



## Research Article

# SCHOOL CULTURE AS A CORRELATES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR IN ILORIN SOUTH, KWARA STATE

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## Abstract

In educational institutions, school culture has been found to have a major impact on students' behaviour. The behaviours, attitudes, and values of a school's students are influenced by its culture. It is crucial to comprehend the connection between student behaviour and school culture as a result. This paper investigated how students' behaviour and school culture are related. The study adopted correlational research design. The research sample consists of 360 senior secondary school II students in Ilorin South, Kwara State. The structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to gather information on school culture and student behaviour. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and rank order were utilized to analyze the demographic data of the respondents and to answer the research questions posed in the study. The inferential statistical tool of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the study's hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between school culture and students' behaviour. It was recommended among others that stakeholders in the school should always enact and promote positive and favourable cultures within the school environment as this will promote better academic results; increased levels of staff and student involvement and attendance; a decrease in teacher turnover and a decrease in bullying and aggressive conduct.

**Keywords:** School, Culture, School Culture, Delinquent Behaviour, Students' Outcomes

## Introduction

School culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, traditions, behaviours, and practices that characterize a school community. It encompasses the social and emotional environment of the school and shapes the way students interact with each other, teachers, and administrators. School culture is a concept that has been discussed by scholars in the field of education for many years. According to research, social context affects how people behave. Since schools are young people's primary social environment, they inevitably have an effect on how they behave. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) World Drug Report 2021, about 1.7 million children were jailed for drug-related offenses globally in 2018 (UNODC, 2021). The UNODC also stated that teenage crime rates have been steadily increasing in recent years (UNODC, 2021). According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), there were 12,353 juvenile delinquency cases in 2020, up from the 8,954 instances registered in 2019. (NBS, 2020). Juvenile delinquency, according to the NBS, is defined as crimes committed by people under the age of 18.

Research has shown that students, as well as teachers, can sometimes be the victims of delinquent behaviour in school. This has raised concerns among education stakeholders regarding the impact of such conduct on the future of the students involved. Some common forms of delinquent behaviour in school include bullying, fighting, vandalism, use of foul language, plagiarism, truancy, drug use, and other forms of aggressive behaviour.

According to Ali, Sharma and Zaman (2016), school culture is "a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration." Badamas (2022) emphasized that school culture is not something that is explicitly taught, but rather it is learned through observation and interaction with others in the school environment. Kwan and Wong (2020), viewed school culture as "the shared beliefs, values, and practices of a school community." They noted that school culture can have a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours of students, teachers, and administrators within the school. In their research on school culture and student achievement, Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir (2018) defined school culture as "the norms, values, beliefs, and practices that shape patterns of behaviour within a school community." They argued that school culture can play a key role in shaping student outcomes, as it can influence the quality of instruction, the level of student engagement, and the overall climate of the school. Abdullah (2019) argues that school culture is the underlying assumptions and beliefs that guide the behaviour of members of a school community. These assumptions and beliefs are often unconscious and are influenced by the school's history, context, and external environment. Brady, (2008) contends that school culture is critical in shaping the behaviour of students and teachers and plays a significant role in the school's success.

Furthermore, Carpenter (2015) suggest that school culture is a set of shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the behaviour and interactions of members of a school community. They argue that school culture influences the school's goals, priorities, and decision-making processes and impacts the school's effectiveness and student outcomes. Similarly, Sabancı et al. (2016) view school culture as a set of shared

mental programming that guides the behaviour of members of a school community. They suggest that school culture is shaped by the school's history, values, and external environment and impacts the attitudes and behaviours of students, teachers, and administrators. Scholars such as Carpenter (2015) and Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir (2018) agree that school culture is an important concept that can have a significant impact on the functioning of schools and the academic success of students. Understanding and effectively managing school culture is therefore essential for promoting positive learning outcomes in educational settings.

In secondary schools, the school culture is a critical factor in shaping student behaviour. It influences how students perceive themselves, their peers, and their teachers, and affects their motivation to learn and engage in positive behaviours. Therefore, understanding the relationship between school culture and student behaviour is essential for educators and policymakers who seek to improve educational outcomes and promote positive youth development. Bisset, Markham and Aveyard (2007) posit that school culture is an important aspect of secondary education as it shapes the academic, social, and emotional experiences of students. They said further that, school culture includes the values, beliefs, traditions, and behaviours of the school community, including students, teachers, and administrators. Therefore, a positive school culture promotes a sense of belonging, academic excellence, and positive behaviour, while a negative school culture can lead to academic underachievement, social isolation, and behavioural problems.

The study of school culture and student behaviour is critical in secondary education because it provides insights into how schools can foster positive educational outcomes and promote positive youth development. A positive school culture fosters a sense of community and belonging, encourages academic excellence, and promotes positive behaviour. In contrast, a negative school culture can lead to academic underachievement, social isolation, and behavioural problems (Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014). In addition to the importance of understanding the relationship between school culture and student behaviour in secondary education, this study is also relevant because of the current challenges faced by the education sector globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted education, leading to school closures, disruptions in learning, and changes in teaching and learning methods. The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of social and emotional support in education and the need for a positive school culture that fosters resilience and well-being among students (Kaden, 2020).

In this case school culture can be viewed as a set of shared values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and behaviours that characterize a particular school community. School culture influences the behaviour of students, teachers, and administrators and plays a significant role in the school's success and student outcomes (Ham et al., 2022). He concluded that understanding school culture is critical in developing effective policies and practices that promote positive youth development and academic achievement.

Some scholar such as Miller (2022) has also emphasized the importance of school culture in promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) among students. SEL refers to the process through which students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to manage emotions, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. According to Miller (2022), school culture can play a significant role in promoting

SEL by fostering a positive and supportive environment that encourages the development of social and emotional competencies among students.

Furthermore, leadership has been identified as having significant effect on school culture. According to Lee, (2023)., effective school leaders can shape school culture by creating a shared vision, setting high expectations, and modeling positive behaviours. They argue that effective leadership can create a positive school culture that promotes student learning, well-being, and academic achievement.

Additionally, researches have demonstrated that stakeholders such as parent, school leader and the community playing vital roles in shaping school culture. According to Lynch, Lerner and Leventhal (2013), school culture is shaped by the interactions among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. He argues that effective policies and practices that promote positive youth development and academic achievement must take into account the perspectives and values of all stakeholders.

Moreso, research has shown that a positive school culture has been associated with positive student behaviour. Abdullah (2019) argue that a positive school culture promotes student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging, which can result in positive behaviour. In contrast, a negative school culture can lead to negative student behaviour, such as absenteeism, low academic achievement, and disciplinary problems. In that wise, school culture can impact the development of social and emotional competencies among students, which can influence their behaviour. According to Miller (2022) a positive school culture can promote social and emotional learning, which can result in positive student behaviour. Students who develop social and emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour.

The behaviour of teachers and administrators can impact the school culture and student behaviour. McKinney, Labat and Labat, (2015) argue that the behaviour of school leaders and teachers can shape the underlying assumptions and beliefs that guide the behaviour of members of a school community. If teachers and administrators model positive behaviour and reinforce positive values, this can promote a positive school culture and positive student behaviour.

Literature has also demonstrated that the relationship between school culture and student behaviour is bidirectional. School culture can impact student behaviour, but student behaviour can also influence school culture. For example, if a school has a culture of respect and responsibility, students are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour, which can reinforce the positive school culture. School culture had been adjudged to be important in the school as it cater for the cultural needs of students from diverse backgrounds to promote positive behaviour. Students from different cultural backgrounds may have unique needs, values, and beliefs that influence their behaviour in the school context. Therefore, it is important to create a school culture that is inclusive and responsive to the cultural needs of all students. Involving students in shaping school culture can promote positive behaviour (Clauss-Ehlers & Garagiola, 2023). When students feel that their voices are heard and their perspectives are valued, they are more likely to take ownership of the school culture and exhibit

positive behaviour. Students can be involved in shaping school culture through student councils, leadership programme, and other student-led initiatives.

Family and community as a social unit play significant roles in shaping school culture and student behaviour. This the reason Deal and Peterson (2016), argue that schools cannot effectively promote positive behaviour without the involvement and support of families and the community. When families and the community are involved in school decision-making and are supportive of the school culture, students are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour.

In a situation whereby collaboration was minimal, participating teachers worked alone, teacher-student interaction was either poor or limited, seatwork exercises and rote learning activities were frequently used in the classrooms, they will strongly encourage bad behaviour in children. Schools with corrosive cultures may lack a strong sense of purpose, hold students accountable for their academic shortcomings, and uphold inaction-encouraging norms (Tamir, 2013). Also, it hinders teamwork and frequently fosters adversarial relationships among teachers and students. Healthy school cultures foster a strong sense of community. This is the reason this research was grounded to find out relationship between school culture and delinquency.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem being addressed in this study is the correlation between school culture and secondary school students' behaviour in Ilorin South, Kwara State. While research has established the importance of school culture in promoting positive academic outcomes and behaviour, it is unclear how school culture is specifically related to secondary school students' behaviour in Ilorin South, Kwara State. Furthermore, there is a lack of research examining the impact of school culture on school discipline, deviant behaviour, and conflict among secondary school students in Ilorin South, Kwara State.

Studies have suggested that negative school culture can contribute to disciplinary problems, deviant behaviour, and conflict among students (Goffin, 2017; Udpa & Soares, 2021). Therefore, the problem being addressed in this study was to investigate the correlation between school culture and secondary school students' behaviour in Ilorin South, Kwara State, with a focus on understanding the impact of school culture on school discipline, deviant behaviour, and conflict."

### **Purpose of the study**

The general aim of this study was to investigate school culture as a correlate of secondary school students' behaviour in Ilorin South, Kwara State. Based on this, the specific objectives of this study include:

1. To identify prevalent culture practice in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area;
2. To ascertain the students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area;
3. To ascertain the relationship between school culture and students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

## Research Questions

The following questions would be answered in the study:

1. What is prevalent culture practice in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area?
2. What is the students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area?
3. What is the relationship between school culture and students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

## Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis would be tested in the study:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** there is no significant relationship between school culture and students' behavior in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

## Methodology

The research design for the study was a survey of correlational type. The quantitative component involved the use of a survey questionnaire to gather data on student behaviour in secondary schools in Ilorin South, Kwara State, and the relationship with school culture. The study was conducted in Ilorin South, Kwara State, with a population of 2,289 senior secondary school students from 24 senior secondary schools. The target population consisted of senior secondary school II students in Ilorin South Local Government Area. This choice of population was based on the critical stage of their academic and personal development, as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood, which can significantly impact their future academic and career success. Additionally, senior secondary school II students are more likely to exhibit complex behaviours that can be influenced by school culture and may engage in risky behaviours, including substance abuse, bullying, and delinquency, which can have adverse effects on their academic outcomes and overall well-being. These considerations informed the selection of this population for the study.

Out of the 24 senior secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, a random selection of 60.00% of the schools was chosen using simple random sampling technique, resulting in a total of approximately 15 schools, or 14.80 to be precise. Within each selected school, 24 students were randomly chosen using the simple random sampling technique, yielding a sample size of 360 students.

The data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to gather information on school culture and student behaviour in Ilorin South, Kwara State. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, namely A, B, and C. Section A collected data on respondents' personal characteristics, section B focused on school culture, and section C was geared towards students' behaviour. The researcher employed a four-point Likert rating scale, with 4 representing Strongly Agree (SA), 3 representing Agree (A), 2 representing Disagree (D), and 1 representing Strongly Disagree (SD).

The research instrument underwent validation by three lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. These lecturers were from the fields of

Sociology of Education, Social Studies Education, and Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation. Observations made during the validation process were carefully considered, resulting in the retention, restructuring, and deletion of certain questionnaire items to improve the instrument's relevance and effectiveness for this study. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was utilized. The questionnaire was administered twice to a subset of the population from a different Local Government Area than Ilorin South Local Government Area, with a three-week interval between each administration. The resulting data sets were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics, producing a coefficient value of 0.75.

The data collected in this study underwent both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and rank order were utilized to analyze the demographic data of the respondents and to answer the research questions posed in the study. The inferential statistical tool of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the study's hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.

### Ethical Consideration

The research team adhered to ethical considerations regarding research involving human subjects. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from school administrators of the selected schools to access the targeted population and administer the questionnaire. Following this, student participants were requested to provide informed consent through completion of a consent form. The consent form explicitly outlined the confidentiality and privacy measures in place to ensure the protection of respondents' personal information and questionnaire responses.

### Data Analysis and Results

In this present study, a total of 360 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and all were retrieved by the researcher. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

#### Demographical Description of the Respondents

Table 1 was based on the description of the personal data of the respondents and the description was done using frequency and percentage.

**Table 1** Frequency and Percentage Description of the Respondents based on Gender

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	142	39.4
	Female	218	60.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 presents the breakdown of respondents based on their gender. The data indicates that out of the total 350 respondents, 142 were male, accounting for 39.4% of the total, and 218 were female, accounting for 60.6% of the total. Therefore, the majority of respondents were female.

## Research Results

This study addressed two research questions, which were answered by the mean against the benchmark of 2.5. The findings for both questions are presented in tables 2 and 3 below:

**Research Question 1:** What is prevalent culture practice in secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

**Table 2** Mean of the Responses on Culture Being Practiced

S/N	Items	N	Remarks	Mean
1	There is a school Mission Statement or Vision Statement that includes a stated commitment to diversity and/or global citizenry.	360	Practiced	3.80
2	Literature selections in the curriculum reflect a variety of cultural perspectives (classrooms and library).	360	Practiced	3.70
3	There are identified support programme to promote achievement and retention of lower achieving groups	360	Practiced	3.30
4	Linguistic and content objectives are addressed for second language learners.	360	Practiced	3.20
5	Youth “voice” is considered in decision-making by regularly meeting with randomly selected groups of students to obtain feedback.	360	Practiced	3.20
6	New teachers and students are formally inducted through orientations and structured mentoring and support programme	360	Practiced	3.00
7	There is a program in place to facilitate the adaptation of NEW students into the school and classroom.	360	Practiced	2.90
8	Informal student leadership roles are recognized	360	Practiced	2.80
9	Racial/ethnic representation in advanced placement classes, honors classes, and gifted programme is balanced	360	Practiced	2.60
10	There is a variety of student leadership opportunities for all students.	360	Practiced	2.60
Average Mean			Practiced	3.11

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of responses regarding the school culture in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The mean score for each item in the table indicates that all aspects of school culture included in the table are being practiced in secondary school in Ilorin South, Kwara State. This is because none of the items has a mean score below the benchmark of 2.5. Furthermore, the calculated average mean score



(3.11) is higher than the benchmark, indicating that all the items are part of the school culture practice in the school premises.

**Research Question 2:** What is the students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

**Table 3** Mean and Rank Order of the Responses on the Students' Behaviour

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Students rarely abuse one another culturally	4.0	Positive
2	Students rarely engage in examination dishonesty	3.70	Positive
3	Students respect one another as necessary	3.60	Positive
4	Students behave in line with the school rules and regulations	3.60	Positive
5	Students do not engage in truancy	3.50	Positive
6	Students are involved in community service and service-learning activities.	3.20	Positive
7	Students do not move about during the school	2.90	Positive
8	Students do not play with their academic activities	2.90	Positive
9	Students make use of the external resources to compliment their learning in school	2.90	Positive
10	Students relate with their teachers like their parents	2.80	Positive
<b>Average Mean</b>		<b>3.31</b>	

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of responses regarding secondary school students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The table indicates that all items were representative of the students' behaviour, as none of them had a mean score below the benchmark of 2.5. Furthermore, the calculated overall mean score of 3.31 suggests that the items strongly represented the students' behaviour, indicating a positive behaviour trend among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Research Hypothesis** there is no significant relationship between school culture and students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area

**Table 4** PPMC of the Responses on the Relationship Between School Culture and Students' Behaviour

		Culture	Behaviour
<b>Culture</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	360	360
<b>Behaviour</b>	Pearson Correlation	.278**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	360	360

The outcome of the hypothesis test conducted at a significance level of 0.05 is presented in Table 4. The calculated p-value of .000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicates that there is a significant relationship between school culture and students' behaviour. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Additionally, the calculated correlation coefficient ( $r=.278$ ) suggests that there is a positive relationship between school culture and students' behaviour.

## Discussion of the Findings

The first finding of this study indicates that secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area have certain prevailing cultural practices. These practices include having a school mission or vision statement that emphasizes diversity and global citizenship, incorporating literature from various cultural perspectives into the curriculum, and implementing support programme to help lower-achieving groups improve their academic performance. This finding aligns with existing research that highlights the importance of promoting diversity and inclusivity in schools. Turan and Bektas (2013) have emphasized the value of creating a school culture that appreciates and celebrates diversity, as it contributes to a positive learning environment and enhances students' educational experiences. It has been shown that incorporating literature that represents different cultural perspectives in the curriculum can broaden students' horizons and foster a deeper understanding of different cultures (Melesse & Molla, 2018).

The findings also support previous research that advocates for implementing support programme for students who may be struggling academically. McKevitt and Braaksma (2008) have emphasized the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address the specific needs of these students. By providing additional resources and support programme, schools can help these students improve their academic performance and increase their chances of success.

The second finding of this study indicates that secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area exhibit positive behaviour in terms of their interactions and adherence to rules and regulations. The study reveals that students rarely engage in culturally abusive behaviour towards one another, indicating a positive and respectful school culture. This finding is consistent with the research of Yunus (2014), who highlighted the critical role of school culture in shaping students' behaviour. It suggests that the prevailing school culture in Ilorin South promotes a sense of respect, tolerance, and cooperation among students. Moreover, the finding indicates that students in Ilorin South Local Government Area rarely engage in exam malpractice. This is an important observation as exam malpractice undermines the integrity of the education system and can have long-lasting negative consequences for students' academic and personal development. The finding suggests that the prevailing school culture in the area emphasizes the importance of honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct among students.

In comparison, these findings align with previous research that highlights the positive effects of a supportive and respectful school culture on students' behaviour. Scholars such as Abdullahi (2016) have found a significant relationship between school culture and students' behaviour, emphasizing the role of school

culture in promoting positive attitudes and behaviours among students. Similarly, Shefiu (2011) reported a positive correlation between school culture and students' behaviour.

The third study finds a significant positive correlation between school culture and student behaviour, this implies that schools with positive and supportive cultures have students with positive behaviour. Previous research has shown that schools with strong cultures of care and support, where students feel valued and respected, are more likely to have students with positive academic and behavioural outcomes (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Konstantopoulos et al., 2011). Positive school cultures may also help to foster positive teacher-student relationships, promote student engagement, and reduce the likelihood of negative student behaviours such as truancy, bullying, or substance abuse (Bradshaw et al., 2009). This finding is consistent with Abdullahi's (2019) study, which found a significant relationship between school culture and primary school pupils' learning behaviour. The findings also support Ali et al (2016) report of a positive correlation between school culture and students' behaviour. Bliss & Sandiford (2004) also reported that school culture is a predictor of students' behaviour most especially students study behaviour.

The outcome of the study is contrary to the previous researches which discovered that schools with negative cultures, such as those with high levels of bullying, discrimination, or teacher-student conflicts, are more likely to have students with negative academic and behavioural outcomes (Espelage et al., 2014; Thapa et al., 2013). Negative school cultures may also contribute to student disengagement, absenteeism, and a lack of motivation to learn (Bradshaw et al., 2009).

## Conclusion

Based on the collected data from the questionnaires, the study reveals that secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area have certain prevailing cultural practices. These practices include the presence of a school mission or vision statement that emphasizes the importance of diversity and global citizenship, the incorporation of literature from various cultural perspectives into the curriculum, and other similar practices. Additionally, the findings indicate that students exhibit positive behaviour towards the school culture.

These findings underscore the significance of school culture as a crucial factor influencing students' behaviour, particularly in the context of Ilorin South Local Government Area. The study highlights the importance of considering school culture as one of the key determinants of students' behaviour. The results demonstrate that a favorable school culture fosters positive behaviour among students.

In conclusion, the study establishes a significant relationship between school culture and students' behaviour in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The findings support the notion that school culture plays a pivotal role in shaping students' behaviour. The presence of a positive school culture creates an environment conducive to positive student behaviour. It is important for educators and policymakers to recognize the importance of fostering a favorable school culture to promote positive student behaviour.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are raised:

Schools should create and execute policies and initiatives that support a pleasant school climate and foster involvement, participation, and overall wellbeing among their students. This includes developing excellent teacher-student connections, giving opportunities for student involvement in school decision-making, and fostering a secure, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.

Teachers really do need to learn skills on how to establish and preserve a friendly environment in the classroom that promotes growth and learning. This entails developing strong bonds with students, encouraging their involvement and engagement, and exhibiting behaviours that uphold cultural awareness, respect, and inclusivity.

Parents should be encouraged to support their children's academic and social development by staying involved in their education, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, and advocating for policies and programme that support positive school culture.

Policymakers should prioritize the development of policies and programme that support positive school culture and promote student well-being, engagement, and academic achievement. This includes investing in teacher training and professional development, promoting cultural diversity and inclusion, and providing resources and support for schools to develop and implement positive school culture initiatives.

## Suggestion for Further Studies

Further research should be conducted to explore the relationship between school culture and student behaviour in different contexts and populations, to identify best practices for creating and maintaining positive school culture, and to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programmes designed to support positive school culture.

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