
CAN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PREDICT ADOLESCENT STUDENTS PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT? LESSONS FROM BUI DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to find out the influence of school discipline on the personality development of students. Specifically, it sought to examine how corporal punishment influences students' personality development; investigate whether suspension as concerns school discipline has an influence on students' personality development; and ascertain if students' expulsion from school influences their personality development. Three hypotheses were formulated as follows: corporal punishment has no significant influence on students' personality development; there exist no significant relationship between suspension of students from school and their personality development; and expulsion of students from school significantly affects their personality development. The study adopted a descriptive survey on a population of 1,592 students. A sample of 388 were selected using the simple randomly sampling and subsequently the convenient sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a 20-items closed ended questionnaire. The chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that at a 0.05 level of significance and 6df, there is a significant relationship between corporal punishment and regulations and students' personality development with calculated $\chi^2(91.821)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026); there is a significant relationship between school suspension from school and students' personality development with calculated $\chi^2(51.791)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026); and that there is a significant relationship between expulsion of students from school and students' personality development with calculated $\chi^2(161.917)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026). It was then recommended that the government should provide teachers and school administrators with lots of resources necessary to develop safe and effective methods for encouraging positive students' behaviour.

KEYWORDS: School, Discipline, Personality Development, Adolescent, Cameroon

BACKGROUND AND THE PROBLEM

A school is an educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers and administrators. Schools are the central places where children and youths get access to formal education. Most countries have systems of formal education, which are commonly compulsory. Students' progress through a series of schools, that include primary school for young children, secondary school for teenagers who have completed primary education, high school and higher institution where higher education is taught, also commonly called a university college or university.

Students do not only get formal education from schools but schools also help them to build up their personality. Personality can be explained as the set of individual differences that can be identified among people by their interactions, emotions, cognition, and behaviour patterns (Heinström, 2000). To Nsamenang (2003), personality is that abstract quality in a human being which is associated with and manifested by a person's ability to do things well at the right time, in the right circumstance, without or with minimum supervision.

Personality is what makes a person a unique person, and it is recognizable soon after birth. Personality has several components: temperament, environment, and character (Damon & Eisenberg, 2000). Temperament is the set of genetically determined traits that determine the child's approach to the world and how the child learns about the world. A second component of personality comes from adaptive patterns related to a student's specific environment. Most psychologists agree that these two factors—temperament and environment—influence the development of a person's personality the most. Temperament, with its dependence on genetic factors, is sometimes referred to as "nature," while the environmental factors are called "nurture"(Damon & Eisenberg, 2000).

When parents and school authorities understand how students respond to certain situations, they can anticipate issues that might be problematic. They can prepare the student for the situation or in some cases they may avoid a potentially difficult situation altogether. Parents and school administrators who know how to adapt their leadership approach to the particular temperament of their children can best provide guidance and ensure the successful development of their children's discipline and personality.

The importance of human personality was also recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Right in its Article 26, which states that "education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom." In Cameroon, the 1998 law of orientation implements this as it stipulates clearly in the objectives of education. This law laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon states amongst others in part 1 section 4 that the general purpose of education shall be to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and their smooth integration onto society bearing in mind prevailing economic, socio-cultural, political and moral factors. One of the means to attain this as stipulated in section 5 article 7 is that the learner should be able to develop creativity, a sense of initiative and the spirit of enterprise. The quality of instruction should therefore be oriented towards attaining this objective at all levels of the educational system (Agborbechem, 2016). Teachers from very different schools, primary and secondary, rich and poor, private and public, feel that learners are becoming more unruly and less respectful than they used to be in the past. They argue that the lack of discipline among learners makes it impossible to teach effectively. Because neither alternatives to corporal punishment nor appropriate in-depth training in prescribed methods of discipline have been

provided to educators, many have come to believe that there are no effective alternatives (Rothbart, 2011).

Within the school, personality of students can be developed positively or negatively. The development of their personality is influenced by a number of disciplinary styles in the school environment which include corporal punishment, restorative justice, suspension, expulsion. The level of discipline in a school has a great part to play when it comes to developing students' personalities. Therefore, school administrators and teachers should enforce acceptable behaviour in their students. This is to say that, for the personality of students to develop in a school, discipline has a vital role to play. Scarlett (2015), defines School discipline as actions taken by a teacher or the school organization towards a student (or group of students) when the student's behavior disrupts the ongoing educational activity or breaks a rule created by the teacher or the school system. Discipline can guide the children's behavior or set limits to help them learn to take care of themselves, other people and the world around them. The level of discipline implemented in a school can determine the level of personality development in students. Discipline in schools has to be implemented by teachers, school administrators, educational stake holders and students inclusive. Discipline according to Yhayeh (2015) is the ability and willingness to do what one ought to do without external control.

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulation of children and to the maintenance of order in schools. The aim of school is, ostensibly, to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom (Yhayeh, 2015). The term 'discipline' is also applied to the punishment that is the consequence of breaking the rules. discipline as a branch of knowledge, training that develops self-control, character, orderliness or efficiency, strict control to enforce obedience and treatment that controls or punishes and as a system of rules (Bear, 2009).

School discipline is the action taken by a teacher or the school organization towards a student (or group of students) when the student's behaviour disrupts the ongoing educational activity or breaks a rule created by the teacher or the school system.

Discipline is internally motivated within the individual and depends on the state of mind of an individual. It is voluntary and an individual deliberately makes efforts to conform to an established code of conduct. However, Yhayeh (2015) while emphasizing Douglas McGregor's theory x, maintained 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 (Bear, 2009). Principals as administrative head or chief executive of the institution who plan, control, command, organise and coordinate all the activities that take place in the school and the principal is the president or ex officio of the disciplinary council; to try students whose conduct is not satisfactory (Mbua, 2003).

Discipline can be viewed as a means of control, of which there are generally three kinds (1) Coercive control, which is based on the use of threats (2) Utilitarian control, which is based on the use of material rewards; and (3) Symbolic control, which focuses on prestige, esteem or social symbols such as love and acceptance.

There are numerous types of school discipline that may be imposed if a student engages in improper conduct. An academic sanction involves keeping a child back in the same class or withholding a certificate. It is well accepted that academic sanctions should not be imposed for disciplinary misconduct. Academic sanctions are only permitted if misconduct is directly related to academic performance. If a student engages in misconduct, they may be transferred to another school. Depending upon the state and the school district, a school transfer may or may not be an option as a type of discipline.

The zero-tolerance approach to noncompliance and misbehaviour exclusively focuses school discipline on punishment—suspension, expulsion, alternative education, “sentencing manuals” (i.e., extensive codes of conduct for minor to major behavioral infractions), and the constant policing of student behavior (Rice, 2009). Suspension or temporary exclusion is a mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one day to several weeks, in Cameroon last from one day to a maximum of 8 days. During this time the student is not allowed to attend regular school lessons. Suspension can further be divided in to in-school suspension (ISS) and out-school suspension (OSS).

In-School Suspension (ISS) or On-Campus suspension (OCS), sometimes known as “internal exclusion/isolation” is an alternative setting that removes students from the classroom for a period of time, while requiring students to attend school and complete their work (Rice, 2009). This form of punishment is often chosen because it provides supervision and structure to the students' day to day works, whereas a student who is given an off-campus suspension receives essentially an unscheduled holiday, as off-campus suspension is widely considered to be nothing more than a pleasant reward to most students, instead of the punishment that it is intended to be, and also gives students more of a reason to misbehave on purpose, to those who would prefer to be suspended out of school, rather than being kept in school. Generally, a student assigned to on-campus suspension spends the entire school day in the designated OCS location, completes work submitted in advance by the student's teachers, and is monitored by school staff (Blyth & Milner, 1993).

Out school suspension on the other hand, is a temporal sending off from school of a student or group of students for a period of days or weeks as a punitive measure, the suspended students are sent out of the school compound to serve their punishment and only return to school for regular classes after the punishment date is over (Blyth & Milner, 1993). The student's parents or guardians are usually notified as to the reason for and the duration of the suspension. Also, upon returning to school, it is

often mandatory that the student, his/her parents/guardians, and a school administrator have a meeting to discuss and evaluate the matter. If the suspension is related to the symptoms of a disability or the student is receiving special education or mental health services, students may be required to consult their case manager, counsellor, or school psychologist before and/or after the suspension.

Expulsion or permanent exclusion is the complete removal or banning of a student from a school system due to persistent violation of that institution's rule and regulation or in extreme cases. Expel means to drive out by force (Godfrey, 2013). Expulsion is a punishment used by the school to repress unwanted behaviour. It happens when a student is removed from the school forever. Expulsion is different from suspension, whereby expulsion is much more serious and has a lasting effect on someone (Blyth & Milner, 1993). Most students when expelled turn to end their education at that level, pushing most of them to continue with their bad conduct. Stealing, smoking, bullying, and all kinds of truancy become the other of their lives nevertheless this form of discipline has forced some students to rethink and redirect their lives toward a positive direction and has also acted as a warning to all other students with behaviour problems to change from their negative ways (Blyth & Milner, 1993).

In some cases, students who go against rules and regulation kept in place for the smooth functioning of the institution are severely flogged or whipped (inflict physical pain). This is to cause the student to avoid such behaviour and stay on track. Due to several critics this form of discipline has been banned in most countries all over the world including Cameroon. Yet still practiced at a lower rate in some institutions especially basic levels. Corporal punishment or physical punishment is a punishment intended to cause physical pain on a person. It is most often practiced on minors, especially in home and school settings. Common methods include spanking, paddling and caning.

The implementation of discipline in students has been an issue since the colonial era and the inception of public education. In 1770, William Blackstone applied the phrase *in loco parentis*, which means in place of the parents, to educators. *In loco parentis* gave teachers the abilities to act in the place of the parents in respect to disciplinary actions (Rice, 2009). It is worth noting that, discipline was implemented in schools in the early 1900s, and with it came corporal punishment. During the Victorian era, parents believed children who were lazy and insubordinate were alienating themselves from God, and teachers were thought to be the perfect authority figure to ensure that the feeling of not being part of society did not occur (Blyth & Milner, 1993). During this period, corporal punishment was viewed as necessary to produce citizens who conformed to the norms of the society, beat out sin, and ensures learning occurred (Blyth & Milner, 1993). Discipline in schools is a very important aspect towards academic excellence, while lack of it usually gives rise to a lot of problems such as lack of vision, poor time management, irregular attendance and punishment. It also plays a vital role in the acquisition of the sense of responsibility in learners as well as educators. Effective discipline helps in the achievements of goals, expectations and responsibilities in students (Rice, 2009). Good discipline creates a good image of the school and prepares learners for the future.

Through discipline, students' personalities will be well moulded and disruptive behaviour, poor manners of approach and poor physical appearance in learners will be eliminated. The implementation of effective discipline at school is a key for the learner in his journey into adulthood and also to become a desired person in society through his personality.

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory argued that at adolescence stage, life gets more complex as one attempts to find his own identity, struggles with social interactions and grapples with moral issues. Most secondary school students are at this stage which is a volatile stage of human development and this may cause indiscipline (Yhayeh, 2011). This is because if one is unsuccessful in navigating this stage, he experiences role confusion and upheaval. Therefore, in an environment where leadership and guidance is not effectively offered, the discipline of the students becomes greatly jeopardized leading to uncondusive working and learning environment (Eniola, 2003).

At a policy level, the government of Cameroon attempted to fill the vacuum left by the banning of corporal punishment in two ways. It introduced school-level codes of conduct and allowed parents an unprecedented level of involvement in school affairs. The new approach involved adopting a different philosophy towards punishment – one that stressed consensus, non-violence, negotiation, and the development of school communities (Mbua, 2003). School governing bodies (SGBs), of which parents constitutionally comprised the majority of members, were constituted as a major vehicle for the democratic transformation of schools. Since their inception, SGBs have had a key role to play in policy development, including in the development of a code of conduct. Parents, thus, have come to play an important, and indeed critical, role in school disciplinary policy (Eniola, 2003).

Thus, as far as school discipline is concerned, corporal punishment is unlawful in schools under Article 35 of the Law of Cameroon National Education Guidelines No. 98/004 1998 although the law has not proposed alternative non-violent discipline conflict measures that will not jeopardize the student- administrator relationship. However, corporal punishment is still seen practiced in some private and government schools especially, those located out of the city towns. The government also went further to propose that, school discipline may apply outside of school hours and off school premises where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. Additionally, every school administration has the duty to put in place rules and regulations to ensure the smooth functioning of these institutions and create an effective learning environment. Disciplinary councils are also put in place in schools to discipline defaulters with sanctions corresponding to their crimes or offences committed. Sanctions such as hard labour, suspension of students from classes, and total expulsion are given to defaulters corresponding to the crimes committed at school.

The school, through its different personnel, has the responsibility to make students succeed in their academics and also to elevate their personality standard through school discipline so that they can become better nation builders and future leaders. The government has noticed the importance of

school administrators in administering discipline and building up personalities of students and this is why the Government through Decree No.2001/041of 19 February 2001 in respect for Public Educational Establishments, outlines the duties of the school administration. To achieve this, the Government has placed authorities in schools such as Discipline Masters whose responsibilities are to ensure that the students obey the school rules and regulations and apply appropriate sanctions to defaulters so as to correct their errors and mould their personalities. Also, Order No. 68/B1/1464/MINEDUC/CAB of 19/02/2001 also outlines the program of Educational Counselling in primary and secondary education. Under the authority of a guidance counsellor, the educational counselling service shall be responsible for counselling, information and orientation of students in accordance with skills, interest and needs of the students.

The necessity of school counsellors has led to them being posted in secondary schools in order to assist students in their academics, career choices and personality development through counselling sessions and continuous follow up to check the progress of the students. School counsellors are not yet available in primary schools but teachers play the role of counsellors. Also the putting in place of the Student Government in secondary and high schools also helps the school administration in governing the entire student body and improve on the level of discipline in schools through the effort put in by the school prefects to see that everyone adheres to the rules and regulations of the school. A problem therefore, arises when there is a fuzzy personality development of students, especially in Bui Division despite all these measures put in place in secondary schools in Cameroon to discipline children. It is absurd that persons who studied together, when through same disciplinary upbringing should record different personality's especially negative personality traits. In Bui division of the North West Region in particular, many persons noted to be secondary school graduates behave and show character traits as if there did not pass through school and school discipline. Fighting, bullying, drunkenness, flirting and a host of others has been the order of the day leading to high crime waves and public disorder. Over 70 percent of the persons have a lot of negative personality traits (Rothbart, 2011). It is against this backdrop that the researcher sought to examine how school discipline correlates with students' personality development.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to;

- 1) Examine how corporal punishment influences students' personality development.
- 2) Investigate whether suspension as concerns school discipline has an influence on students' personality development.
- 3) Ascertain how students' expulsion from school influences their personality development.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: Corporal punishment has no significant influence on students' personality development.

Ha1: Corporal punishment has a significant influence on students' personality development.

Ho2: There exist no significant relationship between suspension of students from school and their personality development.

Ha2: There exist a significant relationship between suspension of students from school and their personality development.

Ho3: Expulsion of students from school significantly affects their personality development.

Ha3: Expulsion of students from school does not significantly affects their personality development.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Bui Division of the North West region of Cameroon. It adopted a descriptive survey as a method on a population of 1,592 students. From this population, a sample of 388 was selected. Firstly, 5 secondary schools were randomly selected, then students who were readily available and willing to take part were selected using the convenient sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a 20-items closed ended questionnaire which was designed for secondary school students. It was a weighted Likert rating scale comprising of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree(SD). A pilot study involving form 4 students from Government High School Mve which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.71 indicating that the instrument was reliable. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistic was used to answer the various research questions in the form of tables. The chi-square was used to test the hypotheses.

FINDINGS

Research hypothesis one

There exists no significant influence of corporal punishment on students’ personality development. In an attempt to verify this hypothesis, the collected data was summarised and presented in the table 1 below with the use of SPSS V 20-32bit.

Table 1: Effects of corporal punishment on students’ personality development.

<i>Chi-Square Value</i>				
	<i>chi-sq</i>	<i>x-crit</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
Pearson's	91. 821	21.026	Yes	0.562591
Max likelihood	92.017	21.426	Yes	0.542201

From table 1 we can notice that our test value is significant. That is;

Calculated $X^2 = 91. 821$

Critical (table) $X^2 = 21.026$

At a 0.05 level of significance and 6df, the calculated $\chi^2(91.821)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026). Inference (Yes) leads us to conclude that the test value is significant for hypothesis one. We concluded that there is a significant relationship between corporal punishment and regulations and students' personality development.

Research Hypothesis two

There exists no significant relationship between suspension of students from school and their personality development.

In order to verify this hypothesis, the collected data was summarised and presented in the table 1 below with the use of SPSS V 20-32bit.

Table 2: School suspension and students' personality development

<i>Chi-Square Value</i>				
	<i>chi-sq</i>	<i>x-crit</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
Pearson's	51.791	21.026	Yes	0.592595
Max likelihood	51.827	21.426	Yes	0.540511

From table 2 we can notice that our test value is significant. That is;

Calculated $X^2 = 51.791$

Critical (table) $X^2 = 21.026$

At a 0.05 level of significance and 6df, the calculated $\chi^2(51.791)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026). Inference (Yes) leads us to conclude that the test value is significant for hypothesis two. We then concluded that there is a significant relationship between school suspension from school and students' personality development.

Research Hypothesis three

In an attempt to verify this hypothesis, the collected data was summarised and presented in the table 3 below with the use of SPSS V 20-32bit.

Table 3: Dismissal from school and students’ personality development.

<i>Chi-Square Value</i>				
	<i>chi-sq</i>	<i>x-crit</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
Pearson's	161.917	21.026	Yes	0.582511
Max likelihood	161.629	21.426	Yes	0.570533

From table 3 we can notice that our test value is significant. That is;

Calculated $X^2 = 161.917$

Critical (table) $X^2 = 21.026$

At a 0.05 level of significance and 6df, the calculated $x^2(161.917)$ is far greater than the critical value (21.026). Inference (Yes) leads us to conclude that the test value is significant for hypothesis four. It was concluded that there is a significant relationship between expulsion of students from school and students’ personality development.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of data proved that their school discipline has an effect on the personality development of students. That is, there exists a significant influence of corporal punishment, suspension and expulsion of students from school and their personality development. Therefore, school discipline significantly influences the personality development of adolescents. That is, when school administrators discretely and judiciously use these disciplinary measures, students tend to develop the ability to do things well at the right time, in the right circumstance, without or with minimum supervision

These findings are in line with Pandey (2001) who said that discipline in raising and teaching of children is necessary if they are to become socially productive and responsible adults. Also, it corroborates with Deater-Deckard, et.al (2003) who found out that adolescents who had been spanked by their own mothers were more approving of this discipline method, regardless of the overall frequency, timing, or chronicity of physical discipline they had received. Furthermore, this is in congruence with Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz (2005) who suggested that socially, teachers’ discipline strategies are a potent force to promote students’ sense of responsibility in the classroom and to produce more responsible citizens at a grand vision.

On the other hand, the finding is in contrast with Olusegun, Olusegun & Adelayo (2017) who found out that corporal punishment has great effects on students’ academic performance creating a sort of

friction and making them show lack of interest in their work. Again, found that students perceived teachers who used punitive strategies as being less effective in their teaching and that in classes where teachers managed disruptive behaviours by using punitive strategies, students had problems in learning as punitive strategies lowered students' motivation. Again, the findings are contradicted by Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013) who found that the use of exclusionary discipline strategies was inversely related to order and discipline in the class, while greater use of classroom-based positive behaviour supports was related to higher order and discipline, fairness, and student-teacher relationship.

Therefore, when children who portray disruptive behaviour are punished corporally, suspended or dismissed as the case may be, they tend to reduce their frequency of such behaviour and consequently develop a sense of morality and uprightness. That is, when students are suspended with or without labour, they become more responsible, they stay out of crimes, they do everything possible to finish all work assigned to them in time, they work hard to catch up with missed lessons and develops respect for other students, teachers and school administrators.

Also, after expulsion, most students envy a return to school and consequently try showing positive attitudes in order to impress their parents and school administrators on a positive change. In cases where dismissal occurs when the student has not gained enough socialisation skills, such students end up finding it difficult to integrate into the society. Some tend to return to the disruptive behaviour or become radical, violent, inferior or frustrated. Therefore, a frequently punished child will be a problematic person later in life because the child will be sensitive to the behaviour and disciplinary practice of adults either at school or at home.

CONCLUSION

Discipline is very essential in schools as it can predict the personality development of adolescents. It reduces their frequency of disruptive behaviour and consequently develop a sense of morality and uprightness as it enables students to become more responsible, stay out of crimes, they work hard and develops respect for other students, teachers and school administrators. Regrettably, a frequently punished child will be a problematic person later in life because the child will be sensitive to the behaviour and disciplinary practice of adults either at school or at home. extreme disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment can lead to frustration, humiliation and consequently, drop-out. Thus, children who are subjected to corporal punishment are more likely to utilize violence in their family and society in the future. Therefore, corporal punishment should not be banned completely but teachers should strike a balance between using corporal punishment and positive discipline such as guidance and counselling, reinforcement and rewards. Corporal punishment should only in a low frequency and only in cases of severe misbehaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Guidance and counselling, reinforcement and rewards should be used to discipline students instead of corporal punishment, suspension or dismissal so that the children could still benefit from the wealth of knowledge and life skills in the school milieu.
2. Policies and social changes that lead to reductions in parents' and schools' use of corporal punishment could lead children to have a positive personality.
3. Teachers training colleges and institutions of higher learning should design appropriate courses to adequately equipped student teachers with alternative methods of discipline.
4. The government should promote the use of positive behavioural support and providing of teachers and school administrators with lots of resources necessary to develop safe and effective methods for encouraging positive students' behaviour.
5. There is need for government to deliberately organize workshops, seminars and conferences to train school administrator and teachers on alternative ways of discipline.

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