Improving the education of a Nigerian child through discipline in primary schools

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Abstracts

This paper discussed the improvement of education of a Nigerian child through discipline in primary schools. It also discussed the goals of primary education in Nigeria, concept of discipline-teaching students to observe school laws and regulations and respect to authorities, types of discipline in school, ways to improve discipline in schools, the goals of discipline to children. The paper also discussed the concept of indiscipline: lack of control in the behavior of a person, causes of indiscipline in primary schools, appropriate way to discipline children by parents. Finally, conclusion and recommendations were made.

Introduction

Presently, the general view of all and sundry in the society is that the standard of education in Nigeria is falling seriously especially in primary schools. Primary school is a school designed for children between the ages of 6 and 11 years. Primary education aims at training students to develop morals and good character, exhibit appropriate behavior in school and at home, develop the ability to continue learning (FRN, 2004). It is considered very important because it is designed for the overall development of the child physically, morally, socially, mentally and emotionally and to prepare the child for secondary education.

In primary schools, pupils are exposed to variety of learning which will lead to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies to properly function in the society. In primary schools, pupils need to be disciplined in order to inculcate good habit in them and help them to improve

their education and responsibilities as correct citizen in future. It is noticed by Raid (2009) that primary schools these days are filled with various forms of social vices because pupils do not practice discipline in schools. According to Uzoka (2013) one of the fundamental factors for the falling standard of education is that discipline is not sufficiently practiced in our primary schools. For this reason, pupils do not show interest in education. They engage in social vices such as bulling, fighting among others, Reyes (2006) have no respect for their teachers and even the school authority. Pupils inability to obey rules and regulations have led them to poor concentration in school activities which has resulted to poor performance in education. They develop deviant behavior in school and become big problem in their families. The teachers and parents are not happy about this indiscipline act in primary schools. The situation does not give them joy because these students will be future leaders of society tomorrow (Akinbote, 2001).

Goals of primary Education in Nigeria.

National Policy on Education (FGN, 2008) stipulated the objectives of primary education as:

- 1. Inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively.
- 2. Lay a sound basis for scientific critical and reflective thinking.
- 3. Promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity.
- 4. Instill morals and values in the child
- 5. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the damaging environment
- 6. Provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulate skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity.
- 7. Mould the character and develop the spirit of self-control and responsibility in the child.

Concept of Discipline

Discipline is one of the most essential training that schools should offer to students in their early year in school. The importance of discipline in school cannot be overemphasized. In teaching and learning, discipline is an essential factor, it makes learning in school effective. Discipline has many definition by various authors and educationists. According to Akinbote (2001) discipline is training or control parents and teachers exercise on their children using a system of encouragement and punishment. It is aimed at affecting their mind and character thereby producing obedient children who will obey rules and authority and have self control. Hornby (2000), said that discipline is the practice of training people to obey rules and orders and punishing them if they do not obey. In his contribution, Reid (2000) said that discipline is the ability to control people's behavior and the way they live, talk and work. Discipline means

teaching students to observe school rules and regulations and respect teachers and school authorities (Akintunde, 2013).

Uzoka, 2013 defined discipline as a strategy to control the behaviours of pupils and help them obey school rules and regulations. Ejide (2012) noted that discipline is crucial in education, that discipline is the hub on which other issues in the system revolves. It is an affair that concerns both the teacher and the pupils. According to Chibueze (2013) discipline is an instruction given to students who are expected to follow a specified way of behavior. Students are expected to be disciplined in order to achieve the goals of education, in his opinion, Miller (2009) sees discipline as the act of installing discipline which summaries all the various activities the teacher and the school carry out to develop pupil's behavior. In other words, if indiscipline is checked very well, it will go a long way in improving the education of pupils in schools.

Discipline can be defined as the training that moulds and correct an individual. It can be instilled in school through instruction in school subjects. Abubakar (2000) in Akintude (2013) saw discipline as an individual's willingness to do what he should do on his own (and not because of external control). This implies that discipline can be internally and externally controlled, Reyes (2006) opined that discipline can be seen as training suitable for students to develop self control, good conduct, and the habit of achieving their potentials during and after school life. He added that discipline reflects self control. From the above statement, discipline can be seen as the ability and willingness of pupils to do what they are expected to do without external control. Discipline may be induced in pupils who do not succumb to established rules and regulations out of fear of punishment.

According to Nakpodia (2010), discipline means instructions to students to follow certain codes of conduct to promote orderliness in the school. If a school child violates school rules and regulations, it is called indiscipline which attract punishment. Discipline is an important training because it controls life making children to be obedient and respectful. Discipline is a means of training and learning that foster growth and development (Onwurah, 2004). This implies that discipline is aimed to help the students to be happy and useful to themselves and society. In the school environment, teachers have the right to punish students who disobey school laws. In his contribution, Onwurah, (2004) opined that discipline means training to ensure proper behavior and enforcing acceptable patterns of behavior in children especially in the class. It is the control over life style and mental self control. Discipline has to do with

learning something as well as the punishment designed for it. Abubakar (2013) sees discipline as the strategies or actions employed by teachers for the elimination of anti-social behavior. This is to say that it is a method of training pupils mind and body in order to control their behavior. Discipline is essential in primary school, pupils need to be taught discipline during their early years if they are to benefit from formal education of the school. The teachers and parents are not happy about indiscipline act in primary schools, this is because these students will be future leaders of society. School discipline is the training which produces in children self-restraint, orderliness, good conduct and habit of getting the best out of themselves. (Ajayi & Adeniji (2009).

Types of Discipline in School

In his contribution, Reyers (2006) listed three types of discipline which include:

- 1. **Preventive discipline**: This is the measure taken to prevent any unacceptable bahaviour among children. In preventive discipline, teachers have to explain their expectation and set ground rules to ensure discipline.
- 2. **Supportive discipline**: This is done after preventive discipline. If the preventive measures do not work as perfectly as expected and things may go wrong, the teacher may give warnings and show the students the right way of doing things.
- 3. **Corrective discipline**: This comes after supportive discipline. When a student has failed to show any improvement despite numerous efforts at supportive discipline, corrective discipline disciplinary actions come into play. Punishment such as suspension, expulsion can be given.
- 4. Discipline can also be positive or negative.

Ways to improve discipline in school

In order to improve discipline in school Akintunder (2013) listed the following points.

- Plain and organizes: Teacher should plan and organize school and classroom to ensure
 that there is a routine in the classroom, with this, students know what to expect from
 the class and what to expect from them. On the other hand, if there is no legitimate
 planning and proper organization in the classroom, students will feel tired and would
 begin to act mischievously.
- 2. **Resolving issues from the beginning**: When problems come up, it is ideal to solve them immediately before they become enormous to handle. Teachers should address

- every problems or issues occurring in the classroom, handle them tackfully. A small problem can turn to a big problem later on.
- 3. **Establishing proper procedures**: School should have a decent control procedures to keep the students in check. A proper code of conduct, rules and regulations must be established and followed. Avoid being strict so that students do not fight back or rebel. Give students controlled freedom both in classroom and in the schools.
- 4. **Explain the rules**: Teachers and school authorities need to communicate the procedure to the students for them to know what is expected of them so that they can do it accordingly. In the class, explain the rules and regulations and how they should behave in the classroom and in the school.
- 5. Practice what you teach: The teachers, staff, management and everyone in the school must practice the code of conduct that has been established by the school, when right and wrong, they look up to their teachers. So teachers should be good role models to students.
- 6. **Make the classes interactive**: Teachers should make their classes interactive. When the classes are interactive, students do better and have less time to be mischievous or be moisy. The classes should be made interesting by including games, quizzes, visual aids etc.
- 7. **Establish a connection with the students**: creating a good rapport with students will make them to be more disciplined and understanding, mutual respect will help in bringing about harmony in the classroom.
- 8. **Reward good behavior**: When teachers reward good behavior in the classroom, he is encouraging other students to behave better.
- 9. **Be fair:** As a teacher avoid being biased, be fair in relating with students. Do not favour some student to the detriment of others. For instance, scoring some students high grade in examination or assignment because you like the child. Treat all students equal.
- 10. **Be optimistic**: Encourage all students for positive thinking. Do not allow them to feel hostile in the classroom, they should relaxe so that they have chance to express themselves. Being a positive teacher will help you to achieve this in the classroom.
- 11. Make sure punishments and rewards are clear.

Goals of discipline.

Discipline is crucial in children's development. Reid (2000) listed these as the goals of discipline to children.

- 1. Discipline helps children to stay focused till they achieve their goals.
- 2. It gives students the strength to stick with difficult tasks and allow them to overcome obstacles and discomfort as they push themselves to new height.
- 3. Discipline helps children develop a sense of responsibility and help them improve their habits and personality.
- 4. It directs them to adopt right principles and become successful in their life
- 5. Discipline opens children's eyes to identify wrong things from right things, and helps them to shorn disrespect, bulling and aggression.
- 6. Discipline assist children in developing skills for making decisions and help them gradually gain self-control to be responsible for their own behavior.
- 7. It protects children from danger and help them learn self-control and self-discipline.
- 8. Discipline allow children to develop self-discipline and helps them become emotionally and socially mature adults.

Appropriate way to discipline children by parents

Discipline is the force that helps the child fit into the real world happily and effectively. Positive discipline is about teaching and guiding children, not just forcing them to obey.

Parents should not use corporal punishment in disciplining their children. Odo (2005) opened that parent can promote effective discipline through evaluation and through guidance and counseling. Parents should let children know, they have and support them. Trust between parent and child should be maintained and constantly built upon. Disciplining children is one of the most important thing, yet difficult responsibility of parenting and there are no shortcuts. Parenting is the task of raising children and providing them with the necessary materials and emotional care to help them develop physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. The goals of effective discipline is to foster acceptable and appropriate behavior in the child and to raise emotionally mature adults (Odo, 2005).

The foundation of effective discipline is respect. The children should be able to respect parents, authority and also the rights of others. Parents should be consistent in their discipline because inconsistency will not help the child respect his or her parents. Parents should avoid harsh discipline such as humiliation (verbal abuse, shouting, name-calling) as it will make it hard for the child to respect and trust the parents (Odo, 2005).

The goals of discipline is to protect the child from danger, help the child learn self-discipline and develop a healthy conscience and an internal sense of responsibility and control and help

to instill values in the child. To achieve these goals, Odo (2005) asserted that parents should remove inconsistency because it will confuse any child, regardless of his/her age. He went further to say that parents should be consistent role models. Telling children to "Do" as I say, but not as I "Do" does not achieve effective discipline.

The purpose of discipline is to help children organize themselves, understand, internalized rules and acquire appropriate behavior patterns. Effective discipline does not instill shame, negative guilt, a sense of abandonment or a loss of trust. Instead it instills a sense of greater trust between the child and the parents. In their contribution, Ajayi and Adenyi (2009) opined that undesirable behaviours are best avoided through prevention and by building supportive structures that include clear and consistent rules. When a child exhibit good behavior, approval and praise are the most powerful motivators for good behavior. They added that the use of appropriate motivators should be encouraged.

Improving the education of a Nigerian child through discipline in primary schools

The role of discipline in a child's life at any point in time cannot be overemphasized. Discipline is relevant to the well-being of a child as well as his/her education. Discipline is used to enhance teaching and learning and promote academic performance of pupils. Discipline improves children's cognitive skills and help them reason and think. Discipline is acquired in the school through the process of teaching and learning activities. It can also be acquired at home through proper upbringing by parents. When a child is disciplined, it calm down his head and his focus is developed. Improving the education of a Nigerian child is specifically the responsibility of the teacher. Teachers are supposed to use discipline in teaching activities in order to ensure orderliness and peace on the part of learners and also bring improvement to his life-mentally, socially, physically and emotionally. According to Etim (2008), discipline are those advice and direction which the teacher use to promote the effectiveness of instructions. It provides real life experiences to the pupils during learning activities. Discipline makes a child cleaver and wise. When children are disciplined, they realize themselves and think of how to solve a problem, thus improving their cognitive skills. Discipline is very significant for the overall development of the child and his education. It is used to develop children's language and communication skills and help learn to cooperate and socialize as they work in teams.

Discipline help a child to know the usefulness of education in his life, develop the thinking and reasoning abilities and enable him work better in class activities. Discipline opens ways for a child to be inquisitive and creative and practice things by himself. By asking questions, his

education is improved. Discipline develop the social spirit of children thereby helping them to work together as a family, share knowledge and ideas under the auspices of a teacher. It equips the child with what he needs to know and learn about the world at large. Ocho (2010) has it that through discipline educational experiences of children are improved and help them to make "U-turn" in life when a child remembers his past experiences with his teacher, he is forced to bend down to study.

Discipline affects all aspects of life and enable a person to live a comfortable life. It is a relevant advice received by learners from the teacher that creates ways for achieving the goals of education through discipline, primary school pupils achieve their potentials. Discipline is a tool which a classroom teacher can use to encourage children to learn in order to achieve the desired learning objectives. Discipline stimulates a child's memory and help him reason and think creatively, and through this way, a child's education is improved. Research revealed that children who achieve high level of discipline are more likely to have better results and bright future. As stated by Chibueze (2013) positive discipline enable the learners to have a clear understanding of lesson taught by a teacher and try to carry out assignment and home work given to him. He added that a teacher who has the ability to discipline pupils in school produces the best quality pupils who will become great leaders tomorrow capable of developing the country's economy. It has been noted by Odo (2005) that appropriate use of discipline in the school environment will boost the student's academic achievement. Discipline makes learning more interesting and understandable as it attracts students attention to what is being taught to them. For this reason, discipline should be introduced to pupils in school at the appropriate time by the teacher so that it could help pupils in realizing their potentials. Through proper discipline, knowledge acquired by pupils will be retained for a long time and seriousness will be shown. Again, it will help learners to acquire different skills and involve more actively in class lessons thereby improving their life and education.

What is Indiscipline?

Disobeying school rules and regulations, disrespecting teachers and schools authorities are signs of indiscipline.

Indiscipline is the breaking of rules and regulations of schools.

According to Hornby (2000) indiscipline is a lack of control in the behavior of a group of people. Onwurah (2004) defined indiscipline as those forms of behaviours rthat are disruptive in nature, that affects and disturb the activities of the classroom. Nakpodia (2010) identified

indiscipline behavior as conflicts between teachers and students. Chibueze (2013) identified indiscipline as students roaming streets in school uniforms, disrespect of teachers, lateness in schools, stealing, insulting and other social vices. Indiscipline can lead to poor education of primary schools. It has made pupils loose focus, develop sense of carelessness. Indiscipline behavior is dangerous and disruptive. When indiscipline behavior are exhibited, it disrupts the academic process, leading the students to become underachievers Akinbote (2001), identified indiscipline behavior as examination fraud and fighting. Ikoya (2009) identified some as lateness to school, insulting teachers and other individuals, stealing, aggression, bulling, and rudeness to teachers, inattention and other social vices.

Indiscipline is inappropriate behavior exhibited by students that disrupts the progress of school activities, classroom activities and students poor performance. Indiscipline hinder effective teaching and learning in schools it destroys the students by putting them confusion in the head. Indiscipline is idleness, lack of respect for teachers, and school authority, truancy, poor relationships among the pupils (Uzoka, 2013). It disorganizes students to forget their future and while away their life. Indiscipline is bad and should be discouraged from happening. Indiscipline behavior is usually seen as exhibiting disruptive behavior which is seen as a source of concern to school authority which has made them to establish acceptable discipline measures. Indiscipline leads to non-compliance and lack of interest in education, it can lead to lack of attention in the classroom. It encourages noise making and truancy on the part of the pupils. Indiscipline behavior started to exist when corporal punishment was abolished. Students started behaving as they like. Since the removal of corporal punishment, it appears that indiscipline among students in primary schools tend to increase (Uzoka, 2013). This paper therefore was aimed at improving the education of a Nigerian child using discipline in primary schools.

Causes of Indiscipline in Primary Schools

Indiscipline is the breaking of rules and regulations of schools by students. There are many factors that cause indiscipline among primary school students. Some of these factors are:

- Teachers factors
- Parents factors
- Students factors
- School factors
- Society factors and

- Government factors

Teachers' factors

Some teachers are never serious with the lesson they teach to pupils. Their behavior is nothing to write home about. They have bad character that cause indiscipline. When a teacher fails to deliver his lesson appropriately, students are bound to become noisy, restless and disrespectful to such a teacher. (Akintunde, 2013)

According to Chibueze (2013), a teacher who dresses indecently to classroom is encouraging the students to go naked. The teacher is not a good role model. Some teachers are harsh to students making the pupils to look down on them especially when pupils answer questions wrongly, the teachers scold them calling them block head. This statement does not encourage improvement in pupils. Overcrowded classroom forces pupils to sit on bar floor during class activities making them engage in noise making and play. It also leads students in cheating during examination period. (Chibueze, 2013).

Parent factors

Some students lack home training and good parental upbringing. Due to laxity and carelessness on the part of parents, some students are spoilt from home and so unable to conform to school norms (Akintunde 2013). She continued that a child that has no respect for parents at home, will not respect teachers in school. A spoilt child is always aggressive because he is not loved by teachers.

In his study, Onwurah (2004) pointed out that the learner who behaved badly in school did not receive proper discipline at home. He said that the inability of parents to take care of their children education and welfare is very bad. Parents need to protect their children from harm but not over protection. For instance a school child whose school uniform was dirty was beaten by his class teacher for being dirty, when the child reports the case to his parents at home, the parents insulted the teacher in the presence of the child. This type of behavior contribute to indiscipline in primary schools. The one that pain most is parents encouraging their children to cheat in examination by paying some teachers to show answer to their children or overlook the nonsense they write and score the children high. This is an act of indiscipline. Furthermore, Akintunde (2013) stressed that some parents do not adequately supervise their children at home as regards to school work and the kind of peers they move with, thus make some learners not to strive to excel.

Students Factors

Students are human beings with varied characters and abilities. Some pupils are serious to learn others are not. The serious ones pay attention to lessons taught in the class. Such students do not engage in the act of indiscipline because they have focus. But the non-serious students make noise during teaching and learning exercise, engage in an unnecessary discussion absent themselves from school and sometimes leave school before the close of time. Students who do all the above, do not see the need to achieve their potentials and more so do not have focus at all. The pupils who fight, quarrel and bully their fellow pupils practice indiscipline learnt at home. Poor behavior of some pupils has made them perform poorly in academic. This refers to students who do not do assignment and class works. Students who spend too much time in play become tired and restless which make them to sleep in the class and at the end they perform poorly on academics.

School Factors

School as an institution is one of the factors responsible for indiscipline problems among students. According to Akintunde (2013) some schools rules are harsh or unrealistic for example a school that has school rules that students should wear one particular sandal to school throughout the year. The school will find it difficult to maintain the rules because students might not be able to keep to it. So if school rules are too strict or harsh and with little or no supervision can result to indiscipline. Lack of rules to adhere causes indiscipline. Sometimes rules are not set out or specified for children to follow. Akintunde (2013) opined that in such cases where rules are not specified, children are not taught and supervised to adhere to these rules, it results to indiscipline.

Society Factors

Society also contribute to indiscipline in primary schools. Society open up Cinema houses and other entertainment places like hotels where children are exposed to programmes and advertisements that can destroy their behavior. Mass media display corruptive films show pictures where young boys engage in kidnapping and young girls engage in prostitution, after watching these type of films some students are encouraged to practice it in school. Akintunde (2013) also noticed that in social media some corruptive materials such as immoral pictures, indecent dressing etc are posted which some students after watching them copy to experiment in schools.

Government Factors

Government also contribute to discipline problems in primary schools. Primary schools need fund for the maintenance of old buildings, provision of libraries, infrastructure, teachers' workshops and recreational facilities for students. Government do not fund primary schools very well to accomplish the above objectives. This attitudes contribute to indiscipline in schools. (Akintunde, 2013).

Other causes of indiscipline include:

- 1. Factoritism: teacher favour some students and others will see this favouritism as offence against them which leads to rebellion.
- 2. Rules not enforced: When a student is not punished for a offence he/she goes on to commit more offence.
- 3. Teacher students relationship: The relationship between teacher and students is essential for any learning process. If there is a breakdown for any learning process. If there is a breakdown in this relationship, indiscipline emerge (Reyers, 2006).
- 4. Lack of motivation: When students are not motivated, they tend to work in an indiscipline manner.
- 5. Bad habits: Some students have acquired bad habits from the previous teaching experience once a students for example has formed the habit of coming to school late, it will be hard for him/her to change the behavior.
- 6. Victimization: Victimization of students also results in indiscipline. The school should exploit the students.
 - Absence of code of conduct: This creates confusion and provide chance for discrimination while taking disciplinary action. A code of conduct is a set of rules outrunning the responsibilities of or proper practice for an individual.
- 7. Poor administrative leadership: A poor leader is a confusions listed of organizing things well, he scatters things.
- 8. Harsh school rules: harsh school rules are difficult to realize
- 9. Lack of extracurricular activities in school results to indiscipline.
- 10. Lack of guidance counselor in school result to indiscipline. Students need a counselor to help them to solve their own problems.
- 11. Poor funding of primary school by government result to indiscipline which affect the school, teachers and students.

Strategies for solving the problem of indiscipline in schools

Indiscipline in primary schools in Nigeria cannot be eradicated completely but it can be reduced. To reduce the frequency of indiscipline in schools, the following strategies become imperative.

- 1. The government should establish education laws, stipulating what teachers should do in the control of indiscipline in primary schools.
- 2. A school attendance monitoring device should be put in place in schools to identify indiscipline students. Data collected from it should be used as a follow up in homeschool link.
- 3. Parents and guidance should make efforts to visit their children's schools occasionally.
- 4. The school environment should be made conducive to generate interest to the students to make them avoid coming to school late.
- 5. The parents teacher association should organize enlightment programme regularly for parents and students on the danger of indiscipline.
- 6. School authority should consistently provide awards to good behaved students to create the interest and zeal to those in schools.
- 7. Hard working students should be recognized always to make dull students wake up. (Akintunde, 2013).

Conclusion

Discipline is formally acquired in the school through the process of teaching and learning activities. Discipline is intended to curb human excesses and thereby control and moderate behavior. It is a relevant advice and tool needed to improve pupils performance in the school. Research revealed that high level of discipline helps to improve children's education hence children who achieve high levels of discipline are more likely to have better results. In order words, discipline is very significant for the improvement of a Nigerian child's education to be achieved. Efforts are needed by the parents, teachers and the government to ensure that indiscipline problems in primary schools is reduced. More effort should be made to ensure that discipline is introduced in primary schools on time and ensure that pupils go to school on time, pay attention in classroom activities especially during teaching period. Teachers should endeavour to give pupils assignment to evaluate the pupils performance. All these will make pupils to be serious in their studies which will help to improve their education.

Recommendations

- 1. Teachers should plan and organize lessons to ensure that there is a routine in the classroom.
- 2. In the school, teachers should explain the rules to students for them to know what is expected of them.
- 3. Parents should not use corporal punishment in disciplining their children.
- 4. Teachers should avoid harsh discipline such as humiliation (verbal abuse, nick naming) as it will make it hard for them to respect them.
- 5. Guidance and counseling services should be used to assist students to solve their own problems.
- 6. Teachers should establish good relationship with the students to help them participate actively in teaching and learning process.
- 7. School authority should not establish harsh school rules that will be difficult to realize
- 8. Teachers should recognize, praise and reward good behaved students.

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