
The Role of Guardians and Parents in Addressing Students' Indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya**Tabitha Muthoni Njoroge*, James Kuria, Peter Koome**

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Abstract: Education as a means of achieving economic development has become a respectable and challenging subject for scholarly research and analysis. Most studies indicate that many children are growing up without proper guidance from their parents. The parents/ guardians are largely absent and housemaids, the media and peers have become the main socialization agents of most children today. This study established the part guardians and parents play in addressing students' discipline problems in public day secondary schools in Nakuru sub County, Nakuru County, Kenya. Nakuru East sub-County has 31 public day secondary schools, 18,600 students, 31 principals, and 806 teachers. Sixteen schools were randomly selected for the study. Data was collected from 80 parents, 50 students, and 24 teachers who were selected randomly from the 16 schools using questionnaires. Eight principals were also interviewed. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed using the thematic technique. Result found that stealing/ theft, skiving or truancy, and distraction in class were the most common forms of indiscipline in the schools. It was also found that there is little involvement of parent in addressing disciplinary issues. The study did arrive at a concrete verdict regarding the parenting styles of most parents/ guardians because different stakeholders have varying views. However, all stakeholders agreed that parenting style influences students' discipline to a great extent. The study recommends that stakeholder particular teachers educate parents regarding parenting styles and their impact on student's behavior. The study also recommends strengthening cooperation between teachers, students, principals, and parents so as to enhance discipline within the schools.

Keywords: Parents/guardians, students' discipline, public day secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education as a tool for driving economic progress has become a reputable and thought-provoking subject for scholarly research and analysis. The belief that education is vital to development is most evidently by two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education, which have now been revised to Sustainable Development Goals. Despite significant efforts by the Ministry of Education to curb cases of students' unrests, incidents of indiscipline and delinquent behaviours have remained in schools have prevailed over the years. In fact, the year 2016 has seen the destruction of over seventy schools through arson by students.

These acts of mutiny have been perpetrated either individually by the students or as a group, which result to rioting or revolts. There is no doubt that acts of indiscipline hamper the teaching and learning processes, as well as, undermines the production of acceptable and responsible members of the society. It is further, observed that some guardians and parents

appear to have neglected their parental parts or responsibilities towards their children.

Kabiru [1] observed that guardians and parents contributed a lot to their children by among other things being bad part models and by avoiding parental responsibility. Alidzulwi [2] revealed that parental influence constituted a contributing factor to poor discipline among secondary school students. The result also agreed with the remark of Cooper [3], which states that the difference associated with different home background influences one's life which in turn influences ones behaviour. However, studies examining the parenting style and how they influence students discipline within the Kenyan context are sparse. This study therefore aimed to find out the part of participation of parents in improving students' discipline in public day secondary schools in Nakuru East Sub-county.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Part Guardians and parents play in Addressing Students' Discipline Problems

Parental participation in education is necessary in schools because the teachers alone cannot make certain that a child is equipped mentally, intellectually, morally and culturally for adulthood. Parental participation can be practiced in three ways: co-operation, participation and partnership.

Co-operation implies that guardians and parents support the child at home through their actions, such as demonstrating loyalty towards the school and supervising sons and daughters' homework. Participation means that guardians and parents become more participate in school issues e.g. by serving on certain committees and becoming participate in fundraising projects. Partnership constitutes the highest level of parent participation at school level. Van Deventer and Kruger [4] discuss the benefits of parental participation and say that they include improved school performance, reduced drop-out rates, a decrease in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards school.

Parental participation and support benefits schools because they have a profound influence on the culture of learning and teaching. A school with such a culture is characterized by the fact that all part players value the processes of teaching and learning, practice a commitment to teaching and learning, make available the resources needed to facilitate the process and put structures in place to facilitate the process of teaching and learning. A sound culture of learning benefits learners, teachers and parent communities.

In a research study by Sangawi *et al.*, [5], guardians and parents were found to have low levels of awareness of preventive measures used within schools to tackle incidents of poor discipline. The study further reported that guardians and parents only seemed to have an awareness of "reactive" measures used (report, detention, and exclusion) to address poor discipline. Communication between guardians and parents, schools teachers and pupils was found to be inconsistent. Guardians and parents perceived their part as being "external" to the school environment with respect to addressing issues of poor discipline. It observed that a gap existed between internal parts and influences (teaching staff) and external parts and influence (guardians and parents) and the strategic links that could be made to offer an approach to addressing pupil behavior from both parties. The study showed that the home environment had an impact on the discipline of the child. Students, who were victims of some poor discipline behavior, did so because of some personality differences which were a reflection of in very good socialization, particularly at puberty stage. Violent attacks on others and challenge to authority was most likely a result of lack of inbuilt

discipline traits in the learners because the guardians and parents did not instill a culture of discipline at the tender age of childhood, for From Njoya [6], the parent mediates security, health, justice, order, knowledge, affection and peace.

Shaw [7] observed that the parenting trends that had evolved over the last 30 years promoted the development of unattached, uncommunicative, learning-impaired and uncontrollable children. Although economically, there continued to grow a need for more income to bring up a family, the idea of two working guardians and parents had a downside to it. Millions of children returned from school to an empty house. When guardians and parents arrived, they were often tired and preoccupied with problems at work. This meant that teenagers were getting less parenting. Shaw [7] concluded that guardians and parents found themselves enslaved by a materialistic, over-achieving society that led them to spend so many hours at work and so much money that they could not make time to do the things necessary to bond with their children. This also left teenagers with large amounts of unsupervised time. Shaw [7] also stated that in homes where there was a lot of violence between spouses or where the guardians and parents corrected their children through harsh punishment like beating; or where guardians and parents were constantly absent from home, a sense of insecurity and lack of self-esteem developed in the children. Self-esteem could also be destroyed during puberty if young people were not fully explained to the physical and psychological changes taking place in their bodies, a part that fell squarely on guardians and parents.

Guardians and parents seemed to have a challenging view of discipline. Taffel [8] bluntly put it that many guardians and parents abdicated their authority. When this happened, young ones grew up with few, if any rules or guidelines to regulate behavior. In some cases it appeared that guardians and parents were reacting to negative experiences they had in their own childhood. They wanted to be friends with their children, not disciplinarians. Taffel further observed that a "survey of nearly 600 teens in drug treatment in New York, Texas, Florida and California indicated that 20% had shared drugs, other than alcohol with their guardians and parents, and that about 5% of the teens were actually introduced to drugs – usually marijuana – by their moms or dads."

From Hussein [9], love deprivation is similar to attention deprivation. In fact, children usually considered attention to be an indication of how much they were loved. They felt unloved when guardians and parents were too preoccupied to give them sufficient attention. Children often interpreted the lack of time spent as lack of caring and would cause discipline problems as they tried to satisfy this need.

Poor parental guidance had resulted in students indulging themselves in drug abuse. Drug indulgence created a false sense of greatness and power that could explain why rebellion of students occurred accompanied by wanton destruction of property in school. Keyton [10] observed that the challenges of those in charge now was to deal with students who were much younger but yet more exposed in the present world with all its sophistication and negative influences. The era when guardians and parents had authority over their children, he said, was no longer there and we had to refashion our upbringing of the youth accordingly to cope with the changing circumstances of life. It was clear that the adolescents' view of authority was also changing.

From Nasibi [11], a child's early view of parental authority became the cornerstone of his future outlook of schools and others with whom the individual would eventually live and work. Van [12] in a study on adolescent behavioral problems noted that, pupils who were victims of some undisciplined behavior do so because of some personality deficiencies, which were a reflection of in very good socialization particularly at puberty stage. Violent attacks on others and challenge to authority was most likely a result of lack of inbuilt disciplined traits in the learners because the guardians and parents did not

instill a culture of discipline at the tender when they could be disciplined.

Delinquents described their guardians and parents disciplinary techniques as erratic, overly strict and involving both physical punishment and a high degree of hostility [13]. The home atmosphere of delinquents was thus characterized by a great degree of parental rejection and a lower degree of cohesiveness than that of non-delinquents. Consequently, guardians and parents of delinquents had minimal aspirations for their offspring. They also expressed little interest in their child's school performance and may have had a host of personality and adjustment problems of their own [13]. Joseph [14] stated that parental liaison was identified as the most very good way of providing support to schools in dealing with pupils who were becoming more difficult to handle at an earlier age.

RESULTS

Role Played by Parents/ Guardians

The second objective of the study was to establish the role played by parents/ guardian in addressing discipline problems in schools. To address this objective, parents were whether they participant in any way in dealing with discipline problems in school. Their response is summarized in Table-1:

Table-1: Whether Parent Participate in Addressing School Discipline Problems

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	24	30.0
	No	56	70.0
	Total	80	100.0

As Table-1 illustrates, about 70% of parents reported that they do not participant in addressing discipline problems in school. This is an unfortunate situation because evidence suggests that parents' involvement in their children discipline is critical to the

realization of positive outcomes. Those who gave an affirmative answer were asked to briefly state how they participant in addressing discipline issues in school. Results are summarized in Figure-1.

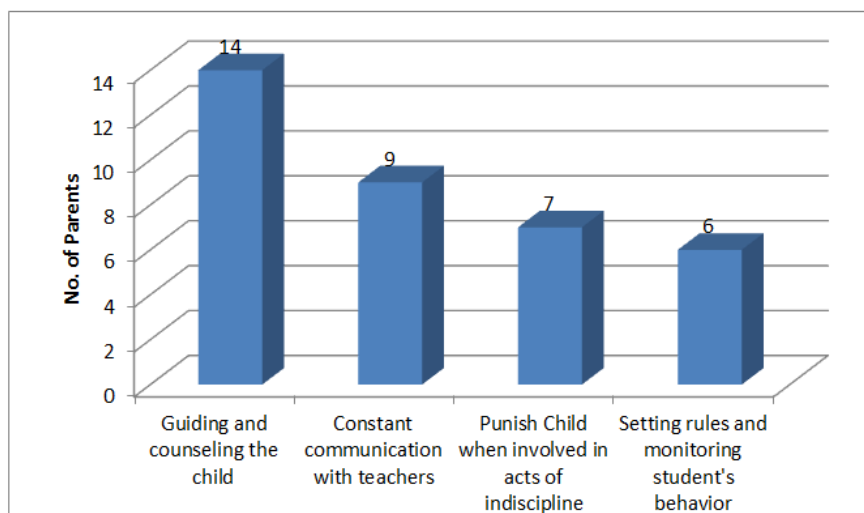


Fig-1: Ways of Parent Involvement in Solving School Indiscipline

As the Figure illustrates, most parents (14, 58.3%) detailed that they address discipline issues by guiding and counseling their child. About nine parents reported that they maintain constant communication with teachers, seven maintained that punish their children whenever they are involved in acts of indiscipline, and six held that the set rules for the

children and monitor their behaviors on a constant basis. The study also sought teachers' views regarding the role that parents play in addressing discipline problems in their school. The teachers were asked to give their views on how parents should participant in solving their children disciplinary issues. Results are presented in Figure-2:

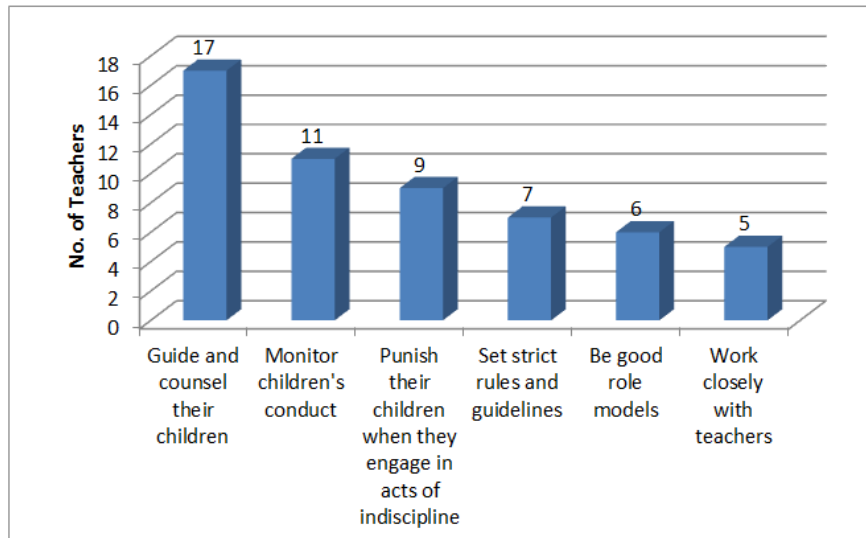


Fig-2: Teacher views on how Parents should participate in solving indiscipline

As illustrated in Figure-2, most teachers believe that guiding and counseling children is the best way in which parents can assist to solve discipline problems in school. Most teachers emphasized that parents should spend more time with their children and give them advice on various life issues. Eleven teachers believed that parents should monitor their children's behavior. They emphasized the need for parents to follow-up what their children are doing and to develop a good understanding about their kids. One teacher proposed that parents should be visiting the

school on a regular basis to follow-up their children's progress in terms of academics and behavior.

Nine teachers believed that the best way in which parent can contribute to solving disciplinary issues is by punishing their children when they engage in acts of indiscipline while seven felt that parents should set strict rules and guidelines for their children. The study also examined students view regarding parent's involvement in addressing discipline issues in the school. Findings are presented in Table-2:

Table-2: Student's View on Parents Involvement

	Frequency	Percent
They are not meaningfully involved	30	60.0
Reporting Off-School Misbehavior	1	2.0
They are called to school when child misbehave	17	34.0
They are invited to give talks to students	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

As the Table illustrates, the majority of students (60%) felt that their parents are not meaningfully involved in solving school discipline problems. About 34% reported that the only way parents are involved in solving disciplinary issue is by calling them to school when the child misbehaves. While this is an important measure, it is a retroactive strategy as parents are called in when the child is already involved in disciplinary problems. While this

strategy may work in solving most forms of indiscipline, it may not be adequate in addressing cases that have consequences that are difficult to reverse such as drug abuse or coupling. More proactive strategy of involvement should also be used. Students were asked to give their views regarding what more parents can do to address school discipline problems. Results are summarized in Figure-3:

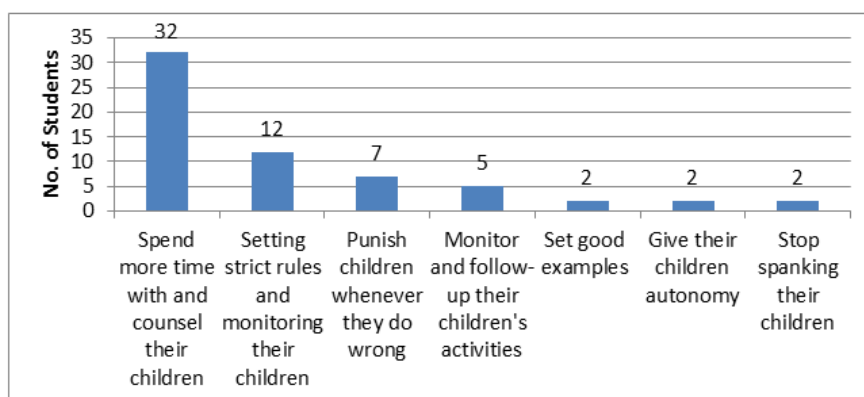


Fig-3: Students view on how else parents can be involved

A majority of the students (32) said that parents they would like to see parents spend more time with their children and counsel them on life issues. About 12 expressed that parents should set strict rules and monitor their children behavior. On the contrary, two students suggested that parents should give their children greater autonomy. Seven students felt that parents should punish children whenever they do wrong with one student advocating for spanking. Two students were, however, of the view that parents should stop spanking their children and use less punitive forms of addressing problem. These findings highlights that students have divided opinion regarding how parents should approach disciplinary issues.

Principles were also asked to give their input on the issue of parent involvement during the interview. A common theme that came out during the interview is that parents should maintain close link with the school. They should visit the school or call to find out how their children are doing. One principle expressed that parents should also avail themselves when their children have disciplinary issues and support the measures taken by teachers. Another theme that appeared frequently was that parents should be good role model to their children. They should teach their children good morals through their examples. Guiding and counseling was also a frequent theme.

CONCLUSION

Role Played by Parents/ Guardians in Addressing Students Indiscipline

The second objective of the study was to investigate the role played by parents/ guardians in addressing students' indiscipline within the schools. When asked about this issue, about 70% of parents reported that they do not participate in solving school discipline problems. About 60% of students also reported that their parent do not play a significant part in solving disciplinary problems at school while 34% reported that their parents are only called to school when their child is involved in a severe form of indiscipline. This is an unfortunate situation given that parents are major stakeholders in the education process; hence, they are expected to play a central role

in promoting discipline. The 30% of parents who confirmed participating in addressing discipline said that they do so by guiding and counseling their children, maintaining constant communication with teachers, punishing the student when involved in indiscipline cases, and setting rules and monitoring their children. Teachers also added that parents can participate in solving discipline problem by being good role models. A few students also felt that parents should stop spanking them and use alternative modes of resolving disciplinary issues.

Parents should also be encouraged to spend more time with their children. The study has established that parent have a major role to play in promoting good behaviors among students. Their approach to disciplining their children should not be reactive such as that they only avail themselves when the child has done something wrong. They should also embrace proactive methods of promoting discipline such as guiding and counseling their children on life issues, setting rules and guidelines, and monitoring their children's activities. They should put more efforts towards understanding their children and make follow-up by visiting or calling schools. Parents should establish good cordial relationships with their children that are based on trust, two-way symmetrical communication, decisiveness, and explanations. Parents should also create a good home environment that will have a positive influence on student's behavior. They should monitor their children's company and being good role models.

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