

SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS AND STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined School Rules and Regulations and Students Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria; using descriptive survey design with two research questions and one hypothesis tested.

The population comprised all the Principals, Teachers and students in the 304 Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State. A sample of 3213 participants consisting of 153 principals and 3060 students selected from 153 Public Secondary Schools in nine LGAs of the State using the multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "School Rules and Regulations and Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State, (SRRSDIPSSQ). Data were analyzed using frequency, mean and Pearson product moment correlation statistics and the hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance. Finding shows that there is a significant relationship ($r=0.72$) between School Rules and Regulations and Students' Discipline. Based on findings, the study recommended improvement of students awareness of School Rules and Regulations to ensure students discipline.

Key Words: Rules and Regulations, Awareness, Students, Discipline, Public Secondary Schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The implication of ignorance of the school rules and regulations is explicit on students' discipline and non-compliance to the rules and regulations often attract punishments. Education laws permit the issuance of punishment to any teacher, student or individual in the education system who contravenes school rules and regulations. Schools are run under the ambit of education laws to maintain discipline and ensure overall effectiveness of schools. Discipline is a prerequisite for almost everything a school can offer to students Carlon (2012).

Students are key stakeholders and the most essential resources in education. It is absolutely necessary to direct students to exhibit an acceptable attitude and behavior within and outside the school. In an attempt to achieve an organized and peaceful environment and maintain law and order, the school management specifies rules and regulations to guide the activities of members of the educational institution Anna (2013).

Different strategies to maintain discipline have been employed both at the national and school levels. Among others, the adoption and deployment of school rules and regulations in secondary schools is the main target for monitoring and curbing students' behaviours Odoyo (2016).

Discipline can be defined as the practice of training people to obey rules and orders and punishing them if they do not. The school has a reputation for high standards of discipline and the implication of this is that discipline in post primary institutions should be interpreted as the training

of students during the transactional period from child-hood to adult-hood, so, by the time they gain full maturity, they are fully prepared for life socially, sexually, emotionally, intellectually, morally and economically.

Educational researchers in recent times have written more on indiscipline among individuals in schools in relation to their impact on students' learning outcome. Most of their researches are premised on the fact that if greater academic heights will be attained, schools must maintain discipline. A disciplined student is the one who is in the right place at the right time. Punishment is often used for students who break school rules or do not follow school regulations Aggrawal (2004). In a proper learning situation, a disciplined student is the one expected to do the right things at the right time Kyawu (2014).

Indiscipline in itself is a hydra headed problem, having a lot of branches. The school system has its own share of indiscipline amongst the students. Students' role in the successful implementation of any laudable educational policy is very important and any indiscipline arising from students would mar the final output of the system. The problem will militate against their individual performances, as well as development of the society. There is nowhere in the State that students are not involved in the act of indiscipline. The degree varies from community to community and from school to school.

Ehiametalor and Aderounmu (1985) stated that there are many types of indiscipline in school which are:

1. **Anti-Social Act: This** refers to the destruction of public property and rioting, hooliganism, stealing and bullying.
2. **Acts of Defiance:** These are usually directed against established rules of the schools, e.g. going out without permission, avoidance of wearing school uniform, smoking, drinking and drug taking and sexual immorality, failure to serve punishment and carry out lawful duties.
3. **Acts of Negligence:** These are many and can include things like lateness to preparatory classes and assemblies, careless handling of school and personal property.

Indiscipline in schools has been influenced by several factors which may be internally or externally motivated. They are:

1. exposure to crises, violence and substance abuse in economically disadvantaged neighbourhood or slums, which leads to anxiety, irritability, stress and hyper-vigilance;
2. the need to challenge or face threat of violence or harm by developing a tough personality;
3. being from a low income family, living in a low income community, and attending schools with high rates of low income students;
4. the frustration, disaffection and lower self-confidence that can come with low school achievement;
5. Injustice in the administration of punishments to individuals e.g. the apportioning of punishments on racial lines or financial capabilities of the infracted (Gregory; Skiba; & Noguera . (2010).

Aina (2005) states that the much-publicized indiscipline in schools is a projection of the indiscipline in the society and a house cannot fall without bringing down both the ceiling and the scaffolding. The indiscipline in the society is a function of the uncurbed indiscipline in various homes which has now transcended into school indiscipline (Ajila & Olutola, 2007).

Reporting on Uganda, Kiggundu (2009) opined that disciplinary control in secondary schools is done through the administration of various types of punishments, such as reprimand,

bawling out, ridiculing sarcasm, belittling, name calling, withdraw of privileges, social isolation, demotion, putting placards around the offenders neck, standing or kneeling in front of class, exercise drills such as raising arms while carrying weight, suspension and expulsion from school, corporal punishment, restitution and detention or keeping students after school.

Dressing and appearance constitute a topical aspect of school rules and regulation which has accorded attention from all and sundry. In Nigeria, the courts are reported to have reached different conclusions regarding the power of school authorities to regulate such matters as dress code, style of hair, etc. High Court (Civil Procedure Rules, Ondo State Order 23, and Rule 2) pleadings and judgment in matter clearly illustrate the extent of the powers the school authority has over the determination of school rules. As long as rules are applied for the purpose of discipline and moral upbringing of students, the law will continue to be on the side of the school authority. Once the rules are clear, school authorities could reasonably ban any kind of dresses or hairstyle detrimental to proper discipline or morals in the school.

A recent ongoing and relevant case on school rules and regulations and discipline was that of *Gift Agenoisa v mrs. F. M. Oluwasanmi and ors (HAD/01/CR/2021)*. Sequel to her suspension from school for alleged indiscipline and assault on teachers by her parents, a JSS1 female student of Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Ado Ekiti, Gift Agenoisa, has sued the Ekiti State government, seeking N15 million damages for breach of her fundamental rights.

On May 22, the plaintiff's father and police sergent, Elijah Agenoisa, reportedly mobilized four armed policemen to the school to manhandle some teachers for scolding his daughter for coming to school with an incedent hairdo against the school's rules and regulations.

Consequently, the school suspended his daughter and the state police command had allegedly queried him.

In a suit number HAD/01/CR/2021 and sworn to at the Ado Ekiti High Court on her behalf by Mrs Odunayo Agenoisa, Gift claimed that her suspension from school by the government after her parents allegedly beat up some teachers for punishing her for indecent dressing and gross indiscipline infringed on her rights.

The plaintiff described as cruel and inhuman, the alleged treatment meted out to her for coming to school with the indecent hairstyle.

Joined in the suit as respondents are the school's principal, Mrs F. M. Oluwasanmi; the Commissioner for Education, Dr. Olabimpe Aderiye; the Ekiti State Teaching Service Commission and the Ekiti State government as first, second, third and fourth respondents respectively.

In the affidavit attached to the originating summons, the plaintiff claimed that she was single out of assembly on May 22, 2021 and given 20 lashes of cane on the orders of school principal for alleged indecent hairstyle. Although the matter is yet to be determined by the court but cited here as it bothers on student's infringement on school rules and regulations and discipline.

In the case of *Spiers v Warrington Corporation(1954) QB 61*, the appellant's daughter, a 13-year-old girl named Eva Spiers was a pupil at a secondary school in Warrington and turned up at school in clothing which the headmistress considered as unsuitable.

There was a school rule relating to the suitability of clothing in the school. The mother's excuse was that the girl had had two bouts of rheumatic fever. She had been advised by a doctor that the girl's kidney should be kept warm, and believed that jeans keep kidneys warmer than skirts. The headmistress thereupon asked the mother to produce a medical certificate to this effect.

No such certificate was forthcoming, and the headmistress entered her repeatedly for medical examinations in school, but Eva failed to turn up. The headmistress then decided to take a well-charted, but fairly exceptional course. Every time Eva came to school in slacks, the headmistress said to her, in effect, now run along home dear and come back properly dressed. As soon as you do, you can come into school. But Eva stayed at home for the morning and arrived at school again in the afternoon. The same conversation would take place and Eva would return the next morning. This went on for some months until the county Borough of Warrington decided to prosecute the father for failing to send his child to school as was his duty. The Magistrate found him guilty and fined him.

Mr. Spiers appealed, maintaining that the Magistrates were wrong in law, that he had sent his child to school; and that it was the perversity of the headmistress who was preventing Eva from receiving her education, the education to which she was entitled.

The West Derby Quarter Sessions Appeals Committee quashed the conviction believing that the parents were acting reasonably in the interest of their child. The local education authority thereupon appealed to the Queen's Bench Division which did not agree and overturned the decision of the Appeals Committee with a conclusion that the headmistress shall control the internal organization, management and discipline of the school.

Another relevant case showing the demonstration of the need for school discipline is *Principal of Government Secondary School Ikachi v Igbudu (2005) 12 NWLR (pt.940)543*. The appellant suspended the respondent, a female student indefinitely on account of her being pregnant and aborting the fetus. This was announced to the entire students at a morning assembly. The respondent sued for defamation of character. Her action was dismissed on the ground that the principal had a qualified privilege to make the announcement

With regard to the duty of a principal, Nzeakor, Justice of the Court of Appeal (2005) opines:

that the principal of a school or anyone with lawful authority therein has public duty to insist on discipline and high moral standard from students under his charge and to duly inform the students of any decision taken regarding such matters of interest to the students themselves. It was his humble view on the above matter that the principal is entitled to succeed on the defence of qualified privilege and that the students who all knew the matter have a corresponding interest and ought to know the decision of the school authorities and the nature of the punishment meted out to one of their lot in such circumstances.

Another interesting case was *R v Newport (1929) 2KB 416* where a principal recognized that allowing the unnecessary influence of and selfish opinions of parents in some matters compromise school effectiveness and as well question his role as an instructional leader. In 1929 there was a rule in Newport Grammar School in Shropshire (England) that smoking within and outside the school during term time is prohibited. One afternoon, two boys left school and smoked as they strolled through the streets. They were reported to the headmaster by the prefects. The headmaster decided that they should be caned for breach of a school rule. One boy took his punishment like a man, but the other objected, that his father gave him the permission to smoke

and that it was no concern of the headmaster whether he did or not. With the aid of two masters, the headmaster administered the beating.

The father thereupon summoned the headmaster before the Magistrate, and the case was dismissed. The father of the boy appealed. The higher court first refused, holding the applicant to be frivolous, but in due course, they had to comply. The case was dismissed on grounds that reasonable school rules have the force of the law. Smoking was prohibited in school which was deliberately breached by the boy, whether the father approved of it or not, and that the punishment was appropriate.

In the cases above, the principals ensured zero-tolerance to students' misconduct by taking their stand in order to uphold school rules and regulations so as to maintain school discipline. This means that reasonable school rules have the force of the law.

Considering the case of *Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria v Lagos State Government (On the Ban on Hijab in Public Primary and Secondary schools in Lagos State)*, an Ikeja High Court upheld the ban on the wearing of Hijab (Muslim head scarf) in primary and secondary schools in Lagos State that it is against the rules of the school which is reasonable. Justice Modupe Onyeabor dismissed the suit instituted against the Lagos State Government by two 12-year-old girls under the aegis of the Muslim students' society of Nigeria, Lagos State Area Unit.

The government had banned the use of Hijab on the argument that it was not part of the approved school uniform for pupils. Following the ban, the students filed the suit on May 27, 2013 seeking redress and asked the court to declare the ban as a violation of their rights to freedom of thought, religion and education.

In her judgment, Onyeabor held that the prohibition of the wearing of Hijab over school uniforms within and outside the premises of public schools was not discriminatory. According to her, the ban does not violate Sections 38 and 42 of the 1999 Constitution as claimed by the plaintiffs. The judge said Section 10 of the Constitution made Nigeria a secular State and that government must maintain neutrality at all time (The Vanguard News, October 17, 2014)

The cases illustrated above underscores the need for school authorities to make rules and regulations in accordance with the provisions of education law so as to prevent conduct that could interfere with the progress of the school or with the rights of students and members of staff and in keeping with good moral behaviour.

Wider range of researchers has raised the implications of disciplinary cases in schools that warrant exclusionary consequences such as suspension and expulsion. Speaking on suspension and expulsion of students, Rausch and Skiba (2005) hypothesized that students' removal from the learning environment has both positive and negative effects. Consistent with the philosophy of zero-tolerance, the positive impacts of students' removal is that it will protect and preserve the learning environment for those students who are avid to learn, students removal may as well improve the school by functioning as a deterrent: by severely punishing students' misconduct, in the process reducing the probability of future students' misbehaviour in general.

In Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, (2010), it was noted that the exclusion of students from school may disconnect the students' interest in schooling and as it reduces their opportunity to learn. According to Fabelo (2011); Hemphill, Tounborou, Herrenkohl, McMorris & Catalano

(2006), when bonds to school are broken, students are also more likely to repeat misbehavior and even turn to law breaking in the larger society (Advancement Project/Civil Rights Project, 2000).

A study by Okumbe (1998) found a relationship between discipline and students' achievement. It was stressed that regulations are authoritative discipline within the education law so as to promote discipline within the school system, and has implication for students' academic performance (Hernandez & Seem, 2004). They opined that failure to clarify established rules and consequences by the administrator have ambiguous ends. Hernandez and Seem (2004) like Okumbe (1998) stressed that one way to know an effective school is through their demonstration of sound inclusive practices which includes emphasizing school discipline, collaborative leadership and their good practice.

Ndeto (2013) reported on Kenya on the effectiveness of school rules and regulations in enhancing discipline in public secondary schools. The study found a significant relationship between school rules and regulations with academic outcome of students. Furthermore, the study concluded that one way to achieve an effective school system is by involving students in the making of rules and regulations and in some administrative decisions in the school. In essence, involving students in decision making processes including the rules and regulations could promote discipline, better attendance, less delinquency and higher academic achievements. Also parental involvement in making decisions, rules and regulations is a critical factor for school effectiveness as identified in Reynolds, sammons, Stoll, Berber and Hillman (1996) and Kocayoruk (2016). They argued that legal provisions made parents partners in education. Involvement and all round inclusiveness in making decision, rules and regulations has been considered crucial in recent times and necessary in achieving internal discipline in schools. Duze (2007).

Gulcan, Murat and Duran (2018) as cited in Ayeerun (2021) carried out a cross-national analysis of parent involvement in decision-making focusing on Germany, France and Turkey. They recommended the need for the activation of parents and Teachers' collaboration as well as Board of Governors (BOGs) as important organs of decision-making in the school system; rules and regulations inclusive.

Oyelola (2012) in his study on the Nigerian education laws and discipline classified discipline in Nigerian schools into Punitive and Non-punitive disciplinary measures. According to him, punitive disciplinary measures include corporal punishment, suspension, expulsion, while non-punitive disciplinary measures include counseling, positive reinforcement and parent notification and communication.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indiscipline as often said is the bane of our contemporary society in Nigeria which has somehow permeated all the strata including the entire educational system. Consequently, there are allegations from the public on the falling standard of secondary education in Nigeria, which could be traceable to the inadequacies in the compliance of school authorities, teachers and students to the provisions of education laws which might have caused poor instructional supervision, lack of instructional leadership, recurrence of unilateral decision making in school administration, hooliganism and students unrest. Most critical is the serious disregard for school rules and regulations and discipline in behavior and conducts of affairs within the school system which impacted school effectiveness. Non compliance of students with the provisions of school rules and regulations has also led to indiscipline / infractions like defiant behaviours such as going out

without permission, avoidance of wearing school uniform, smoking, drinking, drug abuse, examination malpractice and sexual immorality. Also it has caused acts of negligence such as lateness to preparatory classes, assemblies and careless handling of school property.

It is believed that such inadequacies, particularly the problem of indiscipline in schools could be prevented or properly managed if stakeholders in school administration are fully aware of the provisions of education laws. It has been noted that most school teachers in Nigeria let alone students, have never read the Nigerian constitution nor even the laws, rules and regulations governing the administration of the school system and in caring for the students. Yet, Nakpodia (2007) in a Latin Maxim opined that “ignorantia juris est lata culpa” meaning ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

Many students appear to be unaware of their rights, duties, obligations, responsibilities and limitations under the law and more especially with regard to discipline. Such students do not know and appreciate the general principles and provisions of the law as the school rules and regulations as they apply to students’ discipline in schools. Similarly, a school principal as instructional leader may not be able to handle students discipline effectively, if he is not legally literate with regards to education laws.

It is realized that the education laws or the school rules and regulations are not absolute in themselves; but can be subjected to the law court or the reading of the constitution.

To ensure a high disciplinary tone for school effectiveness and at the same time, stem the tide of litigations in the Nigerian educational system, stakeholders particularly students must be legally literate with regards to their rights, obligations and limitations in the course of their studentship.

School discipline as a predictor for school effectiveness implies self-control, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003). It is instructive to note that on admission, students are given prospectus which contains and explained the rules and regulations in terms of what they should or not do and their rights and obligations. Kabandize (2004) drew attention to the enforcers of discipline within the school to include prefects’ bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents.

Consequently, this study examined the relationship between awareness and compliance with School Rules and Regulations and Students’ Discipline in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

The research questions raised to guide the study are:

1. What is the level of Students’ awareness of school rules and regulations in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools?
2. What is the level of compliance with school rules and regulations in enforcing students’ discipline in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools?

Research Hypothesis:

The hypothesis formulated to guide the study is:

1. There is no significant relationship between awareness and compliance with school rules and regulations and students’ discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State.

3. METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design which involved the use of questionnaire to collect data from Principals and Students. This enabled the researcher to establish the possible

relationship between the independent variable “School Rules and Regulations” and the dependent variable “Students’ Discipline” across the Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State.

The target population for the study comprised of all Principals, Teachers and Students in the 304 Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State.

The sample comprised 3213 respondents (153 Principals, and 3060 students) randomly selected from the 153 Public Secondary Schools. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 9 out of the existing 18 Local Government Areas in Ondo State. The process involved random selection of 3 Local Government Areas out of the existing 6 Local Government Areas in each of the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. 17 Public Secondary Schools were purposively selected from each of the nine sampled Local Government Areas totaling 153 Public Secondary Schools representing 50.3% of the Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State. Furthermore, 20 students were randomly selected from each sampled school together with each of the Principals of 153 sampled Public Secondary Schools.

A self developed questionnaire titled “School Rules and Regulations and Students’ Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State” (SRRSDPSSQ) with sections A, B and C used to collect data for the study. Section A elicits Bio-Data information of the respondents. Section B elicits information from the students on their level of awareness of education laws while section C elicits information from all respondents on the level of compliance with education laws in enforcing discipline in public secondary schools. A 5-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Fairly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with scale values of 5.4.3.2.1 respectively was adopted for the study.

The instrument was validated by experts in the Faculty of Education of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko while the reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-re-test technique that yielded a correlation coefficient of $r=0.72$. Data were analyzed using frequency mean and Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of Students’ awareness of School Rules and Regulations in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools?

Table 1: Level of Students’ Awareness of School Rules and Regulations in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	SA %	A %	FA %	D %	SD %	\bar{X}
1	Every student in my school has a copy of the school rules and regulations.	1036 (33.9)	903 (29.5)	331 (10.8)	375 (12.3)	415 (13.6)	3.57
2	Every bonafide student is allowed to attend classes on daily basis.	1623 (53.0)	1093 (35.7)	163 (5.3)	113 (3.7)	68 (2.2)	4.33
3	My school often enforce the rules and regulations on dressing code, hair style, Act of defiant and negligence	1966 (64.2)	869 (28.4)	98 (3.2)	88 (2.9)	39 (1.3)	4.51
4	I always operate within the context of the school rules and regulations.	969 (31.7)	967 (31.6)	420 (13.7)	396 (12.9)	308 (10.1)	3.61
5	The parents are often intimated with their responsibilities in the school rules and regulations	1138 (37.2)	1066 (34.8)	328 (10.7)	352 (11.5)	176 (5.8)	3.86
6	My teachers respect students' rights to freedom of expression.	1128 (36.9)	1019 (33.3)	338 (11.0)	399 (13.0)	176 (5.8)	3.82
7	My school has students' disciplinary committee comprising students' representatives to try offenders.	1358 (44.4)	1018 (33.3)	277 (9.1)	273 (8.9)	134 (4.4)	4.04
8	My school often involve students in making rules and regulations on matters that may affect their interest and the administration of the school.	1558 (50.9)	908 (29.7)	189 (6.2)	217 (7.1)	188 (6.1)	4.12
9	Principals and teachers often inflict corporal punishments on erring students in my school.	1106 (36.1)	916 (29.9)	416 (13.6)	419 (13.7)	203 (6.6)	3.75
10	Students' disciplinary problems are often handled in accordance with the school rules and regulations.	819 (26.8)	650 (21.2)	457 (14.9)	453 (14.8)	681 (22.3)	3.15
Overall mean on awareness by students							3.87

Source: Field Survey (2017) **Low**= < 3.0; **Moderate** = >3.0<4.0; **High** = ≥4.0

Result of data analysis on table 1 shows the level of students' awareness of School Rules and Regulations in public secondary schools in Ondo State. It was strongly agreed (33.9%); with mean (3.57) that every student has a copy of the school rules and regulations as revealed in the responses in item one. Similarly in item two, it was strongly agreed (53.0%); with mean (4.33) that every bonafide student is allowed to attend classes on daily basis. In the same vein, it was strongly agreed (64.2%); with mean (4.51) that the school often enforce the rules and regulations on dressing code, hair style, acts of defiance and negligence in item three. It was also strongly agreed (31.7%); with mean (3.61) that every student always operate within the context of the school rules and regulations as revealed in the responses in item four.

It was strongly agreed (37.2%); with mean (3.86) that the parents are often intimated with their responsibilities in the school rules and regulations as indicated in item five. Also on item six,

respondents strongly agreed (36.9%); with mean (3.82) that their teachers respect students’ rights to freedom of expression. Respondents strongly agreed (44.4%); with mean (4.04) that their school has students’ disciplinary committee with students’ representatives to try offenders as indicated in item seven. About half of the respondents strongly agreed (50.9%); with mean (4.12) that the schools often involve the students in making rules and regulations on matters that may affect their interest and the administration of the school as seen in item eight. Less than half of the respondents strongly agreed (36.1%); with mean (3.75) that principals and teachers often inflict corporal punishments on students in their school as seen in item nine.

Furthermore on table 1, it was strongly agreed (26.8%); with mean (3.15) that students’ disciplinary problems are often handled in accordance with the school rules and regulations as seen in item ten. Lastly on table 1, shows a cumulative mean (3.87) which indicate that students’ awareness of School rules and regulations is moderate.

Research Question 2: What is the level of compliance with School rules and regulations in enforcing students’ discipline in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools?

Summaries on the level of compliance with School rules and regulations in students’ discipline are provided in Table 2

Table 2: Level of Compliance with School Rules and Regulations in Enforcing Students’ Discipline in Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	SA %	A %	FA %	D %	SD %	\bar{X}
1	All teachers show concern for students’ discipline.	494 (29.4)	641 (38.1)	253 (15.0)	194 (11.5)	101 (6.0)	3.73
2	Students always find it difficult to obey school rules and regulations.	462 (27.5)	773 (45.9)	292 (17.3)	129 (7.7)	27 (1.6)	3.90
3	There is existence of students disciplinary committee in my school	721 (42.8)	746 (44.3)	145 (8.6)	41 (2.4)	30 (1.8)	4.24
4	Students’ unruly behaviour (truancy and anti-social behaviour) makes learning environment uncondusive	768 (45.6)	673 (40.0)	127 (7.5)	77 (4.6)	38 (2.3)	4.22
5	Students’ indiscipline makes them to waste their time.	811 (48.2)	697 (41.4)	103 (6.1)	49 (2.9)	23 (1.4)	4.32
6	Parents’ negative attitude makes teachers to relax in the discipline of students.	593 (35.2)	674 (40.0)	175 (10.4)	167 (9.9)	74 (4.4)	3.91
7	Students are often involved in examination malpractices	460 (27.3)	558 (33.2)	308 (18.3)	238 (14.1)	119 (7.1)	3.60
8	Students’ poor performance could be largely attributed to the act of indiscipline in school.	372 (22.1)	676 (40.2)	286 (17.0)	225 (13.4)	124 (7.4)	3.56
9	Students’ disciplinary cases are treated in accordance with laid down rules and regulations.	461 (27.4)	816 (48.5)	222 (13.2)	134 (8.0)	50 (3.0)	3.90

10	Students are punished in accordance with the school rules and regulations	466 (27.7)	742 (44.1)	256 (15.2)	156 (9.3)	63 (3.7)	3.83
	Overall mean on compliance and enforcement of students' discipline						3.92

Source: Field Survey (2017). **Low**= < 3.0; **Moderate** = >3.0<4.0; **High** = ≥4.0

Result of data analysis on Table 2 shows the level of compliance with school rules and regulation in the enforcement of student discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State. Respondents strongly agreed (38.1%); with mean (3.73) that all teachers show concern for students' discipline as indicated in item one. It was agreed (45.9%); with mean (3.90) that students always find it difficult to obey school rules and regulations as indicated in item two.

It was agreed (44.3%); with mean (4.24) that there is the existence of students' disciplinary committee in schools as indicated by respondents in item three. Students' unruly behaviour (truancy and antisocial acts) makes learning environment uncondusive as revealed by respondents who strongly agreed (45.6%); with mean (4.22) in item four.

Similarly, it was strongly agreed (48.2%); with mean (4.32) that students' indiscipline makes them to waste their time as indicated in item five. Respondents agreed (40.0%); with mean (3.91) that parents' negative attitude makes teachers to relax in the discipline of students as indicated in their response in item six. Likewise, in item seven, respondents agreed (33.2%); with mean (3.60) that students are often involved in examination malpractices as revealed in item seven.

Also in item eight, respondents agreed (40.2%); with mean (3.56) that students' poor performance could be largely attributed to the act of indiscipline in school. Students' disciplinary cases are treated in accordance with laid down rules and regulations as indicated by respondents who agreed (48.5%); with mean (3.90) in item nine. It was also agreed (44.1%); with mean (3.83) that students are punished in accordance with schools rules and regulations as indicated in item ten. Finally on Table 2, the cumulative mean (3.92) indicates that the level of compliance with school rules and regulations in the enforcement of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State is moderate.

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between awareness and compliance with school rules and regulations and students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State.

In order to test this hypothesis, the mean and standard deviation of awareness of school rules and regulations and students' discipline were provided. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was then applied to the variables. The results are as provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Awareness of School Rules and Regulations and Students' Discipline

Variables	N	r-cal	r-tab	sig.
Awareness of school rules and regulations	153	0.727*	0.087	.000
Students' Discipline	153			

p<0.05

Result of analysis on Table 3 shows that r-cal value (0.727) is greater than r-tab value (0.087). This means that there is a significant relationship between compliance with school rules

and regulations and students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis postulated and tested is rejected.

5. DISCUSSION

The Hypothesis tested states that there is no significant relationship between awareness and compliance with school rules and regulations and students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State.

The result presented on Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between awareness of School rules and regulations and students' discipline in public secondary schools in Ondo State. In a bid to ensure high moral standard, a principal in Ogun State had to conduct virginity test on her students. This act was considered as outrageous expression of authority by the principal and consequently, the Ogun State Government suspended her indefinitely as there was a need for prior consultation and consent before such action could be carried out.

This finding is in line with Aina (2005), Ajila and Olutola (2007) that the awareness of education laws has significant relationship with students' discipline in public secondary schools. They equally indicated that the much-publicized indiscipline in schools is a projection of the indiscipline in the society and a house cannot fall without bringing down both the ceiling and the scaffolding. This gives reference to *Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria v Lagos State government (CA/L/135/15)2015* on the wearing of hijab in secondary schools in Lagos State, where Justice Onyeabor gave a verdict in support of the principal's intention to maintain discipline and gave an order that, the school is a secular institution and has a uniform dress which must be strictly followed by all students.

Similar judgment was given in the case of *Spiers v Warrington Corporation (1954)1 QB 6*, where the appellant continually made her daughter, a 13-year-old girl named Eva Spiers to breach the school's uniform dressing code, which the headmistress considered as unsuitable. Although, her mother had attributed it to rheumatic fever, but refused to present a medical report when requested to do so. The court gave a verdict against the appellant and struck that all steps taken by the school towards the pupil was consistent with the law, while the appellant's opinion continually threatened the discipline of the school. The findings is also in line with the judgment in the case of *R v Newport (1929) 2KB 416* that reasonable school rules have the force of the law discipline students thus, prohibiting the students of Newport Grammar school in shroshire (England) from smoking within and outside the school premises.

Also related to this was the ongoing case of *Gifrt Agenoisa V, Mrs. F. M. Oluwasanmi, and Ors (HAD/01/CR/2021)* in Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Ado Ekiti in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This justifies the ascertainment of Duze (2007), Kocayoruk (2016) and Gulcan, Murat and Duram (2018), on the need for involvement and all round inclusiveness of students, teachers and parents in making decisions to achieve internal discipline in schools and for school effectiveness.

The finding of Cotton (2000) also supports this finding and subscribed to the administration of uniform punishments as an effective way of controlling behaviour within the school system, if they understand that punishments are firm, fair and consistent. However, the ideal thing can only be known through the legal understanding as touching students' discipline.

More so, Nakpodia (2007) and Hernandez and Seem (2004) concluded that the operation of schools is directly influenced by the way disruptive behaviours of individuals in schools are

curtailed hence, they further reeled out that the parameters for behaviours and academic expectations must be clearly stated by the schools in their Hand Books.

6. CONCLUSION

The result of findings from the Research questions showed that the level of Students' awareness of school rules and regulations in Ondo State Public Secondary School is moderate. Also, the level of compliance with school rules and regulations in enforcing Students' discipline is moderate. The study further confirmed a significant relationship between School rules and regulations and Students' discipline. In essence, it could be concluded from the study that effective students' discipline in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools, could only be sustained with a high level of awareness and compliance of Students and all Stakeholders with education laws, with the assurances of equal rights, equity, equal opportunities, fair play and justice for all Stakeholders in the education system.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the discussion, findings, and conclusion from this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. There is need to intensify efforts for the improvement of Students' awareness of education laws/school rules and regulations
2. Students should be allowed to participate in the formulation of school rules and regulations.
3. It is also recommended that principals and teachers should subject students to regular check on their compliance with school rules and regulations to ensure discipline.
4. The Ministry of education should, on a periodic basis sponsor as well as organize lectures and seminars on education laws and emerging legal matters in the education system to update teachers' knowledge of the laws relating to the teaching profession and school management. This becomes imperative as teachers cannot adequately supervise students' compliance with school rules and regulations if they are not well grounded in education laws in line with the legal maxim (Nemo dat quod non habet) you cannot give what you don't have.
5. All students in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State should have handbooks containing school rules and regulations.

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