Principals' Strategies in Managing Disruptive Behaviours of Students with Disabilities in Special Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated principals' strategies in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Descriptive research design was used for the study. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised 12 principals from special and inclusive schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Census sampling technique was adopted to select a target figure of 12 male and female principals for the study. The research instrument was a self-designed instrument titled: "Managing Students Disruptive Behaviour Questionnaire'' (MSDBQ) was used for data collection. The reliability coefficient for (MSDBQ) was r=0.80 (80%) and was established using the test-retest method. Mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard

deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while Independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study concluded that; suspension, peer mentoring and parental involvement positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. That there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension, peer mentoring and parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. It was recommended among others that; Principals' aside using suspension as a disciplinary strategy should educate students with disabilities on the meaning of discipline and also its essence as this would enable them to appreciate that discipline is not just put in place to subdue them and would help curtail (SWD's) disruptive behaviour.

Keywords: Disabilities, disruptive, students, principals, managing

Introduction

Students' discipline is a major concern in many parts of the world with the quality of students' discipline acting as an important factor in determining the intellectual outcome of students and schools. Students' with disabilities discipline problems do manifest themselves in form of bullying, failure to pay attention in class, disrespect for other learners, staff or the school property, fragrant breaching of school rules and regulations like inappropriate clothing. Agabi (2020) asserted that students in regular and special secondary schools in Africa are more susceptible to practice disruptive behaviors due to several factors that act against them such as less supervision from teachers, lack of recreational facilities in schools, poor learning condition, and poor supervision from parents among others. For a student with disability to make success in school, desirable or adaptive behaviors ought to be exhibited. However, where there is persistent disruptive behaviors amongst students in the school system, there would be difficulty in the attainment of educational goals. A disruptive behaviour is that behaviour which does not enhance the attainment of instructional objectives. Urah (2017) defined disruptive behaviour as that which interferes with the learning and opportunities of other students and imposes undue stress upon the school management.

Narga (2020) noted that disruptive behaviours are those behaviours of children which are against school or class routines, practices, and rules. Narga went further to indicate that the behaviours disturb lesson and cause discipline problems in the class. They can be classified into two broad categories namely: minor disruptive behaviours and major disruptive behaviours. Minor categories include; lack of attention, inattention, lack of interest in class work, lateness to school, being suggestible. The major ones include physical aggression (pushing others, arguing and interrupting), moving or wandering around in class, challenging of authority, disobedience to teachers and noise making.

In their own perspective, Onyechi and Okere (2017) indicated some of the disruptive behaviours to include: calling teachers provocative nicknames, walking out on the teacher, noise making, sleeping in class, pinching, aggression, vandalism, pilfering, lies, truancy, lateness, irresponsibility, cheating, immorality, alcoholism, use of drugs, cultism, and examination malpractices. A student may misbehave at one time or the other but this misbehavior cannot make such a student to be considered a disruptive student, if it is an isolated event. Mont (2019) noted that it is when students' misbehaviours create problems for teachers and themselves; and when they begin to occur frequently and pervade many areas of activity. The following as disruptive behaviours: attention seeking, continuous talking and muttering, making annoying noises, lack of attention, poor concentration, distractibility, shouting out, wandering about, snatching other students' property, annoying and distracting other students and teachers, provoking each other by name calling, unpleasant comments, lack of interest and motivation to work.

For this study, students with disability disruptive behaviours are those behaviours which when they are exhibited by students can interfere with the teaching and learning process. Such behaviours include: noise making in class, lateness to school, hatred for teachers, distracting others, interrupting the teacher, drinking alcohol, being domineering, pushing, fighting others. Also included are use of hand set in class, lack of interest in learning, stealing, not having a locker and seat, engaging in subject other than the one being discussed, attention seeking, staying outside the class as lessons go on, sleeping in class, and malpractices in assessments.

These behaviours are obviously cases of indiscipline amongst students, and when they are exhibited by students especially in the classroom interfere with the instructional process. When disruptive behaviours become sustained among students they could manifest in drop out from schools, frictions between students and authorities, examination malpractices or poor performance in school. Onyechi and Okere (2017) observed the existence of disruptive behaviours like calling teachers provocative nicknames, walking out on teachers, noise making in class, aggression, truancy, lateness and others among secondary school students. Disruption and other associated behaviour problems seem to be on the increase particularly in some schools. According to him this increase seems to be associated with a curriculum which emphasizes academic competition, places little value on non-academic pursuits or individual needs and aspirations, streams its students in this setting, imposes a heavy and inflexible code of school rules, and fails to involve students and staff in corporate development.

These disruptive behaviours are remarkably felt in the student's academic achievement as it manifests in constant poor grades in class and repetition of classes a situation that affects both boys and girls. Managing these the disruptive behaviours by the principals would help in enhancing students' disposition to focus on their academic work. Onyechi and Okere (2017) noted that because students come to be regarded by teachers or the school as being disruptive, it is usual for such students to be regarded as owners of such problems and for discipline and correction to be directed towards such students with disruptive behaviours. Such instrument is not only directed at students with disruptive behaviours but generally to maintain an orderly, purposeful and stable school system.

The principal chooses from a variety of strategies such as peer mentoring, suspension, expulsion, and parental involvement with the aim of managing students' disruptive behaviours. Some of their strategies which the principal deems suitable for achieving discipline in the school can help to curb disruptive beahviour. It therefore became imperative to examine these strategies in managing students' disruptive behaviours in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The rate at which disruptive behaviours are exhibited by students with disabilities has continued to be on the increase with the attendant negative consequences. Students' indulgence in acts of cultism and gangsterism and defiance toward authority has been on the increase. This not only puts teachers at risk of injury, but students, as well. Students with disabilities disruptive behaviours frustrates the whole aim of education as students no longer show commitment to their academic activities. The high rate of examination malpractices is a clear proof. Disruptive behaviours among students with disabilities therefore, has become a major threat to the smooth running of our educational institutions and the attainment of their academic objectives.

The principal as the administrative head then is saddled with the task of ensuring a disciplined environment conducive enough for learning to take place. This has to do with the disciplinary strategies of each principal. Various principals therefore choose the best approach they are convinced is most helpful as far as discipline in their schools is concerned. But the truth remains that disruptive behaviours among students with disabilities continues to constitute a major challenge to the administrations of many principals and many principals seem to be helpless as their efforts towards curbing these seem not to yield much positive results. Whatever the management strategy adopted by principals; it must be such that encourages students' with disabilities display of desirable behaviours. It therefore became necessary to investigate the strategies that are adopted by principals' in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to investigate principals' strategies in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Determine the influence of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State
2. Ascertain the effect of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

3. Determine the effect of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How does suspension influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?
2. How does peer mentoring influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?
3. How does parental involvement influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State
3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 12 principals from special and inclusive schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Census sampling technique was adopted to select a target

figure of 12 male and female principals for the study. The research instrument was a self-designed instrument titled: "Managing Students Disruptive Behaviour Questionnaire'' (MSDBQ). Section A contained the demographic data of the principals while section B was structured on a four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. Section B had a total of 22 items. The reliability coefficient of was r=0.80 (80%) and was determined using the test-retest method. The data were analyzed using mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions while Independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: How does suspension influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation showing how suspension influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Criterion $\bar{X}$ = 2.5

S/N	Use of Suspension in Managing Disruptive Behaviours of Students with	$\bar{X}$	ST.D	Remarks
1	Suspension effectively controls students' chance of engaging in disruptive behaviour	3.16	0.97	Agreed
2	When students are placed on suspension, it helps prevent negative peer pressure	3.38	0.79	Agreed
3	For suspension to be effective in curbing disruptive behaviour, parents of the student suspended should accompany	3.08	0.95	Agreed
4	When the principal suspends an erring student temporarily from the school, it aids in curbing students disobedience	3.24	0.85	Agreed
	Cluster mean/Standard Deviation	**3.21**	**0.88**	

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively were all accepted, as how suspension influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 1-4 were 3.16, 3.38, 3.08 and 3.24 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.97, 0.79, 0.95 and 0.85. The cluster mean of 3.21 with the standard deviation of 0.88 were also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that suspension positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Question Two: How does peer mentoring influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing how peer mentoring influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Criterion $\bar{X}$ = 2.5

S/N	Use of Peer Mentoring in Managing Disruptive Behaviours of Students with Disabilities	$\bar{X}$	ST.D	Remarks
5	Peer tutoring helps students avoid taking of illicit drugs	3.44	0.94	Agreed
6	Peer mentoring helps students to attend school regularly	3.36	0.90	Agreed
7	Peer mentoring helps students do their classwork on time	3.03	0.55	Agreed
8	Peer mentoring enhances a workable relationship between the learners and the	3.19	0.93	Agreed
	Cluster mean/Standard Deviation	**3.25**	**0.95**	

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 2 shows that items 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively were all accepted, as how peer mentoring influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with

disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 5-8 were 3.44, 3.36, 3.03 and 3.19 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.94, 0.90, 0.55 and 0.93. The cluster mean of 3.25 with the standard deviations of 0.95 were also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that peer mentoring positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Question Three: How does parental involvement influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation showing how parental involvement influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Criterion $\bar{X}$ = 2.5

S/N	Use of Parental Involvement in Managing Disruptive Behaviours of Students with	$\bar{X}$	ST.D	Remarks
13	Principals involving parents in formulating school rules and regulations would aid in curbing the rate of students disruptive behaviour	3.08	0.82	Agreed
14	When parents play active role in the education of their wards, it would aid in minimizing the rate of students disruptive behaviour	3.22	0.91	Agreed
15	When principals inform parents during visitation regarding the general conduct of their ward, it aids in curbing students disruptive behaviour	3.00	0.91	Agreed
16	As a principal, allowing parents to discuss on disciplinary styles to be used in the school will aid in students in minimizing the rate of disruptive	2.67	0.35	Agreed
	Cluster mean/Standard Deviation	**2.99**	**0.43**	

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 3 shows that items 13, 14, 15 and 16 respectively were all accepted, as how parental involvement influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The table showed that the mean ratings of items 13-16 were 3.08, 3.22, 3.00 and 2.67 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.82, 0.91, 0.91 and 0.35. The cluster mean of 2.99 with the standard deviations of 0.43 were also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that parental involvement positively influences the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Table 4: T-test analysis showing significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Suspension	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male Principals	08	3.08	0.56	10	0.000	Significant
Female Principals	04	3.02	0.33			

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 4 shows that the P-value is 0.000 and at 10 degrees of freedom. Since the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State is been rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Table 5: T-test analysis showing significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Peer Mentoring	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male Principals	08	3.03	0.67	10	0.000	Significant
Female Principals	04	3.06	0.29			

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 5 shows that the P-value is 0.000 and at 10 degrees of freedom. Since the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State is been rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Table 6: T-test analysis showing significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Parental Involvement	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male Principals	08	2.94	0.23	10	0.000	Significant
Female Principals	04	2.87	0.46			

(Survey Data, 2023)

Table 6 shows that the P-value is 0.000 and at 25 degrees of freedom. Since the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State is been rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of research question one (Table 1) revealed that suspension positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. And hypothesis one (Table 4) reveals that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The findings agree with Stewart (2017) who revealed that measures such as suspension of students for acts of misbehaviours when exercised in most extreme circumstances of students misconduct significantly reduced the probability of more students engaging in similar act of misconduct. The finding is however at variance with the Bennet (2018) who observed that suspended learners receive support from many of their classmates as suspension has no effect on learner behaviour as use of suspension to manage students' discipline does not change the behaviour of learners.

The finding of research question two (Table 2) revealed that peer mentoring positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. And hypothesis two (Table 5) reveals that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of peer mentoring in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The finding is however not surprising to the researcher as ordinarily during the use of peer mentoring, students who are adjudged to be of good conduct and morale standing are been assigned to peer/team up with another student who exhibits misbehaviours. This process through the process of learning by observation and imitation would significantly impact to change the tendency for disruptive behaviours of learners. The finding also collaborates with the study of Wyk (2019) who revealed that use of peer counselling as an instrument of guidance and counselling significantly enhanced students conduct and behaviour in regular and special schools.

The finding of research question three (Table 3) revealed that parental involvement positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. And hypothesis three (Table 6) reveals that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The finding is in line with the revelation of Ibia (2016) who observed that parenting involvement as the representation of how parents respond to the demand of their children is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in rearing their children which significantly influences the conduct and behaviour of the child.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that suspension, peer mentoring and parental involvement positively influence the management of disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. That there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the use of suspension, peer

mentoring and parental involvement in managing disruptive behaviours of students with disabilities in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Principals' aside using suspension as a disciplinary strategy should educate students with disabilities on the meaning of discipline and also its essence as this would enable them to appreciate that discipline is not just put in place to subdue them and would help curtail (SWD's) disruptive behaviour.
2. Principals and teachers' are encouraged to adopt the use of peer mentoring and parental involvement as it is considered useful in eliminating students' with disabilities exhibition of disruptive behaviours.
3. Principals and teachers should undergo trainings on school disciplinary strategies such as suspension, peer mentoring and parental involvement to help inculcate in them the knowledge of imparting good discipline to students with disabilities.
4. The principal and other school administrators should from time to time monitor disciplinary cases in schools with the view of ascertaining the root cause of indiscipline among the students with disabilities and decide on appropriate disciplinary strategy to adopt.

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