

**SCHOOL BASED FACTORS INFLUENCING DISCIPLINE OF BOY CHILD IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASINGA DISTRICT, KENYA**

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Abstract

Discipline is one of the most important factor that help social systems to function well and achieve their goals and more particularly the schools. However, cases of indiscipline are reported in institutions of learning including primary schools. In Masinga district, the performance of boys in National examinations has been deteriorating compared to the performance of the girls. This dismal performance has been attributed to high indiscipline cases by the boys. It is against this background that this study was set to establish the school based factors that influence discipline problems in schools in Masinga district. The study assumed a survey research design where questionnaires and interview schedules were used as the main tools for data collection. The teachers, head teachers and pupils in the 131 public primary school Masinga district were the target population for the study. The district has a population of 20520 boys, 19837 girls and 1077 teachers. The sample size constituted 410 pupils, 215 teachers and 13 head teachers in public

primary schools in Masinga district. On the strategies used in schools the study established that Guidance and counseling was the main strategy (93.7%) used to curb indiscipline cases in schools. Other strategies include; Dialogue with pupils (73.6%) and referral to parent (66.5%). Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that, guidance and counselling to be more regular and specific teacher should carry out counselling sessions by meeting pupils once a month with a view to helping the deteriorating discipline of the boy child.

Keywords: Discipline, guidance and counsellings

1. Introduction

The introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003 was seen as a solution to improving enrolment, retention and completion rates. Despite all the campaigns for gender equality by both the international and national community, schooling generally favors girls at the expense of the boy. The gender policy in education in Kenya (2006) affirms that a lot has been done to address gender discrepancies in education at all levels.

Good school discipline warrants effective teaching and learning. Indiscipline comes in many forms such as theft students being frequently punished, fights among students, truancy, drug abuse, and drop out from school, drop in academic performance and cases of rape (Republic of Kenya, 2001). It is difficult for policy makers, teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector to mould responsible citizens through educational training where indiscipline reigns (Griffins, 1996).

Discipline is viewed by many as a contemporary problem that may turn in to a crisis if not checked (Kindiki, 2009). Discipline is crucial for the success of any organization. Several factors influence discipline making the learning institutions ineffective. The subject has long been debated and has featured repeatedly in schools as well as national agendas both in Kenya and in other countries across the world. The Ministry of Education policies such as empowering guidance and counseling and training of head teachers is not enough. Despite the existence of various administrative units and frequent talks to students indiscipline among students especially boys is still widespread and has major impact on academic performance (Wesonga, 2009). In Masinga District, boys in schools found next to major rivers have a challenge of indiscipline. Absenteeism, stealing, drug and substance use, truancy and temporary drop out are common discipline matters. Most boys absent

themselves in order to join in sand harvesting, fishing and irrigation. This has greatly affected the discipline of the boy child hence poor performance in KCPE of the boy child in Masinga District. This study therefore sought to determine the extent to which discipline management strategies by school administration influence levels of discipline of the boy child in public primary schools in Masinga district.

2. Objective of the Study

To determine the extent to which discipline management strategies by school administration influence the discipline of the boy child in public primary in schools in Masinga District.

3. Research Methodology

The study assumed a survey research design where questionnaire and interview schedule was used as the main tool for data collection. The teachers, head teachers and pupils in the 131 public primary school Masinga district were the target population for the study. The district has a population of 20520 boys, 19837 girls and 1077 teachers. The sample size constituted 410 pupils, 215 teachers and 13 head teachers in public primary schools in Masinga district. The researcher obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and a letter of authorization from the District Commissioner, Masinga and District Education Officer, Masinga District to operate in their area. Quantitative data was arranged and recorded according to research questions after which frequencies, percentages, bar graphs and pie charts was used to make presentation and analysis. Qualitative data was edited or cleaned up then arranged in to themes drawn from the research questions and patterns using codes after which it was analyzed and interpreted. Data was analyzed using Computer programme, statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The section provides the data analysis and discussions under the subheadings: demographic characteristics of the respondents and the extent to which discipline management strategies by school administration influence the discipline of the boy child in public primary in schools in Masinga District.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic information sought from the respondents included: gender, professional qualifications, teaching experience and exposure to in-service training. The data depicted that majority of the teachers who participated in the study in Masinga were male (63 %) and female (37%). This suggests that most of the teachers in public primary schools in Masinga District are male teachers. It also implies that there are few female teachers compared to male teachers in the district. On highest professional qualification attained by a teacher, is the certificate (as mentioned by about 40% of the respondents), followed by diploma (as mentioned by 28 %). According to the respondents, those with Bachelors in Education were about 9 % and non-trained graduates about 19 % and untrained teachers (non graduates) were about 3 %. The professional qualification of the head teachers shown that majority of the head teachers have a degree in education as the highest level of education, they are followed by diploma, masters, P1 and ATs. This implies that the policy of the TSC which says that the head teachers in primary schools should be degree holders is taking effect in Masinga district. In addition, on teachers length of service in their teaching career more than a quarter (26 %) of the teachers interviewed have been teaching for a period of over 20 years, followed by those who have been teaching for 6-10 years (about 12 %) and 11-15 years (about 20 %). Only a few (about 3 %) had been teaching for less than a year. This implies that the responses given by the teachers are based on experience that they have in their teaching career and therefore can be treated to be reliable. It also implies that the freezing of the employment of the teachers since 1997 has contributed to having young teachers to be few in the teaching profession especially in public schools. The results on whether teachers go for in-service training, 48 % of teachers had attended some in-service training on guidance and counseling. This is almost half of the respondents meaning that guidance and counseling has become vital to teachers' capacity building in primary schools. Since most of the teachers indicated that they attended in-service training on guidance and

counselling, the indiscipline cases of the students should have gone down. However, the results shows that there is high rate of indiscipline cases in schools an implication that the in-service training on guidance and counseling is not very effective in addressing pupils discipline.

4.2: The extent to which discipline management strategies by school administration influences the discipline of the boy child in public primary in schools

On the objective which sought to establish the extent to which discipline management strategies by school administration influences the discipline of the boy child in public primary in schools, the results are as in table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2. 1: Teachers' response on discipline management strategies used by the school administration

Strategy	Yes	No	Total
Guidance and counseling	93.7 (193)	6.3 (13)	100 (206)
Corporal punishment	21.8 (45)	78.2 (161)	100 (206)
Dialogue with pupils	73.6 (153)	26.2 (54)	100 (206)
Referral to parents	66.5 (137)	33.5 (69)	100 (206)
Withdrawal of privileges	32.0 (66)	68.0 (140)	100 (206)
Reprimands	20.9 (43)	79.1 (163)	100 (206)
Others	4.4 (9)	195.6 (197)	100 (206)

Note: Number of respondents is shown in parenthesis.

Table 4.2.1 shows that the discipline management strategies that are engaged by the school administration in Masinga include guidance and counseling as mentioned by about 93.7 % of teachers. Dialogue with pupils was also a suitable strategy which was mentioned by close to 74 %. The other useful strategy mentioned is the referral to the parents, which was mentioned by about 67 % of teachers. These findings are supported by Koech report (1999) who argued that guidance and counseling is a necessary service in all educational and training institutions and it should be rendered by a professionally trained personnel. According to Ndichu (2005) the modern society has changed so much whereby the social safety nets that were in place in the traditional societies and ensured a somewhat stable background for children and the young adults to grow up in have all gone. Thus guidance and counseling in schools serve to fill in this gap in the society by preparing the pupils with skills to deal with the modern setbacks in the society.

As seen in the table 4.2.1, strategies mentioned by fewer people included withdrawal of privileges (as mentioned by 32 % of teachers), reprimands (as mentioned by about 21 % of teachers) and corporal punishment (as mentioned by about 22 % of teachers). These methods were found to work no longer because they were outdated and overtaken by events.

The results from the pupils show that some of the strategies used to control indiscipline in schools include: referral to parents, corporal punishment, withdrawal of privileges, and dialogue with pupils, guidance and counseling and admonishment. This is as presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. Pupils' response on discipline management strategies used by the school administration

Figure 1 shows that even though corporal punishment was banned in schools, the pupils indicated that it is still used as a mechanism of containing indiscipline cases in schools. However, constructive measures such as guidance and counseling and dialogue with students are used to manage indiscipline cases in schools.

Teachers suggested that some strategies needed to be put in place in order to improve discipline of the boy child. The main strategies which were suggested include; comprehensive guidance and counseling program (including peer counseling). This strategy was mentioned by 56.8 percent of respondents. Others were having child friendly schools and encouraging students to avoid absenteeism and the rest are as shown in table 4.2.1

Use of peer counseling was supported by the findings of Kibera and Kimokoti (2007) who argued that in peer group in schools the youth acquire helpful values of cooperation, responsibility and other good conducts, which became the basis for adult discipline. Harambus and Holbun, (2008) also asserted that peer group is very key reference group for learners in schools. The opinion of the peer group is important to the youth with which the children compare themselves.

Table 4.2.2: Teachers' suggestions on strategies that can be put in place to improve discipline of the boy child in school

Suggested strategy	Frequency	Percent
Guidance and counseling	117	56.8
Child friendly schools	16	7.8
Avoid absenteeism	16	7.8
Playing materials and equipments	11	5.3
Provide role models	8	3.9
Dialogue with pupils	6	2.9
Other	32	15.5
Total	206	100.0

Most teachers (56.8%) suggested that guidance and counselling should be the most commonly used discipline management strategy in public primary schools. Other suggested strategies included child friendly schools ,avoiding absenteeism , providing playing materials and equipments, provision of role models and dialogue with pupils in that order.

The students were also asked to give the strategies which can be used to control indiscipline cases in schools. Their results are more less the same as the ones given by the teachers. Such strategies include; guidance and counselling, dialogue with pupils, punishing students and involving students in making rules and regulations for the school. This is as presented in table 4.2.3.

Table 4.2.3: Pupils' opinion on strategies that can be used to curb indiscipline in schools

Suggested Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Guidance and counselling	94	23.6
Dialogue with students	124	31.1
Punish students	176	44.1
Involve pupils in making School rules	5	1.3
Total	399	100.0

Among all the pupils who answered the questionnaire 44.1 % suggested that they preferred punishment more than any other discipline strategy. This could be attributed to the fact that is the mode they are used to. 31.1 % preferred dialogue with pupils while a minority of them preferred guidance and counselling. The most unpopular strategy was involving pupils in making school rules (5%). This was a clear indication that school administration does not involve them in formulating school rules. This should be improved because Maingi (2005) found out that schools which have started forms of participation by student's administration enjoy pretty smooth administrative tenure with fewer students' related administrative difficulties.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) In order to avoid the problem of peer pressure, there is need for teachers, parents and pupils to collaborate and identify children who cause problems to others with a view to subjecting them to a comprehensive guidance and counseling programme.
- (ii) There is a need to make guidance and counselling more regular and specific the teacher should carry out counselling sessions by meeting pupils once a month with a view to helping the deteriorating discipline of the boy child.
- (iii) The guidance and counseling teachers should create time for the boys and refrain from ignoring them on matters of guidance and counselling
- (iv) There is also need of inviting the most successful men in schools to give talks on the link between the discipline and performance in examinations
- (v) Peer counseling should also be introduced in schools, this would enable the pupils to deliberate on matters of indiscipline in schools and come up with the solutions to the problem of indiscipline among the Boys

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