

LECTURE 8

DISCIPLINE IN INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

In a school organization, discipline among members of staff and students is absolutely essential for the success of the teaching and learning process.

Objectives

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

- i. Explain the concept of discipline
- ii. Describe the importance of discipline
- iii. Analyze causes of indiscipline in the learning institutions
- iv. Examine the role of the head teacher and teachers in maintaining discipline
- v. Discuss the strategies of maintaining discipline

The Concept of Discipline

The term discipline means the practice of making people to obey rules of behavior; and applying corrective measures to people when they do not obey rules.

Further, the concept of discipline can be explained as:

- The action taken by management to enforce conformity to organizational standards or the guidelines/policies established to ensure conformity to organizational standards.

Fayol (1985) defines discipline as “a means of controlling people to achieve desirable behavior”.

In order to successfully achieve the objectives of an educational institution, its members are required to strictly adhere to the various behavior patterns necessary for maximum performance (Okumbe, 1999). It is necessary that education managers use appropriate disciplinary action to maintain the required organizational standards. Hence education managers need to establish policies and guidelines that need to be followed by members of the organization.

Importance of discipline

Discipline is an indispensable and integral component of the instructional programme in educational organizations.

- It is important in maintaining order and control among the teaching, non-teaching staff and students.

- Schools like many organizations operate within a framework of policies, rules, regulations and procedures that must be followed.
- Rules are there to ensure that the objectives of education organization are attained.
- Discipline is the force that makes staff and students observe standards of behavior as expected.
- Discipline also demands that those who do not conform to the laid down rules and regulations be punished in order to prevent the recurrence of the act in future.
- Discipline make people use their freedom wisely & distinguish between safe and unsafe practices.

Types of Discipline

Two types of discipline procedures as identified by Okumbe (1999) are discussed here below:

(i) Preventive Discipline approach

This refers to the administrative action taken by an educational administrator in order to encourage employees and students to follow organizational rules, regulations and standards.

The educational managers should endeavor to instill self-discipline among the organizational members by providing an enabling organizational climate in which expected standards are well stated.

(ii) Corrective discipline

This refers to a punitive administrative action, which aims at discouraging further infringement of a rule. The action taken is known as a disciplinary action. Educational administrators should try to apply progressive discipline. This follows a defined procedure, which proceeds from an oral warning, a written warning to a suspension and finally to dismissal. The purpose of this is to give an individual an opportunity for self-correction before more serious penalties are meted on him or her.

Techniques of discipline

There are several techniques that can be employed to ensure that discipline is instilled in institutions of learning. We are going to discuss the following three:

(a) Authoritarian technique

The following are characteristics of the authoritarian technique:

- Strict rules and regulations
- No freedom of action, thought or movement
- Too much emphasis of perfection
- Making too many decisions for the students/ children
- Constant criticism of wrong doings and nagging
- Lack of respect for individual rights
- Expecting unattainable standards
- Little or no recognition when one meets the standards
- No relaxation or control of corporal punishments
- Deprive the student/child to learn to control his own behavior

Authoritarian mode of discipline may make the student to conform but the apparent goodness conceals a resentment which will break out sooner or later.

In such situations, the student might:

- Assert their independence by doing many wrong things which they would not otherwise do.
- Behave & feel that the world is hostile & thus become hostile too.
- Show rebellion/revolt
- Become resentfully submissive and disobedient
- Be hypercritical toward authority- too much criticism
- Fear punishment more than other things
- Become sullen/obstinate/negativistic
- Learn to be sly, secretive and dishonest to avoid punishment

b) Permissive/ laissez faire technique

This technique employs little or no discipline:

- There are no limits or boundaries for the student to act within
- The student may make his or her own decisions and act on them in any way he/she feels or pleases.
- There is too much leniency

Under this technique the students might:

- Get confused and insecure
- Have no concept of right / wrong
- Exercise excessive aggressiveness
- Be resentful – feel that adults care little
- Be unmanageable in school/ neighborhood

c. Democratic Technique

Democratic disciplinary technique is synonymous with education and counseling. It emphasizes growth, self-discipline and self-control.

The main characteristics include:

- Explanation, discussion and reasoning to help the student/pupil understand why he/she is expected to behave in a certain manner.
- Punishment only at appropriate times when he/ she refuses to do and act accordingly.
- No unnecessary harsh punishment.
- Rewards and praise when he/she comes to expected standards.
- Careful planning to channelize energies.
- Appropriate motivation to live up to expectations.

Students brought up with democratic discipline technique will:

- Achieve desirable personal and social adjustments
- Develop independence in thinking
- Develop initiative in action
- Be active and outgoing
- Be spontaneous in behavior
- Achieve healthy and positive self-concept
- Have better self-control
- Deal with obstacles in a positive manner.

Indiscipline and causes

Introduction

Indiscipline refers to an individual's undesirable behavior that is not in conformity to the set organizational rules, regulations, customs, values and standards.

In a school situation symptoms of indiscipline include: fighting, sex abuse, truancy, drug abuse and destruction of property among others.

Causes of Indiscipline

- Lack of environmental stimuli leading to boredom, mal-adjusted behavior
- Imitating hero's / role models
- Frustrations due to social or psychological factors
- Drug abuse/alcoholism
- Adolescent rebellion to adults control
- Lack of proper guidance and counseling.
- Peer pressure
- Poor management/leadership

- Poor parenting
- Modern technology
- Poor communication.

Activity



What ways can you suggest that can be used to curb indiscipline in the institutions of learning in Kenya?

The role of the head teacher in maintaining discipline

Some of the techniques that the head teachers can employ to maintain discipline in schools include:

- i. Use of Dialogue: Although there are various leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, laissez faire, bureaucratic, contingency, consultative) the head teacher has to employ dialogue in dealing with pertinent issues affecting both students and teachers. Most of the students and teachers attribute indiscipline to lack of dialogue between the administrators and students, most heads adopt master/servant, superior/inferior attitude in dealing with students. They rearing listen to students' grievances because they believe that they have nothing to offer. Opportunities should be provided where teachers, students and administrators can sit down and discuss issues affecting their school freely without inhibition, intimidation and victimization.
- ii. The head teacher should ensure school offers guidance and counseling services to all students. This is key to discipline
- iii. S/h*e has to communicate the importance of school values to students/pupils, teachers and administrative staff.
- iv. Ensures that discipline is exercised fairly, with no favoritism or excessive penalties
- v. Involve the assistance of religious bodies e.g. church/ mosque in instilling discipline leading to character formation.
- vi. Encourage the creation of a family concept among teachers and students.
- vii. Ensure time is allocated to creative activities through which excess energy is vented out e.g. drama, music, dance, play, soccer, sporting, scouting
- viii. Initiate peace clubs in school to curb down riots.

- ix. Lead by example. S/he should ensure you do not break rules of the school. One has to set the example by obeying the school rules him/herself.

Activity



Evaluate the effectiveness of preventive and corrective discipline in institutions of learning.

Self – Assessment Questions



1. It is impossible for an indisciplined principal to maintain discipline among his/her students. “explain”
2. Discipline is the key to the academic excellence. “Discuss”

8.11 further Reading



- Amanuel, A.T (2009). *Managing Education: A handbook for student-teachers, trainers and school principals*. Nairobi: CUEA Press.
- Okumbe, J.A. (1998). *Educational Management: Theory and Practice*. Nairobi: University Press.
- Olembo, J.O., Wanga P.E & Karagu, N.M. (1992). *Management in Education*. Nairobi: ERAP.
- Smarth, M.W. (2001). *Fundamentals of Management*. New Delhi: Chanda and Co. Ltd.