

## EFFECT OF ACADEMIC-RELATED STRESS ON STUDENT INDISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ELDORET EAST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Many factors contribute to student indiscipline in schools. Some of these factors emanate from the school environment. In light of this fact, the study was designed to establish the key school environment contributors and solutions to rowdiness among secondary school students in Eldoret East Sub-County. Based on the study, this paper discusses the findings on the effect of academic stress on indiscipline practices among secondary schools students in Eldoret East Sub-County. The study was led by Social Control Theory. Ex-post facto research design was used in the study. The target populace of the research included 3480 form three students and 54 deputy principals in public secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub County. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted to pick a sample of 346 students to take part in the study. Census approach method was considered in which all the 54 deputy principals took part in the study. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used as data collection instruments. Data collected was analysed in both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was evaluated in form of frequencies, percentages, average and standard variation. Analysis of Variance was used to examine the hypotheses. The study also established that academic stress ( $F [47, 273] = 2.001, p = .000$ ) had an effect on indiscipline's cases among secondary school students. The study concluded that academic stress had an effect on indiscipline cases among secondary school students. The study, therefore, recommended that the schools should reduce academic stress by providing adequate time for relaxation to help reduce cases of indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County.*

**KEYWORDS:** Effect, Academic Stress, Indiscipline, Students, Secondary Schools, Eldoret East, Kenya

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### INTRODUCTION

School environment is the erudition troposphere fashioned through the associations of human relationships, somatic scenery and psychosomatic atmosphere. It is grounded on people's awareness of school life. It is reflected in the school rules, objectives, morals, associative relationships, instruction, knowledge practices and the structures of the organization. It also includes expectations that support people's feeling socially, emotionally, intellectually, psychologically and physically. Every school has a climate that differentiates it from other schools and influences behaviour and feelings of teachers and pupils. An institutions climate is a relatively lasting nature of the school surroundings' that is felt by the instructors and pupils and affects their behaviour towards the environment.

According to Peterson and Skiba (2001), school environment is a comprehensive outlook that learners and educators have about their school atmosphere over a period of time. The feelings deals with how satisfied each individual felt in school, it ranged from how training and knowledge acquisition reinforced their learning and how protected they felt in school. A

learning environment could either be positive or negative. Thus the school atmosphere could either promote or discourage students materially, morally, emotionally and psychologically. These were linked to students' indiscipline behaviours ranging from delinquency, truancy, and substance abuse and even examination malpractices.

School climate is an essential part of the knowledge acquisition process. For one to achieve desired school climate, it is important that the school is well equipped for teaching and learning. School should make sure that quality physical infrastructure, adequate learning resources, strong parental involvement and skilled and motivated staff are available. According to Nyaigoti (2011), however, majority of schools lacked good studying climate and knowledgeable teachers to simplify students' learning. There were also poorly constructed buildings, insufficient desks, congested classrooms, inadequate number of resource books and poorly motivated teachers. This was attributed to insufficient support from education system in the country. The findings were supported by Okendo, Munyua and Nganzi (2014) study in Kisii County which established that most of the secondary schools had poorly facilitated environments with acute scarcity of required school facilities.

### **Academic-related Stress and Indiscipline Problems in Schools**

Sun (2012) conducted a study on effect of academic related stress on examination anxiety among of private secondary schools students in India. The study aimed at a total of 400 adolescent students out of which 52% were male. Five private schools in Kolkata were used, this included students who were studying in 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Subjects to take part in the study were sampled using a multi-stage sampling technique and were examined using a study specific questionnaires. The results showed that 35% and 37% reported elevated levels of academic stress and exam anxiety respectively. The reviewed study was conducted in India and concentrated on the relationship between academic stress and examination anxiety while the current study was conducted in Kenya and focused on the effect of school climate on indiscipline among students in public secondary schools. However, the study failed to highlight on how the students were sampled to take part in the study. Also to note was that India is a very large country thus 400 students could not be used to generate results to be generalized in the whole country.

Pellerin (2015) looked into the influence of authoritative school climate on indiscipline in Malaysia. A total of 164 public secondary school students were selected to take part in the study. The findings from the study were that authoritative school climate was related to a lower rate of truancy and minimal dropouts than schools using an authoritarian approach. The study used the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1988. Pellerin constructed indicators of an authoritative school climate with a mixture of manager and student survey responses to available questions about school discipline and student-teacher relationships. Surveys were grouped and analysed at the school level, using school absenteeism and rates of dropout, but did not have student-level result data. This study noted that authoritative schools, identified by both challenging and reactive, had higher levels of student commitments, based on student self-reports that they usually did their homework and came to class with their books and pencil/paper. The study highlighted the fact that there was a positive effect of an authoritative school climate on discipline practices among students. However, according to the study there was no association between authoritative measures and academic achievement, as indicated by the 40-item mathematics test administered.

Wang and Eccles (2013) investigated how school climate characteristics were related with diverse types of student engagement. The study incorporated a sample of 1,157 students from middle level school. The study revealed that school structure support that is clarity and consistency of teacher expectations and emotional support of the learners as determined by level of care and support provided by the teachers were linked to behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement of the learners. The study highlighted that positive school climate was related with less peer victimization; less student aggression directed to teachers and lower suspension rates. However, the study concentrated on effect of a large and diverse group of schools, controlling for school demographics of enrolment size, ethnic and tribal composition and percentage of students compared to the current study thus prompting the current study to be carried out to look into the effect of school climate on indiscipline.

Cornell, Shukla and Konold (2016) conducted study to explore into the influence of school climate on disciplinary structures among of students in Virginia. The researcher wanted to find out whether authoritative school climate shown by elevated levels of corrective structure and student support would be associated with greater discipline among the students. The study targeted 39,364 students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a total of 423 schools and 48,027 students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in 323 high schools. This provides an unusually large sample of schools with varied socioeconomic and racial/ethnic assortment across urban, suburban, and rural location. The findings from the study were that disciplinary structure and student support were linked with victimization among students from middle schools; it was also established from the study that authoritative school climate representation was connected with lower student aggression and misconduct, but there was little proof relating to student academic performance.

Mohammad (2017) conducted a study to look into classroom troubles faced by teachers at the public schools in Jordan and possible solutions. The study sample was made up of 196 teachers from the public school in Tafila province. By use of teachers' questionnaire to collect information, the results of the study indicated that behavioural mean of teachers' problems was 2.66, and that of academic problems was 3.08. Also, the researcher found that statistical significant differences existed on relations between gender, school level, and teaching experience in problems related to behaviour for male in the basic school, those with work experience less than 5 years. Also, there was no statistical significant difference between gender, level of school, education degree, and teaching experience in the academic problems.

Olulekan (2016) carried out a study to probe into the strategies of Stress management used by teachers in secondary school in Nigeria. The study provides experimental evidence for stress management by secondary school teachers in Nigeria. A total of 3466 teachers, drawn from schools in Ogun State of Nigeria, submitted their questionnaire for the study. Data from the questionnaire were analysed by way of simple percentage and chi-square. The findings pointed out that there was a high frequency of teachers in using the active behavioural and inactive (escape) strategies in managing stress. This is an indication that an average Nigerian teacher preferred to deal with personal engagements and domestic duties in such a way that it does not affect pedagogic duties.

It also implies that, at any time the teacher is stressed, he/she consoles him/herself with the fact that work is not end of life and therefore feels more relaxed. The active cognitive methods are never used by the teachers. Their feeling is that nothing almost certainly can be confronted in worrying situations. The teachers also articulated mixed position about the

acceptance of passive behavioural strategies. While a greater percentage of the teachers never engage in physical exercises or, say, watch films in order to manage any stressful situation, they prefer to keep away from any situation that could cause stress, and endeavouring to separate them from people who cause stressful situations.

Maina and Njoroge (2017) conducted a study to look into the Effects strategies of managing Stress on Enhancement of Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Elburgon Division, Molo Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya Educationists are currently paying more attention to the effects caused by stress on students as associated to school discipline. Inability to cope with stress culminates to indiscipline behaviour that has rocked many schools in Kenya. Stress management strategies are a set of techniques and programme intended to assist people experiencing stress, acquire appropriate measures to avert harmful behaviour. The rationale for the study therefore was to determine the effect of strategies used to manage stress on enhancement of students' discipline in secondary schools in Elburgon Division, Molo Sub-County in Nakuru County. The study adopted the ex post facto research design. The target number of respondents for the study consisted 4145 students, 20 school counsellors and 20 school administrators while the accessible population consisted 2072 students. A total of 322 students were selected using simple random sampling technique, 16 school counsellors and 16 administrators were purposively sampled. Data from the respondents was obtained through the administration of learners, counsellors' questionnaires and an interview schedule for the school administrators.

A pilot study was conducted in two different schools from those participating in the study but with similar characteristics to help in determining the consistency of the instruments. The pilot study yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.825 obtained through Cronbach's coefficient method. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages). The result of the study revealed that application of strategies to manage stress in secondary schools would reduce stress significantly among students in addition to enhancing their discipline. These findings might assist school guidance and counselling units to apply the strategies of stress management in their daily encounter with stress related issues among students. School administrators may benefit from the outcomes of the study by adopting the strategies in stress management to curb indiscipline incidences in their schools. This study may also benefit parents who would better understand the problem behaviour in their young ones and employ stress management methods to correct undesirable behaviour. The study recommended that the strategies for controlling stress be applied in secondary schools to enhance students' discipline.

Wairagu (2017) conducted a study to investigate the factor related to school influencing students discipline practice in Public secondary schools in Thika West Sub County, Kenya. The rationale for the study was to look into the influence of school administrators' sensitivity of welfare of students, students' socialization in school culture, academic stress and security monitoring on students discipline practices. The study used descriptive research design. The study targeted all the teachers, principals and learners among public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-County. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to decide on a sample of 13 head teachers, 13 deputy head teachers and 189 students. Questionnaire, interview schedules and observation checklist were employed as techniques for data collection.

The study recognized that teachers were more sensitive to students' need which had resulted to reduced cases of indiscipline. The study also established that increased academic stress was responsible for the increased number of strikes among students in secondary school. The study made a conclusion that academic stress contributed the highest influence of students' indiscipline practices. The study suggested that the students ought to be given adequate time to release academic stress to help reduce cases of indiscipline. The reviewed study was carried out among secondary school in Thika West Sub-County while the current study was conducted among students in public schools in Eldoret East Sub-County. The reviewed study concentrated on school factors influencing discipline practices while the current study was more concerned with the effect of school climate on school indiscipline among students in secondary schools. The reviewed study used descriptive survey research design while the current study used causal comparative research design.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The conditions of students' indiscipline in Kenyan secondary schools are disheartening as violent behaviour incidences widen (Kiumi, Bosire & Sang, 2009). The explanation given for the strike were teenage misbehaviour, drug abuse and peer pressure. Despite the government efforts to impose discipline in Kenyan schools, recurrent unrest in schools has been reported. For example, a report by Mutahi (2018) highlighted a case in which three students were arrested for burning two dormitories to ashes in Nakuru. The scandalous truth indicated that the unrest had taken new dimension. Apart from forceful attacks and destruction of properties, they appeared to have been planned logically which has led to serious damage to people's lives physically, emotionally and psychologically.

The climax of such attacks was seen in 2016 when within a period of 6 months; more than 100 schools got destroyed by fire. A good number of the unrests involved burning of school dormitories which resulted to extensive loss of property and in some incidences, loss of life. The arson incidences were articulated by students. This raised concerns among the stakeholders, policy developers and school management on students' discipline practices. The indiscipline practices are not exclusive to particular parts of the country; Eldoret East Sub-County has also experienced a fair share of indiscipline problems. In 2016, the County registered seven incidences of disruptive behaviour.

Many studies have been done in relation to school climate and indiscipline. For example in developed countries, Linares (2012) explored the effects of school climate on students' success and discipline in three town high schools in Houston and Texas; Wang, Selman, Dishion and Stormshak (2010) investigated students' supposed school climate and etiquette problems in China. In Kenya, Wairagu (2017) emphasized on factors that directly related to the school and affected indiscipline practices in Thika West Sub-County. Okendo, Ngunzi and Munyua (2014) undertook a study to examine how of school climate affected students' academic outcomes in Kisii County. None of these studies carried out earlier paid attention to the effect of school climate on students' indiscipline in secondary school. Therefore, this paper examines the effect of academic-related stress, which is an aspect of school climate, on indiscipline among secondary school students.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study used Ex-post facto research design and sought to investigate the effect of school climate on indiscipline among secondary school students in Eldoret East Sub-County, Kenya. The study population targeted all the students in Form 1 to Form 4 in all the 54 registered secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub County. The target population, therefore, included 3480 form three students in 54 secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County. The population was made up of, mixed day and boarding secondary schools, Girls and Boys boarding secondary schools. The study group was made up of adolescents attending secondary schools whereby a small number was drawn from form 1-4. The study also targeted the deputy principals in all the 54 secondary schools.

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table. The study used stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of the 346 students. The study made use students questionnaire as data collection instrument. The interview schedule was used to get an in-depth understanding on the effect of school climate on indiscipline among students in public secondary schools in Eldoret east Sub County. The data collected in the research was edited, coded and entries made into statistical software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). This involved converting quantitative (nominal and ordinal data) into mathematical codes. Quantitative data gathered through open ended questions was sorted, coded and analysed in form of themes. The outcome was presented in frequency tables and percentages. The data was also presented by using tables and analysed SPSS version 21 and explanation for a given scenario was done after each research question is analysed. Descriptive statistics consisted of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation to summarize the data. ANOVA was employed to test the hypotheses.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Effect of Academic Stress on Indiscipline Cases among Secondary School Students**

The research sought to investigate effect of academic stress on indiscipline cases among secondary school students. This was done by using, a set of five items that were formulated. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with each of the statements. The statements were anchored on a five point Likert-type scales ranging from 1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree. Descriptive measures included frequencies, percentages and means. The relevant results were as presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Academic Stress and Indiscipline Cases among Secondary School Students**

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	S.Dev
Academic stress leads to indiscipline practices	95(29.6%)	34(10.6%)	38(11.8%)	82(25.5%)	72(22.4%)	3.01	1.56
The teachers arranged to extra teaching sessions to cover the syllabus in our school	59(18.4%)	24(18.4%)	32(10.0%)	85(26.5%)	121(37.7%)	3.58	1.50
Our school have very strict demand to meet academic targets	61(19.0%)	33(10.3%)	39(12.1%)	66(20.6%)	122(38.0%)	3.48	1.53
In our school we have long preps which reduce time for relaxation.	97(30.2%)	61(19.0%)	43(13.4%)	44(13.7%)	76(23.7%)	2.82	1.57
I am challenged by the task that I am given at school	120(37.4%)	68(21.2%)	54(16.8%)	31(9.7%)	48(15.0%)	2.44	1.45

*Source: Survey Data (2018)*

The study sought to investigate if the students were experiencing academic stress and that it lead to indiscipline cases in Eldoret East Sub-County. The findings revealed that 47.9% of students agreed that they experienced academic stress and it lead to indiscipline cases, 11.8% were undecided while 40.2% of the students disagreed that academic stress led to indiscipline cases. The study also sought to investigate whether the teachers arranged to extra teaching sessions to cover the syllabus in our school. The study established that 64.2% of the teachers arranged extra teaching sessions to cover the syllabus in the schools, 10.0% were undecided,

while 36.8% of the students disagreed. The study also sought to investigate whether their schools had very strict demand to meet academic targets. The study established that 58.6% of the students agreed, 12.1% were undecided while 29.3% of the students disagreed their schools had strict demand to meet academic targets. The study also sought to investigate whether in their school they had long preps which reduce time for relaxation. The study established that 37.4% of the study agreed that they had long prep hour which reduced time for relaxation, 13.7% were undecided, 49.2% of the students disagreed that their school had long prep hour which helped to reduce time for relaxation. The study also sought to investigate whether the students were challenged by the tasks given at school. Majority 58.6% of the students disagreed that they were challenged by the tasks given at school, 16.8% were undecided while 24.7% of the students agreed that they were given tasks that challenged them.

The findings deduced that academic stress (Mean=3.01 S. Dev=1.56), the fact that the teachers arranged extra teaching sessions to cover the syllabus (Mean=3.58 S.Dev1.50), very strict demand to meet academic targets (mean=3.48 S. Dev=1.53), long preps which reduced time for relaxation (Mean=2.82 S. Dev=1.57), and challenging tasks that the students were given at school (Mean=2.44 S. Dev=1.45) were the main contributors to indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County. These findings concurred with one of the Deputy Principal respondent who said:

Academic stress had been the main cause of indiscipline cases in majority of the country. The ongoing strikes and arson in schools is because the students want leakage in the upcoming national examinations. With the tightened rules on examination supervision implemented during CS (Cabinet Secretary, Education) Mating'i era in education the country experienced the highest number of strikes and arson in secondary schools (Personal Communication, Deputy Principal, 2018).

The table below shows the findings from ANOVA on the effect of academic stress on indiscipline cases in schools.

**Table 2: One-Way (ANOVA) Effect of Academic Stress and Indiscipline Cases**

Source of variations	Sun of squares	df	Mean square	f	Sig.
Between groups	7473.060	50	149.461	2.001	.000
Within groups	20170.136	270	74.704		
<b>Total</b>	<b>27643.196</b>	<b>320</b>			

Source: Survey Data (2018)

The results in Table 2 show that the ANOVA is  $F=2.001$  and p- value obtained was  $p=.000$  which is less the level of significance 0.05 therefore the researcher rejected the null hypothesis. The results indicated that academic stress had an effect on indiscipline cases among secondary school students. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypotheses was adopted which clearly showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between academic stress and indiscipline cases hence increased academic stress had an effect on indiscipline cases among the students.

## DISCUSSION

The study established that there was a positive and significant relationship between academic stress and indiscipline cases among secondary school students in Eldoret East Sub-County. The findings were in support of Sun (2012) study on effect of academic related stress on examination anxiety among of private secondary schools students in India. The results showed that 35% and 37% reported elevated levels of academic stress and exam anxiety respectively. The findings also concurred with Pellerin's (2015) study on the influence of authoritative school climate on indiscipline in Malaysia. The findings from the study were that authoritative school climate was related to a lower rate of truancy and minimal drop-outs than schools using an authoritarian approach. This study noted that authoritative schools, identified by both challenging and reactive, had higher levels of student commitments, based on student self-reports that they usually did their homework and came to class with their books and pencil/ paper. The study highlighted the fact that there was a positive effect of an authoritative school climate on discipline practices among students.

The findings were also in line with Wang and Eccles (2013) study on school climate characteristics related with diverse types of student engagement. The study revealed that positive school climate related with less peer victimization; less student aggression directed to teachers and lower suspension rates had a negative effect on indiscipline cases among the students. The findings established that school climate was inversely proportional to indiscipline cases among the students.

The findings also supported Cornell, Shukla and Konold (2016) study on the influence of school climate on disciplinary structures among of students in Virginia. The researcher wanted to find out whether authoritative school climate showed by elevated levels of corrective structure and student support would be associated with greater discipline among the students. The findings from the study were that disciplinary structure and student support were linked with victimization among students from middle schools; it was also established from the study that authoritative school climate representation was connected with lower student aggression and misconduct.

The findings also supported Mohammad (2017) study on classroom troubles faced by teachers at the public schools in Jordan. The study established that there was a significant differences on gender, school level, and teaching experience in problems related to behaviour for male in the basic school, those with work experience less than 5 years. The findings were also in support of Olulekan (2016) study on strategies of Stress management used by teachers in secondary school in Nigeria. The findings pointed out that there was a high frequency of teachers in using the active behavioural and inactive (escape) strategies in managing stress. This is an indication that an average Nigerian teachers preferred to deal with personal engagements and domestic duties in such a way that it does not affect pedagogic duties. It also implies that, at any time the teacher is stressed, he/she consoles him/herself with the fact that work is not end of life and therefore feels more relaxed. The active cognitive methods are never used by the teachers.

The findings were also in line with Maina and Njoroge (2017) study on the effects strategies of managing stress on enhancement of students' discipline in secondary schools in Elburgon Division, Molo Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. Inability to cope with stress culminates to indiscipline behaviour that has rocked many schools in Kenya. The study established that stress management strategies were a set of techniques and programme intended to assist

people experiencing stress, acquire appropriate measures to avert harmful behaviour. The result of the study revealed that application of strategies to manage stress in secondary schools would reduce stress significantly among students in addition to enhancing their discipline. School administrators benefited from the outcomes of the study by adopting the strategies in stress management to curb indiscipline incidences in their schools.

The findings also supported Wairagu (2017) study on factor related to school influencing students discipline practice in Public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-County, Kenya. The rationale for the study was to investigate the influence of academic stress on students discipline practices. The study recognized that teachers were more sensitive to students' need which had resulted to reduced cases of indiscipline. The study also established that increased academic stress was responsible for the increased number of strikes among students in secondary school. The study made a conclusion that academic stress contributed the highest influence of students' indiscipline practices. The study suggested that the students ought to be given adequate time to release academic stress to help reduce cases of indiscipline.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that academic stress had an effect on indiscipline cases among secondary school students. Increased academic stress, very strict demand to meet academic targets, long preps which reduce time for relaxation and challenging task that the students were given at school were the main contributor to indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub County. The study, therefore, recommended that the schools should reduce academic stress by providing adequate time for relaxation to help reduce cases of indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County.

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