

# Sponsors Role in Managing Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Kisumu West Sub-County, Kenya

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## Abstract

In Kenya religious sponsors are empowered by the Education Act to participate in the management of public secondary schools. The purpose of the study was to examine sponsors role in managing students' discipline in public secondary schools. Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of 42 deputy principals (DPs), 42 Parents Association Chairpersons (PACs), 42 Principals, 2 Quality Assurance and Standard Officers (QASOs) and 5 Priests. Purposive sampling which involved 42 DPs, 42 PACs, 42 Principals, 2 QASOs and 5 Priests. Data collection instruments included: Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide. Data was analyzed by descriptive statistics as frequency counts, means and percentages, presented in tabular forms. Findings revealed that discipline challenges facing students was related to high level of poverty recorded at 58.1% by the DPs while PACs was recorded at 60%. It was recommended that high level of poverty which makes the parents not to provide the basic items and even failure to pay fees in time should be addressed. In conclusion, religious sponsors should actively be involved in the management of students' discipline.

**Keywords:** Religious sponsors Management Students' Discipline Schools Kisumu Kenya.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious organizations are very important institutions all over the world when it comes to establishment and management of educational centers. According to a report by Commonwealth Secretariat (2017), in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, educational institutions were established by known world religions such as Christianity, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhism in various parts of the world. The Church of England was committed to partnership with the State, this partnership followed the 1944 Education Act which guaranteed State funding for church schools but allowed the church to retain control as major providers for the development of the schools. This was in terms of religious traditions, pastoral programs, guidance and counseling and chaplaincy system. The works of Chadwick, Ainsworth, Gwynne, O'Reilly & Brown (2016); Deem (2015) observed that most modern educational systems in Italy, Spain and Latin America had been shaped by the interactions between religious organizations and the state. In Saudi Arabia and Iran, Islam was a major deciding factor in the school's management. They further

observed that in Thailand; although largely a Buddhist country, religious schools also existed along state ones (Sandra 2014). While the work of Deem (2015) dealt with administrators' management style, effectiveness and teacher morale, the current study dealt with management of Students' discipline in public secondary schools to fill the research gap.

Research done in Indonesia by Siraiti (2016) indicated that the church is a major player in deciding directional changes in the education department. It has been involved in the educational management and administering of curriculum extension. However, the main concern of the church was to ensure that its doctrines or traditions was perpetuated into the schooling process which it helped to serve. In Sub-Saharan African countries, like Nigeria, according to Akinbode and Abati (2019) management and administration of education is under the influence of religious organizations. They played a pioneering role towards the establishment of educational institutions (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017). In Tanzania, the role played by religious sponsors was commended by the studies done by Nyanda Yambo

and Getange (2018; Nyagiati and Yambo (2018) who found that they supplemented the efforts of other education providers in the country like the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the provision of quality education (Bakar 2015).

In Kenya, the work of Yambo (2012) reiterated that religious organizations built new schools, recruited and trained teachers, oversaw the implementation of curriculum, taught and approved the teaching approaches. Religious sponsors were part of stakeholders in the management of students' discipline in schools and are therefore empowered by the Education Act of Kenya 2013 to participate in school management (Wabwoba & Simatwa 2010). The researcher further observed that top performing schools in Kenya were majorly established by religious organizations. During the missionary era, religious sponsors provided services such as pastoral care, chaplaincy and guidance and counseling which were instrumental in management of students' discipline, moral growth and spiritual nourishment in public secondary schools.

The religious sponsors are working hard in the provision of quality education. According to Onderi and Makori (2013) they dominate in the establishment and sponsoring of public secondary schools. More statistics showed that out of forty-two (42) public schools in Kisumu West sub County in Kenya, the Anglican Church accounted for 57.14% (24 schools), the Roman Catholic church for 26.19% (11 schools), the African Inland Church for 4.76% (2 schools), the Pentecostal Assembly of God 4.76% (2 schools) while other African Churches 7.15% (3 schools). The religious sponsors are expected to work closely with other education stakeholders in the provision of strong religious tradition, doctrines and ethos that will help to promote high level of students' discipline and moral stability in public secondary schools they sponsor (Yambo 2022a). Gross indiscipline exhibited in schools in the form of students' strikes were reported in 5 schools, cheating during national examinations was reported in 1 school, cases of drug abuse were reported in 5 schools and drop out due to early pregnancy among female students were reported in 10 schools. All these were clear indicators that indiscipline still persists in schools. In view of these, the study therefore sought to explore role of religious sponsors in management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in and Kisumu West Sub-county.

### Statement of the Problem

Ordinarily, church sponsored schools are supposed to be exceptional in all their undertakings in school. Religious sponsors create an enabling environment for moral growth, spiritual nourishment and discipline in schools. Despite the concerted efforts by religious sponsors, cases of various forms of indiscipline are still rampant in schools in Kisumu west sub-County, for example five out of forty-two (12%) secondary schools went on strike 2.3% were involved in

examination cheating, 12% were involved in drug cases while 24% dropped out due to early pregnancy during the year 2014 (Sub-County Office 2014). There is still doubt on how the religious sponsors instill moral and spiritual teachings to the students' fraternity to ensure the expected high level of discipline. It was therefore important to explore role of religious sponsors in management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kisumu West Sub-county.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Influence of Religious Sponsors in Management of Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools

Management of students discipline has been a collective responsibility. Research done by Sandra (2014) on how principals should relate with teachers in discipline matters revealed that the church took up positions in the boards of management, enshrined Christian values, pastoral care and chaplaincy in the management systems of the religious sponsored schools. The Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) had the mandate to measure or evaluate all the academic and non-academic activities in sponsored schools (Deem 2015). Churches have been trying their best in doing their role as sponsor like the Church of England for instance, attributes her success to the national society which was founded in 1811. The work of Bush (2018) stated that church's commitment to partnership with the state had found its unique form in the 1944 Education Act which guaranteed state funding for church schools but allowed the churches to retain considerable independence and control as a major provider with the state in the maintained school dual systems. Here the church involved itself in provision of religious concepts and traditions which were very essential as discipline management strategies in educational institutions.

In Nigeria, culture and religion are closely connected to schools sponsorship. According to Omo-Egbekuse, Omaze and Imobekhai (2013) a study on teachers competency and curriculum development in Nigerian schools noted that curriculum in religious sponsored schools included all extra class activities and counseling services, it should be oriented towards providing school programs which structured the environment to coordinate the elements of space, equipment and personnel. Moreover, Akinbode and Abati (2019) opined that the involvement of church sponsors has lowered the level of students' indiscipline in schools to a large extent. All the sponsor activities were expected to mold the character of individuals and assist in their personal development. In Tanzania, the work of Nyagiati and Yambo (2018) on examination of teacher's attitude towards open performance appraisal on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Serengeti District, Tanzania revealed that both teachers and parents involvement in the learning process leads better academic achievement. When the efforts of parents and teachers are combined with that of the church as sponsor, more education outcome could be realized.

As put forward by Nyanda *et al.*, (2018) the role of the school sponsor has been key in bringing sanity to schools for the religious morals they are propagating plus chaplaincy programs are meant to curb indiscipline cases among students.

In Kenya, a study conducted by Cherop and Wanyonyi (2015) who investigated the role of religious sponsors in the development of public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County was to examine the relationship between religious sponsors and primary schools' development. The researchers found out that there was a close relationship between religious sponsors and schools' infrastructural development (Yambo 2022a). They used descriptive survey as their research design and stratified random sampling, purposive sampling as sampling procedures. However, the present study differed with the past study in that it focused on role of religious sponsors in management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kisumu West Sub County to fill the research gap.

In terms of students' discipline which goes hand in hand with their academic performance, the work of Omulama and Yambo (2023) on satisfaction level of the working environment among teachers on students' academic achievement in Kakamega County in Kenya was found to be equally significant. In this regard, the school sponsors should create conducive working environment for teachers and other non-teaching staff to do their work hence effective service delivery. Students discipline needs to be given more time and attention and consequently, some churches have decided to hire the services of trained chaplains for spiritual input on the same. Typically, Anindo (2018) who dealt with challenges and prospects in the implementation of re-entry policy of girls in secondary schools added that before the girls are fully settled back to school they need proper guidance and counseling plus pastoral counseling championed by a chaplain. While the work of Omulama and Yambo (2023) had a total of 1769 as target population of respondents, the current study dealt with a population of 153 to fill the research gap.

Active church participation in school matters has brought sanity in schools. According to Wabwoba and Simatwa (2010) who conducted a study based on the contribution of the Quakers church in the management of public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County, found that the Quakers church dominated sponsorship of schools in Bungoma East Sub-County. The schools which previously had multiple discipline cases now had them reduced considerably. In the absence of corporal punishment, the church made use of guidance and counseling plus active chaplaincy programs which has brought about spiritual edification as well in management of students' discipline. A study conducted by Kombo and Gogo (2012) on the role of the church in the provision of early childhood education in Nairobi County was to establish the role of the churches in the

provision of early childhood education in Nairobi County as an alternative source to supplement the effort of parents and local communities. Their objectives were to establish the policies of Christian churches on the provision of early childhood education, to identify the main curriculum taught in the church-based pre-schools and to establish the challenges facing pre-schools in Nairobi County. The current study delved into the role of religious sponsors in management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kisumu West Sub County to fill the research gap.

The work of Muindi (2008) noted that high level of discipline and moral stability is attributed to strong religious traditions provided by the religious church sponsors. This in turn translated into good management hence contributing to a stable and friendly environment where teachers, students and support staff receive appropriate stimulation. Studies done by Kowino, Agak and Obiero (2011) recognized that the Education Commission of 1964 embraced the role of religious sponsors in fostering moral growth through spiritual nourishment and the teaching of religious knowledge. Furthermore, the strengthening of guidance and counseling, pastoral care and chaplaincy programs should be put in place since corporal punishment had been outlawed (Kombo & Gogo 2012). The church was quick to incorporate spiritual nourishment, guidance and counseling to mitigate the vacuum occasioned by the ban of corporal punishment in schools.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) cross-sectional design is a kind of survey in which the researcher uses different category of people at the same time. Additionally, it was suitable for the study because it allowed the use of questionnaire which is analyzed using descriptive statistics.

### Population of the Study

The study involved 42 public secondary schools sponsored by various churches. The target population was 42 Parents Association (PA) chairpersons, 42 Principals, 42 Deputy Principals (DPs), 2 Quality Assurance and Standard Officers (QASOs) and 5 Priests.

### Sampling

The sampling technique was purposive sampling involving all the targeted ones for they were few and had needed characteristics. This type of sampling was best poised to provide the desired information (Sekaran 2006).

### Data Collection

The data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide. According to Saunders *et al.*, (2009) questionnaires and interviews were used extensively in education research

to collect information which was not directly observable. This allowed data to be collected from many respondents within a short period of time (Sekaran 2006). Validity was done by the candid scrutiny of experts from the department of educational administration from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Agriculture and Technology (JOUST). The work of Saunders *et al.*, (2009) opined that to ensure reliability of the instruments the researcher conducted a pilot study which was administered in 5 public secondary schools sponsored by church organization; these schools were not included in the actual study. Test- retest was used to determine the reliability of the research instruments. Pearson coefficient correlation was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content was reliable. A correlation coefficient(r) of 0.7 was gotten and considered high enough to judge the reliability of the instrument.

**Data Analysis**

In data analysis, information derived from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively. Quantitative data involved descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts, percentages, means and standard

deviation while Qualitative data involved the use of content analysis, transcribing data into themes and sub-themes as they emerged from the field (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Responses received from interviews were analyzed through narratives and enriched with quotation from key informants and other respondents as inscribed in the report. Information drawn from document analysis guides were analyzed through content as per emerging themes. The privacy of the participants and confidentiality of their personal information was respected and consistent with the international human rights law (Sekaran 2006).

**RESULTS**

**Influence of Religious Sponsors in Management of Students’ Discipline**

The research question was: What is the influence of religious sponsors in management of students’ discipline?

This research question was responded to by 30DPs, 31PACs, 30 Principals, 2 QASOs, and 5 Priests.

**Table 1: Response on Influence of Religious Sponsors Involvement in Management of Students’ Discipline as Indicated by DPs (n=30) and PACs (n=31)**

Factors influencing sponsor church involvement	DPs F (%)	MEAN	SD	PACs F (%)	MEAN	SD
Low level of parental involvement	29(93.5)	4.4	0.9	27(90)	4.1	0.7
Boy girl relationship	27(87)	4.0	0.9	22(73.3)	3.6	1.2
Misunderstanding	26(83.9)	3.9	0.8	22(73.3)	3.7	0.8
High level of poverty	18(58.1)	3.4	1.2	18(60.0)	3.5	1.2

Table 1 the results of the study indicated that 93.5 percent of the DPs and 90 percent of the PACs perceived low level of parental involvement as a pulling factor, this was followed by boy-girl relationship at 87 percent for DPs and 73.3 percent for PACs, DPs perception on misunderstanding was recorded at 83.9 percent while PACs was 73.3 percent high level of poverty was recorded at 58.1% by the DPs while PACs was recorded at 60 percent.

**DISCUSSION**

In table 1, the standard deviations displayed are less significant hence are indicating that the DPs and the PACs were much in agreement that low level of parental involvement, boy-girl relationship, misunderstanding and high level of poverty influenced the sponsor involvement in the management of students’ discipline. These findings concur with the work of Siraiti (2016) which contended that the church is a major player in deciding directional changes in the education department. Similarly, Akinbode and Abati (2019); Yambo (2012) equally pointed out that sponsors play key roles in enhancing discipline in schools. Parental obligation is an important aspect to be considered when

management of students’ discipline is to succeed. Parents need to provide the essential learning items to the students since the government cannot provide everything needed in public schools.

**During Interview with the Principal, one of them noted that:**

Low level of parental involvement in the provision of learning materials to the students is a factor creating indiscipline cases in secondary schools. Those parents who do not provide enough learning material and personal effects to the students encourage them to steal from one another (Principal 14).

**While another Principal Reported that:**

Parents often failed to give their sons and daughters enough learning materials when they are reporting to school. For example, a number of parents failed to provide sets, calculators, pens and revision books; this has prompted the students to steal from other students whose parents had provided the materials (Principal, 9).

In order to address such instances of indiscipline, Chadwick *et al.*, (2016) supported these

findings by adding that pastoral programs, guidance and counseling and chaplaincy should be fully operational in schools.

#### **One of the Qasos, Observed that:**

Most parents have abdicated their roles to the teachers, apart from failing to discipline the sons and daughters they have also failed to provide the necessary academic requirements thus encouraging theft and physical fights within the school (QASO 3).

#### **While another QASO Noted:**

Parents fear visiting schools because the teachers would remind them of their responsibilities which they have already forgotten (QASO 2).

#### **One of the Priests Observed that:**

Parents do fail to provide enough learning materials and even when they are invited to attend open day for a very few of them report so as to discuss the matter with the school authority, this has made theft cases be very high in school (Priest 1).

#### **While another Priest Reported that:**

Parents feared visiting schools where their sons and daughters are learning because the teachers would remind them of their forgotten responsibilities, including provision of learning materials (Priest 4).

Conversely, these findings imply that most parents are not fully involved towards the provision of basic items; failure by parents to be involved in the provision of basic learning materials in school has been cited as an influential factor that has made the sponsor church be involved. Parents who don't provide for essential materials to their sons and daughters in schools make them develop behavioral patterns such as stealing and fighting which are against Christian practice (Atieno & Yambo 2017). The finding of this study was also consistent with studies conducted by Yambo (2022b). Further, Anindo (2018) who revealed that inadequate parental involvement in the education of their children and long term separation were attributed to students' indiscipline in schools which had been expressed in the form of theft and physical struggle over school and personal items.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study found out that low level of parental involvement influences religious sponsors to take part in students' discipline management. The research question was: What is the influence of religious sponsors in management of students' discipline? It was concluded that low level of parental involvement, boy-girl relationships, misunderstanding among sponsors and high level of poverty influenced the sponsors' involvement in the management of students' discipline.

Other negative influences include; Boy-girl relationships, misunderstanding and high level of

poverty in the region was attested to. The study recommended that pastoral programs, guidance and counseling and chaplaincy services should be fully operational in schools. The Ministry of Education needs to review the policy on religious sponsorship in public secondary schools, there seems to be lack of awareness on the rights and obligations of the sponsors towards management of students' discipline. It was also found out that parents/guardians have abdicated their duties to teachers and other care givers in schools.

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