

# Behavioural Problems Among Secondary School Students in Osun State: A Nexus of Principals' Administrative Effectiveness

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**Abstract** The thrust of this paper was to examine the influence of administrative effectiveness of school principals in managing the behavioural problems among secondary school students. A survey research design was employed for the study. A total of 300 teachers was selected from three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Osun State using multistage sampling procedure. An adapted instrument titled Questionnaire on Principals' Administrative Effectiveness and Students' School Behavioural Problems (QPASBP) was used to collect information from the respondents. Data collected were analysed using percentages, relative strength index and multiple regression. The results showed a prevalence rate of 27.2% of behavioural problems among secondary school students. The result showed that disruption/vandalization of school properties (RSI = 0.512), thuggery (RSI = 0.481) and lateness to school (RSI = 0.480) were the prevalent behavioural problems among secondary school students. Again, the result showed that the most three areas of administrative effectiveness among the principals were instructional management (RSI = 0.724), internal relations (RSI = 0.724) and students' performance (RSI = 0.724). Finally, the result showed that there was a combined predictive ability of areas of principals' administrative effectiveness on management of students' school behavioural problems ( $R^2 = 0.034$ ;  $F = 1.681$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It was concluded that fewer number of students engaged in various types of behavioural problems such as disruption/vandalization of school properties, thuggery and lateness to school and this was due to the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Osun State.

**Keywords** Behavioural problems, Students, Administrative and effectiveness

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## 1. Introduction

Behavioural problems among secondary school students seem to be a permeating, long-standing issue in the school management. The phenomenon is as old as education itself. It is a major problem in an educational setting which has created a source of worry to all the stakeholders in the schools [1,2] In the opinion of [3,4] the high rate at which secondary school students in Nigeria involved themselves in disruptive behaviour. To the above scholars, disciplinary problems ranked as a major problem among students of secondary schools in Nigeria. Also, [5] confirmed that the persistent worsened teaching-learning environment some schools are facing is due to the students' behavioural problems. As a part of their roles, the school principals are to do everything within their capability to improve learners'

achievement and promote teachers' satisfaction [6]. To this end, there is no doubt that the ability of school principals to effectively organize schools and manage the students' behavioural problems may be a key factor in achieving positive educational results. Hence, the success of any school principal depends on his/her ability to maintaining an effective learning environment that is devoid of any student's misbehaviour [7,8]. Inability to do this, may constitute a great danger to students' academic performance as well as impeding the effective school administration [7,9,10]. s is because the situation if not checked may constitute a great threat to school environment by bringing fear and frustration to school culture.

Behavioural problems are seen as an offshoot of development stages in adolescents. As adolescents enter into new stage of rapid physical, emotional, mental and social changes, they begin to acquire a new set of attitudes, beliefs, characters and skills that will make they become effective members of their society [7,11]. During their growing process, the set of people that adolescents come across greatly influence their personality and behaviour. While corroborating the above, [12] opined that behavioural

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problems among students are as a result of the existence of relational problems of those students with their parents, educators, friends and other people they value in their lives. Besides, [13,14] explained that adolescents usually manifest identity crisis in their stage. In this period of an identity crisis, adolescents' cognition and attitudes toward people and their environment are affected. As the adolescents get to school in this condition, the quality of their relationships with the entire school system is affected [15].

In secondary schools, indiscipline among students manifest in many ways. For instance, it was revealed by some researchers that behavioural problems such as disruption/vandalization of school properties, thuggery, lateness to school, bullying, drug and alcoholism, wearing the wrong school uniform, use of the mobile phone, non-compliance and assault are rampant among secondary school students [1,16,17,18]. Besides, [4] mentioned that students get involved in smoking, drug abuse, sexual offences, willful destruction of lives and properties and of recent, armed robbery. Apart from the above, [19] found writing or using foul language in the school, smoking verbal aggression, stealing, class disruption and bunking classes as some indiscipline prevalent with secondary school students. In most cases, students manifest these behavioural problems either as a way of showing their disapproval to school rules or policies [20] or because of their youthful exuberance [21,22].

Meanwhile, principals are saddled with the responsibility of maintaining discipline in the school environment. One of the responsibilities of principals is to maintain a peaceful atmosphere of their schools [23]. For that reason, principals need to possess the good quality of behavioural management skills that can guarantee positive academic standard for students and promote stress-free teaching environment for teachers [24,25,7,26,27]. However, often time, some principals find it difficult to establish effective learner discipline management strategies that can promote positive school climate. According to [28], many school principals overlook their leadership responsibility, and on this account, making the school environment unsafe for both teachers and the students.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to state that for any principal to be able to curb the menace of indiscipline among his/her students, such a principal must be effective in discharging his official responsibilities. For now, [29] opined that effectiveness depends on the leader's knowledge, expertise, capability, and ability to improvise solutions to problems. Also, [30] remarked that administrative efforts of principals are necessary for realizing schools' goals and objectives. In their own submission, [31,32] described administrative effectiveness as the extent to which a school principal is able to achieve the outlined school's objectives. Also, [33] found that the principals as the schools' pioneer perform certain expert and authoritative functions that could help achieve conducive school climate and positive school-community relations. To this end, the administrative effectiveness of principals may, therefore, be a condition to

establishing a peaceful academic environment free from students' indiscipline.

As the central figures of the school organisation, the actions of the principals have significant effect on organisational performance. It is expected that principals are to carry out administrative tasks related to instructional management, internal relations, organisation management, administration, students' performance and school-community relations toward achieving the school goals and objectives. In his own view, [34] remarked that principal's interaction and participation can increase learning climate, productivity, achievement and school reputation. This implies that the accomplishments of educational objectives or otherwise are largely determined by the administrative effectiveness of principals. Therefore, their leadership ability can promote human relationships, management motivation, collegial relationships, school improvement and collaboration with stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, staff, and the community [7,35].

Without any doubt, school is seen as an integral part of the community it is located. Hence, there is a need for collaborative efforts between the school and the community. It is the responsibility of a good principal to envision a mission for the school that accomplishes the needs of the community [36,37]. Since school is built within a community. It means the school cannot stand aloof [38,39], believed that there is need for symbiotic or mutual relationship between the school and community. To this end, it important to state that when community is involved in the school administration, the community is likely to cooperate actively with school principals in dealing with behavioural problems of students [40,41]. For this reason, the community participation in the school disciplinary plan and implementation phase cannot be compromised [42].

Similarly, [43] stated that the principal needs to establish a relational function with other members of staff. If the principal is able to establish trust and rapport relationships with all stakeholders in the school, such a relationship can help build a friendly relationship and conducive school climate devoid of students' indiscipline [8,44]. Besides, it is imperative that the school principals should pay cognisance to the factors that likely to promote students' academic performance. When the principals are concerned with this matter, it makes the students feel safer and secure in school, promotes behavioural climate of the school as well as improves the academic performance of students [45,46,47].

In addition, principals who are effective create a safe and secure learning environment. They consistently welcome students, teachers and parents to foster a positive school climate [48,49]. In their own contribution, [48] explained that such principals involve the entire school community including teachers, parents, students, school board, and others to create an environment for meaningful learning and teaching. They listen to parents/guardians carefully if they bring any complaints and clarify them constantly [50]. They focus on the curriculum and instruction management to promote an appropriate school climate [48]. They provide

learning materials, information, and other equipment to nurture meaningful learning and teaching [49].

From the foregoing, the type of school leadership provided by the principal is one of the key factors that will determine school outcome [51,52,53,54]. To this end, the behaviour of the principal together with his role as an instructional leader will have a significant impact on creating more effective schools leading to improved students' performance [55,56,57]. By implication, principals are, therefore, a responsible avenue for the smooth running of schools. However, [58] remarked that the attitudes of school principals in Osun State in Nigeria have resulted in the prevailing administrative problems in most secondary schools in the state. According to the above scholars, the administrative ineffectiveness of secondary school principals has resulted in a high rate of conflicts in secondary schools. In his reaction, [30] remarked that administrative ineffectiveness of some principals in Southwestern Nigeria has led to the prevailing indiscipline as well as poor performance of students in their examinations in the region. Arising from the above, this study is geared towards investigating the prevailing behavioural problems among secondary school students in Osun State. More so, the study is believed will provide empirical support on the influence of areas of administrative effectiveness on the management of the students' behavioural problems. These are the thrust of this study.

### Research Objectives

- investigate the prevalent rate of behavioural problems among secondary school students in Osun State;
- identify the types behavioural problems prevalent among the secondary school students;
- investigate the areas of administrative effectiveness (instructional management, internal relations, organisation management, administration, external relations and students' performance) of secondary school principals in the study area; and
- determine the combined predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness on management of students' school behavioural problems.

### Research Questions

- What is the prevalent rate of behavioural problems among secondary school students in Osun State?
- What are the types behavioural problems that are prevalent among the secondary school students?
- What are the areas of administrative effectiveness (instructional management, internal relations, organisation management, administration, external relations and students' performance) of secondary school principals in the study area?

### Research Hypothesis

There is no combined predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness on management of

students' school behavioural problems.

## 2. Methodology

The research design employed for this study was a survey. The population of the study comprised all public secondary school teachers in Osun State. A total of 300 teachers were selected for the study using a multistage sampling procedure. Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from the three senatorial districts in the state, using a simple random sampling technique. From each LGA, five secondary schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Thereafter, 20 teachers were selected from each school using a convenience sampling technique. An adapted instrument titled Questionnaire on Principals' Administrative Effectiveness and Students' School Behavioural Problems (QPASBP) from Adeniyi (2012) was used to collect information from the respondents. The Spearman-Brown split-half correlational analysis performed on the instrument yielded 0.88 at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analysed using percentages, relative strength index and multiple regression.

## 3. Results

**Research Question One:** What is the prevalent rate of behavioural problems among secondary school students in Osun State?

The data on the prevalent rate of behavioural problems among secondary school students were sorted coded and analysed using percentage. The results are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** Prevalent Rate of Students' School Behavioural Problems in Osun State

	f	%
Not Prevalent	57	19.4
Less Prevalent	157	53.4
High Prevalent	80	27.2
Total	294	100.0

Table 1 showed the prevalent rate of school behavioural problems among students in the study area. The results showed that 80(27.2%) of the students highly involved themselves in the school behavioural problems. This implied that less than half of the students actively engaged in the school behavioural problems.

**Research Question Two:** What are the types behavioural problems that are prevalent among the secondary school students?

The data on the types of school behavioural problems that are prevalent among the secondary school students are analysed using mean, relative strength index and rank order. The results are presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Types of Behavioural Problems Prevalent among the Secondary School Students

Students' School Problems	Highly Prevalent	Less Prevalent	Not Prevalent	Not at All	RSI	Rank
1. Disruption/Vandalization of School Properties	69(23.5%)	101(34.4%)	49(16.7%)	75(25.5%)	0.512	1 <sup>st</sup>
2. Thuggery	57(19.4%)	89(30.3%)	64(21.8%)	84(28.6%)	0.481	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3. Lateness to School	47(16.0%)	108(36.7%)	55(18.7%)	84(28.6%)	0.480	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4. Littering of School Environment	45(15.3%)	98(33.3%)	65(22.1%)	86(29.3%)	0.469	4 <sup>th</sup>
5. Deliberate Absent from Classroom	36(12.2%)	97(33.0%)	72(24.5%)	89(30.3%)	0.454	5 <sup>th</sup>
6. Bullying of Other Students	47(16.0%)	84(28.5)	58(19.7%)	105(35.7%)	0.450	6 <sup>th</sup>
7. Molestation of Other Students	33(11.2%)	96(32.7%)	74(25.5%)	91(31.0%)	0.448	7 <sup>th</sup>
8. Indecent Dressing	43(14.6%)	88(29.9%)	58(19.7%)	105(35.7%)	0.447	8 <sup>th</sup>
9. Gambling during School Hours	35(11.9%)	90(30.6%)	77(26.2%)	92(31.3%)	0.446	9 <sup>th</sup>
10. Fighting in the School Premises	41(13.9%)	81(27.6%)	72(24.5%)	100(34.0%)	0.443	10 <sup>th</sup>
11. Deliberate Absent from School	37(12.6%)	81(27.6%)	81(27.6%)	95(32.3%)	0.441	11 <sup>th</sup>
12. Disrespecting Teachers/Other Staff	45(15.3%)	68(23.1%)	83(28.2%)	98(33.3%)	0.441	11 <sup>th</sup>
13. Wearing of Unauthorised Clothes	42(14.3%)	72(24.5%)	73(24.8%)	107(36.4%)	0.433	13 <sup>th</sup>
14. Absent from School Morning Assembly	38(12.9%)	71(24.1%)	83(28.2%)	102(34.7%)	0.431	14 <sup>th</sup>
15. Rioting	31(10.5%)	80(27.2%)	77(26.2%)	106(36.1%)	0.424	15 <sup>th</sup>
16. Molestation of Opposite Sex	37(12.8%)	68(23.1%)	73(24.8%)	116(39.5%)	0.418	16 <sup>th</sup>
17. Bullying of teachers	41(13.9%)	59(20.1%)	77(26.2%)	117(39.8%)	0.416	17 <sup>th</sup>
18. Sexual Harassment Against Fellow Students	32(10.9%)	61(20.7%)	73(24.8%)	128(43.5%)	0.398	18 <sup>th</sup>

From Table 2 above, the results on the types of school behavioural problems showed that the first three problems that are most prevalent among the students were disruption/vandalization of school properties (RSI = 0.512), thuggery (RSI = 0.481) and lateness to school (RSI = 0.480), while, molestation of the opposite sex (RSI = 0.418), bullying of teachers (RSI = 0.416) and sexual harassment against fellow students (RSI = 0.398) were recorded as the three least prevalent school behavioural problems among

secondary school students in the state.

**Research Question Three:** What are the areas of administrative effectiveness (instructional management, internal relations, organisation management, administration, external relations and students' performance) of secondary school principals in the study area?

The data of the above research question were analysed using mean, relative strength index and rank order. The results as presented in Table 3 below:

**Table 3.** Areas of Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals

Areas	Very Effective n(%)	Effective n(%)	Less Effective n(%)	Not Effective n(%)	RSI	Rank
1. Instructional Management	209(71.1%)	63(21.4%)	18(6.1%)	4(1.4%)	0.724	1 <sup>st</sup>
2. Internal Relations	201(68.4%)	68(23.1%)	23(7.8%)	2(0.7%)	0.718	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3. Students Performance	169(57.5%)	92(31.3%)	25(8.5%)	8(2.7%)	0.687	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4. Administration	168(57.1)	85(28.9%)	37(12.6%)	4(1.4%)	0.684	4 <sup>th</sup>
5. Organisation Management	143(48.6%)	114(38.8%)	25(8.5%)	12(4.1%)	0.664	5 <sup>th</sup>
6. External Relations	134(45.6%)	110(37.4%)	46(15.6%)	4(1.4%)	0.654	6 <sup>th</sup>

From the above, the results on the administrative effectiveness of the secondary school principals, showed that most principals were very effective in areas such as instructional management (RSI = 0.724), internal relations (RSI = 0.724) and students' performance (RSI = 0.724). Whereas, few principals were less effective in organisation management (RSI = 0.664) and external relations (RSI = 0.654).

**Research Hypothesis:** There is no combined predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness on management of students' school behavioural problems.

The data on the combined predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness on management of students' school behavioural problems were analysed using multiple regression. The results are presented in Table 4 below:

**Table 4.** Combined Predictive Ability of Principals' Areas of Administrative Effectiveness on Management of Students' School Behavioural Problems

R = 0.184 R <sup>2</sup> = 0.034 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.014 F = 1.681	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	36.907	4.339			8.506	.000
Instructional Management	.493	.162	.218		3.033	.003
Internal Relations	-.177	.183	-.087		-.971	.332
Organisation Management	-.095	.202	-.039		-.469	.639
Administration	-.017	.199	-.008		-.083	.934
External Relations	-.141	.160	-.073		-.881	.379
Students' Performance	.028	.173	.014		.159	.874

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioural Problems

From the above, coefficient of determination value ( $R^2 = 0.034$ ) for the regression model showed that 3.34% of the variance in the management of students' school behavioural problems is due to the combined influence of areas of administrative effectiveness. The result showed that F-value ( $F = 1.681, p < 0.05$ ) significantly predicted the dependent variable. This implies that there is a significant predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness of the management of students' school behavioural problems. Thus, the regression equation of the combined independent variable is presented below:

"Management of Students' School Behavioural Problems =  $36.907 + 0.493$  (Instructional Management) –  $0.177$  (Internal Relations) –  $0.095$  (Organisation Management) –  $0.017$  (Administration) –  $0.141$  (External Relations) +  $0.028$  (Students' Performance)".

## 4. Discussion

One of the findings of the above study was that less than half of students were reported to be engaging in behavioural problems. This showed that few of those secondary school students in Osun State actually involved themselves in indiscipline acts. However, this negates the report of [3] supported by [4] that there were high rate disciplinary problems among secondary school students in Nigeria. From the above, it may be inferred that the issue of students' behavioural problems may be related to the leadership role of the principals.

Another finding of the study was that disruption/vandalization of school properties, thuggery and lateness to school were discovered as the prevailing indiscipline among the students. This was supported by [1,2,18] which ranked disruption/vandalization of school properties, thuggery and lateness to school as the most common forms of indiscipline among the secondary school students. In their own finding, 4 mentioned that smoking, drug abuse, sexual offences were the behavioural problems that were prevalent with the students. By and large, it is sufficient to state that some secondary school students in the state engage in one form behavioural problems and this is inimical to the peaceful

teaching-learning environment.

Again, it was revealed through the finding that instructional management, internal relations and students' performance were the leading areas of administrative effectiveness of the principals. This was buttressed by [7]'s submission that for school principals to be effective in their administrative tasks, they must do well in the areas of instructional management, internal relations, organisation management, administration, students' performance and school-community relations. While reacting earlier, [58] indicated that principals' administrative ineffectiveness served as a precursor to high rate of indiscipline in secondary schools.

Lastly, it was revealed that there was a significant predictive ability of principals' areas of administrative effectiveness on the management of students' behavioural problems. This is an indication that there is a relationship between principals' effectiveness and students' behavioural problems. For instance, Quinn [55,57] supported that principals' administrative effectiveness is significantly related to creating more effective school leading to improved students' performance. While buttressing this, the trio of [7,31,32] submitted that the administrative effectiveness of principals is a requisite to establishing a peaceful academic environment free from students' indiscipline. Against this background, it is appropriate to state that administrative roles and behaviour of principals are very germane to determining the atmospheric nature of the schools.

## 5. Conclusions / Recommendations

Arising from the above, the study concluded that fewer number of secondary school students in Osun State, engaged in various types of behavioural problems such as disruption/vandalization of school properties, thuggery and lateness to school. It was concluded that quality of administrative efforts was a prerequisite to combating disciplinary problems among students.

It is therefore recommended that principals should work harmoniously with other stakeholders in the school to promoting discipline among the secondary school students.

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