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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF THE USE OF SELECTED DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HOMABAY COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Students in Rachuonyo North Sub County have continued to perform poorly in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) over the past years. The focus of this study was to look into the selected discipline strategies specifically suspension, manual labour and sending students home to call their parents and how these strategies influence students' academic performance. The study presents the knowledge of these discipline strategies, how they are executed in schools in Homabay County, Kenya and how they influence the academic performance of high school students. From the literature review, academic performance of students before and after these strategies has not been looked into which necessitated the study. The students' academic performance before and after the discipline strategies is subjected to empirical testing and the test results are likely to equip teachers with the knowledge on the influence of these selected strategies on their academic performance. Further research is required to determine the influence of these discipline strategies in other counties.

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INTRODUCTION

Discipline is key since it is an integral part of the teaching and learning process in any learning institution and without which effective teaching and learning may not occur. According to Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014), Discipline enhances a happy and industrious school community and an orderly and safe environment which is not intimidating or threatening to the learner. This implies that to ensure safety of educators and learners and to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning, discipline is paramount. Managing discipline in a school set up has been an obstacle impeding academic performance of some students since all students including those who are disruptive must be examined and so it is important that they are educated like the rest of the population (Kralevich, Slate & Carmen 2010). Student discipline problems have always existed in the world and the discipline strategies employed have changed over the years because teachers are constantly battling discipline issues. Teachers therefore have the responsibility of managing student discipline apart from delivery of content and so in the event of student misbehavior; they employ a certain discipline strategy to combat the misbehavior (Nasibi, 2003).

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Due to the ban of corporal punishment, student misbehavior has resulted in discipline strategies which involve removing the student from regular education setting. Some of these strategies include suspensions (Christle, Nelson and Jolivette, 2004), sending them home to call the parents and finally manual labor. A study conducted by Arcia (2006) demonstrated that when a student is excluded from education setting, it can be detrimental to his or her academic performance because their academic needs fail to be met. Although there are several factors which have been attributed to the poor academic performance of students in Homabay County, Kenya, discipline strategies especially the ones excluding a student from a class set up was necessary to have an in-depth assessment on the influence of these discipline strategies on academic performance of high school students in Homabay County.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of the selected discipline strategies on academic performance of learners in secondary schools. In order to attain this purpose, the study was guided by the following objectives:

1. Describe the selected discipline strategies and their use in schools
2. Determine the influence of discipline strategies on academic performance of students.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In this study one null hypothesis was tested.

HO_1: Discipline strategies have no significant influence on the academic performance of students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Rachuonyo North Sub County in Homabay County which is about 500 kilometres west of Nairobi City and has an area of about 438 square kilometres. The study employed causal comparative research design whose main purpose was to explore the inter link between variables. The population of the study comprised of 23 schools in Rachuonyo North Sub County, Homabay County. The accessible populations were teachers and form 2, 3 and 4 students. The researcher used questionnaires for teachers and document analysis for the students. This involves analysis of documentary materials that are in print form (Kothari, 2014). Simple random sampling was used to select 23 schools out of the 43 schools in the county. Purposive sampling was thereafter used to identify the form 2, 3 and 4 students who had received any of these discipline strategies with the help of the class teachers. Simple random sampling was again used to select 5 teachers per school who also teach these forms but were not class teachers totalling to 115 teachers. Questionnaires for teachers aided in finding out the frequencies and percentages of the schools which were using these discipline strategies. The researcher went through the documents containing the students' results, to find out the academic performance before and after receiving the discipline strategy. The researcher went through the academic results (In all subjects and obtained a mean score) of the identified student specifically in the exam which was done just before the discipline strategy was used on them and the results of the immediate exam which was done after the discipline strategy had been used on them. Data was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V20.0). Descriptive statistics, means, frequencies, and percentages and standard deviations were used for data presentation. The quantitative data was analyzed using paired sample t-test at .05 level of significance and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the academic performance of students before and after the discipline strategies had been given. According to Kothari (2014), a paired t test can be used to compare the same group of people before and after a certain treatment has been given to them and therefore the scores in the first exam for all the students were compared with the paired scores.

RESULTS

The results from the teachers' questionnaires were presented in frequencies and percentages;

Table 1. Use of suspension as a discipline strategy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	95	82.6
No	20	17.4
Total	**115**	**100.0**

From the findings in Table 1, a majority of teachers agreed that the schools they teach at use suspension as a discipline strategy. 95 out of 115 respondents translating to 82.6% as compared to 17.4% agreed that they used suspension. This could be interpreted to mean that a bigger percentage of schools in Homabay County are using suspension as a discipline strategy. This is in agreement with other researchers like Arcia (2006), Kralevich (2010), Dahir (2010), Koon (2013) and Huzinec (2014) who found out that suspension is used as a discipline strategy in most schools.

Table 2. Suspension is mostly given to boys than girls

	Frequency	Percent
SD	41	35.7
D	31	27.0
U	14	12.2
A	20	17.4
SA	9	7.8
Total	**115**	**100.0**

From the results in table 2, a high percentage of teachers strongly disagreed that suspension is mostly given to boys than girls. 31 teachers which is 27% disagreed that boys are mostly suspended than girls. This is a true evidence that both boys and girls are suspended when found with an indiscipline case. This contradicts the study that was conducted by Costello (2009) which found that boys represent 85% of discipline referrals.

Table 3. Sending of students' home to call their parent as a discipline strategy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	111	96.5
No	4	3.5
Total	**115**	**100.0**

Finding revealed that 111(96.5%) of teachers agreed that students are usually sent home to call their parents whenever they were found in an indiscipline case and 4(3.5%) disagreed that students are sent home to call their parents if found in any indiscipline case. This is a justification that almost all schools use this strategy in Homabay County. Students were sent home for a maximum of two days to call their parents when they were involved in a discipline case.

Table 4. Students enjoy being sent home

	Frequency	Percent
SD	11	9.6
D	18	15.7
U	7	6.1
A	55	47.8
SA	24	20.9
Total	**115**	**100.0**

Table 4 indicate that 11(9.6%) of teachers strongly disagreed that students enjoy being sent home, 18(15.7%) disagreed, 7(6.1%) were undecided, 55(47.8%) agreed and 24(20.9%) strongly agreed that students enjoy being sent home. This finding is in agreement with the finding by Simatwa (2012) that some students preferred a discipline strategy that will exclude them from an education setting because they do not enjoy academically demanding tasks.

Out of the 115 teachers (shown in table 5), a good percentage, that is 36(31.3%) strongly disagreed and 47(40.9%) disagreed that sending students home weakens their connection with school. 6.1% of the respondents were undecided. 14 teachers agreed and 11 teachers strongly agreed that that sending students home indeed weakens their connection with school. This contradicts the study which was conducted by Huzinec

(2014) which found that discipline strategies involving removing a student from education setting weakens their connection with school.

Table 5. Sending students home weakens their connection with school

	Frequency	Percent
SD	36	31.3
D	47	40.9
U	7	6.1
A	14	12.2
SA	11	9.6
Total	**115**	**100.0**

Table 6. Use of manual labour as a discipline strategy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	87	75.7
No	28	24.3
Total	**115**	**100.0**

As indicated by the findings in table 6, manual labour is also widely used as a discipline strategy in Homabay County. 87(75.7%) of teachers agreed that manual labour is one of the strategies they use when students misbehave in school. This is in agreement with the study conducted by Simatwa (2012) which indicated that most schools use manual labour, for example, uprooting a tree stump or cutting grass as a discipline strategy.

Table 7. Manual labour done during school hours

	Frequency	Percent
SD	16	13.9
D	38	33.0
U	3	2.6
A	41	35.7
SA	17	14.8
Total	**115**	**100.0**

Table 7 indicates that 17(14.8%) of teachers strongly agreed that manual labour is done by students during school hours and 41(35.7%) of teachers also agreed that manual labour is done during school and class hours. 16(13.9%) strongly disagreed that manual labour is done during school hours and 38(33%) also disagreed that manual labour is done during school hours. A study conducted in Bungoma by Simatwa (2012) indicated that manual labour was done during weekends and this contradicts with this study which was conducted in Homabay County, since students were given manual labour as soon as they were found in a discipline issue even if it was class time.

Table 8. Manual labour leads to loss of instructional time

	Frequency	Percent
SD	14	12.2
D	14	12.2
U	4	3.5
A	39	33.9
SA	44	38.3
Total	**115**	**100.0**

According to the results shown in table 8, 14(12.2%) of teachers strongly disagreed that manual labour leads to loss of instructional time, 14(12.2%) disagreed and only 4 (3.5%) were undecided. 39(33.9%) agreed that manual labour leads to loss of instructional time and 44(38.3%) strongly agreed that manual labour leads to loss of instructional time. From this result, most of the teachers agreed that when a student is given manual labour during class time, the instructional time is lost.

Table 9. Manual labour is given to both boys and girls

	Frequency	Percent
SD	8	7.0
D	11	9.6
U	4	3.5
A	59	51.3
SA	33	28.7
Total	**115**	**100.0**

The results in table 9 indicate that 8 (7.0%) of teachers strongly disagreed that manual labour is given to both boys and girls, 11(9.6%) disagreed and 4(3.5%) were undecided. 59(51.3%) agreed that manual labour is given to both boys and girls and 33(28.7%) strongly agreed that manual labour is given to both boys and girls.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

In this study one null hypothesis was tested

In testing the above null hypothesis, a paired t test was carried out to compare the academic performance of students before and after each discipline strategy and thereafter a one way ANOVA test was carried out in order to compare means of the students before and after the use of the discipline strategies in general.

HO_1: *Discipline strategies have no significant influence on the academic performance of students.*

In testing the above null hypothesis, a one way ANOVA test was carried out in order to compare means of the students before and after the use of the discipline strategies

Table 10. Academic Performance of Students before and After Suspension

	Mean	Std. deviation	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Pair 1	2.94366	9.79342	2.533*	70	.014

Table 10 indicates the performance of students before and after suspension. The standard deviation score was 9.79 at 95% confidence level, the computed t-value was 2.53 with a df of 70 which is higher than the critical t-value of 1.960 with df of 70. These results suggest that there exist significant difference ($t \geq .05$) in academic performance of students before and after they were suspended. This shows that use of suspension as a discipline strategy negatively affected academic performance of students in secondary schools in Homabay County. This finding agrees with the finding of Arcia (2006) and Dahir (2010) which indicated that there is a significant relationship between suspension and academic performance.

Table 11. Academic Performance of Student before and After they were sent home

	Mean	Std. deviation	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Pair 1	.3000	15.87486	.60*	9	.954

Table 11 indicates the results on performance of students before and after they were sent home. The computed t-value = .06 with a df of 9 which is lower than the critical t-value of 1.833 with a df of 9 at 95% confidence level ($t(9) = .06$, $p = .954$). These results suggest that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students before and

after being sent home. This means that sending students home as a discipline strategy did not have a negative impact in their academic performance if anything there was a slight improvement on the academic performance mean. From the table 12 the paired mean before and after manual labour was 5.50 with a standard deviation of 7.96 at $p < .05$ confidence level. The t value at a df of 11 was 2.393 which is higher than the critical t-value of 1.796 [t (11) = 2.393, p = .036].

Table 12. Academic Performance of Student before and after manual labour

	Mean	Std. deviation	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Pair 1	5.5000	7.96013	2.393*	11	.036

From these results, there is an indication that their existed a significant difference in academic performance of students before and after manual labour was used. These results indicate that students improved in academic performance after manual labour as a discipline strategy was used on them. It is therefore evident that manual labour influenced students' academic performance positively in Homabay County.

Table 13. Academic Performance of Students before and after discipline strategies (ANOVA test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3684.707	2	1842.354	8.902*	.000
Within Groups	18626.089	90	206.957		
Total	22310.796	92			

To test whether the discipline strategies had an influence on the students' academic performance, 1-way ANOVA was carried as shown in table 13. There was significant influence of the discipline strategies on the academic performance at $F_{ob} = 8.902 \geq .05$ level of significance for the three strategies [F (2, 90) = 8.902, p = .000]. Therefore, the hypothesis HO_1 which states that discipline strategies have no significant influence on the academic performance of students is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed at examining discipline strategies used in school and their influence on the students' academic performance in Homabay County. Results revealed that most of the schools were using suspension, manual labour and sending students to call their parents as a discipline strategy. Teachers agreed that the suspension was given to both boys and girls. This is in agreement with studies conducted by Wallace et al, (2008); Hinojosa, (2008); Kaufman *et al*. (2010), Brown & DiTillio, (2013); and Jones (2013). The study also found out that students like being sent at home however sending them home did not weaken their connection with school. A large percentage of teachers agreed that manual labour is done during hours and that it led to loss of instructional time and students miss foundational skills. In response to the objectives of the study, which sought out to determine the influence of discipline strategies on academic performance of students, the study revealed that suspension had a negative influence on academic performance of students [t (70) =2.53, p = .014]. The study also revealed that sending students home as a discipline strategy did not have a negative influence on their academic performance. Manual labour as a discipline strategy however had a positive influence on the academic performance of students [t (11) =2.39, p = .036]. The results above on independent discipline strategies were attributed to the fact that students stayed longer when suspended as compared to being sent at home and being given manual labour to do. These results can also be backed up by a study by Mwinzi and Kimengi (2006) which noted that missing of classes increases the chances of failing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the study findings and discussions, the following conclusions were deduced. Most schools in Homabay County, use suspension, manual labour and sending students home to call their parents as discipline strategies. Suspension as a discipline strategy has a negative influence on student academic performance Manual labour has a positive influence on student academic performance and sending students home to call their parents does not have a negative influence on student academic performance. The study recommends that there should be an alternative discipline strategy to suspension since it influences the academic performance of students negatively.

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