

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined students' perception of discipline in secondary schools in River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study was an analytical survey involving the administration of a five-point self-administered questionnaire with 67 items on 2980 SSIII students in 5 local government areas of River State. The response rate was 72%. A 4-point likert-scale was used to elicit response from respondents. Data collected were analysed using comparison of mean, standard deviation, t-test and analysis of variance. The instrument was validated by cross-matching the questionnaire with research questions and hypotheses and scrutinized by some expert in the related areas of interest. A test-re-test of the instrument was carried out on some SSIII students who did not form part of the study. The findings revealed among others that students' perception of what constitutes disciplinary offences are: stealing, impersonation, smoking, late coming to school, truancy and examination-malpractice. Their perception of discipline is not influenced by their gender or type of school they attend. It also identified their perception of inhibitors of discipline as lack of proper upbringing, lack of career prospects, de-boarding of the school system and eradication of corporal punishment. The study also revealed that there was no significant difference in their perception of inhibitors when classified under gender and type of school. Based on these findings the following recommendations were made. Orientation programmes should be organized so that the students would be well informed of what constitutes discipline in the secondary school system. Teachers and students should come up with appropriate disciplinary actions to be metered out to erring students. Career awareness programmes on occupational prospects should be a regular feature in their academic programme. Government should renovate the dilapidated school dormitories, equip the school properly and boarding made compulsory for students.