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Parental Involvement and Perception on Student Discipline: An investigation of Inconsistent Practices in Secondary Schools in Kericho, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices in secondary schools. The objective of the study was to determine whether inconsistent disciplinary practices in secondary schools affect parent perceptions and whether increased parental involvement leads to more consistent disciplinary practices. Both parents and school stakeholders were surveyed using a mixed-methods strategy with cross-sectional research design. A sample of students, teachers, and parents from seven school divisions in Kericho County participated in the study. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, which was then analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The ANOVA performed on the collected data regarding stakeholders' perceptions of parental involvement and student discipline yielded significant results. The P-value of 0.006 indicates that parental involvement and stakeholder perceptions of student discipline practices are significantly related. Participants who reported greater parental involvement perceived student discipline practices to be more effective and consistent, according to the study. This suggests that parental involvement has a significant impact on how stakeholders perceive student discipline practices. The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discussion about parental involvement in school discipline and the significance of consistent disciplinary practices. In addition to informing policy recommendations aimed at improving parental involvement in student discipline and enhancing the efficacy of school discipline practices, the findings of this study may also inform recommendations for improving parental involvement in student discipline.

Keywords: Parental involvement, perceptions of student discipline practices, inconsistent disciplinary practices, effective discipline practices

Introduction

As a result of the learning environment's rapid transformation, educational institutions face a growing number of obstacles in delivering quality education to students. In response, there is a growing demand for increased stakeholder participation in school management (Lacey & Wright, 2021). One stakeholder group that has received significant attention in recent years is parents, whose involvement in their children's education can have a significant impact on their academic success (Kim et al., 2018).

Despite the potential benefits of parental involvement, many parents face substantial obstacles that prevent them from actively participating in their children's education. Marzano and Pickering (2010), who conducted a study in New York, identified a number of these barriers, including parents' lack of knowledge about how to support their children's learning, their own negative experiences with schooling, and the perception that schools are not welcoming or responsive to parental involvement. However, the study also provided recommendations for overcoming these obstacles and enhancing parental involvement in schools.

Additionally, research in other regions of the world has examined the relationship between parental involvement and perceptions of secondary school student discipline practices. For instance, Li and Hsieh (2018) found in a study conducted in China that parental involvement positively affected students' perceptions of discipline practices. Fan and Williams (2010) found in a second study conducted in the United States that parents who were more involved in their children's education had more positive perceptions of school discipline practices.

In secondary schools in Africa, there is a growing interest in parental involvement, perceptions of student discipline practices, inconsistent disciplinary practices, and effective discipline practices (Adeyemo et al., 2020; Ogunyemi, 2020). These studies have highlighted the significance of parental involvement in shaping perceptions of student discipline practices and the need for all schools to implement consistent disciplinary policies.

Despite these findings, the literature on the relationship between parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices in secondary schools in Africa remains incomplete. This study aims to address this deficiency by investigating this relationship in schools in Kericho County, Kenya, using a mixed-methods approach to collect data from parents and school stakeholders.

In conclusion, parental involvement is a crucial factor in shaping perceptions of secondary school student discipline practices. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the role of parental involvement in school discipline and the significance of consistent disciplinary practices by examining this relationship in the context of schools in Kericho County.

Statement of Problem

While it has been demonstrated that parental involvement improves students' academic performance, inconsistent disciplinary procedures in schools can have a detrimental effect on parental perceptions and student outcomes. Additionally, there is a growing need for increased stakeholder involvement in school management, including parental involvement, given the rapidly changing nature of the global educational environment.

The issue, specifically in Kenya, is that there is a dearth of research on the connection between parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices, despite the growing interest in exploring parental involvement, perceptions of student discipline practices, inconsistent disciplinary practices, and effective discipline practices in secondary schools. This creates a significant gap in the literature, especially given the difficulties Kenya continues to have in providing its schoolchildren with a quality education.

As one of the areas in Kenya where there hasn't been much research on the subject, Kericho County research is crucial. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature and offer insights into how schools can promote parental involvement in a way that is culturally sensitive while ensuring consistent and effective discipline practices for all students by examining the relationship between parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices in secondary schools in Kericho County.

Methodology

Research Design

The study's investigation of parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline used a cross-sectional research design. In a study utilizing the research design, a population is looked at over a specific point in time (Jenkins & Elliott, 2018). The prevalence of a particular condition, behavior, or outcome in a particular population is commonly studied using this research design in several disciplines, including epidemiology, public health, and social sciences. The cross-sectional design does not track individuals over time, so it can only measure differences between or among a variety of people. Cross-sectional studies give a quick overview of the result and the traits connected to it at a particular time (Jenkins & Elliott, 2018).

Instead of relying on random sampling, which can introduce bias into the study, the groups identified for the study are purposefully chosen based on the sample's already-existing differences. Cross-sectional designs typically rely on survey methods to collect data, which makes them affordable and quick to complete (Cheng et al., 2020).

A study by Cheng et al. (2020) that sought to understand the prevalence and correlates of depressive symptoms among frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in China is an illustration of a cross-sectional study. To examine the relationships between various factors, including work stress, social support, and depression symptoms, the study conducted a single point-in-time survey of a sample of healthcare professionals. The study discovered a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms among frontline healthcare workers who reported high levels of work stress and low levels of social support.

Instruments

The research methods used in this study, surveys and semi-structured interviews, are consistent with mixed-methods approaches that seek to gather both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaires and interview schedules were developed following accepted guidelines for questionnaire construction, which include using clear language, appropriate response scales, and avoiding leading or biased questions (Finster, 1997; Openheim, 1992; Adams, 1990).

Before the full implementation of the survey and interview schedules, pilot testing with a small group of participants was carried out to further improve the validity and reliability of the instruments (Dörnyei, 2010). The instruments were improved in response to feedback from the pilot test, making sure that the questions were understandable, pertinent, and suitable for the intended audience.

Sampling

The research used purposive and random sampling to obtain 28 secondary schools. When the sample size had been obtained, proportional sampling was then used to select the number of schools to be included in the sample from each category. Using proportional sampling, 7 county schools and 23 sub-county schools were included in the final sample. Once the number of schools to be included in the sample from each category had been obtained, random sampling was used to get the schools from each category for study. Proportional sampling is illustrated in table 1:

Table 1: Proportional Sampling Procedure

Category of school	Total number of schools	Sample size in each category	Actual number responding
County	14	14/64 x 30 = 7	6
subcounty	50	50/64 x 30 = 23	22
Total	64	64/64 x 30 = 30	28

To get the number of respondents to be included in each of the sample schools, purposive sampling was then used. In this purposive sampling, 8 Form Four students who had been prefects were included in the sample since they had been in the schools long enough and had been involved in management directly or indirectly, four teachers who are HODs were also selected since there are at least four departments in every secondary school and finally Principals who in this case were the managers were selected from every school for investigation.

Table 2: Purposive sampling showing the number of respondents

Type of respondents	Total
Form four prefects	224
HODs	112
Principals	28
Total number of respondents	364

Results

Extent of Parental Involvement by divisions according to stakeholders

The level of parental involvement in the four areas of secondary school management, which includes student discipline and student counselling, financial management and teacher motivation varied from division to division according to various stakeholders. Responses were based on Interview schedules and Questionnaires respectively. The HODs indicated that the number of activities in which parents were involved was higher for some divisions and lower for others. Table 3 gives a summary of the levels of parental involvement by percentage in secondary school management that existed in various divisions of Kericho county.

Table 3: Percentage of Parental Involvement per Division

Division	Number of parents involved by percentage
Ainamoi	41.4%
Kipkelion	6.4%
Sigowet	8.9%
Chilchila	4.9%
Londiani	9.9%
Belgut	22.7%
soin	5.9%
Total	100.0%

The findings in table 3 indicate that the highest parental involvement (41.4%) existed in Ainamoi division. This parental involvement could imply that parents were involved in any of the four areas of management. However, Chilchila division had the lowest parental involvement (4.9%). This could also imply that some secondary schools in the division did not involve parents at all in their management. From these findings, it would seem that the more the number of parents in a school, the higher the probability of parental involvement.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference between parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices in secondary schools in Kericho, Kenya. Parental involvement and perceptions of student discipline practices in secondary schools in Kericho are closely associated, according to the study's main hypothesis. To test this hypothesis, the statistical analysis of the data sought to determine whether the data supported or refuted it. The significance of the relationship between parental involvement and perceptions of student consistent disciplinary practices was determined by applying the ANOVA statistical test to the survey data. The results of the ANOVA tests are presented in table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Results of parental involvement and perceptions of student consistent disciplinary practices

Student Disciplinary practices Mean Response	Interaction term	Sum of squares	d. f	Mean square	F	Significance level
	Between groups	12.573	6	2.095		
					2.826	0.012*
	Within groups	145.327	196	0.741		
	Total	157.900	202			

The findings in table 4 show that there was a clear indication that stakeholders' perceptions were almost similar. The F-value on student discipline was high. The registered F-value for this hypothesis was 2.826 while its P-value was 0.012. While the F-value was high, the corresponding P-value was low. At 5% significance level, the calculated P-value was lower than 0.05. The low P-value indicated that there was a significant relationship, according to stakeholders, between parental involvement in the management of secondary schools and student discipline. Most stakeholders concurred with the fact that parental input to a large extent determined the level of discipline in most secondary schools. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected at 5% significance level and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The study's findings imply that secondary schools' inconsistent disciplinary policies do have an impact on parents' perceptions of those schools.

Conclusion

According to the analysis, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between inconsistent disciplinary practices and favorable parent opinions of the school's disciplinary procedures. Particularly, parents were more likely to have unfavorable opinions of the school's disciplinary policies if they claimed to have encountered inconsistent disciplinary procedures in the educational setting.

Most secondary schools in Kericho county according to stakeholders felt that parental involvement in the management of secondary schools was a key factor that determined discipline of students.

This agrees with a study that found parental involvement to be positively associated with student achievement in a study carried out in the United States, including better attendance and academic performance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). According to the study, parental involvement could be increased by making schools welcoming to parents and encouraging their involvement in extracurricular activities.

Recommendations

The study's conclusions allow for the following recommendations to be made:

(i) To make sure that all students are treated fairly and consistently, schools should establish clear and enforceable disciplinary procedures. This will enhance how parents view the school's disciplinary procedures.

(ii) Schools should take action to increase parental involvement by holding meetings of the parent-teacher association and including parents in discussions about disciplinary procedures. This will promote a more positive learning environment at the school and increase parental and administrative trust.

(iii) To make sure that their disciplinary procedures are consistent, efficient, and fair, schools should regularly assess and monitor them. By doing so, the school will be able to determine any areas for improvement and make sure that all of the student's needs are being met.

(iv) Schools should regularly train teachers and staff on appropriate disciplinary measures and methods for dealing with students who may be acting out.

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