EFFICIENT USE OF DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS FOR EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Discipline has been used as a parameter for measuring the operational success of the school as an organization. This paper seeks to preview major aspects of discipline and indiscipline in a school setting for effective management and administration of Nigerian schools.

Introduction

The task of helping children through the school system to live socialized lives is that which demands and in-depth understanding of the disciplinary complications that are bound to surface and the attempt to deal successfully with them to make for an effective and efficient management and administration of Nigerian schools is the trust of this paper. The paper therefore sets out to explore the concepts of discipline in schools and delves into indiscipline among pupils and staff, the principles of the and modern school disciplinary practices and makes useful recommendation as a way forward before drawing a conclusion. All these are aimed at assisting managers in a school environment.

The concept of discipline in schools

The concept of discipline as in Tar pearl (2008) is derived from the biblical word discipline which means one who follows the teachings of leader. The primary purpose of discipline is thus to make children disciplines. It is however a paradox that discipline is often used to describe aversive teachings used to curb socially undesirable behaviour patterns. Discipline is not equal to punishment; in fact punishment is one strategy out of the many disciplinary strategies.
A disciplined pupil is one who complies with the school rules and codes of conduct. Those rules may, for example, define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethic. The term discipline is also applied to the punishment that is the consequences of breaking the rules. The aim of discipline is to set reasonable limits which protect students from harm and teach them what is safe and what is not.

Student's discipline is a prerequisite to almost everything a school has to offer student (Selbert and Vormberg in Idoko 2010). They further link discipline with both the culture and climate of the school thus: "In order for a satisfaction climate to exist within a school a certain level of discipline must exist". In a school where discipline is a serious problem, for example, where students bully others, parents can transfer their children to other schools. There is a positive relationship between discipline and overall performance of students and school in general.

According to Akinboye (1997), discipline has been seriously described as:-

A system of rules for conduct
A specified set of punishment to be inflicted for breaking rule
Training of the mind and moral character
A branch of instruction

Discipline, they say, cannot be detached from teaching and learning, for it is in the conduct of teaching and learning that disciplinary problems arise. In the school organisation teachers can improve their effectiveness through effective utilization of discipline. To be effective, the teacher needs to understand four (4) important issues:

1. Understanding models on which discipline strategies are based
2. Follow a development approach of discipline
3. Use approved disciplinary practices.
Discipline has been used as a parameter for measuring the operational success of any organization or success. Discipline is in fact regarded as the lifeblood of any system. Adesina (1998) refers to discipline as when students are taught to respect the school authority, to observe the school law and regulations and to maintain established standards of behaviour. Ezocha (1985) defined education discipline as a systematic training through education or as a mode of life in accordance with the rules of the society. Akubue in Ejeh (2013) conceives discipline as punishment or enforcing obedience or orderly conduct, or motivating pupils to take responsibilities with trust and confidence.

Discipline can be defined as total obedience to rules and regulations of an organization including behaving in the culture or way of the organizations with the purpose of achieving organizations with the purpose of achieving organizational goals; in the school system, students are thought to respect the school authorities, observe rules and regulations and to maintain an established standard of behaviour.

**Form of discipline in schools**

Discipline can be positive or negative. Positive discipline involves the creation of an attitude and an organizational climate wherein employees willing conform to established norms or rules and regulations. This is brought about through positive motivation, positive socialization, which lays emphasis on expected behaviour rather than on prohibitions and on reward rather than punishment. Negative discipline involves the use of penalties or threats to elicit expected behaviour or compliance.

**Indiscipline among pupils**

These can take the forms of aggression: which comes primarily from three areas (a) impact from the home or from the community (b) within his environment (c) from the classroom. It may be triggered either by what the teacher does or doesn’t do.

Indiscipline among teaching and non-teaching staff

This may take the forms of 1) improper dressing 2) examination malpractice 3) favouritism and inconsistency in dealing with pupils disciplinary problems 4) stealing, corruption, lying and cheating 5) fighting other members of staff 6) foul language 7) skipping of topics perceived to be difficult 8) dereliction of duties 9) lateness to school/class 10) truancy 11) nonchalant/irregular writing of lesson note, scheme of work, filling of appropriate records such as diaries, attendance register, report sheet, mark e.t.c

Forms of indiscipline among school heads

1) Improper/inadequate records keeping both statutory and non-statutory 2) poor role modeling 3) lateness 4) truancy 5) laziness 6) poor dressing 7) use of improper language 8) poor administration styles not being able to use appropriate administrative style for school development 9) low focus or direction 10) poor communication to staff and students 11) inability to update knowledge.

Principles of punishment

Punishment has a necessary place in the school economy but it must be based on certain principles if it is to yield its determined effects.

1. Punishment should fit the “crime” as well as the “criminal”, this is because individuals differ from one another in the basic temperamental patterns which they inherit and in those which the subsequently develop
2. There should be no uncertainty about punishment. The element of uncertainty in punishment renders it almost inoperative and postponement is almost fatal.
3. Punishment should help the offender to improve and this condition is satisfied only when he realized his mistake, feels regret or shame for his mind not to commit the offence again, when the offender realizes that he deserves punishment, punishment becomes necessary.
4. Punishment should be inflicted to the barest possible minimum. Familiarity breeds not so much contempt, as indifference measure and should not be resorted to too often.

**Modern school disciplinary practices.**

*Detention*: this is one of the commonest punishments in schools in the developed countries such as United States, Britain, Ireland, Singapore, Canada, Australia and other countries. It requires the pupils to remain at school at a given time of the school day (such as lunch, recess or school) – or even to attend school on a non-school day, e.g. “Saturday detention held” at some US and UK schools. In the UK, the Education Act 1997 obliges a school to give parents at least 24 hours notice of a detention outside school house. This is not common in Nigerian schools but in specialized schools like “command secondary school or navy secondary schools” such practice is common perhaps because of their military nature in the schools.

*Suspension or temporary exclusion*: this is mandatory leave assigned to a students as form of punishment that can last anywhere from one day to several weeks, during which time they cannot attend regular lessons. The parents/guardians are notified of the reason for the duration of the out-of-school suspension.

*Exclusion, expulsion*: withdrawing or permanent exclusion is the removal of a pupil permanently from the school. This is the ultimate last resort, when all other methods of discipline must have failed.

*Deprivation of privilege*: it is useful and efficient form of punishment. Loss of a position, prohibition from playing any game in the school compound for a certain period e.t.c can go a long way in improving the wrong door.

*Moral punishments*: such as apologies, public or private degrading from positions e.t.c is sometimes resorted to. Great care and discernment are needed before such form of punishment is resorted to. It could never harm self respect of the wrong door.

*Self government*: it means the organisation of community life of the school in such a manner that responsibility for managing the school and running it in certain
activities is shared with pupils. It therefore, enables the pupils to learn in a practical way the principles of citizenship, co-operate living and democratic organization.

Games: the discipline which is learnt through games is self-discipline. The player willingly accepts the rules of the games and with a view to achieve his purpose that is to win the games, observe the rules and thus discipline himself. He also learns the valuable lesson of cooperation. He learns to sacrifice his interest for the interest of the group. In this way games enables us to make valuable social and individual adjustments.

Praise and blame: the teacher must be very careful in his allocation of blame or praise. Sarcasm, ridicule and abuse are cowardly weapons to employ. The lower the self-respect of the pupil tampers with his or her ego and permanently estranges him from the teacher and the school order. These forms of tongue lashing have no place in school.

Rewards: rewards are not only right and desirable but also indispensabe. Even if as few as possible their appeal should be wide as possible.

Punishment: all the above mentioned except blame and sarcasm are positive measures to secure discipline. They need checks to prevent excesses, restrictions to keep them within the limit of propriety.

Discipline procedures applicable to staff

1. Verbal reprimand: this first procedure must be pleasant but firm. It must be given in office privacy.
2. Written warning: it reprimand fails, then a written warning can be given. A copy kept in the file of staff member.
3. Reporting to school board. When thus is done a copy of the report been given to the staff concerned.

Recommendations

In order that discipline had been ensured in schools for smooth running of the teaching learning process:
1. Parents should make efforts to keep stable homes and ensure good school community relationship. Parents and teachers must be good role models.
2. Parents and guardians should provide for the needs of their children/wards in schools adequately.
3. The school curriculum should be made suitable to cater for the different categories of pupils.
4. Games and other recreational activities like drama and gardening should be provided to help build in the students the spirit of co-operation, determination, courage and other values for successful living.
5. Moral education, religious and social studies are given a place of prominence in the school.
6. There is always need for ongoing training and retraining of staff in handling of disciplinary matters.
7. Proper channels of communication must be established in the school.
8. Appropriate leadership styles must be adopted for running of schools.
9. Disciplinary committees should be put in place, well funded and supervised.
10. Staff and students must be kept busy and interesting programmes evolved.

Conclusion

Education today demands that the school administration must endeavor to function in a non-chaotic environment. Therefore for efficiency and effectiveness, he must strive to maintain good staff and student discipline. Indiscipline or discipline problem arises at the instance of any behaviour or action which deviates from the accepted mode of conduct. This denotes some form of negotiation from the established rules, regulations, laid down procedures and patterns of normal behaviour in the conduct of human or school activities which can manifest in individuals or groups. A good understanding and articulation of the topic at hand is the only way to proper postulations of ways to tackle the menace in our school system today and thus prepare our children for a brighter future. The foregoing presentation therefore only seeks to chart a course forward.
References


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