

**Daystar University Centre for
Research and Publications Working
Paper Series**

**Student Indiscipline and Academic Performance in Public
Secondary Schools in Kenya**

By

Rebecca Karanja & Michael Bowen

Working Paper Series

Number DU/2012/002

Student Indiscipline and Academic Performance in Public Schools in Kenya

Rebecca Karanja¹ & Michael Bowen²

CRP Working Paper Number DU/2012/002

Daystar University

Abstract

Learning institutions in Kenya have been plagued with cases of students' unrest and indiscipline. Students' unrest and indiscipline undermine the quality education. As a result of students' unrest and indiscipline, there has been destruction of property and even lives have been lost. The purpose of the study was to find out the impact of students' unrest on academic performance in public secondary schools. This study used a survey research method, employing both questionnaires and interviews. The population consisted of public secondary schools that had gone on strike and those which had not. According to 86.2% of the respondents, strikes negatively affected the academic performance of the students. A correlation carried out confirms that the negative relationship between students' unrests and academic performance. Further, schools where students went on strike showed higher variation in the mean grade when compared to schools where students did not go on strike. The data clearly shows that strikes lead to poor academic performance. The schools that had not been involved in unrests on average had more counselors than the schools that had unrests. This might suggest that one of the solutions to the problem of indiscipline and unrests in public secondary schools is to strengthen counselling.

Background

Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Manpower Training classifies all schools as either public or private. Public schools receive financial support from the government. In this context, all public schools are expected to be developed with the required facilities and staff in order to cater for the high demands for quality education. Besides this sessional paper, other policies have also been proposed by the government to improve education standards in the country.

¹ Rebecca Karanja holds a Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology from Daystar University, Kenya. She is a professional educator, administrator and counselor, having been the chief principal Alliance Girls. She can be contacted on email at rnkaranja@yahoo.com.

² Dr. Michael Bowen is Senior Research at Centre for Research, Publications & Consultancy at Daystar University. He can be contacted on email at mbowen@daystar.ac.ke

In spite of the policies and the various sessional papers that the Government has set up to ensure quality education, learning institutions in Kenya have been plagued with cases of students' unrest and indiscipline. Students' unrest and indiscipline undermine quality education. This study looked at students' indiscipline broadly but more specifically as manifested in students' strikes. The terms 'strikes' and 'students' unrest' are used interchangeably in this paper.

The government has responded to the unrest in schools in various ways. Concerned stakeholders have aired their views regarding possible causes and also prescribed a number of solutions to the problem. The government has set up committees and commissions to investigate the causes of the problem of unrest in schools and various recommendations have been made. For example, the Sagini Report (Government of Kenya, 1991) on unrest and indiscipline in secondary schools notes that the problem has not been restricted to public secondary schools but that the public universities have also experienced their fair share of student unrest and indiscipline. See also Shitanda Report (Government of Kenya, 2000) and Wangai Report of (Republic of Kenya, 2001).

As an example, the year 2008 saw a lot of unrest in public secondary schools. There was an outcry from the public regarding this perennial problem. The government responded by setting up yet another committee. There is reason for concern regarding this problem, particularly given the fact that it has persisted for the last 100 years and is growing in frequency and gravity of damage and long-term repercussions on all parties involved (<http://www.breakingnewskenya.com>). For one thing, the long-term goals of education and economic development could be undermined. The country has continued to lose much in terms of human resources and property due to unrest in schools. Quality education is also undermined, as invaluable learning time is lost. Students' unrest in public schools is a major drawback to the goal of poverty eradication. Ignorance and disease thrive as the meagre national resources go to undo the damages caused during such unrests. Another consequence is that the goals for industrialisation and economic recovery may not be achieved if the human and other resources are wasted during students' unrest.

Problem Statement

It is noteworthy that cases of students' unrest have been reported as far back as 1908 when Maseno Secondary School students went on strike (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Since then, there has been an increase in the frequency and number in recent years. There has been an increase in wanton destruction of property and lives have been lost. It is evident that most students' unrests are premeditated and planned to cause maximum destruction. For instance, during the second term of the year 2008 nearly 200 secondary schools and other institutions out of a total of 5,600 public and private secondary schools, and 21 public Technical Training Institutes were involved in unrests (Report to Parliament by the Minister for Education, 2008). Out of these, about 180 public and 8 private schools were seriously affected.

The Wangai Commission (Republic of Kenya, 2001) on student discipline and unrests in secondary schools reported that 250 schools were involved in various levels of serious unrests in secondary schools in the country in the year 2001. The report noted a disturbing feature of indiscipline in primary schools had also joined the fray of students' unrests. This report noted a clear indication of an increase in incidences of mass indiscipline and unrests in schools in Kenya.

The committees and commissions set up by the government to investigate the causes of the unrests have proposed a number of recommendations (presented in the literature) to solve the problem. Despite this, the problem has persisted.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the impact of students' unrest on academic performance in public secondary schools. Further, the study sought to find out the role of counselling in dealing with students' unrests.

Objectives

1. To establish the causes of recent waves of students' unrests in public secondary schools.
2. To establish the effect of students' unrests and indiscipline on academic performance in public secondary schools.
3. To determine other losses suffered by the schools and students as a result of the unrests.
4. To determine the role of counselling in dealing with the problem of students' indiscipline.
5. To establish reasons behind ineffectiveness of previous recommendations.
6. Based on the research, to prescribe recommendations that would be effective in dealing with students' unrests and indiscipline if implemented.

Justification

Academic performance is a major indicator of quality education. Quality education, in turn, is considered the key to economic and industrial growth and ultimately development. The national goals of economic recovery and industrialization are jeopardized by students' unrests and indiscipline in public secondary schools. The information provided by this research is important for the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders who have an interest in quality education. The public and the parents also have an interest in education having invested heavily in it. The society expects good returns for its investment in terms of good academic performance. Unrests in schools would, however, jeopardise these returns as parents are often called upon to meet the cost of unrests in schools.

Overview of the Literature

Reports on the problem of indiscipline and unrests in schools have been a common feature in the media for a long time. Muchemi (The Nation 2001, May 21) gave a chronological account of protests and destruction in public schools. According to Muchemi, the issue of unrests and indiscipline in schools is of great concern. It has become a worrying trend in that it has evolved from simple protests to the destruction of property and burning of prefects. The upshot was that student disturbance was negatively affecting academic performance. The report prepared by the Provincial Education Board (Central Province) indicated that indiscipline was rampant, not only in Central province but in the whole country.

The problem of indiscipline in schools is not unique to Kenya. It is a global issue of great concern, spanning political, economic, geographical, racial and even gender boundaries. There is a growing concern regarding indiscipline in schools within the United Arab Emirates (Khaleej Times, 2006), where teaching methods were blamed for the children's indiscipline. The parents were getting anxious and frustrated as they complained of the rising incidents of indiscipline and violence in schools. The concern was not only on the risk of destruction of property and injury to persons but also the poor academic performance associated with the growing trend of indiscipline.

The standards of discipline were also reported to be deteriorating in India (India Parenting PVT online Ltd, 2007). According to this report, there was a need to find a lasting solution to the problem of indiscipline. It was concluded that a solution to the issue of indiscipline would make students education and schooling experience more productive. Cases of indiscipline have also been noted in England. The government then planned a crackdown on school indiscipline by giving schools powers to search pupils for weapons under new plans. According to the then Education Secretary, Hon. Charles Clarke, schools should be encouraged to arrange for surprise police searches of the premises to reduce the problem of indiscipline (BBC, UK version, 2004, Nov.18).

The schools in Botswana had their image marred by acts of student indiscipline. Some students died and others became blind after they broke into the school science laboratory and consumed toxic amounts of methanol and ethanol. A survey on a number of previous provincial schools also revealed that indiscipline had caused deterioration in academic performance (BOPA, 2006, July 6)

UNESCO (1998) noted that unruly classrooms around the world had reached a very alarming proportion. According to Kuntz (1998), a bullet in a school in Argentina wounded a thirteen-year-old pupil. In Springfield, USA, one student was reported dead and 30 wounded in a shooting associated with indiscipline, while in Kobe, Japan, a schoolchild was decapitated by a fourteen-year-old. Killings, physical attacks, robberies, attempted arson and fights between children which ended in tragedies have been making headlines the world over. School violence that involves knives, baseball bats, marijuana,

guns and even bombs has become common. Incidents are also reported from Mexico, Italy, Germany, India, Comoros and even Spain (UNESCO, 1998).

There has also been a variety of reactions to the rising incidences of indiscipline and unrests in schools. Various views have been expressed regarding the cause of the indiscipline and possible solutions to the problems have been proposed. The 'rod' was banned in Kenya as a means of disciplining students in school according to the Daily Nation (2004, August 19). This ban has been blamed for the increase in indiscipline, and naturally, there have been calls to rethink the decision. A similar article in the East African Standard (2004, August 11) also supported this point. However, these views are not in agreement with organisations such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC). Subsequently, the reintroduction of caning was ruled out (Daily Nation, Nairobi, 2004, August 18).

A research commissioned by National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) of the UK in 2003 showed that indiscipline was due to many factors both internal and external. Violence was viewed as a contemporary crisis, which was beginning to reflect in trends in USA. The issue of indiscipline is of concern because it does not discriminate. It transcends the boundaries of race, gender and class. The impact has serious implications for schools. Teachers have less time to deliver teaching and have difficulties in effectively managing classroom discipline. The implication is that the quality of education is impaired.

A correlation between discipline and good academic performance is studies that have been carried out. According to Ovell (2001), discipline in schools is essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment. A democratic form of discipline leads to a healthy classroom environment that in turn promotes respect for education and a desire for knowledge. Ovell quoted a number of studies which support this view.

Absenteeism is a major area of indiscipline in schools. Reid (2006) in his study reported a positive correlation between performance and school attendance, namely that parenting styles contribute to students' indiscipline. The fact is that dysfunctional behaviour from parents can lower the performance of students.

A survey was carried out by Lynskey and Hall (2000) on the effect of adolescents' use of cannabis on education attainment. The cross-sectional study revealed a significant association between cannabis use and a range of measures of education performance including lower grade point average (GPA) and poorer school performance. The use of cannabis was associated with the adoption of an anti-conventional lifestyle resulting in a lot of indiscipline in schools (Ingenta, 2007). The use of cannabis was also identified as a cause of indiscipline in many schools in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2001).

Mumo (2004) in her research study on student unrests and indiscipline reported that discipline is considered vital for students' academic and social success. A good academic qualification without a good foundation of discipline of the individuals is of no use to the individuals, their families and the society. The society invests heavily in the education of its citizens. A positive correlation between discipline and academic performance was found in this study showing that students that are well disciplined perform better academically. This finding is also similar to that of Eshiwani (1993).

According to Mwangi (2003), there is a correlation between school organisations where there is discipline and academic performance. Mwangi argued that a school's climate that is characterised by social rewards for academic excellence and where discipline and scholastic achievement are valued by the teachers and students has a direct influence on students' performance.

Rwamba (2004) argued that lack of democratic leadership together with communication breakdown is a major cause of indiscipline in schools. He suggested that there is a relationship between learning and indiscipline. Cognitive skills are crucial in terms of academic success, self-esteem, coping skills and overall resilience. In the absence of discipline, the learning and teaching process are hindered. Time is wasted and energy is misdirected to deal with issues emanating from unrest.

According to the Daily Nation (2002), students and teachers in schools affected by unrest find it difficult to restore working relationship after the unrest. The emotional and psychological trauma that characterises the aftermath of students' unrest strains further interaction amongst the people. The issue of emotional and psychological impact due to unrests in schools has not featured in various reports discussed so far. Akala suggested that there would be need for training of teachers in conflict management as opposed to use of force, which brings anger and resentment.

Although much has been done to establish the causes of the problem of unrests and possible remedies recommended, very little has been done in terms of the counselling needs of the parties affected by unrests. Such counselling would be important in deterring future occurrences and bringing normalcy to the schools. For example, the best that is usually done is to expel or suspend the students and when they come back to school, a penalty is imposed for damages incurred. Usually such actions breed deeper resentment and the teachers and students still have to be in the same school. Without counselling and proper "friendship" between administration and teachers on the one hand and the students on the other, such a problem is rarely solved.

Methodology

This study used a survey research method, employing both questionnaires and interviews. The survey research obtained data that described the existing relationship between unrests/indiscipline in public secondary schools and academic performance. The study took both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative approach was carried out through focus group discussions with students whose schools had not been involved in students' unrests. On the other hand, quantitative inquiry was used to collect information from principals, deputy principals, counsellors and students concerning the frequency of the strikes, and academic performance of students levels with respect to strikes and other variables that could be quantified.

The population consisted of public secondary schools that had gone on strike and those which had not. It was important to sample schools that had not experienced students' unrests to be able to know the strategies they employed. In particular, 10 schools from the rural areas and 10 from the urban areas were chosen. In each of the categories, 5 schools which had experienced students' unrests and five which had not experienced unrests were sampled. For the schools that had had unrests, the students were interviewed in a focus group while personal interviews were carried out with the principals. Questionnaires were filled in by principals, deputy principals, counsellors and the students. Nyeri was chosen to represent a rural area while Nairobi represented the urban area.

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), quoting Gay (1983), stated that descriptive studies require a minimum of 10% of the accessible population for any study. Approximately 200 schools were involved in unrest countrywide (Report to Parliament by the Minister for Education, 2008). On the basis of Gay's recommendation, a sample of 20 schools was be considered an adequate sample for this study.

The sampling approach was both purposive and simple random. Purposively, the research sampled schools that were involved in unrests and those which were not. Further, the research sampled principals, deputy principals, counsellors and boarding masters since they were likely to have the information required for this study. Simple random sampling was used to arrive at the students that filled in the questionnaire. The sample included boys and girls schools as well as mixed, day, and boarding schools.

The data collected from the respondents was cleaned, coded and then entered into SPSS computer software. The data was then analyzed and various statistics generated which are presented in form of frequencies and percentages. Correlations were carried out to determine the impact of students' indiscipline on academic performance. The data is presented in form of text, tables and figures. The qualitative data was coded according to the various themes and analysed to produce text reports.

Results and Discussions

Results from Administrators and Counsellors in Schools that went on Strike

Approximately 62% of the schools in this study were from Nyeri while the rest (38%) were from Nairobi. Data from the eleven schools (both from Nyeri and Nairobi) that went on strike showed that majority (37.9 %) of the interviewees for this study were counsellors followed by deputy principals at 31 %. The principals formed 27.6% and boarding masters were 3 % of the sample size.

Approximately 28 % of the respondents had between three to four years of experience in their current positions. This is followed by 13.8% who had served for between 5-6 years. A significant 34.5% did not indicate their years of service. Combining those that had an experience of three years and above gives a percentage of 58.7%. This means that majority of the respondents had sufficient experience to deal with issues arising among students. Most of the principals had over ten years of experience in their current positions.

Most of the schools (72.4 %) were within the category of provincial schools. Most of the rest were district schools and a few were national schools. About 38 % of the schools were mixed schools with another similar percentage as boys-only schools. Slightly over 20 % of the schools were girls' only schools. The school with the lowest number of students had 515 students while the school with the largest number had 920. The schools had a combined number of 368 teachers out of which 336 or 91.3% of the teachers were trained. Over sixty percent (62.1 %) of the respondents reported that all religious activities were allowed in the school while the remaining 37.9 % mentioned Christianity as the only religion allowed in school. This latter group might be church-sponsored schools. Overall, students were still allowed to practice their religion in schools. This is significant as we assume that religion brings the fear of God and consequently that students who fear God would not engage in unruly behaviour, and this would make for a peaceful atmosphere.

The respondents were asked how they dealt with cases of indiscipline among students. The majority (75.9%) mentioned counseling as the predominant method used as opposed to punishment. Close to 90 % of the respondents would not recommend the return of the cane as a means of punishment and only 10.3% would recommend the use of corporal punishment. This would suggest a move away from punishments to counseling as a way of correcting wayward students.

Those that still insisted on the cane argued that students would not listen to instructions unless there was some form of sanction. They suggested that the cane if rightly administered could deter students from being unruly. The upward trend in the number of unrests in schools could be due to the removal of the cane in schools over the years.

Only about 17 % of the schools reported not to have lost any property during the schools' unrests. The table below shows the value of lost property during the unrests, which ranges between Kshs. Zero to Kshs. 2.5 million.

Table 4.1: Damage to Property

Damage to Property (Kshs.)	Frequency	Percent
0-150,000	15	51.7
151,000-500,000	6	20.7
501,000-1,000,000	2	6.9
Over 1,000,000	2	6.9
No Response	4	13.8
Total	29	100.0

It is obvious that the damage caused should be a big burden to the government and parents since the property damaged was either paid for by the government or the parents.

Approximately 35% of those interviewed reported injuries during the schools unrests while 17.2% reported that deaths occurred, as Table 4.2 indicates. Only 37.9% did not have injury or death during the unrests. Clearly, besides the damage to property, injuries and even death among the students are inevitable during schools unrests. The death of a student can be a painful experience for a parent and the community especially because it is avoidable.

The majority of respondents (51.7 %) reported lost learning time of between 5-30 days. Thirty-one percent reported lost learning time of less than 5 days with over 34.5% of the respondents losing over two weeks due to the students' unrests. The loss of learning time would translate into poor performance of students during examinations. Further, such students were unable to complete the required syllabus and consequently, the schools would be releasing students into colleges, universities and the market who were not fully equipped educationally.

Arson and mock examination boycotts were the leading indiscipline types as reported by 44.8 % of respondents. Striking against the school for a variety of reasons was third at 17.2 % followed by killing of other students at 13.8 %.

Table 4.2: Indiscipline Type

Indiscipline Type	Frequency	Percent
Arson (Burning of building, vandalism)	7	24.1
Striking against the school	5	17.2
Bullying	2	6.9

Drug taking	1	3.4
Killing of other students	4	13.8
Mock boycott	6	20.7
No Response	4	13.8
Total	29	100.0

Form ones, form fours and form twos were the leading culprits of unrests at 62.1 %. Except for form threes, all classes appeared equally involved in the unrests.

Peer pressure was the leading cause of unrests according to 24.1 % of the respondents followed by the media and drugs at 20.7 % each. Fear of examinations contributed to unrests according to 10.3 % of the respondents, while poor administration, food and mobile phones were mentioned by 6.9% of the respondents.

The respondents' ranking of blame or contribution to unrests is as follows: Teachers (62.1%), parents (55.2%), society (48.3%), government (24.1%), students (21%) and school administration (17.2%). The ranking clearly indicates that students are not always to blame, and that the problem of schools unrests is more complex than it seems. Interestingly, the students did not seem to blame any of the groups listed above. Instead, they blamed themselves (35%), with 30.3% of the students blaming their fellow students. This was followed by the school administration at 30% by only 14.5% of the students. Clearly there is need for counseling among students given that they admitted that they were largely responsible for the kind of destruction caused.

Most of the respondents (37.9%) reported that ring leaders of schools unrests were poor academic performers although 24.4 % reported that the ring leaders were doing well academically. About 14 % reported that ring leaders were influential amongst fellow students while 10.3 % said they were drug users. These results indicate the need for close monitoring of students especially those who are performing poorly and those who are known to be influential or to be using drugs.

Most respondents (65.5 %) reported that the ring leaders were either expelled or suspended from school as a disciplinary measure, 21% reported that the ring leaders paid for damages incurred while 10.3 % said they were given varied punishments. As a result of the punishment meted out to the students, the administration was rated low by 52% by parents as 48% who supported the administration. This would suggest the need for a closer working relationship between school administrations and parents.

Thirty-one per cent of the respondents indicated that the ring leaders were from single parent families, 27.6% reported that the ring leaders were from families with both parents, and 24.1% indicated that the ring leaders were from separated or divorced family backgrounds. The breakdown of the family unit as evidenced by single parents and

separated/divorced parents contributes significantly to unrests in schools, as parents were earlier listed as contribution to schools unrests.

Impact of Indiscipline on Academic Performance

There is clear evidence that schools unrests are linked to poor academic performance of the students according 86.2% of the respondents. Only 13.8% reported that strikes had no impact on academic performance.

Pearson 2 tailed correlations were carried out for 10 schools (5 in Nairobi and 5 in Nyeri) that experienced students' unrests. The mean grades for the last 8 years (2000-2007) were obtained from the Kenya National Examination Council. The variables of interest were academic performance and students' unrests. The results indicated that except for one school, all the other schools (both in Nairobi and Nyeri) showed a negative correlation (though not significant at the 10% level) between students' unrests (strike) and the mean grade obtained in a given year. For 90% of the schools in the sample representing both rural and urban schools to reveal the same trend means that students' unrests negatively affected academic performance.

The variances and standard deviations for the combined mean grade for Nairobi and Nyeri schools were carried out. The intention was to determine whether schools that went on strike had higher variances and standard deviation compared to those that did not go on strike. The table below shows the results.

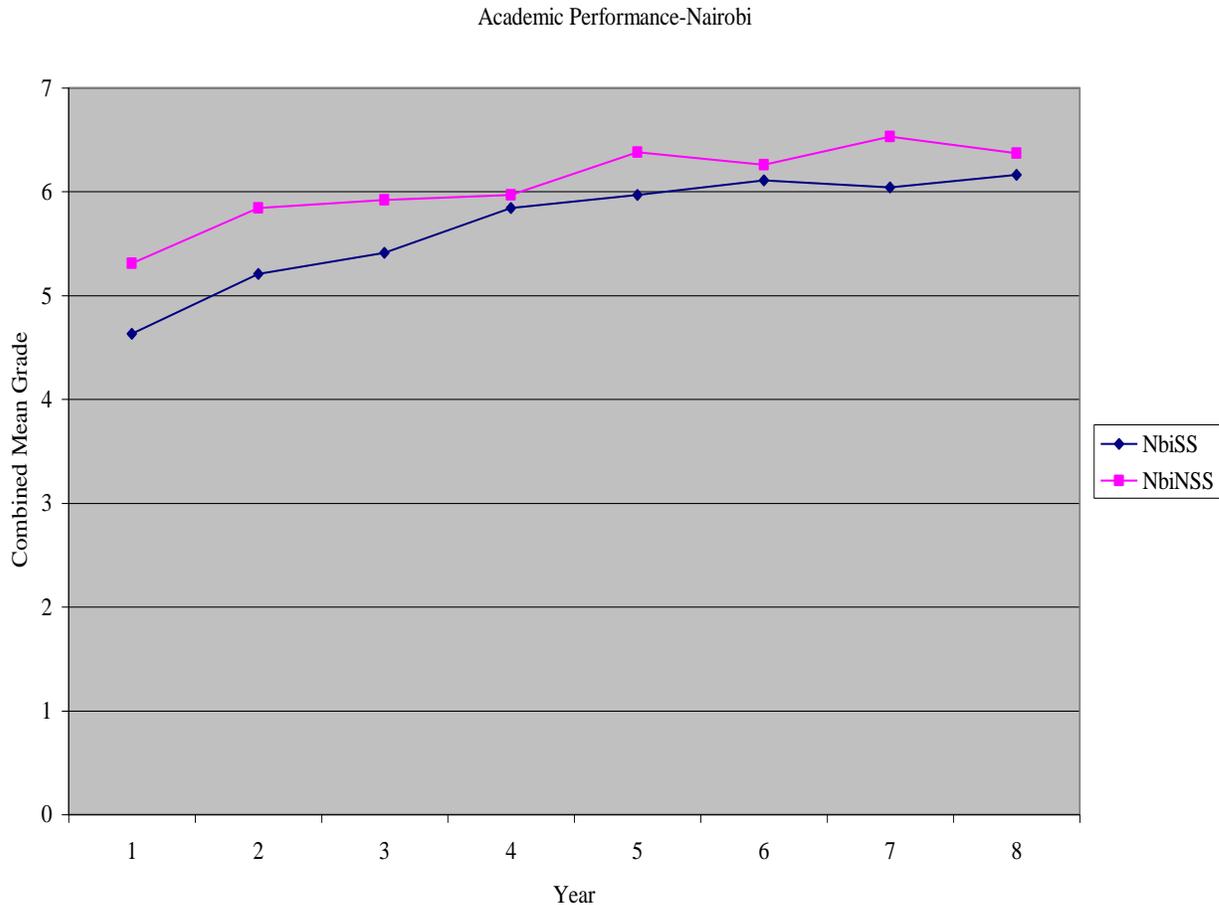
Statistics

		Combined mean grade Nbi Sch. that went on strike	Combined mean grade Nbi Sch that did not go on strike	Combined mean grade Nyeri Sch that went on strike	Combined mean grade Nyeri Sch that did not go on strike
N	Valid	8	8	8	8
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		.54120	.39583	.89561	.78611
Variance		.293	.157	.802	.618

Table 4.8 shows that variance and the standard deviation for schools that went on strike were higher when compared to schools that did not go on strike. It can be concluded that the higher variances and standard deviations were due to the strikes showing that academic performance was negatively affected by strikes while schools that did not go on strike had relatively stable academic performance.

The relationship between academic performance and students' unrests is depicted graphically as shown in figure below. The combined mean grade for schools that went on strike was graphically compared with the combined mean grade for schools that did not

go on strike. This was done separately for Nairobi and Nyeri producing the two graphs presented beginning with Nairobi.



The figure above clearly shows that the combined mean grade for schools that did not go on strike was always above the mean grade of the schools that experienced students' unrest. A similar scenario was observed in Nyeri showing that the combined mean grade marks for schools that did not go on strike was always higher when compared with schools that went on strike. This implies that students' unrests led to poor academic performance.

Measures Taken to Deal with Students' Unrest

One of the measures taken by schools to reduce unrests was open forums or *barazas* between the students and the school administration during which students could air their grievances. Other measures included addressing student concerns, and encouraging parents to play their roles. The measures, however, did not include guidance and counselling. But given the gravity of students' unrests and the backgrounds of students who participated, there is an urgent need for counselling in schools.

The government had taken other measures to curb students' unrest. The majority (62 %) of the respondents said that the government had banned mocks and holiday tuition and mobile phones as measures against strikes. About 17 % mentioned the de-registration of students in KCSE examinations while 7.9 % mentioned freezing of teachers' transfers. Only 20% of the respondents believed that solutions implemented by the government to reduce school riots were effective against 37.9% who did not think so. Another 37.9 % were not certain but indicated that they were yet to see the results of the measures. All this suggests that there is need to involve all stakeholders as the problem seems to be deeper than prescribing simple solutions.

When the respondents were asked to give long-term measures to curb the menace of strikes, about 28% suggested provision of adequate school facilities. Other suggestions included fast response to students' grievances, involvement of stakeholders, listening to students, reducing curriculum load and curbing drugs use.

Results from students from schools who went on strike

The respondents for this study were from Nyeri (45 %) and Nairobi (40.8 %). Form two students were the majority (32.9 %) of the respondents followed by form threes (28.9 %) and 13.2% form ones. The study deliberately targeted more students in forms two and three since it was assumed that form ones had little information about the subject while the form fours were busy with their examinations.

The respondents were aged between 15 and 21 years. The nine schools that constituted the sample for the study from both Nyeri and Nairobi Districts had gone on strike. Majority (61.8 %) of the students reported that they were not free to consult with their counselors while only 31.8% said they were free to do so. This clearly suggests the need for the counselors to be close to students. There may be need to reduce the workload of both the students and counselors so that they could have enough time to interact.

Eighty per cent of the respondents indicated that counseling and light punishment were the predominant methods used to maintain discipline at both Nyeri and Nairobi schools. Only 20% of the students indicated corporal punishment (caning) was used as a means of maintaining discipline, and 2.6% would recommend the use of the cane as a means of maintaining discipline in schools. Similar reasons as those given by the school administrators were given by the students for not recommending the cane as a way of instilling discipline.

As regards the major causes of unrests, 34.2% identified peer pressure as the major cause of unrests, 22.4% blamed it on poor administration while 19.7% stated that it was food. Unlike in the previous causes, food and the administration were among the leading causes of strike according to the respondents. This clearly implies bias in what the administrators reported that they were not a major cause of strikes. Clearly counseling would help alleviate the problem of peer pressure as a cause of strikes.

As reported earlier, 36.8% of the students indicated that strike ring leaders were poor performers (academically) when compared to 22.4% who reported that such ring leaders performed well academically. Expulsion and suspension from school were the frequent actions taken against ringleaders. Again, as in the previous results, close to half of the respondents reported that parents were against disciplinary measures meted out to those who participated in strikes.

Slightly over thirty percent (31.7%) of the respondents reported that enhanced communication between the students and teachers was the measure schools had put in place to reduce unrests in schools. Addressing students' needs followed at 25 %. The rest of the respondents mentioned a wide range of measures such as giving students weekends off, counseling, daily searches and introducing more entertainment programs in the school. Clearly, from the students' perspectives, there seemed to be quite some effort among the schools to address the problem of unrests. Such measures need to be strengthened to bear fruit.

Half of the respondents reported that the solutions offered by both the government and the school administration were effective while 46% differed. As compared to administrators, the main long-term measures which students recommended to deal with unrests in schools included addressing students' needs (15.8 %), providing required facilities (24 %) and counseling (13.2%). It is important to note that more students than administrators and counselors recommended counseling.

An interesting finding is that 50 % of the students reported that their school administration was dictatorial as opposed to 15.8 % who reported that the school administration was democratic. About thirty percent (30.3 %) reported that their schools had a mixture of both democratic and dictatorial school systems. There may be need for the principals and other administrators to employ more democratic measures in managing schools and to ensure that they are approachable. Unrests are likely where students perceive that their grievances would not be heard.

Close to thirty percent (29 %) of the students aired their grievances through student forums such as *barazas* followed by 22.4 % who used prefects. Approximately 11 % used suggestion boxes while 17 % used one-to-one method with school heads. Approximately 49 % of respondents reported that absenteeism was a serious problem in their school. This suggests that indiscipline in the schools would lead to unrest. Concerning drug taking, more than twenty per cent (22.4 %) of the students reported that 21-30 % of students used drugs, 21.1% reported that only 5-10 % used drugs and 17.1 % said it was 11-20 %. Only 14.5 % reported that above 40 % of the students used drugs.

The most commonly used drug according to 41 % of the students was bhang, followed by alcohol as indicated by 31.6 % of the students, and cigarettes (15.85%). It is therefore

obvious that the issue of drug taking in schools is a serious problem that needs to be addressed by the schools.

Results from Principals whose schools have not gone on strike

Approximately 62% of the respondents were from Nairobi while the rest were from Nyeri District. The total number of schools in this category was 13. The number of counsellors for schools that did not go on strike was more with most schools having more than 5 counselors and the lowest number per school at three while the highest was eighteen counsellors. This may explain the reasons as to why such schools rarely went on strike. Counselling helps the students' by increasing their self-awareness. It helps in emotional growth and maturity. Counselling also empowers them to articulate their issues, as there is more understanding of the problems. As communication is enhanced amongst the people, their relationships improve. The students are empowered as they explore alternative solutions to their problems. They learn the need to explore the advantages and disadvantages of the choices which they make. Counselling enables the students to also appreciate that some problems have no solutions. They consequently learn to be more accountable for their actions. Enhancing counselling services in our schools therefore may be one possible solution to the perennial problem of students' unrests. There are no major differences in terms of experience in their current position between principals/ counselors whose schools went on strike and those whose schools did not go on strike.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The data shows that majority of the administrators / teachers have sufficient work experience in terms of years worked to deal with issues that arise among students, with more than 90% of the teachers trained. This implies that the teachers have the necessary knowledge and training to deal with the students.

The majority (75.9%) of administrators and teachers reported that they used counseling as the predominant method to solve problems that arose among the students. This suggests a movement away from punishments. About 90% of the respondents would not recommend the return of the cane as a means of punishment. Close to 83 % of the schools reported to have lost property during school strikes. The value of lost property could be as high as Kshs. 2.5 million. Approximately 35% of those interviewed reported injuries during students' unrests while 17.2% reported that deaths occurred during school chaos. A significant percentage of the schools lost learning time of between 5-30 days as a result of students' unrest.

The major impact of schools strikes on performance was the reduction in the academic performance of the students according to 86.2% of the respondents. It was found that there was a negative correlation between students' unrests and academic performance. Further, schools where students went on strike showed higher variation in the mean grade

when compared to schools where students did not go on strike. Clearly, strikes lead to poor academic performance.

Peer pressure was the leading cause of unrest, followed by the media and drugs. Fear of examinations and poor administration as well as inadequate and poor quality of food also contributed to students' unrests. According to the administrators/counselors and teachers the ranking of blame or contribution to strikes was in the following order of importance: Teachers, parents, society, government, students and finally the school administration. Clearly the students should not be the only or the main focus in terms of looking for solutions to the problem of unrest in schools. Interestingly, the students did not seem to blame any of the groups above with no group receiving more than 35% blame from the students. In fact, the highest blame apportioned to themselves at 35% with 30.3% of the students.

It was also clear from the data that academically strike ring leaders performed poorly and were likely to influence other students into taking drugs. Students who are known to be ring leaders therefore need to be closely monitored by the school administration. It also emerged that most of the ring leaders came from families in which the parent was single, separated or divorced. Such social backgrounds are likely to contribute to unrests in schools.

Out of the measures the schools had taken to reduce unrests in schools such as open forums or *barazas* between students and school administration, addressing students' concerns and encouraging parents to play their roles, guidance and counseling seemed to be given very low priority. We have, however, seen that counselling was a preferred option, and to this end, its use needs to be encouraged in schools.

The fact that many students were not free to consult their school counsellors needs to be looked into critically. On the contrary, counsellors and students should have a close relationship that would ensure that students are free to consult counsellors and that counsellors have enough time to attend to students. An interesting finding is that half of the students who filled in the questionnaire reported that their school administration was dictatorial. This perception could be one of the key causes of students' unrest especially if students perceived that their grievances would not be heard. To address these, there is need to develop the leadership in the schools to appreciate the importance of dialogue and democratic approaches would be of essence in solving the problem of students' unrest.

The schools that had not been involved in unrests on average had more counselors than the schools that had unrests. This might suggest that one of the solutions to the problem of indiscipline and unrests in public secondary schools is to strengthen counselling because it can help to increase students' self-awareness and foster emotional growth and maturity. Counselling can also help students to articulate their issues, and bring more understanding on the problems. Schools should therefore establish structures, specifically

for dealing with reconciliation, trauma and healing for peace building, and recognise that there are different levels of the violence cycle; needless to emphasise the need to maintain peace and identify impartial mediators in a bid to avoid violence in our schools.

References

Agarib, A. (2006, April 1). Teaching methods blamed for children's indiscipline, *Khaleej Times*, p.

Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Best, J. W., & Khan, J. V. (1993). *Research in education*. Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Bring back the rod and save the child. (2004, August 11). *East African Standard*, Editorial.

Crackdown on school indiscipline, online <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4021007.stm> Retrieved on 6th February 2007

Douglas, L. (2006, May 7). National PTA seeks to improve schools' performance. *The Jamaica Observer*. Careers and Education Section.

Glasgow, K. L., Dornbusch, S. M., Troyer, L., Steinberg, L., & Ritter, P. L. (1997). Parenting styles, adolescents' attributions, and educational outcomes in nine heterogeneous high schools. *Child Development*, 68(3), 507.

Government of Kenya. (1991). Report on the Presidential Committee on student unrest and indiscipline in Kenyan Secondary Schools

Government of Kenya. (2000). Causes of disturbances in public universities (Standa Report)

Government of Kenya. (2001). The Education Act (School Discipline) Chpt 211 Legal Notice No. 56/2001, the Education school discipline (Amendment) regulation 2001.

Government of Kenya. (2001). Report of the task force on student indiscipline and unrest (Wangai Report).

Government of Kenya. (2003). Nation Action Plan for Education 2003 – 2005.

Government of Kenya. (2003). The Education Bill 2003 Zero Draft.

Government of Kenya. (2005). Sessional Paper I on Policy framework for education training and research.

ILO .(2003). Violence and stress in the workplace. Online sponsored resource, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/educat/violence.htm> Retrieved on 5th February 2007

Indiscipline online resource
<http://www.indiaparenting.com/raisingchild/data/raisingchild018.shtml> Retrieved 3rd February 2007

Jull, S. K. (2006). Auto-Graph: considering the utility of student behaviour self-monitoring for inclusive schools. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs*, 6(1), 17-30.

Kerlinger, J. N. (1973). *Foundations of behavioural research*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Watson Inc.

Kgari Sechele SSS rises from the ashes? (2005, October 11). *BOPA Daily News*.

Koech, D. (2009). Totally integrated quality education and training (TIQET).

Lockesh, K. (1984). *Methodology of educational research*. New Delhi: Vani Educational Books.

Lynskey, M., & Hall, W. (2000). The effects of adolescent cannabis use on educational attainment: A review. *Addiction*, 95(11).

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (1999). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approach*. Nairobi, Kenya: African Centre for Technology Studies

Munn, P., & Johnstone, M. (1992, spring). Discipline in Scottish secondary schools. *Research in Education*, 50.

Mutua, J. N. (2004). *Investigation into alternative strategies of discipline in the absence of corporal punishment in public secondary schools*. Unpublished M.Ed thesis, University of Nairobi, Nairobi.

Mwangi, N. N. (2003). *An investigation into causes of poor performance in accounting at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in selected schools in Kiambu district*. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Nairobi, Nairobi.

Njoku, M. C. (2000). *Managing students' riots: The role of school personal management bodies and the methods used*. Unpublished M.Ed thesis, Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

Ovelll, S. (2007). Discipline in schools' online resource from the Nalanda Institute. <http://www.nalandainstitute.org/aspfiles/discipline.asp> accessed 5th February

Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (1995). *Nursing research, principles and methods*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Reid, K. (2006). Raising school attendance: A case study of good practice in monitoring and raising standards. *Quality Assurance Education*, 14(3), 199-216.

Wachira, M. (2001, May 21). Chronology of protest and destruction in schools. *Daily Nation* (Nairobi).

Wachira, N. N. (2002). *Study of the student perception and guidance and counselling in public secondary schools*. Unpublished M.Ed thesis, University of Nairobi, Nairobi.

Wright, A., & Keetley, K. (2003). *Violence and indiscipline in schools: Research study commissioned by NASUWT final report*. Leisceter, United Kingdom: Perpetuity Research & Consultancy International (PRCI) Ltd.

Zairi, M. (1998). *Benchmarking for the best practices: Continuous learning through sustainable innovation*, Cornwall, England: Butterworth Heinemann.