

# IMPACT OF DISCIPLINE ISSUES ON SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: THE VIEWS OF SOME GHANAIAN PRINCIPALS

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*This research focuses on discipline issues as one of the major concerns of educators in public schools in Ghana. Qualitative and quantitative enquiries were undertaken into discipline issues and their implications on student learning as perceived by senior high school principals in Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The study reveals that senior high school administrators perceived indiscipline as an issue affecting their administration, and prevented the provision of congenial atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. In addition, it tarnished the image of the schools before the outside world, thus discouraging donors, parents and other interest groups from having interest in the schools. Recommendations for involvement of students in decision making and the provision of guidance and counselling services are explored.*

**KEYWORDS:** Brong Ahafo, Region, Ghanaian Principals, School Administration, Indiscipline in Schools

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade there has been an increasing concern among educators in Ghana regarding student violence and disrespect to school authorities. Research consistently documents that school indiscipline reduces teaching contact hours as more time is devoted to managing misbehaviour rather than on teaching. This appears to be the case in many senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana in particular, which are grappling with challenges from student disrespect for school authority, cultism, examination malpractices, stealing, and lateness to classrooms and absenteeism (Adesina, 1990; Boakye, 2006; Clarke, 2002). The purpose of this paper is to explore discipline issues and their implication on school administration and students' learning from the perspectives of school principals.

Boakye (2006) defines discipline as the obedience of rules and orders and a manifestation of an outward mark of respect in accordance with standing agreements. According to Adesina (1990), discipline is the readiness or ability to respect authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society or of any other organisation. Discipline implies self-control, restraint, respect for self and respect for others. Discipline therefore calls for sacrifice, perseverance, tolerance, and recognition of human dignity; and in the school

setting students should be taught to respect the school authority, to observe the school's laws and regulation and to maintain an established standard of behaviour (Adesina, 1990). Indiscipline, on the other hand, is misbehaviour in any or all of the following areas: respect for school authority, obedience of rules and regulation and maintenance of established standards of behaviour (Adesina, 1990).

Kochhar (2001) also argues that discipline is coined from a Latin word 'Discipulus' meaning to learn. It therefore calls for the submission of one's impulses and powers to a regulation, which prevents chaos and brings efficiency where there would otherwise be ineffectiveness and waste. Indiscipline, on the other hand, is a breach of social order, good moral behaviour, self-accepted and self-maintained social values of life.

On the whole, these authors agree on one common thing about discipline and indiscipline. That is, whereas discipline means obedience to authority, respect for self and others, indiscipline means the opposite (i.e. disobedience to authority, lack of respect for self and others). This common view is undisputable because it underscores the fact that discipline is an indispensable aspect of school effectiveness. In this study indiscipline is conceptualised as behaviour from a student or teacher that breaches rules and regulations and undermines school effectiveness.

## INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

School discipline is important because it sets a congenial atmosphere needed for teaching and learning. Therefore the examination of the factors that contribute to indiscipline can enable us achieve the best educational outcomes for students within our schools. In fact, there are many and varied explanations for the lack of disciplined behaviour in and among students. In a research study conducted within the field of violence and indiscipline in schools across the UK, USA and Europe, Wright and Kate identify indiscipline to be related to bad parental influences, demographic composition of the school, class size, staff cohesion, teaching material, inconsistent communication among parents, teachers and students as well as class boundaries. Similarly, Edwards notes that even though teachers can often be blamed for the disciplinary problems confronting them in school, problems emanating from administrative procedures, the home and the society cannot be overlooked. Their combined effects may sometimes make it nearly impossible to handle disruptive students effectively.

Various home experiences have influence on a child's behaviour. It is argued for instance that, if parents spend little time at home, children may seek unsuitable social experiences elsewhere that have devastating consequences

on their lives (Edwards, 2004; Wright & Kate, 2003). Besides, even when parents are at home, parent-child interactions may be laced with conflicts, for instance, divorce and poverty as well as physical and mental abuse can adversely affect children's ability to function properly. Children from severely dysfunctional families in particular, face enormous adjustment problems at school because they may deprive children of attention, love or exercise excessive control (Edwards, 2004).

As schools are microcosms of society, misbehaviour acquired at home can be transmitted to school sites (Edwards, 2004). Therefore, the role the society plays in children's lives is sometimes more influential than that of the school. Not only the immediate home environment but also the larger social setting influences children's behaviour which parents may have little control. For example, gang activity and drugs, peer pressure and technology, racial and class conflicts may be acquired from the macro-environment in which students form a part.

Usually, teachers consider students to be the source of school disciplinary problems (Edwards, 2004). However, research has demonstrated that undisciplined behaviour from students may be the result of normal reactions to deficiencies in the school as an institution, and to teachers and administrators as directors of the educational enterprise (Boakye, 2006; Wright & Kate, 2003). The school does not only promote misbehaviour in students but contributes also to the creation of conditions that put children at risk generally. Teachers and administrators can invite disciplinary problems if they fail to encourage the development of individual thinking pattern in students, establish rigid conditions for students to meet in order to feel accepted, establish rigid conditions for students to meet in order to feel accepted, sponsor a competitive grading system that prohibits success for the majority of the students and erodes their self-concepts, exercise excessive control over students and fail to provide an environment in which children can become autonomous and independent, and use disciplinary procedures that are punitive (Yarosan, 2004; Wright & Kate, 2003).

Haller on the other hand, blames the prevalence of indiscipline in schools on large school size. She argues that it is very difficult to control a school that is overpopulated and this leads to student misbehaviour. It is also argued that failure of the school curriculum to meet the moral aspiration of the society in which it is found, the lack of good moral training by parents, the lack of good leadership in the society, idleness in school, wrong ideals learnt from peers and electronic media, injustice/corruption in the society and unrealistic rules are some of the many causes of indiscipline in many African schools (Yarosan, 2004).

Adentwi reporting on discipline issues in Ghanaian schools perceives school disciplinary problems as caused by teachers themselves. He enumerates certain teacher behaviour, which affects students' behaviour as physical appearance, lesson preparation and presentation, administration of rewards and punishment and teacher's personality (i.e. whether he or she is an extrovert or introvert). He mentions shabby dressing and indecent attires by female teachers denoting nudity as a cause of indiscipline. Also, included in his account are teacher communicative patterns in which the student feels disrespected. Unsuitable lesson delivery, unfairness and inconsistency with rewards and punishments are also found to promote discipline problems in schools (Yaroson, 2004). School authorities could also cause disciplinary problems through organisational lapses manifesting in inappropriate policies and programmes. For instance, the nature of the school curriculum, the size of classrooms, availability of teaching and learning resources, the competency of teachers handling classrooms, and the nature of time-table schedules are all factors that determine school discipline.

Appiah argues that, the behaviour of a child at any moment is the result of biological and environmental factors operating at the same time. To him, there are root causes of every type of behaviour exhibited by children. He therefore suggests that teachers must endeavour to always find out the rationale behind every misbehaviour in the school in order to address it appropriately. Appiah thinks that undisciplined behaviour in school, especially from students is attributed to both out-of-school and in-school causes. As such, he asserts that, since schools exist as societal institutions they are bound to be influenced by whatever transpires outside them. He mentions child abuse and over permissiveness as two crucial out-of-school factors that bring about student misbehaviour in school.

Another source notes that, ignorance of rules, lack of cooperation from students, frustration and peer pressure have a causative effect on the general students' behaviour. Furthermore, moribund attitude of teachers and ineffective school administration, and when rules operating in a school conflict with those operating at home, students become confused and misbehave accordingly. She contends that, in such situations children may rebel against authority. For example, children respond negatively to mockery, temper tantrums and stubbornness (Gyamera, 2005).

## **IMPLICATIONS OF INDISCIPLINE ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Giancola asserts that misbehaviour from students is a significant problem affecting schools across the world. He links indiscipline among students to the lack of trust and an increase in insecurity, thus creating unsafe learning environment. Students' indiscipline causes much stress in teachers in thereby

making some resign from their profession (Gyamera, 2005). In Ghana, even though there is no available literature revealing student indiscipline as a cause of teacher attrition, student indiscipline discourages and compels teachers to shirk responsibilities and engage in tardiness (Salifu, 2008).

Boakye (2006), writing on Ghanaian school discipline issues concur that indiscipline leads many student to drugs, which significantly increase restlessness, excitability and hyperactivity. Chronic undisciplined students tend to alcohol, crack cocaine and antidepressants leading to lethargic, apathetic behaviour or urge to incite erratic and dangerous behaviour thus causing sporadic outburst of violence. He observes further that, indiscipline may cause a sudden decrease in classroom achievement. According to him, student indiscipline poses a great challenge to principals because they are saddled with how to motivate students. Gyamera (2005) also contends that motivation is the energy that fuels a person's drive to achieve. She reveals that, drugs slow down a person's ability to think and act normally thereby weakening his or her power of reasoning. Adentwi notes that drug abuse and other indiscipline related behaviour promote poor co-ordination, attention deficit disorder, unpredictable mood swings, and sexual immorality as leading factors for school dropout. Adentwi has the belief that the use of drugs carries a very high price tag, which manifests in drug dependence as well as personal and social disorganisation. This tends to have the tendency of bringing about involvement in serious crimes by the victim. He thinks that, drugs slow down a person's ability to think and act normally thereby weakening his or her power of reasoning.

The impact of school indiscipline is not possible to easily quantify. There is widespread acceptance of the fact that indiscipline in the school setting usually affects teaching and learning. Misbehaviour from students has the tendency to make teaching an unpleasant experience especially if it occurs frequently such that the teacher has to spend most of his or her instructional time correcting them. If students decline to stay on task, they invariably do not learn, as they would have done if they were not disobedient. In this sense, the best plans, activities and materials do not as well mean anything. Learning requires close and uninterrupted concentration especially in the type of environment where learning activities are planned according to time. Learning in schools require distraction-free atmosphere, purposeful directions from a teacher, and an ample time for pondering over what one is taught or has read on his own. These conditions cannot be said to prevail in schools where discipline is rife and disruption is frequent coupled with movement of students without permission. In effect, neither teachers nor learners can be encouraged to give of their best because of the atmosphere of constant confusion and friction (Wright & Kate, 2003). As indiscipline damages students' self-confidence and turns

others into criminals their formative years in school is important to instill discipline in them. Exploring discipline issues in this study is therefore significant and contributes to our understanding of the Ghanaian situation and efforts to improve on the situation in schools for maximum learning to occur.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

Ghana is a country in West Africa with a current population of 24 million, a GDP growth of 5.7% and per capita income of \$2,500. The official language is English and all lessons from kindergarten to university are taught in English while the local languages and French are studied as second languages in schools. Tribal and ethnic groups use their various local dialects for conversation in households and in non-academic settings. The literacy rate stands at 82.7 % for males and 67.1% for females. There are 10 administrative regions and 170 districts. Education is partially administered through regional and district directors of education but the development of curriculum, assessment, training and posting of teachers is administered centrally by the Ghana Education Service which is the implementing body of the policy decisions made by the Ministry of Education of Ghana. Pre-tertiary formal education is at two levels. The first level, basic education comprises of two years kindergarten, six years primary and three years junior high school (JHS). The second level is senior high school, which is for three years. This study concerns both levels.

At the age of six when a child starts formal education, it is expected that she has been trained by the parents about the general norms of the larger society, which are adhered to in the school also. The rules set in Ghanaian schools are mandated by the Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Service. These rules are in accordance with the culture of Ghanaians as a people. Some of these rules include respect for elders, parents, parental surrogates (teachers) and even peers. There is also emphasis on hard work and truthfulness, which constitute discipline codes in the school system. However, there appears to be a general decline in the level of discipline in the school system perhaps contributing significantly to the falling standards of education in the country.

The study took place in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The region has 19 districts. It was carved out of the Ashanti Region in April 1959. It has a population of about 1,815,408 and covers an area of 39,557 square kilometres. It shares boundaries with four other regions and La Cote d'Ivoire. To the north is the Northern Region; to the south are the Ashanti and Western Regions; to east is the Volta Region; and to the south are the Eastern Region at southeast and La Cote d'Ivoire at southwest. The major economic activity in the region is farming. The dominant farming activity in its forest zone is the cultivation of cocoa and production of timber whilst northern zone which lies in the savannah

specialises mainly in grains and tuber crops production . The Brong Ahafo Region is cosmopolitan in nature with people of diverse ethnic background settling there because of economic activities. This perhaps accounts for the growing incidence of conflict and indiscipline in the region with a spill over effect on schools.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research method was informed by two questions:

- What are the causes of indiscipline among the staff and students of senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana?
- How do the principals of these schools perceive the impact of indiscipline on their administration?

In view of the questions that explored, the study used both quantitative and qualitative (descriptive) sample survey methods to provide the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships and also obtain the lived perspectives of those affected by the phenomenon. By employing qualitative approaches the research is situated in an interpretive framework where there is freedom to enact our own representation to complement data generated from the quantitative surveys.

The target participants for the study were all the principals of senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana with the average age of 43.1. Five districts of the region namely; Sunyani Municipality, Sunyani West, Tano South, Tano North and Techiman districts were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The researchers for data collection accessed a total of fourteen schools. Out of this number of schools, a total of 50 participants made up of principals, assistant principals and senior housemasters/mistresses completed questionnaire and nineteen of them mainly principals were interviewed directly. This technique was adopted because the study area was noted for frequent unrest and riots by students.

## **RESEARCH TOOLS**

The tools used were researcher-constructed questionnaire and interview schedule. The self-designed questionnaire for the study had two sections namely; background of respondents; and the causes of indiscipline in schools. The first section (section A) of the tool dealt with demographic data of the principals. There were five additional items having to do with their academic qualifications, professional status, number of years of service, present positions in the schools and number of years in present positions. Section 'B' had seventeen close-ended items constructed to find from participants the various

causes of indiscipline in their respective schools. These items were developed in accordance with views expressed by Haller ; Charlton and David ; Adentwi (1998); Curwin et al (2008); Adesina ; Wright and Kate (2003); Edwards (2004) and Yaroson (2004) that the causes of indiscipline in schools are many and varied some of which include; large class size, poor parental care, inconsistent school rules, peer influence and electronic media. The close-ended questions proved very suitable to them because of their tight-schedules as administrators.

The interview schedule, on the other hand, posed one question on how disciplinary issues impacted negatively on administrative effectiveness in the region. This tool was chosen to generate data on lived experiences of the participants to complement the quantitative data (Norman & Yvonna, 2003). The interview schedule was developed based on previous studies by Adentwi (1998), Bowen and Bowen (1999), Giancola (2000), Kocchar (2001), Wright and Kate (2003), Gyamera (2005) and Boakye (2006) who contend that indiscipline affects school administration in many ways. For instance, indiscipline brings about stress, restlessness, insecurity, violence, attention deficit disorder, disruption of teaching and school dropout.

The researchers conducted a pilot test in the Ashanti Region (a sister region of the Brong Ahafo Region) to ascertain the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and interview schedule respectively. Three schools were used for the test. Using Cronbach's alpha test, the researchers subjected individual items on the questionnaire to a reliability test and got a reliability coefficient of 0.73 making the tool reliable for use. In the case of the question on the interview schedule, the researchers measured its validity by examining individual responses from participants to ascertain their relevance to the objective of the research. After this examination, the researchers found the question valid because the responses measured exactly its intended objective. The tool was therefore adopted in full.

## **PROCEDURE**

Data were collected in selected schools through purposive sampling technique. These schools were selected because of the cases of indiscipline frequently reported about them. In all, 50 principals were given questionnaires, which they completed in a week and returned to the researchers. The interview was conducted with 19 of the 50 principals with each interview session lasting about 30 minutes.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The quantitative surveys were analysed with the assistance of SPSS software. To facilitate scoring of data, the various categories of questions on the

questionnaire were coded according to the following Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree-4; Agree-3; Disagree-2 to Strongly Disagree-1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results of the study conducted on views of 50 Ghanaian principals in the Brong Ahafo Region about the impact of discipline issues on school effectiveness. The two tools used, questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed separately since the data obtained through them were in different forms.

**Research Question 1:** What are the causes of indiscipline among the staff and students of senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana?

Table 1

**Results on the Causes of Indiscipline Among Senior Staff and Students of Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.**

| Statement                    | Strongly Agree | Agree    | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| Teacher hereditary problems  | 2 (4%)         | 17 (34%) | 27(54%)  | 4(8%)             |
| Teacher negative self esteem | 4 (8%)         | 25(50%)  | 19(38%)  | 2(4%)             |
| Frustration in teachers      | 6 (12%)        | 28(56%)  | 15(30%)  | 1(2%)             |
| Mishandling of teachers      | 4 (8%)         | 22(44%)  | 23(46%)  | 1(2%)             |
| Inappropriate methods        | 5 (10%)        | 3(6%)    | 34(68%)  | 8(16%)            |
| Teacher absenteeism          | 14 (28%)       | 32(64%)  | 3(6%)    | 1(2%)             |
| Sexual relationships         | 14 (28%)       | 20(40%)  | 16(32%)  | 0(0%)             |
| Inconsistent rules           | 13 (26%)       | 34(68%)  | 3(6%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Student hereditary problems  | 4 (8%)         | 21(42%)  | 22(44%)  | 3(6%)             |
| Student negative self esteem | 6(12%)         | 30(60%)  | 28(28%)  | 0(0%)             |
| Frustration in students      | 12 (24%)       | 26(52%)  | 12(24%)  | 0(0%)             |
| Mishandling of students      | 9(18%)         | 29(58%)  | 11(22%)  | 1(2%)             |
| Student absenteeism          | 13(26%)        | 33(66%)  | 4(8%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Congestion                   | 3(6%)          | 38(76%)  | 8(16%)   | 1(2%)             |
| Conflicting rules            | 5(10%)         | 42(84%)  | 3(6%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Peer influence               | 20 (40%)       | 30 (60%) | 0(0%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Over permissiveness          | 15(30%)        | 33(66%)  | 2(4%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Inadequate parental concern  | 18(36%)        | 30(60%)  | 1(2%)    | 1(2%)             |
| Parental separation          | 13(26%)        | 35(70%)  | 2(4%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Profane in electronic media  | 14(28%)        | 36(72%)  | 0(0%)    | 0(0%)             |
| Violent scenes on television | 13(26%)        | 37(74%)  | 0(0%)    | 0(0%)             |

Table 1 shows the number of responses and corresponding percentage for each variable on the questionnaire. With respect to the causes of indiscipline among the staff and students of schools in the region, the findings indicated that a slight majority (n=27; 54%) of the participants did not favour the view that hereditary problems associated with teachers were a cause of indiscipline among the Brong Ahafo senior high schools (Hereditary problems are anti-

social behaviour that are believed by Ghanaians to be as a result of inheritance from both or either of a parent). A minority (n=17; 34%) however consented with the view that some children are born with traits that predispose them to difficult behaviour. The view expressed by the minority is consistent with the view of Adentwi (1998) that biological factors such as disorders in the hereditary characteristics of individuals, chromosomal abnormality and genetic defects among others cause indiscipline among people.

With regard to negative self-esteem in teachers causing indiscipline, majority of the participants indicated in the affirmative; only a few rejected the view. Also, the assertion that mishandling of teachers by school authorities could cause indiscipline received almost a balanced support and against. This view expressed by some of the participants has been given cognisance by Adesina (1990). He states among other things that, the lack of motivation and encouragement by school administration for teachers sometimes causes indiscipline among teachers.

Furthermore, a good number (68%) showed their approval that inappropriate teaching methods actually caused indiscipline among students. A few, however, indicated their disapproval. Adentwi (1998) shares the view of this majority when asserts that an uninteresting and ill- prepared lesson has a tendency of causing student misbehaviour.

The view that absenteeism and late coming of teachers to classroom could cause indiscipline gave a picture similar to the one above. As many as thirty-two participants representing 64% of the population responded in favour of the variable with just a negligible number responding in the negative. Not all, when participants were asked to indicate whether weaknesses exhibited by some teachers in relating with their students of the opposite sex also caused indiscipline, the result did not produce absolute majority either for or against the assertion to confirm what Adesina (1990) concluded in a previous study that moral laxity of teachers causes indiscipline among students.

On inconsistent application of school rules by teachers as a cause of indiscipline, close to two-thirds (n=34; 68%) of participants indicated that it really contributed to indiscipline among students. Again, only a negligible number (n=3; 6%) responded in the negative. This majority view has been noted by Gyamera (2002) and Yarason. Gyamera contends that, inconsistency in the application of school rules and dishonesty has far reaching consequences on the lives of students. Yarason also identifies unrealistic rules set by the school administration as one of the causes of indiscipline.

Asked whether hereditary problems bringing about misbehaviour from students was a cause of indiscipline in their schools, the research recorded a balanced figure of the total number of those who endorsed the opinion as compared to those who refuted. The break down is as follows: 22 (44%)

disagreed and (n=21; 42%) agreed. A further four (8%) strongly agreed and three (6%) strongly disagreed with the variable. This is a representation of 50% each for those who endorsed the opinion and those who thought otherwise. Unlike the earlier development where the majority of the respondents did not agree that hereditary problems bring about misbehaviour from teachers, a good number (50%) of the respondents endorsed the assertion. This means that the participants partially agreed with Gyamera (2002) that hereditary factors among other things are responsible for students' undisciplined behaviour.

Negative self-esteem by students was also perceived by a majority of the participants as contributing to student indiscipline. Also, a little over half (n=26; 52%) of the participants responded that they believed frustration in students could cause indiscipline. The data collected also indicated that most of the participants attributed absenteeism and lateness of students to classroom as a cause of indiscipline.

On classroom size, a little over two-thirds (n=38; 76%) of the participants answered in the affirmative with only a few rejecting the view. Furthermore, almost all (n=42; 84%) of the participants said when school rules conflict with students' home rules this could lead to indiscipline. However, only three (6%) participants did not endorse this view. The endorsement of the view that classroom congestion could cause indiscipline is consistent with previous findings of Adenwi (1998); Haller (2000) and Nkrumah, all who cite the lack of adequate classroom space for learning and games in particular, to ignite fighting among students.

Student-peer influence as a cause of indiscipline received overwhelming agreement from all participants. However, thirty-two participants representing 60% just supported the assertion while twenty representing 40% strongly supported it. Previous researchers share the view given by the majority of the participants that student-peer influence is a strong contributor to indiscipline in schools (Adentwi; 1998; Boakye, 2006; Gyamera, 2002; Nkrumah, 2002; Yarason, 2004). The responses for over permissiveness by parents were not very different from those given for student-peer influence as a cause of indiscipline. The majority (n=33; 66%) supported the view with only a few not in support. Over permissiveness given as a cause of indiscipline by a good number (66%) of participants is cited by Adentwi (1998). He notes that over permissiveness and child abuse from parents are strong out-of-school factors causing child-indiscipline.

The responses for inadequate parental concern for children as a cause of indiscipline gave the following picture: majority (30) constituting 60% supported the assertion followed by 18 representing 36% also strongly support it but one each representing 2% each either refuted or strongly refuted the assertion. In noting this contention, Adentwi (1998) opines that, the homes of

students contribute immensely to their behaviours in school. For parental separation, a majority 35 (70%) were in favour with the assertion with only two (4%) not in favour. In supporting the view that parental separation could cause indiscipline among students, Boakye (2006) also cites parental divorce or death and lack of family security as a result of prolonged absence of parents from homes as a cause of student-indiscipline.

Furthermore, the study revealed that (n=36; 72%) of the participants answered in the affirmative that profane lyrics by the electronic media could cause indiscipline. A few strongly consented but did reject the proposition. Also, the view that violent scenes on television could contribute to indiscipline was endorsed by all the participants. Thirty-seven participants (74%) affirmed it and (n=13; 26%) strongly affirmed. In supporting this majority assertion, Boakye and Yarason contend that, the media, especially the television introduces students to a variety of indiscipline behaviours such as drug use and crime. Ten of the participants representing 20% of the total (50) responded to the open-ended question on other causes of indiscipline not captured in the instrument. These included alcoholism, drug abuse and bad behaviour of student-leaders among others. Each was mentioned once constituting 10% of the total responses. Poor food in boarding schools as a cause of indiscipline was, however, mentioned twice constituting 20% of the total (10) responses.

**Research Question 2:** How do the principals of these schools perceive the impact of indiscipline on their administration.

This question was investigated through a qualitative research approach.

### QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

The study sought also to understand how principals perceive the impact of indiscipline on their administration. Of the fifty principals who participated in the survey, 19 were subsequently interviewed to seek their opinion on the effects of indiscipline on their administration. The interview results indicated that even though all the participants conceived indiscipline as an issue confronting administrative effectiveness, participants had varied views regarding how indiscipline affected their work. Statistically, 10 out of the 19 participants thought indiscipline distracted “academic calendar of my school”. Just six claimed disciplinary problems made it difficult to perform their assigned duties. A small number of participants also reported:

*The menace of indiscipline did not allow my school to attract the right calibre of teachers.*

Yet, only two out of the 19 participants thought indiscipline brought

about enmity between teachers and students, tarnished the image of the schools and reduced school enrolment because of dismissals. Furthermore, the interview results indicated the following perceptions from the participants:

*Indiscipline embarrassed schools... made schools ungovernable...made my school ineffective and inefficient... made parents lose interest in the schools... slowed the pace of academic work... brought about poor examination results... and breeds conflict between the school and its community....leads to indecent behaviour in my school...made the schools unattractive to donors and sponsors... affected the morale of my students.... made administrators target for students' brutality... and rendered fruitless the efforts of administrations in developing schools.*

Others principals were of the view that indiscipline discouraged teachers and compelled them to shirk responsibilities, leading to unhealthy relationship between administrators, teachers and students, social misconduct; and difficulty controlling students.

Indeed, the major implications of the findings in this research is that indiscipline in the schools reported here is causing a sudden fall in classroom achievement and making teachers feel drained, frustrated and overwhelmed with the task of administering their schools. These findings are important for developing a new teacher professional learning programmes to enable teachers and principals develop quality student-teacher relationships that motivate their students (Adentwi, 1998; Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Wright and Kate, 2003). When schools establish quality relationship with students, it leads to significant reduction in school discipline issues (Yarason, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

The study explored the views of some principals in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana regarding the impact of indiscipline on their administration. Specifically, it examined how these principals perceived the causes of both staff and student indiscipline and their consequences on administrative effectiveness. The findings revealed that the causes of indiscipline in schools in the region varied from school to school, However, the most common ones included negative self esteem in teachers and students, failure to secure needs leading to frustration in teachers and students, inappropriate teaching methods, absenteeism and teachers and students coming late to class, weakness exhibited by teachers in relating with students of the opposite sex, inconsistent application of school rules and mishandling of students by school authority.

Also, classroom congestion, school rules conflicting with students' home rules, student peer influence, over permissiveness, inadequate parental

concern for children and parental separation were attributed to school discipline issues by the principals. Profane lyrics from the electronic media, violent and bloody scenes on television, poor entertainment facilities and poor food quality in some boarding schools were also reported as major causes to student misbehaviour in the schools.

Generally, the principals perceived indiscipline as an issue affecting the effectiveness of administration and that indiscipline tarnishes the image of the schools and makes the schools difficult to manage. Also, indiscipline made assigned duties to assistant principals and ancillary staff difficult to perform. Furthermore, indiscipline prevented the schools from attracting the right calibre of teaching staff and distracted the academic calendar of the schools. It brought about also poor quality of teaching and learning and slowed down the pace of academic work, thus bringing about poor examination results, reduction in school enrolment and making parents lose interest in the schools. Since classroom congestion was named as one of the causes of indiscipline in the schools, the researchers recommend that the government, the school communities and all interest groups should assist in the construction of more classrooms for the affected schools, to ease classroom congestion.

A well organised guidance and counselling services could contribute significantly to easing the tensions brought about by indiscipline behaviour in the schools. It is therefore imperative for the Ghana Government through the Ghana Education Service (GES) to train some teachers in the field of school counselling and post them to the region and other areas in the country with similar problems.

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