

Controlling Students' Indiscipline in Changing Environment: Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives in Morogoro Municipality –Tanzania.

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Abstract

This study investigated strategies used in controlling students' indiscipline in evolving environment in public secondary schools. Data collected through documentary review, questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion, involving a sample of 109 teachers and 21 students from 7 public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The quantitative information; were sorted, coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in a summary using graphs, table and charts. The results show that there have been some changes of indiscipline behaviors from the 1980s to 2000s. Students girl's pregnancy, bullying teachers and to own phone emerged in the year 2000-2021. The most frequent indiscipline behavior control strategy; cited by the teachers was punishment that took various forms such as canning or manual labor, counseling, involving parents and for complicated cases, School Boards were asked to intervene. Teachers proposed changes in school policies in handling students' behavior to reflect to the changing students' indiscipline patterns.

Keywords: *Indiscipline, Control, Perspectives, Changing Environment.*

1.0 Introduction

The study concerned about the escalating school students' indiscipline reflected by the growing research. The reasons for the concern are rooted on the significant relationship between students' discipline and academic performance. "Indiscipline in schools is a major social problem that affects the well-being and educational achieved of students" (Smith, 2003).

This paradigm shared by studies on the area from the different continents that prompted by similar concerns. Therefore, this study is inclined more with studies that explored the approaches to the control of students' indiscipline from teachers' perspective from comparable studies done in Tanzania (Majani 2020; Semali & Vumilia 2016); Cameroon (Ngwokabuenui, 2015), China (Sun & Shek, 2012) and Indonesia (Rusman 2017). Andrea & Jura (2017:218) control involves tracking, measuring, and correcting activities to ensure a compliance of actual development with the planned one. Education worldwide, student indiscipline has become the issue of discussion. The "school indiscipline" concept coined in the 1960s because of growing indiscipline in schools that included crimes such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, carrying weapons to schools, vandalism attack of school heads and cocaine cracking.

Indiscipline is any act that diverges from the acceptable societal norms and values. It is a violation of school rules and regulations, which is capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system (Ngwokabuenui, 2015: 65). Most of the studies in Africa that were surveyed by the researcher were all concerned by the raising indiscipline in schools as depicted by Ngwokabuenui (2015:16) that: "Indiscipline in secondary schools in Cameroon has become a cancer worn that has eaten too deep into the students' moral upbringing." In Uganda, a study by Musa & Martha (2020) and (Muhangi, 2017) were analyzing; students' indiscipline in Uganda secondary schools began in 1924 and indiscipline behavior included infanticide, cruel and humiliating punishment. Sexual abuse including cyber bullying and neglect were also among the indiscipline behavior. On the cyber bullying, Muhangi mentions the use of ICT such as text, social network sites, e-mail and instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. The findings by Musa and Martha established that, school rules and regulations, counseling, guidance, and school family initiative control pupil disciplines in the sampled primary schools.

The findings from studies in Tanzania reinforced those found in most of the African countries but with lesser degree of indiscipline and a few exceptions. Examples of these are verbal abuse toward females, student fights, personal attack on teachers and refusal to follow instruction, bullying and harassment (Majani, 2020: 152 – 154; John, 2017: 1 – 6). In a study on indiscipline in Coast region schools in Tanzania by Badi revealed that; "Students experienced indiscipline incidents including riots, demonstration, bullying, verbal abuse, vandalism, intimidation, sexual harassment and theft" (Badi, 2015:1). In trying to find out the causes of school indiscipline behavior, Ndibalema (2013:10) identified indices of factors of bullying from the respondents' perspectives to include; watching the indiscipline film and pornographic pictures and coming from broken home among others.

Based on the previous studies, on causes of indiscipline by Ndibalema (2013) and Badi (2015); challenges of indiscipline (Majani 2020) and factors behind indiscipline (John 2017). However, this study filled the research gap by investigating current status of how students' indiscipline is controlled from teachers' perspectives and how have such control measures evolved given the changing environment of schools over time in Morogoro Municipality in Tanzania secondary schools not from a comparative perspective, but to add to knowledge from this end.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite research on, school student's indiscipline is a phenomenon in today's contemporary education. Interest has been predominantly to look for the cause so as, to minimize impact of indiscipline of students' learning and performance. In most of the reviewed empirical studies, the focus has been on management, influence of the problem, some of which explored teachers' and students' perceptions.

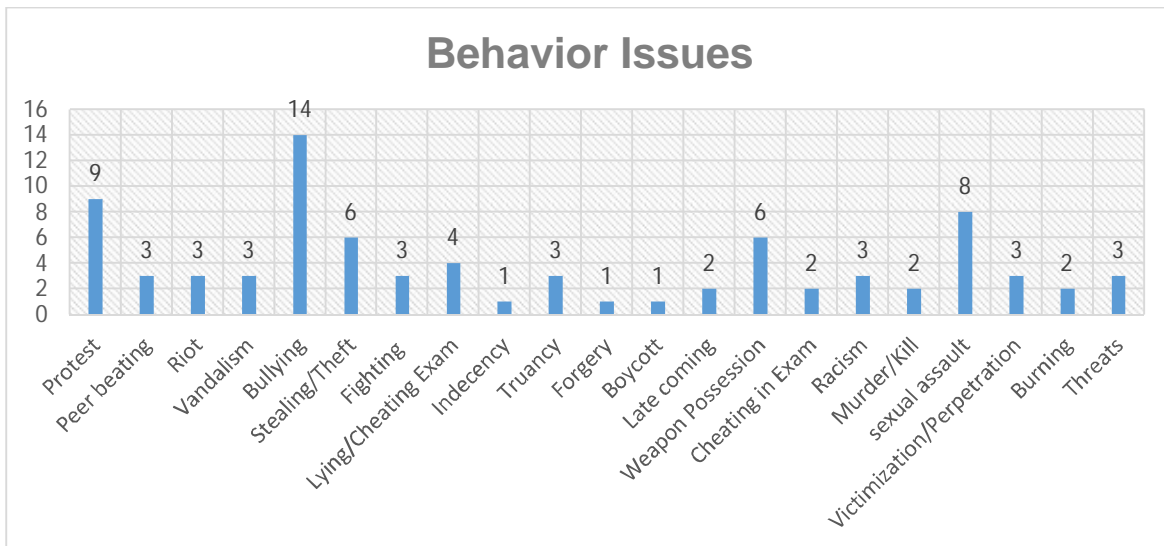
In Tanzania secondary, school students' behavior problems have become questionable by education administrators, teachers, parents and other stakeholders including state level leadership (James & Koda, 2019:82).

Of recent, the late President J. P. Magufuli seriously angered by school student's vandalism of school parents in one of the school in Mbeya to an extent of appreciating the corporal punishment to the group leaders. A literal translation of his speech to the public through media reads:

“It is angering for the government to invest huge amounts of money in building schools and instead of appreciating, students vandalize the school infrastructure. I therefore order that all forms Six Students be expelled and the School Board be dissolved.” (Hon. J. P. Magufuli Speech, 04/10/2019 Tanzania Broad Casting Corporation – TBC).

Surveys done in Tanzania cited in this dissertation considered to reflect the contexts and areas covered by current study. *Figure 1.1* summarizes the behaviors by frequency.

Figure 1.1: Key Indiscipline Behaviors by Frequency



Data source: Surveys done in Tanzania cited in this paper.

The summary of the indiscipline behavior captured *figure 1.1* above, submits that this study mostly likely has come out with similar findings.

Corporal punishment has been used for long as part of management to control of school students' indiscipline. Although some parents in Tanzania endorsed the use of such deterring measure (Ndibalema 2013), most educators are however, against the use of such tool in controlling behavior because of its psychological and dehumanizing nature (Malenya 2016; Muhangi 2017; Odebode 2019). One of the reasons advanced by the authors is that corporal punishment in schools for example intensified students' violence because they were against it (Malenya 2016). It is

proposed that other interventions could be used to control behavior other than corporal punishment using inclusive education framework (Stein *et al* (2019). Therefore, there is a need to explore how students' indiscipline could be controlled using teachers' experiences in Morogoro Municipality in Tanzania secondary schools; and fill that gap by establishing the control measures from stakeholder' experience perspective. This study specifically aimed to investigate how students' indiscipline controlled from teachers' perspectives. More so, the study attempted to map out how has such control measures evolved given the changing environment of schools over time.

1.2 Objectives

The general objective of this study was to establish a "picture" of how secondary schools' teachers control students' indiscipline behaviors.

2.0 Research Methodology

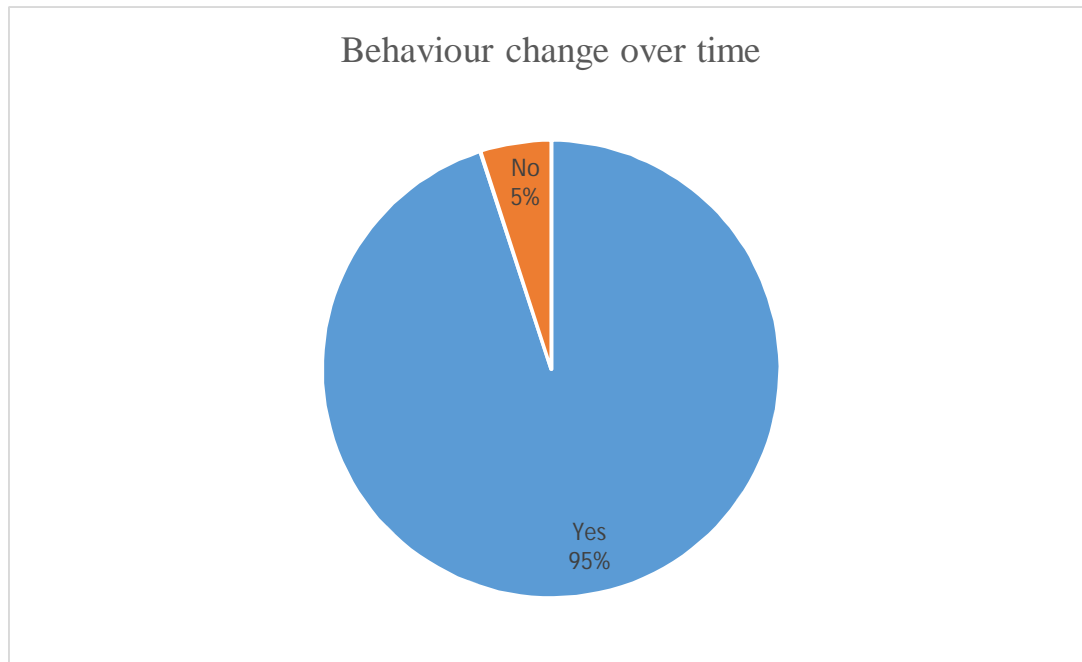
The present study employed an exploratory research design. A popular application of this design is to explore a phenomenon, identify themes, design an instrument, and subsequently test it (Creswell, 2008:561). Methods of data collection used by researcher in this study were including questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, and secondary or existing data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Convenience sampling identified seven public secondary schools willing to participate in the study. In addition, in this study a researcher distributed and administered eighty-one (81) questionnaires to eighty-one (81) secondary school's teachers. Overall, seventy (70) questionnaires accounted to 86.42 % were returned well filled and completed. In addition, face to face conversion interview conducted by open-ended structured questions to one (1) head of school from each seven schools. Focus Group Discussion conducted to twenty-one (21) teachers, three (3) teachers for each of the seven (7) school and twenty- one (21) students' class monitors; three (3) from each of the seven (7) school. Documentary review data collected from Black book from seven (7) selected school. Primary data were; sorted, coded and analyzed using Microsoft excel 2016 in conformity with the objective of the study. The quantitative information was sorted, coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentage) and presented in a summary using graphs, table and charts (Omari, 2011: 48 – 49; Kothari, 2004:18).

3.0. Results and Discussion of the findings

3.1. Students' Indiscipline Change Over Time

In questionnaire, majority 95% of the responses showed that students' indiscipline may changes over time. Which is also supported by different authors in their literatures by displaying that behaviors may change if there is incentives awarded to every indiscipline behaviors (Morris *et al.*, 2012; Parsonson, 2012). Moreover; it has been explained that the transition of changing behaviors may be specifically affected by self-efficacy and decisional balance where by an individual may be given a chance to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the outcomes of his or her behavior as analyzed in the Trans-theoretical model (Parsonson, 2012; Prochaska & Velicer, 2014). *Figure 3.1* summarizes response about discipline behavior can change over time.

Figure 3.1: Indiscipline Behavior Change Over Time



Source: Field Data (May 2021).

The researcher also reviewed the records in the black book in the schools and record student indiscipline behavior changes overtime. These indiscipline behaviors shown in the *Table 3.1*.

Table 3.1: Indiscipline Behavior Recorded by Years in Black Book.

Years	Student Indiscipline Behaviors cases	Frequency
1987-1990	Not attending assembly, refusing to take punishment, escape school.	3
1991– 1999	Go in different place from where allowed, refusing to take punishment, failure to do the given activity, delay return after opening school, leading the strike, violating boarding rules and procedures, dressing differently from school uniform	8
2000– 2010	Going outside the school without permission, refusing to take punishment, to own phone in school, theft of money and books, not attending assembly, improper dressing, not attending preparation time, not attending classes with no reason, foul language for teachers, non-teachers and prefects, yelling at teachers and prefects, pregnancy, boycotting to teachers' and prefects' instructions, use drug abuse.	14
2011– 2021	Going outside the school without permission, theft of money and books, not attending assembly. Improper dressing, not attending preparation time, not attending classes with no reason, to own phone in school, refusing to take punishment. Foul language for teachers, non-teachers and prefects, not attending classes with no reason, yelling at teachers and prefects. Pregnancy, boycotting to teachers' and prefects' instructions, use drug abuse, religious conflicts, threatening others, beating prefects, violating boarding rules and procedures, stealing exams.	20

Source: Field Data (May 2021).

Table 3.1 shows a longitudinal analysis of changes indiscipline behavior recoded in Black Book from 1987 – 2021 indicated. Students girl's pregnancy, bullying teachers and to own phone (while in school) in school were indiscipline behavior did not emerge in the early 1990s, but later in the year 2000-2021 and were not reflected in the past years not recorded between 1987 – 1999, but emerged in 2000's. Similarly, boycotts to teachers and prefects, and drug abuse was also reported to be experienced beginning from 2000s. Implicitly there is a changing pattern and nature of behavior with changing times may be because of influence of exposure ICT and social media.

In focused Group Discussion, all respondents said students' behavior changes over time the results are similar those in other tools used. Moreover, they also responded on the causes of those changes analyzed in themes as shown in the *table 3.2*.

Table 3.2: Causes of Students' Indiscipline Change Over Time

Causes (Theme)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Change in life style (Social Values)	4	57
Immoral mass media	4	57
Easy access of Education	3	43
School Rules	3	43
Living environment	2	29
Unethical Upbringing of Children	2	29
Community engagement	2	29
Parents work	2	29
Mixing of politics and Education	2	29
Globalization	2	29
Joining Strange groups	1	14
Boundless between Adult and Children	1	14
Foreign culture	1	14
Awareness of rights and Law	1	14
Biological change	1	14
Business while studying	1	14
Children are raised by single or grand parents	1	14

Data Source: Field Data (May 2021).

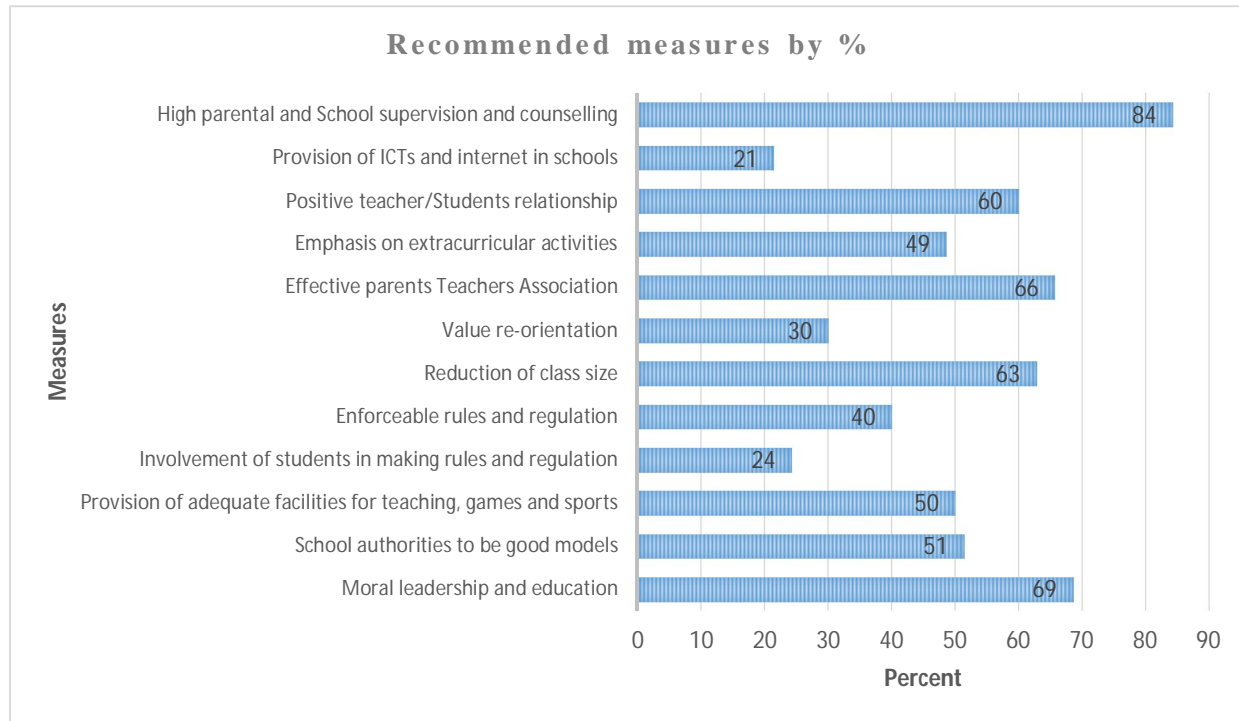
From *table 3.2* show, the main causes of indiscipline behavior change over time are; change in life style, children are raised by single or grandparents' globalization (foreign culture), immoral mass media, unethical upbringing of children, boundless between adults and children, and easy access of education.

3.1 Control Students' Indiscipline Behaviors

In questionnaire, there were measures identified by most of the teachers used to control student indiscipline. This were; high parental and school supervision and counseling (84%), moral

leadership and education (69%), effective parents-teachers' association (66%), reduction of class size (63%), positive teacher-student relationship (60%), school authorities to be good models (51%), provision of adequate facilities for teaching, games and sports (50%) and other reported were less than 50% of the respondents as shown in *figure 3.2*.

Figure 3.2: Measures Used for Control Student Indiscipline Behavior



Source: Field Data (May 2021).

Apart from the results above in questionnaire, the researcher also saw consistence in the response in the Focused Group Discussion that was having similar suggestion on the solution to overcome the students' indiscipline behavior. The following were the suggested solution discussed and were analyzed *table 3.3* in themes.

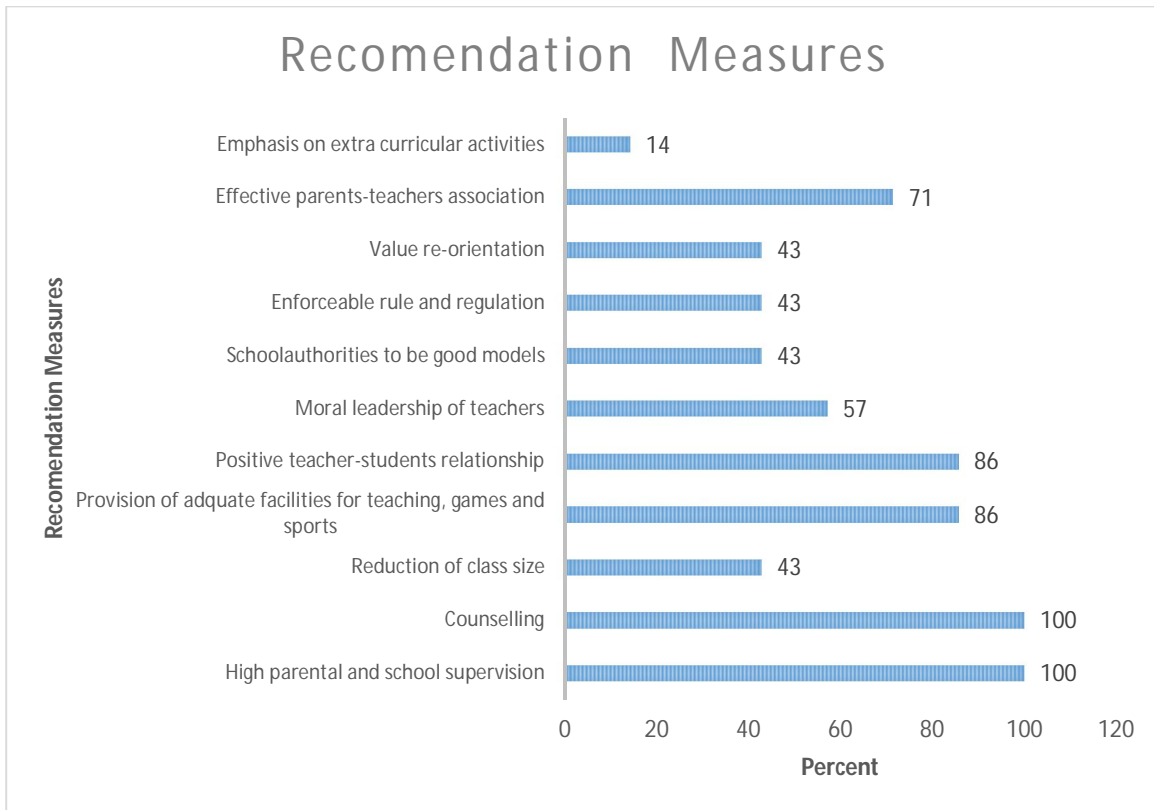
Table 3.3: Control measures used to overcome the students' indiscipline behavior

Measures (Theme)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Develop special program for educating students	4	57
Punishment in accordance with school rules	4	57
Emphasis on students' counseling	3	43
Teacher to be good mentors	2	29
Students' motivation to good behavior	2	29
Regular training for teachers on ever-changing behavior	1	14
School rule to be in line with the education policy	1	14
Parents involvement in solving students' indiscipline cases	1	14
Suspending students with indiscipline behavior	1	14
Conduct regular meeting with students to hear their views	1	14

Source: Field Data (May 2021).

In the interview, 100% of the interviewee said students counseling, high parental and school supervision of students, likewise 86% said positive Teacher-student relationship, provision of adequate teaching, games and sports facilities help to reduce if not to eliminate the students' indiscipline behaviors, other measures shown in the *figure 3.3*.

Figure 3.3: Measures used by teachers to control student indiscipline behavior



Source: Field Data (May, 2021)

The researcher also explored the ways out recorded in the black book for unacceptable behavior where in 1987 to 1990 no solution recorded. There were three indiscipline students' solutions recorded 1991-1999 that were almost similar which were penalties for digging holes, corporal punishment, bringing parent. 2000-2010 solution used to control students' indiscipline were slashing, suspension, bringing parents also in 2011 to 2021 there were seven of the actions involving; school board to make decision, suspension, bringing parents, expulsion from school, student transfer to other school, corporal punishment, students counseling. Today, the teachers who burdened in dealing with students' indiscipline. The most frequent behavior control strategy; cited by the teachers was punishment which took various forms such as manual labor mostly and corporal punishment. However, counseling also frequently used and each school has Counselors (selected by students) who dealt with counseling indiscipline students. Parents were also involved in facilitating the control of indiscipline cases. In cases of complicated students' indiscipline (pregnancy, frequently misbehaved students), School Boards were asked to intervene. To some of student their indiscipline cases referred into transferring student into other school expecting that a change in school environment may results in a student behavior change and behave disciplinary.

Therefore, currently teachers controlled student indiscipline through high parental and school supervision, counseling, and positive Teacher-student relationship, provision of adequate teaching, games and sport facilities, punishment in accordance with the school rules, provide self-awareness education to students and transfer to other school. The findings by this study rhymes well to Ngwokabuenui (2015) who reported positive teacher-students' relationship is attainable when teachers take cognizance of the child socially, psychologically and physically. John (2017) any school must have management which allocates teachers different duties of which touch student discipline lives, teachers area allocates to duties like class teacher, subject teacher, food teacher, sports and games, clubs and others.

For stance in the Focused Group Discussion monitor M₁ in school S₁ suggested that emphasis should be put more in counseling than how it is done now, said that;

“Despite the fact that there have been counselors but this should be taken seriously, teachers should increase their efforts to advise students on good behavior and self-awareness, especially teachers who have remained the main mentors for good behavior for students in the community.”

Implicit from the above concern is the need to strengthen the counseling services through capacity building of the teachers and sharpening the school leadership support to the services.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

The study explored the students' indiscipline change over time and solutions to control students' indiscipline therefore in conclusion the researcher suggests the adoption of the measures as they were teachers' view who interact with students frequently.

4.2 Recommendations

Considering the objective of the study, the following are recommendations of the study.

4.2.1 For Action

- i. Teacher to be given regular seminars on how to handle the over changing students' indiscipline behavior.
- ii. For schools to conduct regular meeting with students to discuss and address the indiscipline behavior when necessary to involve parents or guardians or school boards.
- iii. For the government to have clear and specific policy concerning students' indiscipline policy that will eliminate the interference with politician on decision made concerning students' indiscipline behavior as for now a student may be rejected in public school but accepted in private schools.

4.2.2 For Further Studies

Another study has to be conducted on exploring the best way of helping students to have self-awareness in using and accessing the information, communication and technology (ICT) with the help of teachers and parents, as it has been seen as one of the area where many indiscipline behaviors are driven.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Paul Dominick Mushi, dean faculty of Arts and social science from Jordan University College (JUCo), who supported this paper.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare they have no conflict of interest.

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