

Indiscipline among Junior High School Students in Nkoranza District: Causes, Effects and the Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to find out the causes, effects and solutions to indiscipline among students in selected junior secondary schools in the Nkoranza district. Questionnaires were given to the teachers, headmasters and their assistants while students were interviewed. The information gathered was analysed and general conclusions were made about the results which were for the total percentages for all students, teachers, heads and assistants. The subjects were ninety (90) students comprising of thirty (30) from each of the three schools. Additionally, there were six (6) teachers from each of the three (3) schools making eighteen (18) including heads and assistants. The analysis showed that most respondents agreed on the idealistic concept of discipline. It was also established that, indiscipline was caused by both “internal” and “external” factors. There was no general agreement between students and educators on acts of indiscipline that were considered as serious or not. However, there was a definite agreement among the respondents on the method of ensuring discipline. Rudeness to those in authority came out as the worst kind of behaviour in the school. (Table 19) 72.3% of students, 55.3% of teachers and 98.1% of heads and assistants considered it a serious kind of behaviour. Some recommendations were made as a result of the study. This included the appointment of a fulltime Guidance and Counseling coordinator to each school to ensure the establishment of self-discipline among students. Another recommendation was that students should be involved in decision-making process in the schools.

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Introduction

Indiscipline in schools is a major concern to administrators, parents, teachers, the entire community and especially all educators. In view of the present rate of indiscipline and the concern shown by many people, the researcher thinks if critical measures are not taken to check, the consequences would be a disaster to the whole nation. There will be financial loss to the nation in terms of manpower requirement, for the right people may not be found to occupy positions in the country in future. It is this fast rate of breakdown in order, observed by the researcher in the school situation that prompted him to embark on this study.

Some of the practices such as laissez-faire and permissive philosophies as well as the suggested means of discipline are believed to have come from Europe and other western nations. It is said that Ghanaians have blindly copied and applied to some extent, these philosophies to our situation with serious consequences. The result is youth vandalism and militancy all over. The so-called advanced countries, originators of many philosophies of education are themselves plagued with all sorts of youth vandalism, widespread drug abuse, immorality, plain and pure disobedience of authority and violence. Ghana, the recipient of some of these philosophies, is having its share of the problem. The teacher whose traditional role is to transmit knowledge is being threatened by this need to control his class.

Teachers and administrators have been struggling to find ways and means of dealing with numerous disciplinary problems that they have to handle daily. This study was therefore designed to look at the concept of discipline with special reference to the schools in Nkoranza, the cause of the indiscipline, their effects and some solutions to it.

Theoretical Discussions Discipline

Discipline is a concept with varied interpretations a careful study of the literature suggests that most people have divergent views on the subject discipline [1]. Discipline is defined as the practice of making people obey rules of behaviour and punishing them if they do not (P.392). This simply implies that man needs to be regulated to do what is right. Discipline can also be explained as a means of counseling the students, guiding and persuading them towards desired goals. Also, discipline can be seen as the development within individuals of the necessary personal controls to allow them to be effective contributing members of a democratic society and of a human community at large. For this to be possible, effort should be made to enhance the development of internalized personal control based upon a firm belief in the abilities of the individual to learn both to respect and co-operate with others. Also when students are provided with the opportunities to participate in making decisions about things which control their behaviour, they will be able to set limits and choose from behavioural alternatives to learn personal control. True self-discipline cannot be learned if all restraints are superimposed from without. On the other hand,

identifies two kinds of discipline [2]. The first one “exists in a situation when the rules and regulations of the school are easily supported and obeyed by the students’. He explains that when students understand and participate in making rules, they become responsible and cooperative. Asiedu-Akrofi considers the second kind of discipline as externally imposed sanctions where students are always compelled to obey their teachers. He explained that this denies the individual the chance of learning to exercise his sense of judgement as well as responsibility.

The school as a formal organization must have laid down rules and regulations to guide the activities of the members in the institution to achieve the set goals. The rules are not necessarily to get the culprits rather than to guide against wrong doing and to encourage good behaviour. The school must not be left without rules lest there will be chaos. Discipline is important tool to remind members who tend to easily forget so that they are constantly aware of their expectations [2,3].

The Concept of Indiscipline

All teachers are perfectly sure they recognize indiscipline when they see it but most attempts at definition is a catalogue of insubordination, disobedience and misbehavior and there is a high degree of variation in perception of teachers. Indiscipline refers to behaviour that undermines the ability to establish effect learning experiences and is often subjectively perceived. The interaction between teachers and students in context of the school environment is where discipline and indiscipline must be situated. It is a fact that all the problems that occur in schools are not all of equal importance. What is one teacher’s problem may be to another no more than a minor irritation and to another simply a sign of children’s boisterous high spirit.

Depicts teachers as being most concerned with three kinds of misbehavior [4]. These are

1. Behaviour that affronts their sense of morality
2. Behaviour that is defiant and aggressive and
3. Behaviour that disrupts

A rather detailed work on identification of indiscipline by teachers has been done by who arrives at three main types, which have gained roots in the second cycle institutions [5]. These are:

1. Studies-related behaviour which comprises “absenteeism” lateness to class, inefficient teaching due to ill-preparation, boredom in the teacher’s style and pace in lesson presentation, laziness, digression from relevant topics overlooking misbehavior, and ineffective teaching due to incompetence, ill-preparation and inadequate control over subject, looking nervous in class while teaching ineffective teacher control over English language leading to ineffective delivery of subject matter and giving too many tests and assignments.
2. The second type of indiscipline, is interpersonal relations behaviour as manifest in the use of abusive language on students, over-familiarity with students, discriminating between students in the award of marks, praise and punishment, unfriendliness towards students, over-resistance on discipline and being too autocratic in class [5].
3. The third type relates to self-comportment behaviour as displayed by smoking, drunkenness, soliciting gifts from students, flirting and sexual relation with students, undermining fellow teachers and superiors before students, unfairness in one’s dealing with students and generally having loose morals.

Indiscipline in Schools: Yesterday and Today

In comparing indiscipline in our schools, past and present, we could only discuss the various acts of indiscipline, their degree seriousness and frequency of occurrence and deduce if discipline has really improved or declined overtime. Has discipline in our schools worsened or improved overtime? A research was conducted to collect views on discipline from both present and past students of a top school in Accra (Report on Students’ indiscipline). Analysis of the data showed that majority of the past students supported the idealist concept that both past and present students viewed the following among a number of listed acts as the most serious: Sexual misconduct, drug abuse, examination malpractice, stealing and defiance of authority. The present students however saw these acts in varied degrees of seriousness. These and other acts such as occultism and pornography occurred more often today, indicating that indiscipline was on the increase. The results of the research, even though were limited to only on school, could have universal validity. The crime wave among the youth is at its peak; immorality, bullying and abuse of drugs have become the order of the day; the state of indiscipline among student seems to be increasing.

The research also showed that majority of the past students supported discipline based on sanctions and preferred harsher punishment as a remedy for disciplinary control. The majority of the present student however, supported discipline based on counseling and indicated that harsh treatment is rather a major cause of indiscipline today.

While the majority of the past students indicated that students should not be involved in school decisions, the majority of the present students indicated that their involvement in school decision would improve discipline. In an attempt to control indiscipline in schools, it is important to accept that the views of students of yesterday are different from those of the present. Whereas the past student believed in the idealist concept, the present students believed in the idealist concept, the present students believed in the natural concept. Student seeking greater freedom. They want assurance that they are valuable. Their energies must be harnessed and channeled to greater student performance. Many people believe that excessive drinking, smoking and sexual promiscuity are major ways of expressing rebellious feelings.

Unfortunately, probably due to economic pressures and modernity, many parents today shirk their responsibilities, leaving their children to do what pleases them. Parents must provide a model of good behaviour and show firm love. Schools are part of the society and students mirror discipline in the society. The media today has more aggressive, violent and pornographic materials. Unfortunately many highlife singers have the misconception that music must be profane to be popular. If students see, read, hear and sing indecent acts, they attempt to imitate them. The traits which our students exhibit today are what their parents or the larger society has directly or indirectly imparted to them. The lowering community’s value for decency is therefore, a great concern. [6].

Causes of Indiscipline

Most criminal behaviours occur during adolescence and young adulthood. The size of the cohort of children born each year generally predict the crime rate and the rate of school misbehavior in a specified year Schools feel the import of large birth cohorts when larger than usual group of children enter kindergarten. Schools must decide between increasing teaching staff or increasing class size. When funding is not available to train more teachers and increasing class size. When funding is not available to train more teachers and counselors, the school’s ability to respond

to early signs of discipline is limited. Teachers are more stressed when they must deal with larger numbers of disruptive students.

Divorce as a family factor can have both short and long-term effect on school indiscipline. Divorce has a grave emotional impact on some children. It generally devastates family income, children of divorced tend to live within greatly restricted economic means. Reduced income for both parents creates stress. Home and school indiscipline increases when single parents are not able to cope with their reduced income or the increased demand of primary care of children.

Child abuse which often has a profound impact on student's behaviour in school, is a major problem in a good number of countries. Children who are physically or emotionally abused at home may present either overtly aggressive or sometimes violent behaviour in school or they may be withdrawn. Addictive behaviours including cigarette, alcohol and drug abuse cause many disciplinary problems for schools. Schools usual response is punishment, including suspension and expulsion. However, many believe that prevention-oriented programmes, especially those that teach students to resist peer pressure to use drugs, do reduce-drug use among adolescents.

Schools have frequently been criticized because, rather than serving as bastions for teaching the process of democracy, they too often serve as little islands of autocracy [7]. When schools violate individual rights, stress conformity and obedience, discourage creativity and dissent, they foster rebellion among some segments of the student population. Paradoxically, students are taught in about principles of democracy such as freedom responsibility to the community, justice and fair play, yet, those values too often are not modeled in the way some schools are run. Many even believe that schools that are governed by ineffective or authoritarian heads are most likely to have high rates of misbehavior disruption and violence overly punitive and rigidly bureaucratic schools often promote rather than prevent misbehavior. They tend to implement strict rules, emphasize competition over cooperation and inappropriately violate students rights.

Inadequate funding may result in increased disciplined problems, despite popular beliefs to the contrary; substantive evidence indicates that school productivity, grades and scores improve as funding increases. Although good teachers may deal effectively with a large variety of misbehaviors, there are those students who require extensive special services of school psychologists and counselors. These services are expensive.

Poor instruction may account for more than 50 percent of classroom misbehavior. Teachers who are unable to accurately recognize appropriate instructional levels for each students cause major discipline problems. The frustrated student may become withdrawn or hostile.

Difficult curricula can result in a wide range of misbehaviours from clowning to explosive refusals to do assignments. When classes are too boring, students may cause disruption. They may ignore homework that they consider beneath or beyond their ability level. Bright students can be quite inventive in avoiding homework and in fooling parents and teachers. When they are caught and confronted, they may become openly hostile or resort to passive aggression. Peer groups that are allowed to develop norms and values, contrary to the decent treatment of others are a major contributor to misbehavior and delinquency.

Drug-oriented gangs and loosely knit, antisocial peer groups are particularly difficult for parents, schools and other agencies, for instance, once adolescents embrace the values of the drug culture, no matter where they attend school, they will always find compatible peers. An observation in private school showed that, some parents, who have the economic resources, attempt to save their children from their hometown druggie friends, by sending them to boarding school. This rarely works, because other parents with similar problems have the same idea. So the students just substitute druggie in public school with similar, easy-to-find friends in private school.

Educators know that there is nothing like television to transform children and youth into zombies. Students with short attention spans in class will sit at home, staring for hours at the unending entertainment provided by television. There is now a sufficient body of research to indicate that television can cause a multitude of learning and behaviour problems in school.

Frequent Viewing of Television

Children from academically oriented homes will more often watch educational programmes on television and children from less advantaged backgrounds tend to pick television with high action and low educational value Unrealistic fight scenes from "karate moves" ranging from Power Rangers to Bruce Lee sages may convince students that people who are punched in the face, hit over the head by baseball bats, or slammed head-first into walls do not sustain cuts, bruises, broken bones and serious internal injuries.

Defiance of school rules and norms are encouraged by media depictions of children and youth happily and successfully deceiving, ridiculing and sometimes aggressing against peer, parents, teachers and other adults. Inappropriate heroes and anti-heroes model to solve problems and offer anti-establishment roles to emulate.

In general, a family's socioeconomic and educational level, family structure and values, birth order, number of siblings and support systems have somewhat predictable influences on children and their behaviour in school [8]. However, misbehaving students must also assume some of the responsibility for changing their behaviour and attitudes.

Reading through some reports of Committees of Enquiry into student grievance in Ghana, one finds other interesting causes of students' rebellion. According to the reports, there is the problem of irregularities in student's admission into schools. In one school for instance, the committee had this to say: the students alleged that the Principal controlled admissions. They said there were instances when names of substantive entrants had been crossed out by the principal and substituted with others of his choice. This charge against this principal was also leveled against the headmasters in other schools.

A second set of causes of indiscipline identified from the reports was what one may call wrong information given to students by members of staff. In a certain school, the school driver gave false information to students about the headmaster, thereby giving to the already aggrieved students to start a riot. On this issue, the committee, writing on the driver stated that he could not tell the committee what he stood to gain by giving false information to the students.

A third cause that may be mentioned is lack of channels of communication by which they can get their grievances redressed and so they may resort to rebellion. Writing of this, one committee

that investigated a school wrote that members of the committee found out that the administration was not able to redress the grievances of the students because of the students' apparent ignorance of the channels of communication between the administration and the student body and so resorting to rioting.

Another cause of indiscipline was found was misapplication of funds. Since government subventions are unduly delayed and sometimes may not be released for a whole year, most heads of schools are forced to use monies paid by students as sports and games fees to feed them leaving the sports equipment. To students, the headmaster/mistress had 'stolen' the money and must have to explain. On this issue, a committee that investigated a school recommended that money collected from students should be used specifically for the purpose for which it was intended. Where for one reason or the other this cannot be done immediately, the truth should be fully explained to the students to avoid misunderstanding.

Recommended Ways of Handling Indiscipline

It has been noted that indiscipline has its roots in many factors including those relating to students, parents, teachers and the society as a whole. Therefore the resolution of the problems must address these factors.

However, at the school level the two principal actors are essentially pupils/students and the school authorities – teachers and headmasters. Each teacher is expected to handle his own minor problems and only refer severe cases to the headmaster. Rogers believes that good interpersonal relation between staff and students may halt indiscipline as the school is not a class stratified institution. Students sometimes misbehave towards those in authority due to some teachers' partiality show in punishing students. When there is good interpersonal relation between staff and students, it encourages students to tell their problems all the time and also feel a sense of belongingness [9]. Classified suggested solutions to indiscipline into verbal and non-verbal responses on the part of teachers. Verbal responses to acts of indiscipline include orders to desist, reprimand, threats of punishment, reinstatement of rules, humor statements which involve pupils in work and praise or encouragement. Here, the teacher seeks to engage the offender in a challenge, the results of which may be a correction of ways.

Non-verbal responses include gestures, facial expressions, punishments such as extra work, confiscation, detention and involving other teachers all of which are intended to show disapproval of particular behaviours.

Verbal responses should take place in private in the context of trust, rapport and mutual respect. The belief is that if teachers display a caring and concern attitude towards the student rather than threatening and intimidating them, this would yield good result [10]. Concerned about the difficulty of translating broad school policies and principles of educational practice into realistic procedures formulated a discipline plan which included the following:

1. Students should be shown the rules and regulations.
2. Instructions are to be provided at levels that match students' abilities.
3. Students' thinking and feelings should be taken into account.
4. Students should be allowed to choose from choice offered by teachers.
5. Excuse should not be accepted.
6. Use hugs and touching in communicating with pupils.
7. Be responsible for yourself and allow pupils to be responsible

to themselves.

8. The teacher must realize and accept that he would not reach every pupils.
9. The teacher should make it a point to start afresh everyday. (p.75)

Felt that these procedures should be most valid in addressing the problems of indiscipline [10]. They also studied how teachers work to address indiscipline and observe that the head had to practice leadership by example. They advocated no principles, rules or process but believed that working closely with students will yield results especially if staff takes their behaviour as a model rather than specifying rules for action. Thus if teachers attended classes assembly, church service, supervise and patronize school activities their contacts with students would involve the enforcement of indiscipline and they would serve as models worthy of emulation by students. Self examination of professional behaviour is a way of establishing calmly and objectively the part played by teachers in inducing indiscipline and thence developing improved strategies for dealing with students' indiscipline. Teacher indiscipline is a major threat to any organization because it is not really recognized and addressed [6]. Outlined some grievance and disciplinary procedures that sought to address teacher dissatisfaction, which seems to lie at the core of the teacher indiscipline. Bell and Rhodes recommend that in matters associated with employment, heads should not go straight into grievance procedures but to exhaust all available informal means first. Suggests that in the practice of discipline in the school system, the following should be borne in mind [11].

1. Class moral is important. Discipline is the voluntary subordination of the individual to the good of the class.
2. The individual is important.
3. Harshness is not necessary.
4. Respect for student tasks.
5. Respect for students intelligence.
6. Trust the individual student in terms of his background: know him as an individual.
7. Remember the worth and dignity of every human being and
8. Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect on confidence in each other and co-operation (P-119).

It can be realized from Brown's writing that disciplinary practices that take into account the student as an intelligent rational being and recognizes the limitation of the disciplinarian would turn out to be effective in producing a self-disciplined individual.

One would have to know the causes of indiscipline so as to effect an appropriate means of ensuring discipline. The causes of indiscipline can be said to be internal or external to the student.

When a disciplinary problem arises and even where the cause has been located it becomes necessary for some means to be employed to achieve a desirable result. Many suggestions have been put forward. In all these, it can be said that one method which might be appropriate with some individuals in a particular situation might not be suitable to another group of persons in a different situation. Hence, techniques of discipline shall vary from situation and from the individual to individual.

Methodology

Research Design and Strategy

The design used in this study is the descriptive survey. Questionnaires, one of the major instruments in descriptive research was used to collect data from members of the population.

This design is very appropriate for surveying the perception of students and teachers on indiscipline. The descriptive survey involved collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study [12]. Recommended descriptive sample survey for the purpose of generalizing from a sample to a population for inferences to be made about characteristics, attitudes or behaviour of the population. It was clear from the above that considering the problem under study the research questions, as well as the sample distribution, time and money available for the study, the research decided that the most appropriate method of eliciting information for this study was through the descriptive sample survey [13 to 23].

Study Population and Sample Size

The target population consisted of teachers and students in all the JSS in the Nkoranza township. The schools include L/A “A”, L/A

“B”, Methodist JSS, St. Theresa’s JSS, St. Barnabas, Anglican, Presby, Effah, Star International, S.D.A and El-Rapha Preparatory JSS.

The population of teachers was made up of 89 (Eighty-nine) comprising both professional and non-professional teachers. Female teachers numbered 19 with 70 males. The students population numbered 1376 (One thousand three hundred and seventy-six) out of which 653 (six hundred and fifty-three) students are females representing 47 percent of the total population. The detailed breakdown of the number of students and teachers enrolled in these schools which consisted the accessible population for the study was given by the statistical department of the Ghana Education Service (GES), which are represented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Accessible Population

Name of school	Students			Teachers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
L/A JSS “B”	102	76	178	9	2	11
S.D.A	84	63	147	6	-	6
El-Rapha Shalom	65	43	108	7	-	7

Sampling Techniques

The study was limited to the three JSS in the Nkoranza township in the Brong Ahafo Region. The Schools were selected using purposive sampling procedure. There were 12 JSS in the town with the names mentioned above but the researcher chose L/A “B” JSS, which is one of the government schools, S.D.A as the mission school while El-Rapha Shalom Preparatory is one of the private JSS in the town because much has been expressed by parents and the general public for sometime about indiscipline in these schools especially L/A “B” and S.D.A.

The study had different samples namely:

- a. 30 students from each school
- b. 4 teachers from each school
- c. Headmasters and assistants from each school.

Forms two and three students were chosen for the study because many people believe that most of the disciplinary problems are connected with this age group of students.

Systematic sampling technique was used to select the students from each school. In all, a sample of 90 students made up of 30 from each school was selected. The teachers, in this study, which was made up of headmasters and their assistants, subject masters and sports masters were selected.

Six school prefects and their deputies were selected using the same techniques adopted for the selection of students. The students’ chaplains were among those selected from the staff because they are involved in the moral training in the school and they were seen as people with good moral standards.

Three headmasters together with their assistants were selected for the study. The headmasters, their assistants and the school prefects were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. This category of respondents was included in the sample because as administrators, or those in leadership, they were more involved with discipline in the school in one way or the other.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect data were interview and

questionnaire schedule. The items on these instruments included personal data of the respondents.

Questionnaire is a written instrument that contains series of questions in statements called items that attempt to collect information in a particular topic. Interview on the other hand is a face-to-face meeting between the interviewer and the interviewee. The instruments used were based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were of the close and open ended types meant to assess the different views of the respondents on the indiscipline. The interview was conducted on students who could not interpret the questionnaire. To ensure reliability and validity of the data collected, the writer made sure that the right respondents were used.

Respondents were given instructions to follow and complete the questions. To ensure confidentiality, the study did not require the name of respondents and this helped them to give vivid and reliable answers to the questionnaire administered.

Administrsation of Instruments

Getting access to the schools was not a problem because the research was teaching at the basic level in the locality. With the assistance of the headmasters, it was very easy to get the teachers and the students to assist. In the case of the teachers, the headmasters and their assistants, the questionnaires were left with them while they promised to fill them within the shortest possible time. This, they did with the exception of two teachers who were not able to fill and could not be traced.

On the part of the students, structured and unstructured interview was conducted. On the whole, all the 90 students were willing to answer the questions except a few of them who were afraid of intimidation from their teachers when it comes to questions that relate to them.

On the questionnaire, a total number of 18 questionnaires were administered and 16 of them were collected as shown in the tables below.

Table 2: Percentage of Students Interviewed

	Number of students	Number of students willing to respond	Percentage of students willing to respond
Boys	50	50	100
Girls	40	35	87.5
Total	90	85	94

Table 3: Percentage of Questionnaires Returned

	Number of Questionnaires Administered	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage of Questionnaires Returned
Head and Assistants	6	6	100
Teachers	12	10	83.3
Total	18	16	88.89

Data Analysis

The study being descriptive did not warrant any sophisticated mode of analysis. Because of the nature of the investigation at hand, frequencies and percentages were calculated and used in the analysis. Information gathered from the questionnaires and interviews were checked and frequency counts made for the answers to the relevant questions that were intended to help provide answers to the objectives set.

The percentage frequencies were calculated for each set of questions. Later, the total percentages for all students, teachers, the headmasters and their assistants were worked out.

The questions asked, together with the distribution of responses obtained were presented in the appropriate sections. In the open-ended questions, the responses were compared and those that reflected the same opinion were grouped together and general patterns sorted out. In some cases, frequency counts were made for group of opinions observed and percentages calculated so that a clearer view of the responses made by respondents could be obtained.

It was also necessary to group together some of the columns of the five-point scale presented in the questionnaire. In this way a better understanding and a clearer picture of the trend of opinion expressed by respondents was obtained. For example table 2 columns 1 and 2 labeled “strongly agree” and “agree” were combined to mean “agreement” and this was then contrasted with column 4 labeled “disagree” using this simple method. Therefore, the questionnaires and the interviews were analyzed as shown in the next chapter to bring out general opinion of respondents and to find out answers to the specific questions in this study.

Results and Discussion

Views of the Concept of Discipline

In looking at the concept as held by individuals, five statements were put forward on which respondents were to express agreement or disagreement. Two of the statements 1 and 2 shown in table 4 below expressed the idealistic concept of discipline while statements 3, 4 and 5 express the naturalistic concept.

The categories of respondents are students, teachers, headmasters and assistants. The table shows the percentage of the different categories of people in the study.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Responses to the Concept of Discipline by Category of Respondent

Concept of discipline	Category	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. It teaches that human being must be regulated in his physical activities	Students	16.7	44.4	22.2	16.7
	Teachers	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
	Headmasters and Assistants	66.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
2. It implies that human being has tendency to do evil	Students	18.5	34.1	40.1	0.0
	Teachers	25.0	25.0	55.5	0.0
	Headmaster and Assistants	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
3. It teaches that human being must be left to find out truth for himself by exploring his environment	Students	47.4	13.7	24.9	14.0
	Teachers	14.7	38.7	36.6	10.1
	Headmasters and Assistants	60.5	30.0	9.5	0.0
4. It maintains that teach individual should set his own standard of behaviour	Students	40.5	15.3	34.6	9.6
	Teachers	7.0	10.5	60.0	22.5
	Headmasters and Assistants	0.0	0.0	95.0	5.0
5. It holds that the society’s values are the final standard by which one should judge right or wrong behaviour.	Students	11.1	26.3	35.4	26.6
	Teachers	22.5	36.0	35.2	6.3
	Headmasters and Assistants	94.7	5.3	0.0	0.0

It was observed that the average percentage of respondents who agreed with statements 1 and 2 expressing the idealistic philosophy were 75.9% and 60.5% respectively and the percentage of those who disagreed with the statements 3, 4 and 5 that expressed the naturalistic philosophy, the average percentages of respondents who agreed with the statements were 68.4%, 27.4% and 65.3% respectively but the average percentages of those who did not agree were 31.7% and 34.5% in that same order. After critical analysis, the data revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed with the idealistic concept of discipline.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Agreement with the Idealistic and Naturalistic Concept of Discipline by Categories of Respondents

Category	Idealistic Concept	Naturalistic Concept
Students	56.9	51.3
Teachers	64.4	43.1
Headmasters and Assistants	83.4	63.5

It is the opinion of the researcher that since the different categories of respondents studied were mostly in positions of authority, it was important that their conception of discipline did not differ too much. Otherwise, there might be serious conflict in their application of disciplinary measures which lead to confrontations and breakdown in the administrative machinery of schools. The teachers as well as the headmasters and their assistants' agreed

on the statements indicating the idealistic concept of discipline. The students were considered as being in positions of authority because they were expected to control the rest of the students' body. A number of them usually elected as perfects.

Views and Rationales for Acts of Indiscipline

Students are often caught in various acts of indiscipline. Most of them suffer punishment which ranges from caning, kneeling, and signing of bonds, suspension and the worst of all dismissal. Most times authorities do not bother to find out the reasons for such behaviours.

It was the opinion of the researcher that some administrators did not know why most students behaved the way they did in what may often be termed as 'indiscipline behaviour'. Even if they did know, it was possible that their opinions as to the reasons for the student's indiscipline acts might be quite different from those held by the students. It was the belief of some people that if administrators also had a fair knowledge of the reasons for some of these acts of indiscipline then it might be possible to suggest ways and means by which these acts could be checked.

In this study, 10 acts of indiscipline were identified and respondents' reasons for each were studied and categorized.

Table 6 – 13 shows the percentage responses distribution of the different categories of reasons for each act of indiscipline as expressed by students, teachers, headmasters and their assistants.

Table 6: Reasons for Stealing

	Broken Homes	Peer Pressure	Bad Training from Home	Hunger	Total
Students	12.6	48.2	30.5	8.7	100
Teachers	15.5	46.9	29.3	8.3	100
Headmasters and Assistants	18.6	37.3	31.4	12.7	100

The above table revealed that stealing in the schools under study, was mainly due to peer group influence which is followed by the training they have from homes. Broken homes have less influence on the affected children with regards to stealing whiles hunger is the least cause of stealing among school children as revealed in this study.

Table 7: Reasons why Students Bully Their Younger Colleagues

	Traditional	Seniority	For fun	Others	Total
Students	49.4	19.7	18.3	12.6	100
Teachers	44.6	22.1	19.8	13.5	100
Headmasters and Assistants	43.8	20.3	17.7	18.2	100

Bullying has been an age-old problem in schools. "Seniors" have often bullied "Juniors" and in recent times the form of bullying has been of major concern to parents. Even though the reasons for bullying may vary, the main reason as revealed in table 7 was that, most students bullied others just because of tradition. It was done to them so they must do it to others. Since traditions are hard to break, the likelihood is that problem may be with us for a long time if its eradication is not taken up seriously.

Table 8: Reasons for Smoking

	Peer Pressure	Broken Home	For Fun	High Retention	Total
Students	26.8	5.3	32.7	35.2	100
Teachers	45.5	2.1	44.2	8.2	100
Headmasters and Assistants	34.4	3.3	32.1	30.2	100

Students, teachers, heads and assistants agreed that “fun” was a major cause for students smoking in schools, they smoke to “feel big”. Closely allied to this reason was “peer pressure”. The percentage responses are shown in table 8. While teachers, heads and assistants were of the opinion that smoking by students was due to peer pressure, students claimed that when they smoke, they have high concentration and higher retentive memory.

Table 9: Reasons for “Rude Behaviour Towards Those in Authority”

	Drugs Influence	Rebellion against strict authority	Home Condition	Others	Total
Students	2.3	65.8	20.6	11.3	100
Teachers	70.2	18.4	6.9	4.5	100
Heads and Assistants	93.2	0.4	3.3	3.1	100

This table shows the percentage responses for the reasons for the indisciplined act of rude behaviour towards those in authority. It appears that students were at variance with teachers, headteachers and assistants in their opinion. While students’ opinion was that they acted rudely to those in authority as a sign of rebellion against strict authority, teachers, heads and their assistants believed that students do not rebel for rebellion sake but to those in authority who show partiality in punishing students.

Table 10: Reasons for Cheating in Examination

	Lack of proper supervision	Inadequate preparation of students	Teachers inability to complete syllabus	Poor teaching method	Total
Students	10.8	5.0	39.9	44.3	100
Teachers	13.8	80.7	5.5	0.0	100
Heads and Assistants	0.0	97.4	2.6	0.0	100

This table revealed that students were of the opinion that cheating in examinations was as a result of poor teaching methods on the part of students. It also showed that some teachers do not complete their syllabus so it creates room for cheating. On the other hand, teachers, heads and assistants had the opinion that students do not prepare before going to examination room and this is a recipe for cheating in examinations.

Table 11: Reasons for Absenteeism from Classes

	Truancy	Peer Group Influence	Poor Condition	Others	Total
Students	9.7	23.9	62.3	4.1	100
Teachers	33.4	56.1	4.7	5.8	100
Heads and Assistants	49.1	47.5	0.0	3.4	100

From the table, students were of the view that absenteeism was as result of poor condition in the school but this disagreed by teachers and the administrators.

Table 12: Reasons for Lateness to School

	Laziness	More Work at Home	Peer Pressure	Others	Total
Students	10.9	68.8	13.6	6.7	100
Teachers	30.4	7.4	55.7	6.5	100
Heads and Assistants	30.9	4.9	61.2	3.0	100

Table 12 revealed that students’ opinion for coming to school late is as a result of ‘more work at home’ as they were often times loaded with domestic chores which must be done before coming to school. However, teachers, heads and the assistants were of the view that peer pressure was a major reason for the lateness followed by laziness on the part of the students as the table shows following figures 55.7%, 61.2%, 30.4% and 30.9% respectively.

Table 13: Reasons for the Use of Profane Language

	Bad Training at Home	Drugs Influence	Profane Songs	Others	Total
Students	10.7	22.4	60.1	6.8	100
Teachers	13.2	42.4	37.3	7.1	100
Heads and Assistants	30.0	39.9	29.4	0.7	100

From table 13, 60.1% of the students attributed the use of profane language among themselves to the type of songs played on the airwaves. But the teachers and administrators were of the opinion that this happens as a result of drugs taken by students. They also opined that bad training from homes also contributed to the profane language as children are not punished at home when they speak such language.

Extent of Seriousness of Acts of Indiscipline in Schools

Apart from the concept of discipline with many different opinions about it, the way an individual also looks at an act of indiscipline as being serious or not will determine the method adopted in dealing with the issue or even the type of punishment meted out. Often, there had been fingers raised against some school authorities by the community because people were not satisfied with either some punishments prescribed for particular offences or the method adopted in dealing with certain acts of indiscipline committed in the schools.

In some cases where teachers might consider a particular act of indiscipline as serious and therefore needed a drastic action to be taken, the administration may not see the act as serious so that a more lenient measure is adopted. On the other hand, the administration could be branded as being callous and insensitive in its action if teachers or students think that some acts of indiscipline are not so serious to merit drastic actions being taken. Such situations have led to many serious confrontations in some schools. Some teachers have been know to fan students' rebellion because they held divergent views on some actions taken by administration concerning some acts of indiscipline committed by students.

Interestingly, students in general considered most of the acts mentioned as serious. One may ask, if students considered these acts as serious, why then would they commit them?

Table 14: Seriousness of Acts of Indiscipline

Acts of Indiscipline	Category	Serious	Not Serious	Total
1. Stealing	Students	57.9	42.1	100
	Teachers	69.8	30.2	100
	Heads and Assistants	52.3	47.7	100
2. Bulling	Students	63.2	36.8	100
	Teachers	59.1	40.9	100
	Heads and Assistants	100	0.0	100
3. Smoking	Students	82.4	17.6	100
	Teachers	56.8	43.2	100
	Heads and Assistants	90.3	9.7	100
4. Rude behaviour towards those in authority	Students	72.3	27.7	100
	Teachers	55.3	44.1	100
	Heads and Assistants	98.1	1.9	100
5. Lying	Students	48	52	100
	Teachers	71.3	28.7	100
	Heads and Assistants	50.2	49.8	100
6. Absenteeism	Students	60.8	39.2	100
	Teachers	49.1	50.9	100
	Heads and Assistants	11.2	88.8	100
7. Drunkenness	Students	82.5	17.5	100
	Teachers	55.3	44.7	100
	Heads and Assistants	81.4	18.6	100
8. Lateness to school	Students	47.6	52.4	100
	Teachers	60.3	39.7	100
	Heads and Assistants	54.2	45.8	100
9. Cheating in examinations	Students	33	67	100
	Teachers	56.1	43.9	100
	Heads and Assistants	50	50	100
10. Use of profane language	Students	57.6	42.4	100
	Teachers	41.7	58.3	100
	Heads and Assistants	35.9	64.1	100

Students' indiscipline has taken many forms in this country. There have been cases of quiet demonstrations both in and out of the school compound. These include students' boycott of classes, refusing to eat the meals prepared in the dining hall, attacking teachers, burning of masters' property etc. The country has also witnessed violent demonstrations in which public and private properties have been destroyed. In 1990, almost all the secondary schools in Ghana attempted to or succeeded in demonstrating to protest the increase in feeding fees and governments' withdrawal of subsidies.

In whatever form students' rebellion takes, the public is interested in knowing what the causes are. Committees of enquiry have come out with a number of causes or contributing factors to student rebellion. The general public has often come out with its own thought-out causes. Indeed, in the recent past, most people have blamed the government for the upheavals in the schools. Some have blamed Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC's) for their perceived interference in the school as a contributing factor.

In general, it appears that there are two broad factors that contribute to student indiscipline which are the INTERNAL and EXTERNAL FACTORS. Some of the internal factors include lack of student’s involvement in school decision-making, lack of adequate furniture, poor quality of teaching, lack of school facilities etc. while the external factors include government policies and decisions, Parent Teacher Associations’ decision etc.

Table 15 and 16 display fifteen (15) possible factors showing the extent to which the various categories of respondents thought each contributed to student indiscipline. In the analysis and discussion, columns 1 and 2 have been grouped together to mean a “great contribution” while columns 3 and 4 together mean a “little contribution”. This is necessary so as to get a clearer picture of the opinion of respondents.

Table 15: The Extent to Which Internal Factors Contribute to the Causes of Students’ Indiscipline

	Category	To a Very Large Extent	Toa Large Extent	Some Extent	Least Extent	Not at All
1. Lack of student involvement indecision making	Students	46.5	26.9	19.7	4.3	2.6
	Teachers	15.1	18.7	25.3	20	20.9
	Heads and Assistants	1.2	41.6	46.7	7.6	2.9
2. Lack of adequate furniture	Students	12.1	42.7	40.5	2.7	2.0
	Teachers	1.1	50.0	48.9	0.0	0.0
	Heads and Assistants	0.0	30.7	55.9	13.4	0.0
3. Overcrowding in classrooms	Students	30.4	26.2	19.3	20.1	4.0
	Teachers	19.0	29.9	26.9	13.1	14.1
	Heads and Assistants	16.1	44.8	13.8	25.1	0.2
4. Low academic performance of students	Students	50.2	45.5	0.9	3.2	0.2
	Teachers	40.9	20.5	15.9	4.5	18.2
	Heads and Assistants	50.0	30.6	12.7	4.3	2.4
5. Poor quality of teaching	Students	30.3	22.2	22.2	14.9	10.4
	Teachers	9.2	19.7	42.4	2.8	25.9
	Heads and Assistants	45.3	1.2	46.6	6.9	0.0
6. Bad training at home	Students	4.3	35.9	40.2	15.9	3.70
	Teachers	48.9	40.3	8.5	2.3	0.0
	Heads and Assistants	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
7. Lack of school facilities e.g. Sport equipment	Students	15.6	42.8	37.9	3.7	0.0
	Teachers	10.2	8.3	31.3	30.6	29.6
	Heads and Assistants	0.2	0.9	41.6	55.2	2.3
8. Lack of books, science equipment and other teaching materials	Students	24.0	45.3	23.8	3.6	3.3
	Teachers	11.7	9.5	25.1	26.4	27.3
	Heads and Assistants	3.2	7.3	22.6	40.5	26.4
9. Authoritarian administration	Students	42.3	39.6	10.2	7.9	0.0
	Teachers	10.9	23.2	20.4	13.7	31.8
	Heads and Assistants	3.6	17.9	40.6	20.6	17.3
10. Unjust actions by administration	Students	38.9	26.9	20.1	10.7	3.4
	Teachers	20.0	34.5	20.7	8.7	16.1
	Heads and Assistants	10.0	14.9	30.0	25.6	19.5
11. Lack of freedom for students in school	Students	40.7	45.4	10.3	2.6	1.0
	Teachers	44.3	30.5	7.9	15.2	2.1
	Heads and Assistants	30.3	29.2	40.0	0.5	0.0
12. Bad company in schools	Students	30.3	45.8	19.7	2.2	2.0
	Teachers	50.0	46.3	0.0	0.0	3.7
	Heads and Assistants	0.0	100	0.0	0.0	0.0

Internal Factors

As might be expected, lack of students’ involvement in school decision-making in the opinion of respondents, did contribute greatly to students’ indiscipline. 73% of students were of the opinion that this was a great contributing factor. However, a lower percentage of teachers (33.8%) and the heads and assistants (42.8%) shared the same opinion. In a later question to find out whether respondents thought that students should be involved in decision-making, an average of about 92% of each category of respondents replied “YES”. This is shown in table 16, this implied that even though a high percentage of teachers, heads and assistants were of the opinion that students should be involved in schools’ decision-making, their reasons for saying so might be something other than the fact that it contributed to students’ indiscipline. Since the average percentage of each category of respondents who were of the opinion that this

factor did not contribute at all to student indiscipline was very low (about 8%), it suggested that this factor was definitely responsible for students' indiscipline.

Table 15 revealed that lack of school facilities like library equipment, teaching and learning materials, classroom furniture, science equipment etc did contribute greatly to student indiscipline. On the whole, it was observed that the percentage of the students who were of the opinion that lack of school facilities contributed greatly to indiscipline was much larger than the percentage of teachers, heads and assistants. In a specific example from item 2 on the table, 54.8% of students, 51.1% of teachers and 30.7% of heads and assistants were of that same opinion.

An interesting question that may be asked is that, if the administrators are aware that the lack of facilities which is supposed to be supplied to schools are great contributing factors to student indiscipline, why is nothing being done by the administrators to supply these needs? It can be argued therefore that, if such factors should spark of student indiscipline, then the administrators who failed to supply them are to be blamed.

“Low academic performance of students” and “poor quality teaching”, even though related, did not in the opinion of respondents have the same bearing on student indiscipline. Respondents were of the opinion that low academic performance of students contributed very little while poor quality teaching contributed fairly to indiscipline. It was interesting to note here again that teachers and administrators agreed fairly well on their responses as against students on the other hand. For example, 38.6% of teachers and 19.4% of the administrators did not think that this factor contributed anything at all to student indiscipline. On the other hand, a high percentage of students (52.5%) were of the opinion that poor quality teaching contributed to indiscipline. As has been pointed earlier, this apparent ‘ganging’ of students on one hand and teachers and administrators on the other could not be explained easily on the basis of the data available. However, it appeared that in general, if a factor was related to teachers or administrators then there seemed to be agreement in opinion of these two categories of respondents as against those of students.

‘Authoritarian administration’, ‘unjust actions by administration’ and lack of freedom for students are all factors associated with a schools administration. The data revealed again the pattern observed earlier that teachers and administrators seemed to agree in their responses on one hand while students agreed on the other hand in cases where the factors concerned either teachers or administrators. For example, on the question of authoritarian, 81.9% of students were of the opinion that this greatly contributed to student indiscipline while only 34.1% of teachers and 21.5% of heads and assistants thought that this was so. The general opinion of teachers, heads and assistants was that authoritarian administration had very little contribution to student indiscipline.

Teachers’ opinion agreed with those of students on the question of “unjust actions by administration” and lack of freedom for students. This appears contrary to the observation made earlier that teachers’ opinion generally agreed with those of administrators where the factors being considered concerned either of the two. Specifically, on the question of unjust actions by administration 65.8% of students and 54.5% of teachers were of the opinion that this contributed greatly to indiscipline while only 24% of administrators agreed with this opinion. Even though the percentage of teachers agreeing with students was quit high, it was also interesting to note that a fairly high percentage of teachers

(16.1%) were of the opinion that this fact did not contribute anything at all to the student indiscipline – an opinion which was shared by a fairly large percentage (19.5) of administrators.

It can be concluded that, opinion was divided on whether authoritarian administration did contribute greatly or not to student indiscipline but in general, all the categories of respondents agreed that unjust action by administration did contribute greatly to student indiscipline.

Lack of freedom for students in school was believed to be a contributing factor to student indiscipline. The study revealed that many of the respondents were of the opinion that there was very little contribution that this made to student indiscipline. This opinion was shared by 74.8% of teachers and 59.5% of heads and assistants. As many as 25.2% of teachers and 40.5 of administrators did not think that this factor contributed anything at all to student indiscipline.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents, 76.1% of students, 96.3% of teachers and 100% of administrators were of the opinion that ‘bad company’ in school was a major contributing factor to student indiscipline. Since a zero percent response was recorded under column ‘not at all’ for heads and assistants and also very low values of 2.0% for students and 3.7% for teachers were recorded under this same column, it suggested that this was a definite contributing factor. School authorities may therefore be advised to look out for such occurrence and deal with them if student indiscipline is to be eradicated or reduced.

Student Involvement in Decision-Making

As mentioned earlier on in the discussion, an overwhelming majority of respondents were of the opinion that students should be involved in decision-making in schools. Table 16 displays the percentage responses.

Table 16: Percentages Of The Different Categories Of Respondents In Favour Of Students Involvement In Decision-Making

Category	Yes	No	Total
Students	89.3	10.7	100
Teachers	87.2	12.8	100
Heads and Assistants	98.6	1.4	100

From the table, it was revealed that 89.3% of the students, 87.2% of teachers and 98.6% of administrators were of the view that students should be involved in decision –making.

Some very interesting reasons given by the students who answered ‘YES’ are quoted below:

1. “Students will obey the rules”.
2. “Most of the rules affect us so we need to take part to defend our interest”.
3. “Decisions affect us the students, therefore in the name of grassroots democracy, students must be included”.
4. “Most decisions taken affect students and not the decision makers (the teachers)”.
5. “We also have problems and we are not given the chance to voice them out for help”.

Some of the reasons given by the teachers, heads and their assistants were as follows:

1. “It will help teachers to know student view and therefore get them closer”.
2. “It will help them in understanding and interpretation of the

- laws made”.
3. “Administration will get to know the real problems in the school”.
 4. “Part of their training for future leadership”.
 5. “It will prevent students making unnecessary demands”.

Table 17: Extent to Which External Factors Contribute to Student Indiscipline

Factors Contributing To Students Indiscipline	Category	To a Very Large Extent	To a Large Extent	Some Extent	Least Extent	Not at all
1. Government policies and decisions	Students	22.8	16.0	5.3	21.9	34.0
	Teachers	24.4	10.2	11.3	32.7	33.4
	Administrators	1.2	46.4	2.0	47.2	3.2
2. The mass media e.g. TV, Video, News papers etc.	Students	16.1	14.1	15.5	28.2	26.1
	Teachers	7.0	2.0	49.2	23.3	18.5
	Administrators	0.0	0.0	100	0.0	0.0
3. Old boys and girls associations’ interference in school decision making	Students	38.9	26.9	20.1	10.7	3.4
	Teachers	25.6	32.6	14.0	16.3	11.5
	Administrators	0.0	100	0.0	0.0	0.0

External Factors

Government policies and decisions do not seem to contribute much to students’ indiscipline. Apart from the percentage (46.4) of the administrators who were of the opinion that this contributed to a large extent, most teachers and student respondents thought that there was very little contribution that government policies and decision made on student indiscipline. As can be seen from table 17, over 30% of students and teachers were of the opinion that this had made absolutely no contribution at all to indiscipline.

It was revealed that old students’ interference contributed much to the indiscipline. From the table, over 60% of the students were of the opinion that old students’ interference is a contributing factor to the students’ indiscipline. This is supported by the teachers and the administrators with these percentages 72.2% and 100% respectively.

From the data, the mass media was found to contribute little to student indiscipline. This was particularly surprising because many people tend to blame this as a great contributing factor. The observation was that, as many as 72.5% of teachers and 100% of administrators were of the opinion that this factor contributed very little to this opinion, a fairly high percentage (26.1%) of them did not think this factor contributed anything at all.

In general, it appeared that non of the external factors mentioned above contributed very much to indiscipline except old students’ interference in school decision-making which respondents’ opinion revealed that it was a contributing factor.

Means of Ensuring Discipline

In analyzing the views of respondents on the means of ensuring discipline, the first two columns labeled “of very great importance” and “of great importance” were considered together to mean an important contributing factor. This was then contrasted with the column labeled “of no importance” so as to get a clearer picture of the general trend in opinion. The column labeled “of some importance” has been left out because the opinions expressed were considered as not having a strong directional effect. It was considered as having a buffer effect and was used when there was a split in opinion.

Table 18 displays the percentage responses of the different categories of respondents

Table 18: Means of Ensuring Discipline

	Category	Of Very Great Importance	Of Great Importance	Of Some Importance	Of No Importance
Severer punishment be meted out than is been done in the schools	Students	26.6	30.3	17.4	25.7
	Teachers	26.7	11.8	52.2	9.3
	Administrators	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
Withdrawal of privileges	Students	15.4	21.8	24.9	37.9
	Teachers	26.9	19.6	30.2	23.3
	Administrators	0.0	0.0	100	0.0
Training in moral conduct	Students	49.2	26.3	18.8	5.7
	Teachers	67.4	24.9	7.7	0.0
	Administrators	100	0.0	0.0	0.0
Establishing good relationship between and among students, teaching and non-teaching staff	Students	65.7	19.9	11.5	2.9
	Teachers	65.1	26.2	8.7	0.0
	Administrators	98.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Cooperation between the home and the school	Students	45.3	20.5	26.9	7.3
	Teachers	79	10.6	5.3	4.3
	Administrators	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Involvement of parent teacher associations in school discipline	Students	40.6	29.2	26.2	4.0
	Teachers	49.8	35.9	14.3	0.0
	Administrators	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

There was no clear opinion as to whether withdrawal of privileges as a means of ensuring discipline was effective or not. The data revealed that, 37.2% of students, 46.5% of teachers and 0.0% of administrators were of the opinion that this was an effective disciplinary measure. Such these values were not quite high, it could be deduced that this technique was of little importance.

“Training in moral conduct” and “strong religious training” were highly agreed upon by respondents as being important means of ensuring discipline in schools. The table indicates that for training in moral conduct as a means of ensuring discipline, 75.5% of students, 92.3% of teachers and 100% of administrators were of the opinion that this was important. Apart from a very small percentage of students (5.7%) who thought that this was not important, no of the other categories of respondents was of that opinion.

The position was similar when the opinion of respondents on “strong religious training” as a means of ensuring discipline was considered. Again there were very high percentage respondents who were of the opinion that this was an important means of ensuring discipline. As many as 77.4% of students, 79.2% of teachers and 98.7% of administrators were of this opinion. These high values recorded in favour of moral and religious training as means of ensuring discipline. As many as 77.4% of students, 79.2% of teachers and 98.7% of administrators were of this opinion. These high values recorded in favour of moral and religious training as means of ensuring discipline may be explained in two ways.

Firstly, it has been pointed out earlier in this research that the Ghanaian is by nature, religious and that moral questions are intertwined with religious questions and therefore it was not surprising that there was a strong agreement that moral and religious training were important means of ensuring discipline in schools.

Secondly, the students in this study have strong church influence, some are Christians and others are Moslems. Table 18 revealed that establishing good relationships in the school was a very important means of ensuring discipline. These were 85.6% of students, 91.3% of teachers and 98% of administrators who were of the opinion that this was an important means of ensuring discipline. The home and school are two institutions involved in the training of the child for life. Cooperation between these two is therefore, necessary for proper education of the child. Where a conflict exists between these two institutions, disciplinary problems arise. The percentage responses in table 18 confirm this view that there is the need for cooperation between them in effecting discipline in schools. Of students, 65.8% teachers 90.4% and 100% of administrators share this opinion.

One possible way of realizing this cooperation is through the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). It was the opinion of a number of people that the involvement of P.T.As in school discipline is an important means of ensuring discipline. This opinion was supported the findings in this study in which 72.5% students, 76.3% teachers and 100% by administrators held this view.

In the final analysis, four categories of means of ensuring discipline emerged when the two columns labeled “of very great importance” and “of great importance” we-re considered together as “important means” and the average percentage contrasted with the average

percentage under the column “of no importance”.

These were:

1. Those in which the average percentage under the important means was 80% and above. While the average of the “not important” column was less than 10%. These are called the **very important** group.
2. Those in which the average percentage under the important means was between 30-50% while the average of the “not important” column was less than 10%. These are called the **important** groups.
3. Those in which the average percentage under the “not important” column was more than 50%, while the average under “important” was less than 30%. These are called the **not important** group.
4. Those in which the average of the “important” and “not important” columns differs by about 10%. These are called the **split** group.

The “**very important**” group in this study was found to include training in moral conduct, helping children to see reason for their undesirable behaviour, establishing good relationship between and among students, teaching and non-teaching staff, getting students involved in decision-making, rewarding students, cooperation between the home and the school, good examples to be set by educators and teachers, strong religious training and giving students more responsibility.

The **‘important’** group included: application of punishment other than corporal and sympathetic understanding of students’ behaviour.

The **‘not important’** group in this study were: maintaining military-like training and fewer rules of discipline in schools. Also those that came under the split group were application of corporal punishment and withdrawal of privilege. What this study has done is to point out that there exist various means of ensuring discipline, some of which may be considered important or otherwise in a school situation. However, it has not tried to related the means of ensuring discipline to any type of disciplinary problem, because some other research has shown that no one particular means is applicable in all the situations and to all the people.

To summarize, the study revealed that there were various causes for different acts of indiscipline that were common in the schools. In a number of cases, respondents generally agreed on the reasons for an act being committed. However in some cases for example, rude behaviour towards those in authority, lateness to school, absenteeism, respondents differed greatly. When responses were compared, it was found that there were only four areas where the opinions of respondents in the schools differed. These were in the areas of stealing, use of profane language, cheating in examinations and lying. Much as students would wish to be free to do what they wanted to do in school, they appreciated strict discipline and attributed good discipline in school to a strict administration.

Some unaccepted behaviours patterns were found to be characteristic of boys and others were characteristics of girls. For example, bullying and smoking were found to be characteristic of boys while gossiping was found to be of girls. Among all students

it was found that the worst kind of behaviour that a student could exhibit was rude behaviour towards those in authority.

Students' indiscipline appeared to be caused by either an internal factor or an external factor or both. In general, it was found that external factors contributed very little. The major cause was due to internal factors. Some of the internal factors that were thought to contribute greatly were 'unjust actions by administration', 'poor communication between administration' and overcrowding in classrooms.

Indeed, it was a general opinion of respondents that students should be involved in decision-making in the schools. On the question of means of ensuring discipline, the findings were that four groups of means of ensuring discipline could be identified. These were, very important group, important group, not important group and split group. Application of any of these means will depend upon the situation and the people involved.

Findings/Conclusion

The designs of the study were research questionnaire and interviews. These designs were chosen since the study was intended to investigate the concept, causes and techniques of discipline in the schools. The simple random sampling was used in selecting the entire population of one hundred and eight (180) respondents from the selected schools. Ninety (90) were students and the rest were staff of the schools including headmasters and their assistants. The responses collected from the whole population were analysed and summarized using the simple percentages after their frequency count.

Respondents generally agreed on the idealistic concept of discipline as was evident particularly from the responses obtained from one of the idealistic concepts which was stated as follows: "It teaches that human being must be regulated in his physical activities". Here, there was an almost hundred percent (100%) agreement by all respondents.

On the question of the causes of acts of indiscipline commonly found in the schools, there were sharp differences in opinion between the different categories of respondents with regards to a number of the acts mentioned.

However, in a larger number of acts, respondents generally agreed on their causes. For example, in the cases of lying and cheating in examinations, there was an average of over 60% agreement among the different categories of respondents on the causes of these acts of indiscipline.

Three groups of acts of indiscipline were identified in this study. The first group consisted of those acts that were considered serious and also occurred often. It included stealing, bullying, lying and lateness to school. The second group was made up of those acts that were considered serious but did not occur often. This included smoking, rude behaviour towards those in authority and drunkenness.

The third group consisted of those acts that were considered not serious and which occurred rarely. It included acts like the use of profane language and not putting on the prescribed uniform to school". There was no general agreement between students and educators as to the seriousness or not of the various acts of indiscipline mentioned.

Generally, respondents were of the opinions that strict disciplinary measures helped to keep the level of indiscipline in schools as low

as possible. Even though a number of unacceptable behaviours were mentioned as common to all students, bullying was particularly found to be associated with boys. To the majority of students, rudeness to those in authority was considered the worst kind of behaviour.

Factors contributing to student indiscipline may be, 'Internal' or 'External'. The study revealed that only one of the external factors mentioned, that is old boys and girls associations' interference contributed to student indiscipline. Most of the contributing factors to student indiscipline were internal, and it included lack of student participation in school decision making, overcrowding in classrooms, lack of teaching materials and poor quality teaching etc.

On the question of the means of ensuring discipline used in schools, respondents generally agreed in their opinions as to whether a particular means was important or not. Four of the means of ensuring discipline were considered 'not important' disciplinary techniques. These were the 'use of corporal punishment', 'withdrawal of privileges', 'military-like training' and 'fewer rules of discipline in schools. The others were all considered important means of ensuring discipline by all categories of respondents.

It must be pointed out however that in one instance, that is, the 'application of severe punishment in schools, administrators differed sharply in opinion compared to the other categories of respondents. While 100% of administrators thought that this was an important means of ensuring discipline, an average of about 26.6% of the other categories did not think so.

Interesting, the opinions of respondents on the question of the importance or not of means of ensuring discipline in the schools did not differ. All except four of the means of ensuring discipline listed in this study were considered important. The exceptions included withdrawals of privileges, maintaining military-like training, corporal punishment and fewer rules of discipline in the schools.

Some interesting patterns that emerged from the study were that:

- i. Some unacceptable behaviour patterns were found to be associated with boys while others were characteristics of girls. Those associated with boys were bullying, stealing and smoking while gossiping and stealing were found as characteristics of girls.
- ii. Teachers and administrators on one hand seemed to agree on a number of opinions as against those of students on the other hand. This pattern was observed especially in factors that affected teachers or administrators.

It could be possible that this emerged as a result of some form of solidarity action. Teachers and administrators backed each other while the students supported their views as students.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that respondents generally agreed on the concept of discipline. Since there is a general understanding of the concept which could be argued that the concept of discipline should not be a major problem in school discipline, the problem, it may be suggested, lies elsewhere.

Another conclusion that could be drawn from the findings was that students and educators did not agree on the causes of indiscipline in the schools in the study. Three categories of acts of indiscipline existed in schools. One group consisted of acts that were considered serious and occurred often. A second group consisted of acts that

were considered serious but which did not occur often and the last group consisted of acts that were considered not serious and which did not occur often. There was no general agreement between students and educators on acts of indiscipline that were considered serious or not. Therefore, it can be concluded that this is an area from which disciplinary problems might arise.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that respondents held similar conceptions on discipline. To a large extent they did not differ very much in their opinions concerning the causes and means of discipline. Four categories of means of ensuring discipline existed in the school. These were the **very important group**, the **important group**, the **not important group** and the **split** group.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Teachers and students need to meet frequently for discussions on acts of indiscipline.
- ii. Administrators and teachers should make every effort to find out some of the causes of students indiscipline so as to be able to deal with the situation more effectively.
- iii. Administrators should note and apply as and when appropriate, the following means of ensuring discipline which were considered generally as important in effecting discipline in schools. These include training in moral conduct, helping students to see reason for their undesirable behaviour, establishing good relationship between and among students and staff co-operation between the home and the school, good examples set by educators and teachers and religious training.
- iv. Administrators should provide adequate instructional materials as well as spacious classrooms because an average of about 65.4% respondents were of the opinion that lack of facilities and overcrowding in schools can cause students' indiscipline.
- v. Administrators should appoint full time guidance and counseling coordinators in the schools to ensure the establishment of self-discipline among students through proper understanding.
- vi. Administrators should do well to involve students in decision making processing in schools especially in matters that affect them directly. Because the result indicated that when students are involved in decision making, they understand the rules and regulations in the school much better.
- vii. Administrators should make parents aware of the fact that bad training of their children at home does trigger off students rebellion in school. Therefore, they must make every effort to give the best possible training to their children at home.
- viii. The result revealed that rude behaviour towards those in authority was a result of teachers' favouritism in dealing with students' disciplinary matters. Therefore, teachers should be fair and firm in marks awarding and decision making.
- ix. Administrators should invite parents to talk with them about their children's progress and any concerns they have.
- x. It was revealed that inadequate preparation and poor teaching methods on the part of teachers may cause students' indiscipline. Teachers should therefore prepare adequately before they enter classroom to teach and try to vary their methods of teaching.
- xi. All those involved in the training of the child should co-operate in disciplining the child.

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