Indiscipline Problems of High School Students: the Case of Ethio-Japan Hidasse Secondary School (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

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Abstract
Discipline is among the basic ingredient that plays a crucial role in school system. Disciplinary problems occur when a student refuses to obey rules of the school and lack of it makes teaching effectively difficult. Explorative type of qualitative research approach is adopted to look at the magnitude of disciplinary problems and data has been collected using interview, document analysis and direct observation. The analysis is undertaken using topic coding system. The findings revealed that disciplinary problems in the study have been getting worse from time to time and ranges from frequent absenteeism to drinking alcohol and smoking cigarette. Day dreaming, quarrelling, cheating, missing classes, inattentiveness and distributive behavior are among the manifestations of the problem. Family background, low follow up by parents, school environment and peer pressure are some of the identified factors behind the problem. Stakeholder coordination is very essential in order to tackle the problems. Further detail study with representative sample size and using a comprehensive research methodology has to be under taken by educational experts to investigate the root causes of the problem.
Keywords: Disciplinary problem, high school student, school environment, parent role

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Discipline is one of the basic requirements for successful teaching-learning process in schools and it is one of the subjects of concern for teachers. It is a means of molding the behavior of a person and a process of making a child to show acceptable behavior as a member of the community (Elias et al., 2004). Predominantly, discipline problems occur when a student refuses to obey rules of the classroom or school. Lack of discipline in school makes it difficult to teach effectively. One of the effects of student indiscipline on teaching learning process is poor performance. Since much time is spent on discipline cases, less time on teaching, and this means that the contents are not completed hence students' inadequate preparation for the examinations and learning (Nakpodia, 2010; Alemayehu, 2012 and Oluremi, 2013). Discipline in schools has always been a major concern for teachers and educators, especially when there has been an indication that the problem is getting worse rather than improving (Tan and Yuanshan, ND). Students' misconduct in the classroom interferes with teaching and learning and is thought to be precursor to later school dropout and similar negative social outcomes. Students' behavioral problems are also thought to be a leading contributor to teachers' stress and attrition. According to Nakpodia (2010) and John (2013) disciplinary problems is a major cause for teachers to feel insecure. Serious breaches of school discipline policy can have profound negative effects on teachers. Teachers subjected to abuse or intimidation report experiencing fears for their safety, lack of sense of dignity at work, intense feelings of anger, humiliation, isolation and depression (Azizi et.al, 2009 Tan and Yuanshan, ND). According to Elias et al. (2004), Masekoameng (2010), Idu and Ojedapo (2011), John (2013) and Temitayo et al. (2013) there are hundreds of reasons influencing secondary school learners to misbehave at school, such as, for instance, struggling with hormonal changes, seeing society as deserving criticism and reshaping, a shortage of wisdom to learn from experience, a lack of religion, racism, poverty, and child abuse. Other reasons for learners' misbehavior include learners' who want attention, who see too much violence on television, who have low self-concepts, have no supervision at home, are bored, and do not know of any better. Factors outside the school also play a role. Antisocial and aggressive learners generally come from home environments where their daily needs are not met. This includes not being served meals, not having an indicated time for going to bed, and a lack of parental control.

Serious breaches of school discipline policy include assault by students on teachers and other students, verbal abuse, offensive language against teachers and other students, sexual and other forms of harassment, threat and intimidation of teachers and other students, possessing offensive weapons, supplying or using illegal drugs, intrusions into the school or classrooms by adults with the intention of confronting teachers have become a case of study that needed immediate attention (Azizi et al. 2009). Indiscipline in school is certainly a matter of immediate concern to the teaching profession. Ensuring discipline in schools should be the concern of everyone. It is important for the people to accept the fact that ensuring discipline is not the sole responsibility of teachers alone. One of the salient factors that attributes to the problem is peer group influences. Negative attitude of their friends such as responsibilities, cooperation, time management, respecting adults, disobeying rules and regulations are some of the contributing factors from the peer-group for the prevailing problems (Azizi et al. 2009, Elias et al. 2004, Idu and Ojedapo 2011, John 2013 and Temitayo et al., 2013). Rogers (1991) described

disciplinary problems as forms of disruptive and antisocial behavior, which, in this case, contribute to the high stress levels of educators, such as: resistance to teacher direction, argumentativeness, defiance, or swearing at the teacher and frequent frustrating behavior, such as calling out and talking out of turn. Lewis (1991) has distinguished three overlapping types of misbehavior which are regarded as disciplinary problems for the educator in the classroom, namely misbehavior that inhibits the learner's own learning, misbehavior by one learner which is destructive to the learning of another, and misbehavior which is disrespectful, defiant or abusive to the educator.

The author encountered a hot discussion by two high school teachers regarding the misbehavior of their students while returning from down city to Akaki by city bus. After attending some of the conversation, the researcher decided to share the discussion and involved with the matter. A lot of issues were raised and it was clear that they are highly disappointed with their teaching profession. Similar issue was entertained in the near past by the '*Addis Guday*' monthly magazine that posted teenagers with school uniform who were seeping beer with strew as if they are drinking juice and the writer highly urged concerned bodies to give due attention. A study by Alemayehu (2012) disclosed that students' disciplinary problem in Shashemene secondary school (Ethiopia) became serious and stressful through time. Then after the author was thinking over it and many questions came in my mind. Is really students discipline as such harsh though they are learning civic and ethical education? Is students' residential area (Akaki- being industrial area with diverse population) has a certain contribution? Such and other questions triggered me to conduct this research. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to examine magnitude of disciplinary problem in Ethio-Japan Hidasse secondary school.

The objectives of this study were:
- ✓ To identify the level of students discipline problems and major manifestations
- ✓ To identify the dominant factors contributing to the students discipline problems
- ✓ To examine the role of parents and school community in minimizing the problem
- ✓ To see if there is any difference among students (in terms of sex, family background and place of residence) in committing disciplinary problems

To that end, the following research questions were treated in the study:
- What are the most commonly encountered disciplinary problems that are being experienced in secondary schools?
- What are the major factors/ causes for the disciplinary problems that are being experienced in this school?
- To what extent do parents follow their children school behavior and achievement?
- Who are experiencing disciplinary problems (in terms of sex/ family background/place of residence or else)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of study area

Ethio-Japan Hidasse secondary school in Addis Ababa was established with the financial support of the Japanese government in 2009. It is found in Akaki-Kaliti sub city and comprises grade 9 and 10 levels with 20 sections. As of 2013, the school accommodated 1053 students (of which 559 or 53.1% were male and 494 or 46.9% were females). The average class size was 53 students per class. In addition, the school carried out its teaching learning program with 52 teachers (78.8% male and 21.2% female) and 31 administrative staffs.

Design of the study, Target Population and Sampling Procedures

Explorative type of qualitative research approach was adopted in this research because it is the most suitable to assess the major variables/causes so as to conduct further investigation using survey research. In addition, such qualitative method enables to explore the experiences and feeling of school management bodies. Ethio-Japan Hidasse secondary school was selected purposely due to its proxy and diverse composition of students both from rural, suburban and urban areas. Interviewees were selected using judgment sampling technique. Since the issue under investigation is students' disciplinary problems, those individuals who have better information and immediate relation with students were included in the study. In line with this, the school principals, civic and ethics club coordinator and guidance and counseling coordinator were selected purposefully. In addition, two home room teachers were included for the study using convenience sampling technique to substantiate the information collected from other sources.

Data Collection: Sources, Tools and Procedure

Data were collected using in-depth interview, document analysis and direct observation. In-depth interview was conducted using semi-structured questionnaire with the aforementioned key informants. Document analysis was also carried out mainly disciplinary records both at counseling, homeroom teacher and school principal levels as well as attendance of two home room teachers. The researcher also carried out direct observation at school level.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis was carried out using topic coding system. The information was categorized using different themes as causes/factors of disciplinary problems, manifestation of the problems, the role of school community and parents as well as possible solutions. Finally, based on the analysis, the major types of disciplinary problems being experienced in the school and their underlying causes were identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Major disciplinary problems observed in the school

Disciplinary problem in the school is common problem. The school management suspended two male students due to the severe disciplinary problem in the first semester. Based on the information gathered through in-depth key informant interview and document analysis, being late, cheating during exam time, unable to accomplish assignments and home works given, smoking cigarette, stealing of students property (mainly mobile and text books), being restless in class rooms (mainly in the afternoon classes), quarrelling with teachers and among themselves, absenteeism, missing classes, playing with matches in classrooms, making impolite remarks towards teachers, throwing chalk and small stones across the classroom, purposively disturbing the class with cell phone sounds while the teacher is giving lecture, disobedience of school authority, dress code violations, leaving campus without permission, as well as talking or/and inattentiveness when the educators are talking are the major disciplinary problems committed in the school. Even though it is not as such wide spread and frequent, coming to school after drinking alcohol, sexual harassment, damaging classroom fittings, fighting with teachers have also committed mainly by male students. The problem was observed during direct observation mainly late comers were many in number and absenteeism was observed from attendance sheets. The number of absentee students, as confirmed by home room teachers, increases mainly in market days. The counselor of the school also added that there is a rumor from the nearby residents that male students are chewing chat in group and sometimes with the female class mates in small house especially prepared for such purposes during school time. The researcher had got a chance to talk with a horse cart driver while returning from the school (the school is found around 2 kilometers to the west of the center. So horse cart is the only option). First it was me that started the talk by asking the old man "how things are going on?" It seems that the old man was not interested with my question. After a short gap, the driver started talking by saying "… can you see these girls... pointing his figure towards them; they are secondary school students, I know them by their uniform. I have been working in this road for long time and it is common to see such type of situation. Now they are waiting their friends and return back to home as if they are returning from school."

Even though great variation was not identified in terms of residence and sex, fighting among each other, frequent quarrelling with teachers and school guards, smoking in the school compound and coming class intoxicated are committed by male students. Cell phone sound disturbance and side talking in the class were by large committed by female ones. Other disciplinary problems are performed by both sexes. A study by Lewis (1991) and Temitayo et al. (2013) pointed out similar result as boys are more violent at school than girls using both physical aggression and threats. Girls tend to portray more indirect modes of malicious gossip, as well as malicious ostracism. The reason why boys are more violent than girls is because boys are biologically more prepared to learn dominance, competitiveness and aggression. Girls are socialized into being more inhibited. The researcher also tried to see recorded documents regarding disciplinary problems. Unfortunately, it was not possible to get well organized records so as to compare and contrast if there is any disparity in terms of residential area and other attributes.

Pushing Factors

The findings showed that peer group influence, family background, school environment, considering the act as adventure and lack of vision (long term aim) by students were identified as the dominant factors contributing to discipline problems among students. Both respondents agreed that, since the parents of most students are factory employees and their economic status is low, they are not in a position to follow up their children and unable to afford what their children request. Lack of control or/ and loose control leads students to be misbehaved, drunker and smoking cigarette. Once addicting in such situation students commit stealing properties of their friend in order to get money. Peer pressure was also identified as a pushing factor for disciplinary problems. Some students consider smoking and misbehaving as adventure and manner of 'being civilized'. Especially male students from the nearby suburban perform such acts not to be considered as inferiors by their urban class mates. From the results, the respondents also noted that the students were pushed by their friends to fight and steal. In this case, the students were blackmailed by the other students to do such things. If they resist, the student's fear of something bad will happen to them. Since most teachers were youngsters and newly graduates, their management experiences was weak so that they confront with students frequently and this has also aggravated the situation.

Another issue raised during the interview was the role of parents and school community in minimizing

the problem. As mentioned above, most parents are working as a laborer in the factories. They did not attend the day-to-day activity of their students. They even did not accept as their child is committing such disciplinary problems. The school guidance and counselor shared his experience as "…one 10th grade student was ordered by his home room teacher to come with his parent after robbing the mobile of one female student. The father of the student never accepts such disciplinary problem. He said, 'I know my child, do not blame him of robbery, he is innocent and well behaved, even my neighbors can give the witness, perhaps the problem might be done by somebody else'." This indicated that parents did not follow up their students and students themselves acts as if they are innocent in the home to mischief their parents. Other parents replied 'it is beyond my capacity, I could not manage it, and the school management can take appropriate measures. I have my own business. I never come again with such issue.' The work by Tan and Yuanshan (ND) confirm the same result. Lack of parental guidance/supervision is the most frequently cited reason (Idu and Ojedapo, 2011; Alemayehu, 2012 and Temitayo et al., 2013). Some teachers believe that some of the parents themselves are poor models. When it comes to disciplining misbehaved pupils, they are either indifferent or overprotective, making it difficult for the schools. Masekoameng (2010) pointed out that anti-social and aggressive learners generally come from home environments where their daily needs are not met. This includes not being served meals, not having an indicated time for going to bed and lack of parental control. However, some of the respondents recognize that as teachers, they themselves could have caused some of the problems because of poor classroom management and boring lessons. One of the interviewed home room teacher agreed that most of the teachers are laissez-faire and disappointed with students' poor performance and poor manner. Following up of students was rarely done by some teachers. Most respondents agreed that different forms of organizations in the school like civic and ethical club, one to five organizations of students and students' police did not bring the intended results. This situation was also confirmed by the study of Kinde and Mekonnen (2006) on secondary school in Jimma zone, Ethiopia. As clearly indicated the educational and training policy of Ethiopia, the general objectives of education in the country in general and civics and ethics in particular, among others, is to bring up citizens who can take care of and utilize resources wisely, who are trained in various skills, by raising the private and social benefits of education as well as   to bring up citizens who respect human rights, stand for the well-being of people, as well as for equality, justice and peace, endowed with democratic culture and discipline (FDRGE, 1994 and Yamada, 2011). But most respondents doubted the achievement of the intended outcomes of civic and ethical education. The school has formulated rules and regulation with the consent of students but no one abide by the rules and as informed by the counselor, most teachers are highly irritated by the behavior of their students and are not fully committed to carry out their duties. Smith and Laslett (1993) suggested that the basic elements in determining the state of the classroom environment are rules and routines. Rules define the boundaries for behavior within a classroom. They are in effect the formal statement of the teacher's expectations about what pupils may and may not do. The situation in the study area proved that having rules and regulations by itself is not a guarantee to secure a conducive learning-teaching environment. The enforcement of the rules both by students and school communities matters a lot.

Lack of vision was also identified by respondents as a cause for the disciplinary problems. Some male students are learning only to complete grade 10 so as to have a driving license. Even a great number of female students are dreaming the Arab world. Regarding the vision of students, some parents also share similar idea by saying 'please tolerate my child till he completed grade 10…then after he will be either a taxi driver or min-bus tout. School environment was another factor worth-mentioned during the discussion with the principals. The school serves both for rural, suburban and urban students. This makes the behavior of students to be diverse.
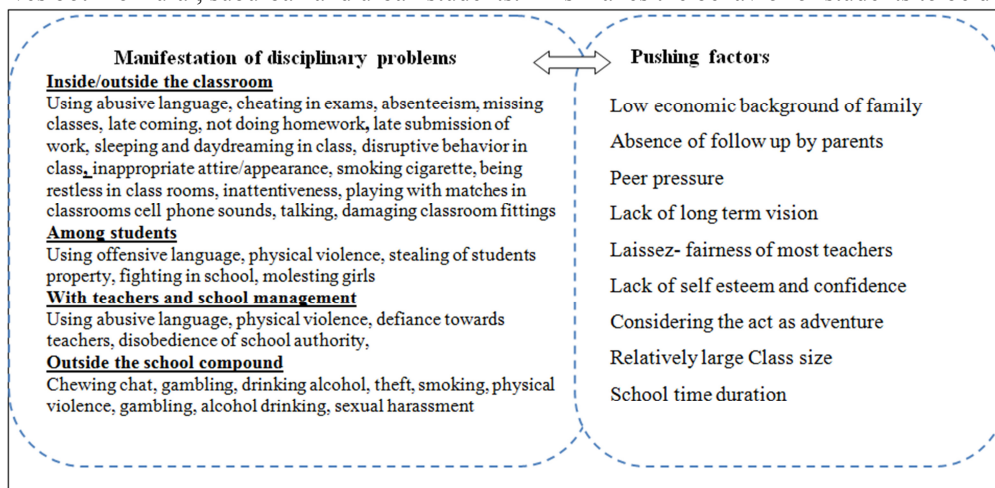

Figure 1: Manifestation and pushing Factors of disciplinary problems

Having diverse behavior in turn aggravates different disciplinary problem. Regarding with this issue, Masekoameng (2010) asserted that multi-cultural schools are more prone to experience disciplinary problems than schools with learners of the same culture and ethnic background. Other factors which may determine the types of problems in schools are, for example, the size of the school, the managerial skills of the principals, and the socio-economic backgrounds of learners, to name but a few. The school time duration (which last from 2:00 to 9:00 local time) was taken as one factor. Addicted students become frequently restless especially after the break time and exhibited disciplinary problems. Relatively large class size has also aggravated some of the problems like talking and cheating.

What should be done?

Managing disciplinary problems needs the collaborative actions of all stakeholders. Educators play a significant role in the management of school discipline. Educators who do not actively involve learners in classroom activities may experience disciplinary problems. The involvement of learners in matters pertaining to their education reduces behavioral problems. Learners, who are actively engaged and interested in classroom activities, stay on task at a higher level than learners less interested and involved.   Smith and Laslett (1993), Idu and Ojedapo (2011) and Temitayo et al. (2013) underlined the role of teacher as an educator who involves his or her learners in class, treats them as people who are capable of thinking for themselves, and do not treat them as objects to be cajoled and shaped into manageable underlings who need to climb on board the educator's behavior track experience less disciplinary problems. If teachers are pre-occupied with setting up displays, distributing materials or searching for equipment then there are ample opportunities for idling, chatter and other unproductive activities. Parents also play the greatest importance in creating conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. It seems that lack of parental involvement was the major cause of disciplinary problems in secondary schools. When parents show due civility and respect, their children reflect it in their interaction with their educators. On the other hand, if parents fail to exhibit respect to others, the learners will imitate this behavior and show little or no respect for their educator. Parents should follow up the day to day activity of their children, their friends outside the school and should communicate with the concerned body in the school at least one in a month. This situation was not common the study area. The school principal was highly surprised with one parent who came to school to check the attendance of her child in the previous day and said 'I suspect my child was not in the class yesterday. I want to check it.' Unfortunately the mother of the student was right. The attendance for that day was absent. Such types of trends should be encouraged. It should be the cumulative responsibility of all stake holders that brings the intended result. Therefore, the school management bodies should work collaboratively with concerned bodies so as to bring the intended objectives mainly attitudinal change and development of self esteem.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the aforementioned discussions, it is possible to conclude that different kinds of disciplinary problems are exhibited the school. The pushing factors behind school level disciplinary problems were the cumulative effects of school environment, family background, loose parent control, lack of vision and other. Parents and schools share the responsibility of promoting values and standards which we hope will help younger people to establish sound behavioral codes for their lives. It is important that parents work in-cooperate with their child's school, and not just leave the school alone in the dark. Discipline problems can be dealt with much more effectively if both parties could share similar and ideal vision which leads to prolific missions. The study was conducted to examine the magnitude of students' disciplinary problems (extent, manifestations and pushing factors) in Ethio-Japan Hidasse Secondary School. Even though, it is difficult to generalize the findings for other schools, due to the problem of representativeness of the sample and the techniques used, it can be possible to forward the following plausible recommendations.

- ✓ Parents and school communities should organize a discussion session so as to discuss with the issue and formulate remedial action
- ✓ The school management is expected to update the regulations of the school regularly and enforcement of the rule should be applied
- ✓ School based clubs have to be strengthened and reward has to be given for ethical students
- ✓ Detail study with a representative sample and a comprehensive methodology should be undertaken by educational experts so as to explore the underlying causes.

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