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# **School Administrators the Brain behind Indisciplinary Behaviours in Schools in Nigeria**

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By

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## **Abstract**

*This paper dealt extensively with indisciplinary behaviours among the school administrators in Nigeria. The paper defined who is an administrator, and educational administrator. It dealt with different categories of school administrators. It went farther to highlight some of the functions of the school administrators. It highlighted some of the unethical behaviours of the school administrators to include, examination malpractice, extortion, absenteeism, sexual immorality etc. The paper ended with recommendations for an improvement.*

As nations of the world, countries, states, local government, ministries, parastatals, commissions, boards etc have administrative heads, so do schools (primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions) have administrative heads called school administrators. In Nigeria we have the following school administrators: Headmasters, Assistant Headmasters; Principals, Vice Principal, Rectors, Deputy Rectors, Provosts , Deputy provosts, Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments.

The above school administrators have been saddled with the task of carrying out educational policies of the government. They are to see to the school performance in terms of students' academic, moral, social, spiritual and psychological growth and development; and the staff welfare. They are accountable to the government. The degree of discipline or indiscipline in any school is principally the handiwork of the school administrator(s). This can be likened to a father in a family who dictates the tone of discipline in his family. The ethicality of any family or otherwise is dependent on the level of the father's disciplinary disposition. This is also applicable to a school. If the

### *The Intuition*

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school administrator is highly disciplined all things being equal the level of indiscipline which has plagued many schools will be very low in his own school, but if otherwise, the story will be the same. Administrator according to Hornby (1995), is a person responsible for managing public affairs e.g. school.

Today indisciplinary behaviours or unethical behaviours have enveloped all the public schools in Nigeria, and the cause of this cankerworm is not farfetched. As an insider, who has taught in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education the prime factor behind unethical or indisciplinary behaviours in our schools are the school administrators who aid and abet unethical behaviours such as examination malpractice, absenteeism, extortion, poor teaching , poor invigilation of examinations, sexual immorality, lateness, loitering, alcoholism , smoking etc.

The high level of indiscipline in our schools has actually brought down the standards of education in Nigeria. The writer's personal contact and interaction with a – 400 level student reveals that some final year students in Nigerian Universities cannot read and write simple English Language. A lot of questions may arise from this ugly situation such as how did he get to secondary school, University and final year? The answer will not be hard at all. He reached this level through examination malpractice encouraged by the school administrator. Oh! What a system of education? The school systems in Nigeria and their administrators need to be pitied. School administrators in Nigeria where are you taking us to? Why should the past when we had fewer numbers of qualified teachers and teaching materials be better than now that we have greater number of qualified teaching personnel and teaching materials? Why have you decided to sell your integrity for material things by being the apostles of indiscipline in our schools? It is a clear fact that the school administrators are the life wire of the school. Thus, the school administrator can either make or mal the school.

### **The school Administrator**

The school administrator is the administrative head of a school, or the assistant to the head of a school, head of a faculty or department in a school. In a primary school, the headmaster and his assistant are the school administrators. In a Secondary School, the principal and the vice principals are the school administrators. In Polytechnic the Rector, Deputy Rector, Deans and Heads of Departments are the school administrators. In College of Education, the Provost, Deputy Provost, Deans and Heads of Departments are the school administrators, while in a University, the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deans and Heads of Departments are the school administrators.

According to Peretomode (1995), a school administrator is that person who is concerned with implementation of education plans, policies or programmes in a school.

Educational administrators according to Adeyemo in Aderounmu (1985), are regarded as servants who minister to the needs of the pupils and teachers to promote the highest possible standard of instructional efficiency. But in Nigeria, school administrators do not regard themselves as servants but as lords whose final decisions are more or less laws. This is actually why our educational systems are defective. Many school administrators do not know the specific roles they have to play in their day – to – day duties. For lack of knowledge or understanding of the real meaning of educational administration, some people wrongly take administration as a complete control of education. But in any case, administration must be looked upon as a service through which the aims and objectives of education are achieved. The educational administrators see administration as an end and not a means to an end.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives set up by the government, the school administrators have to work with other groups within the school community and outside it. The administrators have to work with the Ministry of Education, the teaching service Commission, the school management Board, the teachers and pupils. There may be conflicting demands from the state, the parents, the society in this process but the administrators must try to coordinate these conflicting demands and make a workable plan towards achieving enviable goals in the task of nation building.

Ozigi (1977) asserted that the school administrator should possess the basic knowledge of how to coordinate activities within his establishment, know how to discern and influence goals, policies and programmes and how to procure and manage available resources so as to achieve the main goals of the institution. Out of the school administrator's office come all the plans and programmes that make the school what it is. To be effective, the office must be used properly.

Farrant (1974) stated that the school administrator's office is the nerve – centre of the school. Into it goes all the reports and information that enables him to plan the activities of the school and assess the extent to which the school has attained its purpose. The administrator must be good in record keeping like correspondences. He should be able to relate very well with all the concerned authorities. He should be conversant with the laws of the country. The laws should guide his mode of administration and operation. He should be aware of the legal implications of his actions.

### **Indisciplinary Behaviours in Schools and the School Administrator's Involvement**

In our schools and colleges today, there are many unethical or indisciplinary behaviours among students and teachers that the school administrators are either directly or indirectly involved. Most pressing among them are:

1. Examination malpractices.

2. Lateness
3. Absenteeism
4. Poor teaching
5. Poor invigilation of examination
6. Extortion
7. Poor handling of examination results
8. Sexual immorality
9. Loitering
10. Alcoholism and smoking
11. Cultism etc.

### 1. **Examination Malpractice and the School Administrator**

According to Nwakpa (2008), examination malpractice means any act or behaviour that is contrary to examination rules and regulations done either before or during the conduct of an examination with the capability of undermining examination process. Visits to secondary schools in Nigeria during external examinations such as National Examination Council (NECO) or West African Examination Council (WAEC) reveal that majority of the students were openly copying from textbooks and other sources with impunity. The writer's little interaction with students reveal that students usually buy a lot of gifts and even give out cash to the school authority in order to permit them to write examination with foreign aids. In tertiary institutions, most of the head of departments do not care about what goes on in examination hall, and even most of them directly involve themselves in malpractice.

### 2. **Lateness to Work**

This is a serious act of indiscipline. In Nigeria it has become a norm in our schools especially in primary and secondary schools. This act is principally, the handiwork of the school administrator who does not query or punish the offenders. Experience and observations have shown that majority of school administrators always go to school behind time, and this act could not morally permit them to punish other late comers.

### 3. **Absenteeism**

Nowadays, the degree of school administrator's absence from school for one official reason or the other has encouraged some teachers to indulge in being absent from school without good reasons and this has extended to some of the students. Absence from school does not encourage effective teaching and learning in our schools.

### 4. **Poor Teaching**

Poor teaching is a product of many variables such as absence, lateness and so on. Since most of the school administrators especially in primary and secondary schools are always late or away from school, internal supervision of the school is bound to be weak,

and this encourages weak and poor teaching. At the long run the poor teaching will lead to examination malpractice.

#### **5. Poor Invigilation of Examination**

Poor invigilation of Examinations is actually caused by the absence of either the headmaster the principal, the head of department or the dean or their special delegates. Remember Mc. Gregory's theory x and its assumptions. He was of the view here that workers should be adequately supervised with threats if you want to get positive results. When examination is not properly invigilated, the outcome will not be the real performance of the students.

#### **6. Extortion**

This is an act of collecting illegal money from someone (students) in form of bribe or gift before or after carrying out your official assignment or for doing something unethical. This practice is too common in Nigerian schools among the school administrators. Umeh (1996) observed that the school administrators involve themselves in the following acts of misconduct:

- a. Demanding and accepting money from ex-students before issuing them their certificates or statement of results.
- b. Participating in illegal admission rackets.
- c. Demanding money from students before accepting their completed registration forms and files. They also turn blind eyes on their staff that extorts money from students, thus, encouraging extortion in schools.

#### **7. Poor Handling of Examination Results**

This is a very serious act of indiscipline among the school administrators especially at the tertiary level of education. Experience has shown that most of the school administrators such as heads of departments and deans are very weak in record keeping. This has caused students untold problems especially at graduation when their results are computed. At this point, many of the students' results will not be seen again. The affected students will be made to sit for such papers and also pay another school fees and charges. What a frustration? This can cause serious problems in the school and needs to be avoided and prevented.

#### **8. Sexual Immorality**

Sexual immorality in a school setting has to do with teachers having carnal knowledge of their female students either with or without the consent of the female student. Observations reveal that many headmasters, principals, head of departments, deans etc are frequently involved in having sexual relationship with their female student's right inside their offices, in their matrimonial homes and hotels. O! What an administrator, a

system and a society? This is a society where a dog is eating the bone that is hung on its neck. A society where a father is dating his daughter, God forbid evil.

### **9. Loitering**

This is an act of walking about the school premises aimlessly by students or, and teachers during the school hours when lessons are going on or are supposed to be going on. Visits to schools reveal that between 8.00 am and 10.00 am students in both primary and secondary schools are found every way roaming about when they are supposed to be inside the classrooms learning one thing or the other. When queried, the students said that they were not doing anything in the school, that their teachers were not even in the school. The question now is, where is the school administrator? What is he doing about this ugly situation? This is also applicable to our tertiary institutions. In tertiary institutions many lecturers loiter about instead of going to teach the students. The absence of teachers in the classrooms creates room for students to loiter about aimlessly.

### **10. Alcoholism and Smoking**

Observations have shown that majority of our school administrators indulge grossly in drinking and smoking openly and even go out with students to drink in Beer parlours, especially in tertiary institutions. Under this circumstance, who will check who as far as drinking and smoking are concerned in our schools? At the lower level of education, that is, in the primary and secondary schools, the story is not quite different. The administrators are not disciplined and thus, they cannot give what they do not have. Our students all over the place are found drinking and smoking, and there is nothing the school authorities could do since they are guilty of the same offence.

### **11. Cultism**

A case of indiscipline relating to cultism according to Nwakpa (2006) is a national issue. It is now found commonly in our secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The bulk membership of secret cults in our schools is made up of children from wealthy men in the society and children of the school administrators. Why is it so? It is so because one adage says that when the mother goat is eating, the children will be watching her for imitation later. This is exactly the practice in the Nigerian society today. Most of the affluent men in Nigeria who are in one administrative position or the other are also in one secret cult or the other, and their children who are in school are imitating them. Even some of those administrators are financing these students' cult activities and at times use them against their opponents. The involvement of the school administrators in school cult activities makes it impossible to successfully fight against the existence of secret cult in our schools.

The educational implication of school administrator's involvement in indisciplinary behaviours in schools in Nigeria is falling standards in school discipline and academic performance among students.

### **Conclusion**

Literature has revealed that there is much unethical behaviours exhibited by the school administrators in Nigeria ranging from examination malpractice to secret cult activities. The ugly consequence of the indisciplinary acts has been identified as the fore runner to falling standard in school discipline and academic performance. The paper then ended with enough and strong recommendation for improvement.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations may be necessary if we want discipline and quality education back in our schools.

1. Adequate office allowance should be paid to school administrators to enable them maintain their offices. With enough office allowance, they will not collect money from students in order to permit them to write their external examinations under examination malpractice atmosphere.
2. The supervising agent should regularly visit schools, check the staff attendance registers, identify late comers and absentees and punish them accordingly including the administrators.
3. During examination, the school administrators should find enough time to be around and visit examination halls and even help to invigilate examinations, as his presence will create more fear among both the students and teachers
4. The supervising agent should see that any school administrator found extorting money from students should be appropriately punished, and in turn the administrators should punish any of his staff that extorts money from students.
5. School administrators should be more careful in handling students' result to avoid missing result when students are about to graduate. Thus, results should be put in both hard and soft wares and in computer immediately and be kept under lock and key.
6. The supervising body of schools should frown seriously at sexual immorality among school administrators. A proved case of sexual immorality against a school administrator should earn him outright dismissal without benefit. While ordinary sexual harassment if proved should earn him one year suspension without pay.
7. In the case of alcoholic drinking and smoking, any school administrator found taking any of them in the office should be adequately punished. He should be removed from such office by demotion for a period of at least four years.

8. While in the case of secret cult activities, any school administrator that is proved to be a sponsor of students' cult activities should be punished with six months suspension without pay.

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