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School leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management: A comparative analysis of Homa Bay County, Kenya, and Saskatchewan, Canada

Beatrice Odhiambo, **Janet Mola Okoko**, **Greg McJannet**

1 Kenyatta University,Kenya, 2 Saskatchewan, Canada, 3 Saskatchewan, Canada

Corresponding Author Email: beatriceakinyioyoo@yahoo.co.uk

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Abstract

School leaders occupy a central role in shaping effective teaching, learning, and overall school improvement, yet the complexity of today's school environments requires leaders with advanced competencies in student discipline and behaviour management, competencies that are not always systematically developed within leadership preparation programmes. This study examined how school leaders in Homa Bay County, Kenya, and Saskatchewan Province, Canada, are prepared for the management of student discipline and behaviour, and how their respective policy environments influence these responsibilities. Although the broader study pursued several objectives, this paper focuses specifically on the approaches to leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management in both regions. A systematic document review was conducted, drawing from 242 documents, of which 106 met the inclusion criteria. The final data set included national policies, education acts and regulations, school-board guidelines, ministerial circulars, professional development frameworks, leadership training curricula, academic publications, and empirical studies published between 1978 and 2024. Thematic content analysis was used to identify patterns in policy emphasis, leadership preparation, and school-level practices. The findings reveal significant divergence in leadership preparation pathways. In Kenya, school leaders are typically appointed without structured pre-service training, leaving many to rely on experience, trial-and-error, and post-appointment courses that offer limited

grounding in behaviour management or restorative approaches. This contributes to gaps in leadership capacity when responding to complex disciplinary issues. In contrast, Saskatchewan requires pre-appointment preparation for school leaders, with programmes grounded in instructional leadership, inclusive education, behaviour management, and restorative practice. While these approaches have strengthened school climate and leadership competence, the evidence is largely descriptive and not causal. The study recommends that Kenya, through the Kenya Education Management Institute, strengthens leadership preparation by integrating structured pre-appointment training, adopting proactive and evidence-informed behaviour-management frameworks, and decentralizing aspects of disciplinary decision-making to enhance responsiveness at school level. These reforms hold strong potential for improving leadership capability, strengthening school climates, and fostering a more sustainable and inclusive education ecosystem.

Key terms: leadership preparation; discipline; behaviour management; restorative practice; school climate; educational leadership.

1.0Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is universally acknowledged as a transformative force with the capacity to shape individual destinies, strengthen communities, and drive national development. However, the effectiveness of education is increasingly threatened by rising levels of student indiscipline across the world. Schools, once viewed primarily as centres of academic pursuit, are now confronted with heightened behavioural complexities that undermine safety, learning continuity, and overall school climate. International reports reveal pervasive patterns: nearly half of adolescents globally experience some form of school-related violence, while one in three learners' reports being bullied (UNESCO, 2022). Incidences of arson, gang-related behaviour, drug abuse, vandalism, and cyber misconduct have also surged in frequency across various regions.

These global trends are mirrored in sub-Saharan Africa, where educational systems grapple with persistent and evolving forms of misbehaviour that strain leadership capacity. Kenya is no exception. Secondary schools continue to experience unrest, classroom disruptions, truancy, substance use, and episodic arson, behaviours that not only disrupt teaching and learning but also impede academic achievement, diminish teacher morale, and compromise school-community relationships. The strong correlation between effective discipline and learner performance underscores the urgent need to enhance behaviour management strategies in school settings.

School principals play a pivotal role in maintaining discipline and shaping positive school cultures. Their influence extends beyond administrative oversight to fostering staff collaboration, modelling expected behaviours, resolving conflicts, and ensuring that behaviour policies are consistently and fairly applied. Effective leadership in discipline therefore requires more than familiarity with rules, it demands emotional intelligence, interpersonal competence, policy literacy, and the capacity to engage staff and learners in building a shared vision for behaviour.

Yet, in many education systems, including Kenya, principals often ascend to leadership positions through seniority or years of teaching experience rather than formal leadership development. Pre-service preparation remains minimal, with limited access to structured coursework in educational leadership,

conflict management, adolescent psychology, or restorative discipline frameworks. Consequently, many school leaders are thrust into roles that require advanced behavioural competencies without adequate preparation.

Globally, governments have attempted to address this gap through leadership development initiatives such as the National College for School Leadership (UK), Rwanda's mandatory headteacher training, and Kenya's capacity-building programmes through KEMI. These interventions emphasize instructional leadership, collaborative school culture, and data-driven decision-making. However, the specific focus on discipline and behaviour management within these programmes varies significantly across contexts.

Although closely related, *discipline* and *behaviour management* represent two distinct paradigms. **Discipline**, traditionally understood, focuses on enforcing rules, correcting misconduct, and maintaining order. **Behaviour management**, however, embraces proactive, instructive, and restorative strategies designed to cultivate positive behaviour, emotional regulation, accountability, and self-discipline.

This distinction is critical in Kenya's context following the 2001 ban on corporal punishment. While alternative strategies such as counselling, guidance programmes, suspensions, and parental engagement have been introduced, many schools continue to rely on punitive, reactionary, and sometimes exclusionary measures. Such approaches, if not balanced with restorative practices, risk undermining learner wellbeing and academic success.

In contrast, Saskatchewan, Canada, has undergone a more systematic evolution. Schools commonly implement restorative justice practices, School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), social–emotional learning frameworks, and restitution-based models. These approaches position discipline as a developmental process that strengthens relationships, builds emotional competencies, and addresses the root causes of behaviour. Despite these advances, behavioural challenges persist even within Saskatchewan, reinforcing the need to examine leadership preparation systems in both contexts.

The comparison between Homa Bay County in Kenya and Saskatchewan Province in Canada provides a meaningful lens through which to examine leadership preparation for student discipline. Although socio-economic and policy environments differ, both contexts are confronted with growing behavioural complexities that demand strong, responsive leadership.

Saskatchewan represents a high-income context with well-structured leadership pathways, credentialled preparation programmes, and a long-standing emphasis on inclusive and restorative practice. Kenya, by contrast, continues to navigate the transition from punitive legacies to preventive and restorative models within environments characterized by resource limitations.

This contrast creates an opportunity for mutual learning:

- Kenya can draw insights from Saskatchewan's structured preparation systems.
- Saskatchewan can benchmark leadership preparation within culturally diverse and rapidly changing educational environments like Homa Bay.

Homa Bay County provides a strategic and highly relevant case for examining leadership preparation due to the following characteristics:

i. Persistent discipline issues – The county has consistently reported high incidences of student misbehaviour, including unrest, arson, bullying, and substance abuse, which significantly disrupt learning.

ii. Socio-economic vulnerabilities – High rates of poverty, unemployment, and family instability contribute to behavioural challenges and emotional stress among adolescents.

iii. Educational disparities – Schools in Homa Bay exhibit varied academic performance, often linked to differences in school climate, leadership effectiveness, and the capacity to manage discipline.

iv. Diverse school environments – The county's mix of rural, peri-urban, and urban schools provides a holistic representation of contextual factors affecting behaviour management.

v. Policy implementation gaps – Despite national reforms promoting alternative discipline strategies, uptake remains inconsistent, and many principals report limited training on restorative practices.

These dynamics position Homa Bay County as an ideal setting for analyzing the relationship between leadership preparation and student behaviour. Understanding these patterns is essential for designing responsive leadership development programmes that bridge the gap between policy expectations and school-level realities.

Saskatchewan Province serves as a compelling and balanced comparative case for investigating leadership preparation, characterized by institutional dynamics that mirror and contrast with those in Homa Bay County:

- **Rising Classroom Complexity and Behavioral Shifts:** Saskatchewan schools have reported escalating challenges regarding student behavior, safety, and mental health. School administrators face shifting societal attitudes and a rise in complex, high-risk student behaviors, making effective behavior management a core priority for safe school environments.
- **Demographic Shifts and Socio-Cultural Realities:** The province features distinct socio-demographic realities, particularly a growing Indigenous student population and expanding immigrant communities. Principals must navigate complex multi-generational trauma, economic vulnerability, and housing transiency in inner-city and reserve contexts, requiring culturally responsive and trauma-informed leadership.
- **Decentralized Educational Disparities:** Resource and performance variations across Saskatchewan's school divisions are often tied to institutional support systems. Principals in different school divisions face unequal access to student support services, specialized personnel, and systemic funding, which heavily influences their capacity to maintain positive school climates.
- **The Rural-Urban Administrative Divide:** The province's geography creates a stark dichotomy between large urban centers and highly isolated rural schools. Rural Saskatchewan principals frequently operate as teaching-administrators with multi-grade classrooms, minimal administrative time, and geographic isolation, creating a vastly different leadership reality than their urban counterparts.
- **Policy Evolution and Implementation Gaps:** While the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and local school boards mandate progressive, non-punitive frameworks (such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS] and restorative approaches), systemic implementation remains inconsistent. Many in-school administrators report a lack of standardized pre-service preparation and professional development to operationalize these policy expectations effectively.

These provincial dynamics position Saskatchewan as an ideal Global North counterpoint to Homa Bay County. Examining Saskatchewan provides vital insights into how educational leaders negotiate the gap between macro-level safe-school policies and micro-level classroom realities within a highly decentralized, cross-jurisdictional framework.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective preparation of school leaders is widely recognized as a cornerstone of successful school administration, particularly in fostering safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments. School

leaders directly influence school culture, model expectations, and determine how discipline systems are implemented. Despite this central role, global studies indicate a persistent gap between the behavioural demands of modern schooling and the level of preparation leaders receive, especially in the areas of adolescent behaviour, restorative practices, conflict management, and mental-health support.

In Kenya, leadership preparation tends to occur post-appointment. Principals often assume office without structured pre-service training in behaviour management, socio-emotional competence, or preventive discipline frameworks. This results in leaders navigating increasingly complex student behaviour challenges using limited conceptual, technical, or interpersonal grounding. The consequences of this gap are evident in national statistics: Bwana (2015) reports that 34.9% of learners engage in drug and substance abuse, 56.1% are affected by teenage pregnancies, 44.3% are involved in violence or bullying, and 54.3% contribute to school unrest. These trends underscore a systemic weakness in leadership preparedness and the need for more robust, preventive, and relational discipline frameworks.

Homa Bay County reflects these national concerns. The Ministry of Education documented approximately 13 school arson incidents in 2021, alongside increased cases of absenteeism, exam irregularities, substance use, and violence. Such behavioural patterns raise urgent questions about whether current leadership training frameworks, formal and informal, equip principals with the competencies necessary to respond to emerging adolescent needs rooted in socio-economic hardship, digital influence, peer pressure, and mental-health stressors.

Although Kenya has undertaken several reforms including banning corporal punishment in 2001 and introducing alternative discipline guidelines, school indiscipline persists. This disconnect suggests that gaps exist not only in policy design but also in the capacity of school leaders to interpret, implement, and sustain these reforms. There is therefore a compelling need to critically assess how leadership preparation addresses the changing landscape of student behaviour and to identify comparative insights from other jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan, where preparation is more formalized.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine the approaches to leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management utilized in Homa Bay County, Kenya, and Saskatchewan Province, Canada.

Specific Research Objectives

The study sought to:

i. To identify the approaches used in preparing school leaders for discipline and behaviour management in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

ii. To compare the approaches to leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management utilized in Homa Bay County, Kenya, and Saskatchewan Province, Canada.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

i. What approaches are used in preparing school leaders for discipline and behaviour management in Homa Bay County, Kenya?

ii. How do the approaches to leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management in Homa Bay County, Kenya, compare with those utilized in Saskatchewan Province, Canada?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Katz's Three-Skills Approach to Effective Leadership (Katz, 1951), which proposes that competent leadership is defined by the integrated development of technical, conceptual, and human-relations skills. The framework is particularly suitable for analyzing leadership preparation for behaviour management because effective discipline systems rely on balanced competence across the cognitive, practical, and relational domains.

These include knowledge of discipline policies, Ministry guidelines, legal parameters, behavioural-intervention procedures, and evidence-based strategies such as restorative practices and PBIS. Technical skill development ensures that leaders can interpret policy accurately, monitor compliance, and implement clear, consistent disciplinary systems.

These involve the ability to analyze complex student behaviour patterns, diagnose underlying causes, interpret data, align discipline practices with school improvement goals, and anticipate emerging threats (such as cyberbullying, mental-health crises, or substance abuse trends). Leaders with strong conceptual skills adopt proactive rather than reactive approaches to discipline.

These encompass empathy, communication, conflict resolution, mentoring, staff motivation, and community engagement. Because discipline is fundamentally relational, leaders must build trust with students, collaborate with parents, manage staff dynamics, and foster a positive school climate.

Katz's model therefore provides a rigorous analytical lens for evaluating whether leadership preparation in Homa Bay and Saskatchewan effectively equips school leaders with a balanced skill set required for sustainable, inclusive, and restorative behaviour management.

2.2 Empirical Studies

The concept of discipline, originating from the Latin *disciplina* meaning instruction or learning, has evolved from a narrow focus on punishment and compliance to a broader educational construct that emphasizes guidance, expectation-setting, and the promotion of positive behaviour. In contemporary scholarship, discipline is increasingly understood as a supportive and educative process aimed at shaping behaviour through structured expectations and constructive engagement rather than coercion (Bear, 2010; Skiba et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2017). Closely related to this is behaviour management, which extends the concept further by prioritizing preventive and proactive strategies that cultivate social–emotional competencies, encourage self-regulation, and create conducive learning environments (OECD, 2019; Hattie, 2009; Wang et al., 2020).

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that student indiscipline is associated with poor academic outcomes, increased dropout rates, and reduced learner engagement. It also contributes to strained teacher–student relationships and elevated teacher burnout, ultimately undermining the overall school climate (Allen et al., 2018; Gregory et al., 2016; OECD, 2019). These findings highlight the importance of understanding not only behavioural challenges in schools but also the leadership capacities required to address them effectively. As such, contemporary approaches increasingly advocate for relational, restorative, and inclusive disciplinary frameworks that move away from punitive traditions (Skiba et al., 2014; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

In Kenya, school discipline has historically been shaped by punitive practices, particularly corporal punishment, which was widely institutionalized during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Despite being legally prohibited through Gazette Notice No. 56 of 2001, research indicates that corporal

punishment persists in some schools, especially in rural and under-resourced settings (Republic of Kenya, 2001; Mweru, 2010; UNICEF, 2015). This continued use reflects an implementation gap that can be understood through deficiencies in leadership capacity across Katz's three skill domains. Conceptually, some school leaders struggle to translate national policy into coherent school-wide behavioural systems, often defaulting to entrenched punitive norms (Katz, 1955; Ngware et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2017). Human skill challenges are evident in the persistence of cultural beliefs that legitimize physical punishment, thereby weakening trust, empathy, and positive interpersonal relationships within schools (Mweru, 2010; Oketch & Rolleston, 2007; OECD, 2019). Technical skill limitations are also apparent, as many leaders lack practical training in alternative behaviour-management strategies and operate within environments constrained by inadequate counselling services and weak institutional support systems (Ngware et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2015; Hattie, 2009).

Following the ban on corporal punishment, Kenyan schools have adopted alternative disciplinary approaches such as guidance and counselling, peer mentoring, life-skills education, restorative dialogues, detention, suspension, and expulsion. However, the effectiveness of these strategies remains uneven due to persistent challenges including a shortage of trained counsellors, high learner-to-counsellor ratios, and inconsistent implementation (Republic of Kenya, 2001; UNESCO, 2017; Ngware et al., 2016). These challenges underscore the need for leadership preparation that strengthens conceptual understanding of behaviour systems, enhances human skills for relationship-building, and develops technical competencies for implementing structured behaviour-support interventions (Katz, 1955; Hattie, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

In contrast, Saskatchewan Province in Canada reflects a more progressive shift from punitive discipline to restorative and preventive approaches. Schools in this context commonly implement restorative justice practices, School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), trauma-informed care, and emotional literacy programmes (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2009; OECD, 2019). These approaches emphasize accountability, respect, inclusivity, and the repair of harm through dialogue, mediation, and collaborative problem-solving (Wachtel, 2013; Gregory et al., 2016; Bear, 2010). Restorative practices in particular are embedded in relationship-building activities such as circles and mediation processes that strengthen school connectedness and community engagement (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Wachtel, 2013; Allen et al., 2018).

The sustainability of these approaches in Saskatchewan is closely linked to structured leadership preparation and ongoing professional development. Through institutions such as the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU) and university-based educational leadership programmes, school leaders are systematically trained in competencies aligned with Katz's framework (Katz, 1955; OECD, 2019; Hattie, 2009). Technical skills are developed through training in data-driven decision-making and behavioural tracking systems, human skills through empathy and conflict resolution, and conceptual skills through policy interpretation and contextual adaptation (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Wachtel, 2013; Bear, 2010). Despite these strengths, challenges remain related to cultural diversity and increasing complexity in student needs (OECD, 2019; Allen et al., 2018; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

Across both settings, empirical evidence consistently affirms that school leaders play a central role in shaping discipline policies, influencing school climate, and guiding teacher practices in behaviour management. However, gaps in leadership preparation remain evident globally. In Kenya, preparation programmes tend to emphasize administrative compliance and financial management, with limited focus on behaviour management or social–emotional learning (Ngware et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2017; Hattie, 2009). Training is often short-term and lacks sustained mentoring, leaving leaders underprepared for complex behavioural challenges such as mental health concerns and substance abuse (Republic of Kenya, 2001; UNICEF, 2015; OECD, 2019). In Saskatchewan, although leadership preparation is more

structured, gaps persist in addressing culturally complex environments, particularly within Indigenous communities (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; OECD, 2019; Allen et al., 2018). Overall, both contexts underscore the need for comparative studies examining how leadership preparation influences discipline outcomes and how restorative models may be adapted across diverse educational settings.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a scoping review design to examine the breadth and nature of existing literature, policy documents, legislation, and institutional materials on leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management in Homa Bay County and Saskatchewan Province. This design was considered appropriate because scoping reviews are well suited for emerging and complex topics, allowing for a broad mapping of knowledge without the restrictive parameters of systematic reviews. It enabled the synthesis of diverse evidence sources, including leadership curricula, policy frameworks, empirical studies, and historical records, while also facilitating comparison of how discipline is conceptualized and operationalized across the two jurisdictions.

A comprehensive search strategy was implemented across academic databases, government repositories, institutional archives, and grey literature sources, yielding an initial 242 documents. The inclusion criteria focused on materials published between 1978 and 2024, written in English, and directly addressing school leadership, discipline, behaviour management, leadership preparation, or policy implementation within secondary school contexts in Homa Bay County or Saskatchewan Province. During screening, 136 documents were excluded due to duplication, lack of geographic relevance, or insufficient alignment with the study focus, resulting in a final sample of 106 documents selected for in-depth analysis.

Data were analysed using a thematic-content approach in which all selected documents were systematically read, coded, and organized into recurring themes. The key themes included leadership preparation pathways, disciplinary approaches (punitive, restorative, and preventive), historical developments in discipline policy, professional development models, and contextual factors influencing behaviour management practices. Comparative analysis was then undertaken to identify similarities and differences between the two contexts, with particular attention to contextual variables such as resource availability, cultural influences, and legislative frameworks.

The synthesis of findings was presented narratively to provide a coherent and integrated account of how leadership preparation shapes discipline and behaviour management in the two settings. As the study relied solely on secondary sources, no human participants were involved, and therefore no formal ethical clearance was required; however, academic integrity was maintained through accurate citation and careful representation of sources. Key limitations include reliance on the availability and quality of existing documents, limited methodological appraisal of included studies, and exclusion of non-English materials, which may have constrained depth and scope. Despite these limitations, triangulation of multiple sources strengthened the credibility and robustness of the findings.

4.0 Results/Findings of the Study

4.1 Leadership Preparation Approaches for Discipline and Behaviour Management in Kenya and Saskatchewan

The findings of the review show clear contrasts in how school leaders in Kenya and Saskatchewan are prepared to manage discipline and behaviour. These differences are not merely procedural; they reflect

deeper variations in how each system conceptualizes leadership, prioritizes student wellbeing, and integrates inclusive practices. The comparative insights also illustrate how leadership preparation influences the capacity of schools to create safe, supportive, and sustainable learning environments.

4.1.1 Leadership Preparation in Kenya

In the Kenyan context, leadership preparation continues to rely heavily on an apprenticeship-style progression. Teachers advance through recognizable hierarchical stages—from classroom teacher to Head of Department, Deputy Principal, and eventually Principal. While this trajectory offers opportunities to develop operational competence, it seldom incorporates formalized leadership training before appointment to senior roles. As a result, many school leaders take up administrative responsibilities with limited specialized preparation.

Although institutions such as the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) provide short courses on leadership, financial management, and policy implementation, the findings indicate that these programmes often lack adequate focus on contemporary discipline challenges. Key areas such as restorative approaches, counselling skills, trauma-informed practice, adolescent development, conflict-resolution techniques, drug and substance abuse prevention, and community-engagement strategies are insufficiently covered or addressed only superficially.

Furthermore, induction and mentorship systems are not well structured. Newly appointed principals often navigate complex behavioural dynamics without the benefit of guided professional support or ongoing capacity-building. The absence of formal mentorship leaves leaders dependent on personal experience, resulting in significant variation in leadership styles and disciplinary decision-making.

These gaps contribute to several systemic challenges:

- inconsistent application of discipline policies
- continued reliance on punitive responses
- limited adoption of restorative or preventive approaches
- difficulty managing emerging issues such as mental health crises, cyberbullying, and family instability

The review also suggests that remnants of colonial administrative traditions still shape leadership practices, reinforcing hierarchical and compliance-driven models. These structural and philosophical legacies hinder the development of more inclusive, student-centred approaches to behaviour management.

4.1.2 Leadership Preparation in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan offers a markedly different picture, characterized by a professionalized and credentialled leadership pipeline. Aspiring school leaders are required to participate in structured programmes such as the Saskatchewan Principals' Short Course (SPSC) and postgraduate degrees in Educational Administration. These programmes provide both theoretical grounding and practical skills, ensuring that leaders enter the profession with a comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership and behaviour management.

Leadership preparation in Saskatchewan is closely aligned with modern disciplinary philosophies. Programmes incorporate training in restorative justice, School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), socio-emotional learning frameworks, de-escalation techniques, and collaborative problem-solving models. Emphasis is placed on fostering positive relationships, addressing root causes of behaviour, and engaging students as active participants in resolving conflicts.

An additional strength is the integration of cultural competency training, particularly with regard to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. Leaders are encouraged to understand local histories, community expectations, and the cultural dimensions of student behaviour. This reflects a broader national commitment to reconciliation and educational equity.

Despite these advantages, the findings indicate ongoing challenges. Some school leaders report difficulties applying theoretical knowledge in complex real-world contexts, especially when working in culturally diverse or underserved communities. Resource limitations, staffing shortages, and administrative workload pressures can also undermine efforts to implement restorative or preventive approaches consistently. Nonetheless, the leadership-preparation system provides a solid foundation from which continuous improvement is possible.

4.1.3 Comparative Perspective

From a comparative standpoint, the most striking difference lies in the degree of formalization. Kenya's experiential, apprenticeship-inspired model contrasts sharply with Saskatchewan's structured and professionalized system. The Kenyan model, while rooted in practical experience, does not adequately equip principals to address modern student-behaviour challenges or to implement evidence-based strategies. This leads to reactive, punitive, and sometimes inconsistent approaches.

In contrast, Saskatchewan's leadership preparation integrates both theory and practice, positioning school leaders to manage behaviour proactively and inclusively. Its strong emphasis on restorative practice, data use, community collaboration, and cultural responsiveness contributes to more holistic and developmental approaches to discipline.

However, both contexts share several common pressures, including:

- increasing cultural diversity
- heightened behavioural complexity among adolescents
- rising emotional and mental-health needs
- demanding administrative workloads
- persistent inequalities affecting school environments

These shared challenges suggest that no system is fully insulated from the realities of contemporary schooling, regardless of the sophistication of its leadership preparation model.

4.1.4 Implications for Sustainable and Inclusive Leadership

The comparative insights highlight several implications for strengthening leadership preparation in ways that support sustainable, inclusive, and transformative school environments.

For Kenya, critical opportunities include:

- formalizing leadership preparation prior to appointment
- embedding restorative, preventive, and socio-emotional approaches in all leadership training
- strengthening induction and mentorship structures
- expanding professional development in areas such as mental health, conflict resolution, and community partnership
- resourcing schools adequately to support implementation

For Saskatchewan, improvements could focus on:

- enhancing cultural responsiveness, particularly in First Nations and multicultural communities

- providing targeted support for leaders in high-needs schools
- strengthening practical, context-specific training to complement theoretical preparation
- building capacity for collaborative, community-based discipline models

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that leadership preparation is a powerful catalyst for transformation. When leadership is intentionally developed, grounded in inclusive philosophies, and supported by robust structures, schools are better positioned to foster climates that nurture positive behaviour, promote equity, and sustain long-term educational success.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This study set out to examine leadership preparation approaches for discipline and behaviour management in Homa Bay County, Kenya, and Saskatchewan Province, Canada. The findings demonstrate that the two contexts differ significantly in the structure, content, and delivery of leadership preparation, with direct implications for how school discipline is conceptualized and implemented.

In Homa Bay County, leadership preparation is largely experiential and rooted in apprenticeship progression, with limited formal pre-service training in behaviour management. While institutions such as KEMI provide in-service training, these programmes are generally short-term and insufficiently address contemporary disciplinary challenges such as restorative practices, mental health, trauma-informed leadership, and adolescent behavioural complexities. The absence of structured induction and mentorship further contributes to inconsistent leadership preparedness and a continued reliance on punitive disciplinary approaches.

In contrast, Saskatchewan Province demonstrates a more structured, professionalized, and competency-based leadership preparation system. Through formal certification programmes and postgraduate training, school leaders are systematically prepared in restorative justice, SWPBIS, socio-emotional learning, and culturally responsive leadership. This structured preparation enables more proactive, inclusive, and evidence-based approaches to discipline and behaviour management, although challenges remain in translating theory into practice in diverse and resource-constrained contexts.

Comparatively, the study concludes that the degree of formalization in leadership preparation is a key determinant of how discipline is managed in schools. However, despite differences in systems, both contexts face common challenges such as increasing behavioural complexity, mental health concerns, cultural diversity, and high administrative demands. These shared realities underscore the need for adaptive, continuous, and context-responsive leadership development systems.

Overall, the study affirms that effective leadership preparation is central to fostering safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments, and that strengthening such preparation is essential for improving discipline and behaviour management outcomes.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations for policy, practice, and future development in leadership preparation for discipline and behaviour management:

5.2.1 Recommendations for Kenya

i. Formalization of Leadership Preparation

There is a need to establish structured pre-service leadership preparation programmes for aspiring school

leaders before appointment to senior administrative positions.

ii. Curriculum Enhancement in Leadership Training

Leadership training programmes should integrate contemporary approaches such as restorative practices, socio-emotional learning, trauma-informed leadership, counselling skills, and adolescent psychology.

iii. Strengthening Induction and Mentorship Systems

A structured national mentorship and induction framework should be developed to support newly appointed principals in transitioning into leadership roles.

iv. Continuous Professional Development

Regular, sustained, and practice-oriented professional development programmes should be implemented to address emerging behavioural challenges such as cyberbullying, drug abuse, and mental health issues.

v. Improved Resource Allocation

Schools should be adequately resourced with counselling services, trained personnel, and support systems to enable effective implementation of positive discipline strategies.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Saskatchewan Province

i. Strengthening Practice-Based Learning

Leadership preparation programmes should further enhance practical exposure to ensure stronger alignment between theoretical knowledge and real-world school contexts.

ii. Enhanced Support for High-Needs Schools

Additional targeted support should be provided to school leaders working in high-stress, under-resourced, and culturally complex school environments.

iii. Deepening Cultural Responsiveness

Training should continue to strengthen culturally responsive leadership, particularly in relation to First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and increasingly diverse student populations.

iv. Promotion of Collaborative Discipline Models

Greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening community-based and collaborative discipline frameworks that involve families, learners, and local stakeholders.

5.3 Concluding Statement

The study concludes that leadership preparation is a critical determinant of effective discipline and behaviour management in schools. When leadership development is structured, sustained, and inclusive, school leaders are better equipped to implement restorative, preventive, and student-centred disciplinary approaches. Strengthening leadership preparation systems, therefore, represents a strategic pathway toward improving school climate, promoting equity, and enhancing overall educational outcomes in both contexts

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