



THE INFLUENCE OF CATEGORIZATION OF SCHOOLS ON THE DISCIPLINE OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MACHAKOS SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

Rose Mueni Luti-Mallei¹, Daniel Komo Gakunga²ⁱ

¹PhD Candidate, University of Nairobi, Kenya

²PhD, Lecturer of Comparative and International Education, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of categorization of school on the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools. Secondary information was obtained from different scholars to provide review of related literature to the study which was reviewed as per the study objective. Primary data for the study was collected through the use of questionnaires. The study targeted principals, guidance and counselling teachers and form four students (girls and boys) in public secondary schools. Descriptive survey research design was used in this study because it enabled the study to obtain information that described existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviour and values. Simple random sampling was used to sample 5 schools in each category of the schools totalling to 20 schools where 8 students were sampled from each schools. Census sampling was used to identify all the principals and heads of guidance and counselling department from the 20 sampled schools. Therefore the sample population for the study was 20 principals, 20 guidance and counselling teachers and 160 students (80 girls and 80 boys) thus, a total of 200 questionnaires were issued to the respondents. All the questionnaires from all categories of respondents were returned realizing an instrument return rate of 100 percent, which was very satisfactory for the purpose of the study. Data collected was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

From the study findings, boys were more affected by discipline issues than girls in all categories of schools. Thus, students in single sex schools had less discipline issues than in mixed sex schools, showing that in mixed schools boys and girls influenced each other. Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made; Boys

¹ Correspondence: email rosehallei2016@gmail.com, gakungadk@gmail.com

were more affected by discipline issues than girls. Overall discipline was higher in single sex schools than in mixed schools. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the study recommended that; the government of Kenya through the ministry of education should organize seminars and workshops in line with the Kenya 2010 constitution and children's rights to sensitize teachers and principals in secondary schools on how school category influences the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools.

Keywords: students' discipline, indiscipline, category of school, boys, girls

1. Introduction

Discipline in schools is one of the most pressing issues in the education sector in the world today. According to Adams (1987), discipline refers to strategies for the elimination of antisocial behaviour among individuals. Along with literacy and numeracy achievement levels, school discipline ranks as one of the major concerns voiced by the public about schools and the school system in countries worldwide (Slee 1995, Owens & Bourne, 1997). Like any other organization, every school requires discipline, for no group of people can work together successfully without establishing standards of good behaviour, respect and a desirable system of values that lead each person in the group to develop self-control and self-direction.

The quality of student discipline is an important factor in determining the intellectual outcome of students and schools as indicated by Reynolds (1989). According to Mbiti (1998), students should be disciplined in order to make informed decisions, and this entails the learners' ability to discern what is right or wrong. High school is an important period of time in an adolescent's life, this is the time boys and girls make decisions about future educational and career plans, discipline is therefore critical and highly valued at this level of learning.

Issues of school discipline are not unique to Kenya. It is a global issue of great concern due to the changing times and circumstances ranging from social-technological changes to children rights and many educational demands. According to Kindiki (2009), research studies conducted in developed countries such as the United States of America and Europe in the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Spain consistently highlight similar issues of the deteriorating scale and nature of violence and indiscipline within schools. Lewis, Romi, Qui, and Katz (2005) stated that in Australia, China, and Israel managing student discipline ranked the second most significant factor stressing teachers. Incidents signifying low levels of discipline in schools have also been reported

from Mexico, Italy, Germany, India, Comoros and even Spain (UNESCO 1998). In Africa students' discipline problems have grown into an epidemic level, for example, in South Africa discipline is a major challenge faced by educators and parents in most of the South African schools (Du Preez & Roux, 2010). In Tanzania, teachers are meant to have absolute powers over students, visible in methods of reward or punishment used by the teacher because of students' indiscipline (Kindiki 2009).

One significant issue of concern is that discipline issues in schools do not discriminate hence transcending the boundaries of gender. A number of studies for example, by (Bain & Macpherson, 1990; Cooley, 1995; Gregory, 1996; Imich, 1994) have found that boys were over four times as likely as girls to be referred to the office, suspended, or subjected to corporal punishment. Further, Shaw and Braden, (1990), indicated that in virtually every study presenting school disciplinary data by gender, boys were referred to the office and received a range of disciplinary consequences at a significantly higher rate than girls. These sentiments concurred with the findings in two mixed public secondary schools in Machakos district where experience showed that boys had more discipline issues compared to girls.

In Kenya the issue of student discipline in secondary schools has occupied the minds of researchers for quite some time now and it still remains a subject of investigation. The Government of Kenya (GoK) has implemented several measures aimed at curbing the various cases of indiscipline in learning institutions particularly the use of guidance and counselling units in all secondary schools (MOEST, 2005). In spite of these there have been several cases of student indiscipline reported in Kenya's daily newspapers while majority of the cases go unreported. Although newspapers sometimes are biased and unauthentic, they contain important and contemporary data which could be useful in informing the basis of a study like this one states Kindiki (2009). In the year 2008 alone over 300 schools in Kenya went on strike destroying a lot of property (Republic of Kenya, 2008). The trend has been on the rise with the year 2013 and 2014 witnessing many students' unrests, (Daily Nation July 24th 2014).

Machakos Sub-County in Machakos County has witnessed low levels of student indiscipline as indicated in the Machakos District Education Office Annual Report, (2013) raising the concern of education stakeholders in the sub county. According to Machakos District Education Officer (2015), more than 200 secondary school students at the Machakos Boys School sat for their KCSE examination from home after they ran amok and chased away other students as reported by the Star newspaper on 11th November 2011. In the year 2013, twenty public secondary schools in the Sub County went on strike as indicated in the Machakos District Annual Report, (2013). The report also indicated that most of the affected schools were either boys schools or mixed

schools with girls schools reporting minimal cases. Perhaps failure to identify how the category of school influences the discipline of boys and girls is what would be said as the cause of indiscipline in public secondary schools. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of the category of school on the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya.

1.2 Research question

The study sought to answer the research question; how does categorization of school influence the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of categorization of school on the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. This was in view of the fact that, there are very many factors that contribute to the discipline of secondary school students. Among the many factors, discipline could be influenced by peer pressure and the rule of association. In Kenya, schools are categorized either as single sex, that is boy or girls only secondary schools, or mixed schools where both boys and girls are in the same school. There is research evidence that the discipline issues in each of this category of schools are often diverse, hence the need for this study.

1.4. Brief review of related literature

According to Reid (1958), discipline may be described as relationships of submission of obedience to some sort of order, with all the effects of this relationship. According to Sunshilla (2004), despite the existence of the school code of conduct, most schools worldwide continue to experience student discipline problems because punishment produces anger and rebellion in the students. Punishment is often repeated without ever producing the desired result; that of correction and a change of heart of boys and girls in school.

In Kenya, corporal punishment was legally abolished in schools in 2001. In spite of efforts made by the Government of Kenya (GoK) in abolishing corporal punishment school discipline has deteriorated to such a level that the school system may soon become unmanageable. Further, the Government has been implementing measures aimed at improving discipline in all categories of secondary schools particularly the use of guidance and counselling unit in all secondary schools (MOEST, 2005). This indicates how the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) has been committed

over the years to promote discipline in secondary schools in Kenya. The focus has been on students discipline in general without consideration on the categories of schools, these calls for better understanding of behaviour patterns of boys and girls in the different categories of schools hence making this study relevant.

In Kenya, there are different categories of schools depending on the structure; mixed day schools, single sex day schools, mixed day and boarding schools, mixed boarding schools and single sex boarding schools. The category of a school has great influence on the discipline of the boys and girls. According to Gurian (1996), mixed schools settings are limited by their capacity to accommodate the large differences in cognitive, social, and development growth rates of boys and girls aged between twelve and sixteen. These differences influence the reasoning and behaviour of boys and girls in mixed secondary schools. The average high-school going child in Kenya is at the pubescent age when hormonal changes heighten the attraction of the sexes hence boy girl relationships are likely to be rampant in mixed secondary schools. The girls are more affected compared to the boys because according to Lloyd (2005), girls reach puberty at a younger age than boys. On the other hand, according to Gurian (1996), boys and girls in single sex schools were more likely to be better behaved and to find learning more enjoyable and the curriculum more relevant hence recording high standards of discipline compared to mixed schools.

According to the Machakos District Education Office Annual Report (2013), mixed secondary schools had complicated discipline issues compared to single sex schools. The variance of discipline issues in single sex schools was limited for they handled one sex of students. All categories of schools had discipline problems but the level varied depending on the category of the school. The objective of this study was to establish how the category of school influenced the discipline of boys and girls in public secondary schools.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study was partially qualitative and quantitative in its approach and therefore it was a descriptive survey. The target population in this study comprised all the principals, guidance and counselling teachers and students' in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. There were 65 public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County: 30 mixed day schools, 20 mixed day and boarding schools, 7 girls' boarding schools and 8 boys' boarding schools. There were 65 principals, 65 heads of guidance and counselling departments and about 6,300 students.

The 65 schools in the Sub-County were stratified into 4 groups depending on the category of the school. Simple random sampling was used to identify 5 schools in each

category of the schools totalling to 20 schools. Simple random sampling was further used to select 8 students from each of the 20 sampled schools. Census sampling was used to identify all the principals and heads of guidance and counselling department from the 20 sampled schools. Data for the study was collected through the use of questionnaires. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics i.e. frequency and percentages. Data was then presented by use of frequency tables.

2. Study Findings

To establish how the category of school influenced student's discipline, the study distributed the respondents homogeneously across all school categories to ensure equal representation. This was an indication that the study was able to compare the situation of student discipline in all categories of schools and their variance in the levels of discipline in regard to the school category. The study respondents included principals, guidance and counselling teachers and students. All the questionnaires from all categories of respondents were returned. Therefore, the study realized an instrument return rate of 100 percent, which was very satisfactory for the purpose of the study.

2.1 Principals' responses on discipline of boys and girls according the category of school

The study sought to establish principals' views on the discipline of boys and girls in regard to the category of school. The results were as captured in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Principals' responses on discipline of boys and girls

School category		Girls boarding		Boys boarding		Mixed day		Mixed day & boarding					
		A	D	A	D	Boys	Girls	Boys		Girls			
N = 20													
Discipline issues		A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
Punctuality is observed	F	18	2	17	3	3	17	5	15	7	13	6	14
	%	90.0	10.0	85.0	15.0	15.0	85.0	25.0	75.0	35.0	65.0	30.0	70.0
Assignments are completed	F	20	0	19	1	2	18	1	19	5	15	8	12
	%	100.0	0.0	95.0	5.0	10.0	90.0	5.0	95.0	25.0	75.0	40.0	60.0
Sexual activities noted	F	1	19	2	18	19	1	17	3	20	0	19	1
	%	5.00	95.0	10.0	90.0	95.0	5.0	85.0	15.0	100.0	0.0	95.0	5.0
Use of decent Language	F	17	3	16	4	2	18	7	13	8	12	11	9
	%	85.0	15.0	80.0	20.0	10.0	90.0	35.0	65.0	40.0	60.0	55.0	45.0

Information contained in the table 2.1 above indicated that, generally boys were more affected by discipline issues than girls in all categories of schools. Hence in girls' boarding schools an average of 70 percent of the principals agreed to the statements that portray that discipline was maintained among girls in their schools. This case was similar with boys' boarding schools where 67.5 percent of the principals agreed on average to the statements provided. However, principals were in agreement that both mixed day schools and mixed day and boarding schools to the statement was lower at 32.5 percent and 37.5 percent respectively.

The study therefore established that boys were more affected than girls by discipline issues in secondary schools. For instance, sexual activities were noted in both boys and girls at a higher rate of agreement i.e. 95 percent and 100 percent in boys while in girls 85 percent and 95 percent in mixed day secondary schools and mixed day and boarding which was contrary to boys and girls in single sex schools. The study noted that large number of boys and girls in mixed day secondary schools were more likely to pick out all sorts of behaviour from the community by the students who commute daily. These students were more exposed to discipline issues either from their non-school going peers, drop outs or other bad elements in the society.

These acquired behaviours were passed on to their peers in school causing boys and girls in mixed schools to be more affected by discipline issues than their counterparts in single sex boarding schools. These findings concurred with Gurian (1996), who stated that boys and girls in single sex schools were more likely to be better behaved and to find learning more enjoyable and the curriculum more relevant hence recording high standards of discipline compared to mixed schools.

2.2 Guidance and counselling teachers' responses on discipline of boys and girls

The study also sought to establish the views of guidance and counselling teachers on the discipline of boys and girls in regard to the category of school. They were requested to indicate their responses as; A=Agree and D= Disagree.

The results were captured in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Guidance and counselling teachers' responses on discipline of boys and girls

School category		Girls boarding		Boys boarding		Mixed day		Mixed day & boarding					
						Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
		A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
N = 20													
Discipline issues													
Punctuality is observed	F	18	2	17	3	3	17	5	15	7	13	6	14
	%	95.0	5.0	80.0	20.0	10.0	90.0	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0	35.0	65.0
Assignments are completed	F	20	0	19	1	2	18	1	19	5	15	8	12
	%	100.0	0.0	95.0	5.0	5.0	95.0	10.0	90.0	30.0	70.0	40.0	60.0
Sexual activities noted	F	1	19	2	18	19	1	17	3	20	0	19	1
	%	10.00	90.0	15.0	85.0	95.0	5.0	95.0	5.0	100.0	0.0	90.0	10.0
Use of decent Language	F	17	3	16	4	2	18	7	13	8	12	11	9
	%	90.0	10.0	85.0	15.0	5.0	95.0	40.0	60.0	40.0	60.0	55.0	45.0

Information presented in Table 2.2 showed that 85 percent of the guidance and counselling teachers concurred with the principals that the category of a school influenced boys and girls discipline. Consequently, 95 percent of the guidance and counselling teachers agreed that sexual activities were noted more in mixed day schools and day and boarding mixed secondary schools compared to boys and girls single schools. Furthermore, in girls' boarding schools an average of 95 percent of the guidance and counselling teachers agreed to the statements that portray that discipline was maintained among girls in their schools (Punctuality was observed, assignments were completed and decent language was used). This case was similar with boys' boarding schools where an average of 83 percent of the guidance and counselling teachers agreed to the positive statements provided. However, agreement on both mixed day schools and mixed day and boarding schools to the statements was on average lower at 5.6 percent and 33.3 percent respectively. The study therefore established that boys were more affected than girls by discipline issues in secondary schools.

2.3 Students' response on how category of school influences their discipline

The study further sought students' views on how category of school influenced their discipline. The results were as presented in Table 2.3

Table 2.3: Boys' and girls' response on how category of school influenced their discipline

School category	Boys				Total		Girls				Total	
	Agree		Disagree		F	%	Agree		Disagree		F	%
	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)			Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)		
Girls boarding	0	0.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	40	50.0	0	0.00	40	50.0
Boys boarding	31	38.8	9	11.2	40	50.0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.0
Mixed day	17	21.3	3	3.7	20	25.0	15	18.8	5	6.25	20	25.0
Mixed day & boarding	20	25.	0	0.0	20	25.0	17	21.3	3	3.7	20	25.0

N=160

Information contained in Table 2.3 showed that, 90.1 percent of the girls and 85.1 percent of the boys agreed to the fact that the category of the school influenced students' discipline. This was an indication that all category of schools influenced students' discipline although the level of boys and girls discipline varied depending on the category of the school. This concurred with an annual report by Machakos District Education Office of (2013) that revealed that mixed secondary schools had complicated discipline issues compared to single sex schools. The variance of discipline issues in single sex schools was limited for they handled only one sex of students.

2.4 Students' reasons on how category of school influenced their discipline

The students were further asked to give reasons for their responses on how school category influenced their discipline. Their responses were presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Boys' and girls' reasons on how school category influenced their discipline

Reasons	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Mixed schools enhance sexual relations	41	51.2	24	30.0
Single sex school promotes learning	18	22.5	19	23.7
Students in mixed schools negatively influence each other's discipline	21	26.3	37	46.3
Total	80	100.0	80	100.0

N=160

Information captured in Table 2.4 showed that more than half of the boys 51.2 percent indicated that mixed schools influenced boys and girls discipline more than single sex schools, with regard to sexual relations being a major form of discipline issue in all categories of secondary schools. These findings concur with Gurian (1996) who indicated that mixed schools settings were limited by their capacity to accommodate the large differences in cognitive, social, and development growth rates of boys and girls aged between twelve and sixteen. These differences influence the reasoning and behaviour of boys and girls in mixed secondary schools.

2.5 Conclusions from the study

Conclusions were based on the category of school and its influence on boys' and girls' discipline in public secondary schools. The study concluded that discipline issues among boys and girls in secondary schools were evident in all categories of schools but more serious in mixed secondary schools than single sex schools. There was the need to rise up against the culture of discipline cases in all categories of secondary schools. The existence of discipline issues in different secondary school categories affected negatively the values of education being transmitted to and acquired by the students. According to the principals and guidance and counselling teachers the study concluded that discipline issues varied depending on the category of the school. Further, day schools should be abolished for they exposed both boys and girls to indiscipline practices. Both boys and girls were in agreement that the category of school greatly influenced their discipline practices. However, the study concluded that boys were more affected by discipline issues than girls and that discipline standards were higher in single sex schools than in mixed schools.

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