



Principals' Perception of Prevalent Behavioural Problems Among Secondary School Teachers and Implications for Effective Teaching and Educational System

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ABSTRACT

Discipline among secondary school teachers was the main focus of this study. Its objectives were to identify the prevalent behavioural problems among this category of teachers, how their principals control the problems and discuss the implication for effective teaching and the educational system. The instruments used comprised a teachers' questionnaire and an unstructured interview with the randomly selected six principals and the regional president of All Nigeria' Confederation of Principals in Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) from one of the states under study. The teachers sample included 490 male and female secondary school teachers from four states, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi and Niger selected through stratified random sampling techniques. The findings showed that lateness to class, absence from school with and without permission were the most common of teachers' disciplinary disorder. Selling things during school hours and embezzlement of school funds were found to be peculiar problems associated with female and male teachers respectively. It was concluded that teachers have variety of challenges ranging from social, physical, emotional, psychology and marital challenges that are above the pay may have led to the displayed behavioural problems which cause lack of commitment by teachers. It was recommended that there should be decentralization of staff room, recognition of positive performance, organizing in-service refresher courses, employment of only teachers with education bias, improvement in school's inspection, having a heart to heart discussion with teachers and students and finally acting like parents to the students while in the school.

Keywords: Principal, Teacher, Student. Secondary Schools, Discipline, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are recognized as the most important resource in the teaching - learning process. What a teacher does, does not do, how and where she teaches the students are considered very vital to learning success. The tone of the school is equally dependent on the amount or cooperation the teachers are prepared to give to the principal or the school administrator and how much cooperation the school Administrator is able to secure from the teachers through her management skills in curricular and co-curricular activities.

In short effective learning is very much dependent on the behaviour of the teachers and principals making the school success to be synonymous with student achievement.

Teachers' perceptions of high frequency misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour were largely consistent over time and between states. Teachers' perceived rudeness to higher authority, embezzlement of school money, covering examination malpractice, and immoral behaviour are serious misbehaviours while more extreme violent or potentially violent behaviours were not reported to occur frequently and were rated as the least serious. How the various definitions of good or bad behaviour play out in practice depends on particular social, cultural, economic, historical, material and discursive surroundings. Misbehavior can interfere with teaching of a lesson and in serious instances it could affect the educational system itself. In short effective learning is very much dependent on the behaviour of the teachers and principals making the school success to be synonymous with student achievement

Teachers are expected to be good models to their student by showing commitment and dedication to duty through being punctual to school, class and other school activities, establishing good relationship with students with the avoidance of immoral behaviours especially with female students. Teachers are expected to see to the total development of the students – socially, morally and physically. Prompt correction of erring students. All of these duties call for discipline on the part of the teachers. When the principal loses control of her teachers for whatever reasons, the school then is in trouble and the school management becomes problematic as the quality and quantity of teaching and learning declines, so does student discipline (Babalola, 2006).

In Nigeria, signals of stress in school management are increasingly rearing its ugly head so much that the government, parents and concerned Nigerians are worried. Example massive failure in Secondary School Certificate Examination and Junior Secondary School Examination particularly in English and Mathematics which render the students unregistrable in higher institution no matter how good they are in other subjects. Other problems include massive examination malpractices, truancy, drop-outs an indication of gross indiscipline on the part of the principals, teachers and students involved (FRN, 2013).

Lack of adequate facilities due to under-finding and mismanagement of available funds, inadequate parental guidance and students' irresponsible behaviours are some of the factors attributed to poor students' achievement in schools. However, teacher's attitude and behaviour towards teaching and learning have never been exempted as a factor and need to be examined (Osadolor, 2013).

The principal, though does not participate in the recruitment and selection of her staff, but once posted to her school, the teachers are then under her direct control. She assigns them duties such as subject and classes to teach as well as other co-curricular duty. The control, discipline and appraisal of the teachers are her responsibility and she is expected to work with and through the teachers and students to attain the set educational goals.

In the light of the crucial role played by teachers in the overall success of the educational system, it is important to investigate the type of behavioural or disciplinary problems prevalent among them. This study attempted to identify those problems that are peculiar to male and female teachers, how the principal deal with such problems as well as discuss their implications for effective teaching and the educational system. The following research questions were addressed.

Research Questions

1. Is there any correlation between male and female teachers' ranking of the prevalent disciplinary problems among secondary school teachers?
2. Is there any correlation in the teachers ranking of disciplinary problems peculiar to male and female teachers?
3. What are the most popular measures adopted by principals in controlling disciplinary problems among secondary school teachers?
4. What are the most effective of such measures?

Null Hypotheses (Ho)

Ho₁: There is no significant correlation between the ranking of male and female teachers of prevalent disciplinary problems among secondary school teachers.

Ho₂: There is no significant correlation in the teachers' ranking of disciplinary problems peculiar to male teachers and those of female teachers.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Five hundred copies of questionnaires were administered to secondary school teachers in Kano, Kaduna, Kogi and Niger State. Out of these, 490 questionnaires were retrieved duly complete and used for the analysis.

The sample therefore consisted of 490 teachers selected by using stratified random sampling technique. This comprises 223 and 267 male and female teachers respectively. The sample also includes six principals from the four states in view randomly selected and the regional president of ANCOPSS from one of the states whose opinions on the topic under study were used to support the questionnaire data.

The instrument used included a teachers' questionnaire, and an unstructured interview with the regional president ANCOPSS and six principals. The questionnaire consists of three sections.

Section A required the teacher to indicate his or her gender and the name of his or her school. In section B, a list of eleven (11) usual management problem among teachers were given such as rudeness to higher authority, immoral behaviour with students, quarelling among teachers openly in school, absence from school with or without permission, lateness to classes, embezzlement of school fund and many others (Table I).

The respondents were asked to rank them from 1 to 11 based on prevalence in his or her school. 1 being the most prevalent. They were also required to specify which of the problems are peculiar to male and female teachers (Table II).

In section C, a list of disciplinary measures available to the principals in controlling the teachers were provided such as verbal warning, query letter writing (Table III). These were to be ranked according to frequency of use by their own principal.

The unstructured interview with principal was intended to probe further into the use of discipline among teachers and its effects on school management and student learning to aid discussion of finding of the questionnaire data.

The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by two principals who went through it and made minor corrections; they were not included in the study. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, the reliability coefficient yielded an acceptable value of 0.85.

The questionnaire data were analyzed using Spearman Correlation statistics and percentages. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from the unstructured interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 to 3 show the result of the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire. The null hypotheses were analyzed by using Spearman rho (r).

Table I: Result of the Male and Female Teachers' Ranking of Prevalent Disciplinary Problems Exhibited by Secondary School Teachers. N = 487

S/N		Teachers Ranking			
		Male	Female	d	d ²
1.	Rudeness to higher authority	7	6.5	0.5	0.25
2.	Immoral behaviour with students (boy/girl)	9	4	5	25.00
3.	Quarrelling among teachers openly in school	4	8	-4	16.00
4.	Absence from duty without permission	3	3	0	0
5.	Absence from duty with permission	2	2	0	0
6.	Lateness to lesson	1	1	0	0
7.	Cruelty to student	8	5	3.0	9.00
8.	Laziness in record keeping	5	6.5	-1.5	2.25
9.	Embezzlement of school money	10	10.5	0.5	0.25
10.	Selling during school hours	6	9	-3.0	9.00
11.	Covering examination malpractice	11	10.5	0.5	0.25
					Σd ² = 62

Source: Field Survey 2021

$$r = 1 - \frac{6d^2}{n(n^2-1)} = 1 - \frac{6 \times 62}{11(121-1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{372}{1320} \quad r = 1 - 0.282$$

$$= 0.718$$

Table II: Result of Teachers' Ranking of Disciplinary Problems Peculiar to Male and Female Teachers.

N = 490

S/N		Teachers Ranking			
		Male	Female	d	d ²
1.	Rudeness to higher authority	3	9.0	-6.0	36.00
2.	Immoral behaviour with students (boy/girl)	5	7.0	-2.0	4.00
3.	Quarrelling among teachers openly in school	9	2.0	7.0	49.00
4.	Absence from duty without permission	4	8.0	-4.0	16.00
5.	Absence from duty with permission	7	4.5	2.5	6.25
6.	Lateness to lesson	8	3.0	5.0	25.00
7.	Cruelty to student	10	4.5	5.5	30.25
8.	Laziness in record keeping	6	6.0	0	0
9.	Embezzlement of school money	1	11.0	-10.0	100.00
10.	Selling during school hours	11	1.0	10.0	100.00
11.	Covering examination malpractice	2	10.0	-8.0	64.00
					Σd ² = 430.5

Source: Field Survey 2021

$$r = 1 - \frac{6d^2}{n(n^2-1)} = 1 - \frac{6 \times 430.5}{11(121-1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{2583}{1320} \quad r = 1 - 1.957$$

$$= 0.957$$

Table III: Principals Most Commonly used Disciplinary Measures on Secondary School Teachers in Frequency Count and Percentages

(N=490)

S/N		No. of Teachers	%
1.	Verbal warning in private	316	64.5
2.	Written queries	45	9.2
3.	Transfer to another school	20	4.1
4.	Verbal warning in public	37	7.6
5.	Compulsory retirement of erring teacher	4	0.8
6.	Dismissal from service	3	0.6
7.	Denial of promotion	55	11.2
8.	Sending written report to the Ministry of Education for disciplinary action	10	2.0
		490	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2021

The result of the analysis presented in Table I indicates a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.718$) between the male and female teachers' opinions concerning the most prevalent management problem exhibited by secondary school teacher. The most rampant being lateness to lessons, absence from duty with permission and absence from duty without permission in descending order. Ordinarily, absence with permission does

not constitute indiscipline. However, it was included in order to determine how rampant it is because of the significance of teachers' presence in the class for effective teaching. The first leg of the teaching learning process is the presence of the teacher in the class. If absent, the students are missing the chance to learn and such missed lessons are usually difficult to re-arrange for because of the tightness of the school time-table. The absence with permission was ranked second shows its prevalence in schools which does not augur well for effective teaching. According to the principals, interviewed, teacher give all sorts of excuses to obtain permission like taking their sick children or aged relatives to the hospital for treatment, family emergency matters, bereavement of loved ones and a lot more. Some are genuine others are not because few of such teachers were known to have travelled on private business matters after obtaining permission with falsehood. However, whether absence is with or without permission, the students are the losers and where it is rampant; it becomes a serious educational problem because it can affect both the quality and quantity of teaching and learning in the school.

Bojuwoye (1992) while investigating factors affecting Nigerian secondary school students' academic performance reported that the pupils pointed accusing fingers at the teachers' poor instructional strategies and that both male and female teachers were unanimous in their ranking of the first three problems suggests the widespread nature of the problems and therefore their seriousness. All male (223 or 100%) and female (267 or 100%) teachers ranked lateness to lessons as the number one disciplinary problem.

The reasons why teachers go late for their lessons can be traced to several factors such as low motivation, laziness or laissez-faire attitude or even over-work. However, the organization of Nigerian secondary schools which continued to follow the traditional approach of putting many teachers in over-crowded staff rooms create a condition whereby teachers talk away precious time on interesting story telling and go late for their lessons. Hike in petroleum dispensing to cars can make the teachers to stand on the road side waiting to ride on Okada without getting one on time, unforeseen and unplanned for circumstances can delay the teacher either from the management or personal.

Conversely, the least disciplinary problems according to teachers' ranking are covering examination malpractice and embezzling school funds. Respondents are again unanimous in their ranking (223 male and 267 female or 100% teachers). However, immoral behaviour with students was not considered a serious problem by male respondents by making it ninth whereas the female teachers think it is serious making it fourth. These findings showed that examination malpractice is either not common in internal examination or teachers are not condoning it, both of which are pleasing. According to the principals interviewed, cases of impregnating female students by teachers have reduced drastically probably due to the campaign on the use of condoms.

Table II was to find out whether the disciplinary problems displayed by male teachers are similar to those of female teachers. In other words, is there gender difference in teachers' behavioural problems in school? The result in Table II shows a strong negative correlation ($r = 0.957$) between the male teachers' disciplinary problems and those of female teachers. According to the rankings, male teachers are more likely to be involved in embezzlement of school funds, covering examination malpractice and rudeness to higher authority, while female teachers' offense are more likely to be selling goods during school hours, quarrelling among themselves openly in schools and going late for lessons. These findings are consistent with male and female characteristics. According to the regional president, ANCOPSS of one of the states in view as engaged in an informal interviewed said that the state has recorded some cases of school principals, more common among men, who have converted school money to personal use with the intention of re-paying it but found it difficult to do so. He added that there are some who deliberately mess up school accounts under the pretense of ignorance but with intent to cheat. Men of low integrity, being bread winners are more likely to have financial problems which necessitate the temptation to spend school fund.

On the other hand, this researcher's experience as a teacher in four private secondary schools showed that teachers share their problems and achievements especially about their home, children, wife, husband, in-laws etc. The staff room provides the avenue for socializing, politicking and relieving their personal

psychological problems even gossip and these and many others are the reasons why teachers sometimes ignore the change of lesson bells.

Table III shows the result of the principals most commonly used disciplinary measures on secondary school teachers. The result shows that the most frequently used measure is verbal warning in private with 316 or 64.5% of the respondents accented to it. The next mode of disciplining erring teachers, though much less used than the first is denial of promotion with 11.2% agreeing to its use. According to the principals interviewed, there can be refusal to recommend troublesome teacher for promotion through the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) form. Written queries come next 9.2% of the respondents acknowledged its use and however it is sparingly used. The least used as shown in the table is dismissal from service 0.6% which is usually a last resort if the offence is so grievous like impregnating a student. Others like verbal warning in public, reporting the teacher to the Ministry of Education or the Teaching Service Commission, transfer to another school and compulsory retirements are usually sparingly used according to the teachers and principals. On the question of effectiveness, the most effective of the control measures as opined by teachers and principals are verbal warning in private and public during staff meetings as well as denial of promotion. Teachers are adults and the need to build good rapport and cooperation with them, the principals should also limit tougher sanction like issuing query letters all the time. Verbal warning implies that the principal is taking note of the teacher's activities and he or she understands its implication on his or her APER form.

The findings of this study support Omuma (2013) earlier observation of increasing misconduct among teachers which can filter to students. This reveals hard time for school management. The principals confirmed that they have to do a lot of appealing in order to ensure that their teachers remain in school till closing time and attend their classes punctually.

Lateness to lessons and absence from school was serious offences because they hamper productivity but to curb them or other misbehaviours by teachers, the underlying causes must be thoroughly addressed. If teachers had to resort to petty trading to make ends meet then government cannot count on their full loyalty and dedication to duty (Ibiam & Ahunanya, 2012). This comment applies to all Nigerian teachers and academics that had been pauperized and turned to beggars and thus killing the educational system and its future. In those days, engaging in private business by civil servants was a serious offense punishable by law; but having reduced most workers to poverty line, the government no longer enforces it.

The government should not feel comfortable with poorly motivated teachers and should try to look into the payment of minimum wage to be a reality in all states of Nigeria. The current decay in Nigerian Educational System is one of its direct consequences. While punishment cannot be totally avoided and must commensurate with the offense, emphasis should however be towards adequate remuneration in order to ensure job satisfaction among teachers and enhance their productivity (Onyali & Modebelu, 2011).

Implications for effective Teaching and Educational System

The youths are today caught up in a wave of unprecedented and generally disturbing attitudes, and in a way, a silent guilty verdict points at a particular direction where ANCOPSS holds sway perhaps in conjunction with its primary and secondary counterpart. Schools now exist without any meaningful impact on supposed learners and uncouth school leavers now pose a threat to the society comportment of supposed learners inside and outside the school compound does not seem to reflect any impartation of knowledge. Indecent and utterly poor appearance, preponderance of foul language and anti-social activities and general irresponsible disposition all point at laxities that need to be addressed. Accepted that inconsistent government policies, constant official distractions and insufficient funding are at the root of the predicament facing schools, there is however no way anyone who has studied the situation very closely can rule out nonchalance and inadequate commitment on the part of school heads and teachers as contributory factors. The posture displayed by many people at the helm of affairs in most schools is that of indifference as long as salary payment continues, and if there is ever going to be any positive change, it must start with a paradigm shift. Teaching is a profession of great sacrifice, and whosoever finds herself

in that sector must either accept the reality or quit. Right from inception, teachers have been known to give all without any remuneration. The saying that teachers reward is in heaven is a paradox and an affirmation that whereas teachers are expected to give their best every time, they are not to look for any earthly rewards or immediate compensation so turning a blind eye to whatsoever happens in the excuse of inadequate welfare packages is tantamount to going inside rain and then complaining of getting wet. Teachers wake up and keep going without any backward glance as there is so much reward in selfless service. There are various stories of teachers who were uplifted to a level they never expected by their former students, something akin to wearing the crown of glory after life's struggles. It therefore stands to reason that all genuine efforts made to impact lives positively may never go unrewarded. There is much work to do to salvage the current situation where schools are now no more than breeding ground for hooligans, thugs, free frauds, drug addicts and cultists a direct indictment on school heads and teachers and points at how awry things have gone. School heads and teachers should resume their rightful place as learners' most cherished role model by taking proper charge of their different domains.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of this study, lateness to lessons, absence from school with or without permission are the three most prevalent behavioural problems exhibited by secondary school teachers. These three leads to one spending full time for their lessons as less quantity and possibly less quality of teaching have negative impact on them and teacher's presence is highly compulsory. In her absence, students are left on their own to do as they wish ranging from noise making, fighting, truancy, wandering about and the likes. Thus, teachers' absence not only affects teaching but also tone of discipline in the school. Lateness to lesson may suggest laissez-faire attitude to work, variety challenges known and unknown met during teaching and low motivation.

The finding that some female teachers engage in petty trading and some principals convert school fund to personal use support the already well-known fact that teachers are hard pressed for money due to poor remuneration. Many have shops in town which they return to immediately after school hours at a time when they should be marking assignments and preparing their notes of lessons.

These findings support the conclusion that due to poor remuneration of teachers and the need to make ends meet, teachers are giving less of their time or attention to teaching and the victims are the educational system and the society. For a disciplined workforce, job satisfaction is paramount while pay and productivity are linked in business management

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Decentralization of staff room: All those teaching practical related courses should move to the attached rooms meant for teachers in their different laboratories. The space of the teachers' room should be big to take not more than four or five teachers to discourage excessive time wasting, talk, selling of things around the school and help in controlling students' behaviour knowing that their teachers are nearby.
2. Recognition of Positive Performance: Behaviour that is reinforced, rewarded and recognized is likely to be repeated. Punctuality, excellent accomplishments in various areas should be recognized. Recognition could range from awarding certificates, distribution of plaques, to providing banquet dinner for these individual. This will be away of sending clear message to the teaching staff members that positive performance is appreciated and encouraged.
3. Employment of only teachers with education bias. Several reasons are often advanced why non-qualified people are employed in the school system. Some argue that the level of personnel required is in short supply from our educational systems. Education is bastardized in the sense that many of the gate crashers often say they are using the teaching job to reach to higher level but no doctor or engineer will say that. Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should improve their services on this.

4. Improve on Schools Inspection: In the present dispensation where accountability and corruption fight government investments, it is only schools' supervision and inspection that can ensure that there are no cover ups. Several principals and teachers have often been accused of lateness for lessons, absence with or without permission, illegal collection of fees, immorality and a host of others. In a situation where unprofessional are in control, use of only internal supervision will always keep government embarrassed when such atrocities eventually come to light. An improvement in external inspection and supervision will keep administrators, teachers and students alert (FRN, 2013).
5. Organization of In-service Refresher Courses: Societal dynamism has its effect on the teaching profession. The effect is that everything keep's changing. The school system cannot remain in the same spot while other things change. To avoid this, teachers in the school system must continue their education through frequent and regular updates. Government should organize workshops and conferences for teachers.
6. Constant heart to heart talk with teachers and learners should exist for many are from troubled background and homes and need as much encouragement as possible to keep going. Many girls do not know how to keep themselves safe from dangerous teachers and they fall prey to teenage pregnancy. Always treat students as your own children.
7. Many of the learners live in squalor with their parents and are oblivious of the fact that a higher life exists other than those they see around them. Principals and teachers should not be tired of counseling and always assume the position of parents to the learners that either have no parents or lack parental care. From the little earned every month principals and teachers can sow little seed into the lives of indigent learners and this may yield more dividend in the future than anyone can ever imagine. It is actually when children see their teachers as those truly concerned with their well-being that they feel very safe and are ready to face the future with much optimism.

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