

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the role of educational psychology teachers in school discipline which cannot be over emphasized, school disciplinary policies and practices are essential features in life of students in schools. Conventional approaches to school discipline including conduct codes and security methods, suspension, corporal punishment and teacher's methods of managing students' behavior rely primarily on deference, control and punishment to maintain orderliness. The conceptual clarification of the terms, causes of indiscipline in schools and the role of educational psychology teachers in maintaining schools discipline are examined and it was recommended that all hands must be on deck to curtail the problem such as educational psychologists, counselors, school administrators, community, parents and government has a vital role to play and also everyone in the community should be involved, school system and community agencies especially law enforcement, medical and juvenile service.*

**Keywords:** educational psychology teachers, school discipline, suspension, corporal punishment and conventional Approaches.

### **Introduction**

The school has a clear interest in maintaining discipline and ensuring an organized and safer environment to develop student's skills to manage their own behavior so that they can make choices that help them achieve self-determined goals and improved academic performance (Gregory et al., 2010; Lee & Croninger, 1996). There have been wide variations in the approaches school authorities adopt to manage their student's behavior, ranging from strict and demanding behavioral conformity to autonomy granting and independent decision-making (Kupchik, 2010; Stronach & Piper, 2008). However, in education, classroom discipline or school discipline is a form of discipline appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools and is an aspect of classroom management and teacher student interaction. The term refers to

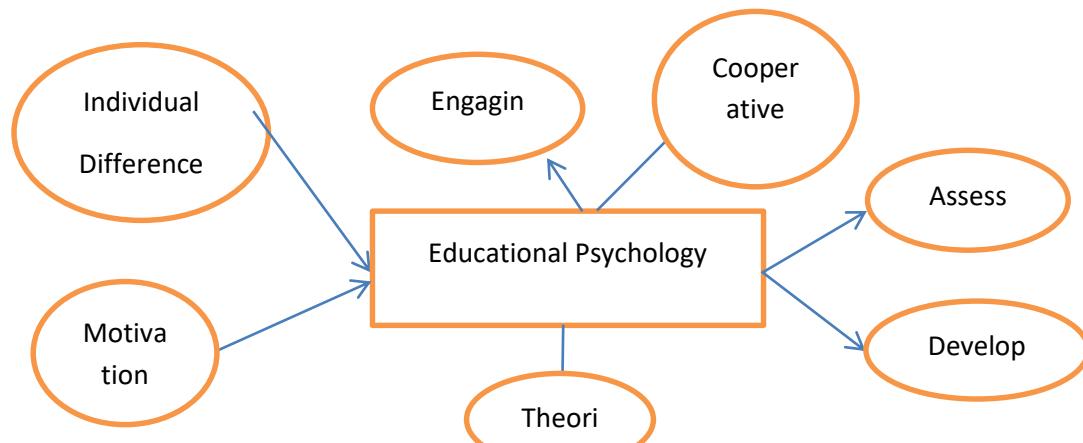
students complying with a code of behavior often known as the school rules. These rules may for example, define the expected standards of classroom behavior, clothing punctuality, social behavior and work ethic. The term may also be applied to the punishment that is the consequence of transgression of the code of behavior. For this reason, the usage of school discipline sometimes means the administration of punishment, rather than behaving within the school rules. The aim of school discipline is ostensibly, to create a safe and happy learning environment in the classroom. In a classroom where a teacher is unable to maintain order and discipline, students may become unmotivated and distressed and the climate for learning is diminished, leading to underachievement (Cotton, 2001).

### Conceptual Clarifications

#### Concept of Educational psychology

Educational psychology involves the study of how people learn, including teaching methods, instructional processes and individual differences in learning. The goal is to understand how people learn and retain new information (Kendra & Morin 2021).

Educational psychology focuses on the elements of the educational process, in addition to the processes of learning and education. It can also be defined as understanding the educational syllables, studies and scientific understanding of the human behavior that appear during the educational process. Furthermore, psychology provides methods and therapeutic strategies to solve educational problems; general problems that are related to the field of education in particular school discipline and others.



Source: Abdul M.N (2003)

#### Concept of discipline

Discipline in school is a required set of rules and regulations administered by teachers to students, which they have to obey or expect to be punished for their disobedience. Discipline sets rules as guidelines and limitations for students' school rules are necessary to set up the basis of social behavior for young minds. Most of these rules are usually established by the government. The ministry of education provides certain necessary guidelines to schools; the schools also have the power to set up their own rules and punishment for disobedience according to the international standards and the governments recommendations. These rules may include dress code, timekeeping, school schedule, work ethic, social behavior and so on. However, indiscipline in school

is the violation of school rules; it is the complete opposite of discipline and it is necessary to stress that indiscipline in school can be observed in different ways, including inside the classroom and outdoors. These violations include:

- Improper dressing
- Lateness
- Misbehavior
- Bullying
- Hooliganism
- Damaging property
- Drug Abuse
- Other immoral acts

The students' behavior policy is the fundament for adequate education in schools; therefore, it is always necessary to analyses and investigates the causes of indiscipline. (George, 2017).

### **Concept of School discipline**

School discipline or classroom discipline is therefore a breach of the management actions undertaken by the teacher to enable students learn. Basically, classroom discipline refers to a set of teacher actions that constitute organizational and management processes aimed at establishing classroom order (routines, norms, procedures, etc). Discipline in turn, refers to the actions that the teacher undertakes to end indiscipline and to restore order. It must be stressed, however, that although students are by far the most frequent source of indiscipline (Kulinna; Cothran & Regualos, 2003), there are not the only source.

The teacher or school staff may also be a source of disruption (Doyle; 1980; Good & Brophy, 2000). Thus, the issue of classroom order, school or classroom misbehavior, school or classroom disruption, school or classroom indiscipline just to name but a few. According to Watson (1995), no school is immune to violence; he suggested practical ways to increase a school's resistance and promote a safety program. Primarily, the staff must seek consensus and identify the problems and the solutions. Coming up with solutions should not be the responsibility of the individual school alone; at the outset, the district should form a district-wide safety committee. Everyone in the community should be involved. Committees for the program should be composed of representatives from the schools, community, school system, and community agencies especially law enforcement, medical, and juvenile services.

However, School violence and ineffective disciplinary practices have become perennial problems in public schools (Devine, 1996). School violence, (inclusive of disrespect for authority and school procedures) fighting, gang-like behaviors, and bringing weapons or drugs to school, are catalysts to disciplinary actions. Studies indicate that nationwide as many as 8% of boys routinely carry guns to school and in 1997, 20% of high school students had carried a gun to school (Mercy & Rosenberg, 1998). These students' behaviors have placed students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff in constant fear. Students have impeded the educational process through severe behavior infractions warranting disciplinary responses. A healthy School climate contributes to the effective teaching, learning and fewer discipline problems.

A fundamental challenge facing the school staff each day is to promote and nurture a wholesome and learning-supportive climate throughout the school. Firm, consistent and continuous commitment to the students and their education is the foundation upon

which educational elements combine to create a climate inclusive of structure and rules. An empowering school climate strengthens and promotes mutual trust, acceptance of individuality and school discipline. According to Burbank and Kauffman (1997) educators first responses to escalating discipline problems and violence should not be to install metal detectors implement zero-tolerance programme or increase the number of security guards but to create a climate of civility in the classroom.

### **Forms of school discipline**

#### **Corporal punishment**

Jacob and Hartshorne (2003) state that provisions of corporal punishment may and often do include: Using it as last resort, giving students advanced notice of implementation, making sure at least two school official(s) be present at the time of punishment, and keeping a complete record of the incident. Corporal punishment works in conjunction with *in loco parentis*, which dates back to colonial times and was discussed earlier in this review. In states where corporal punishment is legal, the only way for parents to protect their student's from potential exposure is by physically removing them from the school environment (Hinchey, 2004).

Evidence on corporal punishment clearly suggests that the use of such punishment is psychologically harmful to children and that many have suffered from sometimes-permanent damage (physical, emotional, and mental) (Jacob & Hartshorne, 2003, Hinchey, 2004). Corporal punishment is labeled as an Aversive intervention (Sachs & Armstrong, 1992). The interpretation of aversive is synonymous with terms such as unpleasant, poor, bad and harmful. Common examples of aversive behavioral interventions (still being used today) include spanking, whipping, or even electric shock (Hinchey, 2004).

#### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Suspension refers to the temporary removal of a student from his or her regular educational setting for a violation of school policies or rules. During suspension, a student is not allowed to attend school or attend school activities for a set length of time. This length of time can vary from days to weeks, depending on the violation and schools' policies. Many schools across the country utilize two forms of suspension; in-school and out-of-school suspension.

In-school suspension “instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom(s) for at least half a day but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision” Out-of-school suspension removes the student from the school grounds. Suspension means excluding a student from school for disciplinary reasons for one school day or longer. Expulsion refers to the withdrawer of students from the school environment totally after sound warning either verbal or written. However, expulsion it is the last resort or school discipline.

#### **Causes of indiscipline in schools**

George (2017) highlighted top ten (10) major causes of indiscipline in Nigerian secondary school;

- 1. Parents' Attitude:** the proper upbringing of children is first and foremost the responsibility of their parents, but a lot of people seem to forget this interesting fact! Therefore, they always expect that their problems with the children should be

blamed on the schools they attend. This is a very wrong assumption, the parent's failure to instill discipline in their children should not be blamed on the school.

- 2. **Environmental Factors:** another great cause of children's' misbehavior is the environment they grow up in. it gets quite difficult to expect any kind of discipline in children if the school is located in a bad neighborhood. Also, the emotional development of children is greatly dependent on everything that surrounds them, including the movies they see, their communication with adults, music, ecology and so on.
- 3. **Family instability:** many cases of indiscipline in secondary schools are connected with family instability. Children can be influenced by everything around them and constant family quarrels can become the cause of major psychological trauma in their life, which in turn makes them exhibit similar behaviors at school. The emotional stress which is brought on children by their families can eventually disrupt discipline in educational institutions.
- 4. **Media Influence:** in this computer age, you tend to find a lot of children whose minds have been completely poisoned by the media, which is currently filled with information and cases related to violence, crimes and different kinds of misbehavior. Children or kids tend to copy a lot of things they see in the media, but unfortunately, it is illogical and impossible to shut down the media industry! However, parents can at least limit the access of some media resources to kids of children that will greatly improve their behavior at school.
- 5. **Economic Instability in the Country:** the economic instability in the country can be a major cause of misbehavior at schools. A teacher who receives very little salary will not be very interested in teaching children properly. At the same time, parents may need to work longer and harder to make end meet, and will not have enough time for their children.
- 6. **Government policy:** another major cause of misbehavior in schools can be the government's educational policies. In a lot of causes, the government does not provide adequate institutions and rules to follow, and when this problem is combined with their indifference to the proper training of educational personnel in schools, it could lead to disaster.
- 7. **School Leaders' Professionalism:** it is impossible to maintain order in school if the school authorities (who are responsible for this order) do not obey rules themselves. The principal of any school should set a good example for their colleagues and the students. Therefore, it is always necessary to evaluate the professionalism of principal.
- 8. **Government Interference:** sometimes government interference and polices more harm than good to schools. One of the main problems with the government is that they tend to assume all schools are the same when making policies. Nigeria is a big nation which consists of many tribes; therefore, it is necessary to provide educational policies in line with the different cultures of the lands.
- 9. **Teachers' Professionalism:** another great source of misbehavior in schools is teachers' professionalism. Unfortunately, a lot of graduate pedagogues are not ready to conduct a lesson in a school. It's necessary for a government to prepare professionals who can maintain order and educate kids or children without a problem.
- 10. **Medical Problem:** a lot of children in Nigeria cannot get access to adequate psychiatric medical help, and most parents do not see the need to take their children to see psychologists. However, it is highly recommended by many health

organizations that children be taken to psychiatrists for prophylactic measures; it will help to prevent the possible misbehavior of children in future.

### **Role of educational psychology teachers in school discipline**

1. To enrich the teachers with the laws and fundamentals of the theories that explains the educational process and controls them, in order to apply them scientifically and objectively in the school environment and classroom towards school discipline.
2. Provide assistance to individuals in charge of the educational process in order to identify the inputs and elements of the educational process such as the characteristics of the learners and the educational environment and their outputs from evaluation.
3. Educational psychology offers strategies and methods that will help the teachers to understand the student's psychological problems facing them at different age level.
4. To motivate the students to be discipline and responsible for life challenging task ahead and thus to achieve the success of the educational process

### **Conclusion**

School discipline is one of the factors of good education in the country, therefore, it is necessary to train teachers to deal with their students and instill discipline at school. This issue is usually a problem for a lot of schools even in the most developed countries. Indiscipline can be significantly affecting the education of your child and the educational system.

### **Recommendations**

1. The school management should establish a written document of to whom it may concern to be fill and sign by parents or guidance of the ward(s).
2. The school management should have a working and standard rules, whosoever breaks it, he/she should be ready for the consequences of the action.
3. The school administrators, psychologists, counselors and other relevant stakeholders should take the issue of school discipline by being a role model to the students.
4. The psychologists, counselors should establish a therapy for behavioral modification to assist the students.

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