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CLASS TEACHERS' ROLE IN MAINTAINING STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TESO SOUTH DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Indiscipline in secondary schools has been a national issue in Kenya. The head teachers have been blamed for incompetence disregarding other factors. The paper addresses the role of class teachers as one of the stakeholders that could help. The objectives; determine how participatory role of class teachers in school administration enhances discipline, establishes class teachers' use of curriculum implementation processes promotes discipline and assess how class teachers' involvement in guidance and counseling enhances student discipline. Purposive sampling and stratified random sampling was used to obtain 81 teachers and 10 head teachers. The interview guide and a questionnaire were instruments used to collect data. The findings showed that class teachers assist in maintaining students' discipline in secondary schools through participating in administrative tasks, curriculum implementation, and guidance and counseling. Recommendations: Ministry of Education to enhance policy on participatory leadership and encourage empowerment programs for head teachers and class teachers for maintaining discipline. Kenya Education Management Institute to design training programs for class teachers to make them effective at social and counselling skills to enhance discipline among students.

KEYWORDS: Discipline, Class Teachers, Participatory Leadership, Secondary Schools, Kenya

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

Student discipline in secondary schools is a global phenomenon and has been of concern over the years. The issue has been debated and features repeatedly in schools as well as national agendas both in Kenya and worldwide (Kindiki, 2009). According to Sushila (2004) despite the existence of the school code of conduct, most schools continue to experience student discipline.

Research conducted in developed countries such as the United States (USA) and Europe in the United Kingdom (UK), France and Spain highlight the deteriorating discipline and nature of violence in schools (Aswani, 2010; Sushila, 2004). The open, democratic approach as exhibited in USA, UK and other European countries seem not to enhance discipline while the strict authoritarian approach exhibited in South Korea tends to respond to discipline problems albeit numerous psychological problems and violation of human rights (Kindiki, 2009).

The government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education is currently implementing several measures that include the use of guidance and counseling in all secondary schools (MoEST, 2005). According to Okumbe (1998) discipline is the action by the management to enforce organizational standards. Wango (2010) and Bakhada (2004) maintain refers to discipline as a process of training the mind and character to make people have self control to ensure social harmony. Discipline makes students take responsibility for their actions, consequences, successes and failure (Olembo, Wanga & Kiragu, 1992). Disciplined students and school record higher motivational levels, have trust based on good working relationships, and bonds students, teachers and school administrators (Walker and Sprague, 2005; Berman, 2003).

Class teachers help students to accept responsibility, it places high value on academic engagement and achievement. Class teachers focus on restoring a positive environment and civil social relationships in school and creating an enabling environment where school core functions are able to thrive without interference. Class teachers deal directly with students on a daily basis through interaction and can therefore contribute significantly to student discipline. The class teacher is a supervisor who enhances the successive attempts at improving academic performance and discipline through guidance and counseling, motivation, and mentoring (Olembo, Kiragu & Wanga, 1992; Mbiti, 2007). Discipline results in other virtues like punctuality, cleanliness and honesty. It perpetuates hard work in the student and collegiality in the school community. Anyang (2007) highlights discipline promotes high concentration among students and this creates orderliness, cohesiveness and unity of purpose. Indiscipline is reflected in the violence, decreased academic achievement and a lower quality of life. It can lead to threats and injuries to other students and the public, class disruptions and lack of concentration in academics (Lelan, Chelimo, Wosyanju, Anyang, Odhiambo & Cyeze, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The issue of student discipline in secondary schools in Kenya is viewed by many as contemporary problem that may turn into a crisis if not checked (Njeru, 2004). One significant issue of concern is that indiscipline and violence in schools do not discriminate; essentially transcending the boundaries of gender, class and race. Frequency of arson attempted and executed in schools set up and alarmed the Ministry of Education in Kenya (Devansah, 2008; Wesonga, 2009). These tragedies led to public outcry and expectations of resolute action (Wathika, 2008). Other than student strikes there are rampant cases of truancy, poor academic performance posted by schools, boycott of classes, refusing to be taught by some teachers is still rampant in Teso south districts based on reports available at the DEO'S office.

The measures put forward by MoE such as empowering guidance and counseling and availability of head teacher's in schools are not effective. Despite the existence of various administrative units and frequent talks to students, indiscipline among them is reportedly still rampant (MoE, 2001; Wesonga 2009). Class teachers are at a strategic place to enforce discipline through guidance and counseling, ensuring curriculum implementation, motivating and mentoring students, and good role modeling. However, despite numerous attempts at addressing the issues, discipline problem still persists. Devansah (2008); Anyang (2007), Serem & Kindiki (2007) emphasize the importance of discipline. However, none of these studies pinpoints the role of class teachers' in maintaining students' discipline at school. The objectives are to:

- Determine influence of participatory role of class teachers in school administration in students' discipline in public secondary school

- Establish how class teachers' curriculum implementation processes influence students' discipline.
- Assess class teachers' actions as guiding and counselling agents in schools' social life affect students' discipline

LITERATURE REVIEW

Class Teachers' Participatory Role in School Administration

The involvement of teachers is a right because of the nature of their commitment in effort and time within the school organization. Participatory leadership helps the head teachers, teachers and students to identify with and contribute towards the realization of, the aims and objectives of the school (Bulinda, 1999). Taking part in decision making assists the teacher to be committed to their functions among which there is discipline control.

Curriculum Implementation and Discipline

The teacher's role stretches from classroom teaching, curriculum development, examination process, learning material preparation, and evaluation, and role modelling. The class teacher ensures physical, intellectual, emotional, and physical development for the Kenyan youth to become good citizens (a Kenyan handbook for teachers, 2008). Teaching entails imparting the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for molding behavior to standards acceptable to the society. The function further involves organization of curricular and co-curricular activities; maintenance of class and school discipline and general management of the school. Hence, Kibera (2005) asserts that teacher education should produce well-equipped individuals with academic knowledge as well as skills for guiding students both in the learning process and social life.

Curriculum implementation by class teachers enhances achievement of set goals, forming a basis for student motivation and stimulates progress in learners so that the purpose of the school program may be achieved. Other roles of class teachers in curriculum implementation involve outings, sports fixture and various outdoor activities. A class teacher can develop confidence in his students if she/he is interested in other aspects of the school curriculum in particular their physical and mental growth (Bakhada, 2004). According to Olembo Wanga and Kiragu (1992) class teachers participate in selecting appropriate instructional materials and timetabling. Availability of resources and attending classes reduces idle time for engaging in discipline malpractice. A well supervised class has fewer cases of discipline.

Guidance and Counseling Promotes Discipline

Guidance and counseling are a process, developmental in nature by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his/her abilities, aptitudes, interests and attitudinal patterns in relation to his/her patterns (Guez and Allen, 2000). It can be looked at as a program or service to students based upon the need of each student, an understanding of his/her immediate environment.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on McGregor's Theory X and Y which posits that there are two fundamental approaches to discipline in managing people. It says people have an inherent dislike for conformity to the rules and regulations thus attract theory X. When people conform to rules and regulations to unleash their potential applies theory Y (Okumbe, 1998).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used. This gave information about the current status of the population. It explored the existing status of the discipline. Eighty One class teachers were selected randomly and 9 principals by the census. Questionnaires and Interview guide were used to collect data. Validity of questionnaire was determined by pre-testing instruments and expert judgment (Mugenda, 2008). Reliability was established using the test re-test method.

FINDINGS

Class Teachers' Participatory Role in School Administration to Enhance Discipline

In order to determine the level of class teachers' participation in school administration to enhance discipline the respondents were asked if class teachers' should be involved in school administration and if they play a critical role to enhance discipline. Table 1 indicates responses on class teachers' involvement in school administration to enhance discipline.

Table 1: Class Teachers' Involvement in school Administration

Class Teachers		
Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	34	41.98
Agree	19	23.46
Neutral	08	9.88
Disagree	10	12.34
Strongly disagree	10	12.34
Total	81	100.00

Table 1 shows class that the highest proportion of teachers 41.98% strongly agreed that participation in decision making would enhance discipline. However, in the same study, only 31.81% of class prefects strongly agreed on the critical role played by class teachers when involved in administration in maintaining discipline and 10.23% were neutral. However, Class teachers and class prefects agree that involvement of class teachers in school administration enhances discipline. Bulinda (1999) and Sushila (2004) concur that participatory leadership in school administration greatly improves discipline. According to Sharma (2009) allowing teachers to take part in decision making yields good results in both academic and disciplinary areas. Griffin (1996) noted that no meaningful and lasting discipline can be realized if class teachers are left out in school administration.

Class teachers were also asked if they participate in planning and organizing activities with school administration to promote discipline. Table 2 indicates class teachers' responses.

Table 2: Class Teachers' Responses on Participating in Planning and Organizing Activities

Class Teachers		
Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	32	39.51
Agree	35	43.21
Neutral	01	01.23
Disagree	08	09.88
Strongly disagree	05	06.17
Total	81	100.00

Table 2 indicates a total 82.7% class teachers agree (43.21%) and strongly agree (39.51%) that class teachers take part in planning and organizing school activities.

Inclusion in planning and organization ensures school programs run smoothly and is complementary to maintaining discipline at school.

(Head teachers' names not real: Mary, Albert, Charles, George, John and Maxwel). When interviewed, the head teachers said they involve class teachers in different ways in school administration to enforce discipline. According to Lenard, Jacinta and Valery, the head teachers of schools involve class teachers in planning, budgeting, coordinating and admission. Head teachers, involve class teachers in the formulation of rules and regulations, monitoring attendance of students, involvement in disciplinary committees and close supervision of classes. These processes have a direct bearing on students' discipline.

Curriculum Implementation and Discipline

Implementing curriculum is a process of executing curriculum with the view of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes of students. One of the functions of curriculum instructions is to inculcate in students desirable attitude. The response of class teachers as to whether implementation of curriculum enhances discipline is shown in Table 3

Table 3: Class Teachers' Implementation of Curriculum as Promoting Discipline

Class Teachers		
Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	26	32.10
Agree	23	28.40
Neutral	13	16.05
Disagree	04	04.94
Strongly disagree	09	11.11
None response	06	07.41
Total	81	100.00

From Table 3, there is 32.10% of class teachers strongly agreed on the use of curriculum implementation to enhance discipline and 28.40% agreed which is over fifty percent that agreed.

Class teachers viewed curriculum implementation as a vehicle to enhance discipline. Curriculum evaluation refers to tests and examinations, students do to measure learning achievement. Class teachers do this regularly and this helps to keep students focused. Curricular content, especially composition passages and literature, students learn about characters which may help them to shape their own discipline positively. The findings concurred with a study done by Sergiovanni, Burlington, Coombs & Thurston (1980) argue that curriculum implementation promotes discipline. Whereas, teachers viewed curriculum implementation as a vehicle to enhance discipline, fewer class prefects were in agreement that curriculum implementation promotes discipline. Curriculum implementation is seen as exerting undue pressure to students and creates tension on students (MoE, 2001).

The teachers were asked if evaluation influences discipline maintenance and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Evaluation Promotes Discipline

Class Teachers		
Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	24	29.63
Agree	23	28.39
Neutral	13	16.05
Disagree	06	07.41
Strongly disagree	09	11.11
None response	06	07.41
Total	81	100.00

From table 4 shows 29.63% of class teachers strongly agreed and 28.39% agreed on the importance of evaluation on promoting student discipline. This is due to the fact that students need to create ties to revise for tests. Some studies show that this stresses students and leads to memorization.

Guidance and Counseling Promotes Discipline

Guidance and counselling by teachers and peer counselors often result in disciplined students. However, parental involvement in the discipline of their children by means of providing guidance and instilling moral values when encouraged helps to achieve educational goals. In view of the importance of guidance and counseling, the researcher sought to assess if class teachers' actions as guiding and counseling agents in school enhances student discipline. The findings show that a majority of 38 (46.91%) class teachers strongly agrees guidance and counseling promotes discipline, 17 (20.99%) agree, 7 (8.64%) were neutral, 10 (12.35%) disagree while 9 (11.11%) strongly disagree. The findings concur with Ajowi & Simatwa, (2010) that guidance and counseling promote discipline among students.

Class teachers expect respect and good behavior from students, hence they were asked whether mentoring and modeling enhances discipline at school. The responses of class teachers indicate that modeling and mentoring greatly promotes discipline according to most, 32 (39.51%) of class teachers who strongly agreed with the view and a further 24 (29.63%) agree, 12 (14.81%) class teachers were neutral, with 6 (07.41%) disagreed and 7 (8.64%) strongly disagreed with this view. The class teachers appraise, motivate and act as role models to students and this helps to enforce discipline. Mbiti (2007) suggests that the discipline of any institution is determined by the quality of workforce found within its environs.

Class teachers were asked if student peer groups affect discipline in school and the responses are in Table 5

Table 5: Student Peer Groups and Influence on Discipline

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	30	37.04
Agree	34	41.97
Neutral	10	12.35
Disagree	02	02.47
Strongly disagree	05	06.17
Total	81	100.00

In Table 5, Most class teachers 73.01% agreed that peer groups influence behavior (37.04% of class teachers strongly agreed, 41.97% agree), while 12.35% were neutral, 2.47% disagreed and 6.17% strongly disagreed. According to Okumbe (1998) social groups lead to informal rules and regulation to which members conform. If these are in tandem with the rules of the school, then it can be a basis to promote discipline in schools and the converse is true.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that class teachers' participatory role in administration promotes discipline among students. Curriculum implementation fosters involvement hence students are kept busy through co-curricular activities and the curriculum content of some subjects also helps to enhance good behavior. Guidance and counseling by class teachers also enhance discipline as they know the students in the class they lead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministries of Education should develop policy guidelines emphasising participatory leadership in schools. The Kenya Education Management Institute should design empowerment programs for class teachers for effectiveness in their roles and in particular discipline control among students. Head teachers need to adopt participatory leadership in schools and include all members of staff in management of students' discipline. The class teachers should take a proactive role in students' welfare at school.

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