

Assessment of Pupils' Preferred Disciplining Styles and Counseling Practices in Public Primary Schools in Kimilili Sub- County, Kenya

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Abstract

Well behaved pupils have better chances of excelling in their academic work which is an indicator of quality education. Quality education, in turn, is considered the key to economic and industrial growth and ultimately development. The government has directed efforts to ensure that each child gains access to free primary education since 2003. The national goals of economic recovery and industrialization of vision 2030 are jeopardized by students' unrests, truancy, drug- abuse, stealing, and failure to complete assignments as a result of indiscipline in both primary and secondary schools. Since the government banned corporal punishment in schools, it has posed a challenge in finding an effective means of instilling discipline among pupils. Therefore, this paper endeared to find out how students prefer to be disciplined and how counseling services are enhanced in the schools. It is therefore projected that this paper will help generate discipline strategies that will help the ministry of Education, Teachers and parents in moulding acceptable behavior in pupils and thus having an upright citizen for a peaceful country. This study adopted the mixed research paradigm. It was established that majority of the pupils preferred guidance and counseling to other disciplining styles. Additionally, it was depicted from the study that majority of the schools do not have counseling facilities and resources to serve the pupils adequately.

Keywords: preferred discipline style, counseling practices counseling, guidance and discipline

INTRODUCTION

Griffin (1994), argues that school discipline is paramount to endow each pupil with habits such as self-respect and proper pride in his own integrity. These will enable the pupils to observe the norms of good conduct when not under compulsion or supervision and will carry them eventually into adult life. Sound discipline is an essential ingredient in the creation of a happy and industrious school community. Pupils learn to the best of their abilities in an orderly and safe environment. The environment should not be intimidating and threatening to the pupil. Mothata and Squelch (1997), state that if discipline is not taken into consideration, the school environment will be dangerous and the educational process may be disrupted.

Similarly, Levin and Nalon (1991), state that in addition to the obvious impact on the teaching and learning environment, disruptive behaviour can also affect the pupils' safety, readiness to learn as well as future behaviour. In the opinion of Hill (1994), ill-discipline can destroy the possibility of a safe and orderly environment and thereby hamper the core purpose of the school. Discipline at school plays a vital role in the achievement of expectations and goals. It also plays a vital role in the acquisition of sense of responsibility in pupils as well as educators. Educator's ability to exercise effective discipline as suggested by Dunham (1994) is essential. Good

discipline creates a good image of the school and prepares pupils for the future. Wolfgang (1999) describes three aspects of discipline: preventive, supportive and corrective. He states the developmental aspect of discipline as instruction, training, helping students' value community and work together to set and agree upon standards for acceptable behaviour. Kounin (1970) noted that effective teachers differ from ineffective teachers not in the way they respond to the students' misbehaviors but how they organize and manage classroom activities.

Among the many methods used by teachers in disciplining the learners, guidance and counseling is one of the methods which aims at providing a basis of finding out reasons as to why a pupil commits a certain disciplinary offence and possible measures to avoid the same in future without any form of corporal punishment. The Republic of Kenya Gachathi report of (1976), among other reports, recommended that the head teacher of each school was to assign a member of staff to be responsible for providing information on guidance and counseling to all stakeholders in the education sector. Each school was to build and use a cumulative record of students' academic performance, home background, aptitudes and interests and special problems to facilitate guidance and counseling.

However, a study by Kiprop (2004) on the challenges faced by teachers and head teachers in maintaining student discipline in the post-caning era in Kenya revealed that teachers and head teachers experienced problems in the implementation of these alternative approaches to discipline. Kiprop’s study established that teachers lacked the necessary skills to implement guidance and counseling programmes. Teachers felt that the Ministry’s emphasis on guidance and counseling failed to take into account the fact that many schools were staffed by ill-prepared teachers and also lacked necessary resources like books and office. It was also found out that guidance and counseling as a method of disciplining pupils is not comprehensive. The reason given was that teachers were not willing to subject students to guidance and counseling because of its demand in terms of time and besides this, it does not produce instant results since it requires patience.

Given the volatile situation in most schools today as manifested in the spirit of violence there is need for the MOEST to strengthen Guidance and Counseling both at the ministry and school level by providing teacher counselors to every public school, facilitate their training and provide the necessary resources to enable them perform their duties effectively. Besides the parents, teachers have a responsibility to mould pupils to meet the expectations of the school and society. However, with the government banning corporal punishment in schools, the question that remains is what is the effective and preferred means of instilling discipline among pupils? And if guidance and counseling is one of the effective ways of enhancing disciplined students, what is the situation on the ground on how it is being enhanced? These two questions formed the basis of this research.

Statement of the Problem

Schools play an important role in the socialization process of the young people from where they learn to regulate their conduct respect others, manage their time responsibly and thus becoming responsible citizens. However, the present situation in schools reveal that the above values are rare found and pupils have strayed in behavior with, increased alcohol use, strikes in schools, bullying, absenteeism, vandalism of school property and general refusal to follow school rules and regulations. The question remains as why the change of behavior is not evidently seen putting in mind the government effort to have a friendly learning environment. Thus the concern of this research paper.

Study Objectives

- a) To determine pupils’ preferred disciplining style.
- b) To investigate the counseling practices used to deal with discipline challenges.

Limitations

The study was limited to class eight pupils and a school counselor or head of the counseling department. It was also limited to a few selected primary schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study employed a mixed approach by adopting both the qualitative and quantitative data. According to Chonge, Wambugu and Kiaritha (2015), mixed method approach gives full, rich and deep description as possible in order to bring out the true picture of a phenomenon under study. Therefore, this approach allowed for triangulation of different methods of inquiry, data collection, and data analysis. Ex post facto design was used to investigate the pupils’ preferred discipline mode and enhancement of the counseling practices of the teachers.

The researchers measured changes that have already taken place hence could not be manipulated. The target population for this study comprised of 276 teachers and 3,220 pupils from primary schools within Kimilili Sub-County. From this population, the researcher used random and purposive sampling and adopted 322 standard eight pupils, 18 class teachers and 18 school counselors. The methods of inquiry employed were interviews and questionnaires. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Bivariate analyses using simple cross-tabulations. The Chi-Square test was also used to establish the level of significance ($P \leq 0.05$) as the standard for rejecting or accepting the null hypothesis. The findings were presented in tables, graph, and narrative form as follows.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The study managed to obtain information from a total of 24 respondents. A previously developed analytical framework based on objectives of the study guided presentation of research findings. The following sections present the research results and the ensuing discussion.

Bio-data of the Respondent

The following table shows the demographic information of the participants of this study.

Table 1: demographic information of the respondents

Zone	No. of		No. of		No. of	
	schools	Sample schools	pupils	Sampled pupils	teachers	Sampled Teachers
C	16	6	1,120	112	96	12
E	19	8	1,330	133	114	16
W	11	4	770	77	66	8
Total	46	18	3,220	322	276	36

Key: C – Kimilili Central; E – Kimilili East and W – Kimilili West

As already mentioned, random sampling technique was then used to select class eight pupils and purposeful sampling technique for class teachers and guidance and counseling teachers. This resulted into a sample of 18 primary schools was selected from 46 primary schools, 18 class teachers and 18 school counselors from a population of 276 teachers, 322 primary school pupils from a population of 3,220 pupils.

Pupils’ Preferred Disciplining Style

The first research objective posed in this study was to determine pupils’ preferred disciplining styles. To achieve this objective the following question was raised: What are the pupils’ preferred disciplining styles? To answer the question, primary school pupils were requested to respond to the items in the questionnaire. Table 2 below shows the results obtained:

Table 2: Pupils’ preferred disciplining style against teachers’ styles

		Frequency	Percent
PUPILS’ RATING OF TEACHERS’ STYLES USED TO INDISCIPLINED PUPILS	<u>Corrective</u>		
	CANING	235	73%
	CARRYING BRICKS	3	1%
	PICKING RUBBISH	3	1%
	<u>Supportive</u>		
	GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING	42	13%
	SEND FOR PARENT	10	3%
	ADVICE GIVING	6	2%
	<u>Preventive</u>		
	WARNING	23	7%
PUPILS’ PREFERRED METHOD OF BEING IDISCIPLINED	<u>Corrective</u>		
	CANING	119	37%
	<u>Supportive</u>		
	SEND FOR PARENT	3	1%
	ADVICE GIVING	3	1%
	GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING	129	40%
	<u>Preventive</u>		
WARNING	68	21%	

In regard to pupils’ views, the most common method teachers used in disciplining them was caning (73%) which is a corrective style of discipline, with fewer being guided and counseled (13%), warning (7%), send to bring a parent (3%), advice giving (2%), carrying bricks (1%) and picking rubbish (1%). From table 1, it was established that majority of the pupils preferred guidance and counseling (40%) which is supportive type of discipline to other disciplining styles, then, caning (37%), warning (21%), advice giving (1%) and being sent to bring a parent (1%). Despite caning being banned, teachers still use it at their own discretion as a preferred method of dealing with indiscipline cases. It also gives an indication of the need to strengthen guidance and counseling on

discipline issues now that pupils prefer it to other methods.

From the findings in Table 1, pupils’ indicated that teachers employed caning (73%), guidance and counseling (13%), warning (7%), sending pupils to bring parents to school (3%) as methods to deal with indiscipline pupils. It was also noted that some teachers advised pupils who made mistakes (2%), punished pupils by picking rubbish (1%) and carrying bricks (1%). In Table 1, it was further established that pupils preferred guidance and counseling method of discipline management (40%), followed by caning (37%), warning pupils (21%), advising pupils (1%) and sending them to bring their parents (1%). The results of this research

collaborates with those of Gitau (2002) who points out that guidance and counseling programmes are important in students' lives as they assist them to deal with academic and developmental concerns. These findings also agree with Eggleton (2001) who asserts that effective instruction, accompanied by wide effective classroom management strategies and alternative school programmes that aim at discipline for reform, should form the disciplinary approach in schools. Disciplinary strategies for reform may include guidance and counseling and remedial assistance.

On the other hand, Rogers (2000), argues that corporal punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment have been widely favored methods of managing discipline both at home and school. In his study, Rogers revealed that pupils preferred caning since it is quick and easy to administer compared to other discipline management

methods which in their view require time, patience and skill. This, therefore, concurs with these findings where teachers prefer caning to other disciplining methods.

Counseling Practices Used in Schools

The second research objective posed in this study was to investigate the counseling practices used to deal with discipline. To achieve this objective the following question was raised: What counseling practices are used to deal with discipline? The various counseling practices considered in the study were: if they have copies of school rules and regulations, maintain records of every indiscipline case, prepared a schedule for counseling sessions, help pupils accept the culture and tradition of the school and help pupils to accept individual differences. Table 3 shows the results obtained.

Table 3: Counseling Practices

Counseling Practices	Mean	Std. Deviation
Familiar and has a copy of school rules and regulations	4.50	0.52
Strict on the pupils' behaviour and adherence to the school rules	4.13	0.96
Keeps and maintains records of every indiscipline cases	4.13	0.62
Has trained counselors to serve pupils	2.94	1.12
Has counseling facilities and resources to serve the pupils	2.94	1.12
Has a schedule for counseling	4.19	0.66
Pupils' attitude towards the counseling section is positive	4.06	1.00
Has helped pupils improve in their behavior	4.38	0.62
Has created conducive learning environment for pupils	4.31	0.60
Has helped pupils accept the culture and tradition of their school	4.25	0.45
Has helped pupils accept individual differences	4.19	0.40

It was depicted from the study that majority of the schools do not have counseling facilities and resources to serve the pupils adequately (mean = 2.94). This meant that with the effort of counselors to curb on pupils' behaviors in school, the inadequate facilities and resources would create a gap. It was also established that the present counseling section in majority of the schools were familiar and has a copy of the school rules and

4.31). Moreover, counseling helped pupils accept the culture and tradition of their school (mean = 4.25).

regulations (mean = 4.50). The availability and awareness of the school rules and regulations will guide and direct both the counselor and the pupil on the expectations and limits about the code of conduct while in school. Although there were inadequate resources for counseling, counselors were in favour of it as it helped Improve pupils' behaviour (mean = 4.38) and had also created a conducive learning environment for pupils (mean =

In regard to counseling practices, the respondents agreed on the various aspects of the questionnaire in Table 3. The counselors strongly agreed that they were familiar and had a copy of rules and regulations (mean≤4.50). They also agreed that they were strict on the pupils' behaviour and adherence to the school rules and regulations (mean≤4.13), kept and maintained records of every indiscipline cases (mean≤4.13), had training to serve pupils (mean≤2.94), had a schedule for counseling (mean≤4.19), counseling had helped pupils to improve in their behaviors (mean≤4.38), counseling enabled a conducive learning environment for pupils (mean≤4.31), counseling helped pupils accept the culture and tradition of the school (mean≤4.25) and

had helped pupils accept their individual differences (mean≤4.19).

The counselors were undecided on the aspect that schools had counseling facilities and resources to serve pupils (mean≤2.94).

The study finding concurs with the findings by Okola (2005) in Trans-Nzoia County who revealed that Kenyan schools have very few reference resources for guidance and counseling; trained personnel in this area are few or not available at all in various schools; most schools do not have sufficient funds to carry out the programme effectively and some teachers and head teachers avoided the responsibility of running such a programme. These findings indicated that there are benefits got from counseling that would be felt, given the limited counseling facilities and resources to serve the pupils. According to Simatwa (2007), studies have shown that lack of serious guidance counseling programmes in schools is the major cause of indiscipline cases and poor performance in learning institutions. The studies have further shown that if guidance and counseling is well guided by teachers, pupils will do the right things related to learning and will become disciplined. Mburu (2002) also emphasized that through counseling, a client is able to alter maladjusted behaviour and fulfill potentials, as well as getting skills, awareness and knowledge to enable them to confront social inadequacy. The study also used an interview guide to get a deeper understanding of the counseling practices used in schools on pupils' behaviour Modification (Figure 1)

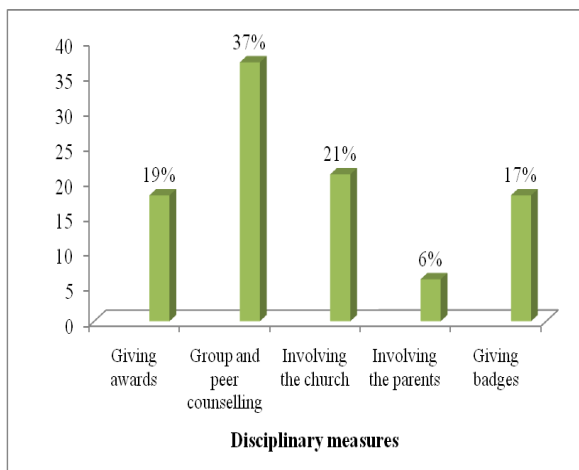


Figure 1: Disciplinary measures employed by the school counselors

All the school counselors accepted that the schools had limited resources in terms of space, counseling books and funds to run their activities. The school counselors admitted that the disciplinary measures employed to indiscipline cases included; giving advice (32%), manual work such as picking

rubbish and weeding flowerbeds, caning (37%), involving their parents (20%) and withdrawal of their privileges (11%). The study established that the common disciplinary measures taken to encourage disciplined pupils were; rewarding them, group and peer counseling, involving both the church and parents, giving badges to encourage them as alternative measures to improve on pupils discipline that were not captured in the questionnaires that was used to tabulate Figure 1.

Finally, the counselors revealed that the parents participated to a small extent in moulding the behaviour of their children and that through guidance and counseling, behaviour has been improving. Additional findings from the interview revealed that guiding and counseling existed in a majority of schools. Some schools were headed by personnel who had not undergone special training. One of them stated, "I was given the position because most pupils love me and always come to me whenever they get a problem." When asked whether the schools had counseling resources and facilities, the counselors were undecided. One of them quipped, "Do I need to read books to solve a problem I see?" It seems most of the counselors feel that they are solutions to problems.

Counselors were asked how guiding and counseling encouraged discipline in schools where most of them stated that pupils were helped to accept one another and their individual differences. It also helped them to discover their weaknesses and so be able to modify their behaviour. However, some counselors observed that according to their pupils, "Discipline meant enforcing corrective measures like caning but not to be talked to by a teacher counselor." From the interview, counselors encouraged disciplined pupils to keep up and maintain the same behaviour throughout in the school by; praising reformed pupils before others, giving them awards like badges, and being given responsibilities like being made a class prefect. A counselor commented, "This method seems to have a great impact as it raises the self-esteem of the pupil and influences others to change."

Counselors concurred that preventive, supportive and corrective styles of discipline were used by teachers in schools. However, most of them noted that teachers did use more of corrective discipline style than the other two. A counselor remarked, "It's only when a pupil sees a cane in the hand of a teacher that he sees the seriousness to change his behaviour." This goes in line with a study by Kiprop (2004) which established that teachers lacked the necessary skills to implement guidance and counseling programmes. He continues to say that teachers felt that the Ministry's emphasis on guidance and counseling failed to take into account the fact that

many schools were staffed by ill-prepared teachers and also lacked necessary resources like books and office and that teachers were not willing to subject students to guidance and counseling because of its demand in terms of time. Certainly from the above development, it becomes clear that guiding and counseling in the schools surveyed is counselor centered and the issue of marrying discipline and counseling is not well understood. Finally, even though, the ban on caning is constitutionally binding, in most schools, it's still the practice of the day.

CONCLUSION

This study therefore concluded that despite caning being banned, teachers still use it at their own discretion as a preferred method of dealing with indiscipline cases. To add on that, it also gives an indication that pupils prefer guidance and counseling as a way of dealing with indiscipline issues to other methods. It can also be concluded that there is inadequacy in terms of enhancement of guiding and counseling services in the selected schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should develop and distribute information for public awareness on creation of alternative discipline methods for teachers to foster discipline in schools, homes and in the Society. They should also provide information about the effects of physical punishment. Also, periodic appraisal of state of discipline should be carried out to identify challenges that limit its management in schools. Through this initiative it will create an overview of the major types of indiscipline cases common in schools and the effective action and management towards the same. Further, parents should always be notified of incidents in schools that need great attention and meetings arranged in schools to discuss how to deal with the challenges. It is indeed important that guidance and counseling teachers should be incorporated in the management of discipline cases fully with provision of necessary facilities and resources. In addition, the government through the Ministry of Education should organize regular training programmes for counselors to strengthen guidance and counseling department in primary schools. Lastly, the government should also sponsor workshops to train teachers on methods of disciplining pupils that are not physically abusive that enhance good behaviors

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