



*Full Length Research Paper*

# Management of pupil discipline in Kenya: A Case Study of Kisumu Municipality

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Abstract

**Pupil discipline is a major concern to educators, parents and the entire society. Head teachers, Deputy head teachers, class teachers and prefects have a responsibility in the school to mould and account for the behaviour of learners to meet the expectations of the society. Between 2006 and 2010 public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality experienced 9870 cases of pupil indiscipline. In Kenya the Ministry of Education recognizes suspension, exclusion and guidance and counselling as methods of managing pupil discipline in schools. Pupil discipline problems experienced in primary schools included; noise making which was rated 3.7, failure to complete assignment 3.8, truancy 4.0, lateness 4.0, theft 3.5, sneaking 3.5. Effective methods of dealing with indiscipline were; Involving parents who was rated 4.2, Guidance and counselling 4.2, manual work 4.0, caning 3.3 and reprimanding 2.4. The study recommended that appropriate pupil discipline management methods be used in schools to create peace and harmony. The findings of this study are useful to head teachers, teachers and policy makers in education in terms of formulation of policy guidelines and their implementation in the management of pupil discipline in primary schools.**

**Keywords:** Management, Pupil Discipline, Public Primary Schools, Kisumu Municipality, Kenya.

## INTRODUCTION

Discipline is an important component of human behavior. It helps in regulating people's reaction to various situations. Without discipline an organization cannot function well towards the achievement of its goals. According to Okumbe (1999), discipline is in real terms the epicenter of a success of school. The efficiency and effectiveness of all organizational activities depend on the organizational degree of discipline. Mbiti (1974) noted that discipline is the correction of the wrong doer. Discipline is therefore connected with training, guiding and arranging conditions of learning. Through good morals among the youth a good society can be moulded. Throughout the world, cases of student indiscipline have increased in intensity and prevalence. Pupils' rebellion against establishment authority has occurred in every country with significant increase and intensity (Otieno, 2004).

In United Kingdom, more than 2000 primary school pupils were suspended in 2009 as principals struggled to cope with the surge in violent and unruly pupils (Mucmahron, 2009). Opposition leader Baillieu concurred by pointing out that poor discipline was increasing among children of all ages and school principals should be given power to search for fire arms in the pupils to tackle the problem. Herald Sun, Magazine published that the number of assaults in and around schools increased by more than 150 percent between 2000 and 2001. In 2009, 16393 public primary and secondary pupils were suspended, more than 200 were expelled (Mucmahron, 2009).

United States of America has experienced the higher rate of school crime in the past decade; Canada as well as Britain have experienced increased use of firearms in public schools. Pupils have turned to violence not only on fellow pupils but also on teachers (Kriener, 2000). Schools are also confronted with gang recruitment, rivalry, drug abuse and trafficking, such problems lead to violence in and around the school. Jimi (2008) carried a study on the role of educators in the management of

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**Table 1.** Reported Cases of Indiscipline experienced in Primary Schools in Kisumu Municipality between 2006-2010.

Type of Indiscipline	No. of School	Years /Cases				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Lateness	115	2040	2000	3000	3450	2950
Absenteeism	115	1000	2000	2055	1150	2050
Fighting	115	700	1130	1140	1145	900
Truancy	115	1100	1200	1170	1155	1180
Bullying	102	200	600	800	900	712
Possession of pornographic materials	64	100	300	600	800	900
Petty theft	54	100	300	775	300	600
Glue sniffing	12	20	60	50	40	45
Drug abuse	10	40	30	55	56	45
Smoking cigarettes	8	10	20	40	30	25

Source: Ministry of Education's Office, Kisumu 2010

school discipline in the Nkangala Region in South Africa and noted that discipline problems in primary schools includes use of abusive language, lack of concentration, late coming and threats by pupils. At the onset of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Kenya has been beset with serious indiscipline cases in most educational institutions. Reports on the situation on discipline in Kenya schools indicate that violence and destructive forms of student unrest had increased. Between 2000 and 2001, 280 schools reported cases of student unrest in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Between June to July 2008, over 300 secondary schools went on rampage and school property worth millions of shillings was destroyed and one student died (The People Newspaper, 2008 August, 1<sup>st</sup>).

Mukundi (1999) observed that headteachers have more demanding task since they deal with very young and developing individuals. If proper discipline standards are not inculcated at this stage, then most secondary schools will experience a lot of indiscipline problems. According to a survey by the National Agency for Campaign against drug abuse, 22.7% of primary school children take alcohol (Daily Nation, 2008 October, 27<sup>th</sup>). Afullo (2005) noted that indiscipline cases that have become a major concern in schools include, arson, sexual assault, theft, sneaking out of school, fighting, bullying, drug abuse, truancy, lateness, obscene language and noise making. Afullo further reveals that in Kenya, school teachers find it difficult to enforce discipline particularly after the abolishment of corporal punishment since discipline is often equated with corporal punishment. The post election violence of 2007 left a negative impact on the level of pupils discipline in primary schools in Kisumu Municipality, Weru (2008). Most children witnessed violence, burning and destruction of property that took place. Currently, pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality particularly the slum areas of Obunga, Manyatta and Nyalenda have manifested indiscipline cases in form of violent fights,

bullying of other pupils, theft, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, watching pornographic materials, noise making and lateness Table 1.

According to Kimani (2009), young girls are easily lured into sex by "bodaboda operators"(motorbike transport providers) who entice them with as little as Kshs. 20. The report further indicate that in some schools, young boys of standard six and below come to school drunk because alcohol is brewed in their homes. The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standard Officer, observed that pupil indiscipline are on the increase. Among them are absenteeism, truancy, drug abuse, fighting, watching and reading pornographic materials, lateness and irresponsible sexual behavior. According to Okoth (2011), pupils of Orongo Primary school in Kisumu Municipality led their parents in a demonstration along Kisumu-Nairobi road. They were demanding the removal of the school's head teacher whom they accused of embezzling Kshs. 100,000 meant for the school's development. There was therefore need to look into the effectiveness of the methods used in managing discipline in public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality.

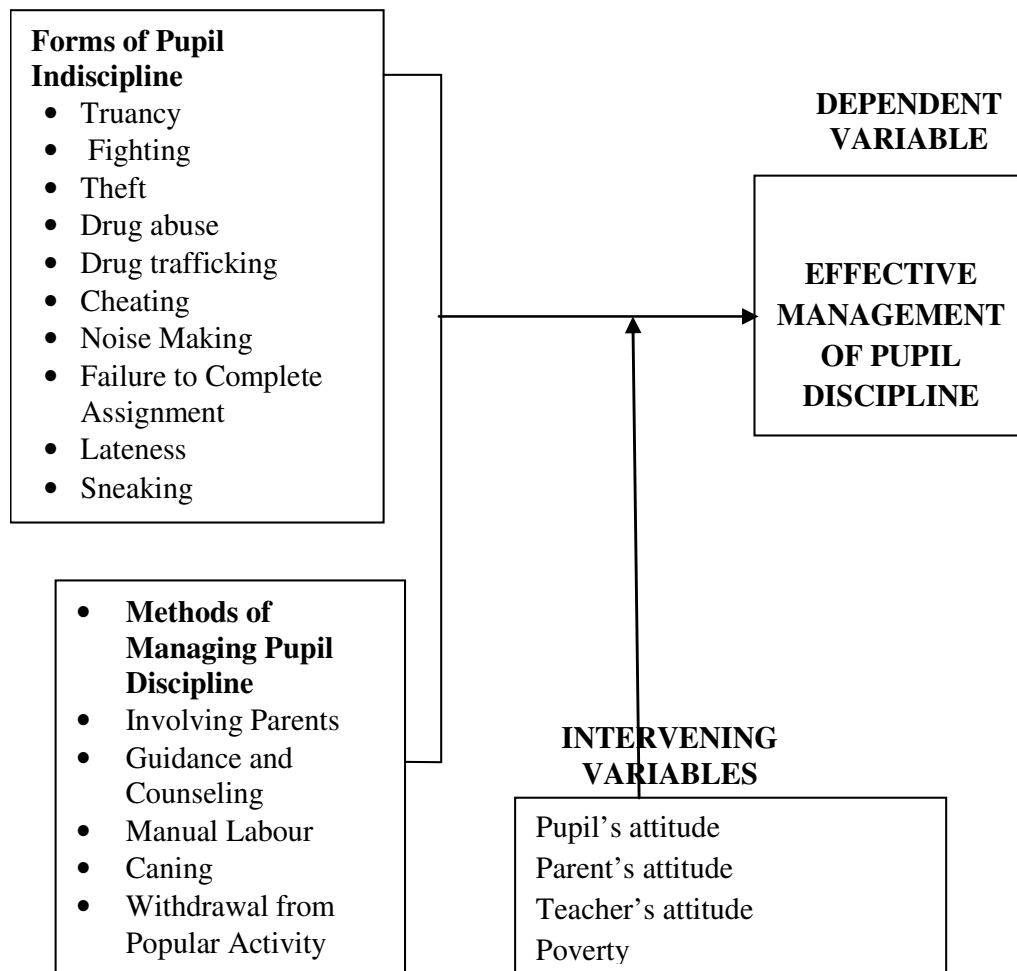
### Research Questions

- i) What discipline problems are experienced in the public primary schools?
- ii) What effective methods are used by school administrators in managing pupil's discipline in the public primary schools?

### Conceptual Framework

The process of managing pupil discipline begins by identifying the forms of indiscipline experienced in schools. Under normal school circumstances learners

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES



**Figure 1.** A conceptual framework showing Management of Pupil Discipline in Public Primary Schools, Adapted from Management of Student Discipline, (Simatwa, 2007) p. 11.

exhibit three forms of indiscipline. These are minor, major and intolerable ones. (Simatwa, 2007). The conceptual framework is based on the concept that pupil discipline can be dealt with effectively by focusing on forms of pupil discipline and methods of dealing with identified discipline problems, taking into account intervening variables. (Figure 1)

The conceptual framework shows that primary schools are faced with numerous indiscipline cases such as; truancy, noisemaking, failure to complete assignment, lateness, sneaking out of school, theft and cheating. The framework also shows that schools could deal with the disciplinary problems by using methods such as; involving parents, using guidance and counseling, manual labour, caning and withdrawal of pupils from popular activity. The framework suggests that when such channels are well followed in the management of pupil discipline the result for the schools would be; well behaved

pupils, orderly pupils, high retention rate of pupils, good academic performance and a conducive learning environment.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study period. The study population consisted of 115 head teachers, 115 deputy head teachers, and 460 class teachers of standard seven and eight, 2530 prefects and one Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a study sample that consisted of 37 head teachers, 37 deputy head teachers, 152 class teachers of standard seven and eight and 370 prefects. Saturated sampling technique was used to select one Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. In-depth interview

**Table 2.** Disciplinary Problems Experienced in Public Primary Schools Head teachers (n= 37); Deputy head teacher (n = 37); Class Teachers (n = 152).

Problem Experienced	Individual Mean Rating			Overall Mean Rating
	Head teachers	Deputy Head teacher	Class teachers	
Truancy	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Theft	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.5
Sneaking	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5
Cheating	4.0	3.3	4.0	3.8
Lateness	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.0
Noise making	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.7
Absenteeism	3.8	3.0	2.5	3.1
Fighting	2.8	2.0	2.0	2.2
Defiance	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.8
Bullying	2.7	2.0	2.2	2.3
Drug Abuse	3.4	2.4	2.7	2.8
Failure to complete assignment	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.8
Sexual Harassment	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.3
Use of abusive language	2.5	3.0	3.9	3.4
Drug trafficking	1.1	2.0	2.5	1.8
Possession of Pornography	3.0	2.5	1.3	2.3

**Classification of Disciplinary Problems Experienced****4.1 – 5.0 Highly Experienced****3.1 – 4.0 Frequently Experienced****2.1 – 3.0 Less Experienced****1.0 – 2.0 Least Experienced**

schedules, questionnaire and document analysis guide were used for data collection. The data collected from the close-ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of means, percentages and frequency counts. Qualitative data collected from open-ended items in the questionnaire and in-depth interviews were analyzed and organized into themes and sub-themes as they emerged.

**RESULTS**

The return rate of questionnaires was 37 (100%) for head teachers, 37 (100%) for deputy head teachers and 152 (100%) for Class teachers.

**Research Question 1**

The research question responded to was; What discipline problems are experienced in the public primary schools? The responses were as shown on Table 2.

Table 2 shows that truancy was indicated as a highly experienced disciplinary problem in public primary schools as it was rated at 4.0. This was attributed to urban influence. The Municipal Quality Assurance Officer further attributed this problem to laxity of the parents who were not taking their parenting responsibilities seriously

and leaving their children without controlling them. Theft among pupils was reported as frequently experienced in schools with an overall mean rating of 3.5. Sneaking out of school during the school hours was rated as frequently experienced disciplinary problem in public primary schools. Cheating was rated at 3.8 as disciplinary problem frequently experienced in schools. During perusal through punishment record books, it was also established that cheating was frequently experienced disciplinary problem. Lateness was reported as highly experienced disciplinary problem in public primary schools as it was rated at 4.1. Noise making was reported as a frequently experienced disciplinary problem and was rated at 4.0. Respondents attributed noise making to the developmental stage of the learners. Absenteeism was rated 3.1 as a disciplinary problem frequently experienced among pupils in public primary schools. Fighting was reported as less experienced disciplinary problem with a mean rating of 2.2 in public primary schools. Defiance was frequently experienced among pupils in the central urban division as was rated 3.8. Failure to complete assignment was reported as frequently experienced disciplinary problem with a mean rating of 3.8 which indicated that it is a major disciplinary problem in all public primary schools. The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer also Criticized bad Company and poor up bringing to be the causes of the disciplinary problems like sexual harassment rated at

**Table 3.** Methods of Establishing and Maintaining Discipline in Public Primary School Head teachers (n= 37); Deputy head teacher (n = 37); Class Teachers (n = 152).

Method Used	Individual Mean Rating			Overall Mean rating
	Head teachers	Deputy head teachers	Class teachers	
Manual Labour	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.0
Caning	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.3
Reprimanding	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.4
Kneeling	2.9	2.0	2.5	2.4
Ignoring the Offence	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.3
Detention	2.2	3.2	2.6	2.7
Guidance and Counseling	4.5	4.0	4.3	4.2
Exclusion	3.1	2.3	2.5	2.7
Expulsion	2.5	1.6	2.1	2.1
Suspension	2.5	2.1	2.9	2.5
Involving Parents	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.2
Withdrawal from a Popular Activity	3.5	3.7	2.1	3.1

**Classification of Methods used to maintain Pupil Discipline**

**4.1 – 5.0 Highly Used**

**3.1 – 4.0 Frequently Used**

**2.1 – 3.0 Rarely Used**

2.3, use of abusive language 3.4, bullying 2.3 and drug trafficking 1.8.

### Research Question 2

The research question responded to was: What effective methods are used by school administrators in maintaining pupil's discipline in the public primary schools? The respondents were asked to indicate methods of maintaining discipline in public primary school. Their responses were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 reveals that public primary schools do use various methods to maintain pupil discipline such as manual labour, caning, reprimanding, detention, suspension and kneeling as methods of maintaining pupil discipline. Manual labour as a method of maintaining pupil discipline was rated at 4.0 and was frequently used by teachers in public primary schools since it did not breach the young person's rights. Caning was reported by head teachers, deputy head teachers and class teachers as frequently used as it had an overall mean rating of 3.3. It was viewed as most effective and time saving. Reprimanding was also established by this study as a rarely used method of maintaining discipline among pupils in public primary schools as was rated 2.4. Kneeling as a method of maintaining student discipline was less used as was rated 2.4. Ignoring the offence was less used in public primary schools as it had a mean rating of 2.3. All head teachers agreed that this method was less common in their schools. Detention was also less used as a method of maintaining pupil discipline. Guidance and counseling was highly used with a mean

rating of 4.2 as a major method of maintaining pupil discipline in public primary schools. Table 2 also reveals that public primary schools do minimally use extreme methods like expulsion 2.1, exclusion 2.7, suspension 2.5, in handling disciplinary cases among pupils. Withdrawal of pupils from popular activities was also established from schools to be in use as one of the methods of discipline management. According to (30%) deputy head teachers and 10(27%) head teachers, withdrawal method was frequently used especially on pupils who were influential and commanded a large following.

### DISCUSSION

Truancy was attributed to laxity of parents who were not taking their parenting responsibilities seriously and are leaving their children without controlling them under care of house helps. Truancy was also attributed to bad examples from both the teachers and adults who are lived permissive lifestyle in the municipality as they constantly uttered obscene language in the presence of the pupils. This finding concurs with Nyaga's (2004) who noted that in less developed countries, pupil discipline is deteriorating as pupils engage in drug taking, truancy and lack of respect for teachers and parents. Focus group discussion revealed that truancy among pupils was due to the mass media influence and more from the videos and soap operas which the urban pupils are exposed to. This finding was also in agreement with the findings of Ileri (1992) that environmental influence played a major role on behavior of pupils. Theft was attributed to

economic disparity among the pupils' family background. Prefects during the focus group discussion emphasized this view. In this regard a prefect further noted, "Most of our classmates who are stealing are from poor families who are living in the slums and are not able to afford books and pens. Some are also orphans whose guardians are not able to buy them books. At times we are defeated to report their cases but some are too notorious, forcing us to report them to the teachers." The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer also echoed the same sentiment by stating that pupils from poor families are forced to steal in order to appear equal with those from the rich families. Results from document analysis guide also revealed that most students who were being punished for theft were from poor economic backgrounds. Sneaking out of school during the school hours was rated as frequently experienced disciplinary problem in public primary schools. According to all prefects in the focus group discussion, pupils do sneak out of school to watch videos where they spend most of their times. Prefects further criticized the parents who do not control their children over the weekends as the pupils do spend their weekends in the video kiosks and would want to continue doing so during school days. On her part the Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer attributed sneaking from schools by pupils to poor parenting in urban centers, she noted that parents in urban areas are never bothered to check what their children do in schools and some never bother to confirm whether their children go to schools or not. This finding confirms the findings of Nyaga (2004) which revealed that pupils engage in dancing, drug taking, pornography and other violent behaviors. She noted that parents in urban centers were busy with their personal businesses and most pupils do take advantage of the absence of their parents to sneak out of schools as they are never asked what they learned by their parents. This finding also concurs with the findings of Afullo (2005) that schools do experience complex disciplinary problems like sneaking and absenteeism without permission which require thorough understanding of their background before attempting to solve them.

During perusal through punishment record books, it was also established that cheating was a frequently experienced disciplinary problem. Most pupils cheated in examination and homework. According to prefects who participated in the focus group discussion, cheating in public primary schools is common among poor performing pupils. One prefect noted, "Children who are orphans and others from permissive families are the majority when it comes to cheating." The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer noted: "Cheating in public primary schools was due to lack of parental attention towards pupils as pupils know that their parents never go to schools to establish their performance and character." And further emphasized; "the society where cheating is being used for survival in

the hearing is a true reflection of what the society practices and this automatically leads to pupil indiscipline.

Deputy head teachers noted that lateness was due to much responsibilities that the learners had over their other siblings at home in the morning before they came to school. Prefects agreed that pupils engage in domestic chores in the morning before they come to school which is a contributing factor to lateness, as a prefect further explained, "Some pupils who are living with their guardian do have a lot of work in the morning and this makes them come late to school, other pupils also come late after lunch because they are the ones who prepare lunch for their siblings since most parents are not at home during lunch hours." The prefects stated further that; some pupils maintained that some pupils were being given responsibilities of their parents who were affected by HIV/AIDS, as such they were to attend to their ailing parents and other siblings before they came to school in the morning. This study established through the punishment records books that lateness was common in all public primary schools. Some of the reasons recorded were; long walking distance to and from schools, orphaned pupils being in charge of their younger siblings causing delayance in the morning, poor weather coupled with bad roads and poor terrain, this was realized in all divisions apart from urban central division. The same sentiments established from the punishment record books were also maintained by all prefects in the focus groups and by the Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer.

Respondents attributed noise making to the developmental stage of the learners. According to prefects some pupils were cheeky and naughty due to their formative stages of development; hence they were fond of making noise unawares. The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer echoed their sentiments that it was a normal problem that requires control and guidance. She however went further to blame noisemaking on the absentee teachers who normally leave the pupils unattended to. During interviews in the focus group discussion, it was noted that pupils who registered chronic absenteeism were those who were orphans and were in charge of their siblings. They also noted that some who usually were absent were affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic, hence either helped to nurse their parents or lacked levies needed by schools. This finding clearly indicates that teachers perceive the poor socio-economic conditions of parents and learners to be a key factor in disciplinary problems as one head teacher maintained; "Our kids live in a poverty-stricken area where parents are always fighting and I think that when you treat a child with aggression, the child becomes aggressive, so role models are not there for their children and they end up admiring the gangsters lifestyles." Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer on her part maintained that poor parenting and lack of focus among the pupils were the major contributory factors to

student absenteeism. She further indicated; “most parents in urban centers are not bothered with their children’s education especially after paying school levies, they therefore leave their children to go to school above some of whom do not reach their schools for a number of days without being realized by their parents.

According to prefects during the focus group discussion, fighting among the pupils in schools was as a result of poor parenting which is characterized by domestic violence. Two of the prefects further explained that pupils from such families had hostile tendencies towards other pupils in the school and were at times provocative in character. Prefects also elaborated that they are influenced to fight their colleagues from simulation of the examples they watched either from the videos or television programs. The deputy head teachers also criticized the parents for poor up-bringing of their children that made the learners to develop aggressive behavior as one deputy head teacher maintained, “as teachers we cannot teach discipline; discipline begins at home. I felt that some of the parents are actually the cause of the learners’ disciplinary problems. The problem emanates from home; the father and mother don’t know how to talk to each other, and they drink, argue and fight in front of the children. The children come with that attitude to school and believe it is correct.” From this finding, the deputy head teachers were very much aware of the impact of home circumstances on learners’ behavior and expressed their frustrations that they were required to teach discipline in school, but that was not being reinforced at home. On other part, the Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, noted, “bad influence from the society was the root cause of fighting among the pupils in public primary schools.” She also noted that fighting among pupils was due to lack clear school policies and rules which could guide the behavior of the pupils. She further noted that fighting was realized in public primary schools because of lack of proper machineries for guidance and counseling in primary schools. She equally blamed the parents for poor guidance to the pupils which makes them not to embrace proper coexistence with children from other backgrounds different from theirs. During focus group discussion, prefects attributed this to permissive lifestyle in the urban and that most pupils are left under the control of house helps whom on the other hand are despised by the pupils a tendency later carried to schools and are exhibited to teachers. The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer also pointed at urban influence, especially videos to be the cause of defiance among pupils in public primary schools.

Failure to complete assignment was reported as a frequently experienced disciplinary problem with a mean rating of 3.8 which indicated that it is a major disciplinary problem in all public primary schools. They also noted that most pupils are left on their own by their parents who do not bother to check on school assignments given to

their children. On the other hand the Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer asserted that failure to complete assignment was a problem due to lack of seriousness on the part of the pupils and also failure of the parents to inspect what their children learn in schools. She also criticized the teachers for failure to counsel the pupils on the importance of assignments.

During the focus group discussion, prefects maintained that these problems were as a result of urban influence which expose the pupils to videos and films that has such vices. The pupils are therefore exhibiting the characters which they do watch from the videos and films from the estates. Drug trafficking was reported as least experienced disciplinary problem. One prefect maintained, “Drug trafficking was very rare among pupils as majority were still young and do not know clear distinction between drugs of abuse” and added that; “It was a rare problem experienced among pupils in classes seven and eight.” The Municipal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer also criticized bad company and poor upbringing to be the causes of the disciplinary problems like sexual harassment, use of abusive language, bullying and drug trafficking. She further maintained: “The indifferent attitude of the parents does give leeway for pupils to join bad companies in urban estates. This encourages very many types pupil disciplinary problems.” These findings were consistent with the findings by Simatwa (2007) that there were several forms of indiscipline experienced in schools and that Kenya had been experiencing an increase in bad behavior among pupils. The findings of Afullo (2005) also revealed that students, mostly day scholars do take drugs at home in the company of their friends and relatives and this makes it hard for the schools to get rid of disciplinary problems associated with drug taking like bullying, sexual harassment, abusive language among other discipline problems in schools. While research findings by Afullo (2005) indicated that secondary schools experience high rate of boy/girl relationship as a disciplinary problem, this study did not find it a problem in public primary schools. In fact it was not reported in the schools visited for research. The teachers attributed this to the fact that most pupils were still very young and had not reached adolescent stage and also to the fact that mature pupils were in the upper primary classes which had a lot of work as such the pupils had no room to think about boy/girl relationship.

Nevertheless all these infractions are by all means maladies of international currency and each country has come up with various strategies of dealing with them. At first most countries of the world tried to instill discipline among the youth by the use of the old adage “Spare the rod, spoil the child.” This resulted in use of cruel, inhuman, torturous and degrading punishments at home and in schools. Thus the infractions were a hindrance to development of the young into responsible, disciplined, hardworking individuals. Therefore the infractions were to

be dealt with decisively. Notwithstanding this view it was realized that the methods used were rather destructive and violated fundamental rights of children. The methods were in fact as universal just as the infractions were universal (United Nations, 1948). The findings of the study attested to these facts. Afullo (2005) observed that teachers apply various methods to cope with the tasks of managing student discipline through suspension, caning, pinching, ridiculing and forcing pupils to kneel for long hours outside the classroom. During the study all head teachers further noted that manual labour was being administered during games and lunch breaks hence did not interfere with the pupils learning in accordance with the Ministry of Education regulations on punishment. On the other hand the deputy head teachers noted that manual labour was commonly used in public primary schools because it was not only a punishment but also was a way of training young people to do other manual jobs which some of them might fall back to after school.

All head teachers maintained that as much as caning was against the Ministry of Education policy, it was the most feared punishment by pupils and so it was effective since pupils would not want to commit an offense in order to avoid the punishment. During interviews with prefects in focus group discussion, maintained that the punishment was common in their schools because most teachers did enjoy inflicting pain on the learners. They noted that not all teachers were using caning as a method of instilling discipline in the pupils but it was used by some specific teachers. The prefects, however concurred with their teachers that caning was not time wasting and was not liked by the pupils hence it was an effective method of maintaining discipline among the pupils in public primary schools. This finding was contradictory to the views of Griffin (1994), that corporal punishment teachers inflict on the children "might" but does not work in shaping "whole man" and while it may physically control behavior, it is psychologically damaging. This finding reveals that public primary schools were going against the policies of the Ministry of Education Ajowi (2005) noted; "The use of punitive punishment on students by their teachers, and the lesson taught to children through the use of violence, may undermine the very purpose of education as articulated in article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child."P.43. Although not admitting to using corporal punishment, one head teacher revealed his true feelings about it when he stated; "I honestly think that hitting is the best form of punishment. If you hit the children for the right reasons, they will learn from their mistakes."

This finding indicates that in spite of the change in educational disciplinary policy, the practice of management of pupil discipline has not yet been transformed to become more democratic and positive. Although it is difficult to quantify the number of children who drop out of school as a result of caning, the Human Rights Watch estimated that 30% of school dropouts in

sub-Saharan Africa are as a result of rampant caning in schools (Human Right Watch, 2004). It is important to note that in the present time teachers and school administrators risk a lot in their approach to use of corporal punishment on pupil/student offenders. In this respect The Basic Education Act 2013 states expressly in section 36 (1) "No pupil shall be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in any manner, whether physical or psychological" and section 36 (2) "A person who contravenes the provisions of section 36(1) commits an offence shall be liable on conviction to a fine and not exceeding one hundred thousand shillings or to imprisonment not exceeding six months or both.

The children Act 2001 also outlaws use of corporal punishment in schools. Thus, Kenya has fully joined a number of countries in the world that have outlawed use of corporal punishment, such as U.S.A, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Italy, United Kingdom, Norway (Simatwa, 2007). In fact outlawing of use of physical punishment and mental harassment in schools (The Basic Education Act, 2013) is the only sure way of creating child friendly schools. This essence immensely would reduce dropout and repetition rates whose outcome is great wastage in education. All head teachers indicated that reprimanding has become common in schools after the directives from the Ministry of Education concerning the modes of discipline management in the institutions of learning. Most teachers therefore do reprimand pupils when they make mistakes than other forms of punishments especially in minor mistakes. Class teachers emphasized that reprimanding was as effective as caning since learners do not like being reprimanded hence they would be disciplined in order to avoid being reprimanded. This finding concurs with the views of Human Rights Watch (2004) which states; "Teachers should impose non-physical disciplinary measures such as requiring students to write a statement describing the negative effects of their behavior, or to apologize for the mistake in front of their classmates. The teacher can require the misbehaving child to sit on a chair at the back of the classroom and to think about their mistakes and ways to improve their behavior" (p. 15).

During interviews with all the head teachers and all the class teachers, kneeling was reported to be frequently used by individual subject teachers and teachers on duty. The head teachers on their part noted that the method was commonly used by subject teachers after lessons especially during break time, lunch time and games time. The head teachers further maintained that although kneeling was not allowed by the Ministry of Education, head teachers allowed it because it was time saving compared to other methods of maintaining discipline. All head teachers agreed that this method was however less common in their schools. They emphasized that teachers were *in loco parentis* while learners were in schools and



as such needed not to punish every disciplinary case especially minor cases. This method they further noted was used in school to enhance good relations between the teachers and the pupils. Although there were mixed reactions from the deputy head teachers, head teachers and prefects, they all however concurred that not all indiscipline cases could be punishable as some should be ignored to create rapport between the pupils and their teachers.

Detention was also less used as a method of maintaining pupil discipline. During interviews with head teachers and deputy head teachers, the respondents maintained that such method was used on notorious disciplinary cases which had been handled through other methods. The deputy head teachers further noted that detention method was used in schools in order to discourage other pupils who might be having similar indiscipline behaviors, as one deputy head teacher noted; "The basic idea behind detention should be to discomfort the learner concerned by taking away his/her free time, thereby attempting to modify his/her behavior to a more positive or disciplined one." The prefects on the other hand noted that some teachers were detaining pupils who were having minor disciplinary problems and even ones whom the teachers had formed opinion about them were being detained without serious mistakes. During interviews with head teachers, deputy head teachers and prefects, they noted that although the Ministry of Education emphasizes on the use of guidance and counseling in the management of pupils discipline in primary schools, it was not possible since pupils were seeing guidance and counseling as sign of lenience on the part of the teachers hence they ignore the advice offered to them by the teachers. This finding confirms the observations of Bray (2007) that the majority of disciplinary problems that may confront school administrators originate in the total school environment and not just from the classroom instructional situation. These disciplinary problems became very important when we remember the variety of the situations from which they can spring. Deputy head teachers further emphasized that most pupils were used to being punished whenever they have disciplinary problems at their homes and talking to them inform of guidance and counseling would not make them change their behavior, such like pupils, they added would deserve punishment to discourage them from such tendencies. This finding concur with Ajowi's (2005) that; The guidance instructions which in certain cases are given to the young people more or less systematically also transmit numerous elements which perfect their aptitudes for finding their way in the complexity of arrangements, norms and customary rule.

This finding was also supported by The Municipal Quality and Assurance Standards Officer when she noted that; it is important to understand how students feel and think because, only then, can we understand what is

appropriate behavior and what needs correcting. She further maintained that it is important to realize that age-related behavior may often be appropriate even if it does not meet an adult standard of goodness. The findings on the use guidance and counseling are also supported by Ajowi (2005) where he noted that teachers and parents should provide the perfect role model and should not turn violent as a way of solving problems because the child will copy their elders. He further maintained that parents and teachers should inculcate values in the child. Such values include love, humility, forgiveness and self-control. This is one of the secrets of success in those schools run by the Faith based organization, such as the Catholic church, Quaker church and the Anglican church.

Table 3 reveals that public primary schools do minimally use extreme methods like expulsion, exclusion and suspension in handling disciplinary cases among pupils. According to head teachers such methods were less used because they made pupils to drop out of schools while the aim of the disciplinary methods is to deter the bad behavior of the pupils but not to make them drop out of school. During interviews with the deputy head teachers, they noted that pupils were at formative stage and were prone to indiscipline tendencies, but such tendencies need to be controlled but not to condemn the pupils as such, severe methods are not necessary to be applied in case indiscipline cases arose. The sentiments of head teachers were equally echoed by prefects during focus group discussion where they noted that pupils needed moderate corrective methods so as not fear going to school. On their part deputy head teachers noted that pupils need friendly environment to make them develop good habits and incase of any indiscipline tendency, they need to be handled with caution so as not to discourage them from coming to school. However one of the deputy head teachers noted that they were using suspension and stated; "We hope that when they are away from school, they will have enough time to reconsider whether they want to be learners or not".

Discipline is essential for creating a positive school environment as it reinforces good learner behaviour, especially in learners who do not like or have little interest in school. Such learners may be motivated to find ways to stay away from school and suspension may have the unintended consequence of promoting these learners' use of inappropriate behavior to provoke disciplinary action that will allow them to stay out of school. This finding shows that public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality observed the Education Act Cap, 211 (1980) which recommends that, the use of suspension and expulsion should be left to the Director of Education who should have the final word on expulsion of pupils. The Basic Education Act 2013 in which The Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 (Revised 1980) is repealed also prohibits suspension and expulsion. In fact section 35 subsections (1), (2) and (3) of the Basic Education, 2013 states "Pupils shall be given appropriate incentives to

learn and complete basic education” ; section (2) states “No pupil admitted at a school, subject to subsection (3) shall be held back in any class or expelled from school”; Section (3) states “subject to subsection (1) the Cabinet secretary may make regulations to prescribe expulsion or the discipline of a delinquent pupil for whom all other corrective measures have been exhausted and only after such child and parent or guardian have been afforded an opportunity of being heard; provided that such a pupil shall be admitted to an institution that focuses on correction in the context of education.”(The Basic Education Act, 2013; The Children Act 2001 and the Constitution of Kenya, 2010). This is because if you ask Kenyans what worries them most about schools, the answer might surprise you Discipline. This is because it tops the list of parents, guardians and other education stakeholders’ concerns. School discipline today is a tougher problem than ever because of nationwide increase of troubled families and disorderly children. Some schools, especially those in urban areas have students who are literally violent felons. In fact one head teacher in Kisumu Municipality estimated that he has had ten to twenty such felons in the past one decade in his school.

It is important to note that although the legislations and courts are created to protect both the school administrators, teachers inclusive and students, very little is achieved under strict observance of these legislations and court decisions. It is for this reason that illegal practices in management of pupil discipline thrive. What these legislations have done is to take a way tools that principals and head teachers use to instill discipline into students. For instance principals and head teachers could facilitate expulsion of unruliest students or send them to rehabilitation schools for the hard-to-discipline, but education legislations now do not allow expulsion and holding back.

Parents, guardians and educators today find their hands tied when dealing with disruptive children. With these legal restrictions hampering them, educators cannot respond forcefully when children get into fights, curse teachers, sexually harass others, disobey teachers, come late to school, bullying, save for cheating in national examinations, drug abuse, drug trafficking and rape which are outright criminal cases. In fact court decisions and national laws have turned headteachers and principals into psycho-babbling bureaucrats who are no longer real respected. Politicizing educational issues and making matters of student discipline a constitutional issue, the courts have left educators fumbling their way through every day disciplinary encounters with children overwhelming. It is indeed daunting, for instance, the headteacher wants to send the child home to put on proper school uniform but he is not sure it is within his authority to do so, so he calls the County Director of Education. The County Director of Education is also unsure and tells him to use his discretion. In fact almost

in all discipline matters the principal finds lots of difficulties. Where does he draw the line between what is “significantly disruptive” to warrant a disciplinary action that does not infringe on the child’s Constitutional Rights. During the study one headteacher pointed out a case that was tricky to deal with, he found a student with condoms in the desk. At first he thought of suspending the student, but later changed his mind because of fear that the decision would be considered arbitrary and capricious.

According to some head teachers parents being involved in cases where pupils were notoriously repeating indiscipline tendencies was highly used. They further noted that parents were being invited in schools by the disciplinary committees after several consultations with head teachers’ office. On their part the deputy head teachers noted that parents were always involved to make them clear the air over the character of their children and assist teachers on finding the way forward on managing pupil discipline. Municipal Quality Assurance Standards Officer also supported the involvement of parents whom she noted were to reinforce the methods of managing pupil discipline employed by the school. This finding conquered with Stoops et al (1981) who advised the school administrators that basic standards of discipline should be agreed upon by teachers, administrators, parents and pupils. Head teachers during interviews also noted that withdrawal of pupils from popular activities was making other pupils not to copy the indiscipline tendencies that were earlier exhibited by pupils under punishment.

The study further revealed that public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality were majorly using illegal punishments, involving parents and using manual labour to maintain pupil discipline. This on the other hand shows that the schools were going against the Ministry of Education Science and Technology directives on pupil discipline management. This finding also concurred with the findings of Afullo (2005) and Simatwa (2007) in their studies on student discipline management in secondary schools in different districts. While research findings of Simatwa (2007) on management of student discipline in secondary schools revealed that secondary schools were having naive disciplinary committees which were in charge of discipline management, the present study did not establish the existence of such committees in public primary schools that the researcher visited, however the present study concurred with the study by Simatwa (2007) on the grounds that there were weak disciplinary systems in public primary schools as established by Simatwa (2007) in secondary schools.

## CONCLUSION

The school is not a haven of peace and tranquility. Infractions are experienced on daily basis and hence the concern of all stakeholders. The indiscipline cases

experienced are on the rise compounded by the emergence of modern technology and new legislations. The mass media and social media have encouraged infractions relating to truancy, bullying, pornography, drug abuse and trafficking and violence. The legislations have expanded the due – process rights of students. This is very important because if the headteacher or principal wants to suspend a violent troublemaker, he has to ask: Would a judge find my decision and procedures legally satisfactory? Would he agree that I had adequate evidence? The appropriate documentation? The authority? The students are also aware of their rights and the right to sue a principal. This means that for principals to succeed in managing pupil discipline, they have to use effective methods. These are methods that can result in positive outcomes. These methods have to a large extent be legal. Thus schools should have policies to cope with the legislations. This is because the laws are designed to avoid law suits than to establish order in school, hence they are abstract and inflexible. Understandably, they inspire some contempt from pupils. More than ninety percent of the methods used in management of student discipline are illegal according to the current legislations. That is, manual labour, corporal punishment, reprimanding, kneeling, detention, exclusion, expulsion and suspension as they are prohibited by The Basic Education Act 2013, The Children Act 2001 and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. Notwithstanding their illegality, the study established that they are used though rarely except manual labour, and corporal punishment that were frequently used. The legal methods used highly were guidance and counseling and involving parents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Head teachers should sensitize the use of guidance and counseling and pastoral care in pupil discipline management.
- ii. Parents, community and sponsors should be sensitized by Ministry of Education and head teachers on their roles on pupil discipline management in schools in order to curb disciplinary problems experienced in public primary schools.
- iii. Ministry of Education should regularly sensitize and organize in-service courses for head teachers and teachers on better methods of pupil discipline management, bearing in mind their pupils' constitutional rights.
- iv. Guidance and counseling teachers should mitigate impulsive and aggressive behaviours among pupils by teaching them social and emotional skills and build self-esteem by engaging them in therapeutic programs such as role – playing games, breathing exercises and learning to identify feelings, manage anger and solve problems.
- v. School administrators should endeavour to develop schools into communities of shared values as opposed to communities that are litigious and punishment phobics.
- vi. Head teachers and principals should always have their presence felt by interacting frequently with students on the alleys, in the classrooms, dormitories, dining halls and modeling for students and staff the moral ethos of the school. They should be in school, long before the day begins and long after it ends. They should know students' names', joke with them and encourage them and take care of little things as they matter.
- vii. Head teachers and principals should work with their entire staff, teaching and non-teaching to enlist them in their efforts.
- viii. Head teachers and principals should never allow their students to socialize with felons through guidance and counseling bearing in mind life skills and never admit undisciplined students transferred to their schools.
- ix. Head teachers and principals should define moral expectations for pupils and students, that is, the school vision, mission motto and core values should be displayed at strategic points in the school. This help to guide learners.

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