An evaluation of strategies used in managing student discipline in secondary schools in kericho west district, kericho county, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Discipline is the epicenter of success of a school and members of a school are required to strictly adhere to various standards or codes of behavior. Student discipline is a crucial factor in not only academic achievement but also success in other school activities. The challenge of managing student discipline is pervasive and constant. The issues of management strategies and student discipline in secondary schools in Kenya are viewed by many as contemporary problems that may turn into a crisis if not checked. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of selected strategies used in managing student discipline by secondary schools in Kericho West District, Kericho County. The objectives of the study will be; to determine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline, to find out the effectiveness of communication as a strategy in management of students discipline, to investigate the influence of student motivation on student, to examine the effectiveness of students' participation in decision making in enhancing students' discipline and to determine the principals' effectiveness in managing students' discipline in secondary schools in Kericho County. The study adopted Bandura's (1997) social learning theory. This study employed the descriptive survey research design. A population of 135 was considered which composed of 45 principals, 45 deputy principals and 45 head of departments in charge of guidance and counseling of all public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

Introduction

Discipline is an important component of human behavior. It helps not only to regulate people's reactions to various situations but also regulating human conduct and relations with others. It is the epicenter of success of a school and all members of a school are expected to adhere to various standards or codes of behavior (Okumbe, 2001). The issue of school discipline is a global and constant challenge [CCBD], 2002) and is a matter of concern to all (Mafabi in Byaruhanga, 2004). The place of discipline in all schools is a number one problem (Ochulu, 2009, Kidner, 2003). In the view of Charles (1999) discipline deals with prevention and suppression of unwanted behaviours. Managing is a process of designing, developing, and effecting organisational objectives and resources in order to achieve some predetermined goals (Okumbe, 1998). In this study, managing was used to mean a deliberate effort directed using words or actions to make a group of people act in a way towards achieving desirable and common objectives.

The challenge of managing student discipline is pervasive and constant. In Australia, China and Israel managing student discipline ranked the second most significant factor stressing teachers (Lewis, *et al.,* 2005). In America, discipline problems in high schools in the medium past were less serious. In Africa, both faith and non faith founded schools exhibit worrying levels of student indiscipline (Yaroson & Zaria, 2004 and Maicibi, 2005).

Education aims at character building and training for the society as education in itself is a cultural process where a newborn individual is transformed into a full member of a given society (Cotton, 2000). Schools play an important role in the socialization process of the young people from where they learn to regulate their own conduct, respect towards others, manage their time responsibly and thus becoming responsible citizens (Tait, 2003).

Student's discipline is a prerequisite to almost everything a school has to offer students (Selfert and Vornberg, 2002). These authors further link discipline with both the culture and climate of the school thus: "In order for a satisfactory climate to exist within a school, a certain level of discipline must exist". In schools where discipline is a serious problem, for example, where students bully others, parents can transfer their children to 'better' schools and because the well behaved usually perform well (Rigby, 2000), their transfer can affect the overall performance of that school. Troublesome students can sometimes make teachers react emotionally to the extent of using punishment. But punishment, instead of curbing behaviour, can aggravate it (Dreikurs et al., 1998). In the words of McManus (1995), punishment does not discourage misbehavior but rather reinforces the pupils' view of adults as treacherous. The management of discipline in secondary schools is affected by strategies that the school has put in place but the question remains how effective are these strategies in Kericho County secondary schools in management of student discipline.

Statement of the problem

The issues of management strategies of student discipline in secondary schools in Kenya are viewed by many as contemporary problems that may turn into a crisis if not checked (Maicibi, 2005). Normally, all schools should pursue high standards of discipline with clear strategies that promote self-discipline of students. Majority of the schools in Kericho County are among very many schools in Kenya which lack clear channels of communication, guidance and counselling and

student motivation to boost student discipline (Kindiki, 2009). Communication between the school administration, parents, teachers and students is lacking, inadequate or inconsistent forms of motivating students and lack of participation in decision making processes thereby leading to indiscipline cases in the schools. It is therefore against this background that corporal punishment in schools has been banned and schools have adopted other strategies of maintaining discipline. Therefore, there was need to investigate the effectiveness of these alternatives forms of managing student discipline in secondary schools in Kericho County.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of selected strategies used in managing student discipline by public secondary schools in Kericho West District, Kericho County.

Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following research objectives

i) To determine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

ii) To find out the effectiveness of communication as a strategy in management of students discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

iii) To evaluate the effectiveness of student motivation on student discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

iv) To examine the effectiveness of students' participation in decision making in enhancing students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

v) Determine the principals' effectiveness on managing students' discipline in secondary schools in public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

Research questions

Based on the objectives, the study will seek to answer the following research questions will be:

i) Is guidance and counseling effective in enhancing student discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District?

ii) To what extent is communication effective in management of students discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District?

iii) To what extent is student motivation effective in management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District?

iv) To what extent is students' participation in decision making in enhancing students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kericho West District?

v) To what extent do principals influences discipline management in public secondary schools in Kericho West District?

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Bandura's (1997) Social Learning Theory which stipulates that "people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modeling" (Okumbe, 2001). This means that students often learn a lot from observing their teachers conduct and performance at work. Teachers are students' role models therefore students are likely to copy teachers' practices that they admire. Bandura's (1997) Social Learning Theory closely relates to the advantages of class interactions in improving the conduct of students. This theory is a bridge between behaviorists and environmental influences. This implies that the way students behave is determined by the people they interact with. Most indiscipline cases in schools stem from students role modeling in the society which has

disintegrated morally as a result of the influence of mass media and other things students imitate from adults. This has led to strikes, destruction of property and conflicts amongst the students despite the existence of various strategies employed by schools to manage student discipline. Therefore, the more students observe and relate with teachers and their fellow learners and society at large, the more they are likely to be molded into well behaved members of the society.
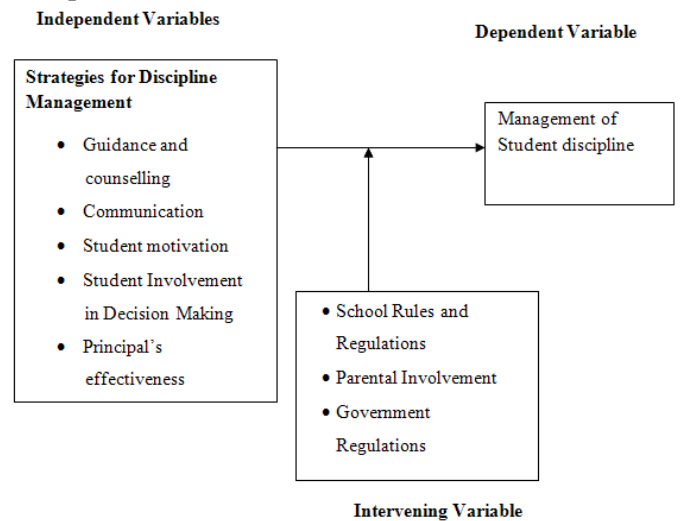
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 Conception Framework
Source: Researcher (2012)

From the figure 1, the strategies for discipline management in secondary schools influences the level of student discipline and may be effective or not depending on how they are applied by the different schools. The intervening variables in this study were schools rules and regulations, parental involvement in discipline management and government regulations on student discipline management.

Research design

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. It is a deliberate attempt by the researcher to collect data from members of population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Descriptive Survey research design was used because the population to be studied is too large to observe directly. The study adopted a mixed methods approach. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis tools were used to collect data. These tools were selected based on the objectives and nature of the study.

Target population

The population to be considered was 135 composed of 45 principals, 45 deputy principals and 45 head of departments in charge of Guidance and Counseling of all public secondary schools in Kericho West District.

Table 3.1 Target Population

Respondent	Target Population
Principals	45
Deputy Principals	45
Head of Departments in Charge of Guidance and Counseling	45
Total	**135**

Source: District Education Office, Kericho West District (2012)

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

To obtain a sample size a formula by Yamane 1967:-

$$n = N \div [1 + N (e^2)]$$

Where; n = sample size

  N = Target population

  e = marginal error = 0.05

Therefore the sample size was;

n = 135 ÷ [1 +135(0.05^2)]

  n_1 = 102

34 Principals

34 Deputy Principals

34Heads of Departments in Charge of Guidance and Counseling

Table 3.2 Sample Size

Respondent	Target Population	Sample Size
Principals	45	34
Deputy Principals	45	34
Head of Departments in Charge of Guidance and Counseling	45	34
Total	**135**	**102**

Source: Researcher (2012)

Sample of Principals, Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments in Charge of Guidance and Counseling was obtained by use of purposive.

Data Collection Instruments

A Test-retest and split half reliability coefficients of the instruments were both calculated. They both gave a reliability coefficient of 0.7 indicating that the instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for the study.
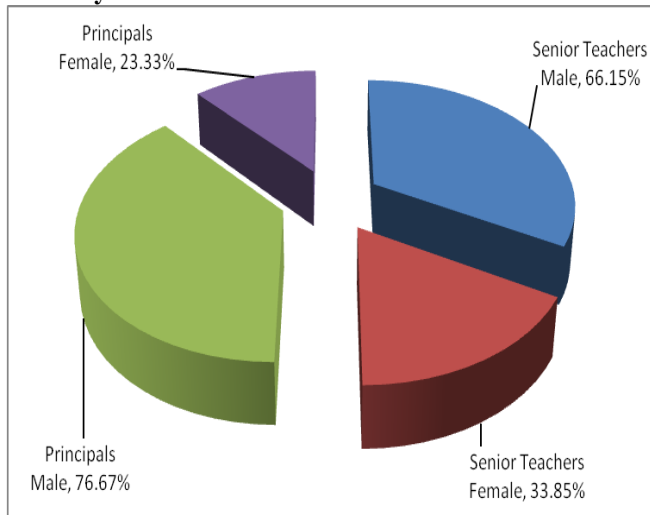
Data analysis
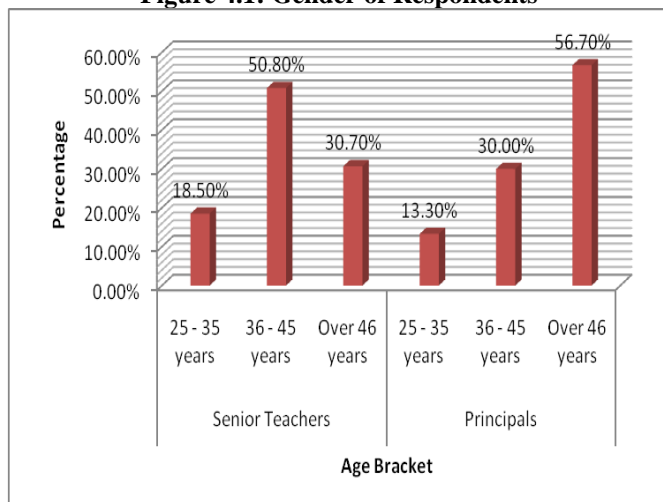

Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

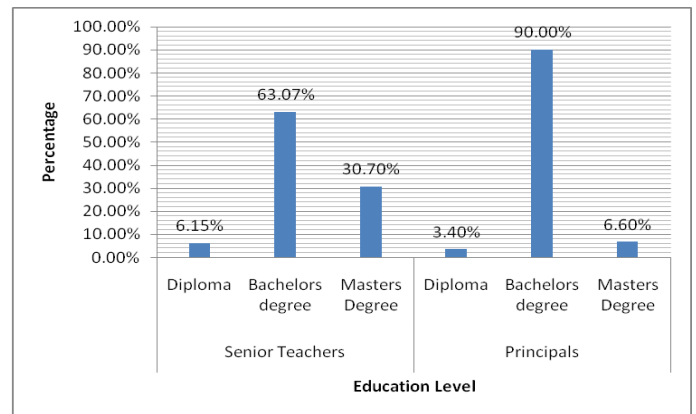**Figure 4.2: Age Bracket of Respondents**

Figure 4.3: Education level of Respondents

Table 4.4: Effectiveness of Students' Participation in Decision Making in Enhancing Students' Discipline

STATEMENT	D		N		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Student consultation and decision-making is limited to aspects of school life that affect students only	20	30.8	2	3.1	43	66.2
Dialogue between students and the school management helps in enhancing student discipline	4	6.1	2	3.1	59	92.8
Student participation in decision making in schools is s problematic to school administrators.	60	92.3	0	0.0	5	7.7
Student participation in discipline management is encouraged in our schools	20	30.8	1	1.5	44	67.7
Student participation in decision making concerning discipline management is a problematic to parents	35	53.8	3	4.6	27	41.6

Table 4.5: Principals' Effectiveness in managing Students' Discipline

STATEMENT	D		N		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
The principal applies the established rules and regulations in the management of student discipline	5	7.7	1	1.5	59	90.7
The principal involves teachers in the management of student indiscipline cases in our school	7	10.8	0	0.0	57	89.3
The principal involves the student leaders in the management of student discipline in our school	28	43.1	3	4.6	34	52.3
The principles decides on the mode of disciplining students solely in our school	44	67.7	1	1.5	20	30.8
The school principal involves parents of the concerned students in the management of discipline in our school	13	20.0	2	3.1	50	76.9
The school principal oftenly rewards performing students therefore maintaining student discipline	28	43.1	0	0.0	37	56.9

The Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Enhancing Student Discipline

The study findings showed that majority (81.5%) of the senior teachers believed that guidance and counseling help to develop a very free and friendly atmosphere in the school thus helps in enhancing student discipline. This concurs with the findings of Ajowi & Simatwa (2010), who argued that guidance and counseling has been effectively used to promote student

discipline in secondary schools in Kisumu. Further, majority (95.4%) of the guidance and counselling heads of department and deputy principals (senior teachers) believed that guidance and counselling may reduce student unrests in secondary schools. This concurred with the findings of Simatwa, (2012) who indicated that counseling helps students to grasp anger, understand why it is there and how best they can channel it therefore helping in reducing destruction of property and ultimately enhancing student discipline. Similarly, majority (92.3%) of the guidance and counselling heads and deputy principals in secondary schools in Kericho West District believed that guidance counseling reduces suspicion and build trust on the part of students reducing on cases of indiscipline amongst the students. Ndiritu (1996) maintained that lack of serious guidance programs in schools is the major cause of indiscipline cases in learning institutions.

In addition, it emerged from the study that majority (97.0%) of the senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District were of the view that guidance and counseling helps students to cope with change on their daily lives and environment. Furthermore, majority of the senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District were of the view that guidance and counseling help diffuse tension in school reducing on property destruction. This further concurs with the findings of This concurs with the findings of Simatwa, (2012) who indicated that guidance counseling helps students to reduce cases of rampage in secondary schools.

Similarly, majority of both deputy principals and heads of department of guidance and counselling were of the view that guidance and counselling enhances change of behaviour amongst students. In addition, majority of the principals were of the view that guidance and counseling programs in schools helps students to change behaviour enhancing student discipline. It was also found out that majority of the principals indicated that peer counselling enables students to detach from their peers who have indiscipline cases. According to Ireri (1992), the factors that cause indiscipline in schools could be social, economic, political, psychological, intellectual and peer influence. To minimize cases of indiscipline, guidance and counseling deters students from having peer influence which could result to destruction of property.

Effectiveness of Communication as a Strategy in Management of Students' Discipline

The study findings showed that majority (64.6%) of the senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District believed that timely information passage by students aided in discipline management. This concurred with Kyamulabi (2006) who found out that timely communication was very important strategy of managing student discipline. Similarly, majority (87.9%) of the senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District believed that timely information release by the school management enhances discipline amongst the students. According to Kindiki (2009), ineffective communication between the students and the school administration causes student indiscipline. The study findings further suggested that majority (60.6%) of the senior teachers were of the idea that communication between the parents and the school management helps in discipline maintenance in secondary schools. Furthermore, majority (84.6%) of the senior teachers believed that allowing the students to air their views in meetings and assemblies reduces cases of indiscipline amongst secondary school students. This supports the findings of Kindiki (2009) who argued that meetings and morning assemblies are the most favoured way of passing information to the school

administration. However, majority (60.0%) of the senior teachers believed that the school administrations have not place notice boards all over the school compound. This shows that notice boards are not a preferred mode of communicating to students in secondary schools especially in discipline matters. According to Kindiki (2009), notice boards are not a very effective way of passing information. Furthermore majority of the senior teachers (54.5%) were of the view that the school management did not encourage students to use opinion boxes to air their views and address the stated problems. On the other hand, the principals noted that effective communication between the school management and students is an effective way of enhancing student discipline in secondary schools.

The Effectiveness of Student Motivation on Student Discipline

It emerged from the study findings that majority (78.4%) of the senior teachers believed that motivational tours aids in maintaining discipline in secondary schools. Furthermore, majority (61.5%) of the senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District believed that gifts may be one of the ways of promoting student discipline. This supported the findings of Gathenya (1992), which indicated that gifts are very effective means of maintaining discipline in students. Similarly, majority (84.6%) of senior teachers believed that involvement of motivational speakers may boost student discipline in secondary schools. In addition, majority of the senior teachers believed that rewards helps in maintaining student discipline. This concurred with Woolfolk (2004) who argued that reward is a common strategy of managing discipline. Similarly, most principals preferred the use of rewards on disciplined students and have attempted to have rewards being given every year to the best disciplined student in every class.

The Effectiveness of Students' Participation in Decision Making in Enhancing Students' Discipline

The study findings suggested that majority (66.2%) of senior teachers in secondary schools in Kericho West District believed that consultation in decision making was limited to aspects of school life that affected students only. This showed that students could only participate in decision making to certain degree. This concurred with Magadla, (2007), who suggested that students can participate in decision making but only to a certain degree. Further, majority (90.8%) of the senior teachers were of the view that dialogue between students and the school management helped in enhancing student discipline. This study findings supports the findings by Fadhili (2005), which indicated that most students and teachers attributed indiscipline to lack of dialogue between the administrators and the students. In addition, majority of the senior teachers were of the view that student participation in decision making in schools was not problematic to school administrators. This was echoed by Duze (2007) who stated that students' and teachers' adequate involvement in decision-making in schools is contributes a great deal to the maintenance of internal discipline in schools. Similarly majority (67.7%) of the senior teachers indicated that student participation in decision making was encouraged in their schools and had enhanced student discipline. This finding supported those of Ikediugwu (2007) and Ofojebe (2007) who observed that truancy, vandalism, violent protests, and incessant strike actions are some of the evils that have plagued most Nigerian secondary schools as a result of inadequate participation of students and teachers in decisions that directly or indirectly affect them.

Furthermore, the study findings suggested that majority (53.8%) of the senior teachers believed that student participation

in decision making concerning discipline management was not problematic to parents. This implied that parents support the involvement of students in decision making process in secondary schools. According to Nelson (2002), parents are the first link in effective school discipline practices. In addition, most principals in secondary schools encouraged the involvement of students in decision making process.

The Effectiveness of the Principals' Leadership Styles on Students' Discipline

The study findings showed that 45(69.2%) senior teachers agreed with the statement that the principal applies the established rules and regulations in the management of student discipline. This was in line with Oyaro, (2005) who argued that there are common methods of discipline that most schools use like school rules, punishment, and guidance and counseling. All these methods to some extent have helped the schools to manage discipline problems. Further majority of the senior teachers believed that most school principals involved teachers in the management of discipline. This implies that teachers have a role to play in maintaining student discipline. This was found to be in agreement with the findings of Kabandize (2004) concluded that school administrators, teachers, parents and students all have a role in discipline management. Similarly, majority (52.3%) of the senior teachers believed that principal involved student leaders in the management of student discipline in school. This concurred with the findings of Kaluoch (2010) which stated that schools and school Principals should allow an all inclusive governance style in which students have an opportunity to give their input in school affairs. In addition, majority (67.7%) of the senior teachers were of the view that principals do not decide on the mode of disciplining students solely in school but involves other teachers, parents and students while making decisions on disciplining students. This was found to be in line with studies by Kiprop (2012) who argued that appropriate school discipline practices involve all stakeholders in their designs. However, majority (76.9%) of the senior teachers were of the view that principals in secondary schools in Kericho West District involved parents of the concerned students in the management of discipline. This was found to support the arguments of Nelson (2002), who cited that parents are the first link in effective school discipline practices. In addition majority (56.9%) of the senior teachers believed that reward systems by the principals enhance discipline in secondary schools. This was found to be in agreement with Gathenya's (1992) findings which showed that rewards are very effective means of maintaining discipline in students.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the study findings;

i) Guidance and counseling is an effective method of discipline management in schools as it helps in developing a very free and friendly atmosphere in the school thus helps in enhancing student discipline at the same time, guidance and counseling helps students to cope with change on their daily lives and environment.

ii) Effective communication channels between the students, parents , teachers and school administrators is an effective way of managing student discipline in secondary schools.

iii) Motivation which involves rewarding students, gifts to well disciplined students and educational tours could be an effective method of discipline management

iv) Allowing students, teachers and parents to participate in decision making process enhance discipline management is secondary school. This is due to the fact that the ideas of

students, teachers and parents are incorporated while making the final decisions. This encourages all parties to be part of the decision making process.

v) Principals in secondary schools involved other education stakeholders in the management of discipline therefore all the stakeholders have a role to play and this has enhanced student discipline.

Recommendations of the Study

The following recommendations were made based on the study findings;

i) There is need for secondary school administration to strengthen the use of guidance and counseling in managing student discipline.

ii) There is need for timely and effective release of information by the school management to avoid cases of indiscipline amongst the students.

iii) There is need for development of more ways of motivating students in order to enhance discipline

iv) School administrators need to embrace the involvement of students in decision making process especially in matters related to discipline.

v) All education stakeholders have a role to play in the management of discipline in school, therefore there is need for incorporation of education stakeholders in enhancing discipline management in secondary schools.

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