



Unpacking the Realities of Student Indiscipline in Two Zimbabwean Secondary Schools in Masvingo and Mashonaland East Provinces.

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ABSTRACT

Students' indiscipline is one of the key issues in the education of the child the world over, in particular in secondary school institutions. Teachers, administrators and learners need to understand the students' indiscipline in schools. This article focuses on unpacking the concept of student indiscipline as understood from different contexts and dichotomous secondary schools in two provinces in Zimbabwe. Data presented here were collected from two dichotomous Zimbabwean secondary schools. The participants included 3 administrators, 1 teacher and 1 student from a private Zimbabwean secondary school, and 2 administrators, 2 teachers and 3 students from a Zimbabwean government secondary school. These are people who are directly involved in dealing with students' indiscipline in schools. Data were collected from individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. Focus groups were conducted with teachers and students. Then individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with some administrators, some teachers and some students from the two Zimbabwean secondary schools. The study found out that there are multiple and subjective understandings of the term 'students' indiscipline' from school context to school context, and from school administrators, teachers, and students. There was no agreed understanding of student indiscipline in the two Zimbabwean secondary schools under study. The understanding from secondary schools was common on some common causes of students' indiscipline and there were disagreements on some cases of indiscipline, depending on the school contexts. Findings indicate that the causes of student indiscipline are related to the location of the schools, dysfunctional schools, increasing curricula, and cultural diversity. It is recommended that in order to deal with the issue of student indiscipline, the stakeholders should have a common understanding of the term.

Key Words: Students' indiscipline, Restorative justice, Private schools, Indiscipline.



INTRODUCTION

This article aimed at exploring the Zimbabwean secondary school teachers and students' understanding of the concept 'student indiscipline'. The author investigated how the teachers, students and administrators from different schools understand the concept of student indiscipline and to find out whether there is a continuous landscape of student indiscipline in the Zimbabwean education systems. The issue is that the concept of student indiscipline has gained popularity in the Zimbabwean society. Are the teachers and students from different schools reading from the same page as far as the concept of student indiscipline is concerned? Student indiscipline is one of the common practices in schools but with different forms of understanding. Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) argue that student indiscipline is a multifaceted concept in the world. It is elusive and difficult to unpack in a complex 21st century. Student indiscipline is the cankerworm that affects the backbone of the world. Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) argue that children are regarded as the wealth and pride of the nations, and they constitute the potential common resources needed for the continuity of society. The alarming rate of indiscipline in school spells doom for the world. This has resulted in the increased discourse on student indiscipline in the world.

Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe

The secondary schools in Zimbabwe are categorised into two groups: government and non-government secondary schools. The government secondary schools refer to those

secondary schools established by the State during the colonial and post-colonial eras. The government secondary schools include boarding secondary schools, day secondary schools and those that are both day and boarding schools (Kanyongo, 2005). In Zimbabwe, every district has a government secondary school. The schools were built in all districts as a fulfilment of the liberation struggle promises to provide education to all Zimbabweans (Kanyongo, 2005). The government secondary schools are few and sometimes offer boarding facilities. The government secondary schools enjoy a countrywide catchment area and sometimes fail to provide adequate decent boarding facilities. In the rural areas, these government secondary schools were constructed by the rural communities with some limited government assistance (Nyagura, 1993; Kanyongo, 2005), but driven by the UJAMAA ideology. In this study, Reed High School (RHS) is a day secondary school characterised by high enrolment, boarding facilities, and high level of student indiscipline. RHS enrolls students from different backgrounds and academic achievements at primary national examinations, from all corners of Zimbabwe and beyond the national borders. The school experiences complex student indiscipline cases and some are not recorded.

The private schools in Zimbabwe are also known as independent schools or non-governmental schools. The non-government secondary schools are not administered by local government, state or national government, hence they retain the right to enrol their students. All private schools in Zimbabwe are members of Conference of

Heads of Independent Schools in Zimbabwe, acronymed CHISZ (Machingura, Magudu, Maravanyika, Moyo & Musengi, 2012). The independent schools have different histories and backgrounds but strive to create a caring, friendly and dedicated community for the growth and development of the whole child (Machingura et al., 2012) The responsible authorities include the boards of trustees, council, mission, individuals and independent boards. The secondary schools may be boarding, day and/or both. In this study, Wise College (WC) is a boarding secondary school run by a board of trustees called Board of Governors. The way the independent secondary school, as an upmarket school, understood student indiscipline is different and it experiences a complex nature of indiscipline. Therefore, for this study one of the secondary schools was an independent boarding secondary school, also called a college.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Zimbabwe, studies have pointed out that the seriousness of student indiscipline in secondary schools varies from context to context (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015; Chiromo, 2021). Student indiscipline has over time been an issue of concern for educators, policymakers and public at large (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015; Gyapong & Subbey, 2021). Student indiscipline is a source of concern for schools, parents, stakeholders concerned with education in Zimbabwe. However, there is no agreed understanding of the concept ‘student indiscipline’ in different schools and contexts. The study aims to investigate and analyze the multifaceted problem of student

indiscipline in two Zimbabwean secondary schools located in Masvingo and Mashonaland East provinces. By unpacking the realities of student indiscipline, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges posed by indiscipline, with the ultimate goal of formulating targeted interventions and strategies to foster a conducive learning environment in the identified secondary schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper seeks to address the following questions:

1. What are the school administrators’, teachers’, and learners’ understandings of student indiscipline at one Zimbabwean public and one private secondary school?
2. What are the forms of students’ indiscipline in the two Zimbabwean secondary schools?
3. What are the causes of students’ indiscipline in the two Zimbabwean secondary schools?
4. What implications for schools can be drawn from the understanding of student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary school context?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Restorative Justice Theoretical Framework

The Restorative Justice Theoretical Framework rooted within interpretivism (Vaandering, 2010), helped interpret the data and explain the meanings behind indiscipline behaviors and perspectives. The study sought to investigate what was paradoxical about

student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary school contexts. The Restorative Justice Framework was applied against the backdrop that in schools there were clearly identified victims but the existence of student indiscipline implies that there are victims. The offender can also be a victim or two or more parties in conflict who have perpetuated harm on each other over time. Hopkins (2002) argues that the Restorative Justice Framework views student indiscipline as conflicts/wrong doing which should be recognised as interpersonal conflicts that provide opportunity for learning. Morrison and Vaandering (2012) confirm that the Restorative Justice Framework within educational settings views student indiscipline as harm that needs to be restored/repared. That means the Restorative Justice Framework emphasises on the view that misconduct is a conflict or harm that has occurred (McCluskey et al., 2008). Hence, the principles of the Restorative Justice Theory provided a lens with which to understand student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Student Indiscipline

The problem of student indiscipline, particularly in secondary schools, is a global problem that schools throughout the world are dealing with (Njani & Bula, 2018; Ikiugu, Kisirkoi & Maithya, 2020). The teachers are custodians of students' discipline and for them to be successful it is important that they understand student indiscipline. The students are a world investment and the direct stakeholders who practice discipline and indiscipline in secondary schools. It is also

imperative for them to unpack the concept 'student indiscipline'. It is the world's quest to nurture well-disciplined younger generations. The paradox of the concept 'indiscipline' has plunged the world into panic mode. The different stakeholders in education are quick to single out practices that they view as student indiscipline and provide ways to respond to cases of students' indiscipline. In Zimbabwe, the concept of indiscipline is elusive and different schools have no common understanding of it. Therefore, definition clarification is one of the issues around the term 'student indiscipline'.

Student indiscipline has afflicted every society and institutions are worried about its devastating effects. As Ali et al. (2014 p. 260) argue, the understanding of the term 'indiscipline' "is that every individual may know what they mean when they talk about it, but individual meanings can still differ in a sense ...". Therefore, it is important to begin by unpacking the meaning of the term. The term 'student indiscipline' is a human construct and its meaning is as diverse as the diversity of the human mind that engages in it.

The phenomenon of students' indiscipline is an issue that has proved to be an epidemic and a topical issue globally, especially for educators, policy-makers, and public opinion, because of the outbreak of drug and substance abuse, aggressiveness among peers, rebellious tendencies, violence, vandalism, and economic hardships (Freire & Amado, 2009; Emekako, 2016). The concept of student indiscipline has received much world attention because the lives of the young

children who are regarded as the wealth and potential human resources for the continuity of mankind (Ali et al., 2014) have been ruined by it.

Most scholars view student indiscipline as the ‘displays’. According to Mares (2018), student indiscipline can be categorized into levels: level one refers to those incidents of disruptive nature, level two refers to conflicts among peers, and level three which refers to conflicts in teacher-student relationships, which might take on proportions of violence and delinquency. The categorization is not world-standard. Each individual or society categorizes the examples in the levels differently. On another note, the scholars’ reduced a complex phenomenon into a simple phenomenon that may fit in the proposed strata easily. However, student indiscipline is a complex phenomenon that cannot be understood through the experienced displays.

Ali et al. (2014) argue that student indiscipline refers to ‘acts of indiscipline’ caused by students’ acts of misconduct such as violence and criminal behaviour that defeat the purpose of education. The scholars have reduced student indiscipline to acts of indiscipline which defeat the purpose of education in a society. This understanding is prone to the weakness of subjectivity, circumstantial, situational and contextual situations which are different from society to society, and from school to school. The understanding of student indiscipline is prone to the issue of relativity which affects people on the discourse of student indiscipline to mean the same common understanding of the phenomenon. What it implies as much as

societies, nations and the global village are concerned is that there are discussions about student indiscipline but there are people talking about similar topics, with divergent views of the concept.

Kiprop (2012) concurs with Ali et al. (2014) that students’ indiscipline is a behavioural disorder that can be referred to as an act of delinquency. This is a sociological definition of students’ indiscipline. Magwa and Ngara (2014) explain student indiscipline as misbehaviour which can be defined using the following areas: respect for authority, obedience to rules and regulations, and maintenance of established behaviour. However, many documents of rules and regulations in schools are vague and sometimes use legal language to students who have limited legal competencies.

There are as many terms used to refer to student indiscipline as the scholars who have studied it. These include indiscipline (Ametepee, Chitiyo & Abu, 2009; Ali et al., 2014), delinquency (Kiprop, 2012), learner misconduct (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013), students’ immoral acts, students’ unruly behaviour (Kounin, 1970), misbehaviour (Magwa & Ngara, 2014; Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka, 2011; Ncube, 2013), misdemeanour, school indiscipline (Ncube, 2013), and students’ indiscipline (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015). The plethora of terms that refer to student indiscipline implies the multiple constructions and understandings of the term ‘student indiscipline’. Therefore, if scholars are hard-pressed to come up with a single term for student indiscipline, do the students and teachers have the same predicament? For the sake of this article, the

term ‘students’ indiscipline’ is going to be used. Of importance from the studies is that there are some scholars who studied Zimbabwean students’ indiscipline and they coined and used a myriad of terms referring to student indiscipline. This study attempts to look at students’ indiscipline from the school perspective. It is unfair to discuss the students’ indiscipline phenomenon without an academic understanding of it.

Studies provide narrow definitions of indiscipline as an observable behaviour displayed by students. These definitions reduce students’ indiscipline to a psychological phenomenon, which implies that it is individualistic. However, indiscipline is a complex phenomenon. A working definition is suggested for the sake of this paper. Student indiscipline is a social construct and society has the voice to condemn acts of indiscipline. Society dictates what student indiscipline is. It is an act that negatively affects the smooth running of a social institution. It is a multifaceted phenomenon, that is, student indiscipline is understood from the perspectives of the offender, the victim, and the affected in general. The word ‘student’ implies that at the centre of committing the unwanted act there is a learner, either as victim or offender. Student indiscipline should be resolved communally by all stakeholders involved. Discipline and indiscipline are both social constructs. Society is the one that determines an act as student indiscipline and it is subjective in nature.

Causes of Students’ Indiscipline

The scholars who have studied the causes of students’ indiscipline used different perspectives. Wigfield, Lutz & Laurel Wagner (2005), Ametepee et al. (2009), Mugabe and Maposa (2013), Ali et al. (2014), Magwa and Ngara (2014), and Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) observe that the causes of student indiscipline were known and well elaborated by scholars. The identified causes of student indiscipline included: the idea of democracy (rights and freedom), generation gap (beliefs and values about the nature of man and life), sophistication of the young men and women, influence of media (newspaper, radio, television), failure of adults to nurture the young men and women in moral standards, and lack of communication between young men and women (Ali et al., 2014). In addition, Parson (2014) as cited in Ali et al. (2014 p. 264), itemizes causes of student indiscipline as “The school, the society, wrong ideals, idleness, lack of good leadership, injustice, lack of realistic rules, bad home training and upbringing”. The explanations of student indiscipline using the factors of causes are misleading because the causes are relative from one school community to another. There are agreements and disagreement on the causes of student indiscipline.

Ncube (2013) argues that there are several causes of student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools, and the chief causes amongst them are poverty, over-permissive home environment, over-permissive school environment, teachers’ demotivation caused by their circumstances,

teacher shortages, teacher absenteeism, and lack of classroom management by the teachers. However, there were understandings of some causes of student indiscipline in the Zimbabwean context.

Kagema and Kagoiya (2018) argue that one cause of indiscipline amongst the children is the issue of child rights. Kagema and Kagoiya (2018) postulate that child rights and family values are at loggerheads. In a study carried out in America after the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989) in the USA, it was proven that child rights were anti-family. Kagema and Kagoiya (2018) further argue that human rights ushered in the advent of world social change in crucial social institutions such as families, schools, and workplaces. Human rights place the dignity of all people at the centre regardless of their ethnicity, gender, wealth, ability and age. The call for human rights and child rights, in particular, heralded the crumbling of the old mores that were based on the authority of one class of people over another. The recognition of child rights appeared to undermine the authority of the parents in the family. Whilst Kagema and Kagoiya (2018) studied the challenges caused by child rights versus family values, Shumba (2003) argues that there were mixed reactions on the understanding of children's rights as espoused by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly 1989), the Zimbabwean Public Services Regulations (Statutory Instrument 65) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1992 and the secretary of Education and Culture Circular P35 of 3 May 1993 on the administration of corporal

punishment by teachers in Zimbabwean primary and secondary schools. When student indiscipline is related to 'rights', this means 'rights' are the area of agreements and disagreements in the world. The relation of rights to indiscipline makes it a complex phenomenon. The majority of the teachers has been thrown at the deep end, without proper understanding of the issue of child rights. Thus, in this paper, the authors seek to investigate the understanding of student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

Impact of Student Indiscipline

In Brazil, the concept of student indiscipline is elusive and difficult to locate in the academic field. Silva, Negreiros and Albano (2017) observe that the phenomenon of student indiscipline pervades the field of teaching methodology, school management, social relations, and psychology of education. The understanding of student indiscipline is vague and complex because it stretches into all facets of the education system of a nation. If the situation is so complex, do the teachers and students have the same understanding of student indiscipline?

Kagema and Kagoiya (2018) view student indiscipline as a problem that has no school, home, the community or national boundaries. Emekako (2016) states that in South Africa, school indiscipline negatively affected the students, teachers and parents. The student indiscipline discourse is a wide and elusive concept. The concept of student indiscipline is difficult to understand in countries with stable economies where the rate of people migration is limited and this could be worse in a country where the rate of

emigration is high and where the cultural boundaries are undefined by high levels of diasporan lifestyle. Shumba and Mawere (2012) note that by around 2012, about 3 million people out of 14 million Zimbabweans were living outside the country, the majority of whom were professionals. Due to economic challenges that affect the country, the number of people living outside Zimbabwe has increased. However, the children of these people in the diaspora are learning in Zimbabwe.

Types of Student Indiscipline

The study follows the observations of the following scholars: Koutselini (2002), Zubaida (2009), Manguvo et al. (2011), Ncube (2013), Magwa and Ngara (2014), and Mawere (2014), who studied students' indiscipline in secondary schools in African contexts. The scholars used exemplified definitions of student indiscipline from different perspectives: cultural, political, religious, economic, social and legal. Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) identify the following Zimbabwean cases of students' indiscipline which are widespread: late coming, bullying, stealing, love affairs, and major cases like rape, murder, and drug abuse. Ametepee et al. (2009) and Ncube (2013) concur with Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) on the examples of students' indiscipline. In addition, Ametepee et al. (2009) expand the list to include smoking, truancy, drinking alcohol, insubordination, leaving school campus without permission, destruction of school property, sexual harassment, forgery, gambling, failing to attend study periods, sale of drugs, possession or use of dangerous weapons, examination cheating, and

improper association. Ndaita (2016) identifies cases of indiscipline in Thika District in Kenya as noise-making, bullying, fighting, failing to complete assignments, drug abuse, sexual deviance, sneaking out of school, stealing other students' property, and general defiance of school authority and rules and feigning sickness. These studies reveal that the understanding of student indiscipline is exemplar-oriented. However, analysing the examples provided reveals that there are some agreements and contradictions on the examples of student indiscipline. The failure to arrive at an agreed list of examples of student indiscipline indicates the complexity and elusiveness of the phenomenon of student indiscipline.

Mawere (2014) argues that the problem of indiscipline and moral decadence among the school-going age-group has affected the whole of Africa, in particular south of the Sahara. In addition, Nyoni (2014) cites a case of two Form Four students at Sobukazi High school in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) who were reported to have had sex in the classroom and the school administration suspended the students for two weeks. The report also contained the story of another student from the same school who gave birth in the school toilet and was apprehended as she tried to hide the baby boy (Nyoni, 2014). In another media report, two pupils from two different schools in Bulawayo were caught having sex in the West Park Cemetery (Bulawayo 24, 19/01/2018). The evidence shows prevalence of the cases of indiscipline related to sex. The disciplinary measures employed in these cases are punishment, which contradicts the government decree that all forms of

punishment had been outlawed (Mawere, 2014). The public opinion on the cause of such misdemeanour is that the laws used to govern the upbringing of children in Zimbabwe are too lax, and that children lack uprightness. Furthermore, the school heads and teachers are no longer able to instil discipline in learners.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is a part of a PhD thesis that sought to explore the implementation of restorative justice in Zimbabwean secondary schools using the interpretive paradigm. The quest for a better understanding of the concept ‘student indiscipline’, owing to inconsistencies and differences in understanding the term from school to school, prompted the author to adopt a qualitative approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and a case study design (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is a multicase study (Stake, 2006), the cases being student indiscipline in two dichotomous Zimbabwean secondary schools. In this paper, the cases are the two Zimbabwean secondary schools that comprise one public secondary school in Zaka District and one private secondary school in Marondera District. The two dichotomous secondary schools were purposively selected, following the Restorative Justice Approach in addressing students’ indiscipline. The two secondary schools had similarities and differences in understanding students’ indiscipline. The author used pseudonyms to keep the schools anonymous. The schools were identified as RHS and WC. The RHS community is a deep

rural community and the school is a day secondary school where the students attend from 0700hours to 1630 hours. Student indiscipline refers to those acts of misconduct that happen during the school hours. WC is a boarding independent upmarket secondary school referred to as a college, a prestigious term.

The other instrument used was document analysis. The use of multiple methods to collect data enabled triangulation in the study (Singleton & Straits, 2010). The documents were interpreted by the author to give voice and meaning around a topic under study. I employed a systematic procedure to review both printed and electronic material related to students’ indiscipline (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2020).

Interpretivist Paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm informed this study. Interpretivism is a research paradigm that emphasizes the importance of understanding and interpreting the subjective experiences, meanings, and perspectives of individuals (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). It is often ideal to be used in social sciences to explore complex human behaviors and interactions. The researcher selected two dichotomous secondary schools with distinct characteristics, such as location, socioeconomic status, student demographics and the nature of accommodation. This dichotomy helped the researcher to explore the issue of student indiscipline in two distinct contexts.

Population of the Study

The two Zimbabwean schools used in the study had different enrolment figures. In 2017, WC College, a private secondary school, had an enrolment of 337 students and 44 teachers. The researcher used a sample of 16 participants from WC College. The population of RHS, a public school, comprised 1200 students and 48 teachers. From the public government high school in Zaka, a sample of 16 participants was used in the study.

Purposive Sampling

To investigate student indiscipline in a public high school and a private college in Zaka and Marondera districts in Zimbabwe, respectively, the researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher intentionally selected participants based on specific criteria relevant to research objectives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The participant selection entailed the selection of students, teachers and administrators as participants. The researcher ensured diversity in the sample to capture a range of perspectives. The researcher selected six students from the public high school, based on disciplinary history. The school administrators were selected because they were directly involved in the students disciplinary system. The six teachers from each school were selected because the teachers were involved in addressing students' indiscipline.

The other criterion employed in the public high school was to choose students from different forms to capture a broad perspective, including well-disciplined and

potentially indisciplined students. The researcher had control over the selection process, ensuring that the chosen participants represented various facets of student life at the public high school.

The sampling at the private college involved employment of similar criteria, such as administrators and teachers involved in previous disciplinary incidents. The students were selected from a wide range, including students from all forms who had a disciplinary history. This sampling criterion allowed diversity in the sample. The researcher maintained control over the selection to obtain a comprehensive understanding of indiscipline among students in the private college.

Through purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selected participants who were deemed to be the most relevant to understanding student indiscipline in these specific educational settings. This sampling technique allowed focused and targeted data collection to address the research questions effectively (Cambell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters & Walker, 2020).

Instruments for Data Collection

Multiple data collection instruments were used (Cohen et al., 2018). The author used individual interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The individual interviews were held with administrators, teachers, and students. The author used semi-structured interviews which allowed flexibility in probing more information on the problem under study. The scope of the interviews was limited to certain subtopics and key questions

had been developed in advance (Singleton & Straits, 2010). The interviews were ideal because they allowed the participants to give detailed information about the concept of students' indiscipline in their school context. Two focus group discussions were used, one to collect data from teachers and the other from students. The focus group instrument was ideal to establish group understanding of the concept. Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukkerjee (2017, p. 20) argue that "Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues". The instrument was employed in the study because it is ideal to generate data from a purposively sampled group of participants.

The researcher used three instruments for data collection. The qualitative methods of data generations emphasize qualitative data collection techniques, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). These methods allowed me to delve deep into the students', administrators' and teachers' perspectives and experiences of the students' indiscipline phenomenon. The interview was one of the instruments used to collect data. The researcher held individual interviews with administrators, teachers and students. An interview was ideal because the researcher obtained in-depth information with regard to students' indiscipline in the two dichotomous secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

The other instrument employed in this study was documentary analysis. The document analysis involved the examination of existing school records, incident reports,

and disciplinary records to gather historical data on indiscipline incidents (Cetinkaya & Kocyigit, 2020).

The researcher used the documents in the schools that had information on disciplinary history of students, and school policies. The letters and reports written by students were used to understand the nature of indiscipline prevalent in the schools.

The third instrument used was the focus group involving students and teachers. The focus group was used to augment information from interviews and document analysis, on students' indiscipline in the schools.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using content analysis, thereby developing patterns, themes and categories (Patton, 2015). The data were presented and analysed using the cross-case analysis method (Stake, 2006). The researcher employed two analysis methods: thematic analysis and comparative analysis.

Thematic analysis entails the analysing of qualitative data to identify recurring themes related to student indiscipline. The researcher paid attention to individual narratives and their interpretations.

Comparative analysis entails comparing findings between the two schools to identify commonalities and differences in the reasons behind indiscipline and other discipline-related issues. Contextualization involved considering the cultural, social, and economic context of each school and interpreting the findings within the broader

Zimbabwean context to provide a nuanced understanding of indiscipline.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured the ethical research practices, including obtaining informed consent from participants and protecting their anonymity, were adhered to. Consent was sought from all the participants. For students, consent was sought from the parents and guardians. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in the two cases.

The researcher also obtained informed consent from the parents or guardians of the students who were under eighteen years (Alomari, Al-Sheyab, Khabour & Alzoubi, 2020). The researcher also used pseudonyms of the schools under study to maintain their anonymity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is arranged according to themes that emerged from the data. The administrators of RHS are identified as RHSA 1-4 and the administrators for WC are identified as WCA 1-4. The teachers from RHS area identified as RHSTR 1-5, and teachers from WC are identified as WCTR 1-5. Students from RHS are identified as RHSST 1-6 and students for WC are identified as WCST1-6. The focus group for RHS teachers is identified as RHSFTR, and that for WC is identified as WCFTR. The focus group for students from RHS is identified as RHSFST and focus group for students from WC is identified as WCFST. The name of the school is identified

immediately after referring to the focus group and individual interviews and documents.

What are the administrators', teachers', and students' understandings of student indiscipline in one Zimbabwean public secondary school and one private secondary school?

The school rules, regulations and policy documents from the two Zimbabwean secondary schools were analyzed to find the participants' understanding of student indiscipline. The sources were silent on a proper definition of student indiscipline but the exemplar definitions were provided. The school policies, rules and regulations documents from the two schools were analysed with reference to definitions of student indiscipline and cases of indiscipline. This provided a bird's eye view of the existence of cases of student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools. However, there is no agreed definition on what student indiscipline is in the policy documents. The documentary evidence revealed that understanding of student indiscipline is varied, since there is no conclusive definition of the phenomenon in the schools. The issue of student indiscipline in schools has evoked concern among stakeholders in education provision worldwide (Mwaniki, 2018). However, schools in their blueprint documents on indiscipline are silent on defining student indiscipline whilst the school communities are eager to know and monitor the level of student indiscipline.

The main purpose of sending children to school is for them to grow up for future life. Students' indiscipline is part of children's growing up. WCA3 indicated that:

Student indiscipline like any other form of indiscipline is a natural thing, even adults they also get involved in indiscipline. Students are also human beings like us adults it is a turning point of their life or other become indiscipline. It is normal in every school be it primary or secondary or tertiary education to experience cases of indiscipline.

Another administrator from the WC secondary school, WCA1, said that students' indiscipline is:

... part of growing up. It is the time of knowing it all. It is a process of developmental stage. We call it indiscipline because we are adults .The statements like I have been there before/ I walked the road before are statements that confirm that there is such a developmental stage in one's life (Individual interview).

The views from WC participants suggested that student's indiscipline is part of the child's growing up. It is natural as even adults are prone to indiscipline. The administrators from RHS held similar views. RHSA2 said, "Student indiscipline is behaviour that are anti-school or that which deter progress of the learner" (Individual interview).

The understanding was that students' indiscipline is behaviour of the student that is against schooling and that deterred the student's achievement in school. The administrators' conceptualisation of student indiscipline was influenced by their view of the student as they enrol at school. The

administrator from WC's understanding of student indiscipline revealed that it is part of the child's growing up. The administrator from RHS view student indiscipline as the damage to the culture of the school by the students. However, whilst the two groups of administrators understood the phenomenon of student indiscipline differently, the understanding was subjective and contextual.

The teachers had their own understanding of student indiscipline. The teachers viewed student's indiscipline as the act of breaking rules. RHSTR1 said student indiscipline refers to "Any wayward behaviour, and breaking of the rules by students' (Individual interview).

The students understood students' indiscipline as doing unwanted acts depending on how they are treated at home so they wanted to fix teachers and be freed, and they did not know why they were attending school (RHSFG). During a focus group discussion at RHS, the students revealed that student indiscipline is an unwanted act as a protest to have their rights which they are denied at home. In an individual interview with students at WC, student WCS2 said that student indiscipline refers to when a student behaved in a certain manner unacceptable at a point in time (Individual interview). RHSS4 confirmed that student indiscipline is doing unwanted behaviour at the school (Individual interview).

The students' understanding of student indiscipline revealed that it is relative and subjective. The understanding is that what students display as student indiscipline is not the real student indiscipline but student indiscipline is a mind-set that manifests in

different acts. If student indiscipline is a protest against oppressive systems at home, it implies the homes are different and unique, hence this explained the complexity of student indiscipline as a negative mind-set of a child at school. These findings were also in line with Ngwokabuenui (2015), who concluded that student indiscipline is a negative mind-frame of the learners. The negative mind-frame manifests in different ways that also allude to different behaviour, some shocking the world.

The results of this study revealed that there are multiple definitions of students' indiscipline amongst stakeholders in education, such as school administrators, teachers, and students. The understandings of the term students' indiscipline are key to unpacking the concept in schools. The findings of this study on the multiple understanding of the term students' indiscipline concurred with Ngwokabuenui (2015), who argues that different authors have defined students' indiscipline in various ways. Therefore, school administrators, teachers and students should conduct an open discussion to come up with an agreed operational definition which is clear and comprehensive. This will reduce levels of student indiscipline in the schools.

The definition clarification facilitated open discussion among teachers, parents, administrators and students, to collectively define the concept students' indiscipline. However, the stakeholders found it difficult to agree upon a clear and comprehensive definition of students' indiscipline.

What are the common forms of students' indiscipline in one Zimbabwean public secondary school and one private secondary school?

The common forms of student indiscipline are indicated as per secondary school participants' understandings. The data came from the administrators, teachers, students, and documents.

Table 1: Common Cases of Students' Indiscipline

Types of Student Indiscipline	Documents		Administrators		Teachers		Students	
	WC	RHS	WC	RHS	WC	RHS	WC	RHS
Drug and substance abuse	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Beer drinking	×	×	×	×	×	×		×
Stealing / theft/robbery			×		×			×
Love affairs / sexual relationship with minors/ 'rape'/'promiscuity'/'illicit relationship'/'improper associations'		×		×		×		×
Bullying	×		×	×	×	×		×
Fighting		×		×		×		×
Speaking in vernacular			×					
Truancy		×		×		×		×
Use of abusive language				×		×	×	×
Improper dressing	×	×		×		×	×	×
Disrespecting	×	×		×		×	×	×
Late coming	×	×					×	×
Graffiti	×	×						×
Being rowdy / noise			×				×	
Not writing work/not attending lessons						×	×	×

From Table 1, the most frequent and familiar common forms of students' indiscipline identified by different categories of stakeholders in the two Zimbabwean public and private secondary schools were drug and substance abuse, beer drinking, love affairs, bullying, fighting, use of abusive language, improper dressing, disrespecting teachers, fighting, speaking in vernacular, late coming to school, graffiti, noise and not writing/not attending lessons. The forms of indiscipline were categorized according to groups of people who deemed that they were forms of student indiscipline and according to the context of the school.

Most of the students' indiscipline forms identified can be grouped as drug and substance abuse-related. These included beer drinking or alcohol consumption, bullying and fighting, improper dressing, disrespecting, use of abusive language, and noise. Gunda and Mbwirire (2020) also identified indiscipline cases as being drug and substance abuse-related. The documents, administrators, teachers and students agreed that drug and substance abuse was one of the common forms of students' indiscipline prevalent in the two Zimbabweans secondary schools, as illustrated in Table 1. Whilst the two schools agreed on drug and substance abuse as a form of indiscipline, they differed on the type of drugs and substances abused. The WC used the generic term drugs (WC document analysis). The administrator WCA1 said that there were cases of drug and substance abuse common in the up-market secondary school (Individual interview). The teachers also identified 'drug and substance abuse' as a case of indiscipline common at WC Secondary School (Teachers' focus

group). The staff members at WC school were silent on the types of drugs abused by students at their school. It is most probable that as an upmarket secondary school, they try to protect the reputation of their school. Drug and substance abuse was also identified by participants at RHS Secondary School. The policy document from RHS identified the drugs such as tobacco, marijuana and glue as causing serious forms of student indiscipline (Document analysis). The administrator at RHS, RHSA2 used the term drug and substance abuse (Individual interview). Teacher, RHSTR3 identified the drug marijuana (Individual interview). The students also identified marijuana as one of the abused drugs (RHSEFGS). The students RHSS1 and RHSS4 also said the drug being abused was marijuana. The way the drugs were viewed differed from one school context to another. The understanding at WC Secondary School was that they try to safeguard the reputation of their students as they try to meet the international standards. Dealing with drug and substance abuse such as smoking marijuana implies that you are banned from participating in international activities.

However, at RHS Secondary School the students freely identified the kind of drug abused as marijuana. Bloomer (2009) argues that the illegal cultivation of cannabis in the Southern African state emerged as a key livelihood strategy that enables smaller farmers to generate more from their limited agricultural resources. The RHS Secondary School is located in a rural area where the people practise subsistence farming. It is most probable that some parents earned livelihoods and income from illegal growing

of marijuana and trading it. Gunda and Mbwirire (2020) comment that drug and substance abuse was rampant in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The majority of Zimbabwean secondary school learners are adolescents who have proved to be the main target for drug and substance traders or dealers in Zimbabwe (Gunda & Mbwirire, 2020). Trading in drugs and substances has proved to be a lucrative business in the ailing Zimbabwean economy.

Beer drinking was another of the common form of students' indiscipline in the two dichotomous Zimbabwean secondary schools. Obot and Savena, (2018, p.13) also observe that,

The other substance with grave public health consequences for both adults and the young is alcohol... However, among young people, heavy episodic drinking and alcohol related problems have recently increased in many countries where such problems used to be negligible.

The documents from the two secondary schools indicated that beer drinking was one of the common form of students' indiscipline. The WCD indicated that possession of alcohol was indiscipline (Document analysis). The administrator WCA1 also said drinking alcohol was one of main forms of students' indiscipline common at WC Secondary School (Interview). The teachers at WC also regarded drinking beer as alcohol abuse. The students were silent about it. This implies that for the students at WC, drinking beer is not a common case of student indiscipline. RHS Secondary School also identified beer drinking as a case of

prevalent student indiscipline. The students are RHS Secondary School said drinking beer was rampant because of the school's proximity to the township and the learners from far way places drink beer as leisure, with their friends who are school leavers encouraging them to drink beer (RHSSFC). In addition, RHSS2 said that the boys drink beer because it is a cultural and traditional practice that boys drink beer at home together with their parents (Individual interview).

The form of students indiscipline revealed by this study as the most common form of student indiscipline was drug and substance abuse. However, the drugs and substances abused identified in the two schools were different. At the private school, the drugs identified were of the imported types, whereas at the public school, because of her geographical location, the participants identified marijuana. Marijuana is grown by the local peasant farmers but illegally. The students at the public secondary school were non-resident students and informal boarders, hence they had constant conduct with drug dealers and traders in the surrounding communities. This finding concurred with Wagner, Parks and Patrick's (2020), who argue that students obtained marijuana for free, from friends and also bought them from drug dealers. Gunda and Mbwirire (2020) also observe that students were the target market of drug dealers in Zimbabwe. The students at the public secondary school had constant supply of drugs from drug dealers, whereas at the private school the supply was limited and contact with the local communities was limited.

The findings from this study revealed that beer drinking was one of the common forms of students' indiscipline. The participants from the public secondary schools agreed that there was beer drinking. The students got the alcohol from the communities where they stay. The monitoring mechanism is difficult to implement on students who stay outside the school. The findings concurred with Gunda and Mbwirire (2020) who argue that the students drink beer from the community where they come from.

Love affairs or improper association, bullying, fighting, use of abusive language, disrespect, late coming to school and being rowdy are other forms of students' indiscipline revealed in this study. The findings from this study revealed that students were involved in love affairs or improper association. Sometimes the students had termly marriages. The findings in this study concurred with Ngwokabueni (2015), who states that there was student-student relationships (peer group love) which are caused by the prevailing environments. The study also revealed that at the public secondary school, some students are accommodated in the informal dormitories where the students had abundant freedom. The school administrators had difficulty in monitoring the students in such residence.

The other forms of students' indiscipline were bullying, fighting, use of abusive language, disrespect, late coming to school and rowdiness. From Table 2, the study revealed that these were some forms of

students' indiscipline in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. The findings concurred with Pal and Barot (2020), who state that rowdiness, disrespect, bullying, lateness and loudness were some of the examples of students' indiscipline.

What are the causes of students' indiscipline in the one Zimbabwean public secondary school and one private secondary school?

Table 2: Common Causes of Students' Indiscipline

Types of Student Indiscipline	Documents		Administrators		Teachers		Students	
	WC	RHS	WC	RHS	WC	RHS	WC	RHS
School location								×
Dysfunctional families			×		×	×		
Lack of teachers' attention / lessons			×		×			×
Negligence on the part of teachers								
Increasing curricula / lack of teachers / resources				×				
Diversity of family backgrounds			×					
Abuse of technology e.g. cell phones			×					
Poverty								×

Table 2 shows common causes of students' indiscipline that were identified in the Zimbabwean public school and the private secondary school.

The school location was viewed as one of the causes of student indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The students at RHS postulated that the location of the school near drug dealers, business institutions and business people who are unethical are the causes of student indiscipline in secondary schools (Student focus group). Also, Muorwa (2023) argues that public secondary schools with large enrolment proved to have become breeding places of gross students' indiscipline such as drug and substance abuse, improper association and truancy. Some mega schools or public secondary schools had bloated enrolments of students, located in or near ghetto or growth points and in a strategic highway to the urban area. This promoted truancy, ghetto culture and urban-rural cultures. The location of the school had an influence on the mind-frames of the students. The location of the school and large enrolment made it difficult for monitoring the movement and behaviour of students and staff members. For instance, it is difficult to monitor students against beer drinking, drug abuse and tobacco smoking. The locations of public secondary schools in post-colonial countries were in the midst of conditions prone to unwanted behavior. The student learns from his/her immediate environment. Therefore, what the student learns from a situation characterized by beer drinking is beer drinking. The environment is not conducive for education. As Chitiyo et al. (2014) observe, school environment is a

contributing factor to student indiscipline. The sites of the schools and other social amenities in Zimbabwe are the root cause of student indiscipline. The students are gullible beings who are quick to adapt to the environment and change their behavior towards the dictates of the environment. The idea that school environment, that is, its location vis-a-vis other infrastructure caused indiscipline was more pronounced at RHS. RHS is a school close to a township, near a high way and in a rural area of Zimbabwe. However, WC was silent about the school location as the cause of student indiscipline. WC is a secluded school on a farmland, where there is limited contact between students and the communities.

One of the interesting findings from the study was that the school was the immediate family for the students. The administrator WCA2 confirmed that the school was the immediate 'family' of the learners, where they spend much of their time (Individual interview). Dzimiri and Chikunda (2018) argue that the type of family plays a crucial role in the discipline of the learner. If the family lacks good ethics, it is likely to produce problematic students in schools. The financial status of the family contributes to indiscipline. For example, single parents cannot afford to support their children adequately. The children from dysfunctional families lack adequate materials such as uniforms, food and other materials (Dzimiri & Chikunda, 2018). The common forms of students' indiscipline associated with dysfunctional families were found to be truancy, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, stealing, improper association, early love affairs, bullying and unwanted

pregnancies. However, evidence from the study also revealed that in the contemporary world, it is not the families alone who are dysfunctional but even schools are dysfunctional (Interview, WTR3). The schools are the most dysfunctional 'families'. The students lack teachers' attention in schools because the teachers are preoccupied with their other activities (RHSTR1). In addition, RHSTR3 commented that teachers were not attending lessons. Therefore, the calibre of teachers also causes student indiscipline in secondary schools. The students at RHS said that teachers were not paying attention to the plight of the students. This leads to creation of a negative mind-frame, which is student indiscipline. What people see as student indiscipline is the manifestation of the minds of the students. However, the constructs of such mind-sets is subjective, depending on individual students' understanding of the context and how it affected his/her mind.

RHSA1 said the ever-widening curriculum is such that learners are faced with new subjects being taught by semi-skilled teachers who lack the required knowledge to teach the subject and this is compounded by lack of resources. Ball, Thames and Phelps (2008) point out that content knowledge for teaching is special. The knowledge required to effectively teach a subject includes specialized content knowledge, common content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Ball et al., 2008). The lack of teachers and resources for the subjects added to the curriculum, whilst the teachers have no content knowledge creates a negative mental frame that is characterized by frustrations and anti-

schooling behavior. From this study, curricula expansion without adequate feasibility studies causes student indiscipline. The students are frustrated by the subjects included in their curricula without adequate facilities and manpower development. The idea that curricula expansion causes indiscipline was more prominent at RHS Government Secondary School than at WC, an independent secondary school.

The school in the 21st century is the macrocosm of the macrocosm in terms of cultural diversity and convergence. The administrator WCA1 said the diversity of family background and cultures led to negative mind frames that lead to display of behavior called student indiscipline, such as stealing and bullying as the common cases linked to students' cultural backgrounds (Interview). WCA3 emphasized that the availability of smart cellphones amongst students led to cyber bullying, especially amongst the girls (Interview). However, the students at RHS stated that poverty causes indiscipline issues such as beer drinking. Parents also sometimes drink beer with their children and they see no problem in it (Focus group). The issue of cultural background should not be viewed from a stereotypical point of view. Both extremes of the accumulation of wealth by the families cause student indiscipline. However, for the independent schools in Zimbabwe, the richness of family background creates a negative mind-frame amongst students and for the public secondary schools sometimes poverty resulted in student indiscipline.

With regard to the causes of students' indiscipline revealed by this study, these

were school location, dysfunctional families, lack of teacher attention or teachers who do not attend lessons, negligence on the part of teachers, expanding curricula without adequate resources, diversity of family backgrounds, abuse of technology, and poverty. The bloated enrolment, especially in the public schools, strained the arms of monitoring discipline in the school. The proximity to other social institutions such as townships, beerhalls, roads and ghetto or growth points resulted in students' indiscipline in schools. The enlarged curricula resulted in extra demands which might frustrate the students who, in turn, play truancy or do not write the given work. The findings resonated with Dzimiri and Chikunda (2018), who contend that type of families, financial status of the family, school factors such as the location of the school, teachers and mass media, are some of the causes of student indiscipline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the country to address students' indiscipline in Zimbabwe the following recommendations could be implemented: More players should invest in education by constructing more learning institutions to decongest already bloated existing secondary schools. This will enable close monitoring of the students and staff members.

The government should encourage public-private synergies to complement government efforts in the pursuit of quality education. This will address the issue of lack of competent professionals, especially in public secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Student indiscipline is a complex and subjective phenomenon. Every school has its perception of what student indiscipline is. The paradox of the discourse of student indiscipline is that people seem to be singing from the same hymn book but once you engage them, it proves that student indiscipline is elusive and the understandings are as many as people debating about it. In some cases people seem to identify similar cases of student indiscipline but as they elaborate, one is amazed at the diversity of the understandings. Therefore, there are no agreed definitions of students' indiscipline. The other issue is on the common cases of student indiscipline. The participants seemed to agree on some forms like bullying, beer drinking and others, but they differ on other cases like speaking in the indigenous language and truancy. In the boarding school setting, truancy is not common but in the public day secondary school studied, the use of indigenous languages is prevalent. In an attempt to unpack the concept 'student indiscipline', the causes were looked at. It was revealed that the school environment, especially location, dysfunctional 'family', that is, the schools, are the contemporary families, burgeoning curricula without thorough feasibility studies, frustrate the learners hence lead to indiscipline. In a nutshell, student indiscipline refers to negative student mind-frame that will display unwanted behavior as it reacts to different stimuli. The causes also are subjective and relative.

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