

KANT OR CAN'T: UNDERSTANDING THE DIALECTICS OF DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOL POLICIES AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF SCHOOLS IN THE NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *School discipline portends a bridge used by schools to accomplish their goals, procure success to the weak and esteem to the entire school because no matter how brilliantly a school's system is conceived, it will not work effectively unless the sunshine of discipline radiates the entire school system. This subject is analysed using Kant's moral theory on the grounds that the declining rate of discipline in schools is a key contributory factor to the erosion of academic success. The paper is based on a qualitative research that assumes that, affirmation of good school systems without discipline is the beginning of delusions for academic success, and consequently sought appropriate policies to reduce indiscipline in schools. The research was a case study of 2 schools that used multi-methods to collect in-depth data with interview guides and interview schedules as instruments for data collection. The total population for the study was 232 and a multi-stage sampling design was used to select 20 respondents. The data was analysed with 4 levels of coding using Microsoft Word and Excel. The findings showed that: teachers and heads apart from students are culprits of school indiscipline and students learn bad behaviours from their teachers; success at school discipline will depend on the use of firmness, fairness and patience to arrive at decisions that would help to promote discipline. The paper recommends that schools should set up rules and regulations that fall within the ambit of public education policy but interspersed with the 'good will' to guide behaviour and conduct.*

KEYWORDS: Metaphysical Ideas; Categorical Imperative; Discipline; Academic Success; Morality; Good Will.

"If you will discipline yourself to make your mind self-sufficient, you will thereby be least vulnerable to injury from the outside." – Critias of Athens

INTRODUCTION

The arguments presented in this paper take as premise the idea that human accomplishments are achieved mostly by the belief in one's self and abilities. With the belief in self, people can achieve what others have been able to accomplish barring physical restraints. This means that the only limitations to any individual's achievements are the ones that they set themselves. These ideals are pertinent in 21st century schools where both teachers and students are expected to possess high moral values and work hard to maintain discipline. They also provide fertile grounds for the development of students' ability to learn and show respect to their colleague students as well as their teachers and vice-versa. In the 21st century, students are taught

differently than before. There is much more student centered involvement in the classrooms and other school activities which demands that both students and teachers become disciplined and kept under control as school activities take place. This implies a philosophy which enjoins schools to maintain firm hand on teachers and students, while showing love and care at the same time. This is a *sine qua non* for academic success and subsequently life after school. Schools therefore have the duty to prepare students for the world of work because management in the 21st century business world expects workers to be respectful of those in authority. This quality is discussed by the paper in the context of exploring ideas for policy making to reduce indiscipline in schools in order to enhance academic success. This will eventually launch students successfully in the world of work. The paper draws on Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (2017) to show the appropriateness, and whether schools are able to apply the ideas of 'Kant' in formulating policies to instill discipline, or that this is an illusion that 'Can't' be achieved. Kant's work in the *Critique of Pure Reason* lays out some metaphysical and epistemological ideas which are primarily meta-ethical work that outlines and defines the concepts and arguments that can shape policies for school discipline on *à priori* basis. Thus, in order to determine morality, Kant makes an argument from common reason to the supreme unconditional law, and then makes a backwards argument to prove the relevance and weight of the moral law which school can follow to formulate policies on discipline.

These perspectives are derived from the notion that schools are established as human resource development institutions, to help shape the character and behaviour of students, who are expected to grow into responsible future leadership. However, a lot of schools across Ghana and at all levels are confronted with diverse forms of unruly behaviour (GNA, 2018; Haroon, 2015) and school authorities are therefore faced with the arduous tasks of dealing with these acts of indiscipline because they undermine academic success (Boamah, 2018). This is imperative because effective learning requires not only the ability of teachers to teach well, but also that students put up appropriate behaviour for lessons to proceed smoothly with minimum distractions and disruptions. This means that academic success becomes possible when there is an orderly, conducive, safe and peaceful atmosphere in the school. If a school is characterized by indiscipline, the opportunity to learn becomes severally compromised. The Editorial (2013) has raised questions about the effectiveness of the systems of discipline in Ghana's schools in a case where 85 final year students from Keta Business College were withdrawn for vandalism; and both Kumasi Girls SHS and Northern School of Business together suspended 400 final year students for gross indiscipline. This scenario in Ghana where large numbers of students are involved in acts of indiscipline gives the impression that discipline has broken down in Ghanaian schools (GNA, 2018; Editorial, 2013; and Tangbanyire, 2010) and schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality (NSM) are not exceptions to the problem.

However, the objectives of equipping students with values, skills and attitudes that will enhance excellent academic performance and consequently become productive, responsible and successful workers can only be achieved in a disciplined school environment. This is a quintessence of Kant's idea of the categorical imperative which is the centerpiece of his *Groundwork* and places the standard for 'moral good' in reason which emphasize the idea that enforcing discipline among both teachers and students should always be done with regard to their personhood and dignity. These embed the schools discipline – values and skill development – social stability logic described by Bawumia (2017) as "indiscipline is expensive for nation building because it is destructive, and can destroy the overall performance of students and their future". Kant therefore argues that school discipline (morality) cannot be merely a matter of preference or taste. He affirms that "man must be disciplined, for he is by nature raw

and wild” (Kant cited in Churton, 2003). Consequently, this study makes a contribution to the debate regarding approaches to policies that are needed to reduce indiscipline in schools through exploring new and effective ideas to deal with indiscipline to promote academic success, build values and skills to bolster social stability through a Kantian framework.

Statement of the problem

The study is based on the problem that the plethora of policy interventions made by educational authorities to reduce indiscipline among students in the Nkoranza South Municipality (NSM) have not been effective since such acts have been on the ascendency and these compromise academic success (Nkrabiah, 2013). Teachers, parents and the public have been very concerned about the growing acts of indiscipline in junior high schools in the NSM which may be categorized into two: student-indiscipline and teacher-indiscipline (Sottie, 2016). Teacher indiscipline is of essence in this context because it erodes the moral authority of teachers to enforce discipline in the schools (Owusu, 2017).

Purpose of the study

The study sought to explore effective ways of formulating policies to reduce indiscipline in schools in the NSM in order to enhance academic success.

Objectives of the study

The objectives for the study are to:

- i. investigate how indiscipline affects academic success in schools in the NSM.
- ii. investigate the effectiveness of schools policies used to reduce indiscipline in schools in the NSM to enhance academic success.

Research questions

Two research questions (below) were used to structure the study:

- i. How does indiscipline affect academic success in schools in the NSM?
- ii. To what extent have the policies used by schools in the NSM been effective at reducing indiscipline to enhance academic success?

Theoretical framework

This section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the research which are categorized into two themes and drawn from the research questions:

a. Effects of indiscipline on academic success

The section discusses issues relating to research question 1 which seeks to investigate the ways indiscipline affect academic success in schools in the NSM. The discussion makes use of theories from Glasser (1998), Canter and Canter (1976), and Coloroso (2009) on schools discipline. Rosen (2005) and Fosu (2005) have argued that defining discipline has for centuries been a difficult endeavour because the concept portends different things with a myriad of implications which are often interpreted subjectively. According to Appiah (2006) this makes discipline a contentious subject in educational administration. However, Owusu (2017) refers

to the concept as “training and experiences that correct, mold, and strengthen individuals’ mental faculties and moral character” or “self-control and the development of skills that help individuals resist temptations, act positively and functions both independently and cooperatively in ways that enhance personal development and community life”. These ideas enjoins educators to find the most effective and useful ways to support students’ development and learning. Acts of indiscipline may be constituted by the actions of students or teachers that stands contrary to school regulations, and which affects negatively classroom or school activities.

Concept of indiscipline in schools

Arújo (2005) has classified indiscipline in schools as disruptive behaviour, and determined by teacher judgment. Rosen (2005) has argued that the definition of school discipline varies from school to school and even in the same school, teachers are unlikely to proffer same definition. This subjective perception of indiscipline determines the individual teacher’s reaction to the phenomenon. The literature suggests that there are two types of school indiscipline, namely; student-indiscipline (Knoff, 2012) and teacher-indiscipline (Parker, 2008; Gobah, 2007).

Causes of indiscipline in schools

Glasser’s theory on schools discipline is based on basic needs of children which include freedom, power (or achievement), fun, and love (or belongingness) (Glasser, 1998; 2000). He argues that these needs may be satisfied through quality curriculum and associated activities. He argues however that indiscipline is a product of being ‘out-of-sync’ with current circumstances but believes that teachers and students are still responsible for their actions. He supports this claim with an aspect of his 10 maxims of choice theory – “we can only control our feelings and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think” (Glasser, 1998). Sackey (1995) has since long ago blamed school indiscipline on choices of school heads. Blair, Jones and Simpson (1975) have also stated since decades ago that the behaviour of children is the result of the simultaneous operations of biological and environmental factors. Ametepee, Chitiyo, and Abu (2009) have grouped the causes of student-indiscipline as: student-related, teacher-related, school-related, and home and community related causes.

b. Policies to reduce indiscipline in schools to enhance academic success.

The ideas discussed under this theme explore appropriate processes and guidelines that can effectively reduce indiscipline in schools. Canter and Canter (2011) have argued that ‘assertive discipline’ provides the solution to indiscipline in schools. They have argued that the goal of assertive discipline is to teach students to choose responsible behaviour in order to increase their self-esteem and subsequently enhance academic success (see also Boamah, 2018). Canter and Canter (2011) have argued that when students take responsibility for their behaviour and attendant consequences, students will positively be motivated to act responsibly. According to their theory, the type of punishment used “must be unpleasant but not harmful to the children; give consequences calmly; and provide students with escape mechanisms in case they wisely choose to avoid conflict”.

This perspective is bolstered by the idea that school discipline means punishment for violating rules, and enforcement of regulations imposed on offenders by the schools’ authorities in order to guide them to behave in socially acceptable ways (Boamah, 2018). These are indications that schools can use lots of strategies to promote peace, quiet and orderliness needed for academic success. Effective school discipline does not happen once after one simple instance

of misbehaviour has been successfully checked. Rather, it takes time and employs tactfulness and persistent efforts to become successful, and Coloroso's theory indicates that this goal is mostly achieved when students are ensured a safe and encouraging environment (Coloroso, 2009). He believes that students can be taught to have inner discipline by providing them with a safe and nurturing environment in order to learn and deal with the consequences of their actions. Coloroso argues further that students learn from the experience of the results of their decisions. Arújo (2005) has also suggested 2 key measures to be used in schools to maintain discipline and deal with behavioural problems. These are supportive and corrective discipline. Boamah (2018) has provided guidance in the development of self-control which is the aim of supportive discipline. Mensah (cited in Sottie, 2016) has also suggested that guidelines for students conduct should be made explicit enough and consistently enforced to avoid infractions in school rules, and Appiah (2006) has advanced a number of reasons why rules ought to be respected. Coloroso (2009) has suggested that teachers should help students to make better choices by making them see that they have the right to choose how they will behave.

Sklare (2014) has advocated for a positive approach through guidance and counseling programmes in order to achieve student self control. Hannigan and Hannigan (2017) points to rewards and argues that this is meritorious action and an expression of authority's approval of an action hoping that the child will enjoy and value the approval and hopes that others will emulate that behaviour. On another hand, corrective discipline is used when school authorities intend to prevent misbehaviour and support self-control (Bramson, 2013). Sprick (2013) has outlined an eight point approach for achieving optimal discipline in order to maximize desirable student learning outcomes in schools. Owusu (2017) believes that strategies for schools discipline must place premium on positive learning environment and good interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. Coloroso's (2009) theory deals with a very important segment of schools discipline - the idea that when it becomes pertinent for students to face the consequences of misbehaviours, the school authorities should not condone with the 3 student trickery which are: begging, bribery, weeping and wailing; anger and aggression; and sulking.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methods and methodology that were used to conduct the study. The research was a case study of 2 schools, and used a multiple-method approach to collect in-depth data. This was a qualitative research which used interviews and focus groups discussion as data collection methods to investigate the phenomena of school indiscipline (see Mertler, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Site and subject characteristics

The study was conducted in 2 Junior High Schools (JHSs) in NSM. The entire municipality has a total population of 100,929 comprising of 50,858 females and 50,071 males (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The Education directorate of the municipality is divided into 8 circuits. There are 42 public JHSs. The two schools used in the case study were selected from the Nkwabeng circuit. These are Nkwabeng SDA and Nkwabeng R/C JHSs. These schools have a lot of serious discipline challenges and are therefore well suited for the study.

Population

Seidu (2006) defines population as the sum aggregate or totality of the phenomenon of interest to the researcher and this involves all the people, objects and institutions that are the subject of the study. The population was 232 which consisted of 2 head teachers, 12 teachers and 218 students from the 2 schools.

Sampling design

The study used the multi-stage sampling technique to select a sample size of 20 respondents made up of 2 head teachers, six 6 teachers, and 12 students from both schools. The population of the study was made up of different groups with different characteristics hence stratified sampling was used to divide the population into 3 homogeneous groups in lieu of the group classification in the population as indicated above (see Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Then purposive sampling was used to select respondents who could help the study to achieve its objectives. Cohen et al. (2007) have said that purposive sampling is used to access knowledgeable people in the field of study. Hence teachers with responsibility for school discipline and student prefects were sampled for the study.

Instrumentation

The study used interview guides and interview schedules as instruments to collect data. Two separate interview guides were crafted respectively for the head teachers and teachers, whereas one interview schedule was used for the FGDs. To ensure the validity and appropriateness of the instruments, the researchers gave the instruments to 2 colleagues for review and comments. The comments were used to revise the instruments where appropriate. This activity was followed by establishing the content validity which was also granted by 2 educational administrators with responsibility for school discipline. They provided expert comments on the content of the instruments. Subsequently, the instruments were pilot tested in the Akumsa Domase M/A JHS in the NSM to establish their appropriateness and trustworthiness. The pilot test included 5 students, 2 headteachers, and 2 teachers. The results of the pilot test evaluation showed that the instruments were appropriate to be taken to the field because the objectives were achieved.

Data collection procedure

Two focus group discussions were conducted – one from each school. These were constituted by 2 teachers and 6 students from each school. In addition, 4 interviews were conducted. These are categorized into 2, namely: 1 headteacher and 1 teacher from each school. Responses from these sessions were written down and audio recorded. The interview sessions lasted 45 minutes on average, whereas the focus groups discussions took up to 1 hour.

Data analysis

The recorded data were transcribed and respondents' identity were coded and kept anonymous. The transcribed data was cleaned and coded for analysis using Microsoft Word to develop memos which is also known as open or initial coding. Thereafter the data was put through a further 3-stage coding regime using Microsoft Excel. These stages are the axial/focused coding, thematic coding, and the development of theoretical concepts (see Bryman, 2015). The study used Kant's theory of morality as the analytical framework.

Data analysis

The paper argues that schools must give both teachers and students the opportunity to make their own decisions about behaviour and deal with the consequences. For students, this idea is part of growing up and getting ready for life in a harsh world. This imperative emphasizes the need for both teachers and students to show respect to each other, especially to those older and wiser than they are. This provides the *raison de être* for school authorities not to tolerate the 3 student trickery (mentioned earlier) because such attitudes build poor character. This exigency enhances academic success if educators and students can understand what constitute discipline and morality. These ideas are expanded in the ensuing analysis of the data.

Effects of indiscipline on academic success.

The data indicated that the schools have a clear understanding of the concept of discipline. A respondent described indiscipline as “lack of self-control and not obeying laid down rules and regulations in a given society or institution” (Interview data, Respondent #1) or ‘the act of going against rules and regulations of an institution’ (FGD data, Respondent #4). The data showed further that discipline refers to “the exhibition of acceptable behaviour among people in a society” (Interview data, Respondent #3), and that indiscipline existed in their various schools. The research then explored incidence of indiscipline in the 2 schools within the previous five academic years, and the interview data revealed that indiscipline in the schools have increased over the period. The data indicated that acts of indiscipline in the 2 schools were manifested in such behaviours as “absenteeism, truancy, sexual misconduct, refusal to prepare lesson notes, theft, fighting, improper dressing, lateness to school, occultism, and smoking” (FGD data, Respondent #7). The data argues that these “acts of indiscipline are perpetuated by both teachers and students” (Interview data, Respondent #2). Another respondent argued that:

Acts like indecent dressing, examination malpractices, disrespect for authority, sexual misconduct, verbal and physical assault, work avoidance, substance abuse, loitering on compound and roaming in town during school hours...are seen among both students and teachers (Interview data, Respondent #2).

The FGD also indicated that:

Stealing, fighting, ‘runaway’, doing homework in class, disturbing in class, calling teachers ‘names’ behind their backs, examination malpractices, late-coming, disrespecting seniors, bullying juniors, abortion...are seen among students in the school (FGD data, Respondent #7).

The data showed that these acts of indiscipline are common among teachers, students and heads. A respondent said that “our head comes to school late and leaves school before we close” (FGD data, Respondent #6). Another said that “my former head embezzled PTA funds meant for a project and it became a serious issue in town. Due to this, PTA meetings were not held for over three years until recently” (Interview data, Respondent #2). Regarding teacher indiscipline, the data indicated that “some of our teachers come to school late; some go home before closing, miss their classes intentionally by sitting and chatting in the staff common room” (Interview data, Respondent #4). Another respondent said that “some teachers are alcoholic, have sexual relations with multiple women, and assault students physically and verbally” (FGD data, Respondent #7). Adu (2016) acknowledges this phenomenon and emphasize that “indiscipline will be on the ascendency if teachers and their heads continued to

absent themselves from school and engage in acts contrary to the code of conduct". Paaga (2007) also accept the notion that teachers and their heads are worse culprits from whom students learn bad behaviours. Owusu (2017) therefore says that

it behooves on the...teacher to act, behave and position him/herself as a role model to the very students.... It is easier for students to grasp the values and virtues the teacher demonstrates than to be coerced to follow...rules and values which is lacking in the life of the teacher who is enforcing same.

For student indiscipline, a respondent said, "students ... call teachers names, cheat during exams, dress improperly, come to school late, disrespect authority and disturb in class" (Interview data, Respondent #3), and another said "some of the students engage in sexual misconduct, wear indecent haircuts, play truancy, dress improperly, harass the juniors and some disrespect the seniors" (Interview data, Respondent #4). The data suggests that the origins of indiscipline in the schools may be traced to the homes and community as Haroon (2015) attributes the

growing indiscipline among students...on improper training...as 'charity begins at home'. These children bring the indiscipline from their homes...because when you have disciplined children from home, they do not involve themselves in this kind of rampaging. Are we breeding a bunch of thieves as students?

Effects of indiscipline on academic success in the schools.

The study investigated the nexus between indiscipline and academic success and the data indicated that indiscipline affects academic success negatively. A respondent argued for example that "absenteeism stagnate academic success since teachers cannot teach at the pace they should, and this eventually leads to non-completion of syllabus" (Interview data, Respondent #1). Another participant indicated that "students who are punished during instructional periods forgo the tuition they should be receiving and this affects their academic performance" (Interview data, Respondent #4).

The data further showed that the attitudes of some parents in reaction to teachers' disciplinary measures have caused apathy among teachers and have indirectly affected teachers' delivery, and this account for the poor performance of students in the 2 schools. According to the data, teachers know that teaching in the classroom is their primary responsibility but "there is the issue of low productivity on the part of both teachers and students. This hinders the ultimate goal of passing the BECE with merit" (Interview data, Respondent #2). The data revealed further that the acts of indiscipline in the schools also lead to non-completion of the syllabus and hence students "are forced to learn on their own without teachers' guidance to write external examinations. This is the reason why we score low marks and teachers cane us" (FGD data, Respondent #3). This view is corroborated by another respondent who said that "candidates are made to answer questions on certain topics in Social and Religious and Moral Education in the BECE which are never discussed in class and these candidates look helpless in the end" (FGD data, Respondent #8). Consequently, the connection between school discipline and academic success is described as:

indiscipline has led to low standard of education in the municipality since the education in the various schools has been 'hijacked by this cancer'. Due to the behaviour of some members from the communities, some teachers refuse to accept

transfer to schools here. They get scared of being harassed. This has made students very indisciplined and has affected the standard of education. Teachers are too careful not to step on the toes of 'the local powers' (Interview data, Respondent #2).

These are explained by the remark that "the high level of indiscipline among some students..., sometimes with the tacit support of their parents undermine academic work and negatively affect other innocent students" (Bramson, 2013), and emphasize the argument that "without school discipline, the school environment will be unsafe for everyone" (Boamah, 2018). These acts of indiscipline are discussed within the context of Kant's idea of the categorical imperative which places the standard for moral good in reason as argued earlier. The paper establishes this *à priori* rational basis for discipline by using Kant's maxims which are formulations of the subjective principle of volition and refer to the rules to follow in any intentional act. This means that actions that have moral worth are determined to fall into one of the 3 basic formulations of the categorical imperative which are:

- a. "act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"
- b. "act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end"
- c. "act as though through your maxims you could become a legislator of universal laws"

In the human behaviour discourse, Kant argues that there is nothing which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a 'good will'. This means that a 'good will' is the moral compass that always seeks good and therefore if a person becomes indisciplined, it is not the fault of the 'good will' but that of the person's ability to let the 'good will' translate into rational behaviour. Kant also connects moral obligations and duty, and argues that it is common sense not to consider as moral an act done out of inclination for the self. So for example a teacher who will not be alcoholic for fear of being sanctioned cannot be considered as a real moral (disciplined) because s/he acted this way for a reward and not for the 'good will'. Kant characterizes discipline (which is a natural product of morality) this way because he believes that discipline is a system of rules that people place on themselves and comes to human beings as a result of being rational. The reasoning here is that people whose good actions do not bring reward are the *only* people whose actions are moral. This is expressed more succinctly by Trotman (n.d.) that "discipline imposed from the outside eventually defeats when it is not matched by desire from within". The Kantian argument seeks to ground discipline in logic, which means that it does not make sense to be undisciplined, and thence thinks of discipline as inescapable as logic. He defined duty as 'the necessity to act out of reverence for the (moral) law'. This paper argues therefore that, to follow the moral law, the intrinsic sense of right and wrong which translates into school discipline is the greatest obligation. Kant outlines four possible cases in which an action may be carried out in respect of duty as actions that:

- i. are contrary to duty (such as stealing),
- ii. are dutiful but done only because of fear of penalty or sanction (such as attending classes),
- iii. accord with duty but which the individual is already inclined towards because it is pleasurable in some way (such as a learning), and

- iv. accord with duty but are contrary to inclination (such as not cheating in examinations even though the student is not prepared for the examinations).

This Kantian concept of morality and duty connects to teachers' and students' autonomy and freedom in maintaining schools discipline. This subject embeds the questions of why should teachers and students act morally or why should they be disciplined? That is, why should they 'will' in a rationally consistent manner? Why should they not make an exception of themselves when it comes to school discipline? The answers to these question links to Kant's concept of freedom. He argues that the very idea of morality and discipline which portends limiting oneself from engaging in certain behaviours because they are "immoral" is the highest expression of the concept of freedom. Freedom in this context refers to liberty from the influence of external forces (that is external to reason) such as the use of various form of punishments. If the teacher or student is influenced by want of an object or fame or revenge, or for any other reason, Kant believes that he is not free. To Kant, freedom also means adherence to the moral law, having one's will determined not externally but by their own (innate) decisions. The state of being free is the state of the 'will' being autonomous which literally means "giving the law to oneself". Kant believes that autonomy of the 'will' is the property that the 'will' has of being a law to 'itself' and this is independent of any property of the objects of volition. This points to a contradiction which Kant expresses as

if the will seeks the law that is to determine it anywhere but in the fitness of its maxims for its own legislation of universal laws, and if it thus goes outside of itself and seeks this law in the character of any of its objects, then heteronomy always results (Kant cited in Patton, 1969).

Kant means that for students and teachers to act autonomously, they must not be compelled to act by external influences but rather by their minds and rational thought. This suggests that discipline must be an integral part of the soul which is expressed in the logical principle in the law of non-contradiction. For example Q and not Q (Q and ~Q) cannot exist simultaneously. Similarly, truancy borders on attending school or not attending school. It cannot be both attending school and not attending school at the same time. Hence, to act rationally is to abide (at least) by the law of non-contradiction, i.e. not willing that something be both good and bad simultaneously. So, if a student or a teacher engages in any behaviour that is not governed by rational thought they are influenced by external forces. Not being free according to Kant is to have abandoned one's rational faculties, and if by contrast school behaviours are governed by rational thought, and are thus not contradictory, it becomes permissible and constitutes discipline. This Kantian framework suggests that both teachers and students must will to be disciplined, implying that discipline must emanate from within the individual and these may be attained through conscious efforts to inculcate morality and orderly behaviour in students and teachers through teaching and training.

Effective policies to reduce indiscipline in the schools to enhance academic success.

This section discusses data regarding the effectiveness of policies used in the schools to reduce indiscipline and how this will improve academic success.

Disciplinary policies and guidelines used in the schools

The data showed that the guidelines used by the 2 schools to check indiscipline are contained in "the Head teachers' Handbook.... These seek to guide heads of schools on how to deal with indiscipline in the schools" (Interview data, Respondent #2). Another source of disciplinary

guidelines is “the teachers’ code of conduct which checks indiscipline in schools especially teacher indiscipline (Interview data, Respondent #3). The data revealed further that “schools use RME textbooks as tools to shape the behaviour of students” (Interview data, Respondent #3). The data indicated that stakeholders of the schools are concerned about the magnitude of indiscipline in the schools. These stakeholders include the church, PTA, SMC, and the Assembly. A respondent said that:

The SMC and PTA are very proactive in ensuring discipline in the school through the suggestion they make. They suggest possible ways of dealing with the misbehaviours and in some cases take part in decisions to punish offenders (Interview data, Respondent #3).

The data indicated that stakeholders regulate the behaviours and attitudes of students, teachers and head teachers in various ways. A respondent said that “students’ attitudes are regulated by use of simple rules and regulations from the schools and the GES, supervision by teachers and headteachers, religious teachings, and counseling” (FGD data, Respondent #2), and then “teachers’ attitudes are regulated by teachers’ code of ethics of the profession, school based rules and regulations, and supervision from the head and circuit supervisor” (Interview data, Respondent, #1). Although these formats for regulation exist, both students and teachers are not familiar with the rules because of lack of orientation programmes. This problem is compounded by the lack of documentation on the school rules and regulations. A respondent claimed that “I have never seen the document but I am told that the rules and regulations have been written down” (Interview data, Respondent #3). It is however significant that all students who took part in the study said that they have never seen the written down rules and regulations of their school. The data indicated that it is just impossible for both students and teachers to have access to such “non-existing” documents. This means that the documentation on school rules and regulations, their comprehension, access, review, and acceptance of the consequences of their application is a major source of indiscipline in the schools due to the lack of information on it.

Enforcement of school rules and regulations to ensure discipline

The interview data revealed that the schools enforce the rules and regulations “by giving punishment to students who flout such rules...teachers get queried and reported to the circuit supervisor, and in extreme situations get transferred to a remote area. This is called ‘disciplinary transfer’” (Interview data, Respondent #2). The data revealed further that the “... nature of punishment are normally specified by the Headteachers’ handbook of 2010, and by the teachers own discretion” (Interview data, Respondent #1). This means that the methods for enforcing the rules and regulations are punitive and corrective instead of preventive and supportive. The data categorizes these punitive and corrective methods to include: caning, scolding, scrubbing, weeding, kneeling, fetching of water, and suspension. The data showed that the schools are not proactive about preventive approaches or making positive overtures about discipline such as guidance and counseling, paying special attention to ‘troublesome’ students, role modeling, giving responsibilities to students, and rewarding good deeds.

These imply that the schools are not doing enough to prevent acts of indiscipline but are rather interested in punishing students who breach the rules and regulations. Such posturing has been counter-productive and ineffective as acts of indiscipline still persist in the schools. The data says that the attitudes of some parents, students, teachers and the community towards discipline is a problem to school authorities in their efforts to maintain discipline in the schools. A

respondent for example said that “some parents challenge teachers when their wards are punished” (Interview data, Respondent #1). The situation is not helped by some government policies on education like mass promotion, because they make it difficult to initiate and implement practical measures to check indiscipline” (Interview data, Respondent #2). This introduces a contradiction in the efforts to reduce indiscipline in the schools because the data also indicated that some stakeholders are committed to reducing indiscipline in order to improve academic success in the schools.

Going beyond the convention to check indiscipline in schools

The data revealed that it is possible to reduce indiscipline in the schools in spite of the difficulties and contradictions that associate the conventional approaches to enforcing rules and regulations. Such endeavours will require new and effective approaches such as anticipated by Bramson (2018) that “as a matter of urgency, there is the need for the GES to ensure that the Unified Codes of Discipline has ‘teeth to bite’, and make it punitive enough to match the pranks of modern day teenagers whose antics are many years ahead of their parents and teachers”. Other example of schools’ strategy is cited as “disciplinary committees have been set up in the schools to help in addressing acts of indiscipline which did not exist in the past” (FGD data, Respondent #9). This committee tends to use “positive re-enforcement like rewards for offending students and teachers...to motivate them to put in their best” (Interview data, Respondent #1). Other approaches are indicated by a respondent that “a guidance and counseling coordinator has been appointed, disciplinary committee formed and reward system initiated to help do away with indiscipline” (Interview data, Respondent #2). The data again suggests that the schools have introduced extra classes to occupy students, and this “... has made it possible for teachers to cover good part of the syllabus and has reduced the pressure on students to learn some things on their own” (Interview data, Respondent #3). Furthermore, the data indicated that “all teachers take active roles in the extra curriculum activities like sports, culture and worship which was not so in the years past, and this has made students interested in such activities” (Interview data, Respondent #1). The data indicated that rewards are given to students for regular attendance in any term as well as for students who place between 1st and 3rd positions in the examinations. The data showed that:

Parents have been educated on the effects of mass promotion without making exceptions and the importance to repeat a student if necessary, to help the student pass the...BECE. Parents have thus, advised their wards to put in their best and will repeat if they are asked to by the school though it might contradict the GES directive (FGD data, Respondent #1).

The data suggests that these alternative strategies for checking indiscipline in schools have been effective. A respondent indicated the desire to see these measures continued rather than abandoned: “these measures have so far been quite effective but I think we need to do more” (FGD data, Respondent #4). Regarding the newly introduced rewards regime, a respondent argued that “comparatively, students’ attendance has increased. There is always competition in class as students challenge each other to take the first three places in class ...” (Interview data, Respondent #2). This measure is enforced by the argument that “the school should emphasize measures that will not only punish bad behaviours but rather prevent them” (Interview data, Respondent #1). Much as the data has shown that the newly introduced reward regime has improved academic success, Kant argues that this leads to a contradiction because

if you punish a child for being naughty, and reward him for being good, he will do right merely for the sake of the reward; and when he goes out into the world and finds that goodness is not always rewarded, nor wickedness always punished, he will grow into a man who only thinks about how he may get on in the world, and does right or wrong according as he finds advantage to himself (Kant cited in Churton, 2003).

The data revealed that the suggestions made about measures to reduce indiscipline in the schools are seen to be too lofty and difficult to attain. Indeed, they are not that difficult. They are "... very realistic if implemented. And if all stakeholders get committed to the course, it is highly possible to reduce indiscipline in our schools" (FGD data, Respondent #3). This view is corroborated by a respondent:

I have always believed that nothing is impossible.... I don't just believe, but I know that indiscipline can be removed completely from our schools. It will require great efforts by all, I mean everyone, to make it happen for the good of education in the municipality (Interview data, Respondent #1).

The data has brought to the fore a number of measures that the schools are using to reduce indiscipline, one of which is religion or God which in Kantian ethics relates to 'the divine command theory. This theory suggests that good and bad are determined by a deity, for example God of Abraham, God of Mohammed, e.t.c. but this contradicts the natural law theory as argued by Aquinas (2002) that morality comes from humans only because human are made by God. However Kant believes that religion and morality are a terrible pairing and must be kept apart. In order to determine what is right, you have to use reason and a sense of consideration on how to treat people becomes an essence. The rationale for this Kantian position is that if society looks to religion for morality there will be different answers. Kant taught that morality is a constant in an almost mathematical sense just like logic and this is so for everybody. The point here is that using religion as a tool for discipline in schools can be counter-productive because it will introduce contradictions in the schools concept of discipline due to the differences in religious teachings. Regarding the motives for behaviours in schools, Kant made a distinction between things people ought to do morally and the things they have to do for other non-moral reasons. He argues that most of the time, whether or not people ought to do something is not really a moral choice. Instead, it is just contingent on our desires, so for example if teachers decide they want more money, then they have to get extra jobs, or if students want to get 'A' in examinations, then they have to study. Kant calls these 'if' statements the 'hypothetical imperatives'. These are commands people should follow if they want something. Hypothetical imperatives are about prudence rather than morality. So in the Kantian world, behaviour which results in discipline may be categorized into 2 based on the motives namely, the hypothetical and categorical imperatives. The categorical imperatives are commands people must follow regardless of one's desires. Categorical imperatives are moral obligations that are derived from pure reason. Kant said it does not matter whether you want to be moral or not, but moral law is binding on everyone.

Kant believes that people do not need religion to determine what constitutes good behaviour because what is right and wrong is totally knowable just by using the intellect. So how should schools constitute morality and discipline? Kant points to the categorical imperative and said that it can be understood in terms of the 3 formulations (indicated above). The first formulation points to the 'universability' of a principle which says 'act only according to that maxim which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction. This

formulation requires that before a person acts, s/he need to ask, what is the maxim of my actions? In other words, what is the general rule that stands behind the particular action they are considering? So for example, a student gets hungry just at the time of going to class and there is no food around anywhere. S/he notices that the school matron is packing fruits to the dining hall but the matron gets distracted with a conversation and the student noticed that s/he could just snag a banana and be on the way. Is it right morally for the student to do this? The particular action that the student is considering, that is taking the bread is stealing, and if the student approves the maxim of stealing, then what s/he is actually doing is 'universalizing' that action. S/he is saying that everyone should actually steal. Thus, if the student should be able to do it, then everyone else should be able to do it too.

This action leads to a contradiction but Kant specifically said that moral action cannot bring about a contradiction. The contradiction is that in reality this student would not agree that everyone should steal all the time. Because if every student should steal, then the student will steal the bread, and another student will steal from the student who stole the bread, and a third student will steal from the second student e.t.c. Every student then will be stealing from every other student. Therefore stealing is not 'universalizable'.

This leads to another subject about school discipline which is the application of different rules to students who commit the same offence, especially in situations where some parents express their disapproval of applying school rules to their children's misconduct. Kant says that it is not fair to make exceptions for oneself. He believes that moral rules apply to everyone equally. This sounds fair but it can sometimes lead to counter intuitive results and has to be approached with caution. According to Kant, one thing students and teachers are not permitted to do is violate the moral law, even if others are doing so, even for a really good cause.

The second formulation of the categorical imperative is the formula for humanity which is 'act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a mere means'. To use something as a 'mere means' is to use it only for your own benefit with no thought to the interest or benefits of the thing you are using. The idea here is that teachers, parents and students should be careful not to use each other as mere means but to recognize the humanity of each other in their interactions. People use things as mere means all the time and when they don't benefit them anymore, they dispose of them. However Kant says that humans are not supposed to be used as such, because humans are what Kant calls 'ends in themselves'. For example, teachers are not mere objects that exist to be used by parents and students. Indeed teachers are their own ends, rational and autonomous. They have the ability to set their own goals and work towards them. So to treat someone as an end in themselves means to recognize their humanity and to realize that they have goals and values of their own.

In the encounter between teachers and students, Kant points out that they do use each other all the time because for example, students use teachers as means to get education but students must not use teachers as a *mere* means. This implies that students should recognize the humanity of teachers when they use them, especially as teachers agree to being used. Thus, teachers deserve not to be used as mere means because of their autonomy. This suggests that unlike objects, teachers are self-governed, they are able to set their own ends, make their own free decisions based on their rational wills, they can set goals for themselves and take steps to realize those goals. This imbues teachers with an absolute moral worth, which means that teachers should not be manipulated, and neither should teachers manipulate students who are also autonomous beings for their own benefits. This analysis suggests that acts like lies and

deceptions are not right. Hence, if teachers are deceived, they cannot make autonomous decision about how to act because their decisions are based on false information. For example, a teacher agrees to allow a student out of class because the student is sick but will not allow the student out of the class to watch a football match. So if the student lies about the permission, the student is robbing the teacher of his ability to decide to help the student. In this case the student has treated the teacher as a mere means to accomplish his/her goals, with no thought to the teacher's own goals and interests. This action violates Kant's second categorical imperative and constitutes indiscipline. Kant argues therefore that a proper rational application of the categorical imperative will lead schools to moral truths that are fixed and applicable to both teachers and students who are moral agents and this will lead to effective guidelines for formulating policies on school discipline.

Concluding with a Kantian formula for schools discipline: 'A jewel that shines in its own light'.

The study has identified that indiscipline cause loss of effective instructional periods, apathy or low morale on the part of heads and teachers, and examination malpractices that lead to the cancellation of entire school results. In order to change this outlook, the study has revealed that the schools use disciplinary guidelines such as: punitive/corrective as against preventive/supportive measures; Teachers' Code of Conduct; Headteachers' Handbook; and individualized school rules and regulations to check indiscipline. Some of these policy guidelines are unwritten, unclear or incomprehensible, and inaccessible to both teachers and students. The findings have revealed that indiscipline can be reduced with alternative strategies such as: preventive and supportive measures; the documentation of the rules and regulations which must be comprehensible, clear, applicable, accessible to all; periodical review and enforcement of these guidelines; and the creation of guidance and counseling coordinating teams and disciplinary committees in the schools.

Kant however argues that these approaches are not sufficient conditions to reduce indiscipline in the schools. Kant rather introduces the notion of 'good will' and argues that, the only thing that is good without qualification is the 'good will'. This mean the 'will' to do the right thing since the 'good will' must be good in itself. Kant says that there is nothing in the world or even out of it that can be called good without qualification except a 'good will'. Things which are intrinsically good are good and that, everything else is good only in relation to the 'good will', which is the ultimate criterion that determines the moral worth of an action. He believes that even all other things that are usually considered as good in schools like dedication, health, obedience, humility, talents, intellect etc., are good only insofar as they are used well or used by a 'good will'. Kant's position focuses on the teachers' or students' will, motives, and intentions. He affirms that the good will is always unconditionally good irrespective of the consequences of the action it prompts the student or teacher to perform. Russell (1930) epitomizes this Kantian idea with his argument that "right discipline consists, not in external compulsion, but in the habits of mind which lead spontaneously to desirable rather than undesirable activities". An important feature of this ethical theory is the affinity of the 'good will' with ordinary moral reasoning. This assumes an outlook of a deontological moral theory which opposes making discipline conditional to actual circumstances and consequences of action. In this strand, Kant argues that what makes behaviour right is not the fact that it leads to good and desirable consequences, but it is performed for the sake of duty. Hence it can be argued that the supreme principle of discipline is Kant's categorical imperative which suggests an unconditional moral command or law that teachers and students must pursue as moral

beings. This is a universal law that allows no exceptions and grounded in Kant's idea of the 'good will' which he elaborates with the metaphor of 'a jewel that shines in its own light'. This suggests that student and teacher behaviours and for that matter what should constitute discipline in the schools must have their value in themselves. Kant argues:

Even if, by some especially unfortunate fate or by the niggardly provision of step-motherly nature, [the good will] should be wholly lacking in the power to accomplish its purpose; if with the greatest effort it should yet achieve nothing, and only the good will should remain (not, to be sure, as a mere wish but as the summoning of all the means in our power), yet would it, like a jewel, still shine by its own light as something which has its full value in itself (Kant, 2017).

This is a ubiquitous trope that enjoins schools to develop models of disciplinary policies that support teachers and students to 'will' to be disciplined. Such school disciplinary policies must be devoid of external forces and influence for compliance but rather, must radiate from within the individual to achieve the goal of discipline in the manner described by Maria Montessori (1995): "discipline must come through liberty.... We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined".

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