
The Role of School Management in Enhancing Students' Discipline in Dodoma Region

Sophia Zawadiel Mpokera (Assistant Lecturer)

The Open University of Tanzania, Department of Education, Planning, Policy and Administration, P O Box 23409, Dar es salam, Tanzania

Abstract: *This study investigated the degree to which the school management plays a decisive role in enhancing students' discipline in Tanzanian secondary schools. It was conducted in Dodoma Region particularly in two districts namely Dodoma Urban and Chamwino. A total of 132 respondents were involved in the study. The interviews, focus group discussion and documentary review were used to collect data which were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.*

The study findings revealed that discipline in secondary schools was a serious challenge. It was further revealed that the school management does little to control students' discipline. For example, it was made clear that school management rarely meets students to discuss disciplinary issues. It was also established that the parents demonstrated poor parental responsibilities especially on taking care of their children, poor communication and discussion on discipline issues with management, teachers, parents and students. It was also noted that the teachers are always unavailable during school hours.

The study recommends that school management has to make close supervision on students' disciplinary issues. The school management and teachers have to work as a team in enhancing discipline issues among the students. The school rules and regulations should be seriously enforced at school in order to control discipline among students. Furthermore, school management should adhere to the National Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations of 1979 made under section 60 (0) as introduced by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training when punishing a student. The school management has to ensure that school calendar provides time for regular meetings where students, teachers and parents discuss disciplinary issues. Lastly, school management has to ensure that there are sessions of counseling and guidance among the students.

Keywords: *discipline, supervision, school management, secondary school, indiscipline, students, punishment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The students' discipline is an important ingredient that plays a crucial role in any school system. The discipline in schools is centered on upholding moral values of the students and thus an essential element in school administration. It is also an epicenter of success in schools. It is further asserted that disciplinary problems have a negative impact on the realization of national objective of education and vision 2013 (UNICEF 2016). Certainly, the school management has a crucial role to play in the management of the students' discipline. Furthermore, various studies have been conducted on the issues pertaining to students' discipline. Those studies have pointed out that the students' discipline is a challenging issue in teaching and learning process, hence effective teaching and learning can be a nightmare if strong and serious students discipline management practices are not in place (Lewis et al, 2002; Luiselli, 2005; Makiya, 2009). The students' appropriate behavior can make school a safe place where teaching and learning can be effectively accomplished. In the eyes of society, a school is supposed to be a safe place for students to learn and grow (Furlong & Morrison, 1994; Ramli et al, 2009) and not a place of violence, fear and other indiscipline. In this light, it is claimed that the students' discipline in school cannot be realistic if the proper management framework is not in place (Imaguezor, M.V. 1997). Therefore, the school management can be used as a tool or mechanism to manage and ensure the students' good discipline

The school administration and teachers are responsible for managing school disciplinary procedures by informing the students on what kind of behavior(s) portrays discipline and what is indiscipline in school. The influence of the school administration and teachers in managing discipline can be estimated based on the basic fact that they stay

with the students for many hours of the day. Rorger (2004) observed that the students spend at least third of their working day at school with their teachers.

The school discipline has always been a concern for educational administration as well as the general public. Makiya (2009) pointed out that since the early 1960's, indiscipline and misconducts in schools have become major issues for public discussion. Discipline among students has become a major issue that has drawn the attention of education administrators, educators and stakeholders in Tanzanian Educational system. The indiscipline cases include burning of schools, truancy, school heads' locked-out by students, fighting, drug abuse, stealing, and alcoholism. Maro (1994) asserts that in Tanzania, many schools experience lack of discipline and violence that makes a school unfavorable place for teaching and learning.

Various studies have been conducted to address the issue of discipline in schools. The majority of them investigated on violence, discipline, truancy and dropout in primary and secondary schools. The studies like those by Munn et al. (2007) in Scotland, Ramil et al. (2009) in Malaysia and Umba (1975), Nkoma (1979), Makiya (2009) and Mizengo (2008) in Tanzania focused on kinds of punishment used in indiscipline cases in primary and secondary schools. Despite these numerous studies that have been carried out on discipline of students in secondary schools, there is little information on the role of school management on supervision of school discipline.

Therefore, the main concern of this paper is to examine how the school management enhances the students' discipline. The expected students' discipline and achievements are established by the school management through supervision activities, working together, formulation and enhancement of school rules and regulations which determined students' behavior. If the school management fails in the supervision part, the consequences are ambiguous and inconsistent and frequent incidences of students' indiscipline will transpire. This brings attention to investigate how the school management enhances the students' discipline in Tanzanian secondary schools.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study employed mainly qualitative research approach with an application of descriptive survey design. This study was conducted in Dodoma Region particularly in Chamwino District and Dodoma Municipal Council. The region was selected for this study due to the fact it is among the regions whose secondary schools experience many indiscipline issues. For example, apart from other indiscipline problems, it was observed that out of 5,264 Form IV students who completed their secondary education in Dodoma Municipality in 2010, about 150 students did not sit for their national examinations due to indiscipline issues (Dodoma Municipality, 2010).

The study population comprised 132 respondents. In particular, the referred population comprised of 7 heads of schools, 7 deputy heads of schools, 7 discipline masters or mistresses, 21 teachers and 90. According to Cozby (2001), for the population size of 10,000 about 95 percent of the population should constitute the sample sizes because the needed sample should be within plus or minus 10%.

The purposive sampling was employed to obtain the heads of schools, deputy heads of schools and discipline masters or mistresses from the selected schools due to their virtue experiences as heads in their school. The selection of the teachers was determined by at least a three year teaching experience. The experience of three years was regarded as enough in handling discipline issues among students. The school management was selected based on the leadership experience in schools. The random sampling was employed to teachers and students. In particular, the hand gathering of random numbers written on pieces of papers which were put in the container and shuffled were used to obtain the teachers and students for this study. The data for this study were gathered through personal interview, questionnaires, focus group discussions and documentary review.

The interview was employed in order to elicit the data on the reality of what happens in schools in relation to students' discipline. It provides an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon under investigation (Gall et al., 2005). The data from the heads of schools, deputy heads of schools, discipline masters or mistresses and teachers were collected using semi-structured interviews so as to get rich and deep information on discipline-related issues through face-to-face encounter.

The study also administered documentary review in order to elicit information from published or unpublished discipline documents which included the primary sources of data such as the minutes of school boards and discipline committees, punishment record sheets of students, school rules and regulations.

The focus group discussion (FGD) which involved five students' representatives was guided by the structured questions whereby a researcher functioned as a moderator, monitor or facilitator, less interviewer, and recorder of group interactions. Gall et al. (2005) asserted that focused group discussions are used to explore phenomenon such as individuals' reactions to educational practices. Through FGD, the students were assigned to discuss the factors that made students to misbehave at school and the efforts done by the school management in enhancing the student's discipline.

The data obtained from interview notes, focused group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, and documentary review were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis was carried out by detailed description and summarized the data collected to get initial impression. The data were then categorized according to different items followed by the description and detailed examination of different responses. Lastly, the responses were classified by categorizing them. Then data were coded by putting together the tags, names or labels against the pieces of data which gave them meaning. After the coding of the data, the researcher summarized them by putting them together and organizing the themes to identify the patterns from the codes thereby drawing conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Role of School Management in Enhancing Students' Discipline

The study looked at the role of school management in managing the students' discipline at school. Through interview, the headmasters or headmistresses, discipline masters or mistresses and teachers gave out what they considered to be their role as school management in managing the students' discipline at school. Different opinions on the matter were given by the respondents. The school management has to work as a team, communicate the school rules and regulations to students, record indiscipline cases in black book. Ensure an availability of the teachers at school.

3.1.1 Working as a Team

During the interview and FGD with participant of the study, it was observed that lack of team work among teachers, heads of schools, discipline masters or mistresses has been a great challenge in managing the students' discipline at school. This was reflected on the statement made by one of deputy head in school X2.

...Some teachers were reluctant in punishing students with indiscipline cases (interview with the teacher on 08/08/2011).

Some of the teachers punish the students with indiscipline cases while others do not care about the students' indiscipline cases as they thought that dealing with indiscipline students is the waste of time and energy. This was revealed through FGD by one of the student. The following is the verbatim quote by from school X2 regarding the students' indiscipline cases.

... Some teachers say that their work here at school is to teach. If a student indicates indiscipline acts, it is none of their business. The teachers insist that the world itself is corrupted and so they cannot change ones child whose indiscipline acts are traced from their home (FGD with the students on (02/08/2011).

Similarly, through the students' FGD and interview with teacher, it was revealed that the heads of schools and discipline committee were authorized to punish the students due to their indiscipline cases. However, other teachers are not serious about it as they do not provide any punishment. The following are the verbatim quotes from three teachers.

The teacher from school X2

...Punishing a student with indiscipline acts bores us as we are required to note down the kind of punishment to use and how you will administer it in black book before punishing a student. So, most of us do not care about the students with indiscipline acts (...interview with the teachers on 08/08/2011)

The teacher from school X3

... The corporal punishments like digging holes and suspension and expelling students from school are normally given to students. However, in some circumstances, the heads of schools and teachers do not co-operate in handling discipline issues among students. Everyone is busy with teaching and personal affairs rather than the discipline of the students. The school management does not make any significant follow up on students in case of any disciplinary problem. So, the whole issue of students' discipline is left to a teacher who is entrusted to provide the punishment to students. (...Interview with the teachers on 10/08/2011).

The teacher from school X3

...Some parents side with their children. If you punish a student, he may opt not to do the punishment. Instead, the student brings the parent with him/her to blame the teacher(s) who punished him/her. (...Interview with the teachers on 10/08/2011)

The issue of discipline in schools should not be left in the hands of the discipline masters or mistresses alone. The school management, teachers, heads of schools and discipline masters or mistresses have to work as a team and co-operate with each other in handling and supervising the discipline issues especially when it comes to actions to be taken against indiscipline cases in schools. Similarly, Wu-Shi Chang (1980) suggested that school management has to take into consideration that incorporating teachers in students' discipline issues may intervene misbehavior.

3.1.2 Availability of Teachers at School

The availability of enough teachers in school was observed to play a very important role in enhancing the students' discipline. The presence of the teachers in schools has a great influence on the students' behaviour since such teachers are likely to control the students' movements while at school. One of the discipline masters from school X4 had the following verbatim quote:

... The presence of enough teachers in schools plays a great role in enhancing the students' discipline. Sometimes, the presence of teachers in the school compound makes the students behave and know that they are being supervised (...Interview. with the teachers on 09/08/2011).

Both the teachers and school management should be available at school during the working hours. This is due to the fact that the school will have strong team of staff to handle the problems like strikes or fights upon their occurrence. However, the researcher's observation indicates that out of seven schools visited, their heads were not around and they in most cases spend little time in their offices. Therefore, the work of supervising the school is left in the hands of the deputy head of the school.

When asked about the place the headmaster had gone, one of the deputy heads of schools from school X3 had the following verbatim quote:

...The headmaster normally says that he attends the meetings and other school activities in the education offices in town. But why doesn't he send us there? He is always the one who there (...Interview with the teachers on 10/08/2011).

The study findings revealed that the presence of the teachers and heads of schools provide a close supervision to students thus making it easier to monitor the students' behaviour at school. Smit (2010) found that when there is no teacher to supervise a class or teachers are not around the school compound, it is where most of the fights, abusive languages and noises often break out in school. Similar findings were observed by Oosthuizen et al. (2003) in that lack of supervision of students and failure to take precautionary measures to protect the students are the causes of the majority of problems regarding the safety of students at school or during school activities. Additionally, the presence of school head is very important in monitoring the students' discipline issues and encouraging his or her colleagues to work effectively. Gokhol (2006) observed that the head of school's regularity, punctuality, attitude to work, sense of principles, fairness but firmness in dealing with troublemakers have a direct impact on everybody pertaining to the institution.

3.1.2 Communicating School Rules and Regulations

The study findings revealed that in enhancing the students' discipline, the school management has the role to communicate the school rules and regulations to students. In support of this, one of the discipline mistresses from school **X3** reported that;

...The discipline committee has to make sure that the school rules and regulations are read in school assembly when opening and closing the school. This is the only way of reminding the students on how they have to behave.(.... Interview with the teachers on 10/08/2011)

Furthermore, the study findings indicate that the school management arranged the parents' meetings concerning discipline issues for their children. The discipline mistress from school **X7** recommended that the discipline committee had to arrange some meetings with the parents whose children misbehaved at school so as to inform the parents of their students' characters and help them in shaping their children's behaviors.

Furthermore, during interview, 6 (85.7%) deputy heads of the schools insisted that the matters concerning discipline were highly emphasized during school baraza whereby the school management, teachers and students discussed much more the issues pertaining to school welfare and discipline. On the contrary, 1 (14.3%) deputy head of school **X3** revealed that they did not have regular meetings with students unless there was a serious misbehavior character at school and suspension or expulsion of the students from school. Such events would necessitate the school baraza or meeting with the whole school or the discipline committee.

Communication is very important in any organization in order to achieve its goals. The school management has to communicate with the parents on issues pertaining to their students' discipline at school so that they get to know the characters of their children and provide assistance wherever the need arises. Moreover, the school rules and regulations should be known to students through school baraza, printed materials school assembly and during the opening or closing of the schools. These meetings help the students to know how they are supposed to behave while at school and the parents get information on the characters of their children. The study by Kindiki (2009) on the effectiveness of communication on students discipline in secondary schools in Kenya reported that lack of effective communication by school administrators may be the most cause of indiscipline and where the school administrators have not put in place effective communication systems or mechanisms, the result has been communication breakdown between the school administration, parents and students. This indicated that for the discipline to be observed, the school management has to ensure effective communication with the teachers, parents and students.

3.2 Recording Indiscipline Cases in Black Book

Additionally, during the interview with discipline mistresses or masters, they all reported that their role in supervising students' discipline as part of school management team was to use the black book in keeping the records of the students' indiscipline characters and punishments given to them.

During the documentary review, the black books had the records on indiscipline or misbehavior characters committed by various students. To the researcher's surprise, indiscipline characters on punishment such as truants, fighting in school, love affairs at early age, to mention the few all these were recorded. The findings indicated that if a student committed more than three indiscipline acts, the parents or guardians were asked to come to school so that further actions such as suspension or expulsion could be taken against student in question.

The keeping of the students' records concerning discipline cases in the black book and the punishments given to students help the school management to provide vivid information to their guardians or parents. This indicates that when further actions such as suspension need to be taken, the school management has the records already of that particular student. The recorded information on the students' indiscipline acts in the black book normally creates being suspended or expelled from school as a result some of the students tend to shape their behaviors. Students who misbehave in school cannot catch up well with studies hence cannot do well at academically because of low concentration on studies. Again, if students stay at home for two or three weeks due to suspension, they miss a lot of lessons and are likely to lag behind on studies. Likewise, the truants fail because they miss a lot of learning activities which take place in classes. This also happens to the students who get pregnant; they are affected

psychologically as they do not concentrate on studies hence poor academic performance. Misbehaved students in a classroom make teachers uncomfortable to teach freely; they tend to be demoralized to teach in a class or staying in school with stubborn students, as a result, it affects students' performance.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the study findings reveal, the supervision of students' discipline management is characterized by the weak team spirit demonstrated by the school, the teachers and parents, poor communication on the discipline issues and lack of proper implementation of school rules and regulations. It is also characterized by the absence of the heads of schools and teachers at school. Following the absence of the heads of schools and teachers at school, the students miss a close supervision of teaching and learning activities as well as students' discipline. The school management has a great responsibility of supervising the students' discipline at school in order to facilitate smooth teaching and learning process. In supervising the students' discipline management, the teachers and parents need to work together as a team and the disciplinary issues should not be left to school management or teachers alone. There should be a strong co-operation between the teachers and parents to ensure smooth teaching and learning process. There should also be a specific time table on school the calendar to address and communicate the discipline issues to students. This has to be done in every term depending on the school calendar. A parent-teacher partnership against students' indiscipline should be established in case of any misbehavior among students. The parents should be informed of their children's misbehavior so that they can correct it earliest possible. The school rules and regulations need to be emphasized and given enough attention so as to enable the students understand them. In addition, the teachers have to provide guidance and counseling sessions among indiscipline students since some of the behaviors can change through counseling rather than punishment. Lastly, the school management should adhere to the regulations prepared by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training on the National Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations of 1979 under section 60 (0) when punishing a student to avoid the dependence on corporal punishment.

REFERENCES

- Best (2009). Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, National Data. MoEVT- Press "A", Dar es salaam.
- Cozby, C. P. (2007). *Methods in Behaviour Research*. New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Dodoma Municipal (2010). A Report of Municipal Academic for Form Four 2010 Examinations, A meeting held at the Municipal Education Office, Dodoma.
- Furlong, M. J. and Morrison, G. M (1994). Addressing School Violence as Part of Schools' Educational Mission. *Preventing School Failure*, Vol.38, No. 3, pp10-19.
- Gokhol, H. D. (2006), *Indiscipline and Violence in Secondary Schools*. MRC Royal Road: Rose Hill.
- Imaguezor, M.V. (1997). *Analysis of Cases of Violation of Students Rights in Secondary Schools in Edo State*. M.Ed Thesis, University of Benin, Nigeria.
- Kindiki, J. (2009). Effectiveness of Communication on Students Discipline In Secondary Schools In Kenya. Moi University, Eldorete: *Educational Research and Review*. 4 (5), 252-259.
- Lewis, T., Peterson, R., and Scheuermann, B (2002). *School Discipline Policies for Students with Significantly Disruptive Behavior*. Reston, VA: Author, A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, Suite 300, 1110 North Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA. 22201.
- Luiselli, J. Putnam, R. and Handler, W. (2005), *Whole- School Positive Behaviour Support: Effects on Students Discipline Problems and Academic Performance*. The May Institute and The May Center for Applied Research: Norwood, *Education Psychology*, Vol 25, No 2-3, Pp183-198.
- Makiya, R. (2009). *The Relationship Between School Discipline and Academic Performance. A Study of Selected Christian Seminaries vis-à-vis Ordinary Secondary Schools in Tanzania*. A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Education (M A. Ed). University of Dar es salaam.

- Mizengo, M. F. (2008). *Discipline and Performance in Primary Schools in Tanzania: The Case of Nkasi District*. A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Education (M A. Ed). University of Dar es salaam.
- Mpokera, S. Z. (2012). *School Management and its Effects on Discipline in Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Dodoma Region*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, the University of Dodoma.
- Munn, P. Johnstone, M., Sharp, S., and Brown, S. (2007). Violence in School: Perception of Secondary Teachers and Headmaster Overtime. University of Edinburg: *International Journal of Violence and Schools*, 3(2), 52-80.
- Nkoma, P. R. (1979). *Truancy and Dropout in Tanzania Mainland Primary Schools, A Case of Pangani District*. A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Education (M A. Ed). University of Dar es salaam.
- Ramil, Y., Yahaya, J., Hashim, J., & Ibrahim, A. (2009), Discipline Problems among Secondary School Students in Johor Bahru, Malaysia: *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp 659-675.
- Rorgers, B (2004). *Behaviour Management*. Australia: Scholastic Australia Pty Ltd.
- Smit, M.E. (2010). *The Role of School Discipline in Combating Violence in Schools in the East London Region*. A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Masters of Education. University of Fort Hare East London.
- UNESCO (2016). *Global Education Monitoring Report (Education for People and Planet)*, De Fontenoy, 75352, Paris 07 SP France.
- Umba, K. A. (1975), *Discipline in Tanzania Secondary School*. A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Education (M.A Ed). University of Dar es Salaam.
- Wu shi- chang, W. (1980), *Students Suspension: A Critical Reappraisal*. Washington, D.C: National- Institute of Education.