



DEALING WITH INDISCIPLINE AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN AGONA SWEDRU, AGONA WEST MUNICIPALITY, GHANA

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to investigate measures that are in place to deal with indiscipline among Junior High Schools in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality. The study was a quantitative study underpinned by the positivist paradigm and adopted the descriptive survey design. The study was undertaken in the Agona Swedru township in the Agona West Municipality of Ghana. Selected Junior High school students formed the sample of the study. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to sample 120 students for the study. The questionnaire was employed for data gathering. Data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. It emerged from the study that predominant forms of indiscipline behaviours were related to the following; leaving the school grounds, physical aggression, disturbing others, inappropriate use of school material, out-of-seat behaviour such as moving, noncompliance with teacher's directives. The study revealed that the causes of indiscipline behaviour were school size, home factors, individual factors, family factors, gender and ethnicity, school factors, societal factors, and peer group pressure. The study showed that indiscipline behaviours result in low academic performance, breeds undesirable student behaviour, and dropping-out of school. The study therefore recommends that the Agona educational directorate, the Agona District assembly, the authorities of the selected schools and the various administrative staff should collaborate with the guidance and counselling coordinators to organise programmes focused on the forms of indiscipline exhibited by the students to effectively equip them to deal with the everyday indiscipline behaviours in the school.

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Keywords: discipline, indiscipline, involvement, challenges

1. Introduction

School indiscipline has been over time an issue of concern for educators, policymakers and the public at large (Paul, 2009). Indiscipline is a behavioural disorder that is classified as an act of delinquency (Kipropo, 2012). It is often the cause of a lot of mental emotional and also physical damage (MacDaniel, 2005). Zubaida (2009) identifies various forms of indiscipline among secondary school students such as truancy, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse, insulting / assaulting, stealing, rioting, sexual activities and many other social vices. According to Kounin (2008) indiscipline behaviours that are exhibited among students in and outside the school include, street fighting and hooliganism, truancy, improper dressing, gambling and other immoral acts. Concerning its displays, Amado and Freire (2009), believed that the major situations are framed in what they point out as the first level of indiscipline and which are those incidents of disruptive nature whose disturbance affects the good classroom functioning. The incidents that might be framed in the second and third levels are conflicts among peers and conflicts within teacher student relationship which might be taken on proportions of violence and even delinquency. The problem of indiscipline according to Yaroson (2004) permeates all facets of the life of man and has brought man down to these knees. School discipline according to Gaustard (2005) has two main objectives. The first is to ensure the safety of staff and students and the second to create an environment conducive for learning. Acts of indiscipline occasioned by students' misconducts involving violent and criminal behaviour defeat the goals of education. According to Jordan (1995), noisiness, vandalism, smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol were the most prevalent forms of indiscipline in Zimbabwean junior High schools. Mukama (2005) attributed this widespread disorder in schools to peer influence. He argued that when a child begins school, he or she moves from the family environment and begins to relate more to his or her peer group. According to Jordan (1995), noisiness, vandalism, smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol were the most prevalent forms of indiscipline in Zimbabwean junior High schools. Mukama (2005) attributed this widespread disorder in schools to peer influence. He argued that when a child begins school, he or she moves from the family environment and begins to relate more to his or her peer group. According to Chemhuru (2010) the modes of punishment have not changed despite the growing consensus that punishment breaks children's fundamental human rights. It is permissible to punish students through the use of the whip, labour or suspension in a way that is compatible with societal norms and values. Despite such measures, Bell and Bolam (2003) observe that there is a consensus between scholars and policy makers that there has to be education reforms that would result to substantial changes in the roles of head teachers in enhancing discipline. They further observed that school leadership and management as vested in the senior staff in the schools and especially head teachers are regarded by policy-makers and practitioners alike as a key factor in ensuring a schools' success.

2. Problem Statement

In Africa, studies have pointed out the seriousness of indiscipline in schools in various countries. The countries include South Africa (Marais & Meier, 2010; Masitsa, 2008). In Kenya, lack of discipline in schools has been one of the challenges facing schools (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) revealed that between 90% and 100% of teachers in primary schools in Kenya encountered disciplinary problems among their pupils (KNEC, 2010). In a study by Gakure, Mukuria, and Kithae (2013) in primary schools in Gatanga District, Kenya, 70% of selected 56 teachers indicated that their schools had cases of pupil indiscipline. In Ghana (Gyan, Baah-Korang, Mccarthy, & Mccarthy, 2015), similar findings have been arrived at. The researcher is a teacher and from her observations, indiscipline identified among JHS students in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality include stealing, bullying, sexual intercourse among underaged students, assault, insolence, excessive absenteeism, lateness to school, truancy, teenage pregnancy and the like. For instance, four female students have dropped out of school because of teenage pregnancy this year. (Attendance Register Swedru Presby 'A' Junior High. 2015/2016 Academic year). Others include the possession of Indian hemp/wee. These acts appear to influence student academic performance and general social behaviour. It is against this background that the researcher wants to conduct a study into addressing the issues of indiscipline among selected schools in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine indiscipline behaviours among Junior High school students in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality?

2.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Identify the forms of indiscipline behaviours exhibited by Junior High school students in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality.
- 2) Determine the causes of indiscipline among Junior High school students in Agona in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality.

2.3 Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) What forms of indiscipline behaviours are exhibited among Junior High school students in Agona in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality?
- 2) What are the causes of indiscipline among Junior High school students in Agona in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Research design is the blueprint of the entire study. The aim of research design is to guide the researcher through the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Yin, 1994). Descriptive survey design is a type of design that assesses current status, opinions, beliefs and attitudes by adopting questionnaire or interview guide to collect data from known population (Macmillan & Schnuacher, 1997). This design enables information to be obtained concerning the current status of a phenomenon. The researcher decided to use a descriptive survey because the study was directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study (Illeris, 2003). Again descriptive survey was considered appropriate for the study as it gives room for the use of questionnaire to elicit information from a large section of respondents and arrive at generalizations.

3.2 Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population of this study comprised all the Junior High Schools within the Agona West Municipality with a total number of 1500. The accessible population was estimated at 300. Purposive sampling was used to select ten basic schools. These schools were selected because they had the highest cases of indiscipline and other vices like school dropout. The simple random sampling method also known as the lottery method was adapted to select the schools and students from each Junior High School. The lottery method as a sampling procedure involved the process where the researcher used numbers corresponding to the schools, wrote them on pieces of papers and put them in a box, thoroughly mixed and picked one after the other, till the sample size was arrived at.

The simple random sampling method was used to select the sample from each school to respond to the questionnaire. In all the schools, the researchers organised twenty pieces of paper, comprising ten for "Yes" and ten for "No". The pieces of paper were folded and put in a box. The box was turned over and over again to ensure that the pieces of paper were well mixed to guarantee that each student had an equal opportunity of being selected. The students were required to pick the pieces of paper at random. Students who selected the pieces of paper which have 'yes' responses were enrolled as study participants for this study. Quota sampling technique was used to select ten (10) students from each school. This process was then repeated in the other schools resulting in 100 students for the study. In all, 120 students were sampled. The random selection ensures that each teacher of the sampled schools has an equal chance of being selected, and this is required for generalization of the results to the target population as noted by Creswell (2009). These sampling techniques ensured representativeness of the population, and it also eliminated selection bias.

3.3 Instrumentation

The study adopted a questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire was made up of three sections, the first section focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section comprised of items relating to forms of indiscipline behaviours exhibited among students. The third section focused on the items relating to causes of indiscipline. The fourth section focused on the negative effects does indiscipline behaviours. The fifth section was concerned with strategies that school management could adopt in curbing indiscipline behaviours the questionnaire has “YES” and “NO” for the forms of indiscipline behaviours. The rest of the section has “Disagree (D)” and “Agree (A)” options for responses. The researcher chose questionnaire because all the participants were literate, and therefore could read and respond to the items.

4. Discussions

Research Question 1: What forms of indiscipline behaviours are exhibited among Junior High school students in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality?

Table 1: Forms of Indisciplinary Behaviours (N=120)

Statements	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Leaving the school grounds without permission	112	93.3	8	6.7
Physical aggression	83	69.2	37	30.83
Choking, pushing, tripping, etc.	51	42.5	69	57.5
Disturbing others	104	86.7	16	13.3
Use of disrespectful and/or threatening language	113	94.7	7	5.3
Inappropriate use of school material	94	78.3	26	21.7
Out-of-seat behaviour such as moving	110	91.7	10	8.3
Noncompliance with teacher’s requests	100	83.3	20	16.7
Inability to work independently without adult supervision	91	75.8	29	24.7
Non-disruptive disorganized behaviour	45	37.5	75	62.5

Source: Field data, 2018.

Table 1 shows the forms of indiscipline behaviours exhibited by junior High school students. Table 1 shows that 112(93.3%) respondents indicated that students leave the class without permission which constitute indiscipline behaviour. Eighty-three of the respondents representing 69.2 percent stated that student exhibit physical aggression during class hours. Most of the respondents 104(86.7%) indicated that students disturb through noise making during classes which was considered as a form of indiscipline behaviour. The table further shows that many of the respondents 113(94.7%) were of the view that the use of disrespectful and/or threatening language was a form of indiscipline behaviour. Concerning the inappropriate use of school material as constituting indiscipline behaviour, 94 of the respondents representing 78.3 percent indicated “Yes” suggesting that it was a form of indiscipline behaviour. Out-of-seat behaviour such as moving about was stated by many of the respondents 110(91.7%) as a form of indiscipline

behaviour. Regarding noncompliance with teacher's requests, 100 (83.3%) indicated that this was a form of indiscipline behaviour. Many of the respondents 91(75.8%) stated that inability to work independently without adult supervision was a form of indiscipline behaviour.

It could be deduced from the analysis that the predominant forms of indiscipline behaviours were related to the following; leaving the school grounds, physical aggression, disturbing others, use of disrespectful and/or threatening language, inappropriate use of school material, out-of-seat behaviour such as moving, noncompliance with teacher's requests, inability to work independently without adult supervision. These findings are consistent with literature support. Bowen, Jenson and Clark (2004) suggest that sometimes some of these behaviours are not really indiscipline. They believe that behaviours such as fighting, crying, arguing, noncompliance, or over-activity can be considered normal for the child's developmental level or for a particular situation. Laing and Chazen (2006) agree by adding that much aggressive behavior is entirely natural, especially in the early years. This is based on the psychosocial theory of Eric Erikson (2003) who points out that during the phase of childhood when a sense of autonomy is being acquired children often experience frustration because they cannot do certain things and this frustration tends to lead to aggression. Since it is desirable that children develop independence skills, a certain amount of aggressive behaviour can be regarded not only as natural but also as desirable (Laing & Chazen, 2006). This view of the aggressive behaviour which occurs in childhood is supported by various other researchers. Manning, Heron and Marshall (2016), for instance, suggest that young children showing specific hostility, such as those which are designed to get their own way, tend to be socially well-adjusted. However, games hostility, which involve activities such as hurling to the ground or gripping round the throat, are maladaptive styles of behaviour. Laing and Chazen (2006) state that there is evidence that aggression in normal children tends to decline fairly rapidly after about five to six years. Maccoby (2014) adds that children who remain highly aggressive at the stage when other children's aggression is lessening are likely to be immature or disturbed.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of indiscipline among Junior High school students in Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality?

Table 2 shows a description of the various contributing factors causing indiscipline behaviours in the sampled respondents of the study. Table 2 shows that all the respondents 120(100%) agreed that their school size could influenced indiscipline behaviour of students. One-hundred and nine of the respondents representing 90.8 percent agreed that home factors contribute to indiscipline behaviour in their school. Regarding individual factors that influence indiscipline behaviour in their school, 125(95.8%) of the respondents agreed to the assertion. All the respondents 120(100%) indicated that family factors contribute to indiscipline behaviours in their school. Many of the respondents 93(77.5%) stated that gender and ethnicity contribute to indiscipline behaviour in their school. One hundred of the respondents representing 83.3 percent

agreed that school factors influence indiscipline behaviours in their school. Most of the respondents 114(95%) suggested that societal factors influence indiscipline behaviour in school. Concerning peer group pressure contributes to indiscipline behaviour in school. 107(89.2%) agreed to this statement.

Table 2: Causes of Indiscipline (N=120)

Statements	Disagree		Agree	
	F	%	F	%
School size could influence indiscipline behaviour in my school	-	-	120	100
Home factors contributes to indiscipline behaviour in school	11	9.2	109	90.8
Individual factors influence indiscipline behaviour in school	5	4.2	125	95.8
Family factors contributes to indiscipline behaviours in school	-	-	120	100
Gender and ethnicity contribute to indiscipline behaviour in school	27	22.5	93	77.5
School factors influence indiscipline behaviours in school	20	16.7	100	83.3
Societal factors influence indiscipline behaviour in school	6	5	114	95
Peer group pressure contributes to indiscipline behaviour in school	13	10.8	107	89.2

Source: Field data, 2018.

It could be inferred from the study that the predominant causes of indiscipline behaviour were school size, Home factors, Individual factors, family factors, gender and ethnicity, school factors, societal factors, and peer group pressure. These findings are consistent with literature. Munyasia (2008) asserts that the larger the school, the more complex the task to be accomplished, and the more complex the task of maintaining students' discipline. This is collaborated by Stockard and Mayberry (2002) who argued that behaviour problems are so much greater in large schools that any possible virtue of larger size is cancelled out by the difficulties of maintaining an orderly learning environment. Felix (2011) asserts that many school problems cannot be dealt with in isolation because various family circumstances may exert more powerful influences over learner's behaviour than anything that happens in school. Lack of discipline among learners is largely a reflection of attributes, values and practices of their society. If there is no social order in society learners will be indiscipline in school (Grossinckle, 2000). Rossouw (2003) mentions that some learners play with cell phones in class, and when the educator confronts them, they start acting aggressively to impress their classmates. Learners with emotional problems are particularly disruptive when certain teaching methods are used. For example, Rossouw (2003) comments on active learning approaches which allow learners to speak out aloud. As the lesson progresses some learners take advantage of the situation and start making a lot of noise. Thus, they are troublesome. Oosthuizen and Van Staden (2007) as well as De Wet (2003) list numerous school related factors which may heighten learners' propensity to engage in disruptive behaviour such as: a negative school climate, inadequacy of teachers as role models; teachers' professional incompetence (lack of educational/didactic expertise), overcrowded schools; deficient organizational structure of the school, and rundown, ill kept physical appearance of the school.

5. Key Findings of the Study

The following findings emerged from the study:

- 1) It emerged from the study that predominant forms of indiscipline behaviours were related to the following; leaving the school grounds, physical aggression, disturbing others, use of disrespectful and/or threatening language, inappropriate use of school material, out-of-seat behaviour such as moving, noncompliance with teacher's requests, inability to work independently without adult supervision.
- 2) The study revealed that the causes of indiscipline behaviour were school size, Home factors, Individual factors, family factors, gender and ethnicity, school factors, societal factors, and peer group pressure.

6. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study;

- 1) The study concludes that forms of indiscipline were related to students leaving the school grounds, aggression, disturbing others, use of disrespectful language, and disruptive behaviours in class. These predominant behaviours if well monitored and abated with well-structured solutions, the gravity and frequency of these forms of indiscipline would reduce drastically.
- 2) It was concluded that school size, home factors, individual factors, family factors, gender and ethnicity, school factors, societal factors, and peer group pressure caused indiscipline behaviours. Based on these findings, if a comprehensive programme is organised to influence students believe systems and values, especially through social institutions, there could be a more significant positive contributions from the listed areas.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn based on the findings of the study;

- 1) The Agona educational directorate, the Agona District assembly, the authorities of the selected schools and the various administrative staff should collaborate with the guidance and counselling coordinators to organise programmes focused on the forms of indiscipline exhibited by the students to effectively equip them to deal with the everyday indiscipline behaviours in the school.
- 2) The Agona educational directorate, the Agona District assembly, the authorities of the selected schools and the various administrative staff should collaborate with the Parent Teacher Association to effectively tackle students' behaviour in the school and the home. Through effective guidance and counselling programmes and community outreach programmes for both students, teachers, and parents. The general causes of indiscipline would be reduced.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of this article certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript, which may result in conflict of interest.

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