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Original Article

Teacher Classroom Management Practices and Students' Discipline in Selected Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Mbarara City

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Background: Student discipline is a key determinant of academic success and overall school effectiveness. In government-aided secondary schools, teachers' classroom management practices significantly influence students' behaviour and conduct. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City, Uganda. The objectives of the study were to establish the relationship between classroom organization and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City; to establish the relationship between classroom instruction and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City; to establish the relationship between supportive feedback and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City; and to establish the moderating role of school environment and students' home background on the relationship between teacher classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. **Methodology:** The study employed a cross-sectional research design, targeting a sample of 421 participants, including 106 teachers, 05 head teachers, 25 school disciplinary committees and 285 students and other relevant education stakeholders. Data was gathered using structured questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS for correlation and regression statistics, while qualitative responses were analysed thematically. **Results:** The findings revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between classroom organisation and students' discipline ($r = 0.537^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), and a strong positive relationship between classroom instruction and students' discipline ($r = 0.696^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). A weak but significant relationship was also observed between supportive feedback and students' discipline ($r = 0.378^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Further regression analysis showed that the school environment and students' home background had a statistically significant moderating effect ($\beta = 0.201$, $p < 0.01$) on the relationship between classroom management practices and student discipline. **Conclusion:** Effective classroom management—particularly classroom organisation and instruction—plays a critical role in enhancing student discipline in government-aided secondary schools. **Recommendations:** The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in Mbarara City

should invest in strengthening classroom management practices by improving classroom layout, enhancing instructional delivery, and creating platforms for teachers to reflect on their classroom practices. Teachers should be empowered to frequently monitor students' work and maintain interactive engagement during lessons to support discipline and learning outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Maintaining student discipline is globally acknowledged as a fundamental pillar in the administration of schools. It plays a vital role in fostering students' moral development and ensuring a conducive learning environment for academic achievement and holistic development (UNICEF, 2016). Globally, effective school discipline is recognised as a critical determinant of educational success and alignment with broader national education goals, such as Uganda's Vision 2040. Numerous studies have emphasised that poor discipline management can significantly derail teaching and learning processes, thereby undermining educational objectives (Lewis et al., 2002; Luiselli, 2005; Makiya, 2009).

The issue of indiscipline is not unique to Uganda but is a global phenomenon. For instance, the United States has recorded rising levels of school-based violence and misbehaviour. The "School Crime and Safety Report" (2018) recorded an average of 31 violent incidents per 1,000 students across

American public schools during the 2015–2016 academic year. These included serious offences such as physical assaults, weapon possession, sexual battery, and drug abuse. Similarly, in Pakistan and Nigeria, school discipline challenges such as drug addiction, truancy, and bullying remain persistent and disruptive to the educational process (Lukman & Hamadi, 2004; Nooruddin & Baig, 2014). In East Africa, including Tanzania and Kenya, student unrest, absenteeism, and acts of vandalism have also been widely reported (Garagae, 2017; Makiya, 2009; Muchiri, 1998).

In Uganda, indiscipline among students in secondary schools has become an increasingly pressing concern. For example, Kabandize (2004) identified drug and substance abuse as a leading indicator of indiscipline among secondary students, often exacerbated by academic stress and negative peer influence. Furthermore, some of the punitive measures employed by teachers have been criticised for their potential to demoralise students, negatively

impacting their self-esteem and worsening behavioural issues.

The increasing number of violent student strikes and unrest in Mbarara City exemplifies the magnitude of the discipline crisis. Mbarara Secondary School experienced a destructive strike in April 2002, sparked by claims of inadequate sports support. In July 2012, students of Mbarara Allied School violently protested the suspension of peers, leading to the looting of shops in Kakoba Division. In 2013, retaliatory attacks between Ntare School and Mbarara High School students escalated into property destruction. More recently, in April 2022, St. Joseph's Vocational School in Mbarara was closed following student protests related to football disqualifications. These repeated incidents of unrest suggest systemic disciplinary gaps within the education system in Mbarara City.

While prior research highlights the importance of classroom management in fostering discipline (Gage et al., 2018; Hagenauer et al., 2015; Korpershoek et al., 2016), there remains a paucity of empirical evidence exploring this relationship within the Ugandan context—specifically in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. Teachers play a central role in managing student discipline through classroom organisation, instructional strategies, and feedback mechanisms. As students spend the majority of their school day in classrooms, the teacher's ability to maintain order significantly influences students' behavioural outcomes (Rorger, 2004).

This study was therefore grounded in the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory developed by Dansereau et al. (1975), which emphasises the quality of relationships between leaders (teachers) and their subordinates (students). High-quality exchanges, marked by mutual respect and communication, are linked to positive behavioural outcomes, while low-quality interactions are associated with disobedience and conflict (Tasić et al., 2020; Hardianto & Sari, 2021).

Furthermore, the study draws on conceptual frameworks of classroom management as defined by Peace Corps (2010), Ahmad et al. (2012), and Jacobsen et al. (2019), which highlight the importance of both behavioural and physical management in ensuring orderly classroom environments. Effective classroom management encompasses strategies for minimising disruptive behaviour, structuring classroom activities, and fostering a positive climate for learning. Complementarily, discipline is understood in this study as both preventive and corrective in nature, grounded in educational practices that encourage adherence to norms and values essential for academic success (Cotton et al., 2016; Okumbe, 2001).

Given the escalating cases of student indiscipline in Mbarara City and the critical role of teachers in managing classroom environments, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between teacher classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government-aided secondary schools. The findings aim to bridge the gap in localised research and provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing discipline and academic performance in Ugandan schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design to examine the association between instructors' classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. According to Wang & Cheng (2020), cross-sectional studies collect data at a single point in time, making them suitable for assessing relationships between variables within a defined timeframe. This design enabled the researcher to explore how various classroom management strategies, including instructional methods and supportive feedback, relate to student discipline. It also allowed the analysis of the

moderating effects of school environment and students' home background on this relationship.

Study Population

The target population comprised head teachers, teachers, students, and members of disciplinary committees in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. There are nine government-aided schools, including three public institutions—Ntare School, Mbarara High School, and Mbarara Army SS—and six church-founded schools operating under government funding. These include Mary Hill High School, Saint Peters SS Katukuru, Nyakayojo SS, Saint Paul High School-Biharwe, and Nyamitanga SS. For this study, five schools were purposively selected—Ntare School, Mbarara High School, Mbarara SS, Nyamitanga SS, and Nyakayojo SS—based on their recorded history of student indiscipline, particularly violent strikes between 2009 and 2024 (Asiimwe, 2021, 2023; Muhangi, 2017; Mugarukye, 2016). These stakeholders were chosen because of their active roles in enforcing discipline and implementing classroom management policies.

Sample Size

For the Students

The advice made by Kombo and Tromp (2006) that a sample size (n) of 5% to 30% is sufficient for cross-sectional studies was used to make this determination. For the 5,719 students in different government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City, utilising a 5% recommendation;

$$n = \frac{5}{100} \times 5,719$$

$$n = 0.05 \times 5,719$$

$$n = 285$$

285 students in different government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City provided data for the study.

For the Teachers

Utilising a 30% recommendation in line with Kombo and Tromp (2006);

$$n = \frac{30}{100} \times 355$$

$$n = 0.3 \times 355$$

$$n = 106$$

106 teachers in different government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City provided data for the study.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaire surveys were used to collect data from students of government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. This method involved a structured set of questions designed to capture students' views on teacher classroom management practices and their relationship to student discipline. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended items, primarily based on a 5-point Likert scale:

Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Not Sure (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). This approach allowed for the efficient collection of quantifiable data, minimising bias and enabling statistical analysis of students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. The structure also encouraged honest responses, especially to sensitive issues, due to the anonymity it provided.

Interviews

In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with school authorities, including head teachers, disciplinary committee members, and other key informants. Interviews allowed for oral conversations where the interviewer could probe further beyond the prepared questions, generating richer qualitative data. A pre-developed interview guide was used to maintain consistency and focus across interviews while still allowing flexibility for

follow-up questions. This method reduced response errors since the researcher controlled the process, and it supplemented the quantitative data from the questionnaires with deeper insights.

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaire

The main tool for data collection from students was a Likert-type questionnaire, designed in line with the study objectives. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with opinion-based statements related to classroom management and discipline. The questionnaire format allowed for efficient data collection, preserved respondent anonymity, and facilitated the computation of statistical measures necessary for analysis.

Interview Guide

An interview guide was used to collect information from school authorities. It consisted of open-ended questions aligned with the study objectives. The researcher personally conducted the interviews, recording responses in a notebook. This tool enabled the researcher to gain immediate feedback and observe non-verbal cues, while maintaining a flexible and respondent-centered approach.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher first obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Bishop Stuart University, along with an introductory letter from the Graduate School – Education, Arts and Media Studies. These were presented to the District Education Officer (DEO) of Mbarara District for approval to access schools. Subsequently, permission was sought from the head teachers of the selected government-aided secondary schools. After approval, the researcher followed the visitation schedules provided by the schools. During school visits, the researcher introduced the study, explained its objectives, benefits, and voluntary nature, and sought informed consent from all participants. Questionnaires were personally distributed to students and collected after

completion. Interview appointments were scheduled and conducted at times convenient to school authorities.

Data Quality Control

Data quality control in this study was ensured through a careful assessment of both the validity and reliability of the research instruments. This process was essential to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings.

Validity of Research Instruments

According to Heale and Twycross (2015), validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure and how well it reflects the specific concept being studied. In this research, content validity was assessed to ensure that the questionnaire comprehensively captured the key dimensions of classroom management practices and students' discipline.

To establish content validity, the researcher consulted three academic experts who assessed the relevance of each questionnaire item using a rating scale where "relevant" was scored as 1 and "irrelevant" as 0. The expert judgment approach was employed to evaluate the appropriateness of the items. Based on their feedback, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated using the formula:

$$CVI = n / N$$

Where n is the number of items rated as relevant, and N is the total number of items.

The CVI score was found to be 0.93, indicating that 93% of the questionnaire items were considered relevant. Since this value exceeds the threshold of 0.7 recommended by Mohajan (2017), the instrument was deemed valid and suitable for data collection.

Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research instrument in producing similar results under consistent conditions (Heale & Twycross, 2015). To determine the reliability of the questionnaires and interview guides, the tools were pre-tested among students and school authorities in government-aided schools outside Mbarara City, including Rwantsinga High School, Bukiro Seed Secondary School, and Kashari High School, all located in Mbarara District.

The results from the pilot study informed adjustments to the questionnaire layout and wording to enhance clarity and consistency. Subsequently, data from the pilot study were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above indicates acceptable internal consistency. In this study, the tools were found to be reliable as the computed alpha values exceeded this threshold.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the field were entered and analysed using SPSS Version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise demographic information and responses to various questionnaire items. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between independent variables (classroom organisation, classroom instruction, and supportive feedback) and the dependent variable (students' discipline).

Furthermore, **regression analysis** was conducted to evaluate the predictive ability of the independent variables on students' discipline. To examine the influence of moderating variables—namely, school environment and students' home background—multiple regression analysis was utilised. The results of the analyses were presented in tabular form and interpreted in relation to the study objectives and hypotheses.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained through interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis and narrative analysis. Responses were first transcribed and then carefully examined to identify recurring patterns, concepts, and themes related to classroom management and student discipline. The themes were coded, categorised, and interpreted to provide deeper insights into participants' perceptions and experiences.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that ethical standards were upheld, the researcher obtained approval from the Bishop Stuart University Research Ethics Committee (BSU-REC) prior to data collection. The study also received clearance from relevant authorities, including the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), the City Inspector of Schools, and the head teachers of the selected secondary schools in Mbarara City.

All participants were briefed about the purpose, objectives, and expected outcomes of the study. They were provided with **informed consent forms**, and participation was strictly **voluntary**. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

To maintain **privacy and confidentiality**, no personal identifiers were used in the data, and responses were coded using numbers. The identities of the respondents were never disclosed in the final report or any other publications derived from the study.

In line with the academic integrity policy of Bishop Stuart University, the final report was subjected to **plagiarism checking using Turnitin software**, and the similarity index was kept below **15%**, as required by the university's guidelines. All sources of information and scholarly work cited in the study were duly acknowledged using appropriate referencing methods.

RESULTS

Table 1 below shows the rate at which the data was provided by the study respondents.

Response Rate**Table 1: Response Rate**

Unit	Tool used	Number of tools distributed	Tools returned	Response Rate
Students	Questionnaire	285	207	72.6%
Teachers	Interview guide	106	75	70.7
Head teachers	Interview guide	5	3	60%
School Disciplinary Committees	Interview guide	25	15	56%

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 1 above shows that the response rate from respondents for all the study tools used by the study was a true representative of the study population since it is above the recommended response rate of 50% for humanity studies

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Details	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	219	73	73
	Female	81	27	100
	Total	300	100	
Age group	10-15 years	173	57.6	57.6
	16-20 years	34	11.3	68.9
	21 years and above	93	31.1	100
	Total	300	100	

Source: Primary data, 2024

Results from Table 2 indicated that the majority of the respondents (73%) were male and the minority (27%) were female. This indicates that the study was inclusive of all gender categories of respondents. Nonetheless, this result implies that issues of discipline among students in secondary schools in Mbarara City cut across both male and female students.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Classroom Organisation

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The teacher effectively establishes and communicates clear expectations for classroom behaviour.	207	1.00	5.00	4.6194	.95614
The teacher consistently enforces classroom rules and consequences.	207	1.00	5.00	3.4403	.75105
The teacher uses proactive strategies to prevent disruptions in the classroom.	207	1.00	5.00	3.2910	1.27335
The teacher effectively manages transitions between activities.	207	1.00	5.00	3.1343	1.14898
The teacher provides a supportive and respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.	207	1.00	5.00	3.6493	1.13228

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The teacher uses positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behaviour.	207	1.00	5.00	3.6866	.93726
The teacher addresses misbehaviour promptly and fairly.	207	1.00	5.00	3.6642	1.10327
The teacher demonstrates fairness and consistency in applying disciplinary actions.	207	1.00	5.00	4.4328	.82670
Teachers canes/beat students to improve their commitment in class.	207	1.00	5.00	4.4403	.88012
Teachers suspend deviant learners from class.	207	1.00	5.00	4.4851	.84724
Valid N (listwise)	207				
Average, mean and standard deviation for Classroom Organisation				3.8843	.98615

Source: Primary data, 2024

From Table 3, all the statements under classroom organisation scored means above the average mean of 3, which indicates that teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City put in substantial efforts to manage and organise students in their classes. The overall average mean for all the computed statements of classroom organisation is 3.8843. Since the mean is above the average of 3.0000, the results imply that classroom organisation is done reasonably well by teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City, which can improve students' discipline.

The result above is supported by statements of some teachers, head teachers and members of school disciplinary committees who were quoted by the researcher to have said,

I walk into class in every lesson to make sure that seats are well organised and students are well seated in their positions (Teacher, November, 2024).

Another teacher from a mixed school said;

In my class, I make it a priority for desks to be occupied by both male and female students in

an arranged way so that they get used to each other. According to me, this helps to mitigate indiscipline such as theft of pens by boys since they would be shy to steal from girls.

One member of the school's disciplinary committees had this to say;

I am a professional teacher and classroom formation is very important, which makes it a priority for me that short students by height must occupy the front seats, then tall ones occupy the behind seats.

Another teacher said that;

I make it a priority for students to sit in groups facing each other as per the demands of the new lower secondary school curriculum.

One of the head teachers said that,

'In this school, we encourage the teachers to manage the chalkboards as they are writing on them, but we leave teachers with the decisions on which students write on the chalkboard or not, if there is a need to do so.'

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Classroom Instruction

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers walk into the class during lessons.	207	1.00	5.00	4.2634	.91141
Teachers review students' notes.	207	1.00	5.00	4.3610	.91707
Teachers review student class attendance registers.	207	1.00	5.00	3.6488	1.15669
Teachers review tests with students at the end of every topic.	207	1.00	5.00	3.4146	1.15328
Teachers set mid-term exams and end-of-term exams.	207	1.00	5.00	4.2780	.94292
Teachers mark students' books every time they are in class.	207	1.00	5.00	4.1268	.91347
Teachers conduct remedial lessons for slow students in class.	207	1.00	5.00	3.6390	1.11866
Teachers always prepare schemes of work.	207	1.00	5.00	4.7073	.93000
Teachers define difficult concepts for students.	207	1.00	5.00	4.6878	.93105
Teachers in this school incorporate diverse teaching methods while in class.	207	1.00	5.00	4.4585	.81318
Valid N (listwise)	207				
Average, mean and standard deviation for Classroom Instruction				4.1585	.97877

Source: Primary data, 2024

Results from Table 4 indicate that all the statements under classroom instruction scored means above the average mean of 3, which indicates that teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City are doing well in terms of classroom instruction. The overall average mean for all the computed statements of classroom instruction is 4.1585. Since the mean is way above the average of 3.0000, the results imply that classroom instruction is done well by teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City, and this could shape and improve students' discipline.

The result above is supported by statements of some teachers, head teachers and members of school disciplinary committees who were quoted by the researcher to have said,

As a teacher, I check students' books whenever I am marking, or even during class, to see if they are writing sense or not. This gives me a picture that they are understanding or not.

Another teacher was quoted to have said,

I make it a priority to walk into class for all my teaching lessons so that students pay attention to what I am teaching them.

Another one was quoted to have said;

In my class, I check students' books to see if they make notes, but not every day.

Another teacher said that;

As a teacher, it is my duty to check students' books to see if they did my class assignments because I have to mark and assess them.

A head teacher said that;

One of the duty-bound roles of teachers is to walk in the class while teaching, as this can help to detect slow and quick learners among the students. As a school head, I sometimes walk around classroom blocks for quick and brief stopovers to make sure that the teachers adhere to this conduct of walking in class as they go about their teaching duties (Male head teacher, November, 2024).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

		1	2	3	4
(1) Classroom organisation	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
(2) Classroom instruction	Pearson Correlation	.353**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
(3) Supportive feedback	Pearson Correlation	.106	.364**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.195	.000		
(4) Students' discipline	Pearson Correlation	.537**	.696**	.378**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	207	207	207	207

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, 2024

Relationship Between Classroom Organisation and Students' Discipline

Study findings in Table 5 indicate a moderate positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.537^{**}$, $P < 0.01$) between classroom organisation and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. The result implies that a positive improvement in classroom organisation is associated with a positive improvement in students' discipline. Based on this result, hypothesis one (H_1), which stated that “there is a significant relationship between classroom organisation and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City”, is accepted.

Relationship between Classroom Instruction and Students' Discipline

Study findings in Table 5 indicate a substantial positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.696^{**}$, $P < 0.01$) between classroom instruction and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. The result implies that a positive improvement in classroom instruction is associated

with a positive improvement in students' discipline. Based on this result, hypothesis two (H_2), which stated that “there is a significant relationship between classroom instruction and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City”, is maintained.

Relationship between Supportive Feedback and Students' Discipline

Study findings in Table 5 indicate a weak but positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.378^{**}$, $P < 0.01$) between supportive feedback and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. The result implies that a positive improvement in supportive feedback to students by teachers is associated with a positive improvement in students' discipline. Based on this result, hypothesis three (H_3), which stated that “there is a significant relationship between supportive feedback and students' discipline in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City”, is upheld.

Table 6: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.638 ^a	.407	.394	5.47826	.407	29.791	3	204	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore (classroom mgt practices), Zscore (school environment and students' home b/ground), moderator (classroom mgt practices* school environment and students' home b/ground)

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Results from Table 6 revealed that the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline remained significant (Adjusted $R^2 = .394$, $p < .01$) after the addition of the moderator

variables/interaction term (classroom management practices* school environment and students' home background).

Table 7: Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Collinearity Statistics			
	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	Tolerance VIF
1 (Constant)	16.682	.367		9.928	.000	
Zscore (classroom mgt practices)	.591	.380	.531	10.514	.000	.281 .823
Zscore (school envt & students' home b/ground)	.430	.375	.348	4.186	.000	.278 .942
Moderator (classroom mgt practices* School envt and students' home b/ground)	.106	.372	.201	3.285	.006	.278 1.023

a. dependent variable: Students' discipline

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 7 indicates that addition of the moderator variables strengthens the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline since the standardized beta coefficient is positive and significant ($\beta = .201$, $p < .01$). Therefore, school environment and students' home background have a statistically positive moderating role in the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City.

The results in Table 7 can be modelled in a multiple regression equation below:

Students' discipline = $16.16 + .531 * \text{Zscore (classroom_mgt_practices)} + .348 * \text{Zscore (school_envt_and_students' home_b/ground)} + .201 * (\text{classroom mgt practices} * \text{school envt and students' home b/ground}) + \epsilon$.

The model indicates that, if ϵ is the error term and keeping all other factors constant (const=16.16), for any unit improvement in school environment and students' home background, the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline in selected government-aided

secondary schools in Mbarara City would improve by 20.1%.

DISCUSSION

Relationship Between Classroom Organisation and Students' Discipline

Study findings revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship ($r = 0.537^{**}$, $P < .01$) between classroom organisation and students' discipline in selected government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. The findings of this study are in agreement with the previous study of Nguyen and Tran (2020), who investigated student discipline levels in urban secondary schools, emphasising the relationship between classroom management strategies and student behaviour. Their research highlighted the effectiveness of proactive approaches, such as positive behaviour reinforcement and student engagement techniques, in fostering a positive disciplinary climate.

The findings are also in agreement with Berkovich and Eyal (2015), who in their research "Teacher Control and Student Misbehavior: A Qualitative Study of Upper-Secondary Classroom Management Practices," explored teachers' approaches to managing student misbehaviour in upper-secondary

classrooms. They identified various strategies employed by teachers, including establishing clear rules, using praise and rewards, and implementing consequences for misconduct.

The existence of a positive and statistically significant relationship between classroom organization and students' discipline in selected government aided secondary schools in Mbarara City concurs with Emmer and Sabornie (2015) who in their "Handbook of Classroom Management," explore various approaches to classroom management, including proactive strategies such as setting expectations, establishing routines, and building positive teacher-student relationships, as well as reactive strategies like addressing misbehavior promptly and consistently. The classroom management manual by Emmer and Sabornie provides a thorough rundown of both proactive and reactive tactics. While the focus is on creating an optimal learning environment, many of these strategies inherently contribute to maintaining student discipline by preventing disruptions and addressing behaviour issues promptly.

The researcher believes that classroom organisation is positively related to students' discipline. For instance, a well-organised classroom by a teacher positively impacts students' discipline by providing a clear structure and routine, minimising distractions, setting clear expectations for behaviour, and creating a sense of security, which allows students to focus on learning and reduces the likelihood of disruptive behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the study findings, the researcher concludes that teachers' classroom management practices significantly influence students' discipline in selected government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City. Classroom instruction emerged as the strongest predictor, with a high mean score of 4.16, indicating that effective teaching methods, consistent assessment, and engagement in instructional duties positively shape student

behaviour. Classroom organisation was found to be a moderate but significant predictor ($M = 3.88$), with practices such as structured seating arrangements, enforcement of rules, and proactive behaviour management contributing to improved discipline. Supportive feedback, although showing a weak positive correlation, still plays a minor role in influencing discipline and could be enhanced through more consistent application. Furthermore, moderator variables such as the school environment and students' home background were found to strengthen the relationship between classroom management practices and student discipline. Overall, the study underscores the importance of a holistic approach that integrates effective instruction, organised classrooms, constructive feedback, and supportive external factors to foster discipline among secondary school students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Uganda and other stakeholders of public secondary schools in Mbarara City should improve on classroom organisation in government-aided secondary schools through better seating arrangement, chalkboard management and classroom formation so as to improve students' discipline in the schools.

The government of Uganda and other stakeholders of public secondary schools in Mbarara City should improve classroom instruction in government-aided secondary schools by facilitating and encouraging teachers to do more checking of students' books and walking in class while teaching is in progress, so as to improve students' discipline in the schools.

The government of Uganda and other stakeholders of public secondary schools in Mbarara City should improve classroom instruction in government-aided secondary schools by encouraging teachers to have more free engagement on what is working and not working in classrooms, so as to improve students' discipline in the schools.

Lastly, the study also recommends that the government of Uganda and other stakeholders of

public secondary schools in Mbarara City improve teacher classroom management practices alongside the moderator variables (school environment and students' home background) since the findings of the study revealed that the moderators strengthen the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline.

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List of Abbreviations

BSU - Bishop Stuart University

CVI - Content Validity Index

LMX - Leader-Member Exchange

MoES - Ministry of Education and Sports

REC - Research Ethics Committee

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SS - Secondary School

SWPBS - School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Education Fund

US - United States

USE - Universal Secondary Education

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Author Contributions:

Shillah Nyamate was responsible for her research.

Dr. Basil Tibanyendera supervised the research project.

Ms. Jean Tutegyeize supervised the research project.

Data availability: Data is available upon request.

Informed consent: All the participants consented to the study.

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