



## THE CONTRIBUTION OF RENTED HOUSES ENVIRONMENT IN MANAGING DISCIPLINE AMONG DAY PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF TABORA REGION

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the contribution of rented houses environment in managing discipline among day public secondary school students in Tabora, Tanzania, specifically in Nzega District. A qualitative research approach was employed, coupled with a case study design. The study employed parents, landlords, and students as respondents. 42 respondents were selected by using purposive sampling techniques.*

*Moreover, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and documentary review. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The study findings revealed that most rented houses did not support the management of students' discipline. Since only a few rented houses had borders, they needed fences, security guards, rules, and regulations to control students' fields. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology collaborate with the schools and community to build dormitories, reducing inconveniences as some parents are reluctant to send their children to schools far from their locations for safety reasons.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Secondary Education is essential to people's lives as it equips them with the knowledge, skills, experience, and values needed to overcome daily challenges. It is a social, economic, political, cultural, and technological tool for people's and national development (Prasad, 2020). Based on the importance of Education, governments in developed and developing countries invested much in Education, including secondary Education, to help young individuals gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's world and produce human capital (Bloom, 2006; Genelza, 2022; Grant, 2017).

Successful provision of secondary Education is accompanied by the availability of a good learning environment that plays an important role in student's academic success. Therefore, school hostels are significant for students because they provide much time for them to easily attend school and utilize their time in studying. It also provides a supportive environment for students to complete their homework and concentrate on academic activities (English & Guerin, 2015; Iftikhar & Ajmal, 2015; Lewin, 2008; Memon *et al.*, 2018).

Different strategies are used to manage students' discipline-school owned-hostel, such as establishing rules and regulations that each student has to adhere to. Some rules and regulations include prohibiting students from smoking, using alcohol, going out without permission, and being visited by people other than their parents/ guardians or relatives. Besides, students of different genders are prohibited from staying together in the controversial environment (Betty & Emily, 2011; Victor, 2018). There are structured forms of punishment for misbehaving students, including kneeling, washing corridors, slashing grasses, and reporting students' cases to the authorities (Betty & Emily, 2011). Other strategies used to manage discipline among students include parent

consultation with their children about their discipline (English & Guerin, 2015). Not only that, but also, fences and security guards secure the hostels.

Like other countries, Tanzania provides secondary Education to its citizens to equip them with skills and knowledge essential to their lives. To ensure effective learning in the country, the Education and Training Policy of 2014 recommends the availability of school infrastructure, including school hostels (URT, 2014). The policy recommends that the government collaborate with other educational stakeholders to develop modern infrastructure at all levels in the education sector (URT, 2014). Similarly, the curriculum emphasizes the presence of school facilities, including dormitories in secondary schools (URT, 2019). The government works with other stakeholders such as parents, community members, and private organizations such as banks to construct the school-owned hostel for secondary schools. The best example is the Lyra Foundation, a non-government organization that constructed a girls' hostel in Iringa (Hollmen & Sandman, 2021). School hostels' construction aims to overcome long-distance traveling from home to school among students, especially for day scholars. Long distance from home to school is associated with truancy, poor performance, and sexual relationships between girls and motorcycle drivers (Mhiliwa, 2015), (Saga, 2014), (McDonald, 2008). For that reason, the construction of school hostels is expected to solve the problem.

Despite the strategies taken by the government and stakeholders to construct school hostels in public day secondary schools in Tanzania, nevertheless, they are not enough to accommodate all students (UNICEF, 2019). Students still experience long-distance traveling from home to school. This problem contributes to truancy among students. Besides, girls engage in sexual relationships with motorcyclists, which leads to early pregnancies and dropping out of school. To avoid this, parents often decide to rent houses near schools for their children (Mhiliwa, 2015). Even though parents take different initiatives to assist their children to have easy access to school, the evidence showed by UNICEF (2019) and Mhiliwa (2015) revealed that students who are living in rented houses misbehave by engaging in sexual relationships, drinking alcohol, truancy and the use of drugs. Besides, the practices cause early pregnancies and drop out from schools. Data generated in 2019 showed that 99.4 percent of school dropouts were caused by indiscipline among students. These included truancy, sexual relationships, and other indiscipline practices (URT, 2020).

Improper behaviors such as truancy, drug abuse, cigarette and marijuana, and sexual relations negatively impact students' futures as they fail to achieve their educational goals. This problem, if not addressed, may result in an increased number of dependents in the family and society, affecting the nation economically, socially, and politically. Proper behaviors in hostels are managed mainly by using rules and regulations and the presence of a safe and secure environment (URT, 2019). However, more attention should be placed on how the proper behavior and discipline of students living in rented houses are managed. This study, therefore, addresses the problem at hand and, along these lines, is essential to fill this gap. If the issue remains unaddressed, students' proper behavior, especially those living in rented houses, will be limited wh, which in turn will affect their development as individuals who are prepared to interact with society in general (Cahill et al.,2019;), (Stockings 2016). Therefore, this study investigated the contribution of rented houses in managing disciplines among day public secondary school students in Tabora, Tanzania.

### **Objective of the study**

The study explores the contribution of rented houses environment in managing discipline among day public secondary school students in Tabora, Tanzania.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research approach to collect and analyze in-depth information on rented house environments and discipline management among day public secondary school students (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2018). The study used a case study design to create an in-depth multiple understanding of a phenomenon in its actual life setting (Boru, 2018), (Yin, 2011). Moreover, qualitative case study design is the design that explores a situation within some specific context and puts emphasis on using multiple methods such as semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentary review (Crowe *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, the study was conducted in the Tabora region, specifically in the Nzega district. Tabora region is selected as the study area because data indicates that as of 2019, the region has the highest rates of students engaging in indiscipline cases. The data indicates that 9.7 % of students in the Tabora region were truants engaged in sexual relationships and drug abuse. As well as Nzega district is the district where most secondary schools are and where the majority of students walk a long distance from home to different schools. Most students walk between 4.58 km and 15 km, majority of them walk a distance more than the recommended 5 km (URT, 2019), (URT, 2022).

The target population of the study comprises landlords, parents, and students. Moreover, purposive sampling was used to select study participants (Cohen, 2018). Landlords were selected because they were the ones who provide accommodation services and thus are expected to be concerned with the discipline of students who rent their houses by making sure that students do not engage in serious misconduct such as using alcohol, drug abuse, and sexual relationships by reinforcing rules and regulations. Students who are living in rented houses were involved in providing information about the rented house environment that supports management of students' discipline, including the presence of rules and regulations, fences, and if it allows involvement in educational activities such as attending schools, sports, and games that could keep them busy and run away from misconducts. Parents were involved, or the reason that they were the ones who allowed and paid for their children to stay in rented houses. Thus, they are responsible for following up on the environment and discipline of their children in rented houses. Meanwhile, the study's sample size will comprise forty-two (42) respondents, including six secondary school students in every three schools, twelve parents, and twelve landlords.

Furthermore, this study used interviews, focus group discussions, documentary reviews, and observation as data collection methods. Interviews were used to collect data from landlords and parents, also focus group used to collect data from students as well a documentary review used to collect data from students about their involvement in other activities when they are in rented houses, and lastly is, observation that used to observe the rented houses environment for managing students discipline. The trustworthiness of this study is ensured by triangulation and thick description that involves the use of multiple sources of information and the involvement of quotation of participant's voice in the presentation of data.

The collected data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (2006). The steps include (a) getting familiar with the content of the collected data through reading repetitively, (b) transcribing or converting non-text data into text format, (c) identifying and generating initial codes or meaningful groups, (d) combining various related codes to generate themes, (e) reviewing, refining, defining, and naming major themes or findings, and (e) interpreting and writing up the research report.

Lastly eth, ethical considerations were ensured in this study. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017), ethics in Research refers to the principles, values, norms, and procedures that guide researchers on what is right to be done and what is not during the research process. Ethical consideration was observed throughout the data collection processes, including acknowledging all authors cited in this study and obtaining a clearance letter from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Dodoma and the Directorate of Research, Publication, and Consultancy.

The research clearance letter was submitted to the President's Office-Regional Administration and the Local Government, Regional Administrative Secretary, District Administrative Secretary, and the Director of the respective municipal council to obtain a research permit. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants to participate in the study. The confidentiality of the research participants and their information was followed through the data collection process and during the stage of writing this report. Besides, privacy was maintained through pseudo-names, coding, and data protection provided by the participants (Marianna & Fouka, 2011).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This study examined how the environment in rented houses supports the management of students' discipline in day public secondary schools. Four sub-themes were developed: security that includes fence, gate, and security guards; the presence of rules and regulations; the presence of water and electricity; and the involvement of students in other activities. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, documentary reviews, and observations. Interviews were conducted with the landlords and parents. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation were conducted with students from each school.

### **Availability of Security that Supports the Management of Students' Discipline in Rented Houses**

Security is an important effort for human beings and has a special role in shaping an individual's attitude and discipline. About students it keeps students safe and promotes academic achievement and good discipline among students. The study examined the security situation in rented houses to find the presence of security guards, fences, and gates to control students and other people's movement in and out of the rented houses. The findings from the interviews indicate that most houses need security guards, fences, and gates to control students' and other people's movement in and out of the houses. One of the respondents had this to say about security in rented houses:

Landlord, ward 2:

"My house does not have a fence, and managing students' discipline has been difficult. The absence of a fence has been a serious problem, causing students to go out whenever they feel free. For example, several students sometimes escape at night and go to recreational areas, which is improper, and I am not happy with it. I will build a fence and gate at my house later to control the discipline of these students". **(Landlord 3 Ward 2 July 2022)**

Besides, another landlord added that he needs a security guard to manage students' movements in and out of rented houses instead of using a dog to guard students.

"There is no security guard in my house, as I am responsible for looking after the students living in my house. Moreover, I always use my dog as a guard at home. When anyone not a resident of this house enters, the dog tends to back". **(Interview of Landlord 3 Ward 3, July 2022)**

Similarly, one student from a Focus Group Discussion said that:

"... The house we have rented does not have a fence, a gate, or a security guard. However, there is a dog that is used as a security guard. The absence of a security guard is a problem because my fellow students engage in improper behaviors such as smoking marijuana, having sexual relationships, drinking local brew, and going to nightclubs since no one looks after us. Something should be done to rectify the situation for our safety..."

**(FGD of Students, School 3 Ward3 July 2022)**

Moreover, observation data indicate that security was outside the priority for most landlords. In all the 15 rented houses visited by the researcher, none of them employed a security guard who could help to control students and other people's movement in rented houses. It was revealed that when students return to their rented houses during class hours, no one makes follow-up to know if they have permission. Not only that, but it also prevents unauthorized visitors from entering the rented houses without permission. The absence of security guards in rented houses frees students to go anywhere they feel like. It can make students engage in improper behaviors as they interact with different people who can influence them to engage in improper behaviors such as sexual relationships, drug abuse, and truancy. Besides, the researcher observed that most rented houses did not have fences and gates, except three houses out of 15 had fences and gates.

The findings presented above indicate that the environment in rented houses does not support the management of discipline among students as most of the houses lacked reliable security services, including security guards, fences, and gates that can control students' and other people's movement in and out of the rented houses which can influence students into improper behaviors. Moreover, loose security measures can encourage students to engage in improper behaviors, such as sexual relationships, due to unlimited and uncontrolled movement, even at night.

The findings related to a study conducted by Japheth (2014) in Tanzania, who found that the safety of students in hostels designed for accommodating students is relatively poor because they lack safety personnel, which implies that students are left unsupervised for a long time when they come back from school, which could be a catalyst for them to engage in improper behaviors such as drugs abuse, drinking alcohol and sexual relationships. Another study by Alhaji and Ogunlolu (2021) supported the above findings, revealing that students living in privately rented houses need more protection as they lack fences and security personnel. These houses are profit-oriented, and the landlords are focused on ensuring that they make a living from these houses; thus, ensuring the security of the students is usually a second priority. Furthermore, Vigar-Ellis (2013) emphasizes that students must live in safe and secure environments with reliable security services and infrastructure, such as gates and fences, to limit their movements and discourage them from engaging in indiscipline cases such as drug abuse, alcoholism, and sexual relationships. Well-secured rented houses maintain good students' discipline and help them succeed academically and attain their goals. Thus, the safety of students in rented houses needs to be strengthened to control students' discipline.

**Establishment of Rules and Regulations for the Student by Landlords**

The study findings revealed that landlords provided rules and regulations to the students that helped manage students' discipline in rented houses, even though most were provided orally and not in written forms. During interviews, One of the respondents argued that:

I often tell them verbally the rules and regulations. I have been telling them that every student should always have good morals when living in my house. They are not allowed to roam around or go out at night. They are not allowed to have sexual relationships; besides, they should clean up the environment and their rooms. When they are handled to me by their parents, I always tell them all the rules and regulations of the tenants who

want to lease my house, and if they agree with my terms and conditions, they pay the rental fee **(Interview, Landlord 3, Ward2; July 2022)**

Similarly, another Landlord commented that:

There are rules, but they are only verbal, not written ones. When they come to me to seek a room, I first explain the rules and regulations of any tenant who wants to lease my house. One of the rules is that they should always be disciplined when living in my house; any tenant should observe the cleanliness of the environment and respect everyone. Every student must stay in their room after school hours, and only students can leave home with my permission. **(Interview, Landlord1, Ward3; July 2022)**

Besides, the data revealed that some of the rented houses needed rules and regulations that could be used to manage students' discipline in day public secondary schools. One among the landlords had this to say during an interview:

I do not have rules for students in this house because I did not plan that students would come to live here. In that regard, if a student comes here, they become a tenant like other tenants, and I believe that when his parents bring them here, they have already advised them how to live. I always try to make sure that the house has doors and windows. I am not concerned with students' discipline and what other tenants do in the house **(Interview, Landlords 3 Ward 2, July 2022)**

Besides, students from school 2 said that:

No rules and regulations direct us on how to live and behave in the houses we have rented. Each student behaves and does what they think is right. **(FGD of student's school2 ward2 July 2022).**

The finding above implies that most landlords must have written documents about rules and regulations to control students' discipline in rented houses. The well-documented rules and regulations help to manage students' discipline, like attending school and preventing students from involvement in sexual relationships and drug abuse. Baehaqi (2020) argues that effective enforcement of rules and regulations is a reliable method to control the discipline of students within and outside the school context. Musabyimana (2018), Ngwokabuenui (2015), and Redempta (2010) support that written rules and regulations need to be enforced by teachers and landlords accommodating students in rented houses to manage students' discipline. Thus, rented houses must have written rules and regulations to help control students' discipline.

#### **4.2.3 Presence of Water and Electricity Services in Rented Houses**

The study revealed that most rented houses needed water and electricity services. From FGDs with students, it was reported that, because of the lack of these services, day public secondary school students living in rented houses were forced to go to schools during evening hours for private studies. Not only that but also, they went to the nearby houses to look for water. One of the students was quoted saying that:

Our study environment is very difficult. There is no electricity in the house where we have rented rooms. This situation makes us come to school and study until late hours. Sometimes teachers tell us to come to study at school and, when we return home, we have to walk in groups of ten people or more for security purposes. **(FGD, Students of school 2 Ward2; July 2022)**

Similarly, students added that:

The rented houses do not have water, which necessitates us to go away to fetch and buy water after class hours. Besides, there is no electricity in our rented rooms, so we stay at

school until late at night for private studies. **(FGD, Students of school 3, Ward3; July 2022)**

Furthermore, data collected through observation also indicated that only 1 out of 15 rented houses had tap water services. Besides, only 3 out of 15 houses had electricity, which provides a favorable environment for students' self-study at home rather than going to school at night. The data presented above indicate that most of the rented houses did not have reliable water and electricity, which forced students to look for them elsewhere, exposing them to immoral peer groups that put them at risk of engaging in sexual relationships. To ensure that students stay within the house parameters and that their discipline is better regulated, landlords must provide water and electricity within rented houses to help students live comfortably. It would ease access to water and electricity facilities instead of moving outside searching for them, which having facilities will keep them away from immoral peer groups.

Study findings relate to the study conducted by Mwakibinga (2018) and Mhiliwa (2015) in Tanzania, which revealed that most rented houses were in poor conditions without important student services, including water and electricity. The absence of such facilities forced students to spend hours looking for water or walk long distances to schools or friends' houses for self-study at night, which exposed students to immoral peer groups and was detrimental to their Education—furthermore, English and Guerin (2015). The study's findings revealed that the availability of safe water and electricity were among the key features parents considered when renting houses for their children. Furthermore, day public secondary school students living in rented houses with these services have sufficient time for self and group study rather than much time looking for water daily.

#### **Students' Involvement in Different Extra-Curriculum Activities**

The study findings showed that most students living in rented houses needed to be more involved in school activities. It was reported through FGDs that:

When we return from school to our houses, we do much housework, such as fetching water, preparing food for ourselves, and cleaning. We are tired when we finish evening chores, so we cannot study or do school homework properly. **(FGD, students, School 1; Ward1, July 2022)**

Moreover, during the interview with the landlord, it was reported that students, especially boys, do not stay in their rooms after school. The quote below illustrates this:

Male students do not stay home, especially when returning from school. You will find them in the streets where they play games, watch movies (*mabanda video*), or play pool table. **(Interview response, House owner1 ward 1 July 2022)**

The data presented implies that students did not engage in extracurricular activities such as doing homework, writing notes as well as sports and games, but rather, they played pool table, watched movies, and joined their peers in the streets, which directly and indirectly exposed them to bad peer groups and other improper behaviors such as drugs abuse and sexual relationships. Furthermore, students spent hours fetching water at the nearby tap in the village due to the absence of water in the households, which was very risky for girls as it could expose them to a wide range of temptations to engage in various indiscipline cases, some of which could be detrimental to their education progress. The negative impact, which is the inability to engage students in extracurricular activities to keep students busy, was also highlighted in the social control theory. The findings relate to the study by Ngwokabuenui (2015), which revealed that involvement in extracurricular activities helps teachers manage students' discipline outside of school hours and enhances the mental well-being of the students. Games and other sports activities are needed to

build students' physical and mental faculties and ensure students are shielded from temptations, hence avoiding indisciplined cases. Furthermore, these findings were supported by Kadama (2016), who revealed that homework presents a reliable extracurricular activity that keeps students busy with school-related activities. By doing so, students solely focus on their education progress. As well as Mwakibinga (2018) on school environment and student indiscipline in secondary schools in the Nyamagana district in Mwanza, Tanzania. Engagement in extracurricular activities keeps students off the streets, thus ensuring that they do not engage in improper behavior, including theft and drug abuse. Thus, the data presented indicate that the environment in rented houses did not support the management of students' discipline in day public secondary schools. Because most of the houses had all the requirements to accommodate students, including clean water and electricity. Moreover, rented houses had minimal safety measures, which left students unprotected and uncontrolled. Moreover, lastly few documents showed rules and regulations for managing day public secondary school students disciplined living in rented houses.

#### Conclusion

From the findings, the study concluded that rented houses offered poor environments that cannot support the management of students' discipline in day public secondary schools, as rented houses were characterized by a lack of rules and regulations, security, safe and clean water, lack of electricity and poor safety measures. Moreover, the study found that most landlords needed to be more responsible in ensuring students lived in protected and conducive environments suitable for learning. Therefore, the study recommended the following: Firstly, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should collaborate with the schools and community to build dormitories, which would reduce inconveniences as some parents are reluctant to send their children to schools located far from their locations due to safety reasons. Some students have to walk 15 kilometers from home to school. Second, The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should also increase its collaboration with stakeholders, including the community, to build schools closer to communities and reduce the distance students have to walk to and from schools. Thus, there is a need for the ministry and the community to work together and jointly build dormitories for each ward school.

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