



RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACTORS INFLUENCING KENYAN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE POST-CANING ERA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th July, 2011
Received in revised form
28th August, 2011
Accepted 15th September, 2011
Published online 15th October, 2011

Key words:

Discipline;
Indiscipline;
Corporal punishment;
Post-caning era;
Kenya.

ABSTRACT

Background

In Kenya, as elsewhere in the world, corporal punishment has been banned as a disciplinary mechanism in schools. The perception exists that this has resulted in an increase in misconduct and indiscipline among secondary school learners. It should, however, be acknowledged that there is a variety of other factors that also impact on the status of discipline in schools and that this increase in misconduct might not have been caused solely or mainly by the banning of the cane.

Purpose

The purpose of this investigation was to identify such factors and their influence on secondary school discipline in Kenyan secondary schools.

Design and methods

This is a position paper that unpacks these factors within the Kenyan context. The concept of discipline is presented through some of its definitions and its aim, the recent manifestation of indiscipline in Kenyan schools is described, factors that impact on discipline are presented and the effects of indiscipline are briefly indicated.

Conclusions

Finally, some recommendations are made on the way forward towards improving discipline in Kenyan schools. These recommendations would also be of value in other contexts where corporal punishment is no longer allowed.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most contentious issues in school discipline is the use of corporal punishment to enforce discipline. In the Kenyan context, Legal Notice 40/1972, contained in the Education Act Cap 211 (revised 1980), authorised the use of the cane, albeit with specific guidelines for its application. Unfortunately, some teachers failed to adhere to these guidelines. This misuse of corporal punishment sometimes resulted in serious injuries to learners and in a number of cases, even death. An example of this is an incident that was reported in the press (Waihenya 2001, 5) where a ten-year-old learner at a Nyeri school collapsed and died after being beaten by a teacher, allegedly because the learner did not have a games kit. Such extreme negative consequences of the use of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools resulted in pressure from non-governmental organisations and international agencies, to ban this method of enforcing school discipline. The move to ban corporal punishment was based on the

argument that it is against provisions in international instruments on child protection to which the Kenyan Government is signatory, namely the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1979; the Defense for Children International, Geneva, Switzerland and the Children and Young Persons Act (Cap 141) from the Kenyan Constitution. These documents are in agreement with child protection and welfare provisions, as contained in the Kenyan Children's Act No. 8 of 2001. The concern about the negative consequences of corporal punishment in Kenya eventually resulted in the amendment of the original legal notice through the promulgation of Legal Notice 56/2001, which banned the use of the cane in Kenyan schools. This ban removed a disciplinary strategy that was previously applied in cases of serious misconduct in schools, resulting in a significant increase in learner indiscipline and misconduct in schools as well as an increased complexity of disciplinary matters (Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association conference, June, 2001, Kisumu, Kenya; Kamotho 2001, 6; Waihenya 2001, 17; The Daily Nation 2001, 17). This was

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exacerbated by the fact that no alternative ways of handling discipline have been put in place, making the implementation of the new law very difficult (Kamotho 2001, 6). Eventually the Ministry of Education (circular G9/1/Vol,VIII/28 of 20 March 2002) came up with two major strategies that could suitably replace corporal punishment, these being:

- Initiating programmes that would educate parents, teachers, learners and society at large, about the harmful effects of corporal punishment and the availability of effective alternatives
- Strengthening of Guidance and Counselling services in all educational institutions

The foregoing exposition clearly shows that the banning of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools, poses many questions regarding maintaining discipline and order in educational institutions. This ban is often cited as being the main, if not the only, cause of poor school discipline in Kenya. It is, however, reasonable to believe that there are also other factors that would co-determine the state of school discipline and that all cases of indiscipline are not necessarily the result of the ban on using the cane. In an effort to clarify the matter, this study focused on identifying the main factors that impact on school discipline in Kenyan secondary schools through a documentary analysis. This is therefore a position paper on whether the ban on corporal punishment is the main factor leading to indiscipline in Kenyan schools. In order to move towards this aim, the paper presents the following:

- the concept of discipline through some of the different understandings and aims of discipline
- various manifestations of indiscipline in Kenyan schools
- factors influencing school discipline
- the effects of indiscipline in Kenyan schools and
- conclusions based on the above-mentioned

The concept of discipline

The whole world of discipline (rules, enforcers, trouble makers) is deeply rooted in the goals and structures of the school. A school often cannot change its pattern of discipline without addressing broad educational issues and structures of the schooling itself (Rogers 2002, 4). Charles (2002, 5) points out that if a clear understanding of the problem of school discipline is to be achieved, goals and expectations are to be re-examined to determine whether they are consistent and realistic.

The ways in which discipline is understood

Educators, parents and theorists have enormously varied viewpoints about school discipline. According to Charles and Charles (2004, 131), many people think of discipline either as overall behaviour in the classroom or what teachers do to make learners behave, such as scolding, threats, admonition or punishment. The divergence among the major perspectives on discipline accounts for some of the confusion in the school, in that people involved with defining discipline and those who are implementing it, do not necessarily agree with each other and are often unaware of this lack of agreement. Rogers

(2001, 46) indicates that discipline is not limited to the context of punishment, but it also has to do with guidance and instruction to teach and enhance a social order where rights and responsibilities are balanced. Charles and Charles (2004, 131) assert that the concept of discipline as punishment is falling by the wayside, as the notion that a forceful technique needs to be used to 'correct' learners who do not live up to expected standards of behaviour, is being abandoned. The different ways in which discipline is viewed is an indication that there is a potentially large community of disagreement about the subject. Since value judgments are involved, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of controversy about the desired characteristics of the disciplinary system. Levin and Nolan (2000, 114) point out that although it is generally assumed that everyone knows what is meant by a disciplinary problem, when they asked pre- and in-service teachers at workshops what their understanding of a disciplinary problem is, there has been no consensus whatsoever in their responses. Thus there does not seem to be a professional operational definition of what kind of behaviour constitutes a disciplinary problem.

Blandford (1998, 1) also indicates that the range of behaviours and attitudes regarded as disruptive and requiring discipline are vast. He goes on to state that there is a broad agreement that effective discipline is heavily dependent on the context in which a teacher is operating. The concept discipline refers to educating someone to acquire desired behaviour, also to both prevention and remediation (Cotton 2005). This links with the viewpoint expressed in the Redeemer Lutheran School (2005) which states that the term discipline does not mean punishment, but rather the teaching of self-control, Christian attitudes, orderliness, efficiency and responsibility. Lewis and Clark (2005) presents a similar understanding of the term by indicating that discipline is training that enables children to make appropriate choices in a climate of warmth and support. Discipline is also described as action by management to enforce organisational standards. In an educational organisation, there are many set standards or codes of behaviour to which learners must adhere or uphold in order to successfully achieve the objectives of the school (Okumbe 1998, 77). Wikipedia (2005) describes the term discipline as referring to students complying with a code of behaviour often known as the school rules. Among other things these rules may set out the standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethics. The term may also be applied to the punishment that is the consequence of transgression of the code of behaviour. For this reason the term school discipline sometimes means punishment for breaking school rules rather than behaving within the school rules. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2004), schools should teach self-discipline for the good of the society. In a society where social and technological changes occur at a rapid pace, the nature of socialisation has changed remarkably. Educators must achieve the dual goal of teaching self-discipline and using disciplinary actions to manage behaviour problems when they occur. Vasiloff and Lenz (2005) also define discipline as a system of rules and regulations that govern the conduct of the teachers and learners that effectively work together so that learning can take place. They add that just as academic learning is an ongoing process, so too is the mastery of discipline skills. The above definitions present various ways in which to

understand the concept of discipline, namely that it is education to reach a desired state, or that it is an action that would remediate the deviation from the desired state, or it is the conception of this desired state itself. These understandings are not contradictory to each other, but rather complementary.

Aim of discipline

Historically, the aim of school discipline was to control the behaviour of learners by force. This has gradually changed, both in the imposition and restraints of individuals and the use of force as a means to perpetuate the interests of society, towards self-direction (Wikipedia 2005). Vasiloff and Lenz (2005) are like-minded and indicate that the goal of discipline is that each learner will be self-disciplined and self-directed. Nelson (2002, 10) describes the aim of discipline as bringing the impulses and conduct of learners in harmony with the ideas and standards of the school, administrators, teachers and the community. Rogers (2002, 7) indicates that the aims of discipline are to enable the individual and the class group to take ownership of and be accountable for their behaviour; to enable learners to develop self-discipline in relation to others; to respect the rights of others in their classes and across the school as well as to build workable relationships between teachers and learners.

According to Gaustad (2005), school discipline has two main goals: firstly, to ensure safety of staff and learners and secondly, to create an environment conducive to learning. She adds that serious learner misconduct involving violent or criminal behaviour defeats these goals. Lewis and Clark (2005) also describe the aim of discipline in terms of the environment, by indicating that the main goal of discipline is to facilitate a climate of responsibility for all members of the school community. They add that it involves helping individuals identify those responsibilities and accept the attendant natural and logical consequences for the choices they make. According to New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2005), the aim of discipline is to develop learner responsibility, encourage respect and create good conditions for effective teaching and learning. In line with the latter, Griffin (2005) asserts that "The paramount aim of school discipline should be to endow each pupil with such habits, self-respect and proper pride of his own integrity that he will observe the norms of good conduct when not under supervision and will carry them eventually into his adult life." From the above it is evident that the main goal of discipline in schools is to shape young people to become responsible adults, able to make appropriate decisions and accept the consequences of these decisions. Mbiti (2002, 83) points out that they should be self-disciplined individuals; the kind of persons who do not simply "swim in the current". Discipline also permits teachers to do the kind of job in the classroom for which they are commissioned and encourages children to respect other people and live as responsible, constructive citizens. Discipline is therefore at the centre of any learning because "formal learning is impossible without it" (Nasibi 2003, 14).

Forms of indiscipline in secondary schools

According to a report by the Provincial Students' Discipline Committee in Central Province, indiscipline in secondary

schools took various forms [Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) 2000/2001, 19]. Bullying was cited in this report to be one of the most common forms of indiscipline in secondary schools. Efforts by the administration to stamp out bullying in some schools have resulted in chaos or riots. Nelson (2002, 35) indicates that bullying in schools is an international problem. In most cases, bullying is interpreted as direct physical aggression, as well as indirect behaviour such as verbal threats. Indiscipline is also manifested in booing (MOEST 2000/2001, 19). Constant booing by learners when addressed by members of staff is a strong indication of indiscipline. Indiscipline is also evident in strange behaviour like intentional loud sneezing and clearing of throats, nasty remarks and inscriptions on boards and walls. Learners feigning illness and frequent absenteeism without good reasons are also signs of indiscipline. Indiscipline also takes the form of drug abuse and is rampant in Kenyan schools [Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) 2004, 2]. This could be a result of negative peer influence and learners are forced to adhere to all that is said and done by their peers (MOEST 2000/2001, 19). Mwiria, (2004a, 7) observes that schools largely mirror the practice of the wider society. Drugs and alcohol abuse and related social ills are problems in schools because they are commonplace outside schools. He adds that drugs and alcohol are easily available and relevant laws are not enforced as effectively as they could be. It was also found that absenteeism, disobedience, dishonesty, untidiness, laziness and lack of seriousness in academic work are serious behaviour problems in secondary schools in Kenya (Kiprop 2004, 61). Mwiria (2004b, 11) observes that learners have exhibited laziness and lack of discipline by refusing to take mock examinations; rejecting head teachers and their deputies who are seen to be disciplinarians; showing disdain for the clothes some lady teachers wear; opposing extra tuition; engaging in alcohol and bhang abuse or love affairs with fellow students; refusing to clean school facilities or following bad examples of peers in neighbouring schools. According to MOEST (2000/2001, 1), strikes and boycotts, which are also forms of indiscipline, may take the form of violent destruction of property; boycotting classes, meals and other learner duties; walk-outs; learners pelting teachers with stones and sticks; arson; looting and murder threats. According to Wekesa (2005), learners do not use dialogue when they are aggrieved; in most cases, they prefer strikes which come with destruction of property.

Factors that contribute to indiscipline in Kenyan schools

This section deals with the main focus of this paper, namely the factors that contribute to indiscipline in Kenyan schools. These factors are divided into internal and external factors. The internal factors cover factors relating to the principals, teachers, learners and support staff. External factors are divided into the immediate community surrounding the school (parents, school board of governors, the context of the school), political leaders, policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and other factors not included in the previous categories. As the reporting on these factors is fairly comprehensive, it is presented in table format with references to the literature in the table.

Table 1: Factors that contribute to indiscipline in Kenyan schools

INTERNAL FACTORS Principal	Poor managerial skills (MOEST 2001, 1; Mwiria 2004b, 11; KESI 2004, 3) Poor administration (Mwiria 2004b, 11) Poor service delivery (KESI 2004, 3)
INTERNAL FACTORS Teachers	Absenteeism, non-punctuality, inadequate commitment, sexual relationships with learners, favouritism (Mwiria 2004b, 11) Shortage of teachers, incompetence of teachers (Kamotho 2001, 6) Failure to adhere to professional documents, lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, poor role models, no proper guidance to learners (KESI 2004, 4) Poor teaching methods and presentation (MOEST 2000/2001, 20) Boring, irrelevant lessons (Muijs and Reynolds 2001, 141) Lack of contemporary innovative educational programmes that meet their needs (Levin and Nolan 2000, 44) Hostile environment created by school authorities (Fadhili 2005, 10) Unjustifiable and inconsistent punishment (MOEST 2000/2001, 13) Approaches to control students and classrooms that are unsuitable for developing mutual respect and shared responsibility (Queen, Blackwelder and Mallen 1997, 5) Disunity in the teaching staff (MOEST 2000/2001, 2).
INTERNAL FACTORS Learners	“I don’t care” attitude among learners (KESI 2004, 4) Peer group influence (MOEST 2004a) Increased drug abuse resulting in declining standards of discipline (Fadhili 2005, 10; MOEST 2004b; KESI 2004, 4; Wekesa 2005) Examination phobia (KESI 2004, 4; Fadhili 2005, 10) Poor examination results (MOEST 2004a) Lack of participation in decision-making (MOEST 2001, 2; Kenya Women Advisory Organisation 2005). Quality, quantity, variety and serving system of food in schools (MOEST 2000/2001, 10; Fadhili 2005, 10) Problems with fee payment (KESI 2004, 4)
INTERNAL FACTORS Support staff	Causing general incitement, sabotaging the school programme, supplying alcohol and other drugs to learners as a source of income (Odaló 2004, 11) Providing civilian clothing for learners to sneak out of school; feeling undervalued and underpaid (Thody, Gray and Bowden 2003, 25).
EXTERNAL FACTORS Immediate community of the school <u>Parents</u>	Poor parenting, absentee parents, defending their children even when they are in the wrong (MOEST 2001, 2; Barmao 2004, 10; Fadhili 2005, 10) Failing to pay fees leading to poor service delivery, making disparaging remarks about the principal and teachers in the presence of learners, over-protecting their children and thereby making them more indisciplined because they do not anticipate any action to be taken against them, creating a conducive environment for drug abuse by taking alcohol in the presence of the children, setting unrealistically high expectations hence putting pressure and stress on their children, practicing incest and sexual abuse of children leading to general antagonism and stigma as well as giving too much or too little pocket money (KESI 2004, 5) Limited interactions between parents, teachers and students; parents’ negative attitude to teachers and principals; parents’ reaction to school disciplinary procedures, rules and regulations (Kiprop 2004, 42) Failing to instill discipline in their children; enrolling them in competitive schools where they do not measure up; challenging teachers who punish their wayward children; reaching out to senior authorities to deal with teachers who discipline their children; allowing their children too many privileges in school environments dominated by less fortunate children (Mwiria 2004a, 7) Values at home are not necessarily the same as those at school (Muijs and Reynolds 2001, 48)
EXTERNAL FACTORS Immediate community of the school <u>School Committees / Board of Governors</u>	[These are principal community agents in the management of educational institutions in Kenya (Kyungu 2001,5). They are legal entities recognized by the Education Act of 1968; should have a membership catering for all stakeholders (MOEST 2004b)] Lack expertise in professional management, training and/or proper guidance; sometimes interfere with smooth running of institutions because of their ignorance of the Ministry’s policies. Some unacceptable behaviour displayed by some members includes making unrealistic demands on the school (e.g. employment for relatives, admitting children/relatives to school without paying fees or having tenders awarded to them), not accepting school principals from religious denominations other than theirs; introducing programmes that run parallel to school programmes thus placing a lot of pressure on the children (Kyungu 2001, 6)
EXTERNAL FACTORS Immediate community of the school <u>Context</u>	[A schools does not exist in isolation; it is a microcosm of the larger society; discipline problems in schools reflect societal problems (Levin and Nolan 2000, 41)] Some school contexts are not conducive to positive physical and/or social development in learners. Examples of negative behavior are truancy, alcohol and drug abuse and sexual immorality (KESI 2004, 5; MOEST 2000/2001, 1). Some communities insist on having people of the local ethnicity heading their local schools. They also demand that the schools should select students from the local community even if they do not qualify KESI (2004, 5). This could result in unqualified principals running schools – this is the cause of many of the school crises.
EXTERNAL FACTORS Political leaders	Unrealistic expectations from the community also cause stress within the school community, leading to riots as a means of letting off steam (Mwiria 2004a, 7). Criticizing the outlawing of corporal punishment without consulting the immediate stakeholders; influencing the nomination of BOG members, which could lead to poor decision making in schools, thus contributing to student unrest in secondary schools (MOEST 2001, 1). Some decisions on bursary allocations by local Members of Parliament (MPs) have led to delays in bursary disbursement – this leads to poor service delivery as learners fail to pay fees in anticipation of these bursaries.

EXTERNAL
FACTORS

Policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)

Principals of secondary schools are in a dilemma as they cannot afford to keep the non-paying students in school, yet the government insists that they should not be sent away (Kareithi 2004, 18).

Allocating bursaries to needy learners has also become difficult as preference is given to people who support the MPs interests (Oduor 2004, 18).

Some political leaders make careless remarks about school principals and teachers in public meetings, thus demoralising educators. Some MPs influence the appointment of principals without considering merit or experience. Evidence of nepotism in employment of educational managers is widespread (Mwiria 2004a, 7; KESI 2004, 6).

Most MOEST policies are put in place without consultation with the people on the ground (implementers). This leads to difficulties in interpretation and implementation. According to KESI (2004, 6), the use of the “top-bottom” approach in policy formulation makes the recipients passive and this causes bottlenecks.

Weak enforcement and follow-up on policy issues, aggravated by inadequate and poor inspection of schools. Banning of corporal punishment without providing appropriate replacement has created problems in the management of discipline in schools (MOEST 2001, 2).

Through outlawing of the cane, authority of teachers has been undermined (KESI 2004, 6).

Failure to establish and support Guidance and Counselling units in schools. Many schools do not have relevantly well-trained teachers or well-established counseling departments; where relevant teachers exist, they are utilized in classroom teaching due to staff shortages (Nation Team 2005).

Appointment of principals and their deputies is not always based on proper guidelines; there have been cases where competent heads and deputies have been replaced by less competent ones, leading to frustration among teachers who in turn project this onto the students (Mwiria 2004a, 7).

Some principals bought their positions after bribing education heads and officials in the Teachers’ Service Commission (Katuku 2004, 11).

Inappropriate staffing in some schools, which leads to employment of teachers on BOG terms. This promotes the diversion of resources, which is wasteful (KESI 2004, 6).

Many principals believe that the MOEST did not consult with society regarding the philosophy that underpins the ban on corporal punishment (Kiprop 2004, 50).

EXTERNAL
FACTORS
Other

The media has been blowing discipline issues out of proportion, at times glorifying violence (MOEST 2000/2001, 2). This could lead to learner unrest as neighbouring schools follow the example of those who have gone on the rampage (Standard Team 2004, 12).

Advertisements related to drugs, condoms, kissing and alcohol, result in learners imitating them. Pornographic literature available on the streets advocates immoral behaviour (KESI 2004, 6).

Television and other media glorify and promote irresponsible, harmful behaviour (Respect Education 2005).

According to Odalo (2004, 11), the government has condoned immorality by allowing evil literature and videos to be easily accessed by students and children.

Queen *et al.* (1997, 13) also observe that the media regularly introduce children to ideas for which they have been ill-prepared. Complex issues and problems, normally in the adult arena, have been thrust on children indiscriminately, sometimes resulting in confusion, questioning of authority and an increase in pressure.

Poor role models are also cited as a cause of indiscipline in schools (Odalo 2004, 11; MOEST 2000/2001, 3; Berreth and Berman 1997, 27; Queen *et al.* 1997, 4).

One of the national objectives of education in Kenya, the promotion of national unity (MOEST 2001, 15), has been undermined by the political divisions which exist in the country that trickle down to schools (KESI 2004, 7). This divides teachers and students on ethnic grounds and political allegiances, causing indiscipline in Kenyan secondary schools (Barmao 2004, 10).

Unemployment has led to the promotion of an attitude that education and schooling is for passing time, creating a sense of hopelessness and a lack of motivation in learners (MOEST 2001, 17; Mwiria 2004a, 7). This problem is further exacerbated by the government’s inability to fund secondary school education due to budgetary constraints (Kyungu 2001, 6).

The quality of education has also been affected by inadequacy of physical facilities and teaching/learning materials as well as a curriculum too broad in scope to be adequately covered within the stipulated period (Kyungu 2001, 6).

Run-down and dilapidated schools, with poor facilities, could have a negative effect on learners’ behavior and this may lead to increased vandalism (Cowley 2001, 129; Jones and Charlton 1996, 24).

Effects of indiscipline in Kenyan schools

In various government reports, the following are given as the effects of student indiscipline in Kenya:

- Poor performance and cheating in examinations as a result of the syllabus having been covered inadequately. This poses a great threat to the future of the country as it lowers its rate of development.
- Damage to school property leading to loss of teaching-learning facilities. Learners often throw stones, break windowpanes, loot school and personal property when they go on strike.
- Loss of teaching/learning time.
- High drop-out rate and hence an increase in the crime rate in society.
- Extra financial burden on parents as they pay for damages caused by rampaging learners.
- Strained relationships between teachers and learners. Low morale develops among teachers when they were physically assaulted by learners.
- Demotivation of staff and the school community. Committed teachers may not like to be associated with schools with poor discipline.
- Mass transfers of learners to other schools lead to declining enrolment in troubled schools. This leads to underutilization of resources.

- Mass admission of learners from other schools to fill the vacancies resulting from mass transfers. The new admissions are predominantly indiscipline cases who with time create disorder in their new schools.
- Expulsion of indisciplined learners means termination of schooling for most of them. They later become a social burden, misfits in the society and this leads to educational wastage.
- Loss of life has been experienced in schools when some learners locked up their peers in cubicles and set them on fire.
- Hostility between the school and the local community is created by the anti-social activities displayed by learners.
- Replacement of some items may be difficult after arson e.g. certificates, library books, vehicles and others.
- Poor handling of unrest may create distrust among stakeholders.
- Unrest tarnishes the image and credibility of the school.
- Actual bodily harm/injuries to staff and other learners (KESI 2004; MOEST 2000/2001; MOEST 2004a)

Conclusion

From the above documentary analysis, it is evident that indiscipline among learners in secondary schools has disastrous repercussions for other learners, schools, parents and society at large. It has contributed to the dismal performance of learners in class and national examinations, an indication that there is a direct relationship between academic excellence and the quality of school discipline. The effects of indiscipline have also had far-reaching consequences in the larger society leading to loss of property and disruption of social life through riots and strikes. This indicates that there is an urgent need to address the issue of indiscipline in secondary schools with more seriousness.

It is also clear that most learner misbehaviour is related to the learners' desire to attain acceptance, gain a feeling of belonging and enjoy a measure of success. Learners behave in socially acceptable ways when appropriate avenues towards those ends remain open to them. When the avenues are closed off, they turn to unsuitable means for reaching the goals, which results in unacceptable behaviour. It is worth noting that the role of parents in the life of the child is of paramount significance. Parents are the first link in preventing problems in effective school discipline practices. Parents who are involved in their children's daily school lives have a better understanding of what is acceptable and expected in the school environment. Varkey (1997, 17) contends that the "parent can be prince charming that turns the children into princes or princesses or the witch that turns them into frogs." It is important that educators and the general public at large realize that what happens in our schools today may be a reflection of what the society is like. Schools do not and cannot conduct their work in a vacuum, isolated from 'external' influences, forces and claims. For reasons of principle as well as practical reasons, a school must attend to, and, where necessary, respond to 'external' realities and demands. From the above it is clear that there are many and varied reasons why learners

misbehave. The way in which discipline is handled by authority figures models how learners themselves might solve problems in the future. Knowing why a learner misbehaves might facilitate in identifying an appropriate disciplinary strategy that will help children behave now as well as in the future, when they are expected to make independent decisions. Since corporal punishment was banned in Kenya in 2001, learner unrest, drug abuse, bullying, boycotts of lessons and other forms of indiscipline such as absenteeism, disobedience to authority, dishonesty, untidiness, laziness and lack of seriousness in academic work, have increased. This study has investigated the factors that contribute to student indiscipline in Kenya and the way they are handled, as reflected in the literature. The indisputable conclusion can be made that the blame does not lie with the banning of corporal punishment in schools as such, but rather with virtually all education stakeholders: learners, teachers, principals, governing boards, administrators, sponsors, politicians, and society at large.

Indiscipline in schools affects the day-to-day school management. Schools incur unbudgeted costs in repairing property that learners have destroyed hence overburdening parents financially. Indiscipline is also associated with poor performance in schools, which pose a great threat to the country's future as it lowers the rate of development. Indiscipline also leads to a high drop-out rate hence increasing the crime rate in society. It also leads to closure of some institutions and loss of lives. Hence whichever form it takes, indiscipline in schools affects the social fabric, the economy and the psychological well-being of the people. Considering all of this, it is imperative that all involved should cooperate to develop a strategy and an action plan to improve the quality of discipline in schools. The government department in charge of education and every school have the responsibility to create a climate in which learners can satisfy their needs in a socially acceptable manner. They must devise operational procedures, provide the means of attaining the goals and, above all, identify negative conditions and bottlenecks within the system that might result in indiscipline with the aim of taking corrective action. Although this study is based on conditions in Kenya, the problem it addresses is universal and it is likely that the outcome of the study as well as the proposed solution, are also universally relevant.

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