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The Implications of School Unrest on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Bondo Sub-County, Kenya

Kenneth Otieno

Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Dr. Edward Khasakhala Okaya

Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Abstract:

Schools are called to effectively assess and monitor school climate given its potential ability to enhance positive student outcomes and mitigate risk behaviors. When a positive school climate exists, students, staff members and parents feel safe, included and accepted. The school community demonstrates respect, fairness and kindness in their interactions and builds healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment. This study sought to examine the Implications of school unrest on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bondo sub-County Kenya. The study was guided by the System Theory of biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. A descriptive research design was used in this study. The study adopted the mixed method of study. This study population comprised 3159 Form 3 students, 49 principals, 49 teachers of Guidance and Counseling and 1 sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer in Bondo sub-county. Stratified sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to arrive at a sample size of 300 of Form three students from sampled schools. Besides, all Principals and Guidance and Counseling Teachers of the selected schools were also brought on board. Data were collected using a questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis. After collection, quantitative data were sorted, edited, coded, classified and tabulated for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics results were presented as counts/tables, percentages, bar graphs, column graphs and pie charts. Further, chi-square tests and Spearman correlation tests were run between school climate and students' unrest. This study established that unrest in secondary schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline and that it has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance. HO2 stated that the association between unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance factor was statistically significant. The study suggested that there is a need to increase students' feeling of safety at school, for example, by reducing victimization, improving overall school and neighborhood safety and promoting classroom engagement.

Keywords: Academic performance, negative school climate, parents, principal, positive school climate, students, teachers, unrest

1. Background and Introduction

When education is interrupted, classrooms destroyed, educational resources stretched, and students are endangered, children's future is threatened (IIEP-UNESCO 2021). Schools should provide a safe space where children can be protected from threats and crises. It is also a critical step to breaking the cycle of crisis and reduces the likelihood of future conflicts (UNICEF, 2023). Where there is insecurity, education can be both life-sustaining and life-saving. Education supports children and young people's lifelong learning. It gives them the necessary skills to build a better future for themselves and their families to contribute to peaceful and prosperous communities (UNICEF, 2018). Unrest in schools is a rampant phenomenon. This is a global issue that has permeated societies for a long time. It spans social, political, economic, geographical, racial and gender boundaries (Karanja & Bowen, 2012).

Developing counties have been the significant receptors of students' unrest that have often given birth to significant violent and destructive outcomes (World Bank statistics, 2012). For example, according to a study conducted on 0-17-year-old children in Bangladesh, the unrest that led to violence among children was considered a global health problem and was the most inhuman type of intentional injury (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

A recent study from South Africa has also shown that physical fighting among school-going adolescents is prevalent, especially when they feel their voices are never heard (Human Rights Watch, 2016). For Example, Rudatsikira *et al.* (2009) reported that 50.6% of adolescents had engaged in physical fighting with their fellow students, teachers, authority, or prefects within the past 12 months before the survey in Namibia and South Africa. While deaths were the most severe consequences of interpersonal violence, the effects of school violence include; interference with students' usual learning activities, weapon carrying for defensive purposes on school grounds, severe injury and increased medical

costs, and absenteeism from school WHO (2009).

Unrest in educational institutions in Kenya cut across secondary schools, colleges and universities. The surprising thing is that primary schools have taken up to the vice (MOE, 2012). These unrests were replicated in Bondo sub-county schools such as Maranda High School. The Ministry of Education puts a lot of emphasis on using good offices and participation in the management of schools and implementation of the curriculum.

Disruptions can interrupt lessons for all students, and disruptive students can lose even more learning time. (Liu & Meyer, 2005; Adams, Lemaire & Prah, 2013) assert that it is important for teachers to keep the ultimate goal of learning in mind when working to improve school discipline. Effective school discipline strategies seek to encourage responsible behavior and to provide all students with a satisfying school experience as well as to discourage misconduct. This does not allow the syllabus to be completed before students write their final examinations. For fear of their lives, teachers are unable to give out their best and use strategies that could enhance their teaching. The research recommends that both parents and teachers should serve as role models and instill discipline among the students. By this, they can do any punishment and reduce various forms of behaviors that are not accepted in society. Parents should be responsible and work hard to meet the socio-economic and emotional needs of their children. A teacher should also change their attitude towards work, eschew laziness and be in a position to counsel the students when the need arises (Liu & Meyer, 2005; Adams, Lemaire & Pray, 2013).

2. Review of the Related Literature

According to Ekwere (2015), research on factors influencing students' unrest in institutions of higher learning and its implications on the academic performance of students in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibo State, Nigeria. The target population consisted of 450 students from the University of Uyo only. Data were collected using questionnaires. This current study targets secondary school students, G & C teachers, principals and SQASO from Bondo sub-county, Kenya. This study has used a questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis guide to get a clear view of the participants. Ekwere discovered that breaking of rules and regulations, lack of social amenities and students' involvement in cultism were serious factors that can influence students' unrest in institutions of higher learning. It was also discovered that disruption of academic programs, closure of schools, lecturers not being unable to cover the syllabus, and brain drain syndrome are the implications of students' unrest. This current study established other aftermath effects of unrest on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Bondo sub-county, Kenya.

Ekwere (2015) recommends that the best practice that should be observed by school authorities for effective control of students' unrest were:

- The use of dialogue,
- Training of school administrators on crisis management, and
- The presence of adequate infrastructure on campuses.

Institutional heads would find the proposed recommendations as effective anti-dotes for effective control of students' unrest in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning. The current study established whether there is a relationship between the behavior of students in Nigeria and Kenya and whether factors influencing students' unrest and their implication on Academic Performance in Nigeria are related to factors influencing students' unrest and its implication on academic performance of Secondary Students in Kenya, and how best can those factors be prevented from occurring.

Odoyo (2016) conducted research on the impact of discipline on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Muhoroni sub-county, Kenya. The target population was 817 pupils from 34 randomly selected schools. Questionnaires were used for data collection. This current study used questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guides to get a clear picture of how discipline impacts academic performance in public secondary schools in Bondo sub-county. The reliability coefficients of the questionnaire, determined by the test-retest method, were found to be 0.83 and 0.97, respectively. Also, discipline related positively with and accounted for 23% of the variance in the pupils' academic performance. This implied that academic performance increased among the pupils with increased levels of discipline. The findings of this current research are slightly different from Odoyo's 2016 research, given that this current research takes place among secondary school students in Bondo sub-county. The study recommends the enhancement of discipline among the pupils for improvement of their academic performance. There is a likelihood that factors affecting primary pupils are different from those of secondary. The current study involves public secondary school students from Bondo sub-county, Siaya County. The differences in age and education level are likely to give different findings. This research will help principals find out how well they can prevent unrest in their schools and promote a positive school climate among students hence promoting improved academic performance in schools.

Enefa et al.'s (2012) research on the Effects of Indiscipline on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in DEKINA L.G.A. of KOGI State showed that students and teachers agreed that indiscipline is majorly caused by the level of teachers' experience and qualification, unfavorable school climate, ineffective teacher/students relationship, inadequate school facilities, improper classroom arrangement of school timetable and types of school punishment. It was also noted that causes of indiscipline are mostly linked to school administrations. The results showed that the effects of indiscipline on students' academic performance lead to poor academic performance, indiscipline among secondary school students, lead to principals/teachers ineffectiveness, students' indiscipline affects societal development, and students' indiscipline affects parent-teacher relationship. It was concluded that indiscipline is a problem for everyone and has effects on all aspects of human lives and as such, everyone must be involved in curbing indiscipline. Also, the schools should reawaken their main objective, which is to reform the human mind and perspective of life, instilling discipline and teaching the human mind the need for good social behavior.

Enefa (2012) recommended that teachers and school administrators should be given proper training on how to manage students and staff alike. School administration should ensure that the school policies do not push the students to the point of rebellion. Rules and regulations should be realistic and stated clearly for the absorption of all students. This research took place in Nigeria. Thus, it has been found to have finding similar to the findings of the current research. This shows that students in Nigeria and Bondo sub-county, Kenya, experience almost similar school climates and once affected, they behave in a similar manner. This research has come up with recommendations that are slightly different from that of Enefa et al. (2012). Thus this study is relevant.

Ofori (2018) conducted research on the effect of indiscipline on the academic performance of Junior High School Students (JHS) in the Fantekwa District of Ghana. During the study, a questionnaire was used as the instrument to gather all the necessary information about the problem. In this current study questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis guide will be used to gather information. The differences in the research instrumentation could bring the difference in the findings of Ofori's study and the current study. This study revealed that indiscipline starts with the home because they are the children's first teachers. It was also found that the effects of indiscipline on academic performance included the inability to concentrate in class, loss of materials taught due to absenteeism and an increase in the rate of school drop-out. Ofori recommends that indiscipline in society should begin at home. The home and the school must therefore interact and co-operate in instilling discipline. Also, providing a hearing process for students to present their side of the story and establishing an appeal process to increase students' and parents' perception of fairness. This enabled us to compare the effects of indiscipline on academic performance in Ghana and the effects of indiscipline on academic performance in Kenya. The current study, therefore, filled this gap.

3. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Bondo sub-county Siaya County, Kenya. Bondo sub-county is located 50 kilometers west of Kisumu. The sub-county is located between a longitude: 34° 16' & 9.98" E and latitude 0° 14' & 19.00" N. The study adopted a descriptive research design whose main purpose was to allow the researcher to collect original information from the field using questionnaires and interview schedules. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. Through the qualitative descriptive design, the researcher was able to record events through first-hand information. The target population comprised 3159 Form 3 students, 49 principals, 49 teachers of Guidance and Counseling and 1 sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer in Bondo sub-county. Stratified sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to arrive at a sample size of 300 Form 3 students from sampled schools. Besides, all Principals and Guidance and Counseling Teachers of the selected schools were also brought on board. Data was collected using a questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis. After collection, quantitative data was sorted, edited, coded, classified and tabulated for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics results were presented as counts/tables, percentages, bar graphs, column graphs and pie charts. Further, chi-square tests and Spearman correlation tests were run between school climate and students' unrest. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between students' unrest and their academic performance, chi-square statistics =40.527, p=0.001 and df=16.

4. Research Findings and Analysis

4.1. Correlation between School Unrest and Academic Performance

The objective of the study was to determine the extent to which unrest interferes with academic performance in secondary schools in Bondo sub-county Kenya. Respondents were asked if unrest in schools interferes with academic performance. The results are presented in figure 1.

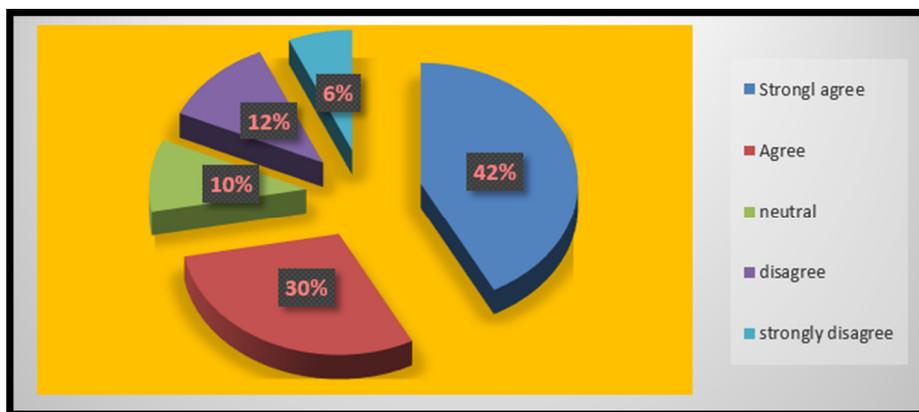


Figure 1: Responses on the Potential of Unrest to Affect Students' Overall Academic Performance
Source: Field Study 2022

Data in figure 1 show that most of the students, accounting for 72% (42.3% strongly agree, 29.7% agree), agreed with the statement that unrest in schools interferes with academic performance. Only 18% (6% strongly disagree, 12%

disagree) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 10% remained neutral. From the results, it is reasonable to conclude that unrest in schools negatively impacts the academic performance of students in Bondo sub-county. This finding was consistent with that of Reynolds (2017), which found that students' school identification might affect their academic performance if the school climate is positive and supportive, and this, in turn, facilitates the student to identify with the school as a salient group, then the student is more likely to reflect and embed the school values, and Ofori(2018) research revealed that effects of indiscipline on academic performance included inability to concentrate in class, loss of materials taught due to absenteeism and increase in the rate of school drop-out.

The above sentiment was echoed by SQASO when he said: *At times, serious cases of indiscipline lead to student protests and from which students take the law into their hands and end up destroying school infrastructure. When the unrest escalates, principals have no option but to close down the schools. When this happens, a lot of time for curriculum implementation is wasted hence poor academic performance.*

According to Lussier & FitzPatrick (2016), increasing students' feeling of safety at school, for example, reducing victimization and improving the overall school and neighborhood safety climate, is likely to promote classroom engagement and high school completion and decrease mental problems of youth.

A chi-square test was run to test (if teachers work hard in school) to get students to perform well in school in tests. The results are presented in table 1.

Chi-Square Test			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.553 ^a	16	.001
Likelihood Ratio	40.527	16	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.033	1	.309
N of Valid Cases	300		

Table 1: Chi-Square Test (Students' Unrest ~ Teachers Working in Schools)

According to the chi-square test results in table 1, the Pearson chi-square statistic is 39.553 and the p-value = 0.00. The likelihood chi-square statistic is 40.527 and the p-value = 0.001. Therefore, at a significance level of 0.05, it is evident that the association between unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance (teachers work hard in schools to get students to perform well on tests) factor was statistically significant. This means that unrest in schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. Therefore, it has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance. In particular, it affects teachers' work. This result was consistent with that one of Nicholas (2016), which found out that schools where teachers provide consistent and regular positive reinforcement to all students, particularly to students exhibiting chronic behavioral problems, are more likely to decrease Office Discipline Referrals and increase positive school climate. The results further confirm the value of positively reinforcing students for appropriate behavior (Horner et al., 2010). The school should also work to increase connections with parents, particularly for students with frequent behavior problems.

The Pearson chi-square test was run to establish the association between students' unrest in schools and their overall academic performance (teachers at my school help us students with our problem). The results are presented in table 2.

Chi-Square Test			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	56.218 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.556	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.395	1	.036
N of Valid Cases	300		

Table 2: Chi-Square Test (Students' Unrest ~ Teachers Helping Students)

Source: Field Study, 2022

The results in table 2 show that the Pearson chi-square statistic is 56.218 and the p-value = 0.000. The likelihood chi-square statistic is 53.556 and the p-value = 0.000. Therefore, at a significance level of 0.05, it is evident that the association between students' unrest in schools and their overall academic performance (teachers at my school help us students with our problem) factor was statistically significant. This means that unrest in schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. Therefore, it has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance. In particular, it reduces the rate or level at which teachers are involved in helping students solve their academic problems.

Nevertheless, this result agrees with the conceptual framework, which shows that when there is unrest in school, the academic performance of the students is likely to be negatively affected. In addition, Lussier et al.'s (2016) findings indicate that students who feel safer demonstrated fewer depressive symptoms, but this only partly explains the association between feeling safe and being engaged. It was concluded that increasing students' feelings of safety at school is likely to represent an effective strategy for promoting classroom engagement leading to future academic achievement

and high school completion, as well as decreased symptoms of mental health problems among youth.

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Pearson Chi-square Statistic was run to establish the association between unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance (I feel that I can do well in my school) factor. The results are presented in table 4.

			Unrest among students in schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. It has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance.	I feel that I can do well in my school
Spearman's rho	Unrest in schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. It has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.155**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
		N	300	300
	I feel that I can do well in my school	Correlation Coefficient	-.155**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
		N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 4: Correlation (Students' Unrest ~ Students Feeling They Can Do Well)

Source: Field Study 2022

Data in table 4 show that there was a weak negative correlation between students feeling that they can do well in their schools and unrest in schools, being a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. This negative relationship implies that, as unrest increases in schools, the students' confidence in themselves and their level of preparedness for their exams decreases. This relationship was found to have the potential to affect students' overall academic performance because it was statistically significant at $r_s = -.155$, $p = .007$.

This view agrees with the study carried out by Ekwere (2015), which indicates that breaking rules and regulations, lack of social amenities and students' involvement in cultism were serious factors that can influence students' unrest in institutions of higher learning. It was also discovered that disruption of academic programs, closure of schools, lecturers not being unable to cover the syllabus, and brain drain syndrome are the implications of students' unrest. These factors were found to have the potential to affect students' overall academic performance.

According to Kangangi (2017) research, findings indicate that Peer pressure influenced students' academic performance in that 67.6% of the respondents said that most students might not be interested in academic excellence and pull others down, while 73% of respondents said motivation and discipline of students influenced performance in one way or the other. This shows that unrest in schools affects the academic performance of students negatively. In conclusion, school administration needs to work more in helping students build a positive school climate both at home and at school.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The third objective was to describe the extent to which unrest interferes with the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Bondo sub-county Kenya. It was evident that the association between the unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance (teachers work hard in schools to get students to perform well on tests) factor was statistically significant. This means that unrest in schools is a consequence of a negative school climate, necessitating students' indiscipline. HO2 stated that the association between unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance factor was statistically significant.

The study established that unrest in schools is a consequence of a negative climate, necessitating students' indiscipline and that it has the potential to affect students' overall academic performance. HO2 stated that the association between unrest in schools and students' overall academic performance factor was statistically significant. Based on the findings, the study recommended that there is a need to increase students' feeling of safety at school, for example, reducing victimization, improving overall school and neighborhood safety and promoting classroom engagement. Secondly, parents should support school administrations in implementing school policies, rules and regulations set out to streamline students' behavior in schools.

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