



# Teachers Decry Indiscipline among Students in Botswana: Hidden Curriculum Strategies as a Panacea

Reginald Oats<sup>1</sup>

Department of Educational Foundations  
University of Botswana  
[reginald.oats@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:reginald.oats@mopipi.ub.bw)

---

## Abstract

Secondary schools in Botswana have been plagued with cases of students' unrest and indiscipline. These incidents have grown to the extent of becoming a matter of public concern among key stakeholders such as teachers, family, educators, religious organizations and education funding agencies. The aching part is that these incidents undermine the quality education as evidenced by gradual decline in academic results across all levels of basic education in Botswana Public schools for now several years in a row. The degeneration in academic results is anticipated to be a result of the unfavourable school climate wherein learners cannot learn and teachers cannot teach effectively in a perilous environment. As a matter of fact, this theoretical paper registers that there is need for an instantaneous action to bring order, discipline and stability in public schools in Botswana. I suggest effective teacher training on matters related to student psychology and multicultural education. Along the same that schools should implement effective hidden curriculum strategies by move beyond suspension to invest social capital in students and embrace culturally relevant education. Other viable strategies for consideration are the need to intensify partnership to address this phenomenon and robust efforts to transmogrify schools into zones of democracy and freedom with a view to manage discipline.

**Keywords:** Students' Indiscipline, Secondary Education, Guidance and Counselling, Parental Involvement.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Oats, R. (2018). Teachers Decry Indiscipline among Students in Botswana: Hidden Curriculum Strategies as a Panacea. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 11(4), 745-755. Retrieved [DATE] from <http://www.ij sre.com>.

---

Copyright © 2018 IJSRE

## INTRODUCTION

Discipline, according to Jemibewon (1976) is a highly desirable quality of human being or social group. A Disciplined behaviour is accepted as essential characteristics of any educated

or cultured person. Discipline comprises compliance and preparedness for submission to an authority without which in the context of learning/schooling students will not achieve their aspirations. 'Discipline can also be dubbed the readiness or ability to respect authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society or any other organisation' (Amoah, Mensah & Gyamera, 2015, p. 1). Simply put, it involves strategies not put in place to train children for orderliness in all their endeavours.

The traditional Botswana society cherished the principle of *botho*-which refers to a well-rounded character. 'A person with *botho* is an individual who is well-mannered, courteous and disciplined, and realises his or her full potential both as an individual and as a part of the community to which he or she belongs' (Republic of Botswana, 1997, p. 3). *Botho* according to University of Botswana (2016) is a specimen of a social bond which involves mutual respect, responsibility and accountability that members of society have toward each other. *Botho* along the same vein expresses a process for earning respect by first giving it, and to gain empowerment by empowering others. 'In this kind of existence, one person's personhood and identity is fulfilled and complemented by the other person's personhood; each person is because the other person is; each person exists because the other person exists' (Muwanga-Zake, 2009, p. 5).

'Man was declared "human" as soon as the element of "divine" (image) goodness (likeness) got instilled in him' (Broodryk in Masango, 2006, p. 931). This divine element that transformed man into a human being was nothing but a humanness, "*Ubuntu/botho*" that manifested the "image and likeness" of God in each individual person of the human race (Broodryk in Masango, 2006, p. 931). To sum up this definition, the values that define *ubuntu* include: togetherness, brotherhood, equality, caring, sharing, sympathy, empathy, compassion, respect, tolerance, humanness, harmony, redistribution, obedience, happiness, wisdom, communalism, communitarianism, kinship, group solidarity, conformity, human dignity, humanistic orientation and collective unity (Gumbo, 2014, p. 67).

The above expression of the concept of discipline clarifies that discipline is a subject of great concern to parents, teachers, and administrators who are interested in the moulding of the character of young people. However, the problem of widespread indiscipline among secondary school students is very clearly noticed across a number of countries. Every year serious cases of rioting, burnings, and damages to school property occur in several schools. In spite of the extreme cases of indiscipline that attract newspapers headlines, there are routine cases of truancy, disobedience, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, fighting and other example of indiscipline in schools which do not appear or are reported in the Newspapers. There are also incidents of indiscipline among staff members and a part of this paper will attempt to argue whether or not teacher behaviours contribute to students' indiscipline. This habit of indiscipline have capacity to divide major education stakeholder and in the process lower academic achievements. The Botswana society is at a point of finger point and blame shifting wherein parents blame teachers for the indiscipline among school children and teachers blame parents, government and school administrators for the indiscipline in the society.

Indiscipline among students is not only a concern in Botswana, but an international one. In Nigeria, there appears to be a great concern about the lack of indiscipline in schools, in offices and among people in public sectors. However, the problem of widespread indiscipline among primary school pupils and post primary schools is very clearly noticed. The problem of indiscipline in schools is not a new phenomenon nor an incident founded in Botswana only, rather it is an old habit and is experienced in a wide number of countries. Muchemi (2001) gave a chronological account of protests and destruction in public schools in Kenya. And that this courances impact on students' academic output. The study further shows

that in Kenya it has become difficult to enforce discipline particularly after the abolishment of corporal punishment since discipline is often equated with corporal punishment.

Ponfua (2015) conducted a study on common types of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools and revealed that, among others, assault and insult on teachers and non-teachers and assault on school prefects were common types of indiscipline. The also pointed to indiscipline relating to the collective misbehaviour of students such as the vandalism and mass protest, speaking of pidgin English, chewing gum in class, fighting, wearing dirty and wrong clothing contrary to the official school uniforms.

It in the effort to address the above mentioned unwanted and unwarranted incidents that this theoretical investigation is carried out to determine the school-based factors that influence indiscipline and suggest viable and practical actions to address the problem. It follows that the challenges that comes with indiscipline are that at time student's drop out of school due to cultivated and demonstrated deviant behaviours and may never accomplish their aspirations. Resultantly such students become a burden to their families and government. The paper is a response to the outcry of educators, administrators and parents in Botswana about the ever increasing rate of indiscipline in secondary schools which are an antithesis to traditional *tswana* principle of *botho* and national government plans and commitment to educate future leaders.

## **STUDENTS INDISCIPLINE IN BOTSWANA SCHOOLS**

In spite of innovations such as introduction of the Guidance and Counselling programme, approaches to students' welfare, discipline strategies and teaching and learning methodologies, indiscipline has relatively remained the same. One may even argue that the behaviour of students has worsened. Indiscipline of students in secondary schools in Botswana has become a public concern as it has now for the past number of years become an annual happening. Secondary schools, in particular senior secondary schools have been plagued with cases of students' indiscipline and without doubt this incidents impact on academic results. For this reason speaking at parliament of Botswana, the leader of opposition Mr Boko indicated that the declining performance of the education system has far reaching implications for the country. He further opined that poor performance implies that the country may not be able to produce the human resources robust enough to drive economic development (Parliament news).

Despite government effort to create a schooling and education opportunity for all children, students do not attend school regularly and some of those who come to school abscond from lessons and only resurface during tea break and lunch time. There are also incidents of bullying and violence which make the school environment unsafely and uncondusive for effective teaching and learning. Expressly, learners cannot learn and teachers cannot teach effectively in an unsafe environment and therefore order and discipline are necessary in schools (Koki, 2014). The current Botswana is at a stage where schools do attempt to enforce discipline but find it very difficult as evidenced cases of indiscipline which occur over and over. According to Matsoga (2003), violence and misbehaviour exist in Botswana schools. This, like mentioned before it can be noticed through habits such as bullying, destruction of property, alcohol and substance abuse, theft, truancy, to mention but a few.

In Botswana currently, substance abuse has become prevalent than at any other times (Kayawe, 2015). According to Mouwane, (2015) the use of the drugs has spread at a fast rate and reached every part of the country particularly senior secondary school level. Like has already been highlighted, substance abuse affects students' academic responsibilities. According to National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism (2005, p. 1) '...in Botswana about

25% of students experience difficulty in academics due to substance use'. Such difficulties include among others getting unsatisfactory grades in test and examinations, and absenteeism from lessons. Mmopi (2013) indicates that indiscipline is said to be the main reason why Kgari Sechele II Senior Secondary School has become a perpetual bad performer in the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) results. A face value analysis of the school's results in the past five years paints a poor and discouraging picture as the school has always been in the bottom cohort from a list of all senior secondary schools in the country (Mmopi, 2013). The outcry from teachers at this school and other senior secondary schools is that Students do not attend school regularly and some of those who come to school abscond from lessons and only resurface during tea break and lunch time.

Another habit common in schools is theft. For instance, in 2003 students at Matsha College broke into a biology lab to steal ethanol (Banda, 2004). After in-taking ethanol there were serious fatalities as some students died while others became blind. Other incidents reported often involve students stealing other students goods, fighting's which even include fighting with teachers. Bashi letsidid, (2015), a Mmegi newspaper reporter reports an incident of Swaneng Hill School female students who fought over a male teacher and one of the students was bad injured in the process. This incident clearly shows that there are cross indiscipline among students and in view of this incident, partly some indiscipline is perpetrated by some teachers. Other incidents of student-teacher love affairs are also very common in secondary schools. These horrifying acts of indiscipline left the nation of Botswana speechless (Garegae, 2008). These incidents clearly erode the good image Botswana has always had. With an endeavour to promote orderliness in schools, Ministry of education introduced the pastoral care system in schools in 2003. The system is defined is concerned with psycho-social, academic and co-curricular development of the learner and it focuses on both the mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of the student, yet cases of indiscipline occur and recur from time to time in our schools.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To assist in uncovering the causes of student indiscipline and explore viable options to remedy the situation, this paper engages Dreikurs' social discipline model (1968). Dreikurs' model alludes to the fact that man is a social animal. That is, man belongs to the society or is a part of it, therefore his actions are triggered by some purposive, directed toward a goal, and his personality is unique and invisible entity (Dreikurs, 1968). The model also maintains that all students like adults want to "belong", want status and recognition and as such most of their behaviour is directed by their desire to belong. Further claims are that misbehaviour reflects the mistaken belief that it will lead to the recognition they want. Expressly, that misbehaviour is associated with four mistaken goals: seeking attention, gaining power, taking revenge, and displaying inadequacy. The goal in each case of misbehaviour is to elicit certain responses from teachers and teachers need to know this so that they respond responsively. It is believed the understanding of this model will assist teachers in relating harmoniously with students.

## **THE MILIEU: POSSIBLE CAUSES**

There obviously is no one cause of this phenomenon. Jones (1998) cited in Matsoga (2003) notes that the causes of school violence and indiscipline are difficult to define, are numerous and difficult to detect, but indicates that factors such as exposure to severe family violence, psychiatric and psychological disorders, and emotional deprivation are experiences that have reinforced violent and indiscipline tendencies. From a close perspective, Ohsako (1997) as

findings of his comparative study conducted in Ethiopia, Israel and Slovakia and Jordanian schools point out that familial, economic and social factors top the list of causes of violence and indiscipline of all sorts among students. Berliner and Biddle (1995) insist that violence disrupts normal school operations, as effective teaching and learning do not take part. As a matter of fact, it alternately destroys the quality of life and the education of children, forcing some schools to allocate many of their limited resources to security and prevention measures (Matsoga, 2003, p. 89).

The nature of the school climate or environment is one outstanding cause of student indiscipline in Botswana schools. This factor I witnessed during my 14 years of teaching in secondary schools. School climate includes such factors as communication patterns, norms of appropriate behaviour and how rewards and sanctions should be applied (Matsoga, 2003). In the school setup in Botswana, teachers and school managers continue to oppress students and deny them a voice in the running of school affairs (Oats, 2016). I argue that such an environment becomes a fertile ground for the emergence of disturbing habits from students. I need hasten to point out that students are equal human being with feelings and as such will notice any manner of unfair treatment and plan for revenge. As such when they are treated like 'objects' they at time react. The unfortunate episode is that their reaction is termed indiscipline but teachers and school managers. Dreikurs, (1968) concord that students display unwanted behaviours at times in an effort to revenge. Truancy, school phobia, or school refusal may be products of an aversive environment where teacher imposes rules on learners and uses punishment to demean student in front of peers (Yarason, 2004). Teachers deserve to be informed that adolescents are very sensitive and trying to demean them or force them into doing something they do not like could result in direct confrontation.

The sad part about an authoritarian school climate is that students from schools are usually nor self-reliant nor responsible. In the case of Botswana the production of critical thinkers' schools has been challenge due to the fact that schools to a large extent suppress and contradicts the ideals of democracy in education (Jotia & Boikhutso, 2012). Children in Botswana schools have a minimal say in the administration of the school as well as how the curriculum should be run or having an input on some of the development projects which are supposed to be instituted in School (Jotia & Boikhutso, 2012). This habit is an antithesis to the goal of education as seen by Dewey (1937). Dewey sees the goal of a school as to instil in each member an ability to think reflectively and critically, so as to become a successful member of a democratic society.

Literature shows that teachers at times originate and propagate indiscipline by being unprepared due to absenteeism or lateness as a result of drunkenness that is lack of commitment (Felix, 2011). Other instances through which teachers may perpetuate indiscipline include their drunkardness accompanied by ill-prepared lesson, teachers' treatment of students as article or things or showing no respect to students. Donga (2007) asserts that if teacher come unprepared and drunk their self-confidence to deliver lessons effectively will be vanished. This is highly possible because once learners notice that they are going to doubt teacher's capabilities. Lochan (2010), also posits that when lessons are not interesting discipline crumbles. This incident would then lead to generation of boredom among students and this has potential to lead to disruptions in class. Along the same Marzano and Marzano (2003), alludes to the fact that ineffective teachers treat all students the same as they are not sensitive to the diverse needs of students and this leads to misbehaviour in classes.

In his study Matsoga (20103) points to family and parenting styles as possible causes of student's indiscipline and violence. Thomerson (2000) cited in Matsoga (2003) pointed to environmental factors, in which she called all those to whom school violence is a concern at carefully analyse the sociology of families from which students come to identify the place of

violence in our society. According to Iyad, (1985) in the process of fragmentation of the family structure and wellbeing, violence among family members may find a door of entrance and alternately such familial conflicts may be passed over to the schools by students. Along the same there is need to cross examine parenting styles as this may have impact on student discipline (Matsoga, 2003). For instance children of strict parents may become aggressive and may also become liars because they grew used to it in the process of avoiding punishment from parents (Amy Morin, 2017). On the other hand, the author about Children raised with authoritative discipline indicates that such children tend to be happy and successful. Such children are also likely to be good at decision making. For this reason it can be argued that children from homes with authoritative parents are likely to become responsible adults.

## **WHAT IS BEING DONE?**

Garegae (2008) through her study points out that the government Of Botswana has responded to the unrest in schools in numerous manners. Among others strategies in place the author indicated that the government has set up committees and commissions to investigate the causes of the problem of unrest in schools and various recommendations have been made. The education act of 1967 has introduced a number of rules and regulations that govern student discipline in Botswana schools. The act specifies how offences of various level can be addressed. These range from minor and severe disciplinary (Botswana government, 1967).

The establishment of G/C as a department in all secondary schools is a great achievement for Botswana schools. It was therefore the development of Policy guidelines in 1996 and Curriculum guidelines, resulted in a comprehensive Guidance and Counselling programme in schools. This move in turn resulted in the appreciation of senior teacher Guidance and Counselling teacher as a portfolio in 1997 and development of guidance support materials consequently. Expressly the senior teacher guidance and counselling is excluded from teaching any other subject except G/C in 1996/97. This implies that the position holder will have full focus towards guidance and counselling of entire school students. Additionally, the development of a comprehensive Guidance and Counselling programme in schools also resulted in compulsory time tabling of guidance lessons, provision of office structure for guidance teachers at all secondary schools in Botswana. Further efforts included the training of G/C teacher with a view to capacitate them for the positions they hold. Through Guidance and Counselling Programmes in public schools, students are afforded an opportunity to talk about various issues which they feel uncomfortable talking about with their parents, such as sex and drugs and alcohol abuse. Students are also advised on how to deal with emotional conflicts and personal problems, both in school and at home and how to incorporate the same life skills in their daily lives. It is believed that these developments resulted in students being able to deal with some of their personal problems that were before hindering learning.

The other initiative worth mentioning is the introduction of the life skill programme for senior secondary school students since 2007. This is commonly known as Boot camps. Mainly the initiative was triggered by the occurrence and reoccurrence of incidences of riots and disturbance by students in senior secondary schools. To counter these events which were then becoming annual luminary among students, this component of the policy is a life-skills programme aiming at empowering young people for life. It is a holistic and developmental programme covering four areas that is personal, social, educational and vocational. In these programmes individuals are helped to understand, accept and use their abilities, aptitudes, interests and attitudinal patterns in relation to different life situations. The guidance part of

the programme is pro-active, preventative and developmental whereas counselling is remedial in nature because it empowers the individual to cope with life challenges.

The pastoral policy is another giant initiative introduced to effect good management at schools with a view to ensure schools are run effectively and that in the process indiscipline would be avoided. One strong feature of this policy framework is the fact that it aims to institute democratisation of secondary schools through mechanisms as such student involvement in school governance (Republic of Botswana, 2003). The specific rationale of the policy reads:

“The policy is intended to empower and equip the youth with skills that promote accountability, responsibility and patriotism. In addition, the policy seeks to give more attention to group and individual students’ needs than is the situation currently. The central issue therefore is the involvement of students in school governance and a call for total participation by staff and other stakeholders in the school pastoral programme. There is need to develop and implement realistic strategies that would address indiscipline (e.g. vandalism, truancy, and substance abuse), poor academic performance and moral decadence in our schools as a matter of urgency. Strategies need to be put in place to help the students make the right choices and decisions. All institutions should endeavour to develop the concept of *Botho* (moral character) amongst students more than ever before” (Republic of Botswana, 2003, p. 4).

To realise the above rationale, schools are expected to form School Pastoral Councils that will drive the Pastoral Programme. The councils are to act as advisory bodies and it is enterprising to note the composition which is as such—Students’ Representatives, Staff Representatives and Parents Representatives. It is interesting that students’ involvement in school governance is an integral part of an effective Pastoral Programme because a school exists for students according to Ministry of Education, Botswana. They are the key customers and should be involved in decision making in order to enhance ownership, accountability and responsibility. Students’ representations in School Pastoral Council (SPC), various committees and the existence of both within the school are essential (Republic of Botswana, 2003).

## **VIALE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS STUDENTS’ INDISCIPLINE**

*I am adamant that Schools Can’t Do It Alone.*

In an effort to prevent and resolve students’ discipline problems and ensure efficient functioning of schools, there must be reasonable disciplinary policies and procedures and favourable school climate. Discipline measures are expected to be moderate and commensurate with offence committed, if not they may fuel more indiscipline (Amoah, Owusu-Mensah & Gyamera, 2015). An important note to make is that the modern concept of discipline advocates that all those who have the responsibility should find creative ways of disciplining children in order to help them develop healthy lifestyles that are a reflection of respect for human rights (Dadzie, 2008). For this reason below I suggest, effective teacher training on matters related to student psychology and multicultural education. Further strategies include-the need to intensify partnership to address this phenomenon and efforts to transform schools into zones of democracy and freedom with a view to manage discipline.

Effective teacher training is a one core strategy to address issues of indiscipline in schools. This is given that teachers interact with students on daily basis and as such can count all movements they make. My reason for this proposal is that teachers in Botswana are posted to various regions for employment after training and at times they are posted to regions with diverse cultural habits and practices than theirs. In such cases chances of teachers failing to effectively addressing some challenges they face at those places is high. It is for this reason that teachers need deeper training and exposure in multicultural education to enable them deal with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and settings their students come from. Nyati-Ramahobo and Chebanne (2004, p. 9) put it clear that Botswana is a homogeneous society and assert that she is a multicultural society with more than twenty-six languages spoken in the country. It is therefore by knowing different cultures that teachers can cope with the cultural challenges they meet. Teachers with students from diverse cultural backgrounds should take a personal commitment to increase their knowledge about cultures represented in their classrooms. Obtaining of such knowledge will enable them to understand and alternately accommodate all students with a view to make them free participants in classroom activities. Resultant such teachers will develop and implement culturally relevant strategies with an endeavour to cater for each child in their classes.

Having mentioned key issues of discipline from the Education Act OF 1967 before, it becomes apparent to suggest to the Ministry of Education working with schools to consider adopting Kirkland, Villavicencio, and Fergus (2016) recommendations. The authors presented a framework for school transformation which involved three major strategies of ‘moving beyond practices such as suspension, investing social capital in students, and embracing culturally relevant education’ Kirkland, Villavicencio, and Fergus (2016, p.5). Each of the recommendation offers support and strategies that incorporate the multiple assets existing in and around any given school. The first two recommendations are policy driven, aimed at supporting the development of students. Thus, “alternatives to suspensions” sees discipline as non-punitive, but rather constructive in its aim at teaching students how to live in a world with the capacity of enlarged character. Incorporating mentoring looks as ways that schools might provide human models for students as they are groomed into full citizens. The third recommendation—‘culturally relevant education (CRE)—affirms teaching practice most responsive to the needs of particular student groups Kirkland, Villavicencio, and Fergus (2016, p. 5)’. As oppose to focusing on students as most teachers in Botswana schools do, this recommendation examines what teachers need to know beforehand about students in order to sustain them culturally through motivation (Kirkland, Villavicencio & Fergus, 2016).

*Schools cannot do it alone but there is need to intensify partnership to address this phenomenon. Learners, parents, teachers, the civil society, the community at large, leaders - both traditional and in the church – need to work towards maintaining peace and quietness in public schools.* The point of discussion now is on parental involvement which the author of this piece of work see as of critical for the sustenance of effective schools in Botswana. Research shows that effective partnerships between parents, families and schools has potential to culminate to improved academic results. The ever continuing role of parents educating their own children is encouraged by this paper. Research also shows that teacher quality, including standards and training in parental engagement, is important for facilitating effective parental engagement (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). According to this council, the importance of functional partnerships between parents and teachers can play a huge role in moulding students’ behaviours. *Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau (2004) concurs that beyond educational achievement, parental engagement is associated with various indicators of student development. These include:*

- Better social skills
- Improved behaviour
- Better adaptation to school
- Increased social capital
- A greater sense of personal competence and efficacy for learning
- Greater engagement in school work
- A stronger belief in the importance of education (p. 12).

It was in view of the need for parental involvement in education matters that the then Minister of Education, Pelonomi Venso-Moitoi told parents that the state of indiscipline had become an eyesore and that the situation calls for urgent attention. She thus further had to appeal to parents, and the general public to instil discipline among students in a national message aired on Botswana Television. She lamented that government property was destroyed in such acts, which parents should assist in curbing. Following this a communiqué from the education ministry called on parents and the community at large to help in advising students to remain focused in their academic work.

Transformation of schools as provinces of democracy and freedom with a view to manage discipline is an absolute necessity in Botswana. Green (1999, p. 14) cited in Jotia and dube-2017 makes a case that “a teacher in search of his/her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young people to go in search of their own”. schools in which learners are accorded the freedom for exploration and discovery, are allowed to participate in the running of the school through various forums such as prefect systems and developers of knowledge, are spheres of democracy and freedom. Mhlauli (2012), shares that Dewey’s belief that the most effective and natural education occurs when problem solving was applied in the classroom as it would encourage critical thinking. According to Dewey’s principle of democratic education, it was believed that such a method encouraged participation among learners by engaging them in cooperative adventures that would turn the classroom into a microcosm of democracy and thereby allowing the child to acquire skills and values of democracy.

Based on the above arguments, if Botswana wants to continue holding the assertion of being a shining example of liberal democracy in Africa, there is need to do away with school management styles that suppress learners’ views and subject them to abuse through inhuman punishments which do not yield any positive results in as far as development of good attitudes and behaviours are concerned (Oats, 2016). To maintain discipline, schools should develop practices that show respect for students by the teachers who in turn earn respect from the students, tolerance by teachers on their students for their differences in all areas such as culture, economic background and learning styles. Along the same there should be encouragement of nurturing of students by male and female teachers without being overly affectionate or permissive. Although schools in Botswana claim to be pursuing their day to day business within the confines of democratic principles, and further encouraging the democratization of teaching and learning through involvement of the students’ interests as well as uninhibited participation in the learning activity, the practical evidence of such claim is lacking on the ground (Jotia, 2007).

## **CONCLUSION**

This theoretical study explored the national concern on students’ indiscipline in secondary schools in Botswana. This phenomenon has become a cancer among senior secondary school students. The study has highlighted a number of possible causes that range from parenting styles, unfavourable school climates, and students’ retaliation to teachers’ treatment and

punishment. The study on teacher treatment of students concludes that students at time are not punished for the right cause though in minimal cases and this habit has triggered indiscipline in a number of cases. The study reveals that student indiscipline has adverse negative effects on both students' academic output, the image of the school, and economics. Top on the list in my view is the fact that indiscipline steals learners' future prospects. Expressly, majority of students found in deviant behaviour do not perform adequately at school and as such impacts on their future. Resultantly they either droop out or fail to qualify for tertiary institutions due to lower grades. For instance Mmopi (2014) in a newspaper reporter indicated that indiscipline is said to be the main reason why Kgari Sechele II Senior Secondary School has become a perpetual bad performer in the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) results.

Further the reporter indicated that a face value analysis of the school's results in the past five years paints a poor and discouraging picture as the school has always been in the bottom cohort from a list of all senior secondary schools in the country. In view of the consequences of indiscipline revealed in this paper, there is need for immediate action to eradicate totally or mitigate the impacts of this cancer. First and for most, the paper registers that if we accept the dogma that schools exist in isolation, we will fail to explore that they can thrive with common sense supports. The study has advocated for building of partnerships over management of schools. The literature reviewed also discloses both a growing commitment to addressing indiscipline among students in Botswana and a growing number of promising interventions this far. Though there are promising interventions in place, the study concludes that these are not well implemented hence further work in this area will be key to ensuring that all students are able to realize the benefits from education.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this theoretical investigation, I suggest the following recommendation to the Ministry of Education, schools and parents among others. As mentioned under viable strategies to address this cancer, there is need for students to be aware of school expectations and above all to have contributed to the development and definition of school rules and regulations. Doing so will show respect to students and in the process help to prescribe the standard of behaviour expected of students and teachers. There is also need to apply diverse alternative modes of punishment as oppose to the common corporal punishment and suspension. Ministry of Education through schools should spearhead the design of proper ways of handling punishments and their implementation thereof. Among others schools should have well established disciplinary committees with representation of various stakeholders as oppose to wherein all members are school staff. Ministry of Education should further delegate some of its powers to school committees that deal with punishing students with a view to instil discipline. Guidance and counselling needs to be intensified through capacity building of guidance teachers and psychologists should be appointed and attached to schools.

## **REFERENCES**

- Adesina, S. (1980). *Some aspect of school management*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Education Industries.
- Amy, M. (2017). 4 types of parenting styles and their effects on kids. Retrieved from <https://www.verywell.com/types-of-parenting-styles-1095045>.

- Asare, A. S., Owusu-Mensah, F., & Gyamera, A. (2015). Managing school discipline: the students' and teachers' perception on disciplinary strategies. European Centre for Research Training and Development: UK
- Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau (2004). From Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research. Retrieved from < <http://www.trinity.catholic.edu.au/a-parents-role-in-their-childs-education/>.
- Boko, D. (2015). Botswana's education system has become a tragedy. 22 Mar 2015. BOPA
- Dadzie, O. C. (2008). *Student discipline strategies: Research and practice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Dreikurs, J. (1968). Student background, school climate, school disorder and school achievement – Journal of school violence.
- Fergus, E. (2010). Common causes of disproportionality. California Department of Education Special Education Newsletter. Retrieved from [www.calstat.org/publications/article\\_detail.php?a\\_id=128&nl\\_id=19](http://www.calstat.org/publications/article_detail.php?a_id=128&nl_id=19).
- Furlong, M. J., Felix, E. D., Sharkey, J. D., & Larson, J. (2005). Preventing school violence: A plan for safe and engaging schools. Retrieved from [www.naspcenter.org/principals](http://www.naspcenter.org/principals).
- Garegae, K. G. (2008). The crisis of student discipline in Botswana schools: an impact of culturally conflicting disciplinary strategies. *Educational Research and Review*, 3(1), 048-055.
- Kirkland, D. E. (2013). *A search past silence: the literacy of young black men*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Koki, M. C. (2015). School Based Factors Influencing Students Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui Central Subcounty, Kenya. M.Ed. Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- Matsoga, J. T. (2003). Crime and school violence in Botswana secondary education: The case of Moeding senior secondary school. PhD. Dissertation. Ohio University.
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2008). The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. Retrieved from [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf).
- Oats, R. (2016). Creating a constructive learning environment for democratic citizenship education in schools in Botswana. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 3(10), 2895-2903.
- Ponfua, Y. N. (2015). Students' indiscipline: types, causes and possible solutions: The case of secondary schools in Cameroon; *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(22), 160-173.
- Republic of Botswana Republic (1967). *Ministry of Education*. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Yarason, C. (2004). *Practical research, planning and designing*. London: Macmillan Publishers

---

<sup>i</sup> **Dr. Reginald Oats** is a Lecturer in the University of Botswana, Faculty of Education where he teaches courses in Curriculum Theory and Design. He attained his MEd from the University of Botswana, and Ed.D. from University of South Africa, South Africa.