

Influence of Students' Family Backgrounds on Management of Their Discipline in Public Secondary Schools In Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract

School discipline is a matter of concern particularly among teachers, family, educators and other stakeholders. Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach effectively in an undisciplined and unsafe environment and therefore order and discipline are necessary for successful educational outcomes. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of students' family background on management of discipline in public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Social Learning Theory and System Management Theories. The study adopted a concurrent triangulation design with a mixed design methodology where both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The study population were all the public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County including all the students, teachers and deputy principals. All 30 secondary schools were purposively sampled as well as all 30 deputy principals as well as all 30 teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in these schools. A stratified random sampling method was used to pick 379 students. Purposive sampling was used to pick 30 deputy principals and 30 teachers in charge of discipline management. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used in data collection. The study was piloted in 5 schools in the neighbouring Keroka Sub County. Reliability and validity of the research instruments were tested during piloting as well as taking into consideration 2 experts' assessments respectively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data analysis to generate the frequencies, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation statistics, chi-square tests as well as correlation coefficient statistics that were used to analyze the data and answer the research questions. Findings were presented using statistical tables. The study made some important findings that drew it to make some important conclusions. It can be noted that there were significant relationships between school characteristics and issues of indiscipline. The following recommendations were made; school rules and regulations need to be emphasized and given enough awareness so as to enable students understand them. These will help to prescribe the standard of behavior expected of students and teachers. Students will learn to behave like students and so will be the teachers. Deputy Principals should design proper ways of handling punishments. Disciplinary committees therefore need to be installed in schools that they are not in existence and to be respected in terms of decision-making and be given powers and authority to execute their duties. The school administration needs to come up with timetables or regular time intervals to need to provide time for counseling and guidance to students so as to prevent occurrence of offences than punishing the offenders.

Key words: discipline, drunkenness, gender, indiscipline

Background to the Study

Schools are considered as complex, dynamic systems that aim to develop students' academic, social, and behavioural growth (Gu and Johansson, 2013). Many studies have demonstrated that contexts and dynamics in schools and classrooms, affect the quality and degree of students' learning and outcomes. The dynamics that are at play in school contexts can be external or internal. They can also be human and non-human in nature. Discipline is a fundamental human requirement that plays a crucial role in guaranteeing successful outcomes in any endeavour especially in a communal setting. And since any educational endeavour requires well-disciplined individuals for successful outcomes to be achieved, this requirement

becomes doubly imperative. Also since schools are set as a system, any success in the system requires all parts to work as they should, thus discipline is required. Society, therefore, insists in upholding the moral values of students because like in every environment composed of community settings, every part of the community needs to play its role in order for successful outcomes to be assured (Gu & Johnson 2013).

Discipline is essential in organizations like schools where there is to be order instead of chaos (Koki, 2015). Discipline does not exist in isolation as the environment and other dynamics influence it. Good discipline starts from individuals' understanding and acceptance of rules and regulations that control and check their own behaviour (Kithome, 2015).

Schools play a big role in teaching students the importance of values and moulding them into disciplined individuals. The paramount aim of the school discipline should be to inculcate in each student a sense of self-respect, pride for personal integrity, sense of responsibility, as well as fidelity to what is right and proper. This serves to internalize the students' ethical and moral outlook and reinforces the student's observation of the norms of good conduct even when nobody is watching him. This behaviour is then carried on by the student eventually into his or her entire adult life (Kithome 2015). This therefore calls for effective communication, understanding and proper management of student discipline in schools. Without proper understanding of the dynamics that influence discipline, inculcating it becomes an exercise in futility. Student dynamics are determined by school and classroom environments, family factors, social influence as well as cognitive development of the students.

Lack of proper discipline by secondary school students is a global problem that cuts across In England, cases of students' indiscipline have also been noted. The government has had to crackdown on students' indiscipline by giving schools power to search for weapons. Incidents involving the use of knives, baseball bats, marijuana, guns and even bombs have become very common. Such incidents of violence have also been reported from Mexico, Italy, Germany, India, Comoros and even Spain (UNESCO, 2008).

African schools have not been left behind in these cases of indiscipline. In many urban and rural areas of Nigeria, students develop and exhibit deviant behaviours (Denga, 2009). In Ghana, Danso (2010) says that the rates of indiscipline and lawlessness in educational institutions are high. Acts of indiscipline perpetrated by teenagers in secondary schools in these countries are constantly being reported.

Kisii County has not been spared this scourge of indiscipline either. In 2013, students of Keroka High School broke all the windowpanes and broke down all the wooden doors in the school (Kisii County Education Director 2015). Yet this school was the pride of the county as far as being disciplined is concerned in the years prior to the 2000's. In 2017 students at Kisii High school were arrested with jerry cans of petrol intending to burn down the school (Kenya Sub County Education Director, 2015). In July 2016 a dormitory was burnt down in Kenya High School allegedly by students who had been suspended for indiscipline (Kenya Sub County Education Director 2017). There have been other less serious cases of indiscipline like students walking out of schools in many schools in the county.

These cases of indiscipline exhibited by the students were only the consequences of the simmering issues of mismanagement of discipline among secondary school students by the schools' administrations. Peer influence was cited by Were (2003) as a contributing factor to indiscipline in secondary schools. Effective management of discipline in public secondary schools is the ability to understand the dynamics impacting on these cases. It is very easy to

manage discipline if factors that influence it are properly understood and managed. If cases of indiscipline increase, then the trend the public secondary schools are taking as far as managing discipline is concerned should be questioned.

Statement of the Problem

School discipline is a matter of concern particularly among teachers, family, educators and religious organizations. Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach effectively in an unsafe environment and therefore order and discipline are necessary in schools. Kenya Sub-County has not been spared the wave of unrest that has swept across the country. Information provided by the Sub-County Education Officer Kenya Sub-County (2013) indicated that six of the twenty-nine secondary schools in the sub-county had been involved in serious indiscipline cases. This has therefore created a big concern from teachers, deputy principals and stakeholders about the lack of opportunity for students to concentrate on their academic work for attainment of the educational goals. In Kenya, school teachers find it difficult to enforce discipline particularly after the abolishment of corporal punishment since management of discipline is often equated with punishment or other coercive methods. The need has therefore arisen for school administrators, teachers, parents and the general public to manage discipline in a more scientific way than in a physical way such as using corporal punishments in schools. There was need to study the specific dynamics affecting students from the time they enter secondary schools to the times they leave. The dynamics would then make the stakeholders understand their students better and will determine the way discipline is managed in secondary schools in Kenya.

Literature Review

Schools are preparatory grounds to ensure, empower and guarantee human development. Fafunwa, 2004 states that teachers are faced with the challenges of educating, socializing, empowering and certifying students, but with the help of good teaching atmosphere and management skills this responsibility becomes workable and successful. Farrant, 2004 and Wasagu, 2009 also studied aspects of discipline management, as well as the school environments, that influence discipline among students in institutions of learning. Loukas, 2007 studied the task of a teacher, which includes sustaining education system, and stated that these do not rest on his or her professional competency alone, but on the entire features of the school climate. Rossouw (2003), claims that in the 21st century, educators are uncertain, confused and afraid of infringing upon learners' rights. They are also constantly being accused of misconduct. He claims that there is an over-emphasis placed on learners' rights which may cause a carefree attitude as well as a lack of regard for discipline and obedience to the rules by the students. Instead, these students may try to influence their classmates negatively to exhibit the same lack of discipline.

It is important to state at the onset that how a child is socialized and motivated determines the way this child will behave (Scaggs 2011). Socialization is a complex learning process that determines how individual lives and relates to others within a society (Lee 2008). Socialization process serves to inculcate into an individual the acceptable norms and values as are determined by society in which he lives in (Lee 2008). Man is a social creature and so in order to live among the others, he must accept to be guided by norms and behaviours that will bring cohesion, discipline and peace within this homogenous group called society. Society determines what is right and what is wrong (Scaggs, 2011).

Many educationists are grappling with the question of how best a child can be socialized to make him an all-round, well developed individual both academically and behaviourally (Scaggs, 2011). Socialization is not done in isolation. It is affected by other factors such as the

environment. It is a highly complex process that begins immediately the child is born (Scaggs, 2011). Family has been recognized as the first level of the socialization process of an individual (Lee 2008). Individuals begin their experience of life at the family level from very tender ages in their homes. In this regard, it can be concluded that family backgrounds can and do constitute the first instant of the socialization process which will determine how the child will behave as a teenager and an adult (Lee, 2008).

Families are of various sizes. Family size has to do with the total number of people in a single family which may include the father, mother, children and even the extended members, all living in one homestead. According to Alio (2005) family size has implication for education. The author emphasized that the size of the family determines to a great extent the relative amount of physical attention and time which each child gets from his parents. Large families are more common among the lower class of the society. Children in large families may suffer poverty and lack parental encouragement and stimulus which motivate their academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). Similarly, smaller family size has been linked with high academic achievement (Majoribank 2006) further stresses that students with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention and have support that leads to better school performance. Family (small or large size) remains the primary environment of every child. The families begin the process of education and provide physical and psychological needs of the child. This supports the view of Maduewisi (2002), that the environmental experiences from family, peer group and school location have great influence in determining child's intellectual ability. She maintained that bright children from under-privileged family environment may turn dull due to impoverished family environment. She added that mental development influence intellectual development. This is in line with Hebb (2010) who observed that the innate potentials of children cannot be attained without adequate stimulating family environment because the child cannot do well intellectually. The implication is that a proper stimulating family environment with intellectual potential and appropriate teaching methods will definitely enhance maximum performance of the child.

The economic implication of large family size is better explained in Okunyi (2004) who observed from his study that as families get larger, parents cannot give their children the same amount of individual attention. They could not afford to provide them with so many of the things which will help them to make the best possible use of their years at school such as educational aids, and quiet comfortable rooms in which to do homework undisturbed by the television, outings to places of interest, leisure time pursuits, and opportunities for traveling. What is most probably important of all, according to him is the fact that the parents of large families were found not to talk with their children to the same extent as parents of small families.

Another aspect of family environmental factor is the structure of the family. Structurally, a family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; such as death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed (Coukline 2006). Life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent and such families are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumptions of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new pattern in intra-familial interactions and reorganization or routines and schedules, (Agulanna 2009).

In single parent families, children may suffer some psychological and social problems which affect their academic performance. Danesy and Okedian (2002), in their study, lamented that street hawking among secondary school students have psychologically imposed other

problems, such as sex networking behaviour, juvenile delinquent behaviour, which take much of the student school time that necessitated the poor academic performance and drop out syndrome noticed among young school students. They also lamented that the maternal and paternal deprivation of essential needs of the young students have promoted their poor performance in public examinations. Similarly, (Okunniyi 2004) asserted that a child who suffers maternal and paternal deprivation may experience academic problems including truancy in the school. This is because the child may lack some necessities like school fees, books and uniforms. These conditions, according to the authors, are not conducive for effective parenting because when the single parents are overburdened by responsibilities and by the own, emotional, reaction to their situation, they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs.

Apart from the structural pattern of the family, another powerful variable in the family that determines the student's academic achievement is the family socio-economic status (SES). According to (Jeynes 2002), the socio-economic status (SES) of a child is most commonly determined by combining parent's educational level, occupational status, and income level. Social class and economic status of the parents determine the type of school and the standard of training they desire for their children. The occupation or profession of the parents, the educational level and whether the mothers are working or non-working mothers places them at an advantage or disadvantage to evaluate their children's academic work and monitor their progress.

Status is often determined by the individual's economic attainment, though it is sometimes ascribed on the individual. Okunniyi (2004) identified three distinct socio-economic groups or statuses which are common in many countries. They are: upper class- which is made up of rich business men and top government officials among others; middle class which consists of skilled workers, professionals and middle ranked government workers and the lower class- which is made up of manual workers, petty traders and low income government officials.

Francis (2007) opines that the lower income families may be aware of the importance of education in the society, but at the same time, they are also aware of their limited resources to measure up with such educational demands. According to the author, a family that can scarcely provide for the basic needs of the family which include food, shelters and clothing will hardly motivate the academic excellence of their children, instead they will pressurize their children so seek for job opportunities with the little education they acquired so far to support the family. The implication of the agreement is that for families are likely to give their children poor academic background because of lack of financial support.

The socio-economic status of a family is capable of affecting the behaviour of the children and determining their aspiration. Families with high socio-economic status often have more success in preparing their children for school because they typically have access to wide range of providing their young children with high quality child-care, books and encourage children in various learning activities at home. They also have easy access to information regarding their children's health, as well as social, emotional and cognitive development (Ojo & Yilma 2010),

Research shows that supportive and attentive parenting practices positively affect academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). In addition, high parental aspirations have been associated with increasing students' interest in education (Majoribanks, 2005). The effect of parental motivation and involvement in their children's school has on academic achievement is less clear (Domina 2005), parental motivation and involvement in school has been linked to both

positive and negative influences on academic achievement (McNeal, 2001). Explanations for this discrepancy are not conclusive. It is thought that the type of involvement and motivation may make a difference and that in some cases parents become involved after their child has already had academic difficulties (Domina, 2005). Other recent research has found more conclusively that while parental motivation may not help academic achievement, it does help prevent behavioural problems (Domina, 2005).

Methodology

Kenya Sub-County comprises of 45 public secondary schools and a population of 15000 students, 400 teachers (County Education Office 2014). The target population of the study was 45 secondary schools, 45 principals/deputies, 45 Heads of department of Guiding and Counseling, 310 teachers and 15000 students. Therefore, the total target population was 15400.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of between 10% and 30% is good representative of target population. Sample size ratio for this study was 1:10 for students and 1:30 for principals, deputies, teachers respectively. Since the target population was 15400

Therefore, sample;

$$30\% \text{ of } 15400 = 462 \text{ respondents}$$

Table 1: Distribution of Population Sample Size

Variable	target population	(%) Sample	Sample
Deputy Principals	45	3%	14
Heads of department	45	3%	14
Teachers	310	20%	92
Students	15000	74%	342
Total	15400	100%	462

Source: Researcher (2019)

Data collection was through questionnaires. The raw data was collected from the field in the form of filled questionnaires and statements from interview guide. The filled research instruments were then sorted to check for the presence of any incomplete questions. The data was categorized according to response. The responses thereafter coded for purposes of analysis. Data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics to yield descriptive data such as how many respondents agreed with a certain statement.

Data analysis employed both qualitative and quantitative procedures. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, version 23.0 was used to cross-tabulate the data and Spearman’s correlation analyses. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The data was presented in output tables, explained and analyzed accordingly.

Results

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The main focus of the study was to establish how students’ family backgrounds influence management of students’ discipline in public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County. The independent variable students’ family background was divided into 5 sub-scales namely: Students’ Family Stability, Student’ Family economic Backgrounds, Students’ Family Cultural Background, Students’ Family Economic Backgrounds and Students’ Family Sizes.

The study started by analyzing the relationship between Indiscipline and Family Backgrounds in order to have an understanding whether Family Backgrounds can have any relationship with Management of Discipline. The frequencies of responses are captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Indiscipline and Family Backgrounds

Statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD	TOTAL
Students discipline is determined by stability of their families	51	202	28	77	21	379
Students discipline is determined by the economic stability of their families	49	111	53	132	34	379
Students discipline is determined by the cultural backgrounds of their families	92	202	27	46	12	379
Students discipline is determined by the educational backgrounds of their families	23	75	78	186	17	379

Source: Researcher, (2019)

The study established that student discipline is determined by stability of their families as was revealed by the majority 202(53.3%) of the respondents. This is in agreement with a study by Scaggs (2011) and Lee (2008) which determined that how a student is socialized determines his discipline.

The study could not establish whether students’ family economic stability influence student discipline as shown by almost a tie in responses between 160 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and the 166 who disagreed or strongly disagreed. The study established that students’ cultural backgrounds influenced their discipline as was revealed by 206 of the respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed with this assertion.

The study further established that students’ families ‘educational backgrounds do not influence their discipline as was shown by a majority of respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that families’ educational backgrounds influence students’ discipline at 203.

The study finally could not establish whether sizes of students’ families determine their discipline as the responses were tied among those who agreed/strongly agreed and those who disagreed/strongly disagreed with this assertion at 187 and 163 respectively

The continuous variables consisted in each sub scale of the independent variable Family Backgrounds were transformed into the new independent variable. This was in turn transformed into categorical Variable Family. Afterwards a correlation analysis was conducted between the recoded independent variable Family with the sub-items consisting of the dependent variable indiscipline. The results are capture in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations between family background and types of indiscipline

		Bullyin g Issue	Truanc y	Drunkenness & Drug Abuse	Disobedienc e	Stealin g & Theft	Famil y
Bullying Issue	Pearson Correlatio n	1	-.141**	-.123*	-.164**	.047	-.065
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.006	.017	.001	.364	.209
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Truancy	Pearson Correlatio n	-.141**	1	.140**	.131*	-.003	.086
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.006		.006	.011	.949	.093
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Drunkenness & Drug Abuse	Pearson Correlatio n	-.123*	.140**	1	.094	-.097	.003
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.017	.006		.068	.060	.956
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Disobedience	Pearson Correlatio n	-.164**	.131*	.094	1	-.019	.044
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.001	.011	.068		.706	.394
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Stealing & Theft	Pearson Correlatio n	.047	-.003	-.097	-.019	1	-.051
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.364	.949	.060	.706		.325
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
FAMILY	Pearson Correlatio n	-.065	.086	.003	.044	-.051	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.209	.093	.956	.394	.325	
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher, (2019)

The results show that Family Background has weak positive to weak negative correlations with types of indiscipline. The study therefore concluded that Family backgrounds have no influence on types of indiscipline in public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County.

Table 4 Correlation between Students’ Family Background and Management of Discipline

		Management	Stability	Economic Background	Cultural Background	Educational Background	Size
Management	Pearson Correlation	1	-.015	.024	.041	-.015	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.776	.638	.429	.766	.775
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Stability	Pearson Correlation	-.015	1	.092	-.031	.063	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.776		.073	.542	.219	.267
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Economic Background	Pearson Correlation	.024	.092	1	.056	.177**	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.638	.073		.275	.001	.554
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Cultural Background	Pearson Correlation	.041	-.031	.056	1	.060	.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.429	.542	.275		.241	.167
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Educational Background	Pearson Correlation	-.015	.063	.177**	.060	1	-.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.766	.219	.001	.241		.135
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379
Size	Pearson Correlation	-.015	.057	.031	.071	-.077	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.775	.267	.554	.167	.135	
	N	379	379	379	379	379	379

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher, 2019

The thematic analysis was based on from the interview schedule. The deputy principals were asked to indicate whether students’ family backgrounds influence management of students’ discipline in public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County. From the forthcoming results it’s purported that students’ family backgrounds influence management of students’ discipline in public secondary schools.

The deputy principals were asked to indicate how students’ family backgrounds affect their discipline. A respondent said,

The students' family plays a major role in instilling students' discipline.(DPI). Further when asked their opinion of the statement that students from poor family backgrounds are more disciplined than those from rich family backgrounds, one of the respondents reported,

"Many a times cases of indiscipline involve students from a well of family" ' (Male, age 44).

Another one said `

"Students from rich are often shielded by their parents when they are involved in indiscipline cases" ' (Female, age 38)

On the family size the respondents opined that students from big family size were likely to get involved in indiscipline cases due to the fact that their parents are not able to guide them individually.

From the descriptive statistical analysis, the students' family backgrounds influence management of students' discipline in public secondary schools. The inferential statistics Family Background has weak positive to weak negative correlations with management of students' discipline. The significance level below above 0.05 thus indicating statistical significant difference students' family background and management of discipline in public secondary school. The differences between means are therefore likely due to chance and likely due to reluctance from the school administration in punishing indiscipline students.

Conclusion

The study made some important findings that drew it to make some important conclusions. It can be noted that there were significant relationships between school characteristics and issues of indiscipline. The study concluded therefore that these school factors are more crucial causes of indiscipline than the student factors.

The sought out to establish the influence of students' family backgrounds on management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kenyena Sub County, Kisii County. The study did not find any connection between family backgrounds and student discipline and therefore could not trace the influence of Family backgrounds on management of discipline.

Recommendations

The study made following recommendations;

1. School rules and regulations need to be emphasized and given enough awareness so as to enable students understand them. These will help to prescribe the standard of behaviour expected of students and teachers. Students will learn to behave like students and so will be the teachers.
2. Deputy Principals should design proper ways of handling punishments. Disciplinary committees therefore need to be installed in schools that they are not in existence and to be respected in terms of decision-making and be given powers and authority to execute their duties.

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