DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS FACED BY TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH IMENTI OF MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT.

BY

MUTHOMI JUDITH KARAMBU

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

JULY 2000
DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

MUTHOMI JUDITH KARAMBU

This research project has been submitted for examination with approval as the University Supervisor.

PROF. M. PATEL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.
DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my dear husband Godfrey Muthomi who took care of our small children and home while I was away on my studies, and also supported me financially. Had he not co-operated with me this study would not have been successful.

Next, to our lovely children Cephas Koome and Sharon Kendi, who even though they were very young, never held me back home but always sent me to study with nice smiles and warm "bye mammy". God bless them.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher wishes to express sincere thanks and gratitude to her university supervisor, Prof. Patel (Lecturer, Department of Educational Communications and Technology, Faculty of Education, Kenyatta University), for his tireless guidance, advice and supervision in the writing of this research project.

Special thanks also go to all the head-teachers and teachers of the schools where the data was collected, for their co-operation and assistance.

Sincere gratitude is also extended to my husband Godfrey, our son and daughter (Koome and Kendi) for allowing me and giving me ample time to do this research project.
ABSTRACT

"Disciplinary problems faced by teachers in primary schools. A study of selected primary schools in South Imenti Division of Meru Central District".

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out:

(a) the types of existing school discipline problems faced by primary school teachers
(b) the possible causes of indiscipline among school pupils
(c) various methods used by teachers in dealing with discipline problems and types of punishments used by teachers
(d) the role played by the head-teacher in dealing and maintaining desired discipline in schools.

Procedure

A review of literature was made to identify the types of discipline problems existing in primary schools, causes, methods used in dealing with the same, and the role of the head-teachers in matters of discipline.

Two questionnaires were developed. The head-teacher questionnaire was in two parts:
A requiring head-teacher to provide general and relevant information about his schools.

B Specific information regarding his roles in matters of school discipline

The teachers questionnaire was in 4 parts:

Part 1 asking teachers to indicate a tick (✓) on checklist, the problems behaviours they encounter

Part II asking teachers to indicate the possible causes of misbehaviour among pupils

Part III requiring teachers to select from a given list the methods they use most or never use in dealing with misbehaviour.

Part IV requiring teachers to indicate the constraints they experience in their attempts to maintain discipline in the school.

Ten schools in South Imenti Division of Meru Central District were randomly selected and used, and standard four, five, six and seven respectively. The ten headmasters and four class teachers from each of the target standard were used hence making a total of fifty respondents.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>(ii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>(iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>(iv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>(vi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>(xi)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND ITS RELATED COMPONENTS

1.1 Background of the problem                                          1
1.2 Statement of the problem                                            2
1.3 Research Questions                                                  2
1.4 The Objective of the Study                                          3
1.5 Significance of the Study                                           3
1.6 Assumptions                                                         4
1.7 The Scope and Limitations of the Study                              4
1.8 Definition of Significant terms                                     5

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Literature Related to Types of Existing School Discipline Problems 8
2.2 Review of Literature Related to Causes of Pupils Indiscipline in Schools 10
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Literature Related to Types of Existing School Discipline Problems............................................................. 8

2.2 Review of Literature Related to Causes of Pupils Indiscipline in Schools 10

2.3 Review of Literature Related to Teachers Methods of Dealing With Pupils Indiscipline........................................ 12

2.3.1 The Use of Punishments............................................. 13

2.3.2 Use of Rewards in the Classroom.................................... 16

2.4 Review of Literature Related to the Roles of The Head Teachers To Ensure Favourable School Discipline............................... 17

2.5 Summary of Literature Related to Disciplinary Problems in Primary Schools...................................................... 21

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Sample........................................................................ 23

3.2 Study Instruments and Data Collection.................................. 24

3.2.1 Instrumentation.................................................................. 24

3.2.2 Pilot Testing....................................................................... 25

3.2.3 Collection of Data............................................................. 25

3.3 Data Analysis........................................................................ 25

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND OBSERVATION
4.4.1 Types of Punishment Used by Teachers in Dealing with Misbehaviour 34
4.4.2 Types of Misbehaviour and Punishment which head-teachers allow
Teachers to Use and to Deal With................................................. 35
4.4.3 Reward used by Teachers for Pupils Who Show Improvement in
Behaviour.................................................................................. 37
4.5 Constraints experienced by Teachers in their attempts to maintain
Discipline in School................................................................. 38
4.6 Roles played by Head-teachers to ensure Discipline in their
Schools......................................................................................... 40

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND SUGGESTIONS
5.1 Summary.............................................................................. 44
5.2 Conclusion........................................................................... 47
5.3 Recommendations.............................................................. 48
5.4 Suggestions.......................................................................... 49

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................ 50
APPENDIX A ............................................................................ 52
APPENDIX B ............................................................................ 54
APPENDIX C ............................................................................ 55
APPENDIX D ............................................................................ 61
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV.1: Some Behaviour Problems Observed by Teachers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.2: Teachers Perception of Causes of Classroom Indiscipline</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.3 Head-teachers' Relative Ranking of Causes of Indiscipline</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.4 Head-teachers Perception of the State of Discipline in Schools</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.5: Some Methods Used by Teachers in Maintaining and Dealing with Discipline</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.6 Types of Punishments Used By Teachers In Dealing With Misbehaviour</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.7: Some Misbehaviour Which Head-Teachers Allow Teachers to Deal With and Some Punishments They Use</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.8 Rewards and how frequently they are Used by Teachers in the Classroom</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.9: Teachers Opinion About the State of Discipline in their School</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.10 Places where teachers experience Discipline Problems Most i.e. Whether in Class or Outside Class</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.11 Roles which are practiced by Head-teachers</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
THE PROBLEM AND ITS RELATED COMPONENTS

1.1 Background to the Problem

The primary school teacher deals with children who are at their early stages of development, physically, mentally, socially, morally and any other aspect of human development one can think of. This is because nowadays most parents take their children to school at very tender age. Due to the children's age, they may display behaviours which are unacceptable in the classroom. It is the duty of the teacher to ensure that these young children's energy is directed towards useful and worthwhile activities.

The teacher, to a larger extent has assumed the role of the parents as he is with the children for greater part of the day as compared to the time the children spend with their parents. The issue of discipline, therefore has been left to the teacher. He has more time to instill in pupils' attitudes desirable for social life. The teacher has a double role, which he must play simultaneously besides many other duties, that is, the classroom teaching and at the same time the instillation and maintenance of discipline among the children.

Discipline problems are experienced in all primary schools although in different nature and magnitude. It is within this assumption that the researcher wishes to study discipline problems experienced by primary school teachers. This is in view of common statements that pupil's behaviour has worsened and that it is likely to deteriorate.
The researcher also wishes to find out the causes of discipline problems and the disciplinary methods used by the teachers in dealing with these problems as well as the problems teachers face in their attempts to deal with cases of indiscipline.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The study attempts to investigate school discipline problems faced by primary school teachers, their causes, the various methods used by primary school teachers in dealing with unwanted behaviour and the problems the teachers experience in their attempts to solve and deal with indiscipline. The emphasis is on the primary school teachers because he relates with the pupils for the greater part of the day more than any part of the day more than any other person does.

The study also seeks to investigate the role of the head-teacher in dealing with indiscipline of pupils, as he is incharge of the overall success of the school.

1.3 Research Questions

The main guiding questions in this study are:

1. What is the nature of indiscipline problems experience by primary school teachers in and out of the classroom?

2. What are the possible causes of these discipline problems?

3. What measures do teachers take in solving and preventing these problems?
4. What particular problems do the teachers experience in their effort to instill, control and maintain discipline in the school?

5. The school headmaster in his capacity as the school administrator, leader and supervisor, what role does he play in the school in matters of discipline?

1.4 The Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate:

(a) The types of existing school discipline problems faced by primary school teachers.

(b) The possible causes of indiscipline among school pupils.

(c) The various methods used by teachers in dealing with discipline problems.
   
   (i) punitive
   
   (ii) preventive

   (iii) behaviour modification

   and the types of punishments used by teachers in primary schools.

(d) The role-played by the head-teacher in assisting the teachers to obtain and maintain favourable school discipline.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The question of indiscipline in schools has been a matter of great concern to educators, policy makers, administrators and the public. Of late, there have been many cases of riots and strikes especially in secondary schools. School discipline is very essential for effective teaching and learning. Good discipline begins in the classroom,
and no lesson can be a success in the absence of good discipline. The researcher hopes that this study will be of significance to the educators, school administrators and teachers.

1.6 Assumptions

The following are major assumptions of the researcher:

1. Discipline problems exist in any normal primary school.

2. That teachers are capable of identifying the causes of indiscipline problems in the classes and school.

3. Teachers have developed some certain standard methods of dealing, controlling and coping with discipline cases.

4. Teachers have, as a result of their classroom experience or training formed attitudes towards use of punishment and rewards in classroom.

5. That the head-teachers are aware that they have the responsibility to instill, control, and maintain discipline in their schools.

1.7 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

1. The study will be carried out in South Imenti Division of Meru Central District. This would therefore not allow for wider generalisation of the findings to cover the whole province or all Kenyan primary schools.

2. The time allocated for this project is too short for a detailed study.

3. Financial constraints do not allow the researcher to select a larger sample of a detailed study.
1.8 Definition of Significant Terms

1. Classroom - a building of any environment chosen by a teacher or school administration where teachers and pupils engage in teaching and learning (instructional activities).

2. Pupil - a learner or primary school child in school.

3. Behaviour - used in broad sense to refer to overt or covert changes within a learner as a result of exposure to formal, informal or instruction of education.

4. Discipline - a state of physical or mental orderliness, or control within a learner, as a result of desirable learning, exposure or externally imposed by rules, punishments and rewards, for example obedience, cooperation, favourable attitudes towards study and classroom work, courtesy, respect for others and property.

5. Self-control - a state of self-control established in a learner that prevails (persists) even in the absence of the teachers in classroom, to punish him/her, as a result of training or individual/group effort.

6. Punishment - a process of an institutional infliction of pain, shame, unpleasantness by the teacher or headmaster on a pupil or group of pupils as a consequence of the pupils of group's misbehaviour.
7. **Reward** - an intentional award, serving a symbolic approval of desirable behaviour to a pupil or group of pupils by a teacher e.g. prizes, praise, grades, smile; privileges, tokens and general approval or recognition of the self-worth of the individual.

8. **Pilot testing** - administration or a questionnaire (research instrument) to individuals or groups with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding the topic of research study, for the purpose of checking the validity of the items on the instruments as well as their relevance to the target population. It provides useful insight upon which revision can be made before administration of the final draft.

9. **Random selection** - picking or choosing of persons or items in a group in such a way that each person or item has equal chance of being chosen or selected.

10. **Spectrum** - a wide range to cover the whole extent.

11. **Learning** - A permanent desirable change of behaviour, physical, or mental, with regard to laid-out education objectives.

12. **Attitude** - a state of mind that governs one's acceptance, rejection, dispositions, prejudices, feelings, twinking, believing, or pre-conceived notions and convictions of something, event, phenomena, opinions being seen as a verbal expression of attitude and index of it.
13. **Role** - functions, duties or responsibility of an individual in a given situation set about by the expectations of the members of the group in the situation at a given time. In this study, 'the situation' is the discipline in school and 'individuals' refer to head-teacher, teachers and pupils (parents implied).

14. **Personality problem behaviour** - Behaviour taking the form of 'withdrawal' that suggests that the child is fearful of others, is anxious, lacks confidence, and is avoiding situations that might expose him/her to criticisms, ridicule or rejection.

15. **Curriculum** - all subjects taught and activities provided in a school and includes time devoted to, and scope of a subject and activity.

16. **Questionnaire** - a set of written questions to which written responses are acquired from the sampled respondents.

17. **Data** - Information that is systematically collected in this study for the purpose of addressing the objective of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Review of Related Literature

Review of related literature was done in relation to:
(a) types of existing school discipline problems
(b) causes of pupils indiscipline
(c) types of pupils discipline problems (unwanted behaviour)
(d) methods of dealing with pupils misbehaviour and the use of
   (i) punishments
   (ii) rewards
(e) the roles played by head-teachers to ensure favourable school discipline in their respective schools.

2.1 Review of literature related to types of existing school discipline problems faced by primary school teachers

Discipline problems are experienced in any normal primary school. These can on one hand be attributed to personality behaviour problems and on the other hand, to group behaviour problems (peer influence) among others.
Blair (1954:416)

Many types of maladjusted children are found in our schools. The symptoms they exhibit are numerous: include shyness, untruthfulness, truancy, cruelty, bullying, cheating, stealing, profanity, suspicions,
impertinence, showing off... and all sorts of classroom disorderliness behaviour.

Most undesirable behaviours are carried from homes by individual pupils and are manifested at school. Teachers spend a lot of time in dealing with cases like fighting, theft, cheating and so on. Teachers therefore deal simultaneously with learning and problem behaviours that disrupt and prevent effective teaching and learning. Page 91964:290) recognizes this demanding role of the teacher when he stated:

Classroom discipline is viewed as problem in schools in countless communities. Not only does it give concern to the citizens and school administrators but also teachers view it as one of their most difficult problems.

Personality behaviour problems such as shyness, nervousness, impulsiveness, lack of confidence, feeling of unworthy/inferiority etc contribute to hostile behaviour by trouble children. Lindgren (1956:137) made a list of symptoms of behaviour problems in early adolescent child and categorised them into 3 kinds: personality (neurotic) problems, conduct (psychopathic) problem and problem of emotional and social immaturity. E.K. Wickman has this to say,

Behaviour can be explained in terms of discrepancies between the individual's capacities to behave and the requirement for behaviour that are imposed upon him and by social forces. By capacities we refer not only to biological (physical, mental) capacities but also to experimental factors (conditioned responses, social attitudes etc), that extend or limit the individual's possible behaviour responses.
A teacher who is teaching pupils of eight years for example and is expecting all the children in the room to do work requiring and intellectual level of, say, twelve or thirteen years, is inviting disciplinary problems. Those children who fall considerably below this level of ability may respond to these excessive requirements by truancy and aggressive behaviour or they may withdraw and become introverted. Similarly children whose abilities far exceed their age may respond to the discrepancy between their capacities and the requirements by exhibiting symptoms of boredom or engaging in many types of annoying behaviour. The paramount aim of school discipline should be to endow each pupil with such habits such as self respect and proper pride in his own integrity that he will observe the norms of good conduct when not under compulsion or supervision and will carry them eventually into adult life.

2.2. Review of Literature Related to Causes of Pupils indiscipline in school

Review of literature on possible causes of classroom indiscipline reveals that many factors such as the level of development of the learners, teachers, behaviour, nature of the curriculum, classroom atmosphere, home background of the learners, administrative behaviour of the head-teacher and peer influence, to name a few, affects pupil's behaviour where there is no discipline, no proper learning can take place Mhlanga 91995:17) supports this by stating:

Unless a pupil listens to a teacher, he cannot learn and understand anything said by the teacher, he cannot make any progress. A child must give a teacher full attention is he is to learn successfully.
He also stresses that 'good discipline exists when the pupils control themselves and behave in acceptable manner without being commanded'.

Osighembe (1974:21), addressing himself to the issue of 'school discipline and academic standards' to Nigerian audience enumerated two possible causes of school indiscipline.

(a) The home environment which includes parents, relatives, dwelling place, playthings and playmates.

(b) The wider environment outside the home which includes the people the child comes into contact with (the community) the language he hears, the ideas he receives, then what he watches on TV and cinema, the play group influence and individual characteristics.

He also adds that:

Today there is conflict between the home and the society and between the home and the society and between the ideas the schools want to inoculate in the children and what the children see going on in the society.

While it is plausible that teachers should shoulder the blame for indiscipline in schools, as they are 'expected to be paragons of excellence in the community, reflecting the ideas rather than practice of the community, page (1964:297). Scarf (1974:21) addressing himself to the issue of classroom indiscipline in American context, stated that parents have a share of the blame for school indiscipline:
Our permissive society has reared a generation of rude, arrogant, supercilious, selfish young people. They are the pleasure-seeking "now" generation.... Teachers cannot continue to be efficient in schools unless parents and society in general take firmer hand in home training in morals, ethics and good manners.

**Review of literature related to Teachers**

**Methods of Dealing with Pupils indiscipline**

Review of literature related to methods of dealing with pupil's misbehaviour showed that three methods are commonly used by teachers:

(i) punitive methods

(ii) use of rewards methods

(iii) preventive methods

Every teacher has his/her own method of instilling and dealing with school discipline. The teacher should be vigilant to monitor the social and physical environment in the school which will eventually result to conducive classroom climate favourable for human living and learning.

Cohen (1977:176) stated that teachers possessing classroom monitoring show 'whithitness and added that;

The good teacher is "out there" in the classroom, not wrapped in his own involved musing. He is aware of everything that is going on and the children sense vividly his perception of them as his grasp of the subject matter. A teacher with his kind of awareness responds immediately to a minor problem before it has come to develop.
2.3.1 The use of punishments

In Kenya, too many people think that discipline is the same thing as punishment. Whereas punishment is only one (and not the most important) aspect of discipline.

In the past, discipline in the classroom was often maintained by using essentially police methods. The child who misbehaved was regarded as "bad" and in need of punishment to make him "good". There was over-reliance on corporal punishments and suspension.

Some methods for deterrents of misbehaviour are applied by some head-teachers even today. A lazy or inefficient head-teacher will use the cane as the answer to any and every minor offense. In consequence, he devalues its effects and leaves himself with nothing in reserve when a really serious breach of discipline occurs, other head-teachers result to handing out two or more weeks suspension for almost any offence thus constantly depriving the pupils of lessons which eventually leads to weakening examination results and so harm the school as a whole.

G. Griffins 1994:36 stresses that:

A good school will apply a variety of punishments that are useful to the community (such as a Saturday afternoon working party to cut long grass, cleaning school pavements and so on), or are healthy to the individual (for instance, running round the athletics track a stated number of times or spending a break time doing a physical education "drill").

Canning if necessary should usually consist of two or three strokes and should be administered by the head-teacher.
However, the needs of the learners should not be ignored. Before a punishment of any kind is administered to the child, the teacher should always investigate the cause.

G.M. Blair supports this:

Children are not regarded as being naturally bad or depraved, but as individuals that have definite needs which must always be met in one way or another.

Teachers should realise that there are causes behind every type of behaviour exhibited by children and that they behave in the only way it is possible for them to behave considering the hereditary characteristics they posses, the kinds of experiences they have had, and social pressures which are operating upon them at the moment.

Kenyatta University Vice-Chancellor, Prof. G.S. Eshiwani, on the Kenyatta University Weekly Newsletter Vol.3 (July 2000) had this to say to the school heads on the rising indiscipline in schools:

Please make sure that you listen to the young people whenever they have a point to make.

G.M. Blair 1954 gives some generalizations and suggestions for keeping discipline:-

1. Praise and social approval are more effective in promoting good standards of conduct than are censure, blame and punishment.

2. It is unwise to punish a whole group for the misconduct for an individual or a small group.

3. Sarcasm should be used sparingly if at all children are sensitive and may become severely hurt by such procedure.
4. Teachers should never consider misconduct as a personal affront. Instead he should adopt the attitude that his interests and those of the pupil go in the same direction. He should work with pupils, not against them.

5. Discipline is difficult to maintain unless the pupils see the worth of the activities they engage in.

6. Whenever discipline episodes arise, the teacher should ask himself such questions as, what is wrong with the course of study? What is wrong with my teaching methods?

7. When a child misbehaves, he should be. Studies in an effort to determine which of his needs have been thwarted. An attempt should be made to make the child's school experiences satisfying.

8. A child may misbehave because he is physically ill or suffering from a glandular disorder.

9. Prevention of disciplinary situations is to e preferred to remedying difficulties that arise. If pupils have sufficient readiness for their work, are highly motivated, and if they are given sympathetic and understanding treatment by their teachers and peers very few problems of disciplinary nature will develop.

E. Stones also confirms that:

If a child is punished whenever he makes a mistake in a given learning Process, the effect will be to decrease his overall motivation. Should punishment be excessive, the child will eventually withdraw and cease to try.
This is natural enough since the whole problem-solving activity becomes associated with failure and a negative emotional state and the best way to avoid those is to avoid the situation. Since an individual acts in accordance to his conception of himself, the devastating effect of punishment is the lowering self-esteem and arousal of feelings of inferiority that follows its wake.

2.3.2 Use of Rewards in the Classroom

Review of literature related to use of rewards in educational setting reveals that the principle underlying the use of rewards in the classroom is that behaviour is purposeful so that the behaviours (responses) that are accompanied by selecting state of affairs are selected and learned.

Ausebel (1968:379) identified three general ways in which rewards can influence learning:

(a) By serving as incentives, rewards help set a meaningful problem by relating a specific sequence or organization of component responses to specified goal outcome.

(b) By providing significance information about the success or failure of responses, rewards give selective emphasis at critical points to desired or corrected reactions, thereby facilitating discrimination between relevant cures.

(c) By satisfying certain drives at a given time, rewards strengthen, on a more permanent basis, those drives which they satisfy at the moment.
A child who experiences success in his working, and whose efforts are encouraged, will want to go on working and will develop a positive emotional attitude towards his work.

In a survey of a considerable amount of research into the effects of praise and blame as motivators in children's learning, the Americans, Kennedy and Willcutt, found that blame was equally consistent inhibiting influence of learning.

G. Griffins, addressing the issue of positive reinforcement stresses that:

Positively motivated pupils are likely to establish a positive and powerful 'school spirit' so that even the new pupils learn the desired attitudes easily and quickly from the example of all around them.

A good spirit is not created in a day; but once attained, it is self-perpetuating to a considerable degree and will enable the head-teacher to maintain a smooth-running and efficient institution, free from the worry of continual disciplinary crisis.

However, although a lot of literature favouring the use of rewards in learning situations exist, Vernon (1974:77) warned that:

"Rewards given at school may have carry-over effects", meaning that child may develop an expectation that people outside school are keen to reward him/her for any success. If this does not happen, the child may return to the unwanted behaviour.
2.4 Review of Literature related to the roles of the head-teachers to ensure favourable school discipline

In Kenya, too many people think that discipline is the same thing as punishment. Whereas punishment is only one (and not the most important) aspect of discipline.

In the past, discipline in the classroom was often maintained by using essentially police methods. The child who misbehaved was regarded as "bad" and in need of punishment to make him "good". There was over-reliance on corporal punishments and suspension.

Some methods for deterrent of misbehaviour are applied by some head-teachers even today. A lazy or inefficient head-teacher will use the cane as the answer to any and every minor offense. In consequence, he devalues its effects and leaves himself with nothing in reserve when a really serious breach of discipline occurs. Other head-teachers result to handing out two or more weeks suspension for almost any offence thus constantly depriving the pupils of lessons which eventually leads to weakening examination results and so harm the school as a whole. G. Griffins 1994:36 stresses that:

A good school will apply a variety of punishments that are useful to the community (such as a Saturday afternoon working party to cut long grass, cleaning school pavements and so on) or are healthy to the individual (for instance, running round the athletics track a stated number of times or spending a break-time doing a physical education "drill").
Canning if necessary should usually consist of two or three strokes and should be administered by the head-teacher.

However, the needs of the child should not be ignored. Before a punishment of any kind is administered to the child, the teacher should always investigate the cause of the misconduct. Blair, G.M. 1954:403 supports this:

Children are not regarded as being-naturally bad or depraved, but as individuals that have definite needs which must always have to be met in one way or another.

Teacher should realize that there are causes behind every type of behaviour exhibited by children and that they behave in the only way it is possible for them to behave considering the hereditary characteristics they possess, the kinds of experiences they have had, and social pressures which are operating upon them at the moment.

G.M. Blair 1954 gives some generalizations and suggestions for keeping discipline:-

1. Praise and social approval are more effective in promoting good standards of conduct than are censure, blame and punishment.

2. It is unwise to punish a whole group for the misconduct for an individual or a small group.

3. Sarcasm should be used sparingly if at all children are sensitive and may become severely hurt by such procedure.
4. Teacher should never consider misconduct as a personal affront. Instead he should adopt the attitude that his interests and those of the pupil go in the same direction. He should work with pupils, not against them.

5. Discipline is difficult to maintain unless the pupils see the worth of the activities they engage in.

6. Whenever discipline episodes arise, the teacher should ask himself such questions such as, what is wrong with the course of study? What's wrong with my teaching method?

7. When a child misbehaves, he should be studied in an effort to determine which of his needs have been thwarted. An attempt should be made to make the child's school experiences satisfying.

8. A child may misbehave because he is physically ill or suffering from a glandular disorder.

9. Prevention of disciplinary situations is to be preferred to remedying difficulties that arise. If pupils have sufficient readiness for their work, are highly motivated, and if they are given sympathetic and understanding treatment by their teachers and peers very few problems of disciplinary nature will develop.

E. Stones also confirms that:

If a child is punished whenever he makes a mistake in a given learning process, the effect will be to decrease his overall motivation. Should punishment be excessive, the child will eventually withdraw and cease to try.
This is natural enough since the whole problem-solving activity becomes associated with failure and a negative emotional state and the best way to avoid those is to avoid the situation. The reverse applies in the case of positive reinforcement. A child who experiences success in his working, and whose efforts are encouraged, will want to go on working and will develop a positive emotional attitude towards his work.

In a survey of a considerable amount of research into the effects of praise and blame as motivators in children's learning, the Americans, Kennedy and Willcutt, found that blame was ineffective. They found that praise acted almost universally as a reasonably stable incentive to learning while blame was equally consistent inhibiting influence of learning.

Positively motivated pupils are likely to establish a positive and powerful 'school spirit' so that even the new pupils learn the desired attitudes easily and quickly from the example of all around them. A good spirit is not created in a day; but once attained, it is self-perpetuating to a considerable degree and will enable the head-teacher to maintain a smooth-mining and efficient institution, free from the worry of continual disciplinary crisis.

The head-teacher is therefore responsible for the improvement of teaching, evaluation of teaching and learning, parents and community, creative and curriculum development, improvement of school living, planning, organizing, implementing plans for total school improvement of educational methodology.
On the other hand, the head-teachers also face numerous problems which sometimes are external but affect the state of discipline in school. For instance, the Teachers Service Commission at times may understaff a school, which means some classes may be without teachers and the few teachers there in are overworked. This on one note may cause indiscipline among pupils who are not involved in active learning. Teachers who are overworked cannot be effective.

When pupils fail in their KCPE the head-teacher is always blamed. In the past, the problem of untrained teachers in the schools was very imminent but of late, this problem has been solved as the Ministry of Education has tried to emphasis on teacher training.

The head-teachers also face a lot of external pressure from the surrounding society so that when head-teachers try to maintain discipline in school, it is difficult. The children are sometimes incited by the society.

2.5 Summary of Literature Related to Disciplinary Problems in Schools

Review of literature related to the purpose of the present study, that is, disciplinary problems reveal that:

(a) The role of a teacher is that of simultaneously dealing with learning and the behaviours that conflict with the teaching and learning activities, which are referred to as unwanted behaviours, indiscipline or problem behaviours.
(b) In primary schools, some of these discipline problems are related to the children's level of development, children's family background and that some are teacher, school and curriculum related.

(c) Methods of dealing with pupil's indiscipline include preventive measures, behaviour modification approaches and punitive methods.

(d) Educators hold varied views (opinions) about the use of punishments and rewards as methods of dealing with disciplinary problems.

(e) Head-teachers are accountable for school indiscipline.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Study Methodology

This study is a simple survey research. Therefore it does not seek variable relationships, but aims at finding out in a survey the types of discipline problems that exist in primary schools, their causes, how teachers are able to solve, control or cope up with these problems and the role of the Head Teachers in dealing with discipline matters.

3.1 Study Sample

The study was carried out in South Imenti of Meru Central District. The researcher used ten (10) schools and standard four (4), five (5), six (6) and seven (7) respectively.

The researcher used all the Head Teachers from the ten schools and one (1) teacher for each of the above-mentioned standards hence making a total of fifty (50) respondents from the ten schools. Class teachers were preferably used as the researcher assumed that these teachers could be more familiar with the pupil's behaviour in the classrooms than the other teachers. In case the classes were double streamed or more, the class teachers for each target class were randomly selected by use of cards and numbers.
3.2 Study Instruments and data collection

3.2.1 Instrumentation

The researcher used questionnaire technique to collect the data. Two questionnaires were therefore developed.

The Head Teachers questionnaire were in two parts

(A) Requiring Head Teachers to provide general and relevant information about the school.

(B) Specific information regarding his roles in matters of school discipline.

Teachers' questionnaire was in four (4) parts as follows:

Part I requiring teachers to indicate a tick (✓) on a checklist, the behaviour problems they encounter and the frequency of occurrence within a given period of time.

Part II requiring the teachers to indicate the possible causes of problem behaviour among pupils in school.

Part III requiring teachers to select from a given list the methods they use most or they never use in dealing with problem behaviour.

Part IV requiring teachers to indicate the constraints they experience in their attempts to maintain discipline in the school.
3.2.2 Pilot Testing

Before collecting the actual data, the researcher carried out pilot testing using a single school, which was not among the ten schools from which the actual data was collected. This was to check whether the items were clear and relevant and that the time allocated was adequate.

3.2.3 Collection of data

The researcher sought an introduction letter from the Director of School of Continuing Education (S.C.E). She then visited the schools personally and introduced herself to the Head Teachers who in turn introduced her to the respective class teachers. The questionnaires were then administered to the respondents and were collected after three weeks. This period of time was sufficient for the class teachers to observe some behaviour problems among the pupils inside and outside the classroom.

3.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were suitable for the data analysis of this study. Tables, frequency distribution and percentages were used in the data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND OBSERVATION

4.0 Introduction

In this study, 10 primary schools in South Imenti of Meru Central District was used. The subjects of the study were 10 Head Teachers and 40 teachers who were class teachers or standard 4, 5, 6 and 7 thus making a total of 50 respondent. In case the target standard had more than one stream, the teacher was randomly selected by use of card number. A 100% return rate for the questionnaire was achieved and all had usable data.

The responses of teachers to the questionnaire items were analysed to determine.

(i) the types of discipline problems faced by primary school teachers;

(ii) the possible causes of indiscipline;

(iii) methods used by teachers in dealing with indiscipline in school, punishments commonly used and the rewards used to encourage and sustain desirable behaviour;

(iv) constraints experienced by teachers in their attempts to maintain discipline in school.

The responses of the Head Teacher were on the other hand, used to determine the roles played by the Head Teachers to assist the teachers attain and maintain desirable behaviour for effective teaching and learning.
4.1 Types of Classroom Discipline Problems

The first objective of this study was to investigate the types of classroom discipline problems faced by primary school teachers.

The respondents were asked to indicate on the checklist, discipline problems and the frequency of occurrence within a given period of three weeks. The findings were as shown on the table below.

Table IV.1 Showing Occurrence of Behaviour Problem Observed by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour Problem</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No. of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Lateness</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Absenteeism (Truancy)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Disobedience (e.g. laziness, inattentive, low concentration span (lack of interest to learn))</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Disrespect to the authority</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Untidiness and dirty pupils</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Aggression e.g. bullying, fighting, destroying school property</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Theft</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) Smoking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) Beer taking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Teachers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table, it is obvious that lateness and absenteeism are the most common problems in all the classes. All the 40 respondents (100%) perceived the two problems to be the most serious discipline problems while 10% of the respondents considered beer-taking to be the least common problem. The number of pupils who showed disobedience, according to the table, is higher than for any other behaviour problem that was observed and this could explain why lateness and absenteeism are common problems among the pupils. The number of pupils who were found to take beer is negligible.

4.2 Causes of Classroom Discipline Problem

The second objective of this study was to investigate what was perceived as causes of classroom indiscipline.

In part A of the Head Teachers' questionnaire number 13 (see Appendix C), the respondents were asked to rank a given set of possible causes of classroom misbehaviour.

In part II of the teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix D), the respondents were asked to indicate by a tick (✔), the causes of classroom problem behaviour, from a given list.

Table IV.2 shows the extent to which the problems were perceived by teachers to be causes of misbehaviour while Table IV.3 shows some 5 administrative causes ranked in
order in which Head Teachers perceived to be causes of classroom misbehaviour in their schools.

**Table IV.2 showing teachers perception of causes of classroom indiscipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Classroom Indiscipline</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Too much work given to pupils</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Examination pressure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conflict between classroom rules and home training</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Peer group influence</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family background of pupils in classroom</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Too many pupils in classroom</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Influence from surrounding society</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Influence from mass media e.g. radio, T.V., newspapers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teacher lateness for class or leaving class before lesson is over</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Poor teaching methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teacher being too harsh, hates pupils and fails to Listen to their problems or opinion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the above table, 95% of the respondents indicated that influence from the surrounding society is the probable cause of misbehaviour among the pupils. This is a
possible explanation of the fact that all respondents (100%) ranked lateness and absenteeism (see table IV.1) as the most serious discipline problem they faced in their classrooms. This could mean that the surrounding society incites the pupils against the school management, the Head Teacher and the teachers as well.

Only 15% perceived examination pressure could be a cause and another 15% of the respondents indicated teachers being harsh to pupils, as a cause of misbehaviour.

4.3

4.3.1 Table IV.3 Showing Head-teachers' Relative Ranking of Causes of indiscipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes as Perceived by Head Teacher</th>
<th>Relative ranking of cause of indiscipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Parents Interference</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overcrowding</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shortage of teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Small school compound</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Too many untrained teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table IV.3, it can be observed that the Head Teachers ranked parent's interference as the most serious cause of the state of indiscipline in schools. This could
be due to parents attitudes towards the school, the Head Teachers, teachers and the way they react to the school's disciplinary procedures, school rules and regulations which eventually affect pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

Shortage of teachers was ranked as the second serious problem and this fact could explain why overcrowding in the classroom was ranked the third serious cause of indiscipline in the classroom.

Too many untrained teachers was ranked as last cause of indiscipline by most Head Teachers. This means there are very few untrained teachers (if any). This is because the Ministry of Education had made efforts to encourage untrained teachers to attend Teacher Training Colleges (in-service courses).

A comparative look at table IV.2 and table IV.3 reveals that while majority of the head teachers perceived parents' interference to be the most serious cause of indiscipline, 95% considered influence of the society to be the most serious cause of indiscipline. This fact emanates from outside the school, which eventually affects classroom teaching and learning.

4.3.2 **Head teachers Perception of the state of discipline in school**

In part B of the Head teachers' questionnaire, question 9 (see appendix C), the respondents were asked to mark the position of each standard in terms of discipline on a scale. The results were as shown on the table below:
Table IV. Showing headteachers perception of the state of discipline in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in terms of discipline</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total No. of Head-teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: 1 - very notorious        2 - notorious        3 - neutral
4 - well behaved             5 - very well behaved

4.4 Methods Teachers use in Dealing with classroom indiscipline

The third objective of this study was to find out what methods teachers use in dealing with classroom indiscipline.
In part III of the teachers questionnaire the respondents were asked to circle A for the methods they use and N for the ones they do not use from the checklist provided.

**Table IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Giving rewards in form of prizes, tokens, praise to perform</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Giving rewards to those pupils who show improvement in discipline</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Canning pupils who misbehave</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Severe punishment for misbehaving</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ensuring that every misbehaviour is followed by punishment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ignoring misbehaving pupils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Giving pupils a list of school rules</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Involving all pupils in the lesson</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Giving equal attention to both the bright and poor pupils</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Allowing pupils to choose own prefects</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table IV.5, 95% of the respondents advocate for pupils' involvement in the lesson as the best method to curb misbehaviour in the classroom.

A few teachers 97.5% labeled ignoring individual misbehaviour as a rarely used method in dealing with classroom behaviour. For extreme cases like chronic
absenteeism, stealing, destroying school property, the table shows that the individual pupil's parents are called upon to hear the case before any further action can be taken.

95.2% also agreed that they give pupils rewards in form of prizes, tokens, and praise to perform. This means the teachers are aware of the learning theories, which are essential for effective teaching and learning.

4.4.1 Types of punishment used by teachers in dealing with misbehaviour

In the teachers questionnaire part III B were provided with a list of common Punishments and asked to arrange them in order of frequency in which they use them, and indicate (F) for frequency used, (0) for occasionally used and (N) for never used.

Table IV.6 Shows types of common punishments and how often they are used by teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental punishment (e.g. Criticizing in class)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical punishment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canning pupils</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal reprimand</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: F - Frequently       O - Occasionally       N - Never
The above table shows that verbal reprimand is frequently used by most teachers whereas mental punishment is rarely used as a punishment for misbehaviour. The table also indicated that canning pupils is very common among teachers. These practices can be explained by the fact that it is an easy means of administering the punishment as compared to other types of punishment e.g. physical punishment, suspension waste a lot of time for the pupils.

4.4.2 Types of misbehaviour and punishment which head-teachers allow teachers to deal with

The respondents were required to give a list of types of misbehaviour and punishments which they allow their teachers to deal with in discipline cases.
Table IV.7 shows a list of misbehaviour which head-teachers allow teachers to deal with and some punishments they use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misbehavior</th>
<th>Punishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manual Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lateness</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Absenteeism (Truancy)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Speaking unofficial language</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vernacular)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stealing</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disobedience to authority/rudeness</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Insults and abuses</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cheating</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nose making in class</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Destroying school property</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above it is evident that giving pupils manual work e.g. digging in school shamba, cutting grass in the compound, washing classrooms, is the most common punishment that is allowed by the head-teacher for teachers to use in schools, head-teacher for teachers to use in schools. Head-teachers seem to be aware that canning...
pupils is not allowed by the Ministry of Education. It is also clear that fining to replace stolen or destroyed school property by pupils is the mode of punishment in most schools.

4.4.3 **Rewards used by teachers for pupils who show improvement in behaviour**

The respondents were asked to indicate the rewards which they use for pupils who show improvement in behaviour. The results were as shown on the following table.

**Table IV.8 Showing rewards and how frequently they are used by teachers in the classroom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Verbal reward e.g. praise</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Incentives e.g. writing materials</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promotion to better ranks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clapping by other pupils</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Writing a recommendation on pupils report books</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encouragement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at table IV.8, it is clear that 75% of the respondents are in favour of verbal reward e.g. praising the pupils in the classroom.
4.5 Constraints experienced by teachers in their attempts to maintain discipline in the school

In part IV.1 of teachers' questionnaire, the respondents were asked to tick (✔) Showing the state of discipline in their schools.

Table IV.9 showing teachers' opinion about the state of discipline in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, 80% of the respondents agree that the state of discipline is satisfactory in their schools while 20% feel it is unsatisfactory. This means that the state of discipline in the primary schools is fair and this might have been as a result of teacher's attitude towards the use of punishments and rewards. It seems that most teachers are aware of child psychology and this is clearly shown on-table IV.6 which shows that teachers' use of mental torture is very minimal and table IV.8 also shows that 75% of the teachers use verbal reward which means they are also aware of the learning theories.
Teachers were asked to indicate where they experience most of discipline problems

Table IV.10 showing the place where teacher experience discipline problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) In class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Outside class</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table 75% of the respondents indicated that they experience most discipline problems outside the classroom and 25% experience them in class. It is obvious that they are minimal in class because most of the time the pupils are busy with the lesson while in class and so long as the teacher has proper classroom control, discipline problems will be minimal. However, when pupils are outside the classroom they are free from teacher's presence and are likely to misbehave.

This condition can also be explained by the results indicated on table IV.2 which shows that influence from surrounding society is a major cause of misbehaviour among pupils.

All the respondents also agreed that the administration helps them in solving discipline problems by counselling the pupils and calling upon their parents in extreme cases of indiscipline, such as chronic absenteeism.
Theft and destruction of school property

However most teachers agreed that they clashed with parents once in a while in cases where the parents tend to side or support the pupils against the teachers in matters of discipline. Other parents pull out of the case leaving the head-teacher and the teacher to deal with the case.

Most respondents felt that the relationship between the office of the Head Teacher and the teacher in matters of discipline is satisfactory.

Roles played by most Head Teachers to Ensure Good Classroom Discipline in their Schools

The respondents were given a list of possible roles played by a Head Teacher and were asked to circle M for the ones practiced most and N for those never practiced.
Table IV.11 showing roles, which are practiced, and those, which are never practiced by head-teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Supporting teachers in all discipline matters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Checking teachers lesson notes, record of work and schemes of work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Checking class register and dealing with absentees</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reminding pupils during parade of all the school rules and regulations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Appointing teacher or a group of teachers to be incharge of guidance counselling in school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Avoiding too many pupils in-class</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Discouraging teachers from idle talk in the staffroom</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Purchasing and maintaining teaching materials</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Appoint prefects and class in every class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Expelling misbehaving pupils from class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Expelling misbehaving punctuality from school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sitting at the back of the class as a teacher is teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Asking parents to cooperate in cases of pupils misbehaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Encouraging teachers to discuss the problems they face in school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Holding frequent staff meetings to discuss indiscipline and disciplinary procedures in school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Holding frequent meetings with prefects and class monitors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Encouraging teachers to visit teachers' advisory centres, or visit other schools to learn from colleagues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table all the 10 respondents (100%) seem to place much emphasis on the improvement of curriculum and instruction. This is evident on the table that all of them indicated that they check teachers' lesson notes, scheme of work and record of work; and also purchasing and maintaining teaching materials.

The table also shows that all the Head Teacher support the teachers in disciplinary matters and this is quite in agreement with teachers views described in teachers' questionnaire part IV.3, 4, and 5 that the relationship between head-teachers office and the teachers is satisfactory and that the administration supports them in disciplinary matters.

On the other hand no respondent seem to be in favour of sitting at the back of the class as the teacher teaches or expelling pupils out of school. This means head-teachers have confidence with their staff so that they do not see the need to observe them in class. They may also be considering expelling pupils out of class as a waste of time and they prefer such cases as lateness to be dealt with by the teacher.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology discourages expulsion of primary school children from school unless under special indiscipline cases in which case the Head Teacher has to seek authority to expel from a higher authority in the Ministry. This explains the observation that no respondent indicated that they expel misbehaving pupils out of school. This observation can also be interpreted to imply that the Head-teachers feel that primary school children, being so young, they (Head-teachers) would be
causing more damage to expel a misbehaving pupil from school than the misbehaviour they were guarding against would cause.
5.1 SUMMARY

The primary concern of this study was to investigate disciplinary problems faced by primary school teachers. For the purpose of addressing this problem, the researcher investigated:

a) Types of classroom discipline problems
b) Causes of classroom discipline problems
c) Methods used by teachers in dealing with classroom unwanted behaviour and types of punishments and rewards used.
d) Constraints faced by teachers in their attempts to deal with discipline problems.
e) The role of the Head Teacher in matters of school discipline.

Ten schools within the Division were randomly selected. 10 head-teachers and 40 teachers - 4 from each school, who were class teachers of standard 4, 5, 6 and 7 were selected, making a total of 50 respondents.

Questionnaire of 2 types, one for head-teachers and the other for teachers were administered and were returned with usable data.
Literature related to the subject area was reviewed under each of the six operational areas listed above.

Chapter 3 dealt with the design and methodology of the study which showed the sample, instrument and mode of administration of the questionnaire for collection of data.

Analysis of data was presented in Chapter 4.

The following is a summary of the findings:

1. All teachers (100%) expressed that pupils' absenteeism and lateness are very common problems in the school as observed on table IV.1. It is also clear that most pupils are disobedient, they are either lazy and have very short concentration span. This fact can explain why chronic absenteeism and lateness are common among the pupils.

2. Head Teachers and teachers also perceive parents interference (Table IV.3) and influence from surrounding society (Table IV.2) as the major causes of misbehaviour among pupils. It was also realised that teachers experience most pupil misbehaviour outside the classrooms and a few within the classroom.

3. The Head Teachers perceived that the state of discipline in their schools was satisfactory. Majority of the head-teachers indicated that most standards are neutral and only a few are notorious (Table IV.4). However, the same table also shows that as pupils move up to the upper standards, there is a tendency to
misbehave as standard 7 is labelled to be the most notorious class accordingly to
the Head Teachers. In Standard 8, cases of indiscipline are minimal because they
tend to be more cautious in the academics as they prepare for national
examination.

4. It is noted that 95% of the respondents advocated for active pupil participation in
the lesson as the best method to curb pupils' indiscipline in the classroom. 92.5%
advocate for giving rewards in form of prizes, tokens and praise to perform, and
only 7.5% felt ignoring pupils misbehaviour can be used to solve indiscipline
(Table IV.5).

5. It was also observed (Table IV.6) that verbal reprimand is frequently used and
mental punishment is rarely used as punishment by teachers for pupils
misbehaviour. At the same time, Head Teachers, (Table IV.7) indicated that
manual work, such as, digging in school shamba, washing classrooms, cutting
grass in the field is a common punishment which they allow teachers to use
whereas canning pupils is rarely used (Table IV.8).

6. According to Table IV.9, 80% of the teachers considered the state of discipline in
their schools satisfactory. They also expressed that most of the discipline
problems are encountered outside the classroom whereas in the classroom they
are minimal.
They also expressed that the administration is always willing to assist and support them in discipline cases e.g. calling upon parents in extreme cases such as chronic absenteeism, theft.

However, most teachers expressed that once in a while teachers clash with parents especially in cases where the parents tend to support the misbehaviour of their children. Other parents pull out leaving the case between the pupil and the Head Teacher and teacher.

7. The head-teachers seem to be very particular on the improvement of curriculum and classroom instruction. (Table IV:11). 100% of the respondents expressed that they do check teachers' lesson notes, schemes of work, record of work and also purchasing and maintaining teaching and learning materials.

They also try to create good working conditions by supporting teachers in matters of discipline and discouraging idle talk in staffroom.

On the other hand all the head teachers felt that it is wrong to expel a misbehaving pupil from school as it is also against the code of regulation of the Ministry of Education. They also felt that sitting at the back of the class as the teacher teachers is wrong as this would mean the head teacher has no confidence on the teacher.

5. Conclusion

Based on the summary presented in above paragraphs, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:-
1. Teachers face numerous pupil problem behaviours in the classroom and in school at large.

2. Pupils are more prone to behaviour problems associated with academic work, which directly affect their performance. These behaviour problems such as lateness, absenteeism, disobedience, are directly associated with learning.

On the other hand, pupils are less prone to behaviour problems associated to their moral lives e.g. theft, smoking and beer taking.

3. Teachers have a negative attitude towards the use of punishments and a positive attitude towards use of rewards in classroom as methods of dealing with indiscipline.

4. Primary school head teachers are aware of and understand their role in improving classroom discipline particularly in areas related to school curriculum and classroom instruction, and improving the working climate in the school.

5. **Recommendations**

On the basis of the above drawn conclusions, the researcher recommends that:-

1. very interesting subjects should be taught during the first lessons in the morning to curb the problem of lateness.
2. There is a need to educate the public on matters pertaining importance of school and classroom discipline as it relates to the education of the children. This will reduce influence by parents and surrounding society. This can be done in barazas, and other local meetings.

3. The Head teachers should be trained on managerial skills emphasis being on public relations, to handle problems of parent interference in schools, without causing friction between schools and parents. This can be done during in-service courses, seminars, conferences and even during pre-service training of teachers. At the same time, much emphasis should be made on child psychology, theories of learning and classroom management techniques.

5.4 **Suggestion for further research**

1. A more detailed study similar to this one covering larger population could be done to enable generalisation.

2. There is a need to investigate the extent to which parents' interference affects school discipline.

3. Further research should be done to which punishments used by teachers in classroom are more effective in dealing with school indiscipline.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amadalo, M. Musasa
A Survey of the Strategies used by Primary School Head-teachers in Handling Problems in Hamisi Division of Kakamega District.
Unpublished Thesis: M.ED Kenyatta University

Blairs, E.B.

Calderhead, J.

George, U.S. and Fritz Redl.

Gragey, W.T.

Hymes, J.L. Jr.
Discipline. Edited by Roth Cunningham; Bureau of Publications Teachers College, Columbia University.

Malcolm, S.

Maundu, J.A.
Osinghembe, T.A.

School Discipline and Academic Standard

Page, E.B.

Reading for Education Psychology. Harcourt Prace and World Inc. New Your, 1964

Peter Mortimore et. al


Rwamba Esther Ireri,


Stones, E.

An Introduction to Educational Psychology.

Stones, J. G.

APPENDIX A
RESEARCH BUDGET

1. PROPOSAL EXPENDITURE

(a) Typing about 40 pages @ 25/= per page x 3 copies Kshs. 3,000.00
(b) Photo copying 40 pages @ 2/50 per page x copies Kshs. 300.00
(c) Stationery Kshs. 390.00
(d) Subsistent Kshs. 370.00
(e) Binding 3 copies @ 180/= each Kshs. 540.00

Total Kshs. 4,890.00

2. MAIN RESEARCH AND REPORT

(a) Typing about 80 pages @ 20/= x Kshs. 1,600.00
(b) Photocopying about 80 pages @ 2/50 x 3copies Kshs. 600.00
(c) Typing about pages of questionnaire @ 20/= pare page Kshs. 220.00
(d) Photocopying about pages questionnaire @ 2/50 per page X 3 copies Kshs. 249.00
(e) Transport for pilot-testing Kshs. 40.00
(f) Transport to administer and collect questionnaire to 10 schools Kshs. 400.00
(g) Reporting to supervisor 3 trips at Kshs.600/+ per trip Kshs. 1800.00
(h) Binding 3 copies for research project @ 200/= per copy Kshs. 600.00

3. **STATIONERY**

(a) 1 ream fulscap Kshs. 250.00
(b) Miscellaneous Kshs. 250.00

Total Kshs.6000.00
### APPENDIX B

**SCHEDULE OF STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January to February, 2000</td>
<td>Identification of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March to April, 2000</td>
<td>Construction of tools and writing the proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2000</td>
<td>Pilot testing and rewriting final tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June to July, 2000</td>
<td>Collecting data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July to August, 2000</td>
<td>Data analysis and report writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2000</td>
<td>Submitting of final report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
HEAD TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of School __________________________________________

2. Administrative Zone ______________________________________

3. Your experience as a teacher _____________________________ years

4. Your experience as a head-teacher _________________________ years

5. School staff establishment _____________________________ teachers.

6. Teachers professional qualification P1____, P2________, P3_______
   S1________, UT_______________

7. Number of pupils in your school ___________________________

8. Do you consider your school to be
   Overstaffed [ ]
9. On the scale provided, circle the position of each standard (class) in your school.

Std 1  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Std 2  |  |  |  |  |  |
Std 3  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Std 4  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Std 5  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Std 6  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Std 7  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Key:
1 - Very well behaved  
2 - Well behaved  
3 - neutral  
4 - notorious  
5 - Very notorious

State the reasons for:

(i) The most notorious class

10. Give possible reasons for the state of indiscipline in the

(a) Most notorious std.
(b) Well behaved std

11. Give a list of types of misbehaviour and punishment you:

(a) Allow your teachers to use, with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misbehaviour</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List type of misbehaviour which you do not allow your teachers to deal with.
Do not allow your teachers to use in class in dealing with pupils' misbehaviour.

Please explain:

---

12. Rank the following possible causes of classroom misbehaviour, among pupils, in the order of their seriousness, starting with number one as the most serious.

(a) Shortage of teachers

(b) Too many untrained teachers

(c) Parents interference
(d) Over crowding in classrooms

(e) Small school compound

13. Explain how the 2 most serious causes affects classroom behaviour.

**HEAD-TEACHERS ROLE IN ENSURING GOOD SCHOOL DISCIPLINE**

Below is a list of possible roles played by a head-teacher in a school in order to ensure good discipline circle M for the ones you practice most and N for the ones you never practice.

1. Supporting teachers in all the disciplinary matters.  
   M  
   N

2. Checking teachers' lesson notes, records of work and schemes of work.  
   M  
   N

3. Checking class registers and dealing with absentees.  
   M  
   N

4. Reminding pupils during parade of all the school rules and regulations.  
   M  
   N

5. Appointing teacher or group of teachers to be in charge of guidance and counselling in the school.  
   M  
   N

6. Avoiding too many pupils in a class.  
   M  
   N

7. Discouraging teachers from idle talk in the staffroom.  
   M  
   N

8. Purchasing and maintaining teaching materials.  
   M  
   N

9. Appoint prefects and class monitors in every class.  
   M  
   N

10. Expelling misbehaving punctuality in class.  
    M  
    N
11. Expelling misbehaving pupils from school.

12. Sitting at the back of the class as a teaching is teaching.

13. Asking parents to cooperate in cases of pupil's indiscipline.

14. Encouraging teachers to discuss the problems they face while in school.

15. Holding frequent staff meetings to discuss indiscipline and disciplinary procedures in school.

16. Holding frequent meetings with prefects and class monitors.

17. Encouraging teachers to visit teachers' advisory centres, or visit Other schools and learn from colleagues.

18. Suggest any other ways in which you assist your teachers to maintain good discipline in the school.

19. Do you have any general comments regarding classroom discipline in your schools?

Thank you for your cooperation.
APPENDIX D
THE TEACHER’S QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of school _____________________________________________________________

Class(es) you teach _______________________________________________________

Class Master/Mistress of class _______________________________________________

This questionnaire is divided into four parts. Your name is not required in this question.
questionnaire. Read the instructions given at the beginning of each part before you begin answering the question.

Discipline problems face all teachers and they exist in any normal school. So feel free and answer questions honestly.

Please tick or fill in appropriately.

PART I

TYPES OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

1. Below is a list of some of the possible behaviour problems (indiscipline) in the school. You may have encountered some, or all of them in your own classroom or in the school. Indicated a tick (✓) the ones you will encounter and the frequency of occurrence within the period provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misbehaviour</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Lateness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Cheating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Disobedience e.g. laziness, inattentive, low concentration span (lack of interest to learn.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Disrespect for the teacher, classroom monitor, or school authorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Untidiness and dirty pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Aggression e.g. fighting, bullying, destroying classroom property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Theft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) Smoking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) Absenteeism (Truancy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x) Beer taking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. From the above list, name the three most common behaviour problems in your school.

i) 

ii) 

iii) 

PART II

CAUSES OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Here is a list of probable causes of pupil indiscipline. Based on your experience as a teacher, indicate by a tick (✓) the ones you consider to be the causes of indiscipline.

1. Too much given to pupils [ ]
2. Examination pressure [ ]
3. Conflict between classroom rules and home training [ ]
4. Peer group influence (pupil-pupil influence) [ ]
5. Family background or pupils [ ]
6. Too many pupils in the classroom [ ]
7. Influence from the surrounding society [ ]
8. Influence from mass media e.g. radio, T.V., newspapers [ ]
9. Teacher's lateness for class or leaving the class before the lesson is over [ ]
10. Poor teaching methodology [ ]

11. Teacher being harsh, hates pupils and fails to listen to pupils problems or opinions. [ ]

11. Any other especially suited for your school,

Please specify

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

PART III

TEACHER'S METHODS OF DEALING WITH INDISCIPLINE

As a teacher gains more experience in teaching, he/she normally develops his/her own methods of dealing with pupil indiscipline. This could be punitive, preventive or behaviour modification techniques.

(a) Below is a list of possible methods most teachers use.

Circle A if you agree and that you use any one of them and N for those you do not use.
1. Giving rewards in form of prizes, tokens, praise to perform

Given rewards to those pupils who show improvement in discipline

3. Sever punishment for misbehaving pupils to serve as a deterrent to others

4. Caning pupils who misbehave in class

5. Ensuring that every misbehaviour is followed by punishment

6. Ignoring pupils who misbehave

7. Giving pupils a list of school rules

8. Involving all pupils in the lesson activity

9. Giving equal attention to both the bright and poor pupils in class

10. Allowing pupil to chose their own prefect

11. Any other methods you use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Punishment is a very common method of dealing with indiscipline. Below is list of common punishments a teacher can use in indiscipline case. Please arrange them in
order of frequency in which you use them. Indicate with (F) for frequency used, (O) for occasionally used and (N) for never used.

1. Mental punishment (criticising in front of class)
2. Physical punishment
3. Caning pupils
4. Suspension from class
5. Verbal reprimand

1 (c) Which rewards do you use for those children who show improvement in behaviour?

PART IV

CONSTRANTS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL

Tick the Most Appropriate: or Fill in blank spaces

1. Is the state of discipline in your school
   (a) Satisfactory
   (b) Unsatisfactory

2. Where do you experience most of the indiscipline problems in your school?
   (a) in class
3. When you have a serious discipline problems with a pupil, does the school administration

(a) help you to solve it

(b) ignore your appeal for help

4. If the administration helps you to solve the problem, then mention the ways they help

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________