Impact Of School Administrative Information On Students' Discipline In Secondary Schools In Ibadan North Local Government Area Of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
Students' discipline is noted in the literature as being influenced by the student factors. However, there is dearth of evidence exploring the relationship between students' discipline and non-student factors. In variance to common knowledge in the literature, this study hypothesized that non-student factors, such as the school administrative information (SAI), are a correlate of students' discipline. To test this hypothesis, a purposive random sampling technique was used to select 200 participants (school heads and teachers) from 5 secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. A three-sectioned questionnaire was designed to collect information from the respondents. The data collected centred on the structure of 5 different components of SAI such as assembly rules, general codes, classroom behaviours, exam conduct and disciplinary guidelines. Students' discipline is highly subjective, so the opinions of school heads and teachers, rather than those of students, were considered on the drivers of students' discipline. Data were analysed using a mix of frequency counts, percentages and logistic regression. The empirical analysis indicated that SAI is sub-optimally structured among the sampled schools, resulting in low levels of discipline among students of the schools. It is therefore recommended that schools should consider compilation of SAI into a handbook with constant reminders pasted on the notice boards for the students. In addition, the implementation of disciplinary guidelines (one of the important SAI components) should be without a sense of bias or discrimination. This is a strategy of eliciting the students' confidence in the values and ethos being promoted within the school system through the SAI.
Keywords: *SAI, students' discipline, learning outcomes, logistic regression, Nigeria*

I.   Introduction

There is extensive evidence describing students' discipline as being related to the students' characteristics (see for example Muiru et al., 2022; Anderson et al., 2019; Yunesa and Khaidir, 2018). However, beyond the students' characteristics, the school characteristics are important constructs which determine the propensities of students to embrace discipline (Rodriguez et al., 2022; Ngao and Ogola, 2021). One of such school characteristics is the school administrative information (SAI). For instance, the design and structure of the SAI exemplifies the acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours within the school settings (Rodriguez et al., 2022). However, the central role of the SAI is scarcely discussed in the empirical literature. And in the marginal evidence available, the emphasis is hardly on the specific component of SAI as it may correlate with the students' discipline levels. This paper therefore relies on the notion that a well-packaged, student-focused SAI goes a long way in instilling discipline among the students.

The SAI analysed in this paper is that which is directly related to the students' school conduct. This includes assembly rules, general codes, classroom behaviours, exam conduct and disciplinary guidelines. To achieve the desired outcomes on students' discipline, it is expected that the SAI is well packaged in formal mode without ambiguity (Usman, 2016). In addition, there is the need for students to be constantly reminded that their school behaviours should be in compliance with the SAI, with no tolerance for deviant behaviours (Okon et al., 2022). While one of the key SAI components is the disciplinary guidelines, the guidelines are only effective if they are implemented without the students sensing some discrimination (Okon et al., 2022; Chu and Ready, 2018). In particular, Chu and Ready (2018) affirmed that a disciplinary action labelled with discrimination against some students sends bad signals to the rest of the students. This hinders the achievement of deterrence that the action was intended for originally (Chu and Ready, 2018).

In another perspective, Hayes et al. (2022) suggested that the students' behaviours that are contained in the SAI should be observable among the school authorities. Similarly, Liu and Loeb (2021) noted that it is easy to instil discipline in the students if the school principals, teachers, counsellors and non-teaching staff set good

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examples for them. For example, students' punctuality in morning assembly is best achieved if the students recognize the culture of punctuality among the school staff. In this regard, students' observational learning of discipline in the school system trumps the explicit provisions of the SAI on discipline (Liu et al., 2022).

Given this background, this paper is motivated to explore the impact of SAI on observable discipline among the students. The reminder of the paper is organized into four sections. Section II discusses evidence in the literature on the link between SAI and students' discipline. After this, the methods of data collection from a sample of respondents as well as the techniques of data analysis are explained in Section III. Section IV discusses the results of empirical analysis of the collected data. Finally, Section V concludes the study and suggests strategies of restructuring SAI towards boosting discipline among the students.

II.   A review of related literature

Moye (2015) investigated the prevalence of indiscipline among secondary school students in Ondo State, Nigeria and the attitude of the school principals to curtail such indiscipline. The author designed and administered a questionnaire among 500 students who were randomly selected from 16 secondary schools in the state. Findings revealed that indiscipline was prevalent among the sampled students. In addition, the participant students claimed that the principals of their schools have done little or nothing to address rising indiscipline among the students – some asserted that the principals were involved in activities which supported students' indiscipline. Thus, the SAI was poorly coordinated or altogether absent among the selected schools. This indicated the evidence that the absence or ineffectiveness of SAI is a precursor to students' indiscipline (Moye, 2015).

Ikgbusi and Iheanacho (2016) considered the factors that might hinder the development and implementation of the SAI in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by the researchers' observation of incessant indiscipline among the secondary school students in the state. To provide contexts to the phenomenon, a purposive random sampling technique was used by the authors to select 110 principals of secondary schools, who were asked to fill a questionnaire checklist. The questionnaire data were supported with the respondents' opinions during the interview sessions. Findings showed that the workload for school principals was overwhelming as most schools were understaffed with teachers. Many principals lamented the poor state of teaching-learning process in their schools. In some schools with chronically low staff strength, the principals double as teachers. This condition drags the effective coordination of the school administration, making it difficult to blame the students for lacking discipline (Ikgbusi and Iheanacho, 2016).

Ukala (2018) surveyed the perceptions of secondary school students on discipline in the school settings and what factors might have contributed to their perceptions. The researcher conducted a closed-ended questionnaire survey among a large sample of 2980 Senior Secondary School (SSS) 3 students in 5 local government areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. Ukala (2018) reported the students as defining discipline as the ability not to be involved in disciplinary offences such as stealing, impersonation, smoking, lateness to school, truancy and examination malpractice. The author therefore offered the perspective that students were aware in part of what constitutes discipline. However, when asked of the factors that might make them commit or not commit the listed disciplinary offences, the students cited absence of strict disciplinary guidelines, which is a component of the SAI. It follows that students' discipline or indiscipline responds to the strictness in the execution of the disciplinary guidelines available in the school. The school administrators are thus enjoined to promote discipline among the students by packaging, delivering and implementing sound SAI for the students (Ukala, 2018).

Akomolafe and Ajayi (2019) provided a contextual direction to the evolution of SAI in the current era of social media. The authors argued in support of a re-structure of the SAI regarding the students' use of the social media. Their argument was supported by the trend of students' indiscipline due to their uncultured learning on the social media. To offer more empirical evidence, the authors administered two versions of questionnaires (for each of students' discipline and students' social-media behaviour) among 900 students and 500 teachers in 45 secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. It was found that 81.2% of students were active on social media, and 67.5% were found wanting on discipline – which is defined by the authors as the ability to comply with the school rules. Based on the findings, the authors tasked the school administrators to revisit the SAI and its mode of delivery with the view of discouraging students from heavy use of social media. In addition, students should be engaged with home assignments which might deny them the opportunity to spend long hours on using the social media (Akomolafe and Ajayi, 2019).

Mohammed et al. (2020) explored the direct impact of school disciplinary and reward guidelines on students' discipline and their indirect impact on students' academic performance. The researchers employed a cross-sectional survey design to randomly select 457 respondents, comprising 357 students, 97 teachers and 3 heads of secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The data collection procedure was anchored by a mix of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, while the data analysis featured descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The authors found that strict compliance with the disciplinary and reward measures by teachers and school heads have positive direct impact on students' discipline and their academic achievement. That is, a well-implemented punishment measures for deviant behaviours and unbiased reward measures for

acceptable behaviours promote discipline among the students and boosts their scores in the achievement tests (Mohammed et al., 2020).

Bassey (2020) analysed the impact of school administration on students' academic performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. Having used a simple random sampling technique to select 200 respondents (including principal officers and students) from secondary schools in the state, the author considered students' discipline as the control variable in the data analysis. The Pearson Moment Product Correlation Analysis was used as the analytical technique. The findings indicated that the effectiveness of school administration determines the level of academic performance of the students. In the discussion of findings, the author argued that the effective school administration is that which clearly defines the dos and don'ts for the students, teachers and other stakeholders of the school. Therefore, where the school administration is effective, discipline is championed among the students and this enhances their good academic performance. Bassey (2020)'s findings suggest that students' discipline is the significant variable which connects effective school administration with students' academic performance.

Umoetuk et al. (2023) assessed the administrative efficacy of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. From a population of 374 members of the teaching staff in 15 public secondary schools in the study area, a sample of 76 teachers was selected from three schools using a simple random sampling technique. A validated questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 89% was administered among the respondents. The authors found the principals' administrative efficacy as being strongly correlated with discipline among teachers and then among students. This implies that an effective principal is expected to structure the SAI to promote the culture of discipline among all stakeholders in the school setting (Umoetuk et al., 2023).

III. Methods

The study is descriptively designed towards analysing the relationship between flows of SAI and discipline among the school students. To realise this purpose, a survey was conducted among teachers, principals and vice principals of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The respondents were selected using a purposive random sampling technique. Even though the study is partly cantered on the students' discipline, students were not recruited because it would be difficult to consider the students' perceptions on discipline as trustworthy. Rather, the opinions of teachers and school heads were considered to bear semblance with trustworthiness. In all, a total of 200 respondents (120 teachers and 80 school heads) were selected to participate in this study. A questionnaire was designed and administered among the respondents. The questionnaire has three sections A, B and C. Section A asks for the demographic information of the respondents, including their gender, age, marital status, educational qualification and years of experience. Section B collates information on the structure of SAI in the sampled schools. Section C explores the link between the components of SAI and students' discipline. The considered components are five, namely: assembly rules, general codes, classroom behaviours, exam conduct and disciplinary guidelines. The questionnaire was in two versions for each group of teachers and school heads. To ease the administration, one teacher in each school was recruited as a gatekeeper, resulting in 5 gatekeepers in all. The participation of the gatekeepers was entirely voluntary as no financial inducements were offered to attract their interests.

Prior to the instrument administration, a pilot study was conducted among 20 teachers selected from secondary schools in the study area. Through the pilot study, the face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained. In addition, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as 79%, indicating high reliability properties of the instrument. These properties lent credibility to the use of the instrument to collect the required data in this study. The retrieval rate was 100%, thanks to the engagement of the gatekeepers for the instrument administration. Having collected the qualitative data, they were presented in Excel spreadsheet before they were filtered and cleaned. After this, the data were transferred in the Stata software to kick-start the inferential data analysis. The data on demographic characteristics and structure of the SAI were analysed using the frequency counts and percentages. A logit regression model was specified to capture the odds of the SAI components to affect students' discipline. That is, the impact of the SAI components on students' discipline was measured using the likelihood-based technique of the logit model. The logit estimates were interpreted at 5% and 10% levels of significance. In addition, the elasticities of means (a by-product of logit model estimates) were measured and interpreted in order to explain the responsiveness of students' indiscipline to the flows of different SAI components.

IV. Empirical analysis

The empirical analysis began with a discussion of demographic characteristics of the respondents who were identified with binary status. It was noted that while 45% are male, the remainder of 55% are female. The higher representation of female participants occurred strictly by chance as no criterion was implemented to select more female than male. When the respondents were asked of the highest educational qualifications, a majority (66%) mentioned master's degree while 20% had a first degree. A small number (14%) had a Ph.D. The PhD holders are all school heads. To generate perspectives around their educational qualifications, all the respondents

reported themselves as having degrees or diplomas in education. This would lend credibility to their opinions on the importance of SAI in determining the level of discipline among the students. The mean age of the respondents was calculated as 44 ± 12 years. Furthermore, it was noted that the respondents who fall in the lower end of the mean age (32 years) are mostly teachers while those in the upper end (56 years) are majorly school heads. On the years of experience, the respondents' answers pointed that while 52% of teachers have at least 5 years of experience, 80% of the school heads have a minimum of 12 years of experience. This might interpret that the years of experience is more important to influence promotion to the status of school heads than the education qualifications of participants in this study.

Table 1: Structure of school administrative information (SAI) in the sampled schools

Item on the questionnaire	Distribution	Count	%
Does SAI exist in your school?	Yes	200	100%
	No	0	0%
How is the SAI packaged for students?	Handbook	0	0%
	Audio-visual	0	0%
	Notice board	20	10%
	Assembly announcement	90	45%
	Infused with class activities	60	30%
	Parental meeting	30	15%
	Mixed approach	50	25%
What approach is used to deliver SAI to students?	Students-linked approach	150	75%
	Teachers-linked approach	20	10%
	Parents-linked approach	10	5%
	Mixed approach	20	10%
How often is SAI reviewed in your school?	Reviewed every academic year	50	25%
	Reviewed every 2-3 years	30	15%
	Reviewed every 4-5 years	20	10%
	Never reviewed	100	50%
What is the level of students' compliance with SAI in your school?	Low	160	80%
	Medium	30	15%
	High	10	5%
Has SAI boosted discipline among students in your school?	Yes	60	30%
	No	130	65%
	Undecided	10	5%

Source: Field Report, 2023

The respondents' opinions on the structure of SAI in their schools is summarised in Table 1. In clear terms, all the respondents agreed that there exists SAI in their schools. The respondents were asked of the packaging mode of the SAI. A majority (45%) stated that assembly announcement is the general mode of relating the SAI to the students. Also, a sizable number (30%) mentioned that the SAI is delivered to the students while the class activities are ongoing. While 15% stated that the parent-teacher association (PTA) meeting is the avenue to equip the students with the SAI, 10% cited notice boards as the main medium through which the students are aware of allowable school behaviours. There was no respondent claiming that the SAI is communicated through the handbook or audio-visual means. It is noteworthy that one-quarter of the participants mentioned the use of mixed approach (at least two of the packaging means). This evidence suggests that the SAI is not properly packaged in the sampled secondary schools.

On the approaches used to deliver the SAI to the students, a large percentage of the respondents (75%) claimed that the SAI is students-linked. That is, it is delivered directly to the students. There were 10% and 5% of the respondents who stated that the SAI is communicated through the teachers and parents, respectively. The balance of 10% argued that a mixed approach is implemented to pass the SAI onto the students. A closer look at the participants' opinions revealed those mentioning SAI as passing through the teachers as those stating that SAI is delivered via the class activities. Also, the respondents citing that SAI is parents-linked are those stating the PTA meetings as the medium of relating SAI to the students. When asked of the timing of review of the SAI, there was a largely-shared opinion among 50% of the respondents that the SAI is never reviewed. As 25% mentioned that SAI is updated every academic year in their schools, 15% thought the review happened every 2-3 years and only 10% observed so in every 4-5 years. It follows that the popularity of SAI among students of the sampled schools tends to be on low scale. Where the SAI is passed mostly verbally to the students, there are possibilities that the SAI instructions are unclear to the students, with no room to seek clarifications. This weakens the degree of compliance of students to the SAI. Thus, it was no surprising when the 80% of the participants rated the students' compliance with the SAI as low. By extension, discipline among the school students would likely be low when the SAI is labelled with some levels of ambiguity from the school heads and their teachers. This was consented to by 65% of the respondents.

The logit estimates are presented in Table 2. It is noteworthy that exam conduct is the variable with the highest probability (34.42%) of determining students' discipline. This suggests that a student's level of discipline is indicated by their propensities to comply with the school's acceptable behaviours during achievement tests or exams. Next in the order of influence is assembly rules (29.03%). A student needs to be regular and punctual in assembly activities for them to be described as having discipline. The next indicators of student's discipline are disciplinary guidelines (27.81%), general codes (23.18%) and classroom behaviour (19.32%). By implication, there is the need for adequate flows of SAI on these discipline variables in order to facilitate discipline among the students. Also, the elasticities of means show that all the measures of discipline, with the exception of general codes and classroom behaviours, are elastic in their responsiveness to students' discipline. This means that students' discipline respond strongly to well-structured assembly rules, exam conduct and disciplinary guidelines, but weakly to general codes and classroom behaviours.

Table 2: Odds of SAI having impact on students' discipline (the logit estimates)

SAI component	Coefficient estimate	Standard error	Asymptotic t-statistic	Elasticity of means
Constant	0.0331	0.0045	2.0987*	0.001
Assembly rules	0.2903	0.2763	4.8841*	1.112
General codes	0.2318	0.3881	2.2299**	0.121
Classroom behaviours	0.1932	0.2876	2.7074**	0.077
Exam conduct	0.3442	0.3282	4.6533*	1.345
Disciplinary guidelines	0.2781	0.2887	3.4311*	1.063
Chi-square: 29.67* F-stat: 32.06** Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.812$*				

* indicates that the coefficient is significant at 5% while
** indicates that the coefficient is significant at 10%
Source: Field Report, 2023

Intuitively, a student who is regular in morning assembly shall be regular in classroom, indicating that compliance with assembly rules may instil acceptable classroom behaviours in the students. In other words, the mechanisms of enhancing discipline in students include enhanced regular attendance on the assembly ground and by extension in the class activities, compliance with rules of exam conduct and unbiased implementation of student's disciplinary guidelines. For example, a student that is served suspension for bullying other students or causing disturbance during examinations is bound to serve deterrence to other students. Nevertheless, this should be implemented without any element of bias. On no condition should the students feel being short-changed or biased against, otherwise the implementation of the disciplinary guidelines attracts rejection from the students. Most importantly, the school administrators should ensure that there is unrestricted flow of information on discipline and conduct as it is passed onto the students. A strategy of achieving this is to create information folder or handbook for all students at the point of registration for fresh students or the beginning of academic year for stale students.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

This study has established that the structure of SAI goes a long way in determining the behaviours of students, especially their compliance with the school rules and regulations. That is, a SAI that is unambiguously designed and communicated to the students may instil discipline in them. In contrast, an absence of explicit SAI which is packaged for and delivered directly to the students may contribute to growing indiscipline among them. This study has established evidence for the latter scenario. The empirical analysis of data collected from participants in this study indicated that the available SAI in the sampled schools was not optimally structured to promote discipline among the students. While this does not excuse students' indiscipline, there is the need to revise the nomenclature of SAI towards enhancing discipline among the students. More particularly, the school authorities should be proactive to package the SAI into a handbook with periodic revisions pasted on the notice board. This serves as the means of constantly putting the SAI in the awareness of the students. In addition, simple language should be used to design the SAI handbook such that the students easily understand the contents of the SAI. Furthermore, counselling unit should be promoted in schools so that the students are demotivated from deviant behaviours. Finally, to sustain the effectiveness of the SAI, there should be no bias in the implementation of the disciplinary guidelines. As the students are aware that disciplinary behaviours are non-selectively punished, they are nudged to pursue discipline while in school and even outside the school environment.

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