

Effects of Indiscipline on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Garissa Township Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya

Habiba Abdi Ibrahim¹, Ahmed Osman Warfa², Rosalia Mumo³

Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies
School of Education, Arts and Social Sciences Garissa University,
P.O. Box 167-70100, Garissa, Kenya

Abstract: Student indiscipline in public secondary schools has been an issue of concern for educators, policymakers, and public opinion, owing to the epidemic belligerence among students. While efforts have been made to improve the quality of education, the issue of indiscipline among students persists and is believed to be a contributing factor to poor academic performance. Varied indiscipline aspects have been identified as prevalent issues affecting the learning environment and consequently influencing students' academic performance. The prevalence of indiscipline aspects among students in public secondary schools within Garissa Township presents a significant challenge to the educational system. Highlighting the relationship between indiscipline aspects and academic performance underscores the importance of addressing disciplinary issues and enhancing students' educational outcomes. This research sought to investigate the effects of indiscipline on academic performance among students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Garissa Township by examining the students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township focusing on social, economic, and environmental effects. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design, with a study population of 7,928 respondents of the proposed study area. The target population was 11 Deputy Principals and 224 randomly selected students which constituted the sample size. Simple Random sampling method was used in the selection of schools while systematic random sampling was used in the selection of the study subjects determined using the Cochran's sampling formula. Data collection tools were a semi-structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide. Collected data was analyzed using correlation, which was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Results were presented in tables, themes and narratives. The study found that social effects of indiscipline was negatively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = -0.3527$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0000 < 0.01$). Economic effects of indiscipline was negatively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = -0.4520$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0000 < 0.01$). School environment's effects of indiscipline was positively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = 0.2161$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0011 < 0.01$). The study concluded that social effects of indiscipline, and economic effects of indiscipline, negatively and significantly affected the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. However, the school environment's effects of indiscipline positively and significantly affected the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that parents need to increase their level of involvement in addressing student indiscipline issues; the national and county government of Garissa Township, Garissa County to devise new ways of empowering the students; schools to actively involve parents as primary partners in the academic process; and the school administration and other stakeholders to intensify their fight against indiscipline beginning with tardiness/lateness school, skipping lessons and bullying/harassment.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Social Effects, Economic Effects, School Environment's Effects, Indiscipline

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

In the field of education, discipline stands as the basis for effective teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the prevalence of indiscipline among learners in public secondary schools poses a substantial challenge to achieving anticipated educational results. Indiscipline includes an array of behaviours that include vandalism, belligerence, truancy, substance use and abuse, and disobedience among others. All these hinder the learning environment. Indiscipline wields detrimental effects on learners' academic performance in various ways.

Primarily, disruptive behaviours interrupt the learning environment, orchestrating distractions and decreasing focus among students. Continuous disruptions deter the flow of instruction, making it thought-provoking for teachers to effectively convey knowledge and for learners to understand concepts. Subsequently, academic progress is hampered and reflected in lower grades and reduced learning results. Likewise, indiscipline nurtures a culture of reduced motivation and underachievement. Learners prone to indiscipline often display disengagement from academic quests, preferring to engage in unruly activities or socializing with misleading peers. This reduced motivation deciphers into poor academic performance as learners fail to capitalize on sufficient effort in their studies, resulting in low grades.

Also, lack of discipline dents the integrity of the learning environment, nurturing an atmosphere of cynicism and insecurity. Cases of vandalism, belligerence, bullying, or substance use create a sense of nervousness among students and the teaching staff, detracting from the favourable learning environment necessary for academic achievement. Fear of bullying, violence, and harassment may prevent students from attending school habitually and partaking in classroom activities. Addressing the inescapable issue of indiscipline necessitates a complex approach involving partnerships between schools, parents, policymakers, and the community. Schools must implement proactive disciplinary procedures aimed at promoting a culture of accountability, respect, and answerability among students. Clear and dependably enforced disciplinary policies can serve as restrictions against indiscipline while encouraging a positive school environment conducive for academic success.

Academic performance is an important indicator of learners' accomplishment and success. Education is a critical factor in any nation's socio-economic development, and students' academic performance is pivotal in determining the education system's success. To achieve sustainable development in any society, the young population must not only be preserved but also disciplined. Hooyo (unpublished research) argues that education, personal growth, and successful life are contemporary requirements in the development of any society. To achieve the political and socio-economic development of any country, people must be developed around proper values, attitudes, skills, competencies, information, and behaviour. This can only be achieved by investing in proper educational systems that transmit diligence and characteristics that shape learners into successful citizens. High school education is highly recognized globally and in Kenya since it prepares learners for vocational, technical, and tertiary education and also makes them ready for the job market.

Schools should prioritize early action and support for students at the risk of manifesting indiscipline aspects. Counselling, mentorship programs, and behavioural management interventions can aid in addressing causal issues contributing to disruptive conducts and equip learners with coping strategies and alternative channels of expressing themselves. Through addressing the basic causes of indiscipline, teachers can empower learners to make positive choices towards academic success.

According to Maasai 2021a, discipline involves cultivating positive behaviour change to create a conducive learning environment and influence students' academic performance. The rise in drug use and abuse, absenteeism, truancy, bullying, vandalism, and other forms of indiscipline are issues of concern for teachers, policymakers, parents, and the general public today. Some of these aspects of indiscipline are of concern because if not well handled by teachers and stakeholders advance to become societal issues in the communities where learners live after school.

In Kenya, as in many other parts globally, the education system serves as a foundation for individual advancement and national progress. However, the efficacy of the education system is reliant upon various factors, one of which is the discipline level among learners. Discipline, or the lack thereof, meaningfully influences learners' academic performance and general educational outcomes. In the context of a school system, a disciplined student is that student whose behaviours, actions and inactions conform to the predetermined rules and regulations of the school. Omote et al., 2015, defines indiscipline among learners as any wrong conduct that is not appropriate in any given school, place, community, or culture. Furthermore, Omote et al., 2015, argues that indiscipline includes aspects such as immoral behaviour, disorderliness, dirtiness, use of bad language, stealing, lateness, negative attitude towards studies, impoliteness, disobedience, being argumentative, destruction of school property, cultism, and drug addiction.

Over time, school indiscipline has been an issue of concern for educators, policymakers, and public opinion, owing to the epidemic belligerency among students, violent teacher-student relationships, and vandalism as well, leading to the perpetual existence of problem truancy, aberrant behaviours, lateness, examination misconduct, and poor academic performance among students (Ali et al., 2014). Ali et al., 2014, allude that indiscipline aspects, such as disobedience, absenteeism, truancy, and other related behaviours, can significantly impact students' academic achievement.

Discipline is a basic requirement for successful teaching and learning in schools and a subject of concern for teachers (Eshetu, 2014). According to Gitome et al., where there is good discipline, there is improved academic performance. In other words, discipline is vital for students' academic performance (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). Lack of discipline is called indiscipline. Therefore, indiscipline can be seen as any action considered to be wrong

and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society Omote et al., 2015. Among students, according to Ali et al., it is any form of misbehaviour which a student can display in several ways (e.g., disobedience, destruction of school property, poor attitude to learning, immoral behaviour, drug abuse, stealing, lateness, truancy, dirtiness, being quarrelsome, use of abusive or foul languages, rudeness, gangstarism or cultism). These consequently are detrimental to learners' performance trajectory as it diminishes learners, besides the psychological outcomes of quitting education or even going into depression and substance use. The critical role of indiscipline on academic performance has been emphasized by previous studies (Ali et al., 2014; Jeruto et al., 2020; Joseph, n.d.; Mohammed, 2020a)

Garissa Township, located in Garissa County, has several public secondary schools. While efforts have been made to improve the quality of education, the issue of indiscipline among students persists and is believed to be a contributing factor to poor academic performance. In recent years, concerns have been raised regarding the levels of discipline among students in public secondary schools within the township. Indiscipline aspects such as absenteeism, truancy, disobedience, and misconduct have been identified as prevalent issues affecting the learning environment and subsequently influencing students' academic performance.

Understanding the effects of indiscipline aspects on students' academic performance is crucial for devising targeted interventions to address these challenges effectively. By identifying the root causes and consequences of indiscipline, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can implement strategies aimed at fostering a conducive learning environment that promotes positive student behaviour and enhances academic achievement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been conducted to understand the relationship between student discipline and academic performance (Akessa & Dhufera, 2015; Ali et al., 2014; Ceazar & Ormilla, 2022; Jeruto 2020; Mohammed, 2020b; Mumo, Gedi and Warfa (2022); Mumo, Nthama and Kimeu (2022); Mumo, Kimeu and Mwanja (2022)). Various studies have investigated the various strategies that have been applied to curb indiscipline aspects (Maasai, 2021b; Matimba, 2023; Omote et al., 2015). Jeruto 2020, opines that the establishment of committees of inquiry by the ministry of education whenever indiscipline cases and underperformance arise, parent involvement in student academic progress, introduction of student attendance registers, introduction of free day secondary education, guidance and counselling, cancellation of examination results after cheating and school property destruction fines as some of the ways to curb indiscipline in schools. Despite implementing various educational reforms and interventions, there is a perceived persistent discipline problem among Garissa Township public secondary school students. This indiscipline is suspected to have a detrimental effect on students' academic performance, creating a need for in-depth research to identify the specific aspects of indiscipline and their impact on academic outcomes. There has been minimal improvement in the mean scores of the schools since 2020, however unpredictable in some of the schools, as tabulated in Table 1.1. The prevalence of indiscipline aspects among students in public secondary schools within Garissa Township presents a significant challenge to the educational system. This issue manifests in various ways, including absenteeism, truancy, school rules defiance, substance abuse, and conflicts among students. Such indiscipline aspects not only disrupt the learning process but also deter students' academic progress and overall development. The impact of indiscipline on students' academic performance is complex and requires an all-inclusive investigation to distinguish the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon. There is scanty information on the effects of indiscipline aspects on academic performance in the study area thus this study. Addressing the problem necessitates a nuanced understanding of the root causes, contextual factors, and consequences associated with indiscipline aspects in public secondary schools in Garissa Township. This research presented an excellent chance to investigate the influence of indiscipline on academic performance in one of Kenya's arid areas, contrary to what has been done before in the same region.

Table 1.1: Garissa SC Public secondary schools' performance in the last 4 years

S/NO.	NAME OF SCHOOL.	2023	2022	2021	2020
1	Nep Girls High	7.2	6.5	3.8	4.1
2	Garissa High	6.8	7.5	6.5	5.9
3	Umusalama Girls' Sec. School	6.1	5.6	2.8	4.2
4	Tumaini Secondary School	5.5	4.6	2.5	3.3
5	Sambul Boys High School (New)	4.8	_____	_____	_____
6	County High School	4.6	5.7	4.4	4.1

7	Iftin Girls Secondary School	4.5	2.5	2.6	2.9
8	Tetu Secondary School	4.0	3.0	3.1	3.4
9	Boys Town Secondary	2.9	2.9	3.8	3.8
10	Yathrib Girls Secondary School	2.1	4.7	2.1	2.5
11	Garissa School 4 Deaf	5.2	4.1	3.8	2.8

Source: Garissa Sub-County Education Office

1.3 Study Objective

The objective of the study was to determine the effects of indiscipline on academic performance in public secondary schools in Garissa Township Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research held significance at various levels. Firstly, it contributed to the existing body of knowledge on student indiscipline by focusing on a specific geographical area, i.e., Garissa Township, which may have unique socio-cultural dynamics influencing indiscipline behaviours. Secondly, the findings of this study would inform policymakers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders about the nature and consequences of indiscipline in public secondary schools, thus guiding the development and implementation of targeted interventions. Lastly, by highlighting the relationship between indiscipline aspects and academic performance, this research underscored the importance of addressing disciplinary issues to enhance students' educational outcomes.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study used two theories Social learning theory and Conflict theory to analyze data and themes. The Social learning theory by Albert Bandura proposes that behaviour is learned through observing, imitating, and modelling the behaviour of others, especially those of a perceived social class within the social environment (Bandura Albert, n.d.). According to this theory, learners pay attention to everything in their social environment, retain such practices through rehearsing, and reproduce them by finding motivation in them. Bandura contends that a learner who ever saw their parents being kind and caring will likely do the same and those who witness aggressiveness in their parents are more likely to be violent in problem-solving. Reinforcement or reward is a factor that is more likely to influence imitation. A learner who witnesses their friends or anybody else being rewarded for a certain behaviour may be influenced to copy and act in the same way to be influenced (Omote et al., 2015). Individuals around any learner are more likely to determine the way they respond to the conduct they imitate. The conduct of friends, parents, teachers, and siblings, can define the behaviour anticipated from a learner. A learner can either be encouraged or discouraged by observing behaviours from their teachers. Watching teachers on strike demanding their rights, or television programs with individuals who disrespect authorities can lead to learners either striking or becoming aberrant to express their disagreements and anger. Analyzing indiscipline aspects through this lens investigated how students follow and copy behaviours within their social environment, including peer, teacher-student interactions, and community influences.

Reasonably, society, including the school administration and the general public, expects learners to obey the school rules and regulations. Still, on the contrary, they are always inclined to break those rules and regulations. This results in conflict between those who want rules and regulations observed and the learners who violate the laws. The conflict theory is a theoretical approach that accentuates the existence of disparate forces in the life of an individual, persons, or people in social structures (Goroff, 1978). It argues that human society is an assortment of competing interests from persons and groups whereby each has its own goals, expectations, and motives. These individuals and groups are never at consensus and are branded by constraints and dissimilarities. The result is conflict in the form of disharmony, dis-equilibrium, and, of course, disagreements. This social unit is well represented in schools, which have structures and duties assigned to a diverse group of people. The school heads ensure that peace exists and coordinate everything. However, not everyone in schools, including the students, is in harmony with the head-teacher's coordination, creating conflict. This study investigated whether such conflict exists in schools in Garissa.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Area of Study

This study was conducted in the Garissa Township constituency which is found in the larger North Eastern Region of Kenya. Garissa Township Constituency is located in Garissa County, which is situated in the northeastern region of Kenya. The geographical coordinates of Garissa Township, specifically its center, are

approximately 0.4536°S latitude and 39.6461°E longitude. Garissa Township is bordered by Ijara constituency to the south, Balambala constituency to the northwest, Fafi constituency to the southwest, Dadaab constituency to the northeast, and Somalia to the east. Within Garissa County, Garissa Township Constituency encompasses the urban center of Garissa Town itself and its immediate surrounding areas. Garissa Township serves as a commercial and administrative hub within Garissa County, playing a crucial role in the economic and social life of the region. Geographically, Garissa Township is found in an arid area and is inhabited by the nomadic pastoralists of the Somali, Oromo, and Bajuni tribes. Due to its urban and economic status, Garissa Township is not only inhabited by the aforementioned locals but also other tribes including the Arabs, Pokomo, Swahili, and Ameru among others.

2.2 Research Design

This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. A descriptive survey design and correlational design was used in this study. Surveys, interviews, and document analysis gathered comprehensive data.

2.3 Population and Sampling Design

According to Jeruto (2020), a target population refers to a group of items, objects or individuals from which samples are obtained for measurement. This study targeted all the 11 schools in Garissa Township Sub-County. The target population comprised 11 Deputy Principals and 7928 students. Deputy Principals were selected because they are the custodians of discipline in most schools. The observable characteristics of the target population as advised by Mugenda and Mugenda, (2008), were students' indiscipline aspects and their effect on academic performance. Table 3.1 shows the various schools with their student population as obtained from the Sub-County education office Garissa 2024. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a sample size of between 10% and 30% is a good representation of the target population when the study population is less than 10,000. 30% (3 schools) of the total schools in the sub-County were systematically selected and a 10% of the population from each of the selected schools was used for analysis. Garissa special school was excluded from this study. All the 10 deputy principals and 224 randomly selected students were involved in this study. A systematic random sampling technique was used to select schools for the study. The number of years that a school has been existing as depicted by the school code was used to order the schools from the oldest to the youngest as indicated in Table 3.2. The 3rd (nth) school from the list was selected for the study. The study involved both male and female students selected randomly across different levels (forms) of study.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected through Surveys whereby a semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to all consenting participants to gather quantitative data on indiscipline aspects and academic performance. Interviews were conducted on the Deputy Principals to obtain qualitative insights into the factors contributing to indiscipline. The tool was formulated based on the study objectives and with adequate number of questions addressing each of the study variables. This ensured collection of sufficient data for the study. Data collected was cleaned, coded and entered into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 27.0 (SPSS Inc. USA). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency, counts, and percentages. For inferential statistics, the Pearson correlation was used to interpret any significant difference in the respondents' insight on related factors when grouped by gender and age. Qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis. The findings were triangulated to understand the research questions comprehensively and data presentation was through tables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Social Effects of Indiscipline on Academic Performance among Students in Public Secondary Schools

Based on the study findings 44.20 percent of students mentioned that the level of parental involvement in addressing student indiscipline issues was low, while 31.70 percent said the level of parental involvement in addressing student indiscipline issues was moderate and 24.11 percent of the students noted that the level of parental involvement in addressing student indiscipline issues was high. 20.98 percent of students stated that the social effects of indiscipline was low, while 33.93 percent said the social effects of indiscipline were moderate and 45.09 percent of the students noted that the social effects of indiscipline was high. Similar findings were deduced from the deputy Principals who observed that *"we as teachers and administrators are constantly helping poor learners escape from the impoverished conditions in which they grow up which leads to either poor performance, school dropout, or even the lack of targeted transition from one level of study to the other"*.

The Pearson correlation matrix in Table 3.1 illustrates that the social effects of indiscipline were negatively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = -0.3527$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0000$) at a one per cent level of significance. This shows that the social effects of indiscipline have a negative and significant effect on the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. The

study findings corroborate those established by Akessa & Dhufera (2015) who observed that low socio-economic status hurts the academic performance of learners for the reason that their basic needs remain unsatisfied, leading to poor academic performance. Similarly, Ceka & Murati, (2016) argued that parents play as important roles as teachers among students while at home. These researchers argued that the school, community, and home wield influence in the total education of the learner. This means that classroom instruction, home development, and community engagements complement each other toward the academic success of any learner. Similarly, Mumo, Nthama and Kimeu (2022) established that poor student behaviour, tardiness, drug use, and vandalism were found to have a negative effect on students' academic progress in the study.

3.2 Economic Effects of Indiscipline on Academic Performance among Students in Public Secondary Schools

The study results also show that 60.71 percent of students stated that their parents' socioeconomic status belonged to low income, while 29.91 percent indicated that their parents' socioeconomic status can be considered as middle income and 9.38 percent of the students noted that their parents' socioeconomic status was in the high income bracket. This shows that about two thirds of the households in Garissa Township, Garissa County have low income. 10.27 percent of students stated that the economic effects of indiscipline was low, while 30.80 percent indicated that the economic effects of indiscipline was moderate and 58.93 percent of the students noted that the economic effects of indiscipline was high. In similar vein, one of the deputy Principals noted that *"most of the students struggle to pay their school fees due to the fact the neighbouring communities have low income"*. The Pearson correlation matrix in Table 3.1 shows that economic effects of indiscipline was negatively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = -0.4520$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0000$) at a one per cent level of significance. This shows that economic effects of indiscipline has a negative and significant effect on the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County.

3.3 School Environment's Effects of Indiscipline on Academic Performance among Students in Public Secondary Schools

The findings of the study reveals that 7.59 percent of the students argued that there are no support systems in place in their school to address student indiscipline such as counselling services, peer mentoring programs, and disciplinary committees. However, 92.41 percent of the students indicated that support systems exist in their school to address student indiscipline such as counselling services, peer mentoring programs, and disciplinary committees. This shows that majority of the students supported the idea that support systems are in place in their schools to address student indiscipline. The findings from the deputy principals were similar to those observed by the students. Moreover, one of the deputy Principals argued that, *"in order to improve student outcomes each and every school has support systems in place like counselling services, and disciplinary committees to address student indiscipline"*. The Pearson correlation matrix in Table 3.1 indicates that school environment's effects of indiscipline was positively and significantly correlated to academic performance ($r = 0.2161$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0011$) at a one per cent level of significance. This shows that school environment's effects of indiscipline has a positive and significant effect on the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. The study findings conforms to those established by Caezar and Ormilla (2022) in the school environment, which includes the teaching staff, classrooms, laboratories, management, libraries, pedagogy, and peers are characteristics that affect students' academic performance. The authors found that there is a significant relationship between a student's academic performance and factors such as attitude towards and attendance in school. Likewise, Gregory et al. (2016) explain the importance of teacher-student relationships in modifying disciplinary snags and enhancing academic results. Learners are more likely to shine academically and parade positive behaviour when they feel respected, cherished, and supported by their teachers, regardless of their backgrounds.

3.4 Correlation Test

In this section, the Pearson correlation test was performed as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Pearson Correlation Test

	Academic Performance	Social effect	Economic effects	School Environment's Effects
Academic Performance	1			
Social effect of indiscipline	-0.3527*	1		
	0.0000			
Economic effects of indiscipline	-0.4520*	0.3301*	1	
	0.0000	0.0000		

School Environment's Effects	0.2161*	0.0673	0.2317*	1
	0.0011	0.3161	0.0005	

*, ** and *** represents 1%, 5% and 10% levels of significance

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

Social effects of indiscipline negatively and significantly affect the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. As the social effects of indiscipline escalated the academic performance among students was adversely affected. Economic effects of indiscipline negatively and significantly affect the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. Thus as the economic effects of indiscipline worsened the academic performance among students was adversely affected. The school environment's effects of indiscipline positively and significantly affect the academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County. Hence as the school environment's effects of indiscipline improved the academic performance among students also improved.

4.2 Recommendations

- i. There is a need for parents to increase their level of involvement in addressing student indiscipline issues.
- ii. The national and county government of Garissa Township, Garissa County ought to devise new ways of empowering the students as for most of them their parents' socioeconomic status was low-income.
- iii. There is a need for schools to actively involve parents as primary partners in the academic process as they are well equipped to address disciplinary matters effectively and create enabling learning environments
- iv. The school administration and other stakeholders ought to intensify their fight against indiscipline which is an issue among the students in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County beginning with tardiness/lateness school, skipping lessons and bullying/harassment.

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