

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools as gatekeepers of values are expected to produce well behaved individuals with character traits that will enable them to be well accepted in society. The upsurge of delinquent behaviour among students these days prompted this study which scrutinised the commission of such behaviour by students at a private institution of higher learning.

The main factors examined were the existence and extent of delinquency among the students and causes of such behaviour .

The ecology of the college did in some way contribute to delinquency among the students. This college, located in few blocks of shop house lots, did not have recreational facilities for the students to relax and unwind from the pressures of a rather tight schedule. The absence of such facilities led students to use the library as place to “lepak” and at the same time to rest and relax. This inadequacy also led students to loiter along the corridors and to frequent the numerous video games arcade and cyber cafes located within the neighbourhood. More insidiously, the absence of these facilities has also led a number of students to retaliate and use abusive language towards administrative staff who try to curb their disregard for college rules.

Another shortcoming that precipitated delinquency among the students is the poor enforcement and surveillance of college rules and regulations. Smoking is strictly prohibited on the college premises. Nevertheless, there have been numerous reports about students smoking in the student toilets. The Student handbook provides that students are required to wear kitchen and restaurant uniforms during their respective classes only.

Students are strictly prohibited to be in these uniforms at other times. However, these rules are not strictly enforced as a number of students have attended theory classes in their practical uniforms. The Student handbook stipulates that students should be formally attired every Mondays and Thursdays and further it is stated that students who are not properly attired on this Hospitality Executive Days will be refused admittance to the college premises. This study revealed that the lax attitude of some of the staff in implementing and enforcing these rules led to the constant violation. The importance of abiding to college rules and the rationale for the impositions of certain rules were never explained to the students. Further, although the Student handbook lists recommended dress codes, the students are still not sure on what is accepted formal attire. Due to lack of appreciation of the rules, the students have developed an attitude that the rules are meant to be broken.

Another finding of the study was that a packed timetable with frequent and rigid evaluation conducted to assess the students led to a high percentage of truancy. The Diploma and Higher Diploma courses at this college is based on a modular system. The subjects done in a particular term is independently assessed within the term itself. The termly assessments comprise of continuous assessments (conducted during every practical class), mid term tests and term tests. A tight schedule coupled with these various assessments left a majority of the students with very little time to do their errands. Many students skipped classes to do their errands. The tight schedule also hindered a number of students from completing the various projects assigned to them during the term. Coupled with this was the fear of being penalised for not meeting deadlines for submission of projects.

The library at the college was renovated and upgraded to provide better facilities to the students. However, the number of reference books and the number of computers available leave a lot to be desired. The limited number of reference books available, the nature of the library itself, being a reference library, and the opening hours of the library (9.00a.m. – 6.00p.m, from Mondays to Fridays) has contributed to truancy among students at this college.

The non-existence of trained and qualified counselors to help students with personal problems is another shortcoming within the school system, which has contributed to delinquency among the students.

The interplay of the various inadequacies in the school contributed in the culmination of delinquency among students at this institution.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

According to the Secretary - General of the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP), “by law, every discipline case in the school is the responsibility of the head and the senior assistant.” (January, 1998)

As the findings of this study indicated that there were a number of shortcomings within the institution which resulted in delinquency. Some suggestions are provided to reduce these occurrences: -

1. School administrators have the responsibility of ensuring a humane school environment for teaching and learning. The administrators have to portray themselves as being effective and dynamic climate leader. In order to do this, the school administrators as a key agent for change, should constantly advocate

activities that are consistent with the changing intellectual, social and physical development of students. Various extra curricular activities that promote a sense of pride, instills good morale and respect for institution should be organised to further improve the learning process of students.

2. College should be more students oriented, in that all programmes implemented at the school should be for the benefit of the students and not solely for the benefit of the administrators and staff. The students should also be made aware of the schools' genuine interest in them. According to Blandford (1998), "... pupils should have access to the best quality education that promotes equality of opportunity, ... pupils have a right to skilled care and treatment, individual respect and to be treated with dignity and fairness." (p.58)

Such an atmosphere would also create a good teaching and learning environment.

3. College should develop a strong tie with parents rather than the usual perfunctory relationship. Close relationship with parents would create an avenue for parents and teachers to discuss their concerns and enlist the support of each other in tackling behavioural as well as academic problems among students. The existence of a good parent-teacher relationship would deter students' involvement in various negative activities.

4. School administrators should devise effective techniques to handle delinquent behaviour among its students. One such technique would be to appoint a team, comprising of staff of the college, with personal traits such as maturity, personality and age, who can act as counselors and be involved in handling disciplinary problems. Chng (1976) stated that, "guidance and counselling is

essential in any school set-up to identify any problems that may arise and to prevent them from developing into serious acts of delinquency.(p.402)

5. Imposition of dress codes for students would “better facilitate the process of education through reasonable guidelines of ‘dress’”. (Stradley and Aspinall, 1975). The objective of imposing a dress code, i.e. to establish a good basis of grooming, modesty and cleanliness, should be explained, and if possible an example of accepted dress code should be presented to the students.
6. An effective teaching-learning strategy should be implemented. This involves the teachers stating the goals of each lesson, explaining the lesson and seeking evaluative feedback from the students and also from other teachers. Teachers should always encourage students to evaluate the teaching strategies adopted. Encouraging active participation of the students in their lessons would rekindle their interests in lessons that were previously considered as boring and they also would better appreciate and understand each subject.
7. School administrators should establish effective communication channels. The existence of an effective communication channel that provides for expression of ideas and feelings that would enhance interpersonal relationships between the school administration, staff and students. The students will not feel alienated, isolated and frustrated, instead, would feel free to express their feelings and ideas. This would invariably reduce delinquency among the students.
8. Students’ reaction to the school is to a large extent influenced by the teachers’ reaction to the students. As such, teachers should assume responsibility in the behavioural developments of the students by being initiators of behavioural

motivation, actions and activities. In furtherance of this, in-service education programmes should be regularly conducted for the teachers to acquire and at the same time update their knowledge to further improve teaching and learning.

According to David (1993),

“in service work is an essential part of school life; this is how the quality of teachers and the calibre of leadership is enhanced and monitored. In-service work not only revises facts and updates methods, it also gives time to think and debate everyday work teachers are doing having unhurried and unhurried time to listen to colleagues, being required to articulate opinions and beliefs and having attitudes and methods challenged by others is a very useful part of pastoral and academic professional (and personal) development. It will be seen that in-service training, to my mind, is not a question of sitting in sleepy rows/ listening to too many lecturers: it is a matter of lively debate and discussion. “ (p.153)

9. The Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Discipline (1982) reported that one of the characteristics of effective institutions where discipline is not a problem was that the institution focussed on the causes of discipline rather than symptoms.

According to the Committee:

“educators in well-disciplined school know that behaviour is caused. When misbehaviour occurred, the principal and faculty tended to go beyond merely punishing students for the misbehaviour. They searched for probable causes, and they addressed them. They improved discipline in their schools by taking steps to remove those causes ...”

Such a practice was also advocated by Docking (1989) who stated that:

“...since it appears that in all kinds of behaviour there are wide variations between schools with similar intakes, the right question to ask is not so much, “Is there a problem?” but “Where is the problem and where is there not ...” (p.13)

Therefore, school administration must closely work with the staff to identify causes of indiscipline, especially within the school system, and eliminate such problem.

## **Conclusion**

“A stable society requires citizens who are productive and know how to function independently in whatever situation they find themselves – in short, citizens who have self-discipline.” (Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Discipline, 1982)

Teaching of discipline is one of the main goals of education, therefore educators have to create an effective learning environment that enables students to develop good behaviour. Creating a humane school environment is only possible when there is a good and strong school leader, the principal, who is assisted by dedicated and committed staff.