A Critical Analysis of Acts of Student Indiscipline and Management Strategies Employed by School Authorities in Public High Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This article is a critical analysis of the acts of student indiscipline and management strategies employed by school authorities in public high schools in Kenya. It defines discipline, indiscipline and analyses the various acts of indiscipline in schools as well as the strategies used by school authorities to manage indiscipline. The study was based on the Social Learning (Bandura) Theory. This qualitative study employed content and desk analysis design. The researchers chose this design due to the fact that it allows for critical analysis beyond the statistical results used in such qualitative studies. The researchers critiqued the literature on the acts of student indiscipline and management in high schools. The researchers sought to justify that maintaining school discipline is a key strategy to foster academic achievement and promote socially and morally responsible behaviour among the students. It concludes by emphasizing the need for collaborative partnership among parents, teachers and stakeholders to inculcate values that enhance discipline among high school students. The study recommended partnership among all stakeholders to ensure that children grow up into responsible members of the society.

Keywords: Discipline, indiscipline, Management, Causes, Strategies, self-discipline, Schools

1.0 Introduction

Across the world acts of student indiscipline has multiplied causing great concern among education administrators, teachers and stakeholders (Wayson & Pinnell, 1994; Njoroge and Nyabuto, 2014). Student insurgences against authority are increasing in most countries, perhaps because nowadays schools have children from dysfunctional homes, poverty stricken, single parents or teenage parents (Kute, 2014). Parental supervision is also declining day by day causing many students to develop low regard towards all forms of authority.

One of the key socializing agents meant to enhance discipline among children is the school. It combines both formal and informal approaches in its socializing functions. The formal approaches

include classroom instruction, discipline measures, guidance and counseling while informal approaches include peer group influences or pressure. Through social clubs, schools are able to develop a number of social roles and skills which are important to the students' overall development. Schools therefore through the curriculum provide children with basic intellectual skills and opportunity to achieve social and vocational abilities which are necessary in making one a socially useful and economically productive member of the society. Secondly, schools are centres for implementation of education programmes hence play a fundamental role in socializing children to become valuable members of the society by instilling values and attitudes appropriate for the contemporary society. According to Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014) schools teach roles, traditions and norms of the community; how to behave, and the virtue of sharing and competing responsibly just to mention but a few.

Moreover, Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014) concur with Griffins (1994) that the supreme goal of school discipline is to bestow in each student good behaviours including self-respect, integrity and ability to observe standards of good conduct whether compulsory or under supervision and grow up with these habits. The authors further opine that discipline is an indispensable component for a happy and productive school community. They further agree with Williams (1982) and MOE, (2001) that student discipline requires all stakeholders and that indiscipline could lead to negative academic results.

According to Okumbe (2001) indiscipline among students has its roots in the school, society and in the mind of students. Reports in the media indicate that school children have taken up to violence on their teachers and colleagues (The Standard Newspaper, 10th August, 2015; Kiongo &Thinguri, 2015). Schools today have to deal with the problem of weapons, recruitment into criminal groups, rivalry, drugs and substance abuse, trafficking and youth radicalization. These cases are experienced all over the world with the USA experiencing a higher rate of school crimes compared to Britain and Canada where there is an increase in the use of weapons over the past decade (Afullo, 2005; Kute, 2014). Kenya on the other hand has experienced her share of indiscipline cases in form of arson, sexual assault, rape, theft, sneaking out of school, fighting, absenteeism, vandalism, drug abuse, truancy, lateness, bullying among others (MOE, 1991, Kiongo &Thinguri, 2015). It is therefore critical to analyse acts of student indiscipline in high schools as well as mitigation strategies educational managers have adopted.

2.0 Statement of problem

Indiscipline among students in public high schools is a problem that has persisted over the years throughout the world, Kenya inclusive. Acts of indiscipline by students sometimes result into destruction of property and poor performance in examination among other negative outcomes. Consequently schools lose their role of socializing learners and instead produce members of the society with unacceptable behaviour. The Kenya Government through various policies and

legislations has made several attempts to curb indiscipline in public high schools. Similarly schools have put in places intervention measures aimed at eliminating acts of indiscipline among students in high schools. In spite of this the number of cases of student indiscipline keeps on escalating, manifesting itself in various forms, sometimes leading to loss of life. If the situation is not addressed and appropriate mitigating measures put in place, there will be no effective teaching and learning in kenyan public high schools. In view of this, the study critiqued studies done on types of indiscipline acts prevalent in public high schools as well as strategies used by school authorities to management them.

3.0 Purpose of study
The purpose of this study was to critically analyze the acts of student indiscipline and management strategies employed by school authorities in public high schools in Kenya.

4.0 Objectives of the study
The following objectives guided this study;
   a) Critically analyse acts student indiscipline prevalent among public high school students in Kenya; and
   b) Critically analyse strategies used by schools authorities to manage student indiscipline in public high schools in Kenya.

5.0 Research Questions

   1)   What are the acts of student indiscipline prevalent among public high school students in Kenya?
   2) What strategies do school authorities use to manage student indiscipline in public high schools?

6.0 Research methodology
This is a qualitative study using content and desk analysis design. The researchers' choice of this design is due to the fact that it allows for a critical analysis beyond the statistical results used in such qualitative research. In this kind of study, the researchers extend their critique as a positive evaluation of types of indiscipline acts and the strategies used to manage indiscipline in schools. The study clearly defines school indiscipline and examines the different opinions on school discipline. The researchers sought to justify that maintaining school discipline is a key strategy to foster academic achievement and promote socially and morally responsible behaviour among the students.

7.0 Theoretical framework

The study adopted the Social Learning (Bandura) Theory. In this theory, Albert Bandura (1977) posits that human behaviour is learnt observationally through modelling. Through observation one

forms an idea about behaviours actions of others, codes the behaviour which later serves as a guide to actions. Nowadays, children are surrounded by many people of influence (models), such as parents, teachers, television characters, and peer group members. These models exhibit various types of behaviour which is observed and might be imitated by children with little regard as to whether the behaviour is 'gender appropriate' or not. Bandura suggests that a child who has seen her parents being kind and caring will tend to do the same. Conversely a child who has seen aggressive behaviour of parents is likely to be violent in solving problems.

Reward or vicarious reinforcement is some of the factors that influence imitation. A child that observes someone being rewarded for a certain conduct may be influenced to take up the behaviour that was rewarded. Therefore people around the child will determine the way a child will respond to the behaviour he or she imitates. If a child got rewarded by imitating the behaviour of a model, he/she is likely to continue with that behaviour. Therefore students are more likely to imitate behaviours exhibited by adults. The behaviour of parents, siblings, friends and teachers can define the behaviour expected from a student. Through observing teachers' behaviour the students may be encouraged or discouraged from similar behaviours. If youth see their teachers go on strike to demand for their rights (which they usually get after the strike), or watch Television programmes on violence or society does not respect authority; then nothing will prevent them to also go on strike or be deviant so as to express their anger. According to Osofsky (1995) children learn that violence is a means to control others, especially when it occurs in family relationships and perpetrators go unpunished.

8.0 Critical Reviews of Literature
8.1 Critical Analysis of the Acts of Student Indiscipline Prevalent among Public High School Students in Kenya

Indiscipline can also be seen as any action considered to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society. Akinboye (1980) as cited in Ali et al., (2014) says that indiscipline is any act or behaviour of an individual or group of people that is not in conformity with the generally accepted pattern of standard norms in the society. It involves lack of obedience to constituted authority or law of a nation or organization. According to Igwe (1990) as cited in Ali et al., (2014) school indiscipline is "any mode of behaviour, action and conduct which deviates from the established and approved rules and regulations of a school and the acceptable code of behaviour, action, norms and the ethics of the society at large" Therefore behaviours that do not conform to acceptable and permitted standards are considered as acts of indiscipline.

Acts of indiscipline among high school students are common across the world. These acts occur in the classroom, within the school compound and within the school community. Lewis (1991) as cited by Morongwa (2010) identified categories of misconduct by students in the school as those that inhibit the students' own learning; those that are destructive to others' students learning; and those

that are offensive to the teacher. He further argues that, the misconduct can either be deliberate or unintentional.

Some behaviours can have negative impact on the self-esteem of the students especially when a student disrupts class by consistently going to class late or when a student talks while the teacher is teaching or writes graffiti on school property. Furthermore, another student may be shouting in class or asking questions already answered or defy the teacher's instructions and walk around in the class or just become destructive.

In agreement to other researchers Rosen (1997) identified a number of other types of indiscipline acts among the students such as disobedience to authority; truancy; fighting; the use of profanity; damaging school property; violation of school rules; theft / stealing; and leaving school without permission. Afullo, (2005) as quoted by Kute, (2014) adds to the list with arson, sexual assault, vandalism, drug abuse, lateness, bullying among others. While in American schools indiscipline acts include: fighting, insubordination, inadequate support for teachers, disrespect and distrust of the administration. Schools are no longer safe since students carry firearms and knives to the school. Reports of students stabbing their teachers and burning school property are now common (Donnelly, 2000; Alidzulwi, 2000;Ali et al (2014). Other acts of indiscipline are strikes or boycotts (Kiongo & Thinguri, 2015).

8.2 Analysis of Strategies Used by School Authorities to Manage Student Indiscipline in Public High Schools in Kenya

It is agreed among education managers that the purpose of school discipline is to establish and maintain a conducive learning environment. It should also help to develop self-discipline among students while in school and after school. Schools therefore should focus on strategies or disciplinary actions aimed at stopping misbehaviour and bring about compliance to the rules and regulations. It is anticipated that once this is achieved, it will facilitate the development of self-discipline among students.

Schools are expected to institute disciplinary measures to inculcate self-discipline and maintain discipline in schools. Disciplinary measures can be punitive, preventive or those that modify behaviour. Punitive measures are those disciplinary strategies which inflict pain on students with the intent to deter the student from committing the offence or a similar offence. Punitive measures are also referred to as punishments. According to Colton, (2003) punishments are effective if they are commensurate with the offence as perceived by the student. Discipline should never appear to be arbitrary for if it does, it may be a cause of much resentment and hostility. Some of the punishment used by teachers in Kenya includes; reprimand, detention, forced labour, manual work, fines to replace damaged property, loss of privileges and suspension. Griffin (1994) says that a good school will apply a variety of punishments that are useful to the community such as cutting grass

and clearing bushes. He further says that the physical exercise can be administered as punishment for healthy students.

Effective educators recognize that punishment has limitations. These limitations include; (a) It aims at stopping undesired behaviour without providing an alternative; (b) short-term effects; (c) teaches violence; (d) it does not address the numerous factors behind a student's behaviour; (e) it causes side effects (e.g., revenge, aggression, hatred towards school, emotional disorders); (f) it may distract learning in the classroom or school; and (g) it can reinforce negatively such as suspensions help students to run away from class or school .

School authorities should initiate preventive strategies aimed at preventing indiscipline from occurring. They include the development of an inclusive curriculum that is diversified to sufficiently cater for the academic and emotional needs of the students. Most educationist across the world advocate for a disciplinary policy that focuses on positive reinforcement with praise, merit mark and house points. This plays a central role in maintaining discipline. Duke & Canady (1991) argue that in schools where the Principals emphasize punishment more than rewards, student progress is subdued. In contrast, where rewards exceed punishments the progress is greater. However, some other studies support authoritative style of discipline for prevention and rectification of behaviour problems.

Bear (2008) in support authoritative style of discipline argues that authoritative Principals should offer guidance to students as a way of preventing misbehaviour. They should also see disciplinary interactions as opportunities to instill desired behaviour and not just to offer punishment. Authoritative Principals ought to be supportive and caring in preventing lasting harm to the teacher-student relationships, but at the same time be firm and maintain clear communications on the expectations of appropriate behaviour. In addition, authoritative teachers should use prevention strategies such as; inculcating problem-solving and decision-making competences among students; creating and sustaining a two- way communication with parents or guardians; providing motivating academic activities; creating a conducive learning environment; instituting predictable school routines; and regularly monitor student behaviour as well as promptly respond to signs of misconduct (Bear, 2010).

The school's function of maintaining safety and correction of behaviour is critical in developing self-discipline among students. Self-discipline is defined as control of ones behaviour without anticipation of external rewards such as fear of punishments. Strategies for developing self-discipline are useful for character formation and as well as social and emotional learning. Some of the strategies suggested by research include: implementation of curriculum activities that teach moral, emotional and behavioural skills with an aim of including lessons and activities for instilling self-discipline among the students; providing for responsible behaviour through social and moral problem-solving activities and opportunities for students to apply skills and competences learned.

Student Councils play a pivotal role in today's school administration. It enhance school governance through representing students both within the school and outside, resolving interclass conflicts, monitoring and supervising school programs like morning and evening preps, cleaning, clubs, reporting on teacher as well as students' lesson attendance, reporting on indiscipline and resolving minor disciplinary issues as well as welcoming and inducting of new student to the school. Despite this significance school administration in most cases exclude student councils from key decision making areas such as curriculum implementation, school budget, formulation of school rules, and discipline of students including deciding on the nature of punishments citing lack of expertise of the students' councils. Teachers also excluded the councils from decisions on the choice of textbooks, number of examinations and nature of assignments, teaching methods, grading system and discipline of staff. The study by Gyan et al. (2015) indicated that both teachers and students agreed that involvement of student councils in decision making could lead to increased communication, better learning environment in schools, increased discipline levels, promote effective school administration, and enhances team work as well as improve self-esteem and peer relations among the students (Jones & Jones, 1995; Gyan et al,. 2015).

It should be noted that student councils can provide numerous openings for students to apply social and ethical problem-solving skills hence develop acceptable behaviour. Such opportunities may comprise class meetings to deliberate on school matters and general problems; student council activity programs and activities, conflict management and resolution, mediation and conciliation, sharing experiences and cooperative learning as well as sports and other extracurricular activities

School principals face numerous challenges while dealing with student indiscipline. These challenges may be political, parental interference, limitations by laws and policies, inadequate of support by supervisors, lack of appropriate role models, inadequate knowledge on disciplinary actions and drug and substance abuse among students. Political interference may come from various groups such as aluminae, the school community, the local leadership interest. Okinda (1995) assert that indiscipline in schools can be caused by politicians who may want Principals that they can manipulate to suit their own interest. Such interference has impact on management of student discipline and eventually school performance.

In addition some parents are known for issuing threats to Principals who take out some disciplinary actions against their children. In some cases influential parents have used their position to intimidate the Principals therefore preventing them from taking appropriate measure against their children. Okumbe (2001) indicates that due to some threats from influential parents, Principals may hesitate to take some disciplinary measures like suspension for fear that the powerful parents may use their position to reversed the suspensions and force readmission student before completely the suspension period leading inconsistency in the application of disciplinary action .

After the outlawing of corporal punishment in Kenya through the Children's Act 2001, teachers were left with limited options to instill useful discipline among students (Khatete & Matanda,

2014). According to Okumbe (2001) teachers are expected to be exemplary role models at all times. Rono & Gichana (2006) reported a case where students rioted because some of their teachers were habitual drunkards. Many are the times when poor performance has been blamed on teacher absenteeism and laziness.

Eshiwani (1993) and Okumbe (2001) agree that training improves worker effectiveness in discharging their function. Principals and teachers should be trained on management of discipline in schools which should be based on a policy established in consultation with parents and students. The discipline policy must then be implemented fairly and consistently. Failure to maintain fairness and consistency may become a cause of indiscipline in the school.

9.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations emanated from the study:

i) Parents should avoid the hands-off mindset on matters concerning discipline of their children at school, at home and when engaging in other activities outside the home and school environment. Both the teachers and parents have a critical duty to ensure that children grow up into responsible members of the society.

ii) The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should ensure that curriculum provide for activities that teach social, emotional and behaviour competencies as well as provide opportunities for students to apply the skills and competencies learned.

iii) The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should provide a framework to guide school Principals on the type and extent of administering punishments in schools.

10.0 Conclusion

The goal of education in developing a responsible citizenry cannot be achieved in schools where acts of indiscipline are prevalent. It should be noted that disciplinary process is time consuming and that managing disciplinary cases has become an uphill task for school managers. Changing lifestyles, evolving educational cultures and dynamic education policies have been operating within a background of conflicting but dynamic parenting styles and school disciplinary standards. With regard to upholding the children's rights, school administration have to operate within the limits of emerging but conflicting disciplinary expectations and sometimes devoid of clear school guidelines. The researchers of this article therefore conclude that discipline can be achieved through serious and committed partnership between teachers, parents and relevant stakeholders.

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The quality of students' discipline in schools is an important factor in determining the intellectual outcome of students and schools (Reynolds, 2009). According to Rogers (2011), discipline has to do with guidance and instruction to teach and enhance a social order where rights and responsibilities are balanced. The history of school counseling formally started at the turn of the twentieth century, although a case can be made for tracing the foundations of counseling and guidance principles to ancient Greece and Rome with the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle. The challenge of indiscipline in secondary schools has been rising especially from the 2000s' when corporal punishment was banned by the Ministry of Education by the gazette notice of 13th march 2001. 8.2 Analysis of Strategies Used by School Authorities to Manage Student Indiscipline in Public High Schools in Kenya. It is agreed among education managers that the purpose of school discipline is to establish and maintain a conducive learning environment. It should also help to develop self-discipline among students while in school and after school. Schools therefore should focus on strategies or disciplinary actions aimed at stopping misbehaviour and bring about compliance to the rules and regulations. It is anticipated that once this is achieved, it will facilitate the development of self-d... key role in the management of discipline in schools. The research design adopted was survey and. the study was conducted in Rongai Sub-county in Nakuru County. schools. Principal's Effective Leadership Practices on Student Discipline. elementary, middle level, and high schools in various regions of the United States to ask their. perspective of effective instructional leadership and their views of discipline. They used open-. ended questionnaires and asked the teachers to describe in d etail principal's characteristics or. strategies, behaviours, attitudes, and goals that influence the school environment, both positivel y. and negatively. According to Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 370), principals who are power oriented triggers in school and what strategies should be put in place to curb this deviant behaviour. All of these are equally contributed to the fact that student come from different family backgrounds, economic status, cultures and values. Indiscipline in school greatly affects the quality of teaching and learning, uncovered/unfinished school curriculum (Mariene, 2012; Munyasya, 2008; Onyango, 2008; Kabiru, 2007;); resulting to poor results, dropouts, and wastage of resources invested by stakeholders of education such as parents, and the government. It is evident that most students' indiscipline and... KEYWORDS: Student Council Members, Management, Discipline, Public Secondary Schools, Wareng, Kenya. 11. INTRODUCTION. British Journal of Education Vol.7, Issue 10, pp.11-20, October 2019. Acts of indiscipline in secondary schools in both developed and developing countries are on the increase in terms of frequency and gravity. There are increased cases of violent and non-violent indiscipline acts for instance, fighting, burning hostels and bullying (Mangope, Dinama & Kefhilwe, 2012). Other forms of indiscipline include property vandalism, alcohol and drug consumption, late coming to school or class, noise making in class, and unwillingness or failure to do homework (Modikwa, 2008; Garegae, 2008).