

Effectiveness of Exclusion in the Management of Student Behavior Problems in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract There have been attempts to address behavior problems among secondary students in Kenya. However, very little success has been realized. The present study investigated the effectiveness exclusion in the management of student behavior problems in public secondary schools in Kenya. Assertive Discipline Model and Thorndike's Behavior Modification theory informed the study. The concurrent triangulation design guided the study. The study population comprised 380 teachers from a total number of 40 schools that had 40 Heads of Guidance and Counseling (HOD), 40 Deputy Principals (DP) and 300 classroom teachers. The study employed stratified random sampling technique in the selection of teachers, Deputy Principals and Heads of Guidance and Counseling. A sample size of 28 Deputy Principals, 28 Heads of Guidance and Counseling and 196 teachers were involved in the study. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guides were used for data collection. Split half method was used to ascertain reliability and a reliability coefficient of 0.871 was reported. Face validity of the instruments was ensured by seeking expert judgment by university lecturers. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis while the qualitative data was analyzed using thematic framework. The study findings revealed that exclusion was effective in managing student behavior problems. The findings of this research may benefit the Ministry of Education of Kenya by providing current information on the effectiveness of exclusion, which may be used in managing student behavior problems.

Keywords Effectiveness, Exclusion, Student, Behavior problems

1. Introduction

Misconduct of students faced by schools has become more complicated and some researchers argue that student behavior problems need to be solved through corporal punishment while others do not think so (Mugabe and Maphosa, 2013). However, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stresses on the right of the child to protection of his or her human dignity and physical integrity; corporal punishment in institutions and families is considered as an act which goes against CRC (UNICEF, 2001). Similarly, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) does not support the use of corporal punishment in schools, and instead recognizes the alternatives to corporal punishment which include prevention and intervention programs and strategies for changing student behavior (NASP, 2006). In Pakistan, corporal punishment has been in existence for 143 years, though in recent years there have been attempts to ban it (Iqbal, 2003).

Similarly, the South African constitution opposes inhuman and cruel treatment (Cicognani, 2004). In South Africa, the government has taken several measures to implement the prohibition of corporal punishment in schools; a manual for teachers on alternatives to corporal punishment has been published and distributed widely. The prohibition of the use of corporal punishment on learners has become widely known in the school system (Soneson, 2005). Egypt has also banned corporal punishment even though its use can still be traced in schools and homes (Wasef, 2011). In Uganda, stakeholders have mixed feelings concerning the use of corporal punishment, and others argue that it should be used on the learners, while others feel it shouldn't because it is not a corrective measure, but a coercive one. In protecting children from physical punishment, some stakeholders believe that laws should be implemented in order to avoid child abuse, while others do not support these laws (Damien, 2012).

The current study was guided by Assertive Discipline Model by Lee and Marlene Canter (Canter and Canter, 2001) and Behavior Modification theory which was advanced by Thorndike (Corsine, 1987). Assertive Discipline theory has a five step discipline plan as consequences for breaking the rules, which is applicable to the present study. The student is first warned and then a ten minute time out is applied.

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Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/jamss>

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Thirdly, 15 minute time out; fourth, the parents of the students are summoned. Lastly, the student is sent to the principal's office (Canter and Canter, 2001). Thorndike's Behavior Modification Theory (Rosenhan & Seligman, 1995) highlights human behavior in relation to the law of effect. According to the theory, learning is determined by events that take place after a given behavior, and learning is gradual but not insightful.

Exclusion is such punishment as expulsion, suspension and in school suspension that involves the removal of students from the classroom (Welch and Payne, 2012). Mohrbutter (2011) in the USA indicated that suspension was used in the management of student behaviours. Bejarano (2014) in USA indicated that exclusionary methods removed children from significant opportunities of education that were bound to be of benefit to their future life. Additional findings established that exclusionary discipline was not fair and reasonable and disadvantaged some students. Zaccaro (2014) in America indicated that the use of seclusion and restraint had changed over time, resulting into injuries. Some respondents felt certain that these techniques were beneficial to individuals and are essential in solving crises. However, others argued that their physical and psychological harm was much more than any potential benefits they may have been having. It was also established that the absence of training and regulation standards of the procedures had likely led to inconsistent procedures in their application. Roache, Joel, Lewis & Ramon (2011) in Australia indicated that teachers who tended to use more inclusive management strategies like reward had students who were more responsible for their peers' behaviours and their own behaviour. Another study by Ng (2015) in Toronto, Canada indicated that teacher reinforcement increased appropriate student behavior and decreased problem behavior. In addition, Agesa (2015) in Kenya indicated that manual punishment was effective for minor offences while suspension and exclusion were used for major indiscipline. The findings also indicated that suspension and exclusion were effective where there was massive destruction of property.

Another different study by Kavula (2014) established that the use of alternative disciplinary methods by principals had no effect on students' discipline. Kindiki (2015) in Kenya reported that students preferred the use of expulsion and suspension in managing students' behaviour problem since they wanted behaviour problems to be kept out of school. In a separate study, Nakpodia (2012) in Nigeria reported that teachers found the classroom control difficult due to the absence of corporal punishment. The students engaged in misconduct most of the time because they knew the law did not allow the teachers to punish them through corporal punishment. Similarly, Sorrel (2013) in the USA indicated that teachers reported a decrease in time spent in managing student behaviour problems and decreased student misbehaviour. Students too became more engaged in academic work. In addition, teachers reported that there was significantly less disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. Another study by Khewu (2012) in South Africa established

that time-out may only be effective if the cause of the problem was established before recommending a disciplinary measure.

In Kenya, corporal punishment was banned in schools through Legal Notice No.56 of Kenya Gazette Supplement No.25:199 of 30th March, 2001 and the use of corporal punishment outlawed as a result of the Children Act, 2001 (Government of Kenya, 2001) which declared corporal punishment unconstitutional. The Ministry of Education as a result issued a directive to teachers to use methods other than corporal punishment that would control the widespread cases of indiscipline in the institutions of learning (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005). Kiprop (2012) established that secondary schools in Kenya had developed unique ways of managing student behavior problems and the most common ones were manual punishment, guidance and counseling, exclusion and positive reinforcement (Agesa, 2015; Ndembu, 2013). Since the ban, school discipline has worsened and student behavior has become difficult to manage (Kindiki, 2015). Similarly, Kavula (2014) contends that the ban of corporal punishment in Kenya has not solved student discipline. Alawo (2011) too established that teachers face several challenges in the use of alternative corrective measures, a need for the present study hence, a knowledge gap which the study intended to fill on the effectiveness of exclusion in managing students' behavior problems in secondary schools in Kenya.

2. Methodology

The current study employed concurrent triangulation model in which both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Target population for the current study consisted of 300 teachers, 40 deputy principals and 40 heads of guidance and counseling in public secondary schools in Bondo Subcounty of Kenya. Stratified random sampling technique was used to identify the schools and their proportions. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was used to determine a sample size of 28 deputy principals, 28 heads of guidance and counseling and 196 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers, which enabled the researcher to obtain large amounts of information from a large sample of people (McLeod, 2014). The Effectiveness of Exclusion questionnaire and Management of Behaviour Problem Questionnaires adopted a 5 point likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Deputy Principals and Heads of Guidance and Counseling were involved in in-depth interview. The interview schedules allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information that would not have been provided by the questionnaires (Oso & Onen, 2011). Document analysis guides were also used in gathering qualitative data. To ensure validity, the researcher developed the instruments with the help of expert judgment of two supervisors in the department of Psychology and Educational Foundations of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga

University of Science and Technology. Piloting of the research instruments was done in 9 % of the total population that was not involved in the study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using Thematic Analysis, which followed the principles of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006).

3. Findings and Discussion

A likert scale type of five options; strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) was used to investigate respondents opinion about the effectiveness of exclusion in managing student behaviour problems as indicated on Table 1.

From Table 1, study findings revealed that less than half, 36.14% (Strongly Agree 14.14%; Agree 22.00%) of the respondents agreed that exclusion was effective in managing student behaviour problems, while more than half 58% (Strongly Agree 32.46; Agree 26.18%) felt that it was not effective. This finding is similar to Bejarano (2014) study in Florida, which exclusionary discipline was neither fair nor reasonable, and placed some students at a marked disadvantage. Bourne, Clarke, Sharpe, Hudson & Francis (2015) in Jamaica concur that not all strategies used in managing student behavior problems produce the same results and cannot also be applied to all situations. However, Zaccaro in America argues that restraint and seclusion is useful in crisis management.

Additional study findings established that more than half 56.69% (Strongly Agree 19.90; Agree 39.79 %) of the respondents agreed that exclusion enhances a sense of belonging in the students. Zaccaro (2014) in America agrees that exclusionary techniques provide a therapeutic benefit to individuals and are essential in solving crises. Similarly, Agesa (2015) in Kenya concurs that exclusion is effective where there is mass destruction of property. However, Golomb (2010) in America differs by bringing in a new dimension that exclusionary methods are linked to negative

student outcome and strong disagreement.

Further findings of the study established that more than half of the respondents, 64.40% (Strongly Agree 28.80%; Agree 35.60%) agreed that exclusion had reduced tension and strikes in school. Sorrel (2013) in America too concurred that exclusion had reduced student misbehaviour. There were only 31.41% (Strongly Agree 10.99%; Agree 20.42%) respondents who agreed that exclusion makes students develop positive attitude towards school, as compared to 46.07% (Strongly Agree 38.22%; Agree 7.885%) who felt that it did not. This implies that most respondents felt that exclusion did not contribute positively towards the development of positive attitude towards school. These findings are similar to Bejarano (2014) in America which also agrees that exclusionary methods bar children from beneficial opportunities of education. Current study findings revealed that more than half 61.25% (Strongly Agree 20.94%; Agree 40.31%) of the respondents agreed that exclusion motivates students not to repeat undesirable behaviour. However, Kindiki (2015) in Kenya argues that other than corporal punishment, teachers are not able to identify any other technique that is effective in instilling discipline.

In addition, study findings established that there were more, 42.93% (Strongly Agree 20.94%; Agree 32.98%) respondents who agreed that exclusion developed rapport between the teacher and students as compared to those who believed it did not 35.6% (Disagree 25.13%; Strongly Disagree 10.47%). In the same way, more 44.5% (Strongly Agree 18.85%, 25.65%) respondents felt that exclusion makes students more free and open to teachers as compared to those who felt that it does not 39.79 (disagree 24.08; strongly disagree 15.71%). The findings are in agreement with Vacar (2012) in America who also agreed that suspension was necessary in the management of the classroom. However, Roache, Joel, Lewis & Ramon (2011) in Australia brought in a different dimension, that teachers who tended to use more inclusive management strategies had students who were responsible.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on the Effectiveness of Exclusion in Managing Student Behaviour Problems

Indicator	SA	A	U	D	SD
Exclusion is effective in managing student behaviour problems in school.	27(14.14%)	42(22.00%)	10(5.24%)	62(32.46%)	50(26.18%)
Exclusion enhances a sense of belonging in the students.	38(19.90%)	76(39.79%)	45(23.56%)	18(9.42%)	14(7.33%)
Exclusion has reduced tension and strikes in schools.	55(28.80%)	68(35.60%)	32(16.75%)	28(14.66%)	8(4.19%)
Exclusion motivates students not to repeat undesired behaviour.	40(20.94%)	77(40.31%)	25(13.09%)	32(16.75%)	17(8.90%)
Exclusion develops rapport between the teacher and students.	19(9.95%)	63(32.98%)	41(21.47%)	48(25.13%)	20(10.47%)
Exclusion makes students more free and open to teachers.	36(18.85%)	49(25.65%)	30(15.71%)	46(24.08%)	30(15.71%)
Exclusion makes students develop positive attitude towards school.	21(10.99%)	39(20.42%)	43(22.51%)	73(38.22%)	15(7.85%)
Exclusion makes students feel accepted by their teachers.	28(14.66%)	47(24.65%)	30(15.71%)	70(36.65%)	16(8.38%)
Exclusion has helped students overcome social and behavioural problems.	34(17.80%)	86(45.02%)	26(13.61%)	39(20.42%)	6(3.14%)
Exclusion contributes to amicable relationship among students.	78(40.84%)	62(32.46%)	38(19.89%)	5(2.62%)	8(4.19%)

In order to establish whether or not there was a relationship between exclusion and management of student behaviour problems, a correlational analysis was carried out and the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that there is a positive relationship between exclusion and management of student behaviour problems. From the results, a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r=0.339$ was obtained. This shows that exclusion is effective in managing student behaviour problems. Similarly, Vacar (2012) in America agreed that exclusion was a careful tool in managing student's behavioural problems since it improved student attendance and kept them upto pace. Sorrel (2013) in America too concurred that the use of exclusion decreased student misbehaviour and teachers reported that there were significantly less disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. However, Fallon, Keeffe and Sugai (2012) in America differed by arguing that exclusion causes higher attrition. This finding has theoreticl implications in that it agrees with Thorndike's Behavior Modification Theory highlights human behavior in relation to the law of effect. According to the theory, learning is determined by events that take place after a given behavior, and learning is gradual but not insightful.

In addition to quantitative results, qualitative data revealed divergent views concerning the effectiveness of exclusion in managing student behaviour problems. Various themes emerged concerning the effectiveness of exclusion in managing student behaviour problems. One of the themes was that exclusion was more appropriate for major offences. In addition, exclusion caused stigma, consumed a lot of time, increased resistance among the students and caused school dropout. Study respondents observed that exclusion barred students from repeating behaviour problems and students who saw their fellow students being excluded learnt to behave appropriately. Exclusion was equally effective for students whose behaviour problems were likely to affect the others. It was also deemed effective for students who did not respect the school authority. Some respondents expressed the

following sentiments:

A boy impregnated a classmate. When this was discovered, he took the girl for abortion. An additional offence committed by these students is that they left school without permission. The two did not deserve to remain in school because of what they did. They had to be suspended. That girl's behaviour was going to be a bad example for more than three hundred girls. Suspension makes students realize that some involvements are not acceptable in school. We use such cases for reference [HOD 13]

Suspension is useful for serious offences that are likely to affect others (HOD 11).

Students who fail to do punishment given by the student leaders, teachers or even the school administration are suspended, in addition to other forms of punishment [DP 16].

Students who are fond of failing to do assignments are asked to call their parents and may end up in suspension [HOD 17]

The reflections of respondents above imply that there was need for exclusion in deterring certain student behaviour problems that were considered serious. This is because such behaviour problems were likely to affect other students. The respondents believed that the kind of problem behaviour exhibited by the learners needed exclusion. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) concurs that each method of managing student behaviour problem is determined by the tradition of each school. However, Kruse (2012) in America disagrees that some learners prefer short term in-school suspension since it gives them time to attend to their homework and to meet their friends. Kindiki (2015) in Kenya too disagrees that students prefer the use of expulsion and suspension in managing students' behaviour problem. Other themes that depicted exclusion as ineffective in managing student behaviour problems emerged, and were discussed exhaustively.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis between Exclusion and Students Behaviour Problems

		Correlations	
		Exclusion	Students behaviour problems
Exclusion	Pearson Correlation	1	.339**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	191	191
Students behaviour problems	Pearson Correlation	.339**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	191	191

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the context of the current study, students who are excluded believe that they were bad, unimportant and different from the rest of the students. They were afraid of their parents and did not want them to discover what they had done at school. They did not adjust easily after the period of exclusion. Respondents argued that exclusion was not suitable for the students since they were still young and did not understand it. Their feelings were reflected in the excerpts that followed:

Exclusion stigmatizes the child, who feels that he or she has been alienated from the others yet they're still young. They feel odd among their fellow students; it creates fear and may make the student repeat the same mistake in defiance [DP 2].

It takes time for the student who has been excluded to forget such an experience. More so, if the student is remorseful for the misconduct. The student feels haunted [HOD 4].

Those who have been excluded feel that everybody in the school knows something about them. They do not adjust easily after being excluded [DP5]

The students feel that that they are worse than other students who have not been excluded; no matter the nature of offence they have committed [HOD 14].

The reflections of above respondents show that exclusion was not effective in managing student behaviour problems. Zaccaro (2014) agrees that the physical and psychological harm of exclusion outweighs any potential benefits they may have been having. This too was noted by Anitra (2013) who argued that exclusion contributed to negative outcome of student behaviour. However, Sorrel (2013) argues that exclusion.

In the context of the current study, exclusion consumes time meant for other activities. Learners enjoy being excluded, so as find time to loiter around and about. Respondents argued that it was better to make the learner do what had not been done without being excluded. They also argued that it took long for a learner who had been excluded to catch up with the others, as far as academic work was concerned. Some respondents remarked:

... the learners shouldn't be excluded; should be kept in class and be allowed to do what they didn't do while in class to avoid wastage of valuable time [HOD 10].

Exclusion does more harm than good to the child. It denies the learner an opportunity to study. It wastes valuable time [DP 16].

Sometimes we exclude a child as we go on teaching the rest. We also know that it is bad since it does not promote learning [HOD 18].

A learner who has been excluded requires more time to catch up with the rest of the students [HOD 5].

The sentiments expressed by respondents imply that exclusion was not found to be effective in managing student behaviour problems. Similarly, Bejarano (2014) agrees that exclusionary methods remove children from gainful opportunities of education. Golomb (2010) too agrees that

there's need to relook at the discipline practices and include positive strategies into the policies. However, Kruse (2012) study disagree that students prefer in-school suspension since it affords them time to attend to their homework and they are able to meet with their friends. In the context of the current study, students who have been excluded do not acquire behaviour change and are not remorseful. Deviant students who do not like academic work also enjoy suspension. Those who fear exams would want to engage in misconduct so as to miss exams once they have been excluded. The same applies to those who do not like certain subjects offered in the curriculum. Following is an excerpt from a respondent:

Exclusion has never worked for me. It doesn't make the learner remorseful for the offence committed [HOD 5].

Other respondents who also believed exclusion was ineffective reiterated:

Others want to make mistakes so as to be excluded. It's the joy of those who do not want to be in class, especially during exam period for those who fear exams [HOD 2].

Once I excluded some students who had been threatening the student leaders. Since this was a day school, they chose not to go home. They were seen hanging around, just outside the school compound. When the students were going home, they got back into the school compound through the fence, just on the same day [DP 7].

Once readmitted, some students get involved in the same misconduct, as if they would like to know the consequences that follow thereafter [DP 2].

The excerpts from respondents implied that exclusion was ineffective in managing student behavior problems. From the document analysis, there was evidence of a student who decided to relocate to another school because he was suspended for collecting money illegally from the form one students. Further, it was established that that two students who punished the head boy by throwing his books in the toilet were suspended. They too decided to relocate to other schools. In this case, the students on whom exclusion had been used developed resistance to change. Further findings from document analysis guides revealed that a student who had been suspended for writing abusive and threatening note to the school administration refused to report back to school after the period of suspension had ended. The student was suspended but after the suspension, refused to go back to school. Fallon, Keffe and Sugai (2012) in America agree that students who spend more time outside the classroom due to disciplinary consequences are likely to engage in negative outcomes. Khewu (2012) in South Africa concurs that time out is not always effective since children that have learning problems become problematic because they would want to be sent out of class. However, Kruse (2012) in America argues that some students are ashamed of being suspended and this improves their behaviour.

In the current study, students who were excluded tended not to complete the education course. Respondents observed

that some parents or guardians are very harsh and do not tolerate behaviour problems among their children. Nevertheless, students who had been suspended were expected to report back to school with either parents or guardians. Those who feared their parents did not go home. Some looked for people who were not their parents to accompany them back to school. Others decided not to go back to school at all. Two respondents reflected:

Exclusion is not very effective because when I send students home for misbehavior, I find it hard to bring them back to school. They may go elsewhere, not home because home is hostile and tracing them back to school becomes difficult [HOD 20].

Some parents are also tough and don't want to joke around with the children who misbehave in school. Their children choose not to go home when excluded because they fear the consequences [DP1].

Findings from above participants imply that exclusion is not effective in managing student behaviour problems. Involving parents in issues of student behaviour problems complicates the whole matter. Mohrbutter (2011) in USA agrees that there is need for teacher professional development that would lead to appropriate management of students' behaviour. Zaccaro (2014) in America concurs that the absence of training and regulation standards of student behaviour management procedures are likely to lead to inconsistent procedures in their application. However, Vacar (2012) argues that in school suspension is a careful tool in managing students' behavioural problems since it keeps the students up to pace and improves their attendance.

4. Conclusions

The quantitative findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between exclusion and management of student behavior problems. Additional study findings too established that exclusion was effective in managing student behavior problems since it was more appropriate for major offences and had reduced tension and strikes in schools. Further findings established that exclusion enhanced a sense of belonging in the students and developed rapport between the teacher and students. However, other respondents argued that exclusion stigmatized the learners, consumed time, increased resistance among learners and led to school dropout. Based on the study findings, teachers should be provided with capacity building concerning the most appropriate way of applying exclusion as an alternative corrective measure in the management of student behavior problems.

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