
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Level of Compliance with the University Policies on Appearance and Discipline among College Students of the University of Cebu-Main Campus

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| ABSTRACT

School discipline is vital to helping students achieve solid academic gains. Effective school discipline practices help students make wise decisions and focus on their studies. School discipline refers to rules and strategies to manage student behavior and practices to encourage self-discipline. Along with education, students must adequately learn discipline in school because, with discipline and good values, the holistic development of the students will be protected. This study determined the students' level of compliance with the University policies on students' appearance and discipline to provide an empirical basis for improving the discipline management system currently used by the University. The study utilized the descriptive-survey method of research using a researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the students' manual. The research study was participated by 1,390 respondents who were randomly selected first-year to fourth-year college students from the College of Teacher Education, College of Social Work, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Criminal Justice, College of Customs Administration, College of Business and Accountancy, College of Information Technology and Computer Studies and College of Hospitality Management. Furthermore, based on the study's findings, most students fully comply with the university policies on students' appearance and discipline. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in age, gender, or the college they are enrolled in about students' compliance with school policies.

| KEYWORDS

Level of Compliance, University Policies, Student's Discipline, Cebu City, Philippines.

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1. Introduction

Discipline is used in various academic institutions to keep students, teachers, and personnel safe and has helped meet the students' behavioral, social, and emotional needs. According to Ahorro (2021), a positive perception of school climate can increase healthy school interactions and student achievement. In addition, effective school policies will strengthen the students' behavioral skills by addressing the causes of their misbehaviors while ensuring and maintaining the quality of the learning atmosphere, ensuring the safety and dignity of all students and staff, and fostering progress toward long-term learning (National Association of School Psychologists, 2018). Effective and efficient school discipline policies and practices are critical in promoting students' successful learning behavior and achievement (Atwal, 2020).

In addition to maintaining a positive school climate, effective school policies are crucial in strengthening students' behavioral skills. By addressing the underlying causes of misbehavior, these policies preserve the integrity of the learning environment and ensure the welfare and dignity of all individuals, including students and staff members. These policies also contribute to the progression of long-term learning goals, as the National Association of School Psychologists (2028) emphasized.

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Recognizing the significance of effective discipline, Atwal (2020) highlights its critical role in promoting successful learning behavior and academic achievement among students. Discipline fosters an environment conducive to student growth and excellence by providing a structured framework and clear guidelines. Therefore, implementing appropriate discipline policies and practices is essential for creating an optimal educational environment that supports students' academic success.

Students' discipline poses a significant challenge for the educational system, as it directly influences their character formation. Addressing disciplinary issues lies with parents and schools, which serve as moral laboratories. Parents and educational institutions must work collaboratively to uncover the underlying causes of disciplinary problems that hinder the holistic development of students (Manalo, 2016).

Across various universities and schools in the Philippines, several reported cases have highlighted the students' compliance with school policies and disciplinary measures. These cases encompass various issues, including improper and inappropriate school attire, hairstyles, and colors. Furthermore, problems such as truancy and absenteeism have been identified, alongside more severe offenses like smoking within campus premises, acts of dishonesty, drunkenness, gambling, and bullying. These instances disrupt the learning environment and compromise students' well-being and safety.

Addressing these disciplinary challenges requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders involved in a student's education. Schools must establish clear and enforceable policies that outline acceptable behavior, attire, and conduct while providing necessary guidance and support for students. Additionally, fostering open communication channels between parents, teachers, and school administrators is crucial for understanding and addressing the root causes of disciplinary problems. By working together and implementing proactive strategies, educational institutions create an environment that promotes positive behavior, personal growth, and a solid moral foundation among students.

2. Framework of the Study

This study is anchored on Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura. The Social Learning Theory offers a thorough knowledge of how people pick up new behaviors through modeling, imitation, and observation. Bandura's theory emphasizes the importance of social elements in influencing a person's behavior. It emphasizes that social factors significantly impact learning in addition to internal mechanisms that drive learning. Social Learning Theory believes that individuals acquire knowledge through observing the behaviors of others and the consequences that result from those behaviors. Individuals can learn new information and abilities through this observing process without suffering repercussions. People can judge if a particular behavior is desirable and practical by looking at the activities and results of others. The Social Learning Theory's description of the learning process emphasizes the importance of imitation. Based on their observations, individuals are more prone to copy behaviors they see as rewarding or advantageous. Through imitation, people imitate the behaviors they have seen in others. Through this method, new behaviors can be learned without requiring trial-and-error learning. Another essential element of Social Learning Theory is modeling. According to Bandura, people are more likely to copy and learn from role models viewed as knowledgeable, consequential, and similar to them. Anyone in the social context, such as peers, family members, instructors, or other influential individuals, can be a role model. These models offer instances of behavior that people can learn from and then apply to their behavior. The Social Learning Theory strongly emphasizes social elements, highlighting the influence of social context on behavior. According to Bandura, people actively participate in learning by constantly engaging with their surroundings. The social environment offers observational learning opportunities, and people's actions are a source of knowledge and direction (Bandura, 1977).

Using the Social Learning Theory to guide this study, it may be hypothesized that various social factors impact college students' adherence to the University's dress code and conduct regulations. Students see how their peers, professors, and other authorities behave within the institution's context. They follow what is appropriate or desirable behavior by seeing other people's activities and results.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study determined the students' level of compliance with the University policies on students' appearance and discipline to provide an empirical basis for improving the discipline management system currently used by the University. The findings were used as the basis for the proposed action plan. Specifically, the study looked into 1) respondents regarding age, gender, college enrollment, and year level and 2) students' compliance with the University policies regarding appearance and discipline. Furthermore, the study determined the significance of the difference in the respondents' level of compliance with the University policies when grouped according to profile. The study's findings served as the basis of the proposed action plan.

4. Methodology

A descriptive survey method was used in this study to comprehensively assess the students' compliance with the University policies on students' appearance and discipline. The researchers gathered data from 1,390 participants, comprising 953 women and 437 men, ensuring a diverse representation of the student population. The respondents were selected randomly from various colleges within the University, encompassing all year levels. These colleges included the College of Teacher Education, College of Social Work, College of Hospitality Management, College of Engineering, College of Customs Administration, College of Criminal Justice, College of Business and Accountancy, College of Arts and Sciences, and College of Information Technology and Computer Studies.

To collect the necessary data, the researchers employed a researcher-made questionnaire administered through an online form. This method allowed for data collection while ensuring the anonymity and convenience of the respondents. The questionnaire was designed for this study to capture relevant information regarding the students' adherence to university policies on appearance and discipline. The collected data underwent a thorough analysis using various statistical techniques. Frequency count, percentages, weighted mean, ranking, and t-tests were used to summarize, analyze, and interpret the data. These statistical methods enabled the researchers to derive meaningful insights from the dataset and identify patterns or trends related to the level of compliance among the students.

Based on interpreting the results, the researchers formulated an action plan. The findings served as the basis for identifying areas of improvement in the current management system and developing strategies to enhance compliance with university policies. Using the descriptive survey method and rigorous data analysis techniques, the researchers obtained valuable insights into the students' compliance with university policies on appearance and discipline. The study's results paved the way for evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions to foster a more robust culture of compliance and discipline among the student body.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Count	Per Cent
Age		
18 years old	122	8.78
19 years old	300	21.58
20 years old	307	22.09
21 years old	275	19.78
22 years old	231	16.62
23 years old	87	6.26
24 years old	29	2.09
25 years old	8	0.58
26 years old	23	1.65
30 years old	8	0.58
Sex		
Female	953	68.56
Male	437	31.44
College Enrolled		
College of Information Technology and Computer Studies	99	7.12
College of Arts and Sciences	86	6.19
College of Business and Accountancy	271	19.5
College of Criminal Justice	98	7.05
College of Customs Administration	250	17.94
College of Engineering	305	21.94
College of Hospitality Management	32	2.3
College of Social Work	13	0.94

College of Teacher Education	236	16.98
Year Level		
First Year	486	34.96
Second Year	405	29.14
Third Year	246	17.7
Fourth Year	253	18.2

Table 1 presents the details of the respondents' profiles, such as age, sex, college enrollment, and year level. Most of the participants are female (953), which comprises 68.56 % of the respondents, and 437 (31.44 %) are male. In terms of age, most of the respondents who participated in this study are 20 years old, composing 22.09 %, while 8.78 % are 18 years old, 21.58 % are 19 years old, 19.78 % are 21 years old, 16.62 % are 22 years old a. In addition, 34.96% of the respondents are first-year students, 29.14 % are second-year students, and 17.7 % are third-year students. The fourth-year students also participated, comprising 18.2 % of the total respondents. Furthermore, respondents from the College of Engineering (21.94 %) outnumbered those respondents from the College of Information Technology and Computer Studies (7.12 %), College of Arts and Sciences (6.19 %), College of Business and Accountancy (19.5), College of Criminal Justice (7.05%), College of Customs Administration (17.94%), College of Hospitality Management (2.3 %), College of Social Work (0.94 %) and College of Teacher Education (16.98 %). This indicates that most respondents are female, with the College of Engineering having the highest number of students.

The data reveals an uneven distribution of genders, suggesting that the study's findings may predominantly reflect the experiences and perspectives of female students. Moreover, the study focuses on college students in their early and late adulthood, necessitating an understanding of their distinct developmental characteristics and experiences. Additionally, the variation in enrollment across different academic institutions implies that the findings may have greater relevance for students in specific fields of study, such as engineering, while potentially carrying less generalizability for students in other academic disciplines. Furthermore, the participants' year levels in college experiences potentially impacted their attitudes and adherence to the rules.

Table 2
Students' level of compliance with the University policies

Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation	Ranking
1. Not wearing appropriate uniform/school attire (avoid wearing slippers, sandals, sleeveless miniskirts, etc.) while on campus.	3.81	Never	Fully Compliant	29
2. Not having the prescribed haircut, color, and style (hairstyle must be neat, clean, and modest)	3.84	Never	Fully Compliant	28
3. Not wearing a school ID	3.91	Never	Fully Compliant	26
4. Using the school ID and study load of another student	3.95	Never	Fully Compliant	18
5. Deliberately throwing waste and other forms of trash anywhere on the campus	3.95	Never	Fully Compliant	19
6. Spitting on the walls and floors of the University)	3.95	Never	Fully Compliant	19
7. Engaging in any unauthorized assembly inside the campus, resulting in the disruption or disturbance of classes	3.94	Never	Fully Compliant	22
8. Do not return books and other learning materials and references in the library.	3.97	Never	Fully Compliant	15
9. Not asking permission from the teacher to be excused or to leave the classroom, laboratory, or experiment room where academic requirements are being officially performed	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	4
10. Smoking inside the campus	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	1
11. Carrying deadly weapons inside the campus	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	7
12. Mutilation or destruction of any book, magazine, newspaper, or other library materials.	3.93	Never	Fully Compliant	24

13. Delivery of an offensively lewd and indecent speech that contains sexual metaphors	3.94	Never	Fully Compliant	23
14. Forging or tampering with University records	3.96	Never	Fully Compliant	17
15. Involving oneself in obtaining falsified grades or remarks in the school records with or without a fee	3.95	Never	Fully Compliant	21
16. Paying a university employee to influence him/her in changing the grade or remark on one's record.	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	14
17. Cheating in the classroom or laboratory during examination, experiment, or any academic exercise	3.73	Never	Fully Compliant	30
18. Taking the place of a new student seeking admission to take the intelligence, ability, and aptitude tests of the said new student.	3.88	Never	Fully Compliant	27
19. Drinking liquor or alcoholic drinks inside the campus	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	2
20. Entering the campus or attending class under the influence of alcohol	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	13
21. Involving in any form of gambling activities such as betting and all other forms of vice such as playing cards, blackjack, and other forms of gambling	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	9
22. Involving in the formation of illegal organizations like those associations whose aims and purpose are against the law, good morals	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	12
23. Assaulting any University student, official, teacher, personnel, etc.	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	4
24. Involving in fistfights, rumbles, physical confrontations, or any quarrel similar forms of misconduct	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	3
25. Unauthorized fund-raising activities and solicitations of money, property, goods, etc.	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	8
26. Selling of examination paper	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	11
27. Grave threats or intimidation against University students, officials, teachers, and other personnel	3.98	Never	Fully Compliant	9
28. Bullying	3.97	Never	Fully Compliant	16
29. Plagiarism	3.91	Never	Fully Compliant	25
30. Vandalism	3.99	Never	Fully Compliant	4
Overall Mean:	3.95	Never	Fully Compliant	

Table 2 shows the students' level of compliance with the university policies on appearance and discipline. Based on the data, all respondents are fully compliant and follow student appearance and discipline policies. Most of the respondents have complied with the rules as indicated on the means, such as not smoking, bringing or drinking liquor or alcoholic drinks inside the campus, not getting involved in fistfights, rumbles, or any physical confrontation, and always concerning every university student, official, teacher and personnel, vandalism and carrying deadly weapons with the mean of 3.99 respectively. In addition, the respondents have followed the school policy as shown on the means as not to engage in unauthorized fund-raising activities and solicitations of money, property, goods (3.98); involved in any form of gambling activities such as betting and all other forms of vice such as playing cards, blackjack, and other forms of gambling (3.98), grave threats or intimidation against University student, official, teacher, and other personnel (3.98), selling of examination paper (3.98), involving in formation of illegal organizations like those associations whose aims and purpose are against the law, good morals (3.98), entering the campus or attending the class under the influence of alcohol (3.98), paying a university employee to influence him/her in changing the grade or remark on one's record (3.98).

On the other hand, some of the school policies need to have reinforced information dissemination to mitigate the occurrence while inside the campus as revealed through its means such as bullying (3.97), not returning books and other learning materials and references in the library (3.97), forging or tampering of university records (3.96), using the school ID and study load of another

student (3.96). Policies on maintaining the cleanliness and orderliness of the learning environment must be emphasized to the students as well as shown in the data (means) that some students deliberately throw their waste and other forms of trash anywhere on the campus (3.95), spitting on the walls and floors (3.95). It is of equal importance for the students to highlight the maximum sanctions for committing severe offenses inside the campus, such as dishonesty: forging or tampering with university records, forms, or any other related records or written materials required by the curriculum of a particular department in the University; forging or tampering of any transfer form, securing such forged or tampered materials, records, forms, credentials or documents (3.96) and obtaining a falsified grade or remark in the TOR either for a fee or without a fee (3.95).

Policies are essential because they help a school establish rules and procedures to function effectively and ensure everyone is safe and valued. Schools are highly complex and create quality standards for learning and safety, expectations, and accountability. Students, teachers, and university personnel should be responsible for maintaining a safe space for everyone, especially in expressing one's opinion. To minimize occurrences while on campus, several school policies require strengthened information dissemination, such as the delivery of offensively lewd and indecent speech that contains sexual metaphors (3.94) and plagiarism (3.91).

Furthermore, personal appearance and appropriate attire are essential to the learning atmosphere in the University. Most of the offenses committed by the students, as shown on the data (means), are primarily concerned with their appearance and school attire, such as not wearing the school ID (3.88), not having the prescribed haircut, color, and style (3.84), wearing prohibited or improper attire while inside the campus like indecent, revealing or provocative clothing or dress like miniskirts, thin strap blouses, halter back and sleeveless, and wearing of slippers or sandals (3.81). It has also been shown in the data that some students cheat during classroom or laboratory examinations or any academic exercise (3.730). Though all of the policies are complied with by the students, however as indicated in the data, the school must have a proactive and dynamic approach toward student discipline must be exercised.

Education is a cooperative enterprise of both the teacher and the learner. It requires mutual and coordinated efforts from both parties to be effective. The study's findings align with George Bear's research (2008), emphasizing the importance of school discipline in establishing and sustaining a safe, organized, and conducive learning atmosphere. This necessitates employing discipline to address misconduct and to foster the cultivation of self-discipline among students. Both objectives hold equal significance and merit inclusion in developing and assessing school discipline strategies. While the first aim of school discipline is typically perceived as an immediate objective, focused on curbing misbehavior and ensuring compliance, the second aim is regarded as a long-term goal aimed at nurturing autonomy and fostering responsible citizenship among students. These aims are interrelated, as the pursuit of one reinforces the other. Additionally, both aims serve a preventive function, as correcting misbehavior and cultivating self-discipline contribute to averting future behavioral issues within the school environment (Bear, 2008).

Table 3
*Significance of the Difference of the Respondents'
Level of Compliance When Grouped According to Profile*

Level of Compliance as to:	df	F-stat	p-Value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Age	4	0.41	0.801	Failed to Reject Ho	No Significant Difference
Sex	1	1.73	0.189	Failed to Reject Ho	No Significant Difference
College Enrolled	8	0.67	0.719	Failed to Reject Ho	No Significant Difference
Year Level	3	1.9	0.128	Failed to Reject Ho	No Significant Difference

In Table 3, the significance of the difference in the respondents' level of compliance in terms of age, sex, college enrollment, and year level was displayed. As indicated, the age, sex, college enrolled, and year level have statistically tested less than the p-value at 0.05 significance level. As for age, there was no sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, meaning no significant difference exists between students' compliance with school policies. In connection with the sex, the null hypothesis was not rejected, which means that there is no significant difference between sex and the level of students' compliance with school policies. There was insufficient evidence to disregard the null hypothesis about the college/department where the students belong. It did not find statistical differences between these two variables, just the same decision on age and sex. Concerning the year level, the null hypothesis was accepted, meaning no significant difference exists between students' compliance with school policies.

6. Conclusion

This study assessed students' adherence to university policies on appearance and discipline to inform enhancements to the current discipline management system. Findings guided the development of an action plan. It examined respondent profiles (age, gender, college, year level) and compliance levels with university policies. Additionally, it evaluated the significance of compliance differences across respondent profiles. These findings underpinned the proposed action plan.

A proactive approach within a school community can prevent discipline concerns by strengthening classroom activities and fostering a positive school environment. This demonstrates to students the possibilities of discipline when people collaborate effectively. Additionally, it lays the groundwork for genuine academic achievement and motivation through support, care, and guidance while fostering a sense of belonging that mitigates behavioral issues. Schools with fair disciplinary frameworks promote emotional and physical safety, leading to fewer conduct difficulties and depressive symptoms among students. Effective discipline not only helps students achieve goals and fulfill expectations but also instills a sense of responsibility, contributing to the overall image of the school and preparing learners for the future by eliminating disruptive behavior.

The findings are specific to the University of Cebu-Main and may vary for respondents in different circumstances or settings. However, despite the localized focus, the study provides valuable insights that can inform similar institutions in assessing their policies and practices. Additionally, future research could explore how factors such as geographic location or cultural context influence compliance with university policies on appearance and discipline.

Based on the findings of this study, schools aiming for safe and effective discipline should incorporate several vital components. Firstly, they should initiate a Massive Campaign for widespread dissemination, ensuring that rules, sanctions, and procedures are developed collaboratively with student input, clearly outlined, and communicated to all stakeholders within the school community. This extensive dissemination guarantees that students, parents, and staff comprehend acceptable behavior within the campus. Secondly, there is a need for an Improvement of Discipline Management System, where consequences for misbehavior are clearly defined and communicated to university personnel, particularly those directly involved in rule enforcement such as the Civil Security Unit, Student Affairs Office, and teachers. Thirdly, fostering a warm school climate characterized by genuine student care is crucial. Teachers and administrators should show interest in students' personal goals, achievements, and challenges, supporting academic and extracurricular endeavors. Finally, empowering teachers with discipline authority is essential. In a well-disciplined school, teachers are responsible for addressing student offenses promptly and referring errant students to the Student Affairs Office for disciplinary action.

Well-mannered and disciplined students, which result in effective schools, are not the product of chance. Effective discipline requires enforcing school rules and policies down to the classroom to facilitate learning and minimize disruptions. The school and its constituents must work together to achieve peace and harmony in well-disciplined schools.

The study's findings and previous studies show that students have a crucial role in ensuring excellent academic achievement (Duckworth, 2005). According to Waschull (2005), one major factor in a student's academic performance is self-discipline, which impacts all areas. No wonder less self-achievement than highly self-disciplined students achieve low academically disciplined students. Indeed, discipline directs a person to lead a productive academic and personal life.

Future research could explore three distinct areas to deepen our understanding of discipline management within educational institutions. Firstly, a comparative analysis across diverse educational settings could illuminate the effectiveness of discipline policies and practices, revealing variations and their implications for student behavior. Secondly, investigating the impact of student involvement on compliance and behavior in policy development could offer valuable insights into the significance of student engagement in shaping school regulations. Lastly, evaluating teacher training programs focused on enhancing discipline management skills could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different approaches in empowering teachers to foster supportive classroom environments and cultivate positive student behavior, thus contributing to improved school discipline and student outcomes.

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