of the consequences of breaking school rules and regulations	89 15.6%	162 28.4%	175 30.7%	144 25.3%	2.34	Rejected
6.	My school conducts regular awareness programme on the rules and regulation governing the schools	52 9.1%	78 13.7%	253 44.4%	187 32.8%	1.99	Rejected
Weighted Mean Average						2.39	

Note: The item is accepted if the mean is above the criterion mean score of 2.50 but rejected if it is below.

Table 1 showed the view of respondents on the level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Item 1 on table 1, a large majority of the respondents 181 (31.8%) strongly agreed and 269 (47.2%) agreed that their schools had laid down rules and regulation to follow while 96 (16.8%) and 24 (4.2%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Item 2 on table 1, 177(31.1%) and 145(25.4%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their schools provided a written copy of rules to all students on admission while 123 (21.6%) and 125(21.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

Item three on table 1 also elicited response from the respondents on whether they were familiar with rules and regulation governing their behaviours. 89 (15.6%) and 103(18.1%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to this statement while 198(34.7%) and 180(31.6%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Item 4 on table 1, 102 (17.9%) and 97(17.0%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that

the rules are clear to interpret while 141 (24.7%) and 230(40.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

Item five on table 1 elicited response from the respondents on whether they were aware of consequences of breaking school rules and regulations. 89 (15.6%) and 162(28.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they were aware of consequences of breaking school rules and regulations while 175 (30.7%) and 144 (25.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement. Item 6 on table 1, 52 (9.1%) and 78 (13.7%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their schools conduct regular awareness programme on the rules and regulation governing the schools. while 253 (44.4%) and 187(32.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

The mean average of the whole items in table 1 is 2.36. Since the mean (2.36) is below the criterion mean score of 2.50, then it can be deduced that the level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State was low.

Research Question Two

What is the attitude of students towards rules and regulations in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 2: The attitude of students towards rules and regulations in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State

No	Statement	SA F %	A F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean	Dec.
1.	Students in my school like the existing rules in our school	109 19.1%	119 20.9%	141 24.7%	201 35.3%	2.23	Rejected
2.	Students in my school like being controlled through rules	79 13.9%	136 23.9%	103 18.1%	252 44.1%	2.07	Rejected
3.	Students in my school are afraid	64 11.2%	124 21.8%	187 32.8%	195 34.2%	2.10	Rejected

	of breaking the school rules						
4.	Students in my school do not enjoy going home for suspension	83 14.6%	131 22.9%	146 25.6%	210 36.9%	2.15	Rejected
5.	The school authority is unfriendly towards the enforcement of rules and regulation	94 16.5%	84 14.7%	199 34.9%	193 33.9%	2.13	Rejected
6.	The rules in my school are harsh and I like them	94 16.5%	161 28.2%	152 26.7%	163 28.6%	2.33	Rejected
Weighted mean average						2.17	

Note: The item is accepted if the mean is above the criterion mean score of 2.50 but rejected if it is below.

Table 2 showed the view of respondents on the attitude of students towards rules and regulations in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Item 1 on table 2 showed that a large majority of the respondents 109 (19.1%) strongly agreed and 119 (20.9%) agreed that their students like the existing rules in their schools while 141 (24.7%) and 201 (35.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. With respect to Item 2 on table 2, 79 (13.9%) and 136 (23.9%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that students in their schools like being controlled through rules, while 103 (18.1%) and 252 (44.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

Item three on table 2 also elicited response from the respondents on whether students in their schools are afraid of breaking the school rules. Majority of the respondents 64 (11.2%) and 124 (21.8%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively with this statement, while 187(32.8%) and 195(34.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to this statement.

With respect to item 4 on table 2, 83 (14.6%) and 131(22.9%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that students in

their schools do not enjoy going home for suspension, while 146 (25.6%) and 210 (36.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement. Item five on table 2 elicited response from the respondents on whether their school authorities are unfriendly towards the enforcement of rules and regulation. 94 (16.5%) and 84(14.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that I am aware of consequences of breaking school rules and regulations, while 199(34.9%) and 193 (33.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

Item 6 on table 2, 94 (16.5%) and 161(28.2%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the rules in their schools are harsh and they like them, while 152 (26.7%) and 163 (28.6%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement. The mean average of the whole items on table 2 was 2.17. Since the mean (2.17) is below the criterion mean score of 2.50, it can be deduced that secondary schools' students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State portrayed negative attitude towards rules and regulations.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between knowledge and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The result of the PPMC analysis is presented on the table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between knowledge and compliance of school discipline policy

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P	Remarks
Knowledge	570	17.63	2.67	0.330	.000	Sig.
Compliance of school discipline policy	570	33.11	8.98			

S – Significant at 0.05

The result on table 3 revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the two variables (knowledge and compliance

towards school discipline policy) ($r = 0.330$, $p < 0.05$) and hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between attitude and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The result of the PPMC analysis is presented on table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between attitude and compliance of school discipline policy

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P	Remarks
Attitude	570	22.56	5.49	0.593	.000	Sig.
Compliance of school discipline policy	570	33.11	8.98			

S – Significant at 0.05

The result on table 4 showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between attitude and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State ($r = 0.593$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

From the above analysis, it was revealed that the level of knowledge of secondary school students with regard to the discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State was low. This confirmed Oladele (2003) assertion that the cause of moral decadence among the youth was traceable to the poor knowledge of school ethics/policy in the secondary schools. Consequently, students, teachers and parents do not know which rules if violated will attract what punishment (Oyedele, 2012). This means that if students must obey the rules and regulations, sound knowledge of the school discipline policy is required. Therefore, students, like everyone else, need sound and practical knowledge that can ensure positive behaviour.

It was also shown that the attitude of students towards rules and regulations in secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State was negative. This is attributed to the fact that most

students at this level are usually in their adolescent stage where they develop a rebellious attitude towards what is even meant for their benefit (Kamau and Njenga, 2009).

The findings further revealed that there was a significant relationship between knowledge and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. This was not surprising as it corroborated the finding of Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) that compliance with school discipline policy was reinforced by knowledge and that was why it was necessary to make students understand the rules and regulations in order to ensure easy compliance with the rules. According to Gyan, Baah-Korang, McCarthy and McCarthy (2015), knowledge acquired help children especially secondary school students to behave positively. Similarly, Ehiane (2014) stated that when school discipline policy is well understood, it brings about the standard of behaviour expected of students and teachers. Therefore, when schools effectively communicate school discipline policy, set high expectations and provide frequent feedback, the need for discipline will likely be infrequent (Lukman and Hamadi, 2014). This also is in agreement with the view of Buldu (2006) which maintained that moral knowledge and understanding are prerequisite for moral action. He went on to say that no one can act upon a moral principle or precepts or rules unless he is first aware of it. It appears that students do not see anything wrong in disobeying school rules and regulations because they do not perceive it as evil. In other words, before any disciplinary action is required, there must be acceptance and understanding of the rules of conduct and the disciplinary system by both teachers and students. Students should know exactly what is expected of them and what the consequences will be if they do not meet those expectations. Therefore, adequate knowledge is required in order to ensure total compliance to school rules and regulations.

The result on table 4 revealed that there was a significant relationship between attitude and compliance of secondary school students towards school discipline policy in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The finding gave support to the assertion of Kamau and Njenga (2009) that right attitude formation is a core part in the implementation of school discipline policies.

Conclusion

Succinctly, it is evident that the role knowledge and attitude play in students' compliance with school rules and regulation cannot overemphasized and it goes a long way if total or perfect compliance is to be achieved. This, therefore, means that students will be willing to adhere to school discipline policy only if they are aware of its intrinsic value in their day to day life.

Recommendations

On this basis, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Secondary schools' administrators should familiarize the students with school discipline policy in a friendly way and manner that will enable them understand and interpret them usefully in order to inculcate sense of obedience and belonging among students so as to become good citizens.
- ii. Students should be encouraged to portray positive attitude towards complying with their various schools' rules and regulations because the attitude of students matter a lot in the compliance with school rules and regulations.
- iii. If need be, the schools may occasionally invite experts or specialists to enlighten and encourage students about the benefit as well as need to comply with school discipline policy.

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