

ABSTRACT

The Kenya government banned Physical Punishment (PP) and Mental Harassment (MH) in schools as stipulated in the Basic Education Act 2013. This was as a result of the recommendations of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrests in Secondary Schools which revealed that PP and MH were major contributors to low discipline among students. Despite the ban the level of discipline in schools has remained a major concern in Ugenya, Gem and Siaya sub-Counties, where cases of discipline for the years 2013 – 2016 were 83 (49%) higher than those experienced in Siaya County, 123 (47%) for the same period. Therefore the purpose of the study was to establish the influence of PP and MH ban on the Level of Student Discipline (LSD) in secondary schools in Ugenya, Gem and Siaya sub-Counties. Objectives of the study were to: determine the LSD, establish the influence of students' attitude towards PP ban on LSD, establish the influence of students' attitude towards MH ban on the LSD, establish the influence of PP ban on the LSD, and establish the influence of MH ban on the LSD. The study was guided by McGregor's Theory Y which states that in the absence of coercion, that is physical and psychological torture, persons operate orderly and are disciplined. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study population was 1449 respondents. That is, 166 principals, 166 deputy principals, 166 guidance and counseling (G&C) teachers, 950 class representatives and one Siaya County Director of Education (CDE). Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 116 principals, 116 deputy principals, 116 guidance and counseling teachers, and 274 class representatives. Saturated sampling was used to select the CDE. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires, observation guide, interview schedule and document analysis guide. Face and content validity of the instruments was determined by experts in Educational Administration whose input was incorporated. Reliability of instruments was determined by test-retest method in 9(5.4%) schools and Pearson's r was computed whereby deputy principals' questionnaire had a coefficient of 0.76, G&C teachers' questionnaire (0.77) and class representatives' questionnaire (0.79) at a p value of 0.05 meaning that they were reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages and regression analysis. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub-themes. The study found that: LSD was low with a mean rate of 2.4, students' attitude to PP and MH ban accounted for 80.6% and 79.3% variation in student discipline respectively. PP and MH ban accounted for 77.3% and 68.5% variation in LSD respectively. The study concluded that student discipline was low because of partial implementation of PP & MH ban. The study recommended that PP and MH ban should be fully implemented so as to improve the level of student discipline in schools. The findings of the study are significant to school administrators and policy makers as they inform them on the need for reviewing the ban with the view to enhancing its efficacy.