

# **The Role of Discipline in Education and its impacts on the process of learning in Junior and Senior Secondary schools in Port Loko City North West Region, Sierra Leone.**

**Abdul Karim Koroma**

Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology, Port Loko University College, Faculty of Education,  
Department of Educational Foundation.

## **Abstract**

This publication focused on exploring the role of discipline in Education and its impacts on the process of learning. The role of discipline in the learning process has received little attention in terms of investigating its effects and roles. The main purpose of this study was therefore to investigate the effects and roles of discipline on the process of learning and educational standards among junior and senior secondary Schools in Port Loko City, North west region of Sierra Leone.

A total of two hundred students were randomly selected from three Junior Secondary Schools and three Senior Secondary Schools (i.e. 67%) in the Port Loko Township and used to carry out the study.

Questionnaire were used to collect data on discipline and the learning process of students, for the analysis of the data, frequency count, simple percentage and tables were used.

The study revealed that discipline started from teachers and the school environment in relation to the learning process.

Further, the home was also found to be an agent of discipline for the student or wards through the provision of necessary materials for school activities. This provided a learning process for the students when they felt satisfied.

## **Introduction**

A pre-requisite for effective quality performance of any organisation or system is discipline. The attainment of this mission guarantees the organisation's survival, growth and acceptability of its numerous stakeholders.

In the school system, it is impossible to achieve better production of teacher good performance without discipline.

With the ongoing need for quality education, school rules and regulations as well as code of Conduct for teaches must be maintained and followed to the letter as discipline is a potent force for maintenance of standards. Effective discipline of teachers and learners can ensure an ideal learning environment.

Discipline can ensure effective school administration and management. Discipline in school ensure the graduation of well-behaved male and female students who do not only respect themselves but also the school authority. Discipline is crucial for a positive school climate conducive for teaching and learning. Ali et al (2014) noted that “a disciplined student is one whose behaviours, actions and in actions conform to predetermined rules and regulations of the school organisation. Discipline in School ensures safety of staff and pupils and create a conducive environment for learning and acquisition of skills adequate for self-reliance. School discipline is very important for national development as the school is a microcosm of a microcosm.

### 1.1 the Concept of Discipline

the issue of discipline comes as a result of misbehaviour. The issue of discipline could not have bothered people if there was no misbehaviour. It is therefore not a new concept. Philosophers, priests, parents, Teachers and society have shown deep concern over the issue of the behaviour of youths.

As for back as 470-399 BC, Philosophers including Socrates stated thus:

“Our youth loves luxury, has bad manners, disregards authority and has no respect whatsoever for age. Our today’s children are tyrants, they do not get up while an elderly man enters a room, they talk back to their parents, and they are just very bad”.

Discipline has been defined as the training of the mental, moral and physical powers by instruction, control and exercise. The state or condition of orderly Conduct resulting from such training is discipline. Others define discipline as a systematic training in obedience to rulers and authority.

From the above definitions, two schools of thought naturally emerge to define the concept of discipline. One school of thought see discipline as conformity to rules. The crux of this definition is, the application of measures necessary to ensure the conformity to the rules of the organisation. Most times, children are not encouraged to question these rules in schools.

Their duty is to obey and failure results in punishment. The punitive consequences for breaking the rules or the threat of punishment are enough to bring about discipline.

Followers of the above views believe that students if left on their own will surely get out of control. They must be under the surveillance of stern teacher's.

The other school of thought does not only ensure conformity to school rules and regulation but approach discipline as a process where in a school helps the children to internalise those values and norms that bring about a free, peaceful and orderly school environment. The bottom line about discipline is it educational.

It involves all practices and environmental factors that lead to self-discipline. Purposeful behaviour and good relation between staff and students. Even though discipline must include corrective measures, it is however primarily preventive.

### 1.2 Basic Principles of Discipline

Hamptom and Lave (1981) developed some basic principles of Discipline for schools. These principles were aimed at promoting a positive school climate where disciplinary problems occur less frequently.

- Open communication in school is an indispensable element in bringing about understanding and good relationships between staff and pupils. Planting a system of open communication provides a means of resolving conflict and various disciplinary problems.
- **KEEP DISCIPLINE PRIVATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.**

The threat of public embarrassment may lead pupils to react in way not expected of them. No teenager wants to be corrected in front of others. The humiliation of public discipline should be minimised in schools because of its negative effects.

- Giving students responsibilities Responsibility is an important element in becoming a mature individual. Any emotionally healthy person would not help other people to do things that they can do. Students can be given responsibilities through participation in the decision making process participation in class exercise to promote self-directed learning, participation is the general administration of the school.
- Praise Good Behaviour praise develops self esteem. It is a motivation for growth, positive feedback and positive reinforcement. Too much attention on mistakes can discourage

learning. Correction of mistakes should be above with some encouragement. Mistakes should not be ignored nor should praise worthy. Effort be ignored as well. One important rule is “praise before criticism”.

- Develop programmes that foster good inter-personal relationship. This is done through games and Sports, Social and religions, clubs, terminal or end of year shows, variety shows. This will minimise problems and encourage solidarity.

## **FACTORS IN DISCIPLINE**

- The Home

The home lays the foundation upon which the school builds, discipline starts with the early experiences and relationship existing between the parents and the child, the mother playing a greater role.

- The School

Like the home, the school is a key factor in discipline. Effective schools have positive Climate. There is good interpersonal relation and value system. The teachers, administrators and the pupils are key players in school discipline.

- The Teacher

The Teacher according to C MutinShiphy et al (1968) should maintain good order as the First law of the classroom. There should be rules and standards to follow. The Teacher should exhibit physical mental and moral values.

## **EFFECTS OF DISCIPLINE ON THE LEARNING PROCESS**

School Discipline enables pupils and teachers to focus on long term goals and make better choice related to academic engagement. A strict school climate negatively impacts long run outcomes educational attainment, arrest and incarceration rules for the overall student body.

Therefore, schools aiming at addressing achievement gaps should adopt best disciplinary practices that yield positive academic results.

Positive discipline gears to helping pupils to succeed by giving them the information they need to learn and support their development. Positive discipline respects pupil’s rights to healthy development and protect them from violence.

It encourages pupils to participate actively in their learning process.

Roffaella – Menez, 2003 notes that school disciplinary practices are supposed to prevent pupils from committing crime in school, however many disciplinary practices lack the deterrent effect and may even increase crime.

Nickerson and Martin (2008) found that Zero Tolerance policies are associated with increases in academic disengagement and future disciplinary actions.

According to Hirschi (1969) Social bond Theory's contention is that individuals mutual inclinations to commit crime and the tension that they do not commit crime is because they have an existent bond, high in strength to Conventional Society. Hirschi posited that the strength of an individual's attachment to others, commitment to conformity, involvement in conventional activities and belief in moral values of conventional society represented the extent to which that individual was socially linked to conventional society.

The attainment component refers to the psychological or emotional link between the pupils, the parents, school and peers.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While several researchers have investigated the effects of discipline in schools, most have not looked at the role of discipline and its impacts on the process of learning.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the role of School discipline and its impacts on the process of learning.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The main aim of this study is to underscore the role of school discipline in the impact on the process of learning.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To highlight the various forms of disciplinary measures adopted in schools.
2. To gauge the effect of such measures in the learning process
3. To proffer positive disciplinary approaches for schools.

**Methodology**

This section shows the methods and procedures used in the conduct of the study. It essentially comprises the Research Design, Population, Simple and Sample Technique, research instruments, data collection and data analysis process.

**Demographic data of respondent**

This comprises the gender of participant, gender of participant, age educational background, status and orientation training in school discipline.

**GENDER OF RESPONDANTS**

**TABLE 2 GENDER OF PARTICPANTS**

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
School head	12	60	8	40
Teacher	30	60	20	40
Pupils	25	50	25	50

The table showed 100% of the school head were male while 40% were female. Similarly, 60% of the teachers. Were male while 40% were female. However, the pupils 50% male and 50% female there were more male participants in the study.

**AGE OF RESPONDENTS**

**TABLE No. 2 age of respondent**

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
School heads	35-50	35-50
Teacher	26-50	26-50
pupils	13-20	13-20

From the table above, it was shown that the school heads that participated in the study were in the age bracket of 35-50 years for both male and female. The teachers that participated were all in the age bracket of 26-50 years of age.

The table also shown that all the pupils that participated in the study were between 13-20 years of age.

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS**

**Table 3 educational background of respondents**

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
JSS	25	50	25	50
SSS	25	50	25	50
TC/HTC	15	75	5	25
BSC/BA/BED	13	65	7	35
MSC/MED	3	75	1	25
OTHER	-	0	-	0

The table above revealed a 50% representation for boys and girls in both JSS and SSS respectively.

Among the school heads and teachers, 75% male had teachers certificate [TC] or higher teachers certificate [HTC]. For MSC/MED. Educational background for male is 65% while 25% for female representation.

Among school heads and teacher also, the table showed that 65% of male participants while 35% female participant help same certificates as well.

### **STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
School head	12	60	8	40
Head of department	5	10	2	20
Senior teachers	16	32	10	20
Assistant teachers	11	22	6	12
School prefect	18	9	12	6
School pupils	60	30	25	12.5

60% of school heads were male while 40% were female. 10% male heads of department formed part of the teacher’s representation while 4% were female. Still among teachers were male while 20% were female senior teachers 22% male teachers were assistant teachers while 12% assistant teachers were female. Among the pupils 9% were male school prefect. 30% were ordinary male school pupils and 12.5 percent ordinary female school pupils.

The statistics showed a male dominance in representation in all the category of respondents

**ORIENTATION AND TRAINING ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE**

YES	NO
120	0

The table showed that all 120 participants in the study had either gone through orientation programme or training in school discipline. This indicated that, that the study captured informed data on the subject investigated

**Forms of disciplinary measures in schools**

NO	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
1	Corporal punishment	90	75%
2	Suspension	6	5%
3	Expulsion	3	2.5%
4	Kneeling & Punish up	10	8%
5	Cleaning	9	7.5%
6	Writing Assignments	2	2%
Total		120	100%

The table above showed that 75% of schools in Port Loko City used corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure in schools. 5% of schools use suspension to instill discipline in School 2.5% utilised expulsion to discipline pupils. 8% subjected pupils to kneeling as a form of discipline, 7.5% used cleaning to discipline pupils, 2% gave pupils writing assignments as a form of discipline in school.

**Effects of discipline in school**

The study found that disciplinary measures used to bring about discipline in schools have positive as well as negative impacts on the learning process.

No	variable	frequency	percentage %
1	Good classroom	20	16.6%
2	Improved academic achievement	30	25%
3	Students use school rules as fair and are ready to comply	20	16.6%
4	Pupils are more engaged in the learning process	20	16.6%
5	Safe and friendly learning environment	10	8.3%
6	Less disciplinary problems in school	8	6.6%
7	Positive school image	12	10.3%
Total		120	100%

According to the table, improved academic achievement 25% was the most positive effect of discipline in school. This is followed by good classroom climate (16.6%) and focus on learning process (16.6%) respectively. Another important effect was that pupils viewed discipline as being fair and were ready to comply (16.6%). 10% responses pin pointed on positive school image as a positive effect of school discipline while as much as 6.6% responses emphasised that not positive discipline, there would be less disciplinary problems in schools.

#### Negative effects of discipline

Sn	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low self esteem	25	20.8%
2	Lying to avoid punishment	15	12.5%
3	Truancy	19	15.8%
4	Breeds aggressive behaviour	17	14.2%
5	Child abuse & Juvenile delinquency	15	12.5%
6	Lower Intellectual achievement	29	24.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table revealed varied negative effects of discipline on children’s learning. 25% of responses showed that discipline lowered children self-esteem. 12.5% found lying to avoid punishment as a negative effect of discipline, 15.8% showed that truancy was a negative effect of discipline.

The table further revealed that breeding aggressive behaviour (14.2%) was a negative effect of discipline. Another 12.5% responses stressed that child Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency was a resultant of disciplinary measures in schools. The greatest impact was on children’s learning as shown by 24.2% lower intellectual achievement.

**Positive disciplinary approaches for schools**

Disciplinary Approach	Effect on Learning
Classroom Routines	Helps pupils to plan themselves
Goal setting	Motivates pupils towards goal attainment
Respect the views and opinions of pupils	They feel valued and ready to show that they deserve to be valued.
Set Limits	Makes pupils to abide by set limits.
Teach rights & Wrongs	Helps pupils know what is accepted behaviour
Give consequences	Serve as deterrent
Know when not to respond	This will make pupils to be careful not to step on the wrong side of the teacher
Make discipline private	The threat of public humiliation results in Misbehaviour
Be a good listener	Makes pupils feel their views are respected and can accept any future response

The table showed that for any disciplinary approach there is a corresponding positive effect on pupils learning. Stakeholders of discipline are expected as much as possible to adopt the aforementioned approaches to appropriately impact pupils learning.

**Discussion of Results**

The study established that discipline in school is a deliberate attempt of regulating the behaviour of pupils. In other words, it is the practice of enforcing adherence to legislation, guidelines and cultural standard and values. This has to do with the ability to control oneself and others in even challenging times.

It was found that in schools, various forms of indiscipline may emerge such disobeying set rules, bullying, truancy, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse, stealing, sexual harassment

and many more. If allowed to continue, such indiscipline can undermine the learning process and affect the holistic development of the pupils.

Discipline was used to bring about order and create an ideal environment from teaching and learning to thrive.

The study found that various disciplinary measures were adopted in schools to instill discipline in the pupils. These included corporal punishment, physical labour such as cleaning, kneeling and doing push – ups. Though these forms of discipline were found to be effective in deterring bad behaviour, the study revealed that they could negatively affect the pupils learning and general mental health. Further, pupils Might Model aggressive behaviour. Discipline depending on the measures adopted could lower the self esteem of pupils, cause them to skip classes and eventually drop out of school.

The study also underscored positive impact of discipline on the learning process. It was found to be crucial in installing discipline in children. It was discovered that discipline decreased the probability of a recurrence of unwanted behaviour. Discipline creates a stress free learning environment and enables pupils to appropriate time to various school activities.

It improves planning through observing and maintaining set daily routines moulds and shapes pupils character thus improving academic performance and school image.

### **Conclusion**

Discipline was found to be very critical to the learning process of pupils in Schools, but discipline was conceived as punishment in all schools. Though all schools investigated had disciplinary measures in place, it was observed that such measures were not appropriate for positive discipline and self-discipline. Almost all the schools do not adopt the basic principles of discipline in pursuing their disciplinary agenda to promote a positive learning process. Corporal punishment and physical labour were the most common forms of disciplinary measures used in schools and there was firm belief that without these measures discipline would be highly unlikely in schools.

### **Recommendations**

The following were proffered:

1. School authorities need to be trained on basic principles of discipline so that they in turn can adopt best practices in instilling discipline in pupils in schools.

2. All factors/ stakeholders in discipline should endeavour to play their roles to mould and shape the characters of the pupils and to focus their attention in school.
3. Discipline should not be viewed as punishment but as a teaching moment-guiding and coaching pupils, solving problems, acknowledging emotions and counselling pupils to remove unhelpful behaviour.
4. School to establish guidance and counselling units manned by trained and qualified school counsellors.
5. Give pupils responsibilities and guide them to cultivate respect for law and order.

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