

**ALTERNATIVES TO ZERO-TOLERANCE: AN EVALUATION OF THE STATUS OF
POSITIVE DISCIPLINE METHODS AND THEIR EFFECT ON STUDENTS'
DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT IN KENYAN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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MED 111/ 07086**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTERS OF EDUCATION
DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF
MOUNT-KENYA UNIVERSITY**

DECEMBER 2013

ABSTRACT

Educators all over the world are facing increasingly challenging discipline problems from students. Traditionally, they have reacted by using zero-tolerance policies. The effectiveness of the approaches has been questioned and many schools have adopted positive discipline measures, which are based on the assumption that if a school actively teaches and acknowledges expected behavior, the number of students with serious disciplinary issues will reduce. The themes of positive discipline are prevention, multi-tiered support and data based decisions. The study aimed at finding out to what extent public secondary schools in Kasarani District, Nairobi County had implemented positive discipline methods, how well-prepared they were to do so; and the effect that these methods had had on student discipline in the schools. The qualitative study had been designed as a case study and used observation, interviews and document analysis. The researcher used the opinion of experts in the field to achieve the instruments' content validity. Piloting was done in the neighboring Starehe District. Items found not to be measuring the variables they were supposed to measure were modified or discarded altogether. To establish reliability of the interview guide, the results of the pilot study were compiled and a correlation computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. The split half technique was used to ascertain the coefficient of internal consistency or reliability. The reliability was found to be 0.75. Administrators and teachers were interviewed, school records analyzed, and the school practices observed to ascertain if positive discipline methods had been implemented and their effect on student discipline in the schools. The data collected was coded and categorized according to themes and patterns and analyzed thematically. This was presented in form of frequencies and percentages. The study found out that schools in Kasarani were using both zero-tolerance and positive discipline methods for student discipline management. Furthermore most teachers were only aware of guidance and counseling as a strategy of positive discipline management. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should intensify efforts to increase awareness of various positive discipline methods and the effect of using these methods in management of student discipline.