

Student Leadership and Management of Discipline in Selected Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality, Western Uganda

Kabakyenga Asaph¹, Byabashaija Deuseddit*²

¹Uganda Christian University, Uganda, East Africa

²Mountains of the Moon University, Uganda, East Africa

***Corresponding author**

Byabashaija Deuseddit

Article History

Received: 12.09.2018

Accepted: 27.09.2018

Published: 30.11.2018



Abstract: The study was to assess the role of student leadership in management of discipline in selected secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. The study was guided by the following objectives, to establish the nature of discipline common among students in secondary schools, the causes of indiscipline among students in secondary schools and to ascertain the extent to which student leadership correlates to management of discipline. This study adopted mixed research methods to answer the research questions; the study population involved the Student leaders and teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. The study used simple, stratified and purposive sampling strategies to select potential respondents for the study. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Data was collected using survey questionnaires and interviews. In the study, results yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The study findings revealed new findings about the nature of students in schools from the field as they were mentioned by teachers and student leaders and these included dodging lessons, disrupting other students who are anxious to work/study, disrespect of teachers, cheating exams, Strikes, possession of illegal gargets like mobile phones and stealing students and school property. The study also came up with new causes of indiscipline cases and these included bias on some teachers, lack of guidance and counseling, loss of hope in academic achievement, poor family back ground, poor school administration, alcoholism and drug abuse and peer pressure. The researcher recommended that the school administration should award disciplined students on weekly, termly and at the end of the year in order to motivate other students, Both teachers and student leaders should make roll calls, the school should make games and sports compulsory, Indiscipline students should also be expelled and suspended, Guidance and counseling programmes should be established in schools, the school premises should be properly fenced and the school administration should make it compulsory for students to put on school uniform

Keywords: Student leadership, Discipline Management, Schools, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Student leadership is a process through which students, regardless of their role strive to create positive change in their communities. To accomplish this, they must be able to develop and articulate a vision of what they hope to achieve and foster meaningful relationships to advance the goals that lead to the accomplishment of the vision. Throughout this process, students will be committed to understanding themselves; others and the communities they serve while striving to recognize and appropriately address the ethical challenges they face [1].

In every society, leaders can be found at every level. Leadership occurs in any task and in any activity in which one is involved. It occurs within groups of friends, at work, during classes, and in homes. Hence, leading is an integral part of running organizations. Many scholars have attempted to define the concept of

leadership and as such, there are many definitions that have been advanced to define the term leadership [2] defines leadership as the process of encouraging and helping others to do something of their own volition, neither because it is required nor because of fear of consequences of non-compliance.

According to [2] Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential [4] defines leadership as the process of persuasion and example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to take action that is in accordance with the leader's purpose, or the shared purposes of all.

In context with student leadership, it is a process of influencing the activities of students in

efforts geared at discipline management in secondary schools in a given situation [7]. In essence; leadership is the identification, developing, and use of potentials that an organization and its people possess. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills.

Discipline management is a term often used to refer to behaviour modification for good reasons [3] On its surface, discipline management is primarily about establishing guidelines for behaviour and making sure that those guidelines are followed [3] notes that educators are not interested in good behaviour just for behaviour's sake but good behaviour is important for creating an environment where student learning will take place. *Discipline* is therefore seen as a necessary part and indeed the fundamental part of education because it trains compliance to collective norms [4].

In almost all schools, there is often a person or group of persons charged with the responsibility of leading others often known as prefects and these are the key student leaders who are expected to play a predominant role in the day-to-day functioning of the school. According to [6] a leader is a person who influences the activities and behavior of an individual or group of individuals in efforts towards goal achievement in a given situation. On the other hand [7], considered leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers.

In this study, student leaders consist of all those individuals entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing rules and regulations as well as organizing other students towards orderliness to enhance the achievement of intended education objectives. Examples of student leaders include prefects, councilors, captains or monitors, club executives and student court judges. In particular, student leaders, help in maintaining discipline and order in the school environment, prevent bullying and the use of indecent language, make children understand that rules are made for their betterment and hence they should be followed [5].

As student behaviour is increasingly becoming a growing problem for teachers in many schools especially in urban schools, for example in Mbarara municipality some students in schools were sent home because of misconduct especially due to interclass conflicts, substance abuse among others Discipline management has persistently become an issue of contention hence raising a concern to the community. Destruction of property through strikes in Secondary Schools is a common phenomenon that is dominating daily newspapers and sections of mass media. Some of the monstrous headlines commonly found in the local newspapers today, in fact, include; "school shut over strike" [7] "property worth millions destroyed in

school", "students murder fellow student" to mention but a few.

Therefore it is basing on this background that the researcher intends to assess role of student leaders in controlling indiscipline among students. The study will aim at establishing the extent to which student leaders mitigate indiscipline among students since student leaders are everywhere in all schools and yet there is discipline breakdown despite having student leaders.

METHODOLOGY

Data used for the research study was got using both primary and secondary sources .Primary data was arrived at by use of questionnaires distributed to respondents and conducting interviews to vital persons related to the study. Secondary data was got by the use of documentary analysis. The study employed a descriptive research design involving qualitative and quantitative paradigms in order to have a rich verbal description of the situation and the sample [8].

Opined that descriptive research design is usually used to describe a phenomenon and its data traits. The research study selected a total of 334 respondents (sample size) out of 590 participants (target population). Sample size was calculated using the Sloven's formula. The researcher employed simple, stratified and purposive sampling techniques.

This questionnaire method was preferred because it covers a wide geographical area in data collection; it collects a lot of information within a short time, and offers greater assurance of anonymity. However, the questionnaire involved some hardships of attrition. There were few copies that were not returned, but this was solved by distributing more copies than the required number of the sample size.

Interview guide is an instrument of data collection which involves face to face communication with respondents. The researcher asked questions which the respondents answered orally. It was useful in getting the story behind the participants' experience even through facial expressions. This instrument was preferred because the information and data obtained was of focal importance to the research study. The purpose of a qualitative interview schedule was to understand the respondents subjective view of their cosmos; unfolding the meaning of their experiences, uncovering their lived world prior to scientific explanations [2].

Validity of the research instrument (structured questionnaire) was assured by using content validity Index. Arising from the testing of the validity of the instruments, the researcher got content validity index (CVI) of 0.77 which was well above 0.75 indicating that the instrument was valid to collect data for the study [3]. However, the validity of the unstructured interview

was obtained by interviewing only key participants to prove the answered questionnaires [5].

Reliability of the research instrument (Structured Questionnaire) was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula looking at the variables that had an alpha coefficient of value greater than 0.70. Since the reliability calculation reached at by the researcher yielded 0.78 alpha values, it suggested that the research instrument was reliable to elicit data required for the study. Nonetheless, the reliability of the unstructured interview was got by resorting on peer group review strategies [6].

Statistical tools which were used to analyze data for this study included; descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and Pearson linear correlation coefficient index concerning student leadership and discipline management, in Western Uganda. Qualitative data were analyzed by systematically organizing data into rational themes, sub

themes for easy Interpretation in a storyline situation [3].

RESULTS

According to the data collected, 49 %(164) of the respondents were male whereas 51 %(170) were female. This meant that the female respondents participated more than their male counterparts and that females are usually likely to be truthful than males, hence helping the researcher get pertinent information for the study.

The study sought to examine the nature of discipline among students. The various discipline cases among students included in this study are: escaping from school at night, bullying of new students by senior students, taking alcohol and drugs, dodging lessons and disrupting other students. Table 1 below shows the computed frequencies and percentages of responses of teachers to items related to the nature of discipline among students in secondary schools.

Table -1: Teachers responses to nature of discipline among students

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	
Students escape from schools during the night	56	32.9	70	41.2	24	14.1	20	11.8	2.95
There is teasing and bullying of new students by senior students	46	27.1	80	47.1	30	17.6	14	8.2	2.93
Students take alcohol and drugs	26	15.3	96	57.6	26	15.3	22	12.9	2.74
Students dodge lessons	60	35.3	98	57.8	8	4.7	4	2.4	3.26
Students disrupt other students who are anxious to work/study	34	20.0	96	56.5	26	15.3	14	8.2	2.88

Source: primary data

Table 1 indicates the analysis of responses item by item that related to the discipline of students in schools. The mean score reveal that most of the students strongly agreed or agreed with the items of the discussion. 35.3% and 57.8% of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed that students dodge lessons. This was the item with the highest mean score of 3.26. (32.9%) and (41.2 %) strongly agreed and agreed that some students escape from schools during the night. The corresponding mean score of this item is 2.95. (27.1% and 47.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed that there is teasing and bullying of new students by senior students. (20% and 56.5%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed that some students disrupt other students who are anxious to work/ study. (15.3% and 57.6%) of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed that some students take alcohol and drugs. This was the item with the least mean score of 2.74. This implied that the students were badly behaved leading to poor performance in schools.

This study also examined the causes of indiscipline among students. The various causes of

indiscipline discipline among students included in this study are: lack of leadership skills by teachers, irresponsibility of student leaders, failure of student leaders to follow school rules and regulations, students' lack of respect to school leaders, and growth of economic difficulties. Table 2 below shows the responses of teachers that were computed to obtain frequencies and percentages. Findings from open-ended items were presented as quotations.

Table 2 indicates the analysis of responses item by item that related to causes of indiscipline in schools. The mean scores reveal that most of the students strongly agreed or agreed with the items of the discussion. 17.6% and 38.8% of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed that student leaders are irresponsible. This cause of indiscipline has the highest mean score of 2.88. 21.2 % and 45.95% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that there is failure of student leaders to follow school rules and regulations.10.6% and 50.6% of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed respectively that students lack respect to school leaders. 17.6% and 42.4% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that

growth of economic difficulties is the cause of indiscipline in schools. This meant that most students and teachers were not well sensitized concerning the

school rules and regulations in relation to their bearing on academic performance in schools.

Table-2: Teachers responses to items related to causes of indiscipline in schools

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	
Lack of leadership skills by teachers	22	12.9	66	38.8	58	34.1	24	14.1	2.51
Student leaders are irresponsible	30	17.6	98	38.8	34	20.0	8	4.7	2.88
Failure of student leaders to follow school rules and regulations	36	21.2	78	45.9	34	20.0	22	12.9	2.75
Students lack respect to school leaders	18	10.6	86	50.6	48	28.2	18	10.6	2.61
Growth of economic difficulties	30	17.6	72	42.4	48	28.2	20	11.8	2.66

Source: primary data

Results from Table 4 below indicated that there was a positive correlation between the student leadership and discipline management ($r=0.304^{**}$, $P\text{-value}<0.01$), this meant that student leadership contributes to the management of discipline in a positive manner leading to better performance in schools. This further implied that once there is

democracy and better student representation schools are likely to perform well in academics. This agreed with hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between student leadership and discipline management in schools. And therefore the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table-4: Relationship between student leadership [SL] and discipline management [DM]

	Items	SL predictor construct	DM Dependant variable
SL	Pearson Correlation	1	.322 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	385	385
DM	Pearson Correlation	.322 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	385	385

Source: primary data

These results concurred with the qualitative results which revealed that a highly democratic student leadership helps in taming student's behavior in schools. The head teacher of one of the schools stated:

If the student leadership is well supported by school administration, then one can be assured of well behaved students leading to better performance...

Further still the results agreed with findings of [4] that badly managed student leadership can lead to frequent strikes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings revealed new findings from the field as they were mentioned by teachers and student leaders on nature of discipline cases which scholars did not mention in the literature review and these included dodging lessons, disrupting other students who are anxious to work/study, disrespect of teachers, cheating exams, Strikes, possession of illegal

gargets like mobile phones and stealing students and school property.

The study also came up with new causes of indiscipline cases which scholars did not mention in the literature review as they were mentioned by both teachers and student leaders and these included bias on some teachers, lack of guidance and counseling, loss of hope in academic achievement, poor family back ground, poor school administration, alcoholism and drug abuse and peer pressure. The study findings revealed by the student leaders and teachers were in line with the literature as it was revealed by the following scholars.

Using the study findings from the field, the researcher recommended the following

- The school administration should award disciplined students on weekly, termly and at the end of the year in order to motivate other students.
- Both teachers and student leaders should make roll calls on regular basis in order to reduce on the cases of discipline.

- The school should also make games and sports compulsory for all students in order to occupy their leisure time.
- Indiscipline students should also be expelled and suspended in order to threaten other students not to involve themselves in wrong things.
- Guidance and counseling programmes should also be established in schools such that students are guided on how to behave and become successful academicians more especially those who lose hope along the way due to poor performance.
- The school premises should also be properly fenced in order to protect students from escaping from school.
- The school administration should make it compulsory for students to put on school uniform (both in school and outside school).

REFERENCES

1. Alidzulwi TA. *The role of parents in values education with special reference to the situation in Venda (Northern Province)*(Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).
2. Arekenya L. School Prefects, Tomorrows' Leaders. Lagos downloaded from <http://vanguardngr.com/>. On 31/5/2012. (2012).
3. Bean S. *Classroom Management to Promote Learning Skills for Educators skill* for September. 2001, (2001):
4. Cheng KM, Wong KC. School effectiveness in East Asia: Concepts, origins and implications. *Journal of educational administration*. 1996 Dec 1;34(5):32-49.
5. Walker HM, Horner RH, Sugai G, Bullis M, Sprague JR, Bricker D, Kaufman MJ. Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patterns among school-age children and youth. *Journal of emotional and behavioral disorders*. 1996 Oct;4(4):194-209.
6. Kibe M. The Role of Prefects in Management of Secondary Schools. A case of Kandara Division, Maragua District. Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis Nairobi: Kenyatta University. University. 2005.
7. Nawe JM. Leadership challenges in higher education libraries in East Africa. *Information development*. 2001 Mar;17(1):29-34.
8. Zubaida AN. Indiscipline and its Management Techniques: A case study of a special education school in Kano State. *The journal of the National Council for exceptional children*. 2009;11(2):455-63.