# Students' Discipline in Selected Secondary Schools in Mwingi -West Constituency, Kitui County-Kenya

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***Abstract:*** *The study was about student's discipline and social outcomes in selected secondary schools in Mwingi- west constituency-kitui county. The study was guided by the following objective; to establish the level of students' discipline. Using the eight selected schools out of fifteen schools in mwingi- west constituency, the respondents were basically 231 teachers from the selected schools from the constituency. The study employed descriptive correlation design. The findings of the study were: The level of the students' discipline in the few selected schools in the constituency was satisfactory. The study recommended that parents and teachers should endeavor to improve on the discipline level of their children since it is one of the factors that influences social outcomes among students. The study further recommended that more sanguine disciplinary measures should be adopted in societies so as to mitigate the rebellious effect of corporal punishments among the juveniles.*

***Keywords:*** *Discipline, education, school, social outcomes, students.*

## I. Introduction

The influence of indiscipline in the administration and management of students in Kenya has been recognized by the various government policy documents since independent. The "Report of the National Committee on education objectives and policies of 1976" recommended that discipline factors be evaluated in light of subjects like religious education, social education and ethics to enable schools promote the growth of self-discipline among students (Republic of kenya,1976). Despite this recommendation, reflecting on students' discipline factors has remained wanting. This move led to the need for a new approach to education to be formulated and new management strategies be created in schools. Raffer & Johnson (1981) maintained that, many students' discipline problems that occur in secondary schools might not exist if social services were correctly evaluated. All these instances make it necessary to strengthen guidance and counselling services in management of students' discipline in secondary schools. This call is realized in the words of Oliva (1989) that; "What is lacking is a type of discipline, which empowers an individual to take responsibility for his action in a socially acceptable manner".

Discipline problems occur when a student refuses to obey rules of the classroom or the school. Rules that deal with human actions will eventually be broken and require some sort of punishment. The concept of matching the punishment with the rule violation requires that the rules be presented in a written format and the punishment for violation be specified. Rules must also relate to the stated function of education or the school process and again, common sense must prevail in

establishing disciplinary action for breaking a rule. Teachers, while making rules for the individual classroom behavior, should constantly be reminded about this principle. Furthermore, all students must be aware and prudent of the rules before disciplinary action can be administered, Franken, R.E. (1998), Parents and the school administrators share the responsibility of promoting values and standards which we hope will help young people to establish sound behavioral codes for their lives. It is important that parents work in co-operation with the schools their children attend and not to leave the schools alone in darkness. Discipline problems can be dialed with much more effective if both parties could share the similar and ideal vision that leads to prolific missions. We are all part of the society and our behavior will reflect current values and morals. Students are particularly impressionable and vulnerable if much of their behavior is learned and they will copy and act out what they observe to be fashionable and attractive (Feldman, RF, S. 1996).

Students' behavioral problems are also thought to be a leading contributor to teachers' stress and attrition. Serious breaches of the school discipline policy can have profound negative effects on teachers. Teachers subjected to abuse or intimidation report experiencing fears for their safety, lack of sense of dignity at work, intense feelings of anger, humiliation or shame, isolation and depression. One of the most widespread reasons for indiscipline is the students' inability to cope with the tasks presented to them. The noisiest students will demonstrate their frustration by loud outbursts, disruptive behavior while the rest of the class may remain passive (Sternberg, R.J. & Williams W. W. (2002).

The current obstacles or promotion of discipline in our societies since 1999, when attempts to evaluate the social outcomes of discipline were established in societies in Kenya to address academic career and discipline issues among parents and the students in the society. The focus of the study was to assess the realities of social outcomes of students' discipline in the Kenyan secondary schools by selecting mwingi west –constituency secondary schools as an illustrative example.

## II.        Statement of the problem

Despite the efforts made by the ministry of education science and Technology to democratize the school administrative system, unrest has continued in secondary schools in the society with a new dimension. Not only are the students in Kenyan schools exhibiting the worst forms of social outcomes, violence and destruction, but they are also premeditated and planned and have caused maximum harm to human life (Raman,2002). The society is thus wallowing in the problem of perverse learners, students who are ignorant of their civic rights and social engagements, students who are not conscious of their health and its related concerns, and yet these social outcomes have very severe consequences such as stunted academic growth and un cultured habits in the society, among others. It is against this background that this study sought to find out if there is a relationship between students' discipline and the social outcomes.

## III.        Purpose of the Study

This study was intendent to test a null hypothesis of no significant relationship between students' discipline and social outcomes in secondary schools in Mwingi- west constituency., validating Watson &Skinners' 1930 Behaviorism theory on which the study was underpinned. The study further aimed at contributing knowledge by identifying gaps and finding ways of filling them.

## IV.        Objective of the Study

To determine the level of students' discipline in selected secondary schools in mwingi west – constituency.

## V.        Research question

What is the level of students' discipline in selected secondary schools in mwingi -west constituency?

## VI.        Significant of the study

The students' community will be the greatest beneficiary. It is a process of helping students to understand themselves by discovering themselves by understanding their own needs, interests and

capabilities in order to formulate their own goals and make plans for realizing the goals. An analysis of disciplinary issues in providing adequate guidance for secondary school students is of paramount importance as pertains this study. The results of the study will act as an eye opener on how disciplinary measures will be implemented in Kenyan secondary schools and the quality of social outcomes be eliminated among secondary school students in Kenya. In addition, the results of the study will provide detailed information to educational planners, policy makers and school administrators on their responsibility in providing adequate measures for the disciplinary measures so that the students' discipline may be maintained. The results of the study will reveal the extent to which disciplinary services influence the total development of the potential and proper adjustment for the secondary school students.

## VII.      Theoretical perspective

This study was underpinned by the Theory of John B. Watson and B.F Skinner Behaviorist Theory of 1913 and 1930 respectively. As cited in (Godwin,2008). In a presentation delivered in Colombia university in February of 1913, John Watson knowingly laid out the foundation of what is now called the behaviorist manifesto. In 1908, Watson accepted a position at Johns Hopkins and established a wide-ranging animal behavior research program .During this period Watson began his psychophysics research which held that animals were capable of perceiving differences if not in color at least in shade because they could be conditioned to respond to one color but not to respond to a different shade of the same color .This discovery added a whole new layer in perception to animal behavior and to the  possible applications of conditioning .Watson held that there was no difference between training an animal and training a human being , "no dividing line between man and brute" (p 343) for this reason Watson argued that psychology should not be focused on the study of consciousness, but rather become a science of behavior. He pointed out that just as the study of animal behavior had allowed psychologists to predict and control behavior, these methods could be applicable and useful with the humans as well. These arguments made behaviorism popular in America because it allowed for real life application of psychological principles, (Godwin ,2008).

Building on the work of John B. Watson, B.F. Skinner carried behaviorism to a whole new level. Skinner developed his theories of behaviorism while at Harvard in the 1930s. Skinner was a close follower of Pavlov and Watson having conducted major studies in conditioning .Skinner furthered the study by developing the theories of operant conditioning which holds that repeated behavior is directly depended on the positive or negative consequence of a behavior whether stimulated in the same way or not , the environment being one of the main causes for determination of repeating a ceasing  behavior (Godwin,2008). Skinner studied operant conditioning by creating highly structured and completely controlled environments that came to be known as Skinner Boxes. All actions taking place within the box were recorded cumulatively for later analyzation. Using this type of completely controlled environment Skinner was able to exhibit several conditioning phenomena such as extinction, generalization, and discrimination all of which Skinner referred to as stimulus control. Skinner did not believe in hypothesizing and then conducting experiments to prove a nebulous theory, he preferred inductive research; studying samples of regular behaviors in order to establish general principles (Godwin,2008).

## VIII.      Limitation of The Study

The anticipated threats to the validity of this study were as follows-

1. Intervening or confounding variables were beyond researcher's control for instance, honesty of the respondent and personal biases. To minimize such conditions, the researcher requested the respondents to be as honest as possible and to be impartial/unbiased when answering the questionnaires

2. The researcher environments were classified as uncontrolled setting where extraneous variables may influence the data gathered such as comments from other respondents, anxiety, stress, motivation, on the side of the respondents during the process of answering the questionnaires.

Although these were beyond the researcher's control, efforts were made to request the respondents to be as objective as possible while answering the questionnaires.

## IX.      Review of related literature

Discipline is the practice or method of teaching and enforcing acceptable patterns of behavior Feldman (1996). Discipline is a rudimentary ingredient that plays a crucial role in school system, which insists on upholding the moral values of students Schon, (1983). It comprises a wide spectrum of meaning, well from the negative or positive perspective. However, it is human beings' immune to always focus on the negative smell and that would be considered a popular issue if it involves an individual or a group that claims an intimate relationship with a society.

Behaviorism theory advocates believe that by paying attention to good behavior, you reinforce that behavior. A Parent or disciplinarian should never display in appropriate behavior, anger, frustrations or disappointment. By displaying or paying attention to bad behavior you reinforce that bad behavior. A parent must only use positive reinforcement, create a positive environment, smile and turn the other cheek when hit at the face. By not reacting or paying attention, to negative or bad behavior, you do not reinforce that behavior. Therefore, if you wish to extinguish a wrong behavior, do not acknowledge or punish bad behavior. The behaviorist theory believes students who misbehave, are seeking the reward of attention. Even as a child's behavior gets worse and more dangerous, a parent must not reinforce that bad behavior. Eventually, the child realizes he/she cannot get what he/she wants through bad behavior, he/she extinguishes the bad behavior. A student changes his behavior through positive reinforcement and rewarding good behavior. Only with positive reinforcement can a student develop a positive self-image and attitude. With a positive reinforcement approach, students avoid the mental and emotional damage done by negative reinforcement. Behaviorist Theorists believe negative reinforcement such as verbal confrontation scolding, sarcasm, corporal punishment cannot reinforce behavior. This causes students to develop poor self-esteem, accept hitting as a way to solve problems, creates mental and emotional depression, and will scar their relationship with parents, friends and the society throughout their lives.

## X.      Research design

The researcher used descriptive correlation design to determine the relationship between students' discipline and social outcomes in secondary schools in mwingi –west constituency in kitui county. The study used eight selected secondary schools. The study employed teachers as the principle respondents. Using Sloven's formula 231 respondents from a target population of 547 teachers who were working in mwingi –west constituency. The selected schools which were located in the constituency was derived. The Sloven's formula was used to determine the minimum sample size as shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Na2}$$

N =Target population          n = sample size       0.05 = level of significant

$$n = \frac{547}{1 + 547 (0.0025)}$$

$$= 231 \text{ Respondents}$$

## XI.        Research instruments

The researcher used constructed questionnaires to collect the information required for the study. The questionnaires had three sections, section A collected data on the respondents' profile, section B collected data on the independed variable of the study. Section C collected data on the dependent variable.

## XII.        Piloting of the Research Instruments

Orodho (2005), notes that one can select and adopt a method, instrument or even replicate the entire study already used by another researcher. Therefore, the role of piloting was to ensure that the selected or the modified instruments suited the study. Piloting also enables the researcher to check whether the items were clear to the respondents, whether they give the needed information and to estimate the time the respondents require to respond to the items. A pilot study prepares the researcher on what to expect during the study especially concerning the tools and instruments to be used during the study, it prepares the researcher adequately in advance. Piloting of this study involved random selection of teachers from various schools in mwingi-west constituency which were not sampled for the study. The researcher used two schools for piloting. The researcher personally administered the research instruments to the two teachers. This enabled the researcher to ascertain that each sampled respondent not only understood the questions but understood them in the same way. It also helped the researcher to understand if the respondents were feeling comfortable with the instruments. The researcher was able to know how long the research would take to be completed from the piloting experience. The researcher found that the research instruments were valid and reliable and was encouraged to use the instruments confidently during the study.

## XIII.        Data gathering procedure

Before the administration of the questionnaires,

1. An introduction letter was obtained from the College of the Higher Degree Kampala International University- Uganda by the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from the respective selected secondary schools in mwingi- west constituency.

2. The researcher got the approval letter from the district education officer (mwingi west – constituency) to conduct data collection from the selected secondary schools.

3. The respondents were explained about the study and were requested to sign the informed consent form.

4. Preparation of enough questionnaires to distribute to the respondents was done accordingly.

5. The researcher selected assistants who were supposed to assist in data collection and were thoroughly briefed so as to be consisted in the administration of the questionnaires.

## Respondents of the Study

| Secondary school | population | Sample size |
|---|---|---|
| Musuani | 59 | 20 |
| Thokoa | 70 | 30 |
| Itoloni Girls | 69 | 28 |
| Kyome Boys | 75 | 32 |
| Migwani Boys | 70 | 30 |
| Kyamboo | 68 | 26 |
| Ndaluni | 68 | 29 |
| Itoloni Mixed | 68 | 28 |
| Total | 547 | 231 |

Source; Field data

## XIV.         Sampling Procedure

The researcher used simple random sampling to get the respondents. All teachers teaching in the selected 8 schools in which 3 are private secondary schools and 5 are public secondary schools were selected as the respondents. The researcher then used check list among the selected schools. He clustered schools into private, public with the purpose of including urban and the rural schools. Among them, two were from urban and 3 were from rural areas. The respondents were all class teachers both male and female.

### Respondents' profile

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 149 | 65 |
| Female | 82 | 35 |
| Total | 231 | 100 |
| **Age** | | |
| 20-30 | 100 | 43 |
| 31-40 | 80 | 35 |
| 41-above | 51 | 22 |
| **Total** | 231 | 100 |
| **Academic Qualifications** | | |
| Certificate | 70 | 30 |
| Diploma | 120 | 52 |
| Degree | 30 | 13 |
| Masters | 11 | 5 |
| **Total** | 231 | 100 |
| Source ; Field data | | |

## XV.         Ethical Consideration

To ensure that ethics was practiced in this study as well as utmost confidentiality maintained, for the respondents as well as the data they provided, the people mentioned in the study were acknowledged within the text. 4.Findings were presented in a generalized manner.

## XVI.         Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability is the level of internal consistency or stability over time. It means the degree of accuracy that the measuring instruments provide. It is essentially a measure of degree to which research instruments yield constant results of data after repeated trials, Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). Reliability of instruments is therefore consistent in producing the same results, over a number of repeated trials, (Orodho,2004). There are a number of methods used for testing whether study instruments are reliable. In the case of this study, the researcher contacted the supervisor and some other experts in her area of study to ascertain the validity and reliability of the research instruments. These individuals made the necessary adjustments to ensure that the questionnaires were valid and reliable.

## XVII.         Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The independent variable was students' discipline and the objective was to determine the level of students' discipline in the sampled schools. Students discipline was broken into 20 elements. Each of the components was measured by identifying their specific aspects. Respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement with each element by scoring the right rating. Respondents' responses were analyzed using means computed through Statistical Package for Social Science.

**Level of students' discipline in mwingi –west constituency**

| Indicators of students' discipline | Mean | Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Your students do not have destructive behavior | 3.28 | Very satisfactory | 1 |
| You have no problem deciding whether you should call behavior discipline problem versus letting a behavior "slide" | 3.16 | satisfactory | 2 |
| You have no problem of withdrawn students | 3.11 | satisfactory | 3 |
| You don't have a problem of winning over students' feelings | 3.07 | satisfactory | 4 |
| You don't sarcastic nonverbal reactions from students | 3.04 | satisfactory | 5 |
| You don't get the lessons done on a time schedule | 3.03 | satisfactory | 6 |
| You don't experience cursing by students | 2.94 | satisfactory | 7 |
| You don't have a problem deciding the best seating arrangements | 2.92 | satisfactory | 8 |
| You have no discipline problem with bathroom going | 2.91 | satisfactory | 9 |
| You have no problem with not work not being done | 2.90 | satisfactory | 10 |
| You have no problem marking home work | 2.85 | satisfactory | 11 |
| You don't have problem with late homeworker done | 2.83 | satisfactory | 12 |
| You don't have a problem with homework policy in general | 2.81 | Satisfactory | 13 |
| You don't have late comers | 2.79 | satisfactory | 14 |
| You don't have a problem with calling out | 2.78 | satisfactory | 15 |
| You don't have class clowns | 2.77 | satisfactory | 16 |
| You have no problem | 2.69 | satisfactory | 17 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| with noise making in classroom | | | |
| You don't have a problem with students fighting among themselves | 2.61 | satisfactory | 18 |
| You don't have problems with students involved in drug -abuse | 2.13 | fair | 19 |
| You don't have problems with students with weapons in school | 1.90 | fair | 20 |
| Total | 2.69 | satisfactory | |

Sources; Field data

The results indicated that the respondents agreed that the level of the students' discipline in the sampled schools was rather satisfactory. This is confirmed by the fact that most of the rating were within the mean index of 3 which falls under satisfactory in the Likert scale. The aspects of students' discipline with the highest rating was the fact that the schools do not commonly have disruptive behavior. The study found a positive relationship between the level of students' discipline and social outcomes in selected secondary schools in mwingi-west constituency, Kitui county suggesting that the higher the students' discipline, the higher the social outcomes and vice –versa. This further implies that the more the level of the students' discipline improves, the better will be the level of the social outcomes.

## XVIII. Conclusion

The study tested the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the level of students' discipline and the level of social outcomes. The relation value was found to be positive thus the null hypotheses was rejected and its alternative accepted**. '**There is significant relationship between the level of students' discipline and the level of social outcomes in secondary schools in mwingi-west constituency - kitui county.

**Recommendations**

Based on the objective of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Parents and teachers should endeavor to improve on the discipline levels of their children since this is an effect influential on social outcomes.

2. More sanguine disciplinary measures should be adopted in the societies so as to mitigate the rebellious effect of corporal punishment among the juveniles.

3. Teachers should help students who obtain low grades to develop academic curiosity in the fields more relevant to them.

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