

# DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AND MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated the impact of disciplinary problems on management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Nigeria. Five research questions guided the study and five null hypotheses were formulated. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1,648 teachers from 115 public secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The sample size was 312 or 18.9% respondents (204 teachers and 108 school administrators) from 12 or 10% public secondary schools selected through multi-stage sampling procedure. A 25-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Disciplinary Problems and Management Questionnaire (DPMQ)" with reliability coefficient of 0.81 was used for data collection. Data obtained from the field study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of goodness of fit to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that there is significant impact of students' truancy and students' sexual immorality on management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that government and its agencies should stop handling cases of examination misconducts with levity and those caught should be punished according to the law. The study was then concluded that disciplinary problems impact on management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.*

**Keyword:** Disciplinary problems, management, truancy, sexual immorality

## **Introduction**

Children are often described as both the wealth and pride of a nation. The future of any nation therefore depends on the young ones who constitute the potential human resources needed for the continuity of the society. Thus, to achieve sustainable development of a society, the young population must not only be preserved, but also be disciplined. Disciplinary problems have been an issue of concern for educators, policy makers and public opinion in general over time. This owes to the outbreak of aggressiveness among peers, violence within teacher-students relationship and vandalism. All these lead to perpetual existence of problem of dropout, deviant behaviours, truancy, examination misconduct, drug abuse, lateness and poor academic performance among students (Ali, Dada & Isiaka, 2014).

Students are the most priceless assets and essential elements in any educational institution. Their presence makes the place a center of learning (Onyinye & Tyough, 2018). It is absolutely necessary therefore to direct students to exhibit acceptable attitudes and behaviours within and outside the school environment. In order to achieve an organized and peaceful school environment, which maintains law and order, school management specifies rules and regulations to guide the activities of students in order to be a model for each other's (Mohapi, 2013). Aguba (2010) notes that discipline is needed to produce a breed of well cultivated youths who would develop not only respect for themselves, but also for others in the school and society. Aguba emphatically observes that discipline is externally induced in individuals who do not succumb to established rules and regulations out of personal volition but out of fear of punishment or sanction.

Discipline in any educational institution includes any approach used by teachers and management of schools to overcome the problems of the school environment. The formulation of rules and regulations by the school management is to guide the general conduct of students against practice of examination misconduct, cult-related activities, sexual immorality, harassment, threat and intimidation of teachers and students, supply or use of illegal drugs as well as truancy among students. All these have become serious concerns to stakeholders of education in our society today. So, discipline is aimed at improving behaviour in general (Sharma, 2009). Amado and Freire (2010) posit 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 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.

Student's discipline is a pre-requisite to almost everything a school has to offer the students. This is because a school without discipline is not worthwhile. Zubaida (2009) defines discipline as respect for school rules and regulations and maintenance of an established standard of behaviour. This implies control and respect for oneself and others. Ngwokabuenu (2015) refers to discipline as the ability and willingness to do what one ought to do without external control. Hence, one can say that discipline is internally motivated within the individual and depends on the state of mind of an individual. It is voluntary and an individual deliberately make efforts to conform to an established code of conduct. Beebeejaun (2010) posits that discipline is to teach students manners on how to show respect to school authorities.

It is therefore said to be a strategy adopted by the school management to do away with disciplinary problems such as truancy, fighting and absenteeism. Asiyai (2014) sees disciplinary problem as what does not conform to the societal value and norms. Agbenyega (2010) submits that a disciplinary problem is any act that diverges from the acceptable societal norms and values. It is a violation of school rules and regulations which is capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system. The author add that disciplinary problems are forms of destructive and anti-social behaviours which contribute to high stress levels of educators such as resistance to teacher's directives, argumentativeness or procrastination, defiance or swearing at the teachers' and frequent frustrating behaviour such as calling out and talking out of turns. Ponfua (2015) comments that an undisciplined child is an uncontrollable child and can do any damage in school when he does not get what he wants. The author observed that not a single day passes without a

report of disciplinary problems being perpetrated by teenagers of secondary schools thereby jeopardizing their academic activities. Such unethical and unacceptable behaviour of students include absenteeism, sexual harassment, fighting and truancy.

Timothy (2010) defines disciplinary problems as unacceptable forms of behaviours such as keeping of bushy hair, lateness to school, indecent dressing, littering the school environment with urine, papers and other objects, noise making during class activities, theft and refusal to conform to assigned tasks by the school authorities, insubordination, cheating and bullying. Others are: gangsterism, smoking in the toilet, missing lessons, playing matches in class rooms, making rude remarks about teachers, throwing pencils and pens across the class rooms, talking when educators are talking, painting graphics on corridor walls and damaging class room fittings that are exhibited by some students.

The problem of indiscipline permeates all facets of the life of man. School discipline has two main objectives. The first is to ensure the safety of staff and students and the second is to create an environment conducive to learning. Acts of indiscipline occasioned by students' misconducts involving violent and criminal behaviour defeat the golden goals of education. In many educational institutions today and particularly secondary schools, there has been a tremendous increase in cases of indiscipline among students. Student disciplinary problems seems to be everywhere in the nations secondary schools (Belle, 2014). According to Nakpodia (2010), students' discipline is an agent of socialization. With the recent increase in enrolment of schools, students' disciplinary problems tend to accentuate thereby causing more burdens on teachers and school managers.

Disciplinary problems in secondary schools have a major worry to parents, educational administrators as well as the community especially. It is perceived that students' disciplinary problems could lead to serious consequence on the effective management of secondary schools. Most times, students' deviant behaviours in school make teachers react emotionally to the extent of using punishment which does not really curb the behaviour but worsens it and could sometimes lead to riot in the school. This could affect the stability of good school administration. This is because the school is supposed to be a learning environment where the transmission and acquisition of desirable and relevant learning experiences that are worthwhile for a change of behaviour of learners take place. Most times, parents do not assume their responsibilities as primary educator to their children (Khumalo, 2012).

In any society, the fostering of discipline is a necessary condition on the maintenance of law and order. It is a pre-requisite for promotion of political, social and economic developments. A society or nation achieves discipline to a large extent if its various organs inculcate discipline on the youth. Discipline is very essential in order to ensure loyalty of the citizens and to the social and economic developments of the country. One of the objectives of education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2012) as revised is to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes to learners. Therefore, there is need to get at the root causes of indiscipline among students to minimize ugly situations in our secondary schools and to make educational system what it ought to be. Five factors were identified as major causes of disciplinary problems in secondary schools which include: the family, learners' attitudes, the educators' attitudes, the principals' authority, leadership and peer group pressure (Belle, 2018).

Zuamo (2013) defines management as the principal activity that makes a difference on how well organizations such as schools serve people affected by them. It is therefore

regarded as specialized principles and techniques that could be applied in solving different problems that may arise when there is contact between human and material resources. According to Akpakwu (2008), management deals with the co-coordinating, controlling, directing, planning and organising all the educational resources in order to achieve objectives of the school. According to Babalola (2012), management is described as a set of activities that maintain an organization. It concerns itself with the direction of the activities of people working within organizations in their reciprocal relations in the manner that organizations' purposes may be attained. Management of resources therefore involves planning, controlling, directing our skills, time, talent and activities in schools and other organizations for the purpose of achieving the set goals and objectives of the schools.

The school as an institution is a social organization designed to serve the needs of the society. No school was ever operated in a social vacuum. It is to this fact that Alphonsus (2014) sees management of secondary schools as a process which entails creating, stimulating, unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources of the school to accomplish predetermined educational objectives. The author further observes that management of secondary schools requires the organization and administration of both human and material resources on a day-to-day basis for the achievement of set objectives. It therefore involves the coordination of efforts of teachers and students to achieve educational goals. Iorun (2010) sees management of secondary schools as a process whereby the proprietor/proprietress or manager of a school organizes people in such a way to achieve set objectives and aims of the school.

Students' indisciplinary behaviours in schools today might affect the management of secondary schools. This is because cult related activities of students sometimes lead to destruction of school properties, killing of both students and teachers which could lead to their arrest by the law enforcement agents thereby resulting to distractions in the school academic activities. It is often observed that students who indulges in truancy spend most of their time in cult activities, drug taking, fighting and sexual acts. In a school where these evil activities are found, it might affect students' academic activities.

It is obvious therefore, that whatever the case, discipline in secondary schools seems to be a matter of concern to every individual who has the interest of the youths at heart. The adolescent students are known to indulge in different kinds of anti-social activities such as cultism, examination misconduct, drug abuse, truancy, sexual immorality, beating up of parents and teachers. Thus educational managers today may become afraid to punish or correct their students even when there is wrong display of such in-disciplinary acts. It is against this background that the researcher is moved to investigate disciplinary problems and management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, with emphasis on variables such as truancy and sexual immorality.

Truancy is another disciplinary problem that could affect management of secondary schools. It is one of the major dishonesty or delinquent behaviours committed by students in contemporary Nigeria irrespective of school type, gender and location. Sara (2014) observes that truancy is a serious delinquent behaviour characterized by students that often leads to other deviant behaviours. It is the act of keeping away from school during school hours with neither the permission of their parents nor the school authorities with the view to avoid punishment, dodging specific functions and neglecting certain lawful school duties. The author further explains that although some truants have personal issues that make regular school attendance difficult such as chronic physical health problem, faulty socio-

economic challenges like helping the younger siblings or contributing extra income for the up-keep of the family, others could be the social setting itself or academic needs that are not being met. Truancy could push one out of school, becomes daring and turn into armed robber or murderer. If this act is not checked it would get to an undesirable level and the society will lose lives and live in perpetual fear.

Sexual immorality could influence the management of secondary schools. At the secondary school level, most female students are at the adolescent stage, a developmental period which can decide a person's current and future health. This is because it is at this point that individuals begin to make independent decisions about health-risk and health-enhancing behaviours. According to Sara (2015) physiological, psychological and cognitive changes associated with sexual dispositions are experienced during this period. Risky pre-marital sexual behaviour, which is one of the major problems of adolescence, is a result of the developmental characteristics of adolescence. Monday (2015) defines sexual immorality as a form of sexual intercourse with the scientific name for "having sex" and "making love". Deczrlo (2010) sees sexual immorality as the granting of sexual access on a relatively indiscriminate basis for payment either in money, gift or for personal satisfaction. Since the act has to do without the legal relationship of husband and wife existing between the parties involved, it is regarded as unlawful and evil/bad by the society. Deczrlo observes that unwanted pregnancy, abortion, acquiring Sexually Transmitted Diseases, single parenthood, barrenness as well as poor academic performance are some of the inevitable consequences of sexual immorality among male and female students in the society. Many young ladies today have stories to tell and are left alone to keep babies because they could not wait.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education stakeholders have observed that students' disciplinary problems in secondary schools have negative effects on students' moral upbringing. Students seem to be uncontrollable and highly disrespectful to themselves, teachers, parents, school administrators and to the society at large. The issue of disciplinary problems in secondary schools today is certainly a matter of serious concern to the relevant stake holders of secondary education. In Benue South Senatorial District, the situation has become a major concern to parents and those in the community. It has been observed by the current researcher that in-disciplinary behaviours such as examination misconduct, drug abuse, truancy, cult activities and sexual immorality among students in secondary schools are being perpetrated by students in the area of study. This could seriously impede the effective management of secondary schools.

Most often, students' disciplinary acts are premeditated to cause maximum destruction. For example, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, some secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, through their union, staged a protest over the inability of the government to provide a conducive learning environment which resulted to destruction of lives and properties in the study area. This has serious negative effects on the entire communities since it affects all their activities. In order to avoid future re-occurrence of an ugly situation such as this, the entire communities through the various Parent Teacher Association of each school held an emergency meeting which yielded positive result. Funds were raised and used for renovation of dilapidated structures. The government through the Ministry of Education were equally prompt in action as a result by providing school facilities such as good library and laboratory equipment, more classrooms and good lighting system in order

to reduce in-disciplinary behaviours. This study therefore, sought to investigate the impact of disciplinary problems and management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of staff development programmes on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. establish the impact of students' truancy on management of secondary schools.
2. find out the impact of students' sexual immorality on management of secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the impact of students' truancy on management of secondary schools?
2. How does students' sexual immorality impact on management of secondary schools?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Students' truancy has no significant impact on management of secondary schools.
2. Students' sexual immorality has no significant impact on management of secondary schools.

### **Research Method**

This study adopted descriptive survey design. According to Emaikwu (2013), descriptive survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied in their natural setting by collecting, analysing and interpreting data from people considered to be a representative sample of the entire population. The study was carried out in Benue State. The design is considered suitable for this study because it permits the collection of original data from the respondents themselves, describes the present conditions as they exist in their natural settings and allows only a representative of the population to be sampled. The population of the study comprised 1,648 teachers from 115 public secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The sample size was 312 or 18.9% respondents (204 teachers and 108 school administrators) from 12 or 10% public secondary schools selected through multi-stage sampling procedure. A 25-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Disciplinary Problems and Management Questionnaire (DPMQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, one from Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics and Science Education, another from Educational Management, in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. A reliability study was conducted on 50 teachers in two secondary schools in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State that were not part of the sample for the study and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained which affirmed that the instrument is reliable and can be used for field study. This agreed with Emaikwu (2013) who asserted that the reliability of 0.60 and above is considered adequate to use an instrument for field study. The data collected was analysed using simple descriptive

statistics of mean scores and standard deviation to answer the two research questions. A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of goodness of fit at .05 level of significance. The decision was that, if the calculated ( $\chi^2$ ) value was greater than the p-value, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted and vice versa.

### Results and Findings

This section presented and discussed the results of the study.

#### Research Question 1:

What is the impact of students' truancy on management of secondary schools?

**Table 1:**

***Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Impact of Truancy on Management of Secondary Schools***

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\delta$	Decision
1.	Truancy brings about increased students' dropout leading to reduction in students' population in the school.	167	49	39	45	3.13	1.13	Agree
2.	The school management finds it hard to give group assignment in a case of increase students' truancy.	134	55	67	44	2.93	1.12	Agree
3	Truancy in a school demoralizes teachers from regular attendance to their lessons thereby making it difficult for head teachers' coordination of activities.	160	34	57	49	3.02	1.18	Agree
4	Truancy retards teachers' ability to cover their scheme of work.	175	24	30	62	3.04	1.24	Agree
5	Truancy renders some school functions unperformed within the stipulated time.	161	64	19	56	3.10	1.15	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						<b>3.04</b>	<b>1.16</b>	Agree

**Source:** Field Survey (2020).

Table 1 indicated that mean scores of the respondents on impact of students' truancy on management of secondary schools as 3.13, 2.93, 3.02, 3.04 and 3.10 with corresponding standard deviations of 1.13, 1.12, 1.18, 1.24 and 1.15 respectively. Based on the criterion mean set of 2.50, all the items were above the cut-off point. This indicates that the respondents agreed that truancy brings about increased students dropout leading to reduction in students population in the school and teachers finds it hard to give group

assignment in a case of increased students' truancy. The respondents reported that truancy in a school demoralizes teachers from regular attendance to their lessons thereby making it difficult for head teachers' coordination of activities. They agreed that truancy retards teachers' ability to cover their scheme of work and it renders some school functions unperformed within the stipulated time. The cluster mean of 3.04 with standard deviation of 1.16 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that students' truancy has impact on management of secondary schools.

**Research Question 1:** How does students sexual immorality impact on management of secondary schools?

**Table 2:**  
**Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Impact of Sexual Immorality on Management of Secondary Schools**

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\delta$	Decision
6	Increased cases of sexual immorality among students do tarnish the good image of the school.	178	61	28	33	3.28	1.03	Agree
7	Teachers are seduced into sexual act with female students which may lead to school management problems.	156	57	38	49	3.07	1.14	Agree
8	Sexual immoral behaviour of some students easily spreads dangerous diseases among other students and makes school control difficult for management.	170	34	60	36	3.13	1.11	Agree
9	School management loses its moral value and respect because of increased sexual immorality among students.	150	40	66	44	2.99	1.15	Agree
10	Schools with high incidence of students' sexual acts become an attractive place for ritual attack.	170	38	40	52	3.09	1.18	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						<b>3.12</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Field Survey (2020).

Table 2 showed that the mean scores of the respondents on the impact of sexual immorality on management of secondary schools as 3.28, 3.07, 3.13, 2.99 and 3.09 with corresponding standard deviations of 1.03, 1.14, 1.11, 1.15 and 1.18 respectively. All the items are above the set criterion mean of 2.50. This means that the respondents agreed that increased cases of sexual immorality among students tarnish the good image of the school



and teachers are seduced into sexual act with female students which leads to school management problems. They reported that sexual immoral behaviour of some students easily spread dangerous diseases among students and makes school control difficult for the management. School management loses its moral value and respect because of increased sexual immorality among students. The respondents also agreed that most often, schools with high incidence of students' sexual acts become an attractive place for ritual attack. The cluster mean of 3.12 with standard deviation of 1.12 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows students' sexual immorality has impact on management of secondary schools.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 3:** Students' truancy has no significant impact on management of secondary schools.

**Table 3:**  
*Chi-square on Impact of Students' Truancy on Management of Secondary Schools*

Opinion	Observed N	Expected N
SA	167	75.0
A	49	75.0
D	39	75.0
SD	45	75.0
Chi-square	151.15 <sup>a</sup>	
Df	3	
Asymp. Sig.	0.00	

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 75.0

Table 3 shows that chi-square=151.15<sup>a</sup>, df=3; P=.00<0.05. Since probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that Students' truancy has no significant impact on management of secondary schools is therefore rejected. This means that students' truancy has significant impact on management of secondary schools.

**Hypothesis 5:** Students' sexual immorality has no significant impact on management of secondary schools.

**Table 4:**  
*Chi-square on Impact of Students' Sexual Immorality on Management of Secondary Schools*

Opinion	Observed N	Expected N
SA	178	75.0
A	61	75.0
D	28	75.0
SD	33	75.0
Chi-square	197.04 <sup>a</sup>	
Df	3	

Table 4 indicates that  $\chi^2=197.04^a$ ,  $df=3$ ;  $P=.00<0.05$ . Since probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that students' sexual immorality has no significant impact on management of secondary schools is therefore rejected. This implies that students' sexual immorality has significant impact on management of secondary schools.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The first finding of this study revealed that students' truancy has significant impact on management of secondary schools. It was discovered in the field that truancy contributes greatly to the problem of students' dropout leading to reduction in students' population in the school. Also, the result showed that the negative impact of students' truancy has made it difficult for the school management to give group assignment as it is supposed to. The study found that students' truancy demoralizes teachers from regular attendance to their lessons. This makes it difficult for head teachers' coordination of activities. The study also discovered that truancy do retards teachers ability to cover their scheme of work and truancy renders some school functions unperformed within the stipulated time. This result confirmed with the result of Ngohi and Bulama (2018) who found that examination phobia, peer influence, single parenting and lack of texts books were responsible for causes of truancy. This result also supports the findings of Aremu, Oduola and Oladeji (2015) who stated that self-concept was positively and significantly correlated with truancy. This result also agrees with Onyinye and Tyough (2018) who found that student truant behaviour significantly influences the management of secondary schools.

The second finding of the study showed that students' sexual immorality has significant impact on management of secondary schools. The finding showed that sexual immorality among female students has been one factor responsible for their drop out of school. This study revealed that increased cases of sexual immorality among students tarnishes the good image of the school and often times, teachers are seduced into sexual act with female students which may lead to school management problems. The implication is that sexual immoral behaviours of students easily spreads disease among other students and makes school control difficult for the management. School management loses its moral value and respect as a result of students' sexual activities in schools. This study supports the finding of Monday (2015) who reported that lack of parental care, over pampering of children, moral weakness of parents, economic hardship, problems of accommodation and poverty were responsible for the high rate of sexual immorality among female Christian students. This study also agrees with Oluwatoyin and Oyetunde (2014) who reported that the period of risk of unprotected sexual activity has its attendant adverse consequences of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, acquiring of sexually transmitted infection diseases STIs/HIV which are on the increase. This study supports the finding of Ofok (2010) who reported that sexual harassment in school include sexual comment, jokes, gestures, touch and pinch as sexual language. The scholar also found that student's sexual harassment is among the factors hindering academic progress among youth.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that there is significant impacts students' truancy and students' sexual immorality on management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. This implies that disciplinary problems have impact on

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## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended as follows;

1. Regular marking of attendance registers by teachers should be enhanced and students who absent themselves from school without permission from the school management should be seriously dealt with so as to serve as a deterrent to other students.
2. Government should improve the economy, censor magazines and video films that are immoral and increase public awareness on the evils of sexual immorality. The promotion of immoral programmes and films by the media should be discouraged by the government, since students are often the first victims of such.

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