

Management of Students' Discipline and School Based Violence in Government Aided Secondary Schools in Bulambuli District, Uganda

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Abstract

The study sought to examine the influence of management of students' discipline on school-based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District, Uganda. Two research objectives were; to analyze the influence of implementing guidance and counseling on school-based violence and to assess the influence of students' involvement in discipline management on school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District. The population of the study was 184 Head teachers and teachers with a sample size of 164 respondents. Sampling techniques used were simple random sampling and census inquiry for teachers and head teachers respectively. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and a mixed method paradigm where both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. The Research instruments used were; questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 20 to generate frequency distribution tables, percentage and the Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the influence on variables. The major findings of the study were that there is a significant influence of Guidance and Counseling on School Based Violence in Government Aided Secondary Schools in Bulambuli District. There was also a significant influence found of students' involvement in discipline management on school-based violence. It was concluded that guidance and counseling and students' involvement in discipline management significantly influences school-based violence in Government Aided secondary schools in Bulambuli district. It was recommended that guidance and counselling services be provided in school and students be given opportunity to participate in discipline management.

Keywords: Discipline, Guidance and counselling, Management, Students involvement, Violence,

Introduction

Many schools are facing school based violence in Developed countries; a case of United Kingdom, the Behavior Survey (2010) states that 80% of school teachers felt their ability to teach effectively was impaired by students' violence tendencies (Massey, 2011). On a global level, 13% of teachers' time is, on average spent maintaining order. The magnitude of school

based violence shows that a lot is called for, in secondary schools and in colleges at a global level to call off such school based violence behavior tendencies among students.

Numerous African schools have experienced issues with students based violence. Vindi (2010) noted a case in a secondary school in Senegal that went on strike over claims of theft of school funds. Ngarage (2015) described how disobedience and violence disrupted Botswana's regular school schedule among which included school property destruction, bullying, substance abuse, absenteeism and failure to do school work and uncontrolled use of communication devices by students. A variety of ways that students behaviour e can be used to identify violence related issues in schools (Ministry of Education and Sports report from Uganda (2015). This could involve persistently making fun of fellow students, engaging in queer behavior like throat clearing on purpose, and writing derogatory things on the walls and chalkboards.

In Uganda, fighting, strikes, disobedience, drug usage and fire outbreaks, among other ills, bullying, teasing, and experimenting sexual relations is observed to be part of the violent behaviors among students. For a school to be effectively run, the head teacher must adopt proper management style to maintain a violence free school environment.

In Nigeria, Lukman and Hamadi (2014), found out the typical examples of disciplinary problems experienced in Nigerian secondary schools as truancy, absenteeism, fighting and stealing and drug addiction, among others. This study asserts that discipline is not necessarily punishment but punishment is one of the disciplinary measures. In Kenya, Muchiri (1998) identified some forms of indiscipline commonly experienced in schools as absenteeism, persistent or non-completion of work, fighting in the school compound, deviance of school rules, refusal to carry out punishment, smoking, late coming, and drug abuse.

The management of students' discipline and school based violence is largely defined by: school rules and regulations, counseling and guidance, and students' involvement in managing discipline. Numerous disciplinary issues exist in schools. However according to Nakabugo (2018), it is imperative to take a keen observation to examine the management of students' discipline in terms of school rules and regulations, counseling and guidance and students' involvement in discipline management and its immediate effect on school based violence in secondary schools. Discipline is a Latin word "meaning instruction and training." Discipline is the practice of training someone to behave in accordance with rules or a code of conduct so they can adopt desirable future behavior. Discipline is not punishment as often misconceived since punishment focuses on inflicting pain for a past behavior. (Li, 2023).

Statement of the problem

In Bulambuli District secondary schools, there was a shortfall in assurance of safety and violence free school environments. In many of the secondary schools, violence happen in different forms such as students - students fights, students – teachers' fights, students – management fights or strikes to mention but a few. However, Violence has become a common occurrence in secondary schools of Bulambuli district, evidenced in fights inform of strikes, fights among students and teachers among other forms of violence. (Bulambuli District Education Department Report, 2022).

Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To examine the relationship between implementing school rules and regulations, and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?
2. To examine the relationship between students' involvement in discipline management and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?

Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses;

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant relationship between implementation of school rules and regulations and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?

H₀₂ There is no statistically significant influence relationship between students' involvement in discipline management and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?

Literature Review

Kiggudu (2019), conducted a study on how the management of school rules influences student' academic performance in selected private secondary schools of Busiro County in Wakiso District, Uganda. The study employed survey research design particularly cross sectional survey design. Questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection in addition to interview guide and document review. Four private secondary schools were randomly selected in Busiro County, Wakiso District in which the study was conducted. The major findings of the study were that; all schools have written rules and regulations however some rules and regulations require modifications and others lack consistence in their implementation, which raises students' anger leading to violence, strikes and aggression. The researcher found that despite rules and regulations specifying what school members should do and what they should not do, it is important that policy streamlining is done to ensure violence free environment in schools. The study by Kiggudu (2019), gave concise elaboration about management of rules and how they influence students' academic performance however, their study was limited to Busiro County, and school based violence as a dependent variable not given attention which this current study seeks to address.

Wanja (2010), conducted a study on challenges principals face in enhancing student discipline in secondary schools in Tigania District, Kenya. Her findings revealed that the challenges secondary school heads face when enforcing rules and regulations include political interference, parents interference, restriction by law, lack of support by superiors, inappropriate knowledge on disciplinary actions and drug abuse by students. This implies that effective methods of enforcing rules and regulations in schools are varied. Wanji's study gave attention to the challenges secondary schools face, however there was no relation to school based violence leaving a conceptual gap in the study.

Yaghambe and Tshabangu, (2013), research study on aspect of policy and rights of students in Tanzania assert that school Head teachers possess a crucial role in ensuring a safe environment

for students and also correcting misbehavior. In the study, they recommended various methods to solve discipline problems to include; involving the participation of students in discipline matters, formulation of the curriculum which equips learners with desired moral values and lessons that instill self – discipline in students; teaching students on social work activities that focus on promoting harmony between community and students.

Kiprop (2011) in his study identified that whenever there is failure by the administration to involve students in matters that affects schools, inclusive of discipline, situations that call for unrest continue to take lead. It is however noted that in his study, approaches for data collections were not revealed which hence attracts attention on how data was collected making it a conceptual and contextual gap which this current study seeks to investigate.

Regionally, Mbonyonga (2018) examined the role of student representative councils in curbing students' riots in secondary schools in Zambia and found that students' councils were forums through which students through representatives were involved in decision making about school routine and activities. This helped to create a sense of ownership towards school routines and therefore had a positive effect on management of students' discipline. On their par, Lumanija and Mkulu (2020) investigated the contribution of students' council in management of students discipline in public secondary schools in Tanzania and showed the council was highly involved in enforcing school rules but less involved in decision making on disciplinary matters and punishing misbehaving students. Locally, Kyalo (2017) examined the influence of student councils' involvement in school governance on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub County and revealed that the councils played a significant role in enforcing the implementation of school rules and regulations. It is therefore emerging that student involvement in decision making in public secondary schools is debatable, with much attention by researchers being directed at student participation in Universities. This is irrespective of the fact that their involvement is critical in managing misbehavior among the adolescents in secondary schools.

A study by Owuor et al.(2022) on students' involvement in decision making and discipline management in public secondary schools in Kenya, Findings showed that students' discipline incidents were moderate ($M=4.14$; $SD=0.95$), while involvement of students in decision-making ($B=.236$; $p=.000$) had a significant influence on students' discipline. It is concluded that well-implemented involvement of students in decision-making can lead to a significant improvement in students' discipline among public secondary schools.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because it described and provides contextual analysis of variables under study and on matters relating to similar situations in other organizations (Sekaran, 2003). A mixed method paradigm for data collection where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used as supported by Amin (2005) who emphasized it when investigating opinions of people. The qualitative approach helped in understanding the phenomena and gathering further theories for empirical testing (Sekaran, 2003). The qualitative data was used for purposes of triangulation in order to obtain a more comprehensive view about the problem and draw conclusions. The study population comprised of six Government Aided Secondary schools out of 11 Government schools in

Bulambuli District. The six selected schools were picked based on Bulambuli District education department reports of schools that are often times reported to be involved in school based violence in the District. Therefore the target population comprised of 178 Classroom teachers and six head teachers of Government Aided secondary schools and the accessible population of the study from which the sample was selected was 164 respondents. Head teachers were considered because they participate in school policy formulation processes, decision making, and supervising learners' discipline and classroom teachers were considered because they participate in the implementation of the school decisions and policies governing the management of learners' discipline, Six Head teachers and 158 class room teachers were selected thus the total sample size of the study was 164 respondents. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. Instruments used were structured questionnaire and interview guide.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instrument was established by computing the content validity index of the instrument (CVI) after scrutiny by some research experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined by pre-testing the instruments to determine its internal consistency. Cronbach alpha formula was used to determine the reliability coefficient which yielded 82.73. Indicating that the instrument is reliable,

Data Analysis and Results

In this section, data will be presented in tables.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	94	59.0
Female	66	41.0
Total	160	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

Hypothesis one: There is no statistically significant relationship between implementing school rules and regulations and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?

Table 2

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation between implementing school rules and regulations and School-Based Violence in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Bulambuli District.

		Implementing Rules Regulations	School Based & Violence
Implementing Rules & Regulations	Pearson Correlation	1	.965**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
School Based Violence	N	160	160
	Pearson Correlation	.965**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	160	160

** . Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on Implementing Rules & Regulations and School-Based Violence in Bulambuli District is represented as ($r = .965$, $n = 160$, $P = 0.01 < .05$). This means that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between implementation of rules and regulations of school based violence.

Qualitative Findings on implementing school rules and regulations and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District.

Interviews conducted for (Head Teachers)

The Head teacher of school C indicated that.., “*rules and regulation have been clearly formulated to address students’ behavioral challenges. Their major aim is to ensure control of discipline among learners and to create an environment that is academically sound for excellence.*”

In addition, Head teacher of school D, said “*students are stubborn in schools, however to have a violent free school, it is important to set limits and that in case students go against the limits, they are subjected to the disciplinary committee which should have the power to suspend, expel or call for parental intervention.*”

Head teacher of school E said, “*School based violence is a form of protest expressing the discontentment of students as regards services in schools, unfair treatment and fees increment, feeding. However, it is important that schools address such anomalies by involving parents, the students, school leaders and the community leaders for an amicable environment that is free from violence.*”

Head teacher of school A said; “*school heads should always devise means of solving their internal grievances to avoid violence based behaviors among students. It is important to understand students’ needs and always endeavor to work towards their fulfillment. Such endeavors can play significant roles in countering school based violence.*”

Head teachers of school F said, *it is important for school heads to always detect such atrocities of school based violence to keep harmony in secondary schools in Bulambuli District.*

Hypothesis two: There is no statistically significant relationship between students’ involvement in discipline management and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District?

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between students’ involvement in discipline management and school- based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District.

		Students’ involvement in Discipline Management	School Based Violence
Students’ involvement in Discipline Management	Pearson Correlation	1	.152**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	160	160
School Based Violence	Pearson Correlation	.152**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	160	160

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05

Result in table 3 above show that the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on students’ involvement in discipline management and school based violence in secondary schools Bulambuli District is represented as ($r = .152, n = 160, P = 0.01 < .05$). This means that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between students’ involvement in discipline management and school based violence in secondary schools hence rejecting the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative.

Qualitative Findings on students’ involvement in discipline management and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District.

Interviews conducted with Head teachers.

In an interview with the head teacher of school D, he said.... “*students’ involvement is a core aspect of creating harmony in secondary schools. Students form the core objective of the school. Therefore it is important to always involve them in matters of the schools and those that affect them to minimize the rate of school based violence in schools.*”

In an interview still with the head teacher of school A, he said..., “*whereas school based violence exist in schools, it is the responsibility of head teachers, teachers and members of PTA to always prioritize the needs of the schools especially those of the students to reduce the escalating riots in schools.*”

In an interview still with the head teacher of school C, he said that...., “*in all matters that surround the school, there are always school management bodies and these bodies include those of students. It is therefore important that students are always involved in such matters through their bodies to create an understanding that may help to overcome violence in secondary schools in Bulambuli District.*”

Discussion on Findings

The finding that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between the implementation of school rules/regulations and school-based violence in Bulambuli District government- aided secondary schools corroborates with Kyalo (2017) who revealed that students councils played a significant role in enforcing the implementation of school rules and regulations. The finding of Ndeto’s study in (2013) revealed that students were positive about school rules and regulations. They were willing to embrace them and seemed to recognize their intrinsic value in day to day life and discipline enhancement. This finding was also in consonance with the finding of the present study.

The second finding that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between students’ involvement in discipline management and school based violence in government aided secondary schools in Bulambuli District of Uganda corroborates Yaghambe and Tshabangu, (2013), study which recommends various methods to solve discipline problems to include involving the participation of students in discipline matters and others. In the same vein, Kiprop (2011) in his study identified that whenever there is failure by the administration to involve students in matters that affect schools, inclusive of discipline, situations that call for unrest continue to take lead. It adds up to the fact that some protest by students may not have held if they were involved in discipline management. Similarly Mbonyonga (2018) found that students’ councils were forums through which students through representatives were involved in decision making about school route and activities. This helped to create a sense of ownership towards school routines and therefore had a positive effect on management of students’ discipline. Owuor et al.(2022) findings on students’ involvement in decision making and discipline management in public secondary schools concluded that well-implemented involvement of students in decision-making can lead to a significant improvement in students’ discipline among public secondary schools. This finding was in consonance with the finding of the present study on students involvement in in discipline management in secondary schools.

However, this issue of involving secondary school students in disciplinary issues in schools is still being highly debated. As some scholars believe that at this adolescence stage, they are not matured enough to adequately enforce discipline because of their exorbitance. They have the tendency to abuse power.

Conclusion

Cases of indiscipline and violence by students in secondary schools is on the increase in Uganda and many other countries in the world. Therefore strict measures to forestall its

increasing rate are needed. Several studies carried out in different countries indicate that secondary school students are involved in various forms of indiscipline behaviour. However research has established that formulating and implementing comprehensive school rules and regulations, as well as involving students in formulation and implementing rules and regulation has shown significant success in managing students indiscipline.

Recommendations

The following recommendations may suffice;

1. School management and the disciplinary committee of the schools should always consider parental intervention in matters of violence in schools before taking decisions against students for purposes of mediation.
2. Clear school rules and regulations should be formulated and made available to students.
3. Students should be involved in the formulation and enforcement of the rules, however with strict supervision by teachers.
4. Guidance counsellors should guide students on better ways of presenting their grievance other than through violence and strikes.

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