



RESEARCH ARTICLE

MANAGING DISCIPLINE IN KENYAN SCHOOLS: AN INTEGRATED DISCIPLINARY
STRATEGY MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The use of corporal punishment to enforce discipline in schools, has been banned in many countries world-wide, impacting significantly on school discipline. This study focuses on the disciplinary situation in secondary schools in Kenya. It presents some understandings of the concept of discipline, reviews the status of school discipline in Kenya and describes some existing disciplinary strategies and models from the literature. From this literature review, a model of disciplinary strategies is developed, which is hence tested empirically. The empirical test resulted in amendments to the theoretical model, which is then presented as an integrated model of disciplinary strategies. This integrated model is likely to assist principals and teachers in Kenya to manage and curb indiscipline among learners, by suggesting alternative ways of dealing with errant learners and supporting teachers to create an environment conducive to learning. Further research is required to determine the relevance of the model to primary schools and to schools in other countries.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most contentious issues in school discipline worldwide, is the use of corporal punishment to enforce discipline. In the Kenyan context, Legal Notice 40/1972, contained in the Education Act Cap 211 (revised 1980), authorised the use of the cane, with specific guidelines for its application. Unfortunately, some teachers failed to adhere to these guidelines. This misuse of corporal punishment sometimes resulted in serious injuries to learners and in a number of cases, even death. Such extreme negative consequences of the use of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools resulted in pressure from some stakeholders, to ban this method of enforcing school discipline. This concern eventually resulted in the amendment of the original legal notice through the promulgation of Legal Notice 56/2001, which banned the use of the cane in Kenyan schools. This ban removed a disciplinary strategy that was previously applied in cases of serious misconduct, resulting in a significant increase in learner indiscipline and increased complexity in disciplinary matters (Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association conference, June 2001, Kisumu, Kenya; Kamotho 2001:6; Waihenya 2001:17; Daily Nation 2001:17). This situation was exacerbated by the fact that no alternative ways of handling discipline have been put in place, complicating the implementation of the new law even further (Kamotho 2001:6). Eventually the Ministry of Education came up with two major strategies that could suitably replace corporal punishment, namely by initiating programmes that would educate parents, teachers, learners and society at large, about the harmful

effects of corporal punishment and the availability of effective alternatives as well as by strengthening guidance and counselling services in all educational institutions (circular G9/1/Vol, VIII/28 of 20/3/2002). However, teachers remain confused on how to handle errant students, arguing that counselling alone cannot eliminate indiscipline and that a range of appropriate alternatives to the cane must be identified and implemented. Several claims have also been made that the cane is still being administered despite the new rule. The East African Standard (2003:6) for example, reported an incident where a Form Three learner was admitted to hospital after he was allegedly beaten up by his teachers for refusing to serve food to a prefect. Teachers contend that they are caught in a dilemma where they have to decide either to keep the law and watch indiscipline rise or break it and maintain order. The banning of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools thus places teachers in a "catch 22" situation. A similar situation can reasonably be expected to exist in many other countries of the world, as every "industrialized country in the world prohibits school corporal punishment" except in some of the states in the USA, Canada and one state in Australia (Goldstein & Brooks 2007: 11, 12). The need to develop appropriate, effective, alternative disciplinary strategies to corporal punishment has therefore reached a critical level internationally.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to address the above-mentioned need, the purpose of this study was to develop an integrated model of disciplinary strategies that would provide a suitable and effective alternative to corporal punishment. The objectives that would culminate in attaining this purpose were to:

1. Review the literature to

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- define discipline
 - determine the status of discipline in Kenyan schools
 - describe some selected disciplinary strategies and models
2. Develop a model of disciplinary strategies from the above literature review
 3. Empirically test the validity of this theoretical model against stakeholders' opinions
 4. Review the theoretical model on the basis of the latter to result in an integrated model of disciplinary strategies.

THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE

The whole world of discipline (rules, enforcers, trouble makers) is deeply rooted in the goals and structures of the school. A school often cannot change its pattern of discipline without addressing broad educational issues and structures of the schooling itself (Rogers 2002:4). Charles (2002:5) points out that if a clear understanding of the problem of school discipline is to be achieved, goals and expectations are to be re-examined to determine whether they are consistent and realistic. Enormously varied viewpoints exist about school discipline. Many people think of discipline either as overall behaviour in the classroom or what teachers do to make learners behave, such as scolding, threats, admonition or punishment (Charles & Charles 2004:131). Rogers (2001:46) indicates that discipline is not limited to the context of punishment, but it also has to do with guidance and instruction to teach and enhance a social order where rights and responsibilities are balanced. Charles and Charles (2004:131) assert that the concept of discipline as punishment is falling by the wayside, as the notion that a forceful technique needs to be used to 'correct' learners who do not live up to expected standards of behaviour, is being abandoned. The different ways in which discipline is viewed is an indication that there is a potentially large community of disagreement about the subject. Since value judgments are involved, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of controversy about the desired characteristics of the disciplinary system.

The concept discipline refers to educating someone to acquire desired behaviour, also to both prevention and remediation (Cotton 2005). This links with the viewpoint expressed in the Redeemer Lutheran School (2005) which states that the term discipline does not mean punishment, but rather the teaching of self-control, Christian attitudes, orderliness, efficiency and responsibility. Lewis and Clark (2005) presents a similar understanding of the term by indicating that discipline is training that enables children to make appropriate choices in a climate of warmth and support. Discipline is also described as action by management to enforce organisational standards. In an educational organisation, there are many set standards or codes of behaviour to which learners must adhere or uphold in order to successfully achieve the objectives of the school (Okumbe 1998:77). According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2004), schools should teach self-discipline for the good of the society. In a society where social and technological changes occur at a rapid pace, the nature of socialisation has changed remarkably. Educators must achieve the dual goal of teaching self-discipline and using disciplinary actions to manage behaviour problems when they occur. Vasiloff and Lenz (2005) also define discipline as a system of rules and regulations that govern the conduct of the teachers and learners that effectively work together so that learning can take place. They add that just as academic learning is an ongoing process, so too is the mastery of discipline skills. The above definitions present various ways in which to understand the concept of discipline, namely that it is education to reach a desired state, that it is an action that would remediate the deviation from the desired state, that it is the conception of this desired state itself. These understandings are not contradictory to each other, but rather complementary and in conjunction with each other, confirm that discipline is a multi-faceted concept.

The literature also indicates that the main goal of discipline in schools is to shape young people to become responsible adults, able to make appropriate decisions and accept the consequences of these decisions (Mbiti 2002: 83, Nelson 2002:10, Rogers 2002:7, Gaustad 2005, Griffin 2005, Lewis & Clark 2005, New South Wales Department of Education and Training 2005, Vasiloff & Lenz 2005). Discipline is at the centre of any learning because "formal learning is impossible without it" (Nasibi 2003:14).

THE STATUS OF DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

Discipline in Kenyan secondary schools is a matter of concern and the upsurge of indiscipline is blamed on the law that has in recent years forced teachers and even parents to spare the rod. A study by Kiprop (2004:39) confirms this, establishing that the banning of the cane has undermined discipline in schools and that discipline in secondary schools in Kenya in the post-caning era has deteriorated. According to a report by the Provincial Students' Discipline Committee in Central Province, indiscipline in secondary schools took various forms [Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) 2000/2001:19]. Bullying was cited in this report to be one of the most common forms of indiscipline in secondary schools. Efforts by the administration to stamp out bullying in some schools have resulted in chaos or riots. Nelson (2002:35) indicates that bullying in schools is an international problem. In most cases, bullying is interpreted as direct physical aggression, as well as indirect behaviour such as verbal threats. Indiscipline is also manifested in booing (MOEST 2000/2001:19). Constant booing by learners when addressed by members of staff is a strong indication of indiscipline. Indiscipline is also evident in strange behaviour like intentional loud sneezing and clearing of throats, nasty remarks and inscriptions on boards and walls. Learners feigning illness and frequent absenteeism without good reasons are also signs of indiscipline. Indiscipline also takes the form of drug abuse and is rampant in Kenyan schools [Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) 2004:2]. This could be a result of negative peer influence and learners are forced to adhere to all that is said and done by their peers (MOEST 2000/2001:19). Mwiria (2004a:7) observes that schools largely mirror the practice of the wider society. Drugs and alcohol abuse and related social ills are problems in schools because they are commonplace outside schools. He adds that drugs and alcohol are easily available and relevant laws are not enforced as effectively as they could be.

It was also found that absenteeism, disobedience, dishonesty, untidiness, laziness and lack of seriousness in academic work are serious behaviour problems in secondary schools in Kenya (Kiprop 2004:61). Mwiria (2004b:11) observes that learners have exhibited laziness and lack of discipline by refusing to take mock examinations; rejecting head teachers and their deputies who are seen to be disciplinarians; showing disdain for the clothes some lady teachers wear; opposing extra tuition; engaging in alcohol and bhang abuse or love affairs with fellow students; refusing to clean school facilities or following bad examples of peers in neighbouring schools. Strikes and boycotts, which are also forms of indiscipline, may take the form of violent destruction of property; boycotting classes, meals and other learner duties; walk-outs; learners pelting teachers with stones and sticks; arson; looting and murder threats MOEST (2000/2001:1). According to Wekesa (2005), learners do not use dialogue when they are aggrieved; in most cases, they prefer strikes which come with destruction of property. In summary, indiscipline manifests as self-destructive behaviour, destructive behaviour aimed at other people, damage or destruction of property – all of these could best be described as defying basic societal rules. To understand why learners act in these ways, one has to scrutinize the causes of indiscipline. These could, on the one hand, be attributed to personality behaviour problems and, on the other hand, to group behaviour problems (peer influence) (Jones & Charlton 1996:28). Robertson (1996:28) points out that understanding the reasons why

learners misbehave enables one to create conditions in which there is less need or fewer opportunities for such behaviour. George, Lawrence and Bushnel (1998:395) point out that when learners fight, daydream, deface school property or fail to do assignments, some people find the causes for this behaviour in the learners themselves. Some people blame parents for not teaching their children respect, self-discipline, or appreciation for school. Others blame the teachers for not being firm or compassionate enough or well prepared. It should be noted that children's behaviour is influenced by many and varied factors. There will be motivating conditions for the child or group of children that lead to either misbehaviour or criminal acts (Levin & Nolan 2000:43). What teachers and parents see and therefore punish is the overt behaviour (observable acts). They often do not look beyond this to understand the covert behaviour (the motivational states that lead to behaviour) (Jones & Charlton 1996:10). Therefore, the punishment given will be out to change the undesired observable behaviour, missing the whole point of modifying both overt and covert behaviour.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO INDISCIPLINE IN KENYAN SCHOOLS

A wide range of factors that contribute to indiscipline in Kenyan schools have been identified from the literature and these are summarised below according to a number of categories and sub-categories.

Internal factors

- **Principal**
Poor managerial skills, poor administration, and poor service delivery (MOEST 2001:1, Mwiria 2004b:11, KESI 2004:3)
- **Teachers**
Incompetence and unprofessionalism, shortage of teachers (MOEST 2000/2001:20, Kamotho 2001:6, Muijs & Reynolds 2001:141, Mwiria 2004b:11); lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, poor role models, no proper guidance to learners (KESI 2004:4); unjustifiable and inconsistent punishment (MOEST 2000/2001:13) and disunity in the teaching staff (MOEST 2000/2001:2).
- **Learners**
"Don't care" attitude among learners (KESI 2004:4); peer group influence (MOEST 2004a); increased drug abuse resulting in declining standards of discipline (KESI 2004:4, MOEST 2004b, Fadhili 2005:10, Wekesa 2005); examination phobia (KESI 2004:4, Fadhili 2005:10); poor examination results (MOEST 2004a); lack of participation in decision-making (MOEST 2001:2, Kenya Women Advisory Organisation 2005) and problems with fee payment (KESI 2004:4)
- **Support staff**
Causing general incitement, sabotaging the school programme, supplying alcohol and other drugs to learners as a source of income (Odalo 2004:11); providing civilian clothing for learners to sneak out of school and feeling undervalued and underpaid (Thody, Gray & Bowden 2003:25).

External factors

- **Immediate community of the school**
Parents
Poor parenting, absentee parents, defending their children even when they are in the wrong (MOEST 2001:2, Barmao 2004:10, Fadhili 2005:10). Failing to pay fees leading to poor service delivery, making disparaging remarks about the principal and teachers in the presence of learners, over-protecting their children, creating a conducive environment for alcohol abuse, setting unrealistically high expectations hence putting pressure and stress on their children,

practicing incest and sexual abuse of children leading to general antagonism and stigma, giving too much or too little pocket money (KESI 2004:5). Limited interactions between parents, teachers and learners; parents' negative attitude to teachers and principals; parents' reaction to school disciplinary procedures, rules and regulations (Kiprop 2004:42). Failing to instill discipline in their children; enrolling them in competitive schools where they do not measure up; challenging teachers who punish their wayward children; reaching out to senior authorities to deal with teachers who discipline their children; allowing their children too many privileges in school environments dominated by less fortunate children (Mwiria 2004a:7). Values at home are not necessarily the same as those at school (Muijs & Reynolds 2001:48)

School Committees / Board of Governors

Lack of expertise in professional management; sometimes interference with smooth running of institutions because of their ignorance of the Ministry's policies; making unrealistic demands on the school (e.g. employment for relatives, admitting children/relatives to school without paying fees or having tenders awarded to them); not accepting school principals from religious denominations other than theirs; introducing programmes that run parallel to school programmes thus placing a lot of pressure on the children (Kyungu 2001:6).

School context [A schools does not exist in isolation; it is a microcosm of the larger society; discipline problems in schools reflect societal problems (Levin & Nolan 2000:41)] Some school contexts are not conducive to positive physical and/or social development in learners. Examples of negative behaviour are truancy, alcohol and drug abuse and sexual immorality (KESI 2004:5, MOEST 2000/2001:1). Some communities insist on having people of the local ethnicity heading their local schools; demand that the schools should select learners from the local community even if they do not qualify (KESI 2004:5). This could result in unqualified principals running schools – this is the cause of many of the school crises. Unrealistic expectations from the community also cause stress within the school community, leading to riots as a means of letting off steam (Mwiria 2004a:7).

- **Political leaders**

Criticizing the outlawing of corporal punishment without consulting immediate stakeholders; influencing the nomination of BOG members, which could lead to poor decision making in schools, thus contributing to learner unrest (MOEST 2001:1). Some decisions on bursary allocations by local Members of Parliament (MPs) have led to delays in bursary disbursement – this leads to poor service delivery as learners fail to pay fees in anticipation of these bursaries. Principals of secondary schools are in a dilemma as they cannot afford to keep the non-paying learners in school, yet the government insists that they should not be sent away (Kareithi 2004:18). Allocating bursaries to needy learners has also become difficult as preference is given to people who support the MPs interests (Oduor 2004:18). Some political leaders make careless remarks about school principals and teachers in public meetings, thus demoralising educators. Some MPs influence the appointment of principals without considering merit or experience. Evidence of nepotism in employment of educational managers is widespread (Mwiria 2004a:7, KESI 2004:6).

- **Policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)**

Most MOEST policies are put in place without consultation with the people on the ground, leading to difficulties in interpretation and implementation. The “top-bottom” approach in policy formulation makes the recipients passive and this causes bottlenecks (KESI 2004:6). Weak enforcement and follow-up on policy issues, aggravated by inadequate and poor inspection of schools; banning of corporal punishment without providing appropriate replacement has created problems in the management of discipline in schools (MOEST 2001:2). Through outlawing of the cane, authority of teachers has been undermined (KESI 2004:6). Failure to establish and support Guidance and Counseling units in schools; utilizing teachers trained in guidance and counseling to teach other subjects due to staff shortages (Nation Team 2005). Appointment of principals and their deputies is not always based on proper guidelines; there have been cases where competent heads and deputies have been replaced by less competent ones, leading to frustration among teachers who in turn project this onto the learners (Mwiria 2004a:7). Some principals bought their positions after bribing education heads and officials in the Teachers’ Service Commission (Katuku 2004:11). Inappropriate staffing in some schools, leading to employment of teachers on BOG terms – this promotes the diversion of resources, which is wasteful (KESI 2004:6). Many principals believe that the MOEST did not consult with society regarding the philosophy that underpins the ban on corporal punishment (Kiprop 2004:50).

- **Other**

The media has been blowing discipline issues out of proportion, at times glorifying violence (MOEST 2000/2001:2). This could lead to learner unrest as neighboring schools follow the example of those who have gone on the rampage (Standard Team 2004:12). Advertisements related to drugs, condoms, kissing and alcohol, resulting in learners imitating them. Pornographic literature available on the streets advocates immoral behaviour (KESI 2004:6). Television and other media glorify and promote irresponsible, harmful behaviour (Respect Education 2005). According to Odalo (2004:11), the government has condoned immorality by allowing such literature and videos to be easily accessed by learners. Queen, Blackwelder and Mallen (1997:13) also observe that the media regularly introduce children to ideas for which they have been ill-prepared. Complex issues and problems, normally in the adult arena, have been thrust on children indiscriminately, sometimes resulting in confusion, questioning of authority and an increase in pressure.

Poor role models are cited as a cause of indiscipline in schools (Odalo 2004:11, MOEST 2000/2001:3, Berreth & Berman 1997:27, Queen *et al.* 1997:4). One of the national objectives of education in Kenya, namely the promotion of national unity (MOEST 2001:15), has been undermined by the political divisions in the country, this trickling down to schools (KESI 2004:7). Thus teachers and learners are divided on ethnic grounds and political allegiances, causing indiscipline in Kenyan secondary schools (Barmao 2004:10). Unemployment has led to the promotion of an attitude that education and schooling is for passing time, creating a sense of hopelessness and a lack of motivation in learners (MOEST 2001:17, Mwiria 2004a:7). This problem is further exacerbated by the government’s inability to fund secondary school education due to budgetary constraints (Kyungu 2001:6). The quality of education has also been affected by the inadequacy of physical facilities and teaching/learning materials as well as a curriculum too

broad in scope to be adequately covered within the stipulated period (Kyungu 2001:6). Run-down and dilapidated schools, with poor facilities, could have a negative effect on learners’ behaviour and this may lead to increased vandalism (Cowley 2001:129, Jones & Charlton 1996:24).

MODELS OF DISCIPLINE

There are a great number of models of discipline, however, only a few of these models are well known (Wolfgang 1999: x). Each one of these models has been criticized; no one model can work successfully in all situations, nor will the same model always succeed for the same child (Wolfgang 1999: x). The humanistic, student-centered approaches are primarily concerned with the inner self and its needs and capacities. The developers of these approaches and theories, including the psychologists and educators Carl Rogers (1972), Abraham Maslow (1970), and Thomas Gordon (1974), believe that the inhibition of the rational thought process diminishes the ability of children to behave within acceptable limits. The procedures generated by this group are used to remove obstructions to the rational thought process and to enhance children’s understanding of their own behaviour. This group rejects the use of any kind of reward system as manipulative and unwholesome to child development. At the centre of these approaches are psychologists and educators Mortimer Adler (1990), Rudolf Dreikurs (Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper 1982), Jane Nelson (1987) and William Glasser (1969), expressing concern for children’s natural propensities for rational thought and social interaction. Their position is activist oriented (Queen *et al.* 1997:14).

Thomas Gordon’s Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) model (1974) believes teachers should respect learners, listen to them, and ask for their help in resolving problems. He believes that teachers should use the pronoun “I” instead of “you” (such as “I am very upset, I am trying to teach you”); and that rewards and punishment do more harm than good, because they make learners slaves to authority and do nothing to develop independence (Wolfgang 1999:23). Some of the criticism against this model relates to differences in children’s growth and development, thus complicating implementation. The Positive Discipline Model of Dreikurs and Nelson is based on the theories of Alfred Adler, who believed that children strive from early life, within a social context, to overcome a sense of inferiority by establishing a unique set of goals and means for achieving them. Children often make serious errors in determining how to achieve their goals and act in ways that actually contradict fulfillment of their desires. Thus misbehaviour reflects children’s misconstruence about how to achieve primary goals, the most important of which is belonging (Dreikurs *et al.* 1982 cited in Queen *et al.* 1997:20). Within this context, the teacher must teach children how to belong, help them develop a sense of compassion and community spirit and to understand the value of equal rights and human dignity (Nelson 1987 cited in Queen *et al.*, 1997:20). These authors reject any approach to disciplining children that fail to develop belongingness, equality and mutual respect. To accomplish this objective, teachers should determine which goals are motivating a child’s behaviour through observation or questions. Teachers should use encouragement to elicit mutual respect and optimism where conflict and confrontation may have previously existed. Dreikurs *et al.* (1982) and Nelson (1987) reject the use of punishment and positive and negative reinforcement. Punishment only serves to discourage children, to provoke them to focus on anger and revenge and not on the behaviour that caused the punishment in the first place and may actually reinforce uncooperative behaviour and alienation (Queen *et al.* 1997:21). Some of the concerns about the positive approach to discipline include the difficulty to determine the underlying goal of a child’s behaviour, the difficulty to differentiate between punishment and logical consequences and the constant use of encouragement for minor improvements strengthens children’s acceptance of less than what they are capable of attaining (Wolfgang 1999:306).

The Reality Model of William Glasser (1992) is based on the idea that people must learn to accept the consequences of their actions, regardless of claims of psychological inadequacy, and must learn to live in the world responsibly without infringing on the rights of others (Queen *et al.* 1997:23). Self-discipline, understanding the power of choice and not making excuses and blaming the past for present behaviour, are key end products of Glasser's Model (Wolfgang 1999:88). Fundamental to Glasser's (1990) approach is the notion that children have certain needs that must be met either by the home or by the school. Inappropriate behaviour occurs when their basic needs are not met. The school must assist children in succeeding in what they undertake, in their effort to learn and in their pursuit of self-worth. Glasser (1992) also insists that teachers should not try to alter children's environment to allow them to avoid the consequences of behaviour. Rather, teachers should help learners make value judgments about the causes of a problem. When children make judgments about their misbehaviour and commit themselves to change, they will learn responsibility (Queen *et al.* 1997:24). Teachers are therefore expected to establish clearly demarcated parameters of acceptable behaviour and focus children's attention so that they will discontinue undesirable behaviour and act acceptably. Teachers must urge offending learners to plan alternative, desirable behaviour and should use logical consequences to develop responsibility (Wolfgang 1999:93). Glasser's (1990) model doesn't get much criticism, probably because it is hard to fault anyone who wants people to achieve better self-discipline. Its main weakness is in how it is carried out, as it is not based on a realistic understanding of teaching or the time available to teachers to carry out their instructional responsibilities. Another weakness is that it might be beyond teachers' ability to use this approach effectively with children who have physical or psychological difficulties (Wolfgang 1999:308). Children may also not be capable of devising a meaningful plan to improve their behaviour (Queen *et al.* 1997:25). Wolfgang (1999:308) points out that, if a teacher forces a learner to develop a plan or does this for a learner before the latter has acknowledged a problem, sees the need for change, or seriously wants change, the model crumples at that point. Researchers Emmer and Aussiker (1989), Gottfredson (1989) as well as Hyman and Lally (1982), have noted modest improvements as a result of this approach (Cotton 2005).

On the behaviourist, teacher-centered end of the spectrum, educators and psychologists such as B.F. Skinner (1982), Saul Axelrod (1977) and Lee Canter (Canter & Canter 1985), have developed ideas and strategies that are directly designed to control children's behaviour through manipulation of external rewards and the application of punishment. The goal of the behavioural approach is to structure children's behaviour according to defined expectations. The psychological causes of children's behaviour are irrelevant to the undertaking (Queen *et al.* 1997:15). The Behaviour Modification Model is based on the Behaviourist belief that the inner rational self is a myth. Rather, environmental stimuli determine human behaviour and can be modified to shape behaviour to acceptable social standards. A fundamental principle underpinning behaviourist thought, is that people work to avoid painful or unpleasant experiences or stimuli and seek those that are pleasant and rewarding. Within the context of the classroom, learners cannot be expected to derive solutions to problems based on their rational understanding of their inner selves – instead, the teacher must evaluate how each of the elements of the classroom environment is affecting learner behaviour and alter those elements to affect acceptable behaviour. To modify behaviour, *reinforcers*, which can be categorised as positive or negative, are required. Positive reinforcers refer to desirable stimuli that strengthen and increase behaviour, while negative reinforcers strengthen behaviour when the stimuli are removed (Queen *et al.* 1997:27). A benefit of this model is that teachers can control this system more effectively than other systems of discipline, because they can apply contingencies based on a precise reading of learner behaviour (Axelrod 1977). Axelrod (1977) uses four intermittent reinforcement schedules (fixed interval, variable interval, fixed ratio,

variable ratio) to achieve their ends, as these schedules generally reflect real life situations better than regular schedules. The underlying purpose of each schedule is to reward desirable behaviour often and to lessen the amount of reinforcement as the desirable behaviour is expressed (Queen *et al.* 1997:27). A specific effective technique used by Behaviourists to teach a new or terminal behavior, is called *shaping*. Shaping behaviour requires teachers to deconstruct gross behaviour into smaller and simpler components, which can then be modified through the reinforcement schedules. This procedure requires teachers to prioritise the increments of behaviour and treat them one at a time until the terminal behaviour is achieved. Children do not always respond as teachers expect and they must sometimes be physically removed from the reinforcing environment of the classroom and placed in a non-reinforcing environment (*time-out area*). Time-out areas are used to isolate students from reinforcing stimuli (Axelrod 1977). Another important technique according to Axelrod (1977) is the use of *modeling* or imitation. Modeling is useful in teaching specific behaviour and is considered especially useful when teachers must deal with disruptive learners and must convey appropriate behaviour. Teachers can use learner peers and adults important to the disruptive learner's particular interests as models (Queen *et al.* 1997:28). Criticism of this model is concerned with several issues. From the humanist tradition comes the concern that Behaviourists treat children in an undemocratic and manipulative manner. In the cognitive realm, this system removes emotions and eliminates choice and the development of problem-solving strategies (Queen *et al.* 1997:26).

Another behavioural approach, and one that has been used extensively during the past several years, is Lee and Marlene Canter's (1985) assertive discipline model. The model is based on assertion training, assuming that people respond to conflicts in one of three ways: passively, hostilely, or, the preferred approach, assertively (Wolfgang 1999:249). Assertive teachers are therefore not highly aggressive or overzealous; rather, their behaviour is based on the right of a teacher to teach and meet basic needs. Fundamental to the model is the notion that teachers must apply the same standards and expectations for success to all children. When learners resort to undesirable activity, teachers have several options for verbally limiting misbehaviour before inaugurating punishing actions: eye contact, hand gestures, using names and touching are cited as important elements in setting limits. Teachers must exhibit assertive behaviour when speaking to learners (Queen *et al.* 1997:30); the teacher is the "boss". This model trains teachers to look for the positive, raise what they are doing from the intuitive to the conscious level, clearly and firmly communicating their expectations to learners and preparing themselves to back up what they say (Wolfgang 1999:250). When dealing with difficult behavioural problems, teachers should purposefully adhere to a demand and never negotiate with non-complying learners, use limit-setting consequences like time-out, removal of a privilege or positive activity, detention, use of the principal's office or the learner's home for isolation, time-out in another classroom and systematic exclusion (Wolfgang 1999:254). Teachers must also use positive assertions to reinforce desirable behaviour. The behavioural plan should include the means to regularly reward learners for acceptable behaviour. This might include positive notes or phone calls to the parents, awards, special privileges, or even special material consequences. The approach relies heavily on the development of a plan for discipline in which teachers determine what behaviours they will eliminate or accept, what positive or negative consequences will be attached to behaviours and what planning should be accomplished to implement the consequences. The plan includes rules, which must be stated precisely, avoiding general statements that could be too easily misinterpreted. Teachers must also determine what actions they will consistently take to reinforce appropriate behaviour (Queen *et al.* 1997:31). The emphasis on a teacher being assertive and clear in direction and expectations appears to be a major strength of the model Wolfgang (1999:320). Some issues mentioned as criticism of the model is that it establishes an authoritarian classroom

environment, learners' rights are minimized, the responsibility of learners to develop self-control is removed, the discipline plan is not useful within a group because it ignores individual differences and the model contradicts the belief that teachers must assist children to develop their inner rationality and personal standards of behaviour (Queen *et al.* 1997:26). However, this model seems to work well for children who know right from wrong and want to do what they should, but lack the ability to discipline themselves (Major 1992:65). Three other discipline models that are widely used and respected, but will not be discussed here, are the Dare to Discipline model which is based on Christian principles (Dobson 1992), Harry Wong's Classroom Strategies (Wong & Wong 1998) and Alfie Kohn's Caring Community Model (1996) (Queen *et al.* 1997).

THEORETICAL DISCIPLINARY STRATEGY MODEL

The preceding review revealed an array of phenomena that were used to develop a theoretical disciplinary strategy model. The dimensions of these phenomena refer to the concept of discipline, the status of discipline in Kenyan schools, the factors that contribute to indiscipline in Kenyan schools and a selection of discipline models. The theoretical disciplinary strategy model consists of ten strategies to improve learner discipline in the post-caning era. This initial model is not presented here, as it was amended after testing it empirically, as described in the following section.

EMPIRICAL VALIDATION OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINARY STRATEGY MODEL

The next step in the development of an integrated disciplinary strategy model, was to empirically validate the theoretical model referred to above. This was done using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. A mixed-method research design was used, employing both triangulation and explanatory designs described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003:443). The triangulation design is indicated as the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, comparison of results, and then using those findings to see whether they validate each other. The explanatory design is when the researcher first collects and analyses quantitative data, and then obtains qualitative data to follow up and refine the quantitative findings. The target population of this study [that the researcher would ideally like to generalise to (Gay & Airasian 2003:102)] was all the teachers, learners and parents of public secondary schools in Kenya. The accessible population [from which the researcher could realistically select (Gay & Airasian 2003:102)] was all the teachers, learners and parents of public secondary schools in the Nakuru District of the Rift Valley province in Kenya. To include all the types of public secondary schools in Kenya (mixed boarding schools, mixed day schools, girls' boarding schools and boys' boarding schools) in the sample, stratified random sampling was used. Two schools represented each type of school. This small number of schools representing each type, is justified in the literature (Mertens 1998:260). Simple random sampling, employing a table of random numbers, was used to select the teachers and learners who took part in the study, thus allowing every member in the population an equal opportunity of being selected (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:214-216). Convenient sampling was used to select parents to participate in the study. This technique was chosen as it is not easy to sample parents randomly and therefore the researcher involved parents who were readily available (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999:51-52). Forty parents were selected to the sample. Non-proportionate sampling was used to select teachers and learners from each type of school. Since the study population consisted of 185 teachers, 20 teachers were selected from each type of school, giving a total of 80 teachers to form the study sample. Twenty-five Form four learners were selected from each type of school, totaling 100 learners. Form four learners were chosen because they are the most senior in school and thus better informed about the issues in question. Their level of maturity is also likely to enhance the quality of their suggestions regarding in the study. In justification for the sample size decided on, the literature indicates that sample size is a matter of judgment as well as

mathematical precision; even formula-driven approaches make it clear that there are elements of prediction, standard error and human judgment in determining sample size (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000: 96). The chosen research instrument was a survey questionnaire, as this allowed access to samples that would be hard to reach in person or by telephone as well as permitting respondents to take sufficient time to give thoughtful answers to the questions (Fraenkel & Wallen 2003:398). It was also deemed suitable for the study as the purpose of a survey research is to determine opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of groups of people of interest to the researcher (Gay & Airasian 2003:277). Both closed and open-ended questions were included. Section A of the questionnaire collected data on biographical details of the respondents. Section B of the survey questionnaire sought to establish the strategies currently used to manage discipline in public secondary schools in Kenya as well as to solicit strategies which respondents believe would be useful in improving the levels of discipline in public secondary schools in Kenya. Section C of the questionnaire sought to determine the degree to which the respondents agreed or disagreed that the strategies identified in the theoretical disciplinary strategy model would be useful in improving the levels of discipline in public schools in Kenya. The data collected through section B was qualitative in nature and those collected through section C, quantitative. The initial disciplinary strategy model developed from the literature, served as the basis for the questionnaire. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:31) state that the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument influence the extent to which the researcher can conceptualise the phenomena under study, the probability of statistical significance in data analysis and the degree to which one can draw meaningful conclusions from the data. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:95) suggest that one of the ways of enhancing reliability is pre-testing the instrument. In this study, two pilot studies were undertaken to pretest the questionnaire. The data collection procedure included a pilot study involving four schools, which did not form part of the study sample. Eight teachers, 20 learners and five parents participated in the pilot study, which enhanced the quality of the instrument. The questionnaires for the pilot study as well as for the full study were hand delivered, self-administered and collected at an agreed date by the researcher. A research permit was obtained from the Kenyan government, this being a legal requirement before administering questionnaires. The qualitative results of the survey questionnaire were analysed using a computer software package whereby data was segmented and tagged according to the researcher's definition of units of meaning, so that those segments, which have common or related meaning, could be drawn together for analysis. The quantitative results were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

THE INTEGRATED DISCIPLINARY STRATEGY MODEL

The interpretation of the results of the empirical research, demanded some amendments of the original disciplinary model. The amended model hence became the *Integrated Disciplinary Strategy Model* and is presented below. Figure 1 indicates the 10 strategies that comprise the model. Each strategy encompasses a set of details, presented below.

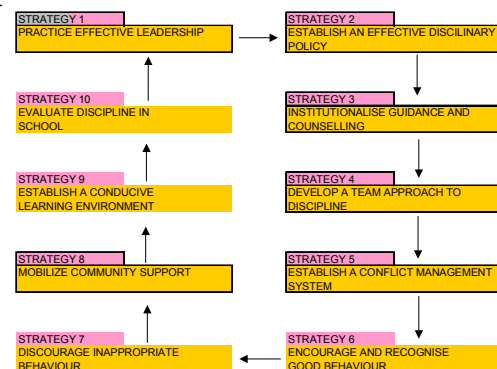


Fig.1: Integrated Disciplinary Strategy Model

STRATEGY 1: PRACTICE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**The principal should**

- promote a positive school culture
- provide a climate of mutual respect
- encourage participative decision-making
- motivate teachers
- ensure safety of learners
- be visible and supportive
- encourage collegiality and reflective professional development
- establish effective communication
- create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement
- maintain close ties with communities
- lead by example
- be accountable and transparent in handling school finances

STRATEGY 2: ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY POLICY**The disciplinary policy should**

- meet individual schools' needs
- be developed with input from teachers, learners, parents
- must promote positive discipline, self-discipline, exemplary conduct
- be reasonable, clearly understood
- communicate clear, consistent rules with high expectations
- have clear, consistent consequences
- distinguish between categories of offences
- be fair and consistently enforced
- protect the safety of all learners
- foster a positive school climate
- preserve dignity of all
- be open to revision as and when the need arises

STRATEGY 3: INSTITUTIONALISE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**Guidance and Counseling departments should**

- be headed by competent individuals (properly trained, mature, experienced)
- develop clear objectives for the guidance and counseling programme
- involve all members of staff in the organization and administration of guidance and counseling services
- play a coordinating role in the provision of guidance and counseling services
- regularly invite competent professionals to talk to learners on career opportunities and other social issues that affect them
- work with school personnel and other stakeholders to establish and maintain policies that encourage appropriate behaviour
- act as a liaison, representative and mediator to help create an effective learning environment
- guide learners on career choices
- adequately facilitate funds, space, communication systems and support by relevant authorities
- have its performance evaluated by an established unit in the Ministry of Education
- involve well-behaved learners in peer counseling

STRATEGY 4: DEVELOP A TEAM APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

- Encourage staff involvement in disciplinary matters
- Form troubleshooting groups to anticipate problems

- Make use of follow-up case conferences
- Involve outside resource persons for difficult cases
- Encourage members of the School Board to take part in planning and implementing the school discipline plan
- Involve learners through problem-solving teams
- Initiate special task forces for acute indiscipline cases

STRATEGY 5: ESTABLISH A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Use trained resource persons
- Involve learners in conflict resolution (peer mediation)
- Train teachers and learners on conflict management skills
- Establish a forum for learners to air their complaints or views

STRATEGY 6: ENCOURAGE AND RECOGNISE GOOD BEHAVIOUR

- Be clear about expectations and standards of behaviour
- Teach appropriate behaviour and skills
- Reward and recognise good behaviour (praise, encouragement, affirmation, appreciation, public acknowledgement, social commendation)
- Provide privileges for well-behaved learners
- Model good behaviour

STRATEGY 7: DISCOURAGE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- Sensitise learners to consequences of inappropriate behaviour
- Intervene quickly in cases of misbehaviour
- Enter into behavioural contracts with learners
- Use preventative strategies (negotiation, problem-solving, interpersonal and communication skills)
- Use supportive strategies (guidance and counseling, peer counseling)
- Use corrective measures or logical consequences (punishment)
- Use a zero tolerance policy towards serious offences

STRATEGY 8: MOBILISE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Encourage parent and community involvement in school activities
- Involve parents and the community in prevention, diagnosis and resolution of learner behaviour problems
- Establish ongoing communication with parents and community
- Use community mentors / role models
- Create opportunities for learners to provide service to the community
- Provide parental education to equip them with different ideas and new ways of thinking about discipline in the home

STRATEGY 9: ESTABLISH A CONDUCIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Create a caring school community which caters for learners' needs
- Create a warm and inviting school for all learners
- Provide adequate physical facilities and resources
- Build positive learner-teacher relationships
- Use appropriate instructional strategies
- Foster an environment of shared responsibility
- Practice fairness and equity
- Establish a learning organization that promotes learning of new ideas

- Cater for spiritual needs
- Emphasise learner participation in extra-curricular activities

STRATEGY 10: EVALUATE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOL

- Create a uniform reporting system for discipline cases
- Establish a systematic data-collection and processing system for discipline
- Assess the impact of disciplinary strategies with attitude surveys
- Conduct staff meetings to review collected data frequently
- Use the collected data to formulate school objectives towards improving discipline

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The main problem that prompted the study was the rising spate of indiscipline in Kenyan public secondary schools after corporal punishment has been banned from schools. This study therefore set out to address this issue, resulting in an integrated disciplinary strategy model, which was developed from the literature and tested empirically.

It is recommended that:

- The integrated disciplinary strategy model should, through the Ministry of Education, be adopted and wholly implemented by public secondary schools in Kenya to enhance the level of discipline in order to achieve optimal learning experiences.
- The appointment of school principals should be reviewed by the Ministry of Education, in line with the model developed from the research.
- Teachers should receive in-service training on managing student discipline.
- Involvement and empowerment of all stakeholders in school planning is prioritised.
- The inspectorate should play a pivotal role: the Ministry should allocate adequate resources to them, review their status and empower them so that regular inspections of schools are carried out.
- Boards of Governors and Parent Teacher Associations should be merged into one body for effective management. Members should be appointed from persons of integrity, who are dedicated, committed and experienced.
- In order to produce a learner who is intellectually, morally, spiritually and emotionally balanced, sponsors and communities should enhance pastoral care programmes in all public schools.
- A strategy should be devised to combat drug abuse, as the study showed this to be at the core of school indiscipline.

Areas that emerged from the study as requiring further research include:

- Additional research that would enhance the generalisability of the results to other school populations (e.g. primary schools) and other geographical populations (other countries).
- The effectiveness of the integrated disciplinary strategy model needs to be tested in practice over a considerable period of time.

Given the emphasis put on the role of schools in shaping the character of the youth, the outcomes of this study will assist principals and teachers to manage and curb indiscipline among learners. The study also provides alternative ways of dealing with errant children, changing teachers' attitudes by equipping them with

relevant knowledge and skills to deal with cases of indiscipline in a learner-friendly way as well as supporting teachers in their endeavors to improve learners' lives. The study also contributes to the existing body of literature on school discipline, simultaneously identifying areas in which further research is required.

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