

Discipline as a determinant of school performance: A case of junior high school in Namibia

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ABSTRACT

Successful teaching and learning can only take place in schools when there is positive discipline. Lack of discipline is called indiscipline. Thus, indiscipline can be regarded as any learners' action that is deemed to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society. This shows that discipline is critical for learners' good academic performance. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate how discipline enables academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools at Katjindakatji Circuit in the Kavango West region, Namibia. The study aimed to determine the causes of indiscipline, assess how discipline enables academic performance and find measures school administrators can use to deal with indiscipline among learners. The study used a mixed research method to collect data from 48 participants comprises of, 3 Principals, 15 teachers and 30 learners who are currently teaching and schooling at the three selected Junior Secondary Schools in the study area. Participants were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The study established that negligent parents contributed to indiscipline in the Katjindakatji circuit. Results show that disciplined learners are likely to perform better, unlike indiscipline learners. Measures to be taken by school administrators to ensure discipline are time management, punishment, and reinforcement of school rules and regulations.

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Introduction

Scholars such as Ouma et al. (2013) and Gitome et al. (2013) noted that discipline provides a good basis for effective teaching and learning. Globally, schools are facing disciplinary issues and cases of indiscipline have been increasing in the last two decades (Ehiane, 2014). In the education system, a learner is referred to as disciplined when his or her behaviours, actions and inactions are in line with the set rules and regulations of the school (Ali et al., 2014). Discipline also implies that the learners is not only observing the rules and regulations of the school but also implies that the learners can establish what is right or wrong (Gitome, et al., 2013).

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A lack of discipline is called indiscipline. Thus, indiscipline can be regarded as any learners' action that is deemed to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set-up or society (Omote et al., 2015). In a school set-up, indiscipline is any form of misbehaviour which some learners can display such as poor attitude to learning, lateness, truancy, immoral behaviours, drug abuse, disobedience, destruction of school property, stealing, dirtiness, being quarrelsome, use of abusive or foul languages, rudeness, cultism.

Discipline plays a critical role in learners' academic performance as evidenced by several previous studies (Dawo and Simatwa, 2010; Tikoko & Bomett, 2011) and in other African countries (Ehiane, 2014; Keating & Rossouw, 2009). Different studies carried out in Asia, Europe and Africa support and corroborate this notion (Duckworth and Seligman, 2006; Bodovski et al., 2013; Zhao & Kuo, 2015; Whisman & Hammer, 2014).

Discipline and academic performances are vital not only in education but also in the corporate world. Educators put special emphasis on creating a conducive learning environment by making sure that the learners are disciplined and the academic performance of the learners is not compromised. While Kavango East produced a 100% pass rate in grade 12 results of 2021 (Ministry of Education, 2022), Kavango West failed to register above a 50% pass rate in grade 12 of 2021. Furthermore, the Namibia Newspaper of 2021 reported that Kavango West schools have been rocked by cases of indiscipline. Comparing the academic performance of public schools in the Kavango region with private schools, public schools have been underperforming and public schools have also been accused of poor discipline (Antonio, 2017).

This raises the question of how discipline influences the academic performance of learners, especially in public schools in the Katjinkatji circuit located in Kavango West. Concerning Namibia's education system, the impact of learners' discipline on their academic performance has received little research attention. Findings from the few studies conducted indicate that the results are not consistent, thus there is a need for more studies to fill in the identified gaps regarding the effect of discipline on pupils' academic performance. To fill in the identified gaps, the current study focused on the Katjinkatji circuit in Kavango West and adopted a case study design in investigating the impact of discipline on pupils' academic performance. Hence, the study sought to investigate discipline as an enabler of the academic performance of learners.

Belle (2018) claims that indiscipline in schools can be traced to the learners' home background where the parents are negligent and are not concerned with their children's behavioural changes from early adolescence to late adolescence. Furthermore, if the parent is always absent from home, there are slim chances of instilling discipline in their children. Belle (2018) argues that indiscipline could be attributed to broken homes, bad parenting and parents displaying bad habits in front of their kids such as alcohol and drug abuse, nepotism, racism, tribalism, bribery and corruption, reckless spending by parents and many more

Teacher factors that influence indiscipline among school learners include a lack of sincerity and devotion. If teachers lack professional morals, there might be indiscipline from learners. Poor professionalism from teachers such as discussing bad things with learners about other teachers also influences indiscipline among learners (Belle, 2018).

In their studies, Siryeh (2020) established that indiscipline problems exist in schools when school rules are not enforced or are not spelt out. Inconsistency in the implementation of school rules might lead learners to misbehave. Cains and Cains (2014) explained that indiscipline is common in schools where misconduct is ignored or the teachers do not pay attention to it. Also, schools characterized by classroom overcrowding and a high teacher-learners' ratio have high cases of learners misbehaving. Where management is not good at communicating rules, policies and other developments in the school to the teachers and learners, learners tend to misbehave as well as teachers. Belle (2018) concurred with Sekyere (2009) that schools that report a high number of indiscipline tend to have poor results and grades at a national level. Misconduct disrupts effective learning and learners will perform poorly in their examinations. In addition,

indiscipline behaviours create panic and a sense of insecurity in the school. Scholars such as (Simba et al., 2016) observed that discipline has a positive impact on the academic performance of learners.

Ketonen et al. (2018). argued that even learners with lower intelligence quotient (IQ) can outperform learners with higher IQ if they are disciplined. Using a sample of 200 learners from the same middle school in the USA, Ketonen et al., (2018) incorporated IQ tests to demonstrate the relationship between academic performance and discipline. Ketonen et al. (2018) showed that girls were obtaining higher scores in mathematics and English subjects than boys although the IQ of girls was lower than that of boys. The results from this study demonstrate that if a learner have determination, completes homework and participates in class, he or she will score better marks on tests. In this regard, discipline is a critical component in the academic performance of learners.

Mafabi et al. (2012) noted that the school can succeed as a whole when management and head of departments lead by example about punctuality, learners tend to follow what their teachers do. Mafabi et al. (2012) explained that well-behaved learners are always punctual for lessons and submitting homework. Furthermore, highlighted that positive discipline for learners studying on their own can only be attained if learners have self-regulation skills which they can be taught by teachers. Good time management refers to the way of monitoring and regulating oneself concerning the performance of multiple tasks within a certain period. Therefore, to improve academic performance, both the learners' and teacher's self-attitude and participation are required as a principle of time management practice (Trentepohl et al., 2022).

Scholars such as Semali and Vumilia (2016) argue that schools should use punishment as a way of instilling discipline and punishment should be implemented on learners who violate school rules and regulations. Punishment is administered as a way of bringing desirable change in behaviours. The assumption will be that the learners will improve his or her behaviours after being served a punishment (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). However, some schools tend to be relaxed about administering punishment Schools design rules and regulations to maintain discipline on the school premises and create a conducive learning environment. Semali and Vumilia (2016) suggest that the rules and regulations are authoritative disciplines with a course of law intended to promote discipline in school. However, Ndeto (2015) explained designing the rules only is not enough but what is important is how the schools enforce the rules and regulations. Effective reinforcement of rules and regulations deter learners' disruptive behaviours.

With regard to Katjinakatji circuit there are no research carried out on discipline as enabler of school performance. Findings from the few related studies conducted indicate that the results are not consistent, thus there is need for more studies to fill in the identified gaps regarding the effect of discipline on pupils' academic performance. In order to fill in the identified gaps, the current study focused on Katjinakatji circuit in Kavango West and adopted a case study design in investigating the impact of discipline on pupils' academic performance. The study has a significant contribution at different levels. Theoretical contribution, the study made significant contribution to the existing literature discipline in schools. Furthermore, the study demonstrated how discipline impacts the performance of learners both in theory and through empirical findings. In addition, the study may also aid other researchers that might research on the same topic. Practical contribution, the empirical findings contribute to testing of how discipline among learners influences their academic performance. The results may be used by Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in wiping out of indiscipline among learners, to ensure that teaching and learning environment is conducive, thus helps the schools to improve their results. The study findings may be used to improve proper discipline among learners and hence lead to improved academic performance. Furthermore, this study is substantial as it may assist school administrators (principals, head of departments and teachers) in understanding the impact of discipline on academic performance of learners.

To ensure the objectives, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- (1) What causes indiscipline among learners?
- (2) How does discipline enable academic performance in learners?
- (3) What are the appropriate measures school administrators can utilize to ensure discipline at schools?

Method

Research design

Creswell (2014) defines mixed method research design as a type of inquiry within the qualitative, and quantitative approach that provides specific direction, and road map for a procedure to conduct research. The study used a mixed methods design to investigate how discipline enables academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools at Katjinkatji Circuit in the Kavango West region, Namibia. This design is considered necessary because it triangulates quantitative and qualitative data to increase the validity as well as reliability of the study. Data were concurrently but separately collected and analysed. Quantitative data were collected using a survey questionnaire while qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2014) integrating both the quantitative and qualitative approaches increase the validity and reliability of a study.

Population and sample

A population is the entire bigger group of individuals that share the same characteristics and from which the study can draw a sample (Ivankova et al., 2018). The targeted population for this study comprised 240 Junior Secondary School teachers and principals as well as learners selected from three schools in the Katjinkatji Circuit in the Kavango West Region. The study sample consisted of 48 participants (3 Principals, 15 Teachers and 30 Learners) and these were selected using purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Forty-five participants completed the survey questionnaire. Additionally, a sub-sample of 3 participants (made up of three Principals one per school) was purposively selected to participate in the interview.

Instrumentation and data collection

Creswell and Creswell (2017) concurred with Morgan (2014) that a research instrument is a tool used to collect data related to one subject of investigation. The study used survey questionnaires and interviews as instruments to collect data so that data could be triangulated and cover almost all issues in this study. The study employed a close-ended survey questionnaire to gather data from teachers and learners about how discipline enables the academic performance of learners. The study used a closed-ended questionnaire because it is relatively quick and easy to gather data from a wide range of participants within a short period. The questionnaire comprised two sections A and B. Section A of the questionnaire comprised questions about the demographic information of the participants while section B comprised questions about discipline as an enabler of academic performance. Furthermore, section B had five-point Likert scale questions (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4= Agree, 5 = Strongly agree).

The researchers personally handed the questionnaires to the participants and encouraged the participants to complete all the sections of the questionnaire. Participants were given three days to complete the questionnaires and this helped with achieving a 100 percentage return rate. The researchers also personally collected the questionnaire from the participants. Qualitative primary data in this study was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. The researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with three school principals from the selected schools. Creswell, (2014) highlighted that semi-structured interview is mostly used in qualitative research to gather in-depth data from

informed participants. The researchers wrote letters to the regional education directorate and the school principal seeking permission to contact the study. With permission granted, the questionnaire was distributed to the participants in the afternoon to avoid disruption of normal teaching time. Before giving out questionnaires, the study explained the purpose of the study and clarified issues related to ethical considerations. This enabled the teachers and learners to complete the questionnaires without fear. An interview was scheduled at the convenient time of the participants to ensure that schools related activities were not disrupted. At the beginning of each interview, the researchers explained to the participants the purpose of the study as well as their right to participate. In addition, the researchers sought permission to record the interview on an audio recorder. The study prepared questions in advance and following up questions were asked during the interview where there was a need for clarity.

Data analysis

According to [Haufiku et al. \(2022\)](#) supporting [Shannon- Baker \(2016\)](#) data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical tools to discover useful information. The study used descriptive statistics (also known as descriptive analysis) to analyse quantitative data because it enabled the study to summarize the data and find patterns by using the mean (numerical average of a set of values), mode (most common value among a set of values), percentage (used to express how a value or group of respondents within the data relates to a larger group of respondents) (Creswell, 2014). Thematic analysis was used in analysing qualitative data and this involved breaking down information into lesser entities, identifying major and minor themes as well as putting the pertinent devices together in a more widely spread analytical structure. The aim was to identify, organize and make meanings from the data gathered through interviews. The first step in qualitative data analysis involved transcribing the tape recording from the interviews. The second step involved reading notes to deduce useful information from the transcript and taking down all the main points. Texts were classified into emerging themes and each theme was given a code that is in line with the meaning of the research questions. Broader themes were established to eliminate huge amounts of codes and have smaller manageable themes that were in line with the research questions.

Ethical consideration

Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained that studies that involve human beings should involve not only abide by the laws of research but should also involve moral and civil matters. Therefore, in conducting this research, the researchers observed the following ethics: Permission was sought and obtained from the Director of Education, Kavango West Region and the principals of the schools where the participants are teaching. To ensure the autonomy of the study participants, they were provided with a complete information sheet detailing the aim of the study, potential risks the right of participants to enable them to decide whether to enroll as voluntary participants. Furthermore, participants remained anonymous by using pseudo-names to identify them and their schools throughout the study. Lastly, we sought and obtained participants' permission to record the interview using the audio recorder.

Results

Respondents' demographic information

The study involved forty-eight respondents comprised of three school principals, fifteen teachers and thirty learners from the three selected public schools in the Katjinkatji circuit in the Kavango West Region, Namibia. The gender distribution of the participants showed that there were two males and one female principal, eight males and

seven female teachers, and eighteen males and twelve female learners. The gender distribution is presented in Table 1. Moreover, of the three principals and fifteen teacher participants, ten (55.5%) had degree qualifications while five (27.7%) had master's degree qualifications and 3 16.6% had diploma qualifications. The summary of the qualifications is given in Figure 1

Table 1. The respondents' gender

Participants	Male	Female
Principals	2	1
Teachers	8	7
Learners	18	12
Total	28	20

The results in Figure 1 show that all the teachers were qualified to teach and thus had the required qualifications. Qualified teachers can instill discipline in learners and have the necessary skills and teaching methods that can promote discipline with learners. Howard et al. (2021) emphasized that teachers should have acquired the right teaching methods and skills to promote discipline.

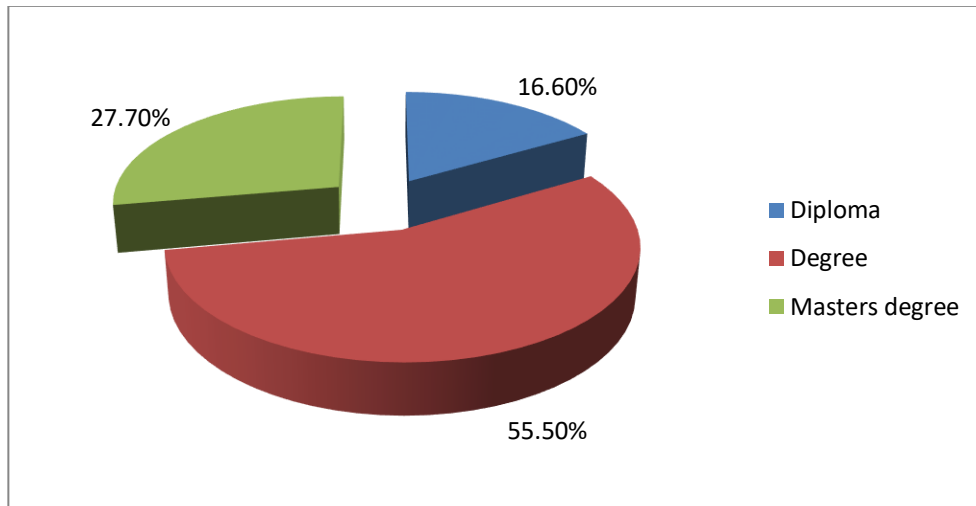


Figure 1. Respondents' educational qualification

During the interviews and questionnaire, teachers and principals were asked about their years of experience and five (27.8%) participants had less than three years' experience, six (33.3%) participants had three to six years' experience and six (33.3%) participants had six to nine years' experience. On the other hand, three (16.7%) participants had more than nine years of experience. The results are presented in Figure 2. Figure 3.2 above shows that most of the teachers at the three selected schools were experienced enough to teach and implement discipline among learners. Novice teachers might struggle with discipline-related issues. Rayn and Deci (2017) noted that the more the teacher gains experience the more he or she can instill discipline among learners.

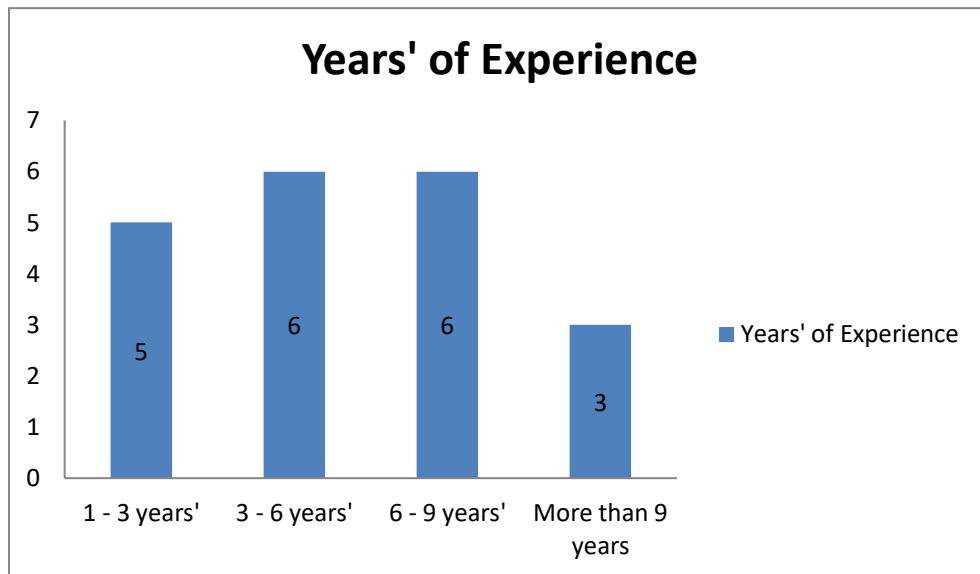


Figure 2. Respondents' years of experience

Causes of indiscipline at Katjinakatji circuit

On the objective of causes of indiscipline at the Katjinakatji circuit, three themes emerged and these are home and parental factors, school factors and teacher factors influencing indiscipline. These themes are presented below:

Home and parental factors

Questionnaire participants (teachers and learners) were asked about their opinion on negligent parents causing indiscipline in the Katjinakatji circuit 20 (44.44%) participants strongly agreed, 12 (26.67%) participants agreed and 8 (17.8%) participants disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, two (4.4%) participants strongly disagreed and three (6.7%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 3.

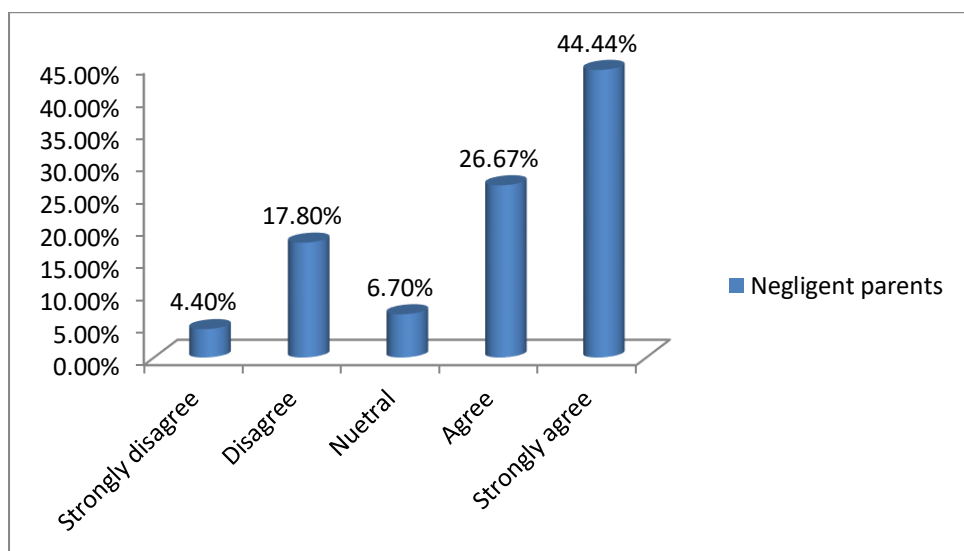


Figure 3. Respondents' views on the effect of parents on discipline

About broken homes giving bad exemplary lives to learners 25 (55.6%) participants strongly agreed with the statement, 10 (22.2%) participants agreed and 5 (11.11%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, three (6.7%) participants strongly disagreed and two (4.4%) participants disagreed with the statement that broken homes

giving bad exemplary lives lead to indiscipline among learners. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' views on the effect of broken home on students' discipline

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	6.7%
Disagree	2	4.4%
Neutral	5	11.1%
Agree	10	22.2%
Strongly agree	25	55.6%
Total	45	100%

School principals who participated in the interview gave the following views about home and parental factors causing indiscipline among learners. Principal 1 commented:

"Some of these learners in my schools are coming from dysfunctional families where the learners can copy bad habits from their parents such as drinking and smoking. Some learners stay alone in houses while their parents are at their Mahangu fields. Hence there is no one to discipline them."

In addition, principal 2 conveyed:

"Some parents do not create a conducive environment for kids. Some of my learners are exposed to environments that bring psychological torture. Indiscipline is a psychological problem faced at home."

The teachers

Questionnaire participants (teachers and learners) were also asked about their opinion on the lack of professionalism by teachers causing indiscipline among learners. 12 (26.7%) participants disagreed, 10 (22.2%) participants strongly disagreed and 8 (17.8%) participants were neutral. However, seven (15.6%) participants strongly agreed and eight (17.8%) participants agreed that lack of professionalism by teachers causes indiscipline among learners. The results are presented in Figure 4.

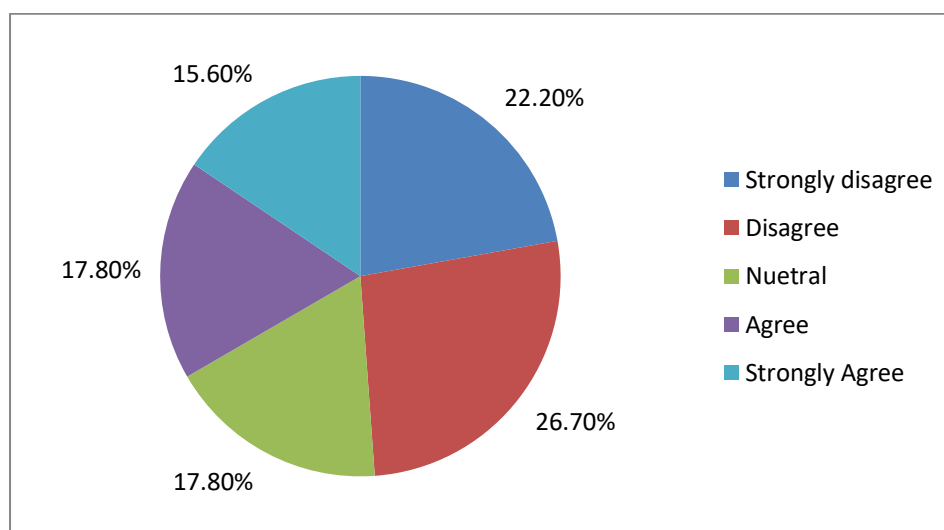


Figure 4. Respondents' views on teacher professionalism

Participants in the interview gave the following views concerning the lack of professionalism by teachers causing indiscipline among learners. Principal 1 commented:

"My teachers are professionals who are trained and experienced to instil discipline among learners in our school. I am confident in their ability to educate and lead by example these learners, therefore, there no teachers who lack professionalism to cause indiscipline."

In line with this, Principal 2 stated:

"The teachers here at my school are role models to these learners thus they always try to lead by example. The behaviors of the teachers here help to shape the learners' discipline."

In addition, Principal 3 gave the following suggestions:

"Although most of my teachers exhibit good professionalism, there are few individuals who are lazy and do not want to be involved in extra activities that help to instill discipline among learners."

School environment

Questionnaire participants were also asked about their views on the inconsistency and unfair implementation of school rules causing indiscipline among learners and 16 (36.6%) participants disagreed with the statement, 12 (26.7%) participants strongly disagreed and 8 (17.8%) participants were neutral. However, six (13.3%) participants agreed and three (6.7%) participants strongly agreed that inconsistency and unfair implementation of school rules leads to indiscipline among learners. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' views on the school rules

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	12	26.7%
Disagree	16	36.6%
Neutral	8	17.8%
Agree	6	13.3%
Strongly agree	3	6.7%
Total	45	100%

Participants from the interviews also commented on their schools having consistent rules and fairly implementing the rules. Principal 2 commented:

"At my school, we have school rules that are given to every learner at the beginning of every year. Also, there are policies on the implementation of the rules"

In a similar direction, principal 3 gave the following suggestions:

"I cannot say learners they misbehave due to unfair school rules because our rules were designed by taking into consideration of learners' input. The learners are happy with the school rules; therefore, the rules are fair."

About schools having a large population but having few or inadequate resources leading to indiscipline, 20 (44.4%) participants strongly agreed with the statement, 15

(33.3%) participants agreed and 5 (11.11%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, three (6.7%) participants strongly disagreed and two (4.4%) participants disagreed with the statement that schools have a large population but few or inadequate resources which leads to indiscipline. The results are presented in Figure 5.

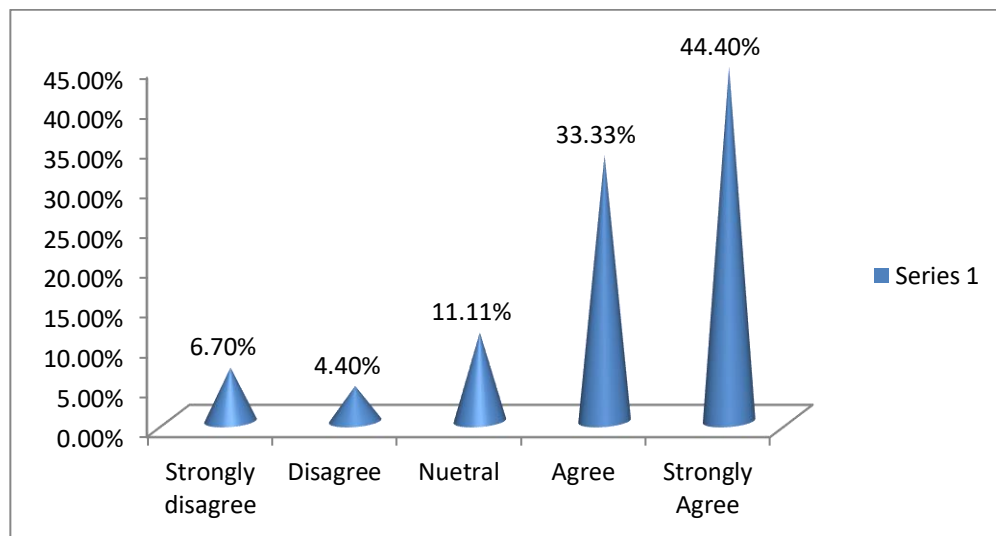


Figure 5. Respondents' views on school inadequate sources

During the interviews, school principals were also asked about their schools having a large population but few or inadequate resources which leads to indiscipline of learners and they gave the following comments. Principal 1 commented:

"My school has more than five hundred learners but we have few classrooms and these classrooms are overcrowded. Some learners tend to misbehave because the classroom is overcrowded at our school"

Principal 2 gave the following suggestions:

"Some teachers, especially novice teachers struggle with managing classroom discipline in overcrowded classrooms. I agree that lack of human resources as well as inadequate classrooms can lead to learners misbehaving"

How discipline enables academic performance

Enhancing better scores

From a questionnaire survey of 45 participants comprising of teachers and learners, 18 (40%) participants strongly agreed with the statement that discipline allows learners to get better marks while 12 (26.7%) participants agreed and five (11.11%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, five (11.11%) participants disagreed and five (11.11%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement that discipline allows learners to get better marks. The results are summarized in Figure 6.

Interview participants also commented on discipline enhancing learners to get better marks in test marks. Principal 1 commented:

"In my school, it is always the learners that are disciplined that get good marks and grades at the end of term and end of year tests."

Moreover, principal 2 gave the following suggestions:

"Well-behaved learners always top the class with the best grades in both national and school examinations. Disciplined learners are good ambassadors of the school academically and behaviour-wise."

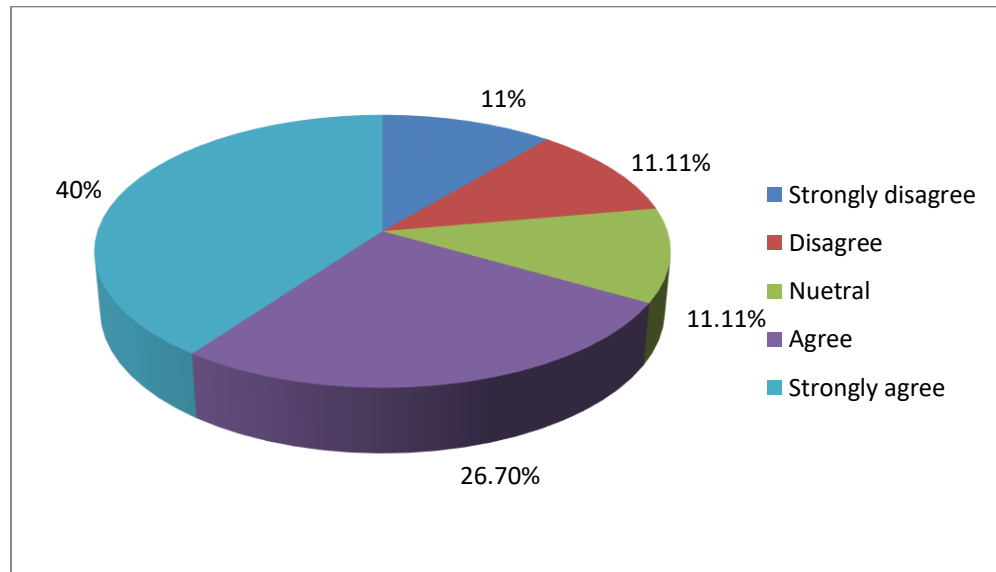


Figure 6. Respondents' views on the role of discipline on students' scores

Self-control

With regards to learners having self-control which enables them to focus on school work, 22 (48.9%) participants strongly agreed with the statement, 14 (31.1%) participants agreed and four (8.9%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, one (2.22%) participant disagreed and four (8.9%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement that self-control enables learners to focus on school work. These statistics are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' views on the role of discipline on students' self-control

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	8.9%
Disagree	1	2.2%
Neutral	4	8.9%
Agree	14	31.1%
Strongly agree	22	48.9%
Total	45	100%

During interviews, the school's principals also alluded that self-control enables learners to focus on school work. The school principals gave the following comments. Principal 1 commented:

"When I observe my top performing learners, they have that self-control which enables them to focus on their school work. As a result, the disciplined learners always outperform the other indisciplined learners."

Furthermore, principal 3 gave the following suggestions:

"At my school, it is the learners who have that self-control that is topping in national examinations and end-of-year examinations, a sign that discipline fosters self-control."

Self-regulation

Questionnaire participants were also asked about their opinion on how discipline enhances self-regulation where the learners commit to their studies 17 (37.8%) participants strongly agreed with the statement, 16 (35.6%) participants agreed and three (6.7%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, five (11.11%) participants disagreed and four (8.9%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement that discipline enhances self-regulation where the learners commit to his or her studies. These statistics are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Respondents' views on the role of self-regulation on students' discipline

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	8.9%
Disagree	5	11.11%
Neutral	3	6.7%
Agree	16	35.6%
Strongly agree	17	37.8%
Total	45	100%

School principals who participated in the interviews also commented on discipline enhances self-regulation when the learners commit to his or their studies. The comments of the interview participants are given below. Principal 2 commented:

"Learners in my school are committed to their studies, they have formed study groups where they study on their own. This shows quite a great deal of self-regulation and this is helping them to get better grades in examinations."

In a similar direction, principal 3 gave the following suggestions:

"Through self-regulation, my learners' complete homework on their own without copying. We don't have a problem of learners not completing homework on time."

Measure of school administrator that can use to deal with indiscipline among learners

The findings of measures school administrators can use to deal with indiscipline among learners were centered on time management, punishment and reinforcements of school rules. Out of the forty-five participants in the questionnaire, 13 (28.9%) participants strongly agreed with the statement that improved time management among learners and teachers can improve discipline among learners, 18 (40%) participants agreed and six (13.3%) participants were neutral to the statement. However, five (11.11%) participants disagreed and three (6.7%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement that improved time management among learners and teachers can improve discipline among learners.

Regarding using punishment as a means of instilling discipline among learners, 8 (17.8%) participants strongly agreed with the statement and 7 (15.6%) participants agreed while six (13.3%) participants were neutral to the statement. On the other hand, ten (22.2%) participants disagreed and fourteen (31.11%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement that punishment is a means of instilling discipline among learners.

Questionnaire participants were also asked about their opinion on the use of reinforcements of school rules and regulations as a means of instilling discipline among learners and 20 (44.4%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore,

12 (26.7%) participants agreed while two (4.4%) participants were neutral to the statement that reinforcements of school rules and regulations instil discipline among learners. On the other hand, five (11.11%) participants disagreed and six (13.33%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings on the measures school administrators can use to deal with indiscipline among learners are summarized in Figure 7.

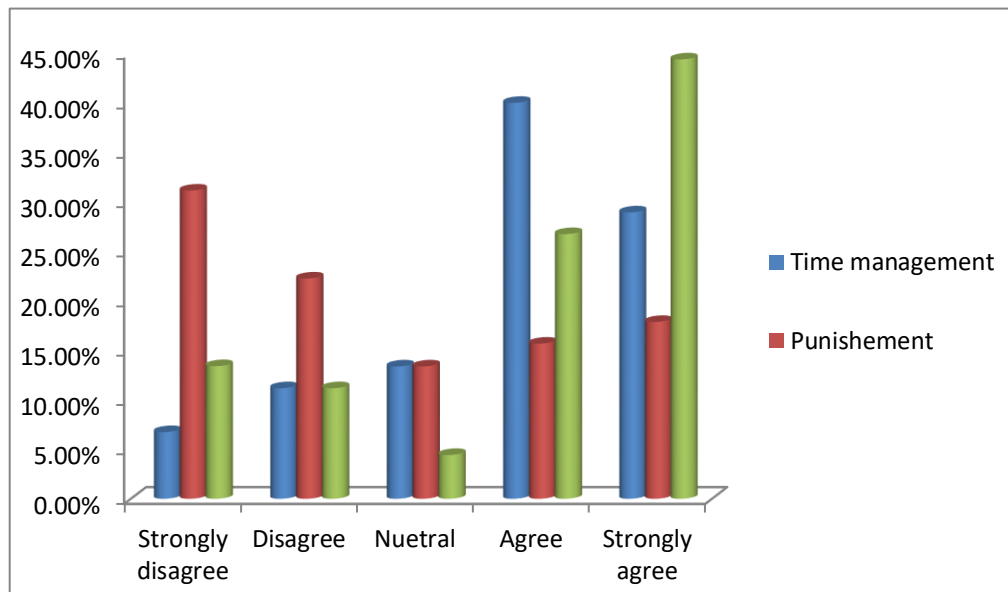


Figure 7. Summary of measures school administrators that can use to deal with indiscipline

Participants in the interviews were also asked to recommend or suggest measures school administrators can use to deal with indiscipline and they gave the following comments. Principal 1 commented:

"The school should have a policy document on rules and every learner should be given a copy of the rules. These rules should be enforced without favour and with consistency. In addition, the learners should also be guided during the life skills lessons. Counselling helps a lot for discipline in a school"

Similarly, principal 2 stated:

"The school must design a code of conduct and the children must be educated on how to observe the code of conduct."

Last but not least, principal 3 gave the following suggestions:

"Life skills teachers should teach learners about discipline. Secondary school kids are teenagers who need guidance and life skills teachers can provide that guidance."

Discussion

Causes of indiscipline at Katjinakatji circuit

Home and parental factors

The majority of the questionnaire participants (teachers and learners) agreed that negligent parents contributed to indiscipline in the Katjinakatji circuit. This was reinforced by interview participants who highlighted that some parents were not creating a conducive environment for learners and some of learners were exposed to environments

that bring psychological problems. Belle (2018) also attributed indiscipline among learners to the parental factors and learners' home background suggesting that some parents do not give proper care to their children as well as shape their behaviour. The problem becomes acute when the parent is always absent from home. In their studies, Belle (2018) noted that parents, who have a demanding career that requires them to be at work very early in the morning and also leave the workplace late tend to do a poor job regarding parenting. As a result, the parent might seem to neglect their roles as caregivers and learners from such family set-up are likely to have discipline problems in schools.

Teacher factors influencing indiscipline

Concerning the lack of professionalism by teachers causing indiscipline among learners' the majority of the participants disagreed with the statement. Participants in the interview concurred with the questionnaire participants highlighting that teachers were professionals who are trained and experienced to instill discipline among learners in schools and thus cannot be attributed to causing indiscipline among learners. Teachers play a critical role in the lives of learners and they are role models to learners. However, Kaluma (2023) shared different views arguing that some teachers were lazy, incompetent, and lacked classroom management skills while some teachers would even flirt with female learners. Such kind of behaviours from teachers can also cause indiscipline in schools. Other teachers can also gossip about fellow teachers with learners, commenting on the poor teaching methods of their colleagues and as a result, the learners will lose respect for some teachers. This will result in learners giving a bad attitude toward other teachers during lessons or not giving attention during the lesson.

School factors

Most of the questionnaire participants disagreed with the statement that inconsistency and unfair implementation of school rules cause indiscipline among learners. The comments from interview participants agreed with the questionnaire participants. School principal participants commented that their schools have consistent rules and were fairly implementing the rules. Belle (2018) supported that indiscipline in schools can be attributed to several factors including a shortage of quantity and quality, of textbooks and a shortfall of qualified teaching staff. When there are inadequate resources such as textbooks and teachers, learners might resort to indiscipline.

How discipline enables academic performance

Better grades

Most of the questionnaire survey participants agreed with the statement that discipline allows learners to get better grades. Interview participants also commented on discipline enhancing learners to get better marks on the tests. Learners that are disciplined tend to get good marks and grades. Disciplined learners are good ambassadors of the school academically and in behaviours wise. Howard et al. (2021) also concurred that discipline enables learners to get better grades. Howard et al. (2021) used academic reports, teacher questionnaires and authors' self-collected reports to demonstrate that disciplined learners scored higher marks in standardized tests. Furthermore, the study revealed that girls were more disciplined than boys. The study by Howard et al. (2021) demonstrates the significance of discipline on the academic performance of learners. Ketonen et al. (2018) further argued that even learners with lower intelligence quotient (IQ) can outperform learners with higher IQ if they are disciplined. Using a sample of 200 learners from the same middle school in the USA, Ketonen et al. (2018) incorporated IQ tests to demonstrate the relationship between academic performance and discipline.

The study recorded the IQ scores of the learners as well as test marks in their respective subjects.

Self-control

Most of the participants agreed that learners that have self-control focus on school work. These questionnaire findings were also shared by interviews participant who highlighted that self-control enables learners to focus on school work. Learners who have self-control mostly come out top of their class in examinations. [Sommet and Elliot \(2017\)](#) and [Ryan and Deci \(2017\)](#) concurred that self-control plays a significant role in the academic performance of a learners. Self-control implies the voluntary regulation of behaviour, emotions and attention to personally valued goals and standards ([Ryan & Deci, 2017](#)). Self-control can thus be implied to mean discipline. [Ryan and Deci \(2017\)](#) argued that a learner cannot achieve academic goals if he or she is not focused.

Discipline enhances self-regulation

Most of the questionnaire participants agreed that discipline enhances self-regulation where the learners commit to his or her studies. School principals who participated in the interviews also commented on discipline-enhancing self-regulation where the learners commit to his or their studies. The school principals highlighted that learners form study groups and complete homework on their own without copying. According to [Ehiane \(2014\)](#), self-regulation enables learners to learn and adapt their behaviours to attain certain competencies in different subject areas, while simultaneously teaching them how to make better choices in adulthood. In self-regulation, the learners decide on their own concerning when to study and balance with social life activities. Through self-determination, the learners can establish the silver lining during difficult situations, appreciate and embrace the bigger picture and seize opportunities in times of hopelessness with great humility.

Measure of school administrators that can use to deal with indiscipline among learners

The majority of the participants in the questionnaire agreed with the statement that improved time management among learners and teachers can improve discipline among learners. School principal participants in the interviews also highlighted guiding learners on how to manage time. Learners should also be guided during the life skills lessons. [Mafabi et al. \(2012\)](#) believes that academic success is attained when teachers are good at maintaining discipline during lessons as well as good in time management. Some schools are failing to follow the timetable or implement the designed timetable and such schools need to follow time table if they are to improve in time management.

Almost all of the participants disagreed that using punishment is a means of instilling discipline among learners. However, [Etyang and Okoth \(2018\)](#), noted that punishment can be either positive or negative and may be used as a tool to inculcate discipline. Physical or corporal punishment includes caning, physical labour such as watering school gardens or cutting grass, kneeling or walking on knees. As part of enforcing the conventions on children's rights, several countries have abolished corporal punishment in schools, although the illegal practice is still common in some schools. [Gorbunovs, et al., \(2016\)](#) criticise the use of corporal punishment suggesting that corporal punishment harms the general mental health of the learners and it ultimately negatively impacts the academic performance of the learners. Corporal punishment can lead to learners copying bad behaviour and the learners might also exhibit the same behaviour to other learners. On the other hand, [Etyang and Okoth \(2018\)](#) gave a different opinion suggesting that punishment delivered immediately after a response is likely to be most

effective while the longer the delay between the response and the punishment, the greater the chance of the punishment associating with other intervening events. Positive and negative reinforcements are crucial aspects of altering behaviour after delivering punishment.

Most of the questionnaire participants agreed on the use of reinforcements of school rules and regulations as a means of instilling discipline among learners. Interview participants also concurred on the school having a policy document on rules and reinforcements of school rules. The school must design a code of conduct and the children must be educated on how to observe the code of conduct (Cohen et al., 2010). opines that regulations are authoritative disciplines with a course of law intended to promote discipline in school. Hernandez and Seem (2004) explained that school operations are impacted by how the teachers and administrators manage indiscipline in a school. The school must spell out the parameters for learners' behaviour as well as what the school expect from the learners. The school principal and management must give each learners a copy of the designed rules and the form of punishment that is given for each type of indiscipline. In their studies, both Sugai and Horner (2014) and Hernandez and Seem, (2014) established that schools with good administration emphasise observing school discipline. Some schools have a disciplinary committee which handles disciplinary-related issues. The school discipline, therefore, prescribes the standard of behaviour expected of the teachers and the learners. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) believe that schools characterised by learners' violence and other related ill-discipline have poor discipline management structures. The poor discipline management practices by the school will negatively impact the academic performance of the school. Ofoyuru and Too-Okema (2011) noted that some schools enforce discipline by using prefect or learners represents councils as well as disciplinary committees Ehiane (2014). also argue that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding learners about disciplines in school and monitoring their compliance with them.

Conclusion

Negligent parents contributed to indiscipline in the Katjinakatji circuit. Furthermore, indiscipline in schools also emanates from learners' home backgrounds. Some learners were coming from broken homes which were giving bad exemplary to learners and dysfunctional families were promoting indiscipline and learners from such families were copying bad habits from their parents such as drinking and smoking Schools have large populations and inadequate resources which were promoting indiscipline among learners. Discipline creates a conducive environment for learning and lessons were progressing smoothly when learners are disciplined. Discipline fosters an understanding of subject concepts and the learning process by creating a stress-free environment which allows learners to understand critical concepts in various subject areas. Discipline promotes a culture of reading and studying and self-discipline regulates reading within learners, thus learners should cultivate the culture of studying. Discipline allows learners to get better grades and average learners were getting better marks or good grades if they were disciplined. Learners who have self-control focus on school work and mostly come out on top of their class in examinations. The government should build more classrooms to reduce the class size such that the teacher-learners' ratio can be low. School should create a conducive environment for learning and an environment that promote discipline. Life-skills teachers should teach and emphasize self-discipline as well as self-control which will enable the learners to focus on school work. Suggestions for future studies can employ the quantitative method to assess the relationship between the academic performance of learners and the discipline of learners.

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