



# **Exploring Intricacies of School-community Collaboration in Managing School Discipline: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Chingola District, Zambia**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

In Zambian schools, the levels of indiscipline among pupils has been on the increase and this should not be the case. The study explored collaboration between the school and the community in promoting school discipline among pupils in selected secondary schools in Chingola. The

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concurrent mixed-method approach was employed. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. This study had 197 participants from four schools and the surrounding communities. The sample included 113 pupils, 48 teachers, 6 administrators, and 30 parents. The qualitative data was analysed thematically, while the quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 21. This study established that close collaboration between the community and schools promote information sharing between teachers and parents in the community and aids in discipline management among erring pupils. It was noted that collaboration between teachers and parents creates an enabling environment for monitoring the behaviour of their children to curb the high prevalence of pupil indiscipline which ranged from vandalism, theft, mobile phone usage, alcohol and drug abuse. The study further found that disciplinary referral, summoning of parents, guidance and counselling, rewarding and punishment mechanisms, and involvement of parents are among the strategies to discipline the learners and enhance social cohesion. Based on the findings, the study recommended that schools should endeavor to strengthen collaboration with the community in curbing indiscipline among learners.

*Keywords: Indiscipline; collaboration; school; community.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discipline is one of the contributing factors to good academic performance among pupils, schools, and also to moral uprightness in the surrounding communities [1,2]. Gitome et al. [3] assert that discipline goes beyond adhering to rules and regulations to encompass a pupil's ability to discern what is right or wrong. Therefore, lack of pupil discipline in schools remains a major concern among researchers, and educators. Pupils' failure to comply with school rules makes the attainment of effective teaching quite challenging and this could lead to poor academic performance.

Conversely, other studies have confirmed a substantial improvement in pupils' academic performance as a result of effective management of pupil indiscipline [4,2,5,1,6]. Similarly, Njoroge and Nyabuto [2] noted that "good discipline creates a good image of the school and prepares learners for the future". This suggests that implementation of effective discipline at both school and the surrounding community is key, not only for pupils improved academic performance but also for their moral and emotional well-being. Thus, impacting on the community and society at large, in either a positive or negative manner in the future.

While indiscipline cases have been reported in other parts of the world, Zambian secondary schools are not an exception. Musonda [7] noted that criminal actions and gangs had started to be the order of the day in some Zambian schools. This trend has continued as similar cases of indiscipline behaviour among secondary school

pupils have been reported countrywide. In some extreme cases, such behaviours have resulted in the loss of lives. This is evident in a matter where a former Twin Palm Secondary School pupil and three juveniles aged between 16 and 18 years were accused of killing a Kabulonga Boys' Secondary School pupil on December 4, 2020 [8,9]. This incident threatened the security and safety of schools and surrounding communities. The Ministry of Education has consistently charged school administrators country-wide with the responsibility of managing indiscipline among learners. As provided for in the Education Act (2011), the school-based policies of indiscipline management in Zambia include discussions with erring pupils and their parents, simple teacher-initiated punishments, suspensions, or even expulsions in extreme cases.

Despite such school policies, indiscipline is prevalent in most Zambian secondary schools [10]. A study conducted by Phiri (2016), also cites rising cases of indiscipline including vandalism, bullying, lesson abscondment, drug abuse, theft, offensive language, promiscuity, and other offences that are against school rules and regulations.

It is assumed that pupils' indiscipline could trigger aggression amongst pupils if not addressed. In some instances, it could result in vandalism of school property, and eventually affect academic performance. Indiscipline may also deprive both teachers and pupils of the valuable allocated teaching periods because handling such cases is equally time-consuming and very involving. Indiscipline could also compromise school values, resulting in the

community refusing to be associated with such a school. In addition, indiscipline defeats the purpose of a school being the safest location for the bigger majority of pupils.

While some sections of society have attributed the rising cases of pupil indiscipline to the abolishment of corporal punishment in 2003, it is not likely that authorities could change this policy as it was an abrogation of human rights. As such, there is need for alternative approaches to managing indiscipline among secondary school learners.

Therefore, this is one of the compelling grounds for undertaking the current study whose aim was to explore the effectiveness of school-community collaborations in managing discipline among pupils in selected secondary schools within Chingola district of Zambia. Previous studies conducted outside Zambia (Dwyer, Osher, and Warger, 1998; Lee, 1994; [5] have established that families and community partners could help school administrations and teachers to control pupils' behaviours so that schools can become safer and conducive learning environments.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed at exploring the effectiveness of school-community collaboration in managing pupils' indiscipline among selected secondary schools in Chingola district of Zambia.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the effect of school management on pupils' indiscipline cases in selected secondary schools of Chingola district?
2. Do external influence-related factors have any effect on the prevalence of indiscipline cases among pupils in selected secondary schools of Chingola district?
3. To what extent have the existing school-community collaborations contributed to pupils' discipline management in selected secondary schools of Chingola district?
4. What are respondents' views on improving pupil discipline using school-community collaborations?

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The social control theory, also known as the social bond theory is premised on the notion that individuals wreck the law because of a breakdown with their societal bond. Hirschi refers to four factors that constitute the societal bond.

These bonds consist of attachment to other people, dedication to following guidelines, involvement by ordinary social behaviours, and belief as a primary fee system. The social management concept explains punishment as a vital management mechanism by which pupils are made to conform to school rules and regulations.

In line with this concept, when a person receives punishment, she or he learns that they are not in line with social norms and rules and accordingly, punishments act as a mechanism to manipulate their behaviour to conform to social norms and guidelines. But this mechanism won't hold if one does not have any attachment to the society or the network to which he or she belongs. Sociologists and different social scientists have long been interested in the feelings that humans increase with the places wherein they live.

Hirschi [11] asserted that individuals will sense regret when there is a social bond. Social bond right here involves the attachment that one feels with colleagues or buddies. This attachment or bond turns more potent when one does not need to be alone or in isolation from the organization that he is attached with. In keeping with Hirschi, when the Bond becomes susceptible, the outcomes are the liberation of a delinquent, and a shortage of obligation for the behaviour portrayed.

As propelled by the theory, people typically reply to four social bonds to conventional society, attachment to pro-social others, dedication to conformity, involvement in conventional sports, and notion inside the value or legitimacy of the conference. Hirsch's idea of "social bond" is made out of the following 4 elements: (1) attachment, (2) dedication, (three) involvement, and (4) ideals. Attachment refers back to the symbiotic linkage between a person and society. These 4 factors of the social bond may additionally determine how one behaves in his or her social surroundings. The social manipulate principle has been utilized by pupils to study delinquency in schools. Jenkins (1997) and steward (2003) for example, have targeted the school as a crucial mechanism of social interaction.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Concurrent Mixed methods research design was used in this study where concurrent triangulation research model was employed. This meant that collection of qualitative and quantitative data was

conducted simultaneously. The study targeted administrators, teachers, parents and pupils in combined schools and the Ministry of General Education officials. The study had 197 participants from four schools and the surrounding communities. The sample included 113 pupils, 48 teachers, 6 administrators, and 30 parents who were available for the study. All the random selected participants were interviewed and given questionnaires. Random sampling provided each member of the population an equal opportunity of being included in the sample (Bless and Achola, 1988).

#### 4. RESULTS

##### 4.1 Prevalence of Indiscipline among Pupils

Before establishing the factors triggering pupils' misbehaviour, both the pupils and teachers who participated in the study were asked to rate the seriousness of indiscipline cases from 1 (not serious at all) to 5 (extremely serious). Results displayed in Table 1 (pupils' responses), and Table 2 (teachers' responses) provide some insights into the prevailing situation regarding indiscipline cases at the participating school and the surrounding community. For each of the 12 items, the total number of responses (N), the minimum (min) and maximum (max) ratings, the mean, and standard deviation (SD) have been reported.

Based on the data displayed in Table 1, it suffices to point out that the distribution of the

responses did not deviate much from normality in the sense that both the skewness and kurtosis coefficients were within the acceptable range of chance fluctuations. Only one item (RM2) had the skewness and kurtosis values outside the recommended range of  $\pm 2$ . This gave an assurance that there were no serious variations in pupils' responses regarding the prevalence of indiscipline at the participating school and the surrounding community.

Results displayed in Table 1 reflect that each of the 12 itemized misbehaviours received ratings ranging from 1 (not serious at all) to 5 (extremely serious). However, the average ratings appear to indicate that only five of the itemized misbehaviours ranged from 2 (a bit serious) to approximately 3 (serious). This suggests that pupil misbehaviours that should attract attention include physical assault among pupils (M = 2.71, SD = 1.47), vandalism of school property (M = 2.11, SD = 1.47), theft of property within the school (M = 2.46, SD = 1.45), mobile phone usage (M = 2.02, SD = 1.33), and unruliness within the school compound (M = 2.58, SD = 1.47). Considering the items scoring the mean values between 1.5 and 1.9 as being closer to 2, it suffices to point out that all the itemized indiscipline cases were a bit serious with an exception of RM2 (M = 1.42, SD = 1.02). This suggests that most pupils were of the view that cases of physical assault by pupils on their teachers were not serious misbehaviour at their school.

**Table 1. Pupils' responses on the prevalence of indiscipline cases from selected schools**

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Physical assault by the teacher on a pupil	112	1	5	1.74	1.199	1.378	.447
Physical assault by the pupils on the teacher	113	1	5	1.42	1.016	2.444	4.945
Physical assault between pupils	113	1	5	2.71	1.474	.502	-1.194
Verbal abuse by a pupil towards the teacher	113	1	5	1.82	1.324	1.577	1.119
Verbal abuse by a teacher towards a pupil	113	1	5	1.76	1.205	1.627	1.605
Vandalism of school property	113	1	5	2.11	1.466	.955	-.609
Theft of property within the school	112	1	5	2.46	1.445	.419	-1.289
Mobile phone usage	113	1	5	2.02	1.329	1.035	-.228
Constant disruption in class	113	1	5	1.81	1.245	1.733	1.966
Alcohol and drug abuse	112	1	5	1.90	1.170	1.431	1.193
Unruliness within the school compound	113	1	5	2.58	1.499	.500	-1.158
Sneaking out of school	113	1	5	1.89	1.198	1.128	.164

**Table 2. Teachers’ responses on the prevalence of pupil indiscipline cases in selected schools**

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Physical assault by the teacher on pupils	48	1	5	1.35	.934	2.818	7.135
Physical assault by the pupils on the teacher	48	1	5	1.88	1.248	1.341	.679
Physical assault between pupils	48	1	4	1.67	.907	1.263	.736
Verbal abuse by a pupils towards the teacher	48	1	4	1.67	.883	1.303	1.044
Verbal abuse by a teacher towards a pupils	48	1	4	1.94	.909	.837	.101
Vandalism of school property	48	1	4	1.98	.838	.493	-.353
Theft of property within the school	48	1	5	1.85	.945	1.565	1.354
Mobile phone usage	48	1	4	1.81	1.003	1.185	.411
Constant disruption in class	48	1	4	1.50	.851	1.840	1.804
Alcohol and drug abuse	48	1	4	2.06	.932	1.024	.476
Unruliness within the school compound	48	1	3	1.56	.741	.922	-.543
Sneaking out of school	48	1	5	2.42	1.127	.775	-.064

Table 2 illustrates teacher responses to the same items as those reported in Table 1. Like pupil responses, the skewness and kurtosis values for teacher responses in Table 2 also appear to indicate no serious departure from normality. Only item 1 (RM1) has values of the skewness and kurtosis that are outside the recommended range of chance fluctuations. This gives an assurance of no serious fluctuations in teacher responses regarding pupil misbehaviour at the sampled school and the surrounding community.

On average, teacher responses suggest that none of the itemised pupil misbehaviours was very serious nor extremely serious as no mean value is close to or above 4. Since all the mean values are close to 2, it can be concluded that teachers perceive the itemized indiscipline cases as a bit serious except for RM1 whose mean is below a 1.5 mark. This suggests that most teachers were of the view that physical assault by the teacher on pupils was not a serious matter.

#### 4.2 Existing School Discipline Management Strategies

Both the pupils and teachers were asked to indicate the strategies that the community and schools use to manage indiscipline cases in

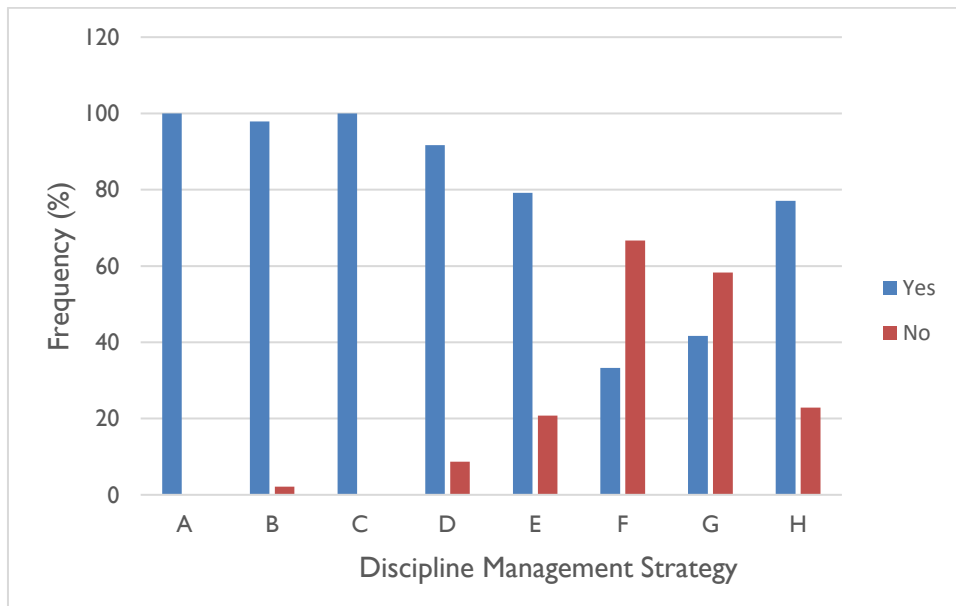
selected secondary schools in Chingola district. Based on the results displayed in Table 3 and Fig. 1, it suffices to conclude that majority (more than 63%) of both the pupils and teachers stated that all the itemised discipline management strategies have been implemented in those schools except for expulsion or forced transfers, which was endorsed by the minority of pupils (n = 55 or 48.7%), and teachers (n = 16 or 33.3%). Another management strategy that received a bit lower number of endorsements from both the pupils (n = 58 or 51.3%) and the teachers (n = 20 or 41.7%) is that of rewarding disciplined pupils.

On the other hand, all the teacher participants (refer to Fig. 1) indicated that simple teacher-initiated punishments and calling parents for erring pupils were widely used. Guidance and counselling were other strategies that received higher endorsements from both the pupils (n = 92 or 81.4%) and teachers (n = 47 or 97.9%).

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**Table 3. Pupils' responses on existing school discipline management strategies (N = 113)**

Discipline Management Strategy	Yes		No	
	n	%	N	%
A. Simple teacher-initiated punishment	82	72.2	31	27.4
B. Guidance and counselling	92	81.4	21	18.6
C. Call parents	89	78.8	24	21.2
D. Disciplinary committee referrals	72	63.7	41	36.3
E. Suspension	83	73.5	30	26.5
F. Expulsion or forced transfers	55	48.7	58	51.3
G. Rewards for disciplined students	58	51.3	55	48.7
H. Parental involvement	84	74.3	29	25.7



**Fig. 1. Teachers' responses on existing school discipline management strategies (N = 48)**

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### 4.3 Efficacy of the Existing Discipline Management Strategies

After establishing the existing discipline management strategies, both the pupils and

teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which each of those strategies has contributed to the reduction of pupils' indiscipline cases in those selected schools and the surrounding communities. Table 4 illustrates pupils' responses while Table 5 illustrates teachers' responses from 1 (no extent) to 5(very large extent).

Based on the skewness and kurtosis coefficients displayed in Table 4, and Table 5, it can be noted that none of the values falls outside the recommended range of  $\pm 2$ . This clearly gives an indication of no serious departure from normality in the distribution of both pupils' and teachers' responses regarding the extent to which each of the itemized strategies has contributed to the reduction of indiscipline among pupils. It also implies that differences in individual perceptions among both pupils and teachers were within the recommended range of chance fluctuations.

Based on the mean values displayed in Table 4, it appears that pupils perceived most of the existing strategies as having contributed to the reduction in pupil indiscipline cases to some extent except for the strategies A, F, and G than have yielded the mean values less than 3. For them, disciplinary committee referrals (M = 3.63, SD = 1.46) appear to have contributed to the reduction in pupils' indiscipline cases to a large extent, followed by a situation where the erring pupil is asked to call parents (M = 3.49, SD = 1.41). Other strategies that had contributed to the reduction in pupil's indiscipline cases to some extent included guidance and counselling (M = 3.24, SD = 1.53), suspension (M = 3.24, SD = 1.67) and parental involvement (M = 3.11, SD = 1.58). The least ranked strategy by pupils was expulsion or forced transfers (M = 2.54, SD = 1.58), which appears to be less effective. This finding is consistent with that of teacher responses (Refer to Table 5), who also rated expulsion or forced transfer as the least effective among all the existing discipline management strategies.

#### **4.4 Suggested Discipline Management Strategies**

Besides the strategies itemised in Table 4, pupils went on to suggest other strategies through which school-community collaborations could be maximized to improve the management of discipline among secondary school pupils. Below are the verbatim from this group of respondents:

*“More activities should be sponsored not just football. Scholarships should not be biased to sport and should be increased in number so as to accommodate more players.*

*Introduction of craft skill centres as not everyone's interested in sports. Making attachments to industries to develop the skills very possible.*

*Involving us in decision making as we understand ourselves better*

The above responses from pupils appear to suggest that pupils should also be consulted on how they can be supported to reduce misbehaviour. Table 5 illustrates teacher responses regarding the efficacy of the existing strategies for managing discipline among secondary school pupils.

For teachers, the most effective discipline management strategy is parental involvement (M

= 4.02, SD = 1.21), followed by guidance and counselling (M = 3.79, SD = 1.25), and then simple teacher-initiated punishments (M = 3.65, SD = 1.18). While some variations between pupils' and teachers' responses were detected, it suffices to state that there was some positive relationship in what both groups of respondents considered as effective discipline management strategies.

During the follow-up interviews, one of the teachers made the following submission on the efficacy of simple teacher-initiated punishments:

*Punishment helps the offender to improve and this condition is satisfied only when he/she realizes his/her mistake, feels regret or shame for his conduct and makes up his mind not to commit the offence again”.*

Watering flower beds/garden, weeding, and kneeling in front of other pupils, are some of the simple teacher-initiated punishments that were reported. One of the parents also noted that, “punishment reduces the number of indiscipline cases and reduces the number of parents being called to schools to respond to their children's cases”. Similarly, a pupil submitted that “punishment improves academic performance, because learners concentrate for fear of being punished”. These narrations from parents, teachers, and pupils appear to suggest that simple teacher-initiated punishments can greatly improve pupil discipline.

While some respondents endorsed the use of simple teacher-initiated punishments as one way of lowering pupils' indiscipline cases, others were of the view that corporal punishment should not have been abolished because it was the most effective way of managing discipline among pupils in public schools. The following submissions from different groups of respondents are examples of such responses:

**Parent:** *“The use of sticks for canning misbehaving pupils should not be abolished at school because it helps in reducing indiscipline cases”.*

**Pupil:** *“At our school, punishment especially the use of sticks is what usually works for managing those who misbehave”.*

**Teacher:** *“Punishment especially canning is the language that most of our indiscipline pupils understand”.*

The above narrations from respondents appear to suggest that some elements of corporal punishment were still present in public schools despite having been abolished completely by the government. On parental involvement, all the interviewed pupils, administrators, parents, and teachers echoed similar views stating that when both teachers and parents/guardians get involved in instilling good manners in the pupils, there is always a great improvement in pupil discipline inside and outside the school environment. This suggests that school-community collaborations ought to be enhanced to improve discipline among secondary school pupils.

#### 4.5 Respondents' Views on Improving Pupil Discipline using School-Community Collaborations

During interviews, administrators, parents/guardians, teachers, and pupils were asked to give their opinions on how parent-school collaborations can help in improving pupils' discipline. All the respondents were of the view that calling parents to come to school to discuss matters related to their erring children would help a great deal. This comes with the realization that erring pupils are seen to be going against societal agreed rules, they lack the inability to stick to set guidelines. Therefore, a need arises to ensure that the school employs measures that would help bring these pupils on

the correct path. It is imperative to strengthen school-community collaborations which promote

information sharing between teachers and parents in the community concerning pupils so that they can know how to manage them in terms of discipline. The collaboration will help erring pupils in adherence to common social behaviour and developing health attachments to both the family and school environments. In so doing interviewed pupils were of the view that both parents and teachers ought to monitor the behaviour of their children. This is reflected in the following submissions by some pupils who were asked to state the role that schools and respective communities play in managing pupil discipline:

*“Yes, parents should work wisely within their role as caretakers to make work easy for the teachers to handle the pupils at school”*

*“Teachers and parents should get involved in sensitising pupils on the dangers of not following school rules. This is because if teachers and parents don't work as a team, many learners can go astray”.*

*“Another reason why teachers and parents should both monitor the behaviour of pupils is because some of them (pupils) have a tendency of can either behaving well at school and misbehave at home or behave well at home and misbehave at school”*

**Table 4. Efficacy of the existing strategies for managing pupil discipline - pupils' responses**

Discipline Management Strategy	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
A. Simple teacher-initiated punishment	113	1	5	2.88	1.462	.116	-1.326
B. Guidance and counselling	113	1	5	3.24	1.525	-.198	-1.475
C. Call parents	113	1	5	3.49	1.415	-.358	-1.195
D. Disciplinary committee referrals	112	1	5	3.63	1.459	-.669	-.868
E. Suspension	113	1	5	3.24	1.671	-.223	-1.649
F. Expulsion or forced transfers	113	1	5	2.54	1.576	.532	-1.296
G. Rewards for disciplined students	113	1	5	2.57	1.586	.526	-1.264
H. Parental involvement	113	1	5	3.11	1.583	-.068	-1.481



**Table 5. Efficacy of the existing strategies for managing pupil discipline - teachers' responses**

<b>Discipline Management Strategy</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skew</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Simple teacher-initiated punishment	48	1	5	3.65	1.176	-1.227	.923
Guidance and counselling	48	1	5	3.79	1.254	-1.006	.260
Call parents	48	1	5	3.35	1.120	-.755	.354
Disciplinary committee referrals	48	1	5	3.38	1.315	.020	-1.232
Suspension	48	1	5	3.27	1.026	-.949	.397
Expulsion or forced transfers	48	1	5	2.96	1.010	-.043	-.709
Rewards for disciplined students	48	1	5	3.44	1.725	-.435	-1.610
Parental involvement	48	2	5	4.02	1.211	-.716	-1.163

As reflected in the above quotes, it appears that pupils believe that teachers and parents have a responsibility to inculcate good manners in children as that would promote good behaviour among pupils and strengthen their societal bonds. Teachers also held similar views as reflected in the following submissions:

*Parents/guardians need to constantly monitor their children's behaviour by asking teachers how their children are behaving at school. Teachers should also do the same. This is because the more parents and teachers share relevant information with each other about a pupil, the better equipped both will be to help that pupil achieve the aims and objectives of schooling*

*Letting offenders carry on with learning encourages indiscipline as their classmates would also think they would get away with such kind of behaviour*

The views presented in the above quotes from teacher participants suggest that both teachers and parents should take a keen interest in monitoring the behaviour of their children. When a child is found with a case to answer, parents need to cooperate with school authorities and take appropriate punishment to ensure that such misconduct by a pupil is not repeated. This is in tendon with the tenets of the social control theory which validates the need for punishment as a mechanism to manipulate behaviour to conform to social norms and guidelines. In support of the need to giving appropriate punishment it was noted that some responses given by parents and school administrators were consistent with those of teachers. This is reflected in the response below:

*Parents should not bully teachers or school management because of their position or status in society. Instead, parents should support the teachers and school management in ensuring that the behaviour of their child/children is controlled*

The creation of independent school governing boards also appeared to be one of the strategies through which parents/guardians could improve school-community collaborations in managing pupil discipline. The interviewed school administrators also stressed the critical role that parents play in managing pupil discipline. In this respect, one of the school administrators made the following submission:

*Parents as primary caregivers and first educators are perceived as co-operating partners in the educational enterprise. As such, parents need to monitor their children closely and always cooperate with teachers and/or school managers whenever they are called upon to deliberate on their children's' misbehaviour*

All of the above suggestions appear to suggest that school-community collaborations cannot be over-emphasized in the management of pupil discipline within and outside the school environment. Interview responses further revealed that enhancing pupil discipline at both school and community levels needed the involvement of pupils, teachers, administrators, and parents in the formulation of rules and the execution of discipline to offenders. Respondents indicated that such a measure would create a feeling of ownership by all teachers, pupils, and the community thereby enhancing cohesion.

Intensifying of discipline measures through the guidance and counselling department/committee was also seen as one of the most effective discipline management strategies among the learners. This confirms one of the results displayed in Table 5 that revealed that guidance and counselling had contributed greatly to the reduction of reported misbehaviours among secondary school pupils. It was further stated that providing guidance and counselling consistently would help pupils adhere to the school rules and regulations. This can be done well when all teaching staff and parents are brought on board too as follow-ups will be made easier and more consistent.

Communication, both verbal and non-verbal has been identified as another way of discipline management. Some teachers and administrators indicated that teachers need to lead by example in the way they conduct themselves in front of pupils. The way they talk to pupils and the type of advice teachers give to pupils can play a significant role in discipline management. In other words, teachers should always exhibit good ethics and professionalism. Respondents further stated that teachers ought to be awarded and provided with tools and necessary skills. Similarly, well-behaved pupils ought to be identified and awarded accordingly. This would eventually motivate other pupils to behave appropriately. There is also a need for continuity of training of teachers. The guidance and Counselling department must be expanded in all schools. This would also lead to more professional and career guidance talks that would motivate pupils to work hard and achieve their future dreams. Parents on the other hand should work with the school and not just overprotect their children even when they are in the wrong.

There was also a greater emphasis on the need to introduce policies that will protect the teacher with the discipline of pupils because some punishments seem to have no impact on the pupils. The administration should work in hand with teachers at all times as is not a competition for a position but for the benefit of the pupil. Guardians should be encouraged to visit schools often to help with the checks and balances in pupils' behaviour. The community should be free to interact or have a professional relationship with teachers and school administrations.

Apart from close monitoring of pupils by both parents and teachers, and bringing back corporal

punishment, some teachers suggested that pupils, parents, and the community should get involved in the formulation of school rules and regulations. This would enable the community and pupils to have a sense of belonging and take ownership of everything that happens in the school. While most interview responses emphasised a serious need for school-community collaborations in managing pupil discipline, some teachers stated that there was a need by government through the Ministry of General Education to formulate policies that would empower teachers to instil good morals in their pupils without the fear of being victimised by parents/guardians.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 External Influence-Related Factors on the Prevalence of Pupils' Indiscipline Cases

It is evident from the findings that the high prevalence of indiscipline cases included vandalism of school property, theft of property, mobile usage, alcohol and drug abuse, bullying, and sneaking out of school. The findings confirmed previous studies on the prevalent indiscipline cases in secondary schools [12]. This is an important finding in terms of understanding the situation of discipline in secondary schools, although it remains uncertain on the origin of misbehaviour in schools. Nonetheless, the study found that external related factors significantly predicted pupil misbehaviour. In particular, one interesting finding was the lack of parental support.

This study confirms Watson and Bogotch's [13] claim that parents, especially working parents do not have time for parenting. The abuse of social media could as well be linked to parents over protection of their children. Manamela [14] submitted that parenting style is the cause of indiscipline in secondary schools. As a result, Madziyire (2015) submits that parents' lack of responsibility towards the discipline of children prevents the teachers of secondary schools to maintain discipline among learners. He claims that parents nowadays are overprotective of their children because they do not know them well; they ignore their duties towards the proper upbringing of their children; little time is spent with these children which results in moral laxity which is exhibited by students. Peer influence and lack of discipline in homes where pupils come from. This is also supported by Gutuza and

Mapolisa [15] who claimed that indiscipline in secondary schools was largely caused by poor group influence, a bad company within and outside the school, lack of discipline at home and in school, irresponsible parents and guardians, use of drugs and alcohol, family problems, and poor teacher-student relationships.

Moreover, it seems possible that these results are due to pupils' attitudes towards education and schooling. Some learners just come to school to socialize with their peers. Such students are potential perpetrators of indiscipline cases in schools. This claim is in line with Jinot [16] who suggested that indiscipline among Secondary School learners originates from the family of the learners' attitudes to education and schooling. It is also possible that students misbehave at school because they come from communities that are dysfunctional where misbehaviour is the norm of the day. This is consistent with Gambo and Muktar [17] who claimed that students who come from such communities are likely to be unruly at school because of the absence of cohesion among neighbors and community networking.

## **5.2 Strategies on Improving Pupil Discipline using School-Community Collaborations**

The study revealed that one of the most applicable strategies was the referral to the school's disciplinary committee. The finding is consistent with Ndaita [12] who submitted that the best results concerning discipline could be obtained through vigilantly reminding pupils about rules and regulations of the school and monitoring their compliance with them. The study also revealed that parents of erring pupils need to be called for the disciplinary hearing as they are partners in reducing indiscipline in schools. However, sometimes parents are resentful when they are called in just for the crisis. Thus, Hamalengo [18] submit parents of "problem" students, sometimes are intimidated by visits to school administrators and other times are resentful that the school only calls them in times of crisis. Ndaita [12] stated that when parents become involved in the resolution of behaviour problems, many educators believe the likelihood of problem recurrence is greatly reduced.

Guidance and counselling were also a discipline strategy used in schools and community as demonstrated in the findings. Instead of giving punishment to offenders, offenders of some

cases, especially minor ones, are asked to undergo guidance and counselling sessions at school. Kaunda [19] substantiates that guidance and counselling services play an important role in learners' discipline. The study further showed that schools used a rewarding system as means to address indiscipline in schools. That means schools have in place systems of rewarding well-disciplined pupils. Rewarding encourages positive discipline among pupils. Chitalu and Phiri [20] relate positive discipline with preventive discipline, providing gratification in order to remain committed to a set of values and goals.

## **5.3 Views on Strategies and the Existing School-Community Collaboration in Pupils' Discipline Management**

It was found that respondents perceived disciplinary committee to have contributed to the reduction in pupils' indiscipline cases to a large extent. This finding is consistent with Kaunda [19] who argued that disciplinary sittings are critical in reducing indiscipline. The possible explanation of this outcome could be that students fear being called for disciplinary hearing as the outcome of the hearing is not predictable; sometimes, it can lead to the expulsion of the offenders. It was further noted that on the efficacy of disciplinary strategies, calling of parents of the erring pupil reduce indiscipline cases. The finding is in accordance with Uzoehina [21-23] who stated that when parents actually become involved in the resolution of behaviour problems, many educators believe the likelihood of problem recurrence is greatly reduced. Pupils take advantage of the lack of involvement of parents in their education and pretend to be good people in their presence and become something else when they are away. Thus, they fear being exposed to their parents by calling them to school. As such, children would be punished than asked to bring their parents to school. Unfortunately, Abidoye and Onweazu [24,25] alluded to the fact that parents are no more concerned with the moral and academic performance of their children since they do not have sufficient time to assume their parental role to discipline them. It was also viewed and perceived that guidance and counselling and suspension had contributed to the reduction in pupil's indiscipline cases to some extent. A study by Salgong, Ngumi, and Chege [26-28] also established that guidance and counselling did not only reduce indiscipline cases among secondary school pupils but also helped in improving their academic performance.

However, Salgong et al [26,29] noted that the lack of trained teacher counsellors, absence of policy and legal framework, and the high teaching loads by most teachers had hindered an optimal utilization of guidance and counselling strategy for managing discipline among secondary school pupils. Expulsion or forced transfers was rated to be less effective among all the existing discipline management strategies. The findings accord with previous observations by Docking, [30,31] who observed that punishments are appropriate and constructive while others are not desirable, baseless and instead intended to instil fear. Although discipline remains one of the most common problems for teachers, some punishments such as expulsion should not be used because no evidence suggests that they have produced better results, morally or that it improves school discipline. This has important implications for developing effective strategies in the fight against indiscipline in secondary schools.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Taken together, the results of this study suggest that whereas the strategies are effective in reducing indiscipline cases in schools, the persistent lack of community collaboration with the school in managing discipline constitutes a major hindrance to the effective management of discipline in schools. The results have identified the community as a major source of indiscipline among secondary school pupils.

### **Based on the findings, the study recommends the following;**

There is need for schools to come up with mechanisms to enhance ongoing communication between the school and the parents of pupils. Apart from PTA meetings and open day there is a need for parents to perform snap checks on their pupils and teachers alike. This would help in attaining consistency in all discipline measures being enforced. This will also provide the sense of belonging to both parents and pupils which will in turn impact the school and its environment positively.

There is also a need for schools from time to time to evaluate the effectiveness of discipline strategies and reinforce only those that prove to be effective. This is important in that life is dynamic thus change in the way we manage discipline is inevitable if we are to see distinct

adherence to rules and laws and a better child who will impact society positively.

## DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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