

**Classroom Management Strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms
in Mbarara City Secondary Schools in Uganda**

By

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Declaration

I **Katusiime Patience**, declare that this Research Dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for the award of any qualification to any institution.

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Approval

This Research Dissertation titled "**Classroom Management Strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City Secondary Schools**" is submitted with our approval.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research work to my beloved husband, Mr. Byamukama Amos, whose unwavering love, patience, and steadfast encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Your faith in me, quiet strength, and endless support have carried me through challenges and inspired me to persevere. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine, for you have stood beside me through every struggle, celebrated every triumph, and reminded me that no goal is unattainable with love and belief.

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List of abbreviations

CM	Classroom management
CMS	Classroom management strategies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
U.S.	United States
UK	United Kingdom
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City, Uganda. The study was guided by three objectives: to establish various classroom management strategies utilised by teachers in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda, to examine the level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda and to examine the relationship between classroom management strategies on student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City-Uganda. The study was guided by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986, 1997), which emphasizes that individuals acquire appropriate and inappropriate behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction, provided the theoretical framework for the study. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and employed questionnaires and interviews as the primary data collection methods. The findings demonstrate that teachers in Mbarara City secondary schools excel in structuring classrooms, monitoring behavior, and applying discipline fairly, and engaging students through varied instructional methods, the study also confirms that students in Mbarara City secondary schools demonstrate commendable respect for teachers, adherence to rules, punctuality, and homework completion. However, challenges persist in maintaining disruption-free classrooms, promoting active participation, and developing self-discipline and A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City. The results indicated a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between classroom management strategies and student discipline ($r = .672$, $n = 282$, $p < .01$). However, gaps were identified in involving students in decision-making processes and in the use of positive reinforcement strategies such as praise and rewards. The study concluded that effective classroom management strategies are crucial for fostering discipline in lower secondary classrooms. While teachers demonstrated competence in maintaining order, there is a need to incorporate more student-centered and motivational approaches to enhance engagement, self-regulation, and a positive learning environment. Consequently, it is recommended that teachers adopt positive reinforcement strategies, including recognition, praise, and rewards, to motivate students toward desirable behavior, promote active participation, and cultivate a classroom culture where learners feel valued and respected.

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

This Chapter gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and conceptual framework. The background of the study is presented in four perspectives that is; historical, theoretical, conceptual perspective, and contextual perspective as below:

Background of the study

Classroom management strategies are central to effective teaching and learning, as they determine the structure, order, and engagement levels within a classroom (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). These strategies, which include setting clear rules, establishing routines, providing consistent reinforcement, and employing participatory teaching methods, are essential for promoting student discipline, minimizing disruptive behavior, and enhancing academic engagement (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Globally, research has shown that well-implemented classroom management strategies lead to improved learner outcomes, especially in lower secondary education where students are prone to behavioral and motivational challenges.

In developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, effective classroom management has been linked to better student discipline and higher academic performance. Simonsen et al. (2008) found that proactive behavior management strategies such as clear rules, consistent consequences, and positive reinforcement enhanced classroom climate and encouraged active student participation in the U.S. Similarly, Rogers (2011) emphasizes that

strong teacher-student relationships, structured routines, and interactive instructional approaches contribute to maintaining discipline in UK secondary classrooms. These studies demonstrate that the choice and application of classroom management strategies directly influence students' behavior and engagement.

In many African contexts, however, classroom management remains a critical challenge. Nakpodia (2010) observes that secondary school teachers in Nigeria struggle to implement effective strategies due to large class sizes, insufficient training, and inadequate support, resulting in poor student discipline and low engagement. In South Africa, Maphosa and Shumba (2010) report that ineffective classroom management contributes to high dropout rates and declining academic achievement. Similar patterns have been observed in East Africa: in Kenya, Wamukuru and Otanga (2020) attribute absenteeism, lateness, and disrespect among students to weak classroom management practices, while in Tanzania, Mbano (2019) links poor learner engagement and behavioral issues to ineffective classroom control and inadequate participatory teaching methods. These studies highlight that the independent variable classroom management strategies plays a critical role in shaping the dependent variable, students' discipline, across different contexts.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has noted increasing discipline-related issues, particularly in lower secondary classes, including absenteeism, classroom disruptions, and lack of participation, often linked to weak classroom management practices (MoES, 2021). Teachers frequently lack professional training in modern pedagogical strategies, and many schools do not offer ongoing professional development to improve classroom management. In Mbarara City, secondary schools face additional challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching resources, and inconsistent application of learner-

centered pedagogies under the 2020 lower secondary curriculum (Mbarara District Education Office, 2023). These conditions directly affect students' discipline, leading to low engagement, disrespect for authority, and frequent disruptions.

Despite the central role of classroom management strategies in influencing students' discipline, there is limited empirical research examining this relationship in the context of Mbarara City's lower secondary schools. Existing studies often focus on general indiscipline without linking it to specific management practices or fail to integrate both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Understanding which classroom management strategies are employed and how they impact student discipline is therefore essential for informing teacher training, school administration, and policy interventions aimed at improving learning environments and academic outcomes.

Theoretical framework

This study was guided by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986, 1997) which emphasizes that individuals learn appropriate and inappropriate behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction with others. This theory is highly relevant to this study, as it highlights how students model behaviors exhibited by their teachers, peers, and other influential figures.

Bandura (1997) argued that students develop self-efficacy, which refers to their belief in their ability to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and actions to achieve academic success. In the classroom, teachers play a critical role in shaping students' behaviors by creating an environment that fosters discipline, motivation, and positive learning experiences. When teachers demonstrate effective classroom management strategies, students are likely to adopt similar behaviors, leading to improved academic performance.

A key concept in Social Learning Theory is triadic reciprocal causation, which explains how a student's personal beliefs, classroom environment, and behaviors interact to influence learning outcomes (Bandura, 1997). This means that the way teachers manage classrooms through instructional methods, student engagement, and behavioral expectations can significantly impact student performance. For instance, if teachers consistently reinforce positive behavior and constructive discipline strategies, students are more likely to develop self-regulation and responsibility for their learning.

Furthermore, Bandura's perspective aligns with classroom management strategies that emphasize modeling positive behaviors rather than solely relying on rewards and punishments. While traditional behaviorist approaches, such as those proposed by Skinner, focus on reinforcement, Bandura's theory suggests that teachers can influence students by creating an environment where students learn through observation and logical consequences rather than strict disciplinary actions.

In the context of Mbarara City secondary schools, this theory supports the idea that effective classroom management enhances academic performance by fostering an environment where students feel motivated, confident, and responsible for their learning. Teachers who use social learning strategies such as demonstrating problem-solving skills, encouraging peer collaboration, and setting clear behavioral expectations help students internalize productive academic behaviors, leading to better educational outcomes.

Conceptual background

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in secondary schools in

Mbarara City. It was guided by two variables which are classroom management strategies as an independent variable and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms as a dependent variable.

Classroom management is a central aspect of effective teaching and learning, particularly in secondary education. It encompasses all the strategies and practices that teachers use to create a conducive learning environment, maintain student discipline, and foster student engagement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). A well-managed classroom ensures that teaching time is maximized, disruptions are minimized, and students are actively involved in the learning process. The concept of classroom management extends beyond mere discipline; it includes planning, organizing classroom space and routines, managing student behavior, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

One of the core components of classroom management is student discipline, which refers to the strategies teachers use to promote appropriate behavior and discourage misconduct. Disciplinary strategies may range from preventive approaches, such as setting clear rules and routines, to corrective measures like sanctions and conflict resolution (Bear, 2010). Discipline is essential in maintaining order, especially in large classrooms, and helps establish a respectful and focused learning environment. In the context of Ugandan secondary schools, particularly in Mbarara City, discipline remains a significant challenge due to large class sizes, teacher workload, and varying socio-economic backgrounds of students (Kakuba, 2012).

The relationship between classroom management strategies, discipline is complex but critical. Poor classroom management often results in disciplinary issues, which in turn affect student motivation and participation. Conversely, when teachers adopt inclusive and proactive management strategies, students are more likely to exhibit self-discipline and take an active role

in learning. Evidence suggests that teacher practices such as establishing consistent routines, giving timely feedback, involving students in rule-making, and using culturally responsive pedagogy can lead to both improved discipline (Jones & Jones, 2016).

In Uganda, reforms under the new Lower Secondary Curriculum (NCDC, 2020) emphasize learner-centered instruction and formative assessment, which require strong classroom management skills. However, studies show that many teachers still struggle to implement these reforms effectively due to limited training and support (Tibenderana & Ndugwa, 2021). As such, this study focuses on understanding how different classroom management strategies influence Students' discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City, with the goal of informing policy and improving instructional practices.

Contextual Background

In recent years, the issue of effective classroom management has gained attention across Ugandan secondary schools, particularly in urban centers such as Mbarara City. Classroom management involves creating and maintaining an orderly learning environment that fosters both student discipline. In the context of lower secondary education, where learners are in early adolescence, managing classrooms effectively is crucial for both academic achievement and behavioral development. Teachers in Uganda often face the dual challenge of ensuring discipline while simultaneously engaging students in learner-centered teaching, especially under the new competency-based curriculum introduced by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC, 2020).

Mbarara City, located in western Uganda, has experienced significant growth in student enrollment in recent years, partly due to population growth and the government's emphasis on

universal secondary education. However, this rapid expansion has brought challenges related to teacher-student ratios, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of adequate infrastructure and teaching materials (MoES, 2021). These challenges often hinder teachers' ability to implement effective classroom management strategies. Consequently, many classrooms in lower secondary schools struggle with issues such as frequent student indiscipline, low attention spans, and reduced academic engagement.

Furthermore, sociocultural and economic factors also shape classroom dynamics in Mbarara City. Students come from diverse backgrounds, with some facing issues such as poverty, domestic violence, or parental neglect, which may influence their behavior and motivation in school (Ahimbisibwe, 2022). Teachers are therefore expected not only to teach but also to act as mentors and behavioral guides, often without adequate training in classroom management or psychosocial support.

Moreover, while the new lower secondary curriculum encourages participatory and interactive methods of teaching, many teachers continue to rely on traditional, teacher-centered approaches due to limited exposure to professional development programs (Tibenderana & Ndugwa, 2021). This misalignment between curriculum goals and classroom realities further complicates efforts to improve student discipline. Schools in Mbarara City differ in terms of resources, administrative support, and teacher capacity, making it essential to understand context-specific classroom management practices that either promote or hinder effective learning.

Given the above realities, there is a critical need to explore the classroom management strategies being used in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City, and how these strategies affect student behavior and participation. Understanding these dynamics will help inform school

administrators, policymakers, and teacher trainers on the best practices for fostering positive learning environments.

Statement of the problem

Effective classroom management is widely acknowledged as a fundamental factor in promoting student discipline and creating a positive learning environment. Strategies such as establishing clear rules and routines, employing engaging instructional methods, and consistently reinforcing appropriate behavior help minimize disruptions, encourage active participation, and foster mutual respect between teachers and learners. Under Uganda's revised lower secondary curriculum introduced in 2020, which emphasizes learner-centered pedagogy, the use of effective classroom management strategies is particularly critical for ensuring that students remain disciplined, motivated, and actively engaged in learning (NCDC, 2020).

In practice, however, many teachers in lower secondary schools encounter significant challenges in implementing these strategies. Factors such as large class sizes, high student-to-teacher ratios, limited professional development in modern pedagogy, and insufficient teaching resources often impede effective classroom management (MoES, 2021). As a result, some teachers rely on authoritarian or punitive approaches, which may achieve short-term compliance but often undermine students' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and long-term discipline. This has contributed to contrasting patterns in student behavior: while some students may respond positively to structured routines and consistent reinforcement, others exhibit persistent indiscipline, including absenteeism, lateness, disrespect for authority, and frequent classroom disruptions, all of which negatively impact academic performance and increase school dropout rates (Mbarara District Education Office Report, 2022).

Despite these observable contrasts in student behavior, there remains limited empirical research examining how specific classroom management strategies influence these varying disciplinary outcomes in the context of Mbarara City's lower secondary schools. Existing studies are often outdated or fail to integrate both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, leaving a knowledge gap that hinders the development of evidence-based interventions tailored to the local context. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the classroom management strategies employed in Mbarara City secondary schools and assess their influence on the contrasting patterns of student discipline, with the goal of informing policy, teacher training, and school-level practices.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in secondary schools in Mbarara City-Uganda.

Research Objectives

- i. To establish various classroom management strategies utilised by teachers in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda.
- ii. To examine the level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda.
- iii. To examine the relationship between classroom management strategies on student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City-Uganda.

Research Questions

The research addressed the following questions:

- i. What classroom management strategies are used by teachers in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools--Uganda?
- ii. What is the level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City-Uganda?

Research hypothesis

(H₁): There is a significant relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study involved Content scope, Geographical scope and the time scope.

Content Scope

The study focused on investigating the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools. It explored various classroom management practices that teachers were expected to employ, such as the establishment of clear rules and routines, the use of participatory instructional methods, reinforcement of positive behavior, time management techniques, and conflict resolution strategies. The study also examined the level of student discipline, including indicators like punctuality, class attendance, respect for school authority, classroom engagement,

and compliance with school rules. Additionally, the research analyzed how these management strategies influenced student behavior and discipline outcomes. The study further considered the challenges teachers faced in implementing effective classroom management, such as large class sizes, lack of training, and inadequate resources. The findings were used to guide school administrators, teachers, and policymakers in developing strategies to improve classroom behavior and promote a positive learning environment

Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Mbarara City, located in the southwestern region of Uganda. Mbarara City served as the administrative and commercial hub of the Ankole sub-region, and it was home to several secondary schools, both government and private. The study focused on secondary schools within the city limits, allowing for an in-depth examination of classroom management practices and academic performance in this urban setting

Time Scope

The study considered the period from 2015 to 2023 to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between classroom management practices and students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms. This timeframe allowed for a thorough examination of trends, policy changes, and curriculum reforms that may have influenced teaching strategies and student outcomes. It also included the impact of external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022), which disrupted education and required adjustments in classroom management

Population Scope

The study focused on teachers and students in lower secondary schools within Mbarara City, Uganda. Specifically, the target population comprised classroom teachers who handled Senior One to Senior Four learners, as well as the students themselves, who were directly affected by classroom management practices. These participants were selected because they were the primary stakeholders in the teaching-learning process, and their experiences provided valuable insight into the dynamics of classroom management and students' discipline

Significance of the Study

The study will provide valuable insights into effective classroom management strategies that promote discipline among students. Teachers will benefit by learning about approaches that work in contexts similar to their own, thereby improving their classroom control, reducing behavioral disruptions, and fostering a positive learning environment.

By identifying strategies that enhance classroom discipline, students stand to benefit from a more organized, respectful, and interactive learning atmosphere. This can lead to improved academic performance, reduced dropout rates, and better social interactions within the classroom setting.

Headteachers and school administrators will gain an understanding of the classroom management challenges their teachers face and the support needed to address them. The findings can help in formulating policies, organizing training workshops, and implementing school-wide discipline policies that align with best practices.

Parents play a crucial role in reinforcing discipline at home. The study will help them understand how their involvement complements school-based discipline strategies. It may also encourage better school-parent collaboration in managing student behavior.

Policy-makers and curriculum developers will find the study useful in reviewing and updating teacher training programs, behavior management policies, and support frameworks for both teachers and students. This contributes to the broader goal of achieving quality education under Uganda's National Development Plan and Vision 2040.

The study will enrich the academic literature on classroom management in the Ugandan and East African contexts. It will also serve as a foundation for future research, helping scholars explore deeper aspects of student discipline, teacher-student relationships, and pedagogical effectiveness.

Conceptual framework

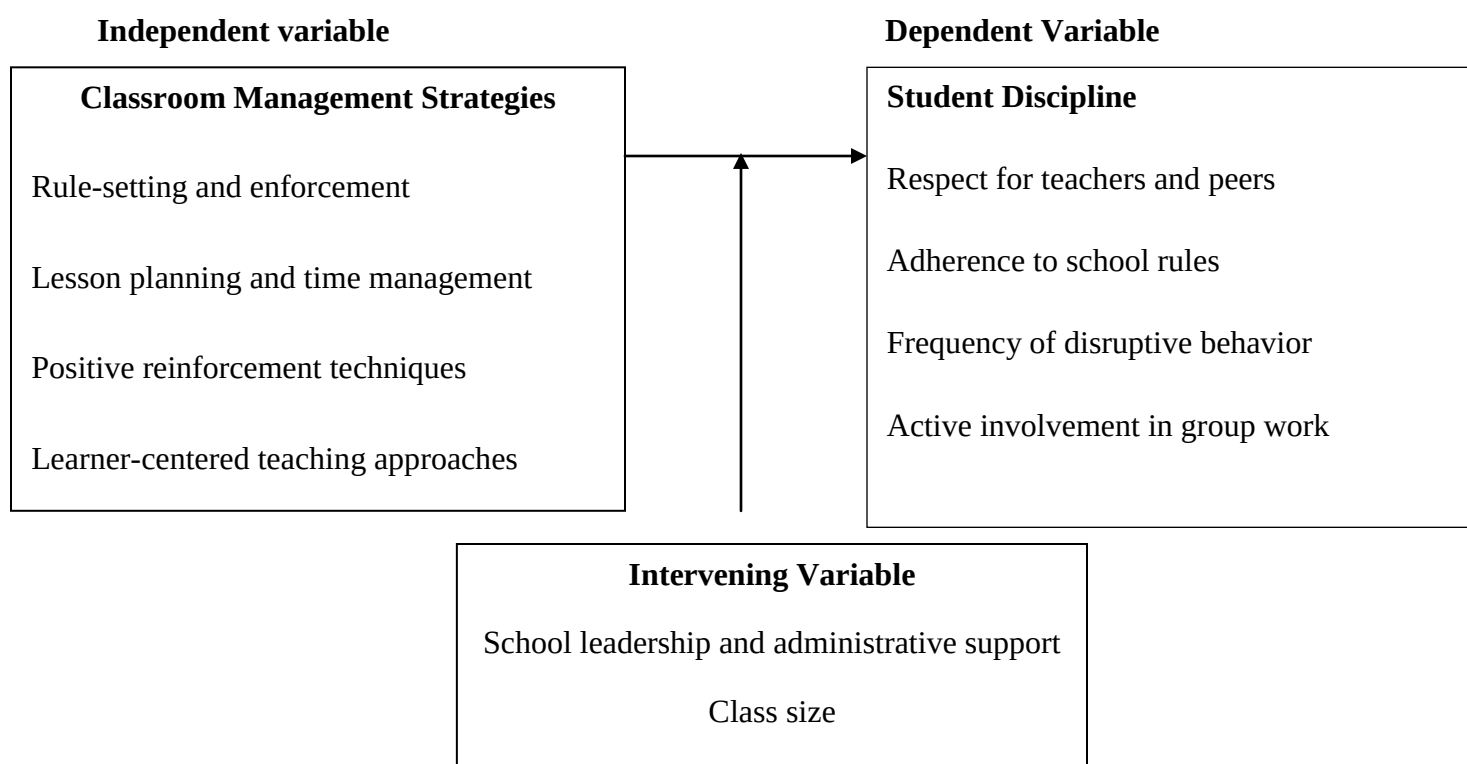


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary schools within Mbarara City. It identifies classroom management strategies such as rule-setting, positive reinforcement, learner-centered teaching, and time management as the independent variable, directly influencing students' behavior in class, which constitute the dependent variable. However, this relationship does not exist in isolation; intervening variables such as school leadership, and class size. For example, even when effective classroom management is in place, lack of parental support or overcrowded classrooms may still hinder student discipline. Conversely, strong school administration and involved parents can enhance the impact of these strategies.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is about teacher's classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in secondary schools in relation to the objectives of the study. It reviews teacher's classroom management strategies (independent variable) relating its dimensions to Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms (dependent variable) in Mbarara City secondary schools.

Classroom management strategies utilized by secondary school teachers

Classroom management practices encompass a wide range of techniques and approaches used by teachers to establish order, promote positive behavior, and facilitate learning in the classroom. These practices include setting clear expectations, establishing routines, fostering positive relationships with students, implementing effective discipline strategies, and creating an engaging and interactive learning environment.

Classroom management is a fundamental responsibility of teachers and plays a crucial role in the overall quality of education. Psychologists argue that a teacher's approach to managing their classroom is so influential that it can shape students' attitudes towards learning (Lewis, 2001; Rahimi & Karkami, 2015). Despite ongoing efforts to improve education quality at the secondary level, schools continue to face challenges that threaten the effectiveness of education, with poor classroom management being a major factor (Asiyai, 2011).

Classroom management (CM) encompasses the strategies and actions teachers employ to keep students focused and engaged during lessons. These strategies help maintain organization, promote student participation, and enhance academic productivity (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). According to Wisetrinthong, Sirisuthi, and Weangsamoot (2012), CM improves the learning environment by fostering better interactions between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves. It motivates and encourages students to engage in the learning process, while also supporting teachers in overseeing various academic activities. Ultimately, effective classroom management leads to improved collaboration between teachers and students, which enhances Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms and the overall quality of learning.

A study by Awang, Ahmad, Wahab, and Mamat (2013) found that teachers frequently use praise as a classroom management strategy to acknowledge students' contributions. This approach, along with other classroom management techniques, indicates that educators are applying empirically supported strategies to manage student behavior and enhance learning engagement (Nasey, 2012). Ozben (2010) identified several other common strategies employed by teachers, including using eye contact, cautioning, modifying lesson plans, engaging in conversations with students, meeting with parents, collaborating with both students and colleagues, and assigning tasks.

Rahimi and Karkami (2015) highlighted that teachers often use disciplinary strategies to engage students in learning, with many preferring reward-based techniques over punishment. Their research suggests that discipline strategies, particularly those focused on positive reinforcement, are more effective than punitive measures, which can negatively impact students' motivation. Omenka and Otor (2015) found that recognizing and praising students' positive

behaviors contributes to better academic performance. In line with this, Hester et al. (2009) observed that strategies such as praise and planned ignoring are among the most widely researched and implemented in classroom management (Darch & Kameenui, 2004; Oliver & Reschly, 2010). According to Pas, Cash, O'Brennan, Debnam, and Bradshaw (2015), teachers are generally well-versed in disciplinary strategies, including establishing classroom rules, monitoring student behavior, setting routines, and promoting positive behavior to prevent disruptions.

Research by Vijayan, Chakravarthi, and Philips (2016) found that reinforcing positive behavior is an effective strategy to motivate students to achieve their best. This approach is frequently used across various situations and age groups, while "planned ignorance" is particularly effective with younger children. The "time-out" strategy, on the other hand, is generally employed as a last resort after other methods have failed. Several scholars, including Adeyemo (2012) and Erden (2008), have emphasized that effective classroom management directly influences both teachers' performance and student learning outcomes. However, teachers must possess the right competencies to manage student behavior effectively (Krause et al., 2003). Evans et al. (2010) also found a correlation between teachers' classroom management strategies (CMS) and student learning. Celik (2006) further suggested that teachers' proficiency in CMS could be influenced by their gender.

Research by Ahmed et al. (2018) on gender differences in CMS in Pakistan revealed that gender can affect classroom management, although other studies found no significant gender-based differences in CMS effectiveness (Sivri, 2012; İlhan, 2011; Bağcı, 2010, as cited by Ahmed et al., 2018). Additionally, Ali (2000) noted that Pakistani teachers face significant challenges in managing classroom discipline, while Ahmad et al. (2012) reported that teachers in

Pakistan often simplify language to ensure clearer understanding. Tahir and Amin (2012) found that inexperienced teachers, particularly those teaching English as a second language, encounter greater difficulties in managing classroom discipline.

Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in secondary schools

Research on classroom management strategies has consistently highlighted their pivotal role in shaping student discipline. For instance, Asiyai (2011) identified effective techniques such as continuous student engagement, innovative instructional strategies, and effective communication as key to enhancing student behavior and participation in Nigerian secondary schools. Similarly, Ofoyuru and Too-Okema (2019) explored discipline management strategies in Gulu District, Uganda, revealing that rewards, punishments, communication, and counseling were commonly employed to manage student behavior. These studies primarily utilized survey research designs, employing questionnaires and interviews to gather data from teachers and students. However, a notable gap exists in the literature concerning the specific impact of these classroom management strategies on student discipline within the context of lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City, Uganda. While previous studies have provided valuable insights into general classroom management practices, they often lack a focused examination of how these strategies influence student behavior and engagement in this specific educational setting.

Evertson and Weinstein (2013) highlighted the significance of proactive classroom management in enhancing student discipline. Their work emphasized the need for clear routines, consistent expectations, and strategic use of classroom space and time. Using structured interviews and classroom observations in well-resourced U.S. schools, they found that teachers who proactively managed their classrooms created more positive learning environments and experienced fewer behavioral disruptions. However, their study was situated in high-income

settings and did not account for the socio-economic and infrastructural challenges common in sub-Saharan African schools. As such, the application of their strategies to Ugandan classrooms remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining how proactive classroom strategies are implemented in the lower secondary classrooms of Mbarara City, where teachers often face large class sizes and limited resources.

Wubbels et al. (2015) conducted a cross-cultural study investigating the impact of teacher-student relationships on discipline. Through a mixed-methods approach involving student questionnaires and teacher interviews, they concluded that supportive teacher-student interactions significantly reduced behavioral issues and fostered academic motivation. Despite the robustness of their findings, the study largely overlooked sub-Saharan African education contexts, where classroom relationships are often shaped by hierarchical norms and limited teacher training in relational strategies. This study intends to examine whether relational classroom management centered on respect, empathy, and communication has a similar impact on student discipline in Ugandan secondary schools, particularly in the cultural setting of Mbarara City.

Restorative discipline, as investigated by Morrison and Vaandering (2012), has emerged as a powerful alternative to traditional punitive measures. Their qualitative research in Australian secondary schools, which utilized case studies and focus groups, found that restorative practices such as peer mediation and conflict resolution circles improved student behavior and emotional engagement. These practices allowed students to take responsibility for their actions while maintaining their dignity. However, such approaches are rarely implemented in African educational systems where corporal punishment and authoritarian discipline still prevail. The current study explored the extent to which teachers in Mbarara employ restorative methods if at

all and how these methods influence student engagement and discipline, thereby providing insight into their applicability in Ugandan classrooms.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) developed a comprehensive framework for understanding student engagement, which includes cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions. Their longitudinal research used student journals, observation logs, and academic performance records to establish that engaging instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, project-based tasks, and student autonomy led to higher levels of student involvement. However, their study was conducted in developed nations with relatively small class sizes and rich educational resources, limiting its generalizability. In Uganda, where classrooms are overcrowded and resources are scarce, such strategies may be difficult to implement. This research seeks to investigate which instructional practices are currently used in Mbarara City's lower secondary schools and whether they effectively promote engagement among adolescents, providing practical, context-sensitive insights for local educators.

Marzano and Marzano (2003) explored the relationship between the physical classroom environment and student discipline. Through quasi-experimental designs and longitudinal observation, they discovered that well-structured classrooms with designated learning zones, attractive displays, and minimal distractions positively influenced student behavior and attention. However, these findings are not easily transferrable to schools in developing countries, where teachers often lack adequate infrastructure, and classrooms are poorly equipped. The present study will investigate how teachers in Mbarara City manage their classroom environments despite these limitations, and what effect their strategies have on student discipline. The findings will offer localized solutions and practical recommendations for improving classroom environments within resource-constrained settings.

Relationship between classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms

The relationship between classroom management strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms has been extensively explored by various scholars.

Asiyai (2011) conducted a study in Nigerian secondary schools to identify effective classroom management techniques. Using a survey research design with a sample of 300 participants, the study employed questionnaires for data collection. The findings revealed that constant engagement of students in activities, use of innovative instructional strategies, effective communication, and a stimulating classroom environment were pivotal in enhancing student engagement. However, the study did not specifically focus on lower secondary classrooms or the unique challenges they present. The current study aims to fill this gap by focusing on lower secondary classrooms in Uganda, examining how these identified strategies influence student discipline in this specific context.

A study conducted in Lusaka District, Zambia, explored the impact of school management practices on student discipline (ResearchGate, 2023). The researchers used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data from 250 participants, including headteachers, teachers, pupils, and parents. The study found that clear communication of rules, consistent enforcement of disciplinary measures, and active involvement of school leadership significantly contributed to improved student discipline. While the study provided valuable insights, it did not delve into classroom-specific management strategies or their direct impact on student engagement. The current research intends to bridge this gap by focusing on classroom-level management strategies and their dual impact on discipline among lower secondary students.

In Western Australia, a mixed-methods study investigated students' beliefs about effective classroom management (SpringerLink, 2017). The study utilized surveys and focus group discussions with high school students. Findings indicated that students valued teachers who showed genuine concern for their welfare, maintained clear behavioral expectations, and engaged them in meaningful learning activities. These teacher behaviors were linked to higher levels of student discipline. However, the study's context differs significantly from that of Ugandan lower secondary schools. The current study seeks to explore whether these findings hold true in the Ugandan context, thereby providing culturally relevant insights into effective classroom management.

Ofoyuru and Too-Okema (2023) examined strategies for managing student discipline in secondary schools in Gulu District, Uganda. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews from 377 respondents, including headteachers, teachers, and students. The study identified rewards, punishment, communication, and counseling as key strategies for managing discipline. While the study provided a broad overview of disciplinary strategies, it did not specifically address how these strategies influence student engagement. The current research aims to explore this intersection, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how discipline strategies affect both behavior and engagement in lower secondary classrooms.

A study conducted in Rubaga Division, Kampala, investigated the relationship between classroom management practices and learners' academic achievement in public secondary schools (DergiPark, 2021). Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the study found that classroom discipline and instructional methods significantly contributed to academic achievement. However, classroom organization did not show a significant relationship. While the

study linked management practices to academic outcomes, it did not specifically examine their impact on student discipline . The current study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on how classroom management strategies influence both discipline , which are critical precursors to academic success.

While existing literature provides valuable insights into classroom management strategies and their impact on student outcomes, there is a noticeable gap in studies focusing specifically on the dual impact of these strategies on student discipline in lower secondary classrooms within the Ugandan context. The current study aims to address this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys and interviews to gather data from teachers and students in Ugandan lower secondary schools. The findings are expected to inform context-specific strategies for enhancing student discipline through effective classroom management.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter covers the research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling technique, data collection methods, data collection instruments, procedure of data collection, reliability and validity of instruments, data analysis, and measurement of variables.

Study Approach

The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline by collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires and gaining deeper insights through interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders such as headteachers, directors of studies, teachers, and students. Using both methods enabled triangulation of data, which improved the reliability and richness of the findings while providing both statistical evidence and contextual understanding.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to assess classroom management strategies influencing student academic performance. The descriptive survey was a commonly used method for gathering information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits, or a variety of educational or social issues (Creswell, 2014). This research design was deemed suitable for the

study, as the researcher aimed to establish and report on the prevailing classroom management strategies influencing student academic performance.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Mbarara City, located in Western Uganda. Mbarara City was one of the fastest-growing urban centers in the region and served as a major hub for education, commerce, and governance. The choice of Mbarara City as the study area was scientifically justified due to its unique educational dynamics and demographic characteristics that influenced classroom management and student discipline. Mbarara City hosted a diverse range of secondary schools, including government-aided and private institutions, with varying school sizes, student populations, and resource availability. This diversity offered a representative context for examining classroom management strategies and their effectiveness across different school settings. Additionally, the city had experienced rapid urbanization and social change, which had impacted student behavior and school environments, making it a pertinent location to investigate the challenges and practices related to student discipline.

Furthermore, Mbarara City's educational policies, aligned with Uganda's revised lower secondary curriculum, emphasized learner-centered pedagogies, which presented new demands on teachers' classroom management skills. Investigating the effectiveness of these strategies in this context provided relevant insights that could inform education policy and practice not only locally but also in similar urban settings across Uganda and East Africa.

Study Population

The study targeted head teachers, directors of studies, teachers, and students in selected lower secondary schools in Mbarara City because each group played a vital role in understanding classroom management and student discipline. Head teachers provided leadership and policy perspectives on school discipline, while directors of studies oversaw academic progress and student behavior, offering insights into the link between management and discipline. Teachers directly implemented classroom management strategies and interacted daily with students, making their views crucial for evaluating practical challenges and effectiveness. Students, as the primary recipients of these strategies, provided firsthand experiences of how discipline practices affected their behavior and engagement. Including these groups ensured a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student discipline and the effectiveness of management strategies, thus fulfilling the study's purpose.

Sample Size

The total population considered for this study was 3,000, out of which a sample size of 353 respondents was selected. For students, the total population of 2,802 was derived from six government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara City, each with an average student enrollment of approximately 467 students in the lower secondary section (Senior One to Senior Four). These figures were obtained from the enrollment registers of the respective schools, as provided by the head teachers and directors of studies.

The sample size was determined by employing Yamane (1967) formula of $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where;

- **N** represents the total population of the study.
- **n** is the required sample of the study

e is the level of precision = 0.05.

$$N = 3000$$

$$e = 0.05$$

$$n = 3000 / 1 + 3000(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 3000 / 1 + 3000(0.0025)$$

$$n = 3000 / 1 + 7.5$$

$$n = 3000 / 8.5$$

$$n = 353 \text{ participants}$$

A sample of 245 students was selected from this total using simple random sampling to ensure that each student has an equal chance of being selected, thus enhancing the representativeness of the study findings.

Table 1: Summary of the study population

Category of respondents	Total Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Head teachers	8	8	Purposive sampling
Director of studies	30	16	Purposive sampling
Teachers	160	84	Simple random sampling
Students	2802	245	Simple random sampling
Total	3000	353	

Sampling procedures

In this study, purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to select participants. These methods ensured that the study included individuals who could provide relevant information while maintaining fairness and minimizing selection bias.

Purposive Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select Head Teachers and Directors of Studies because they possessed key knowledge and experience regarding school management and students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms. The first step involved identifying all secondary schools within Mbarara City, and a list of these schools was obtained from the District Education Office or relevant authorities. Once the schools were identified, the researcher sought permission from school administrators to conduct the study.

The selection of Head Teachers and Directors of Studies was intentional due to their critical role in overseeing students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms, implementing school policies, and managing teaching and learning strategies. These individuals were approached directly, and their participation was sought based on their expertise and responsibility in school leadership. Their knowledge of classroom management practices and their direct influence on students' academic progress made them valuable sources of information for this study.

The use of purposive sampling in this context ensured that only those individuals with relevant experience were included in the study. Since Head Teachers and Directors of Studies were responsible for the implementation of school policies and classroom management

strategies, their insights were essential in understanding how management practices influenced students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms.

Simple Random Sampling Procedure

Simple random sampling was used to select students and teachers to ensure that the study captured diverse perspectives and minimized selection bias. The researcher first obtained a list of all students and teachers from the selected schools. Based on the total number of students and teachers, the researcher determined an appropriate sample size using standard sampling techniques such as Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table or Cochran's formula.

To ensure fairness in selection, each eligible student and teacher was assigned a unique identification number. These numbers were either written on small pieces of paper and placed in a container for a lottery-style selection process, or a computer-generated randomization method was used. The researcher then randomly drew numbers without replacement, meaning once a participant was selected, they were not included again.

Simple random sampling proved to be an effective probability sampling method because it ensured that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected. This process minimized bias and made the findings more generalizable to the entire population of students and teachers. It also allowed the study to capture a wide range of experiences and viewpoints, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between classroom management and academic performance.

Data Collection Methods

The study used two data collection methods; namely questionnaire survey method and interview method.

Questionnaire Survey

This method was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from students and teachers. A questionnaire survey helped to collect data from both groups. The questionnaire included both closed- and open-ended items. This method of data collection proved useful because it was quick and efficient. Teachers and students responded easily to the items due to their ability to read and write, as well as their general proficiency in English, which was the language used in the questionnaire.

Interview method

This method was used to collect qualitative data from Head Teachers and Directors of Studies. The interviews helped in obtaining detailed responses to the items on the interview guide, allowing for deeper exploration and clarity. The responses contributed to the attainment of the study objectives.

Data Collection Instruments

The study used both a self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide as data collection instruments.

Self-administered Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire, developed based on the study objectives, was used to collect data from both students and teachers. This method was chosen because it enables respondents to read and interpret questions at their own pace, allowing them ample time to reflect and provide thoughtful responses, thereby improving the accuracy and quality of the data collected. The questionnaire was particularly suitable for this study as it facilitated the efficient collection of data from a relatively large number of participants within a short period, ensuring cost-effectiveness and convenience. Moreover, it minimized interviewer bias since respondents could answer independently, enhancing the reliability and objectivity of the findings. The structured nature of the questionnaire also allowed for easy comparison and analysis of responses across participants, leading to consistent and quantifiable results that complemented the qualitative data obtained through interviews.

Interview Guide

Qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide designed with open-ended questions to capture detailed insights from headteachers and directors of studies regarding classroom management strategies and student discipline in lower secondary classrooms. This method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, opinions, and perceptions that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe for clarification and elaboration, ensuring rich and comprehensive responses while maintaining focus on key themes such as classroom management practices, discipline issues, and their relationship with student behavior. Additionally, interviews foster a more personal and

interactive environment that encourages openness and honesty, allowing respondents to express their views freely. Conducting the interviews in a quiet school environment and recording them with permission enhanced data accuracy, credibility, and reliability for subsequent thematic analysis.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher first developed a well-structured Research Dissertation detailing the study's objectives, research questions, methodology, sampling procedures, and ethical considerations. The proposal was then submitted to the Bishop Stuart University Ethics Review Committee for approval to ensure adherence to research ethics, including confidentiality and informed consent. Once ethical clearance was granted, the researcher prepared the data collection tools, such as questionnaires and interview guides, ensuring they aligned with the study's objectives. A pilot test was conducted to check the clarity and reliability of these instruments. Additionally, the researcher organized necessary logistics, including transportation, stationery, and recording devices, to facilitate effective data collection. With all these preparations in place, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research, and Innovations at Bishop Stuart University, which was presented to the Education Officer of Mbarara City to request official permission to conduct research in secondary schools.

Upon receiving permission, the researcher proceeded to the schools and presented the authority letter to the headteachers, requesting access to the required participants and scheduling in the school program. The researcher followed the program provided by the headteachers. Once access to the participants was granted, the researcher informed respondents about the purpose of the study and requested that they willingly provide the information required. The researcher

personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents and collected them after they were completed.

Following the administration of questionnaires, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with Head Teachers, Directors of Studies, and selected teachers to gain in-depth insights into classroom management practices and their impact on student academic performance. These interviews were scheduled in advance and conducted in quiet, private settings to encourage open and honest discussions. Before each interview, the researcher explained the study's purpose, sought informed consent, and assured participants of confidentiality. A semi-structured interview guide was used, allowing for both structured and open-ended discussions. Responses were recorded through detailed note-taking, and with consent, audio recordings were made for accuracy. The interviews concluded with the researcher expressing gratitude to participants, clarifying any questions, and reassuring them about the confidentiality of their responses. The collected data were then analyzed to identify patterns and themes that contributed to understanding the relationship between classroom management and student academic performance.

Data Quality Control

Data quality control was determined by establishing the validity and reliability of instruments.

Validity of the Instruments

The validity of the research instrument was defined as the degree to which the tool measured what it was intended to measure. This was determined using content-related evidence of validity. A list of objectives, which guided the construction of the instrument, and a separate

list of items designed specifically to answer the research questions, were provided to two knowledgeable persons familiar with the study topic.

These knowledgeable persons were independently asked to thoroughly inspect the items and link each objective with the respective items, assessing the relevancy of the items to the content addressed in the objectives. They were asked to rate each item on a 4-point scale, namely: not relevant (NR), somewhat relevant (SR), quite relevant (QR), and very relevant (VR). The researcher then computed the level of agreement between the two knowledgeable persons as inter-rater agreement to determine the extent to which they agreed.

Content validity was understood as the degree to which an instrument contained an appropriate sample of items for the construct being measured and was considered an important procedure in scale development.

Therefore: $CVI = n/N$

CVI = Content Validity Index,

n = Number of items rated relevant

N = Total number of items in the questionnaire.

A Content Validity Index of 0.7 and above, according to Amin (2005), qualifies the instrument to be used.

Reliability of instruments

Reliability referred to the consistency of an instrument in producing results multiple times. A split-half reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The

researcher administered the instrument to teachers, and the items in the instrument were divided into two halves: the odd-numbered and even-numbered items.

For each instrument, the scores from the odd and even items were computed. The two sets of scores were then correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. If the results indicated a figure greater than 0.7, the instruments were regarded as reliable.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a correlation coefficient of 0.7 or above was considered appropriate and, therefore, reliable for collecting data

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods as explained below;

Qualitative data from objectives one and two were systematically organized, reviewed, and categorized into relevant sub-themes. The analysis involved identifying key patterns and themes within respondents' responses, interpreting their meanings, and examining how these insights contributed to answering the research questions. This process included coding the data, categorizing it based on both predetermined categories and emerging patterns, and interpreting the findings in the context of the study's theoretical framework and objectives. The goal was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data and its relevance to the research questions.

Quantitative data from objective three were summarized and entered into the SPSS data analysis program, where frequency tables and mean scores were generated for easy interpretation of findings. The correlation between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in Mbarara City secondary schools was determined to find out whether there was a positive statistically significant relationship between the variables, as the research hypothesis

suggested. This was done using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Milton, 2022).

Ethical Considerations

During the planning, data collection, and processing phases, the researcher adhered strictly to established ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of all participants. Informed consent was sought from each respondent after fully explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw or refuse to answer any questions without any negative consequences (Creswell, 2014). To ensure clear understanding, all explanations and instructions were provided in Runyankole, the language familiar to the participants. The researcher respected respondents' privacy and guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their information by not disclosing names or school identities. Approval and ethical clearance were obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Bishop Stuart University, as well as registration and authorization from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). Additionally, permission was sought from the Mbarara City Education Officer to access selected secondary schools, followed by official requests to headteachers to conduct the study within their institutions. The researcher complied with school schedules and protocols, and upon introduction to participants, reiterated the study's purpose and encouraged honest and voluntary participation.

Results Dissemination Plan

Upon completion of data analysis, the research findings were compiled into a comprehensive report, which was shared with key stakeholders, including participating schools, local education authorities, community leaders, and the academic community. A summary report

highlighting the key findings and recommendations was prepared in clear, non-technical language to ensure accessibility for all community members and participants.

To reach a wider audience, the researcher organized dissemination meetings and workshops within Mbarara City involving school administrators, teachers, parents, and education officials. These forums encouraged dialogue on the study outcomes and discussed practical ways to implement the recommendations. Additionally, the findings were submitted for presentation at relevant academic conferences and considered for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Digital copies of reports and presentations were also shared via email and social media platforms where appropriate to enhance accessibility and ongoing engagement.

Community Engagement Plan

Before data collection, the researcher conducted introductory meetings with key community stakeholders such as school headteachers, directors of studies, teachers, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and local education officers. These meetings explained the purpose and importance of the study, emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, and addressed any concerns stakeholders had. The researcher organized sensitization workshops within schools to inform students and parents about the study's objectives and the anticipated time commitment for participation. This ensured transparency, built trust, and created a sense of ownership among the community. Additionally, the researcher worked with local leaders and school authorities to schedule data collection activities at convenient times, minimizing disruption to school routines and respecting community norms.

During data collection, the researcher and research assistants maintained respectful, professional interactions with all participants and community members, ensuring that ethical

guidelines were strictly followed, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. The researcher provided timely updates to school management and community representatives to keep them informed of progress. After data collection, the researcher held feedback meetings with stakeholders such as school leadership teams, PTAs, and local education officials to present the study's findings in an accessible format. These sessions encouraged dialogue on practical recommendations and community-led strategies for improving classroom management and student discipline. The researcher also prepared summary reports and policy briefs to share with educational authorities and community groups, fostering collaboration for sustained positive change in the schools of Mbarara City.

Ebola and COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Before data collection, the research team underwent training on infection prevention and control measures specific to Ebola and COVID-19, ensuring all members were well-versed in symptoms, transmission, and safety protocols. Community sensitization sessions were organized with local leaders and health officials to inform participants about the research process and the health precautions in place, emphasizing the importance of adherence to safety guidelines. All data collection materials, such as questionnaires and devices, were sanitized regularly, and personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers was procured in adequate quantities.

During data collection, strict adherence to Ministry of Health guidelines was maintained. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in well-ventilated, open-air settings where possible, and physical distancing of at least one meter was enforced. The number of participants in any group interaction was limited to avoid crowding. The research team provided handwashing stations or hand sanitizers at all data collection points. Participants and research

staff showing symptoms such as fever, cough, or fatigue were gently excluded and referred to local health centers for screening. Where possible, virtual data collection methods (phone or online interviews) were used, especially for follow-ups, to minimize face-to-face contact. After each day, all equipment and surfaces were disinfected, and the health status of the research team was monitored.

After data collection, the research team conducted a debriefing session with community leaders and health officials to share relevant observations regarding health safety and to reinforce ongoing preventive behaviors. Data handling and storage were done with minimal physical contact, using electronic means where possible. The research findings dissemination meetings also adhered to the safety protocols or were conducted virtually if necessary. Throughout the research period, the team remained in close communication with local health authorities to adapt mitigation strategies based on the current epidemiological situation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings of the study on Classroom Management Strategies and Students' Discipline in Lower Secondary Classrooms in Mbarara City Secondary Schools, Uganda. The presentation is structured according to the specific objectives of the study, supported by both quantitative and qualitative data collected from teachers and students.

Response Rate

Table 4.1: Response rate

Response rate	Frequency	Percent
Returned data instruments	282	80%
Not returned	71	20
Total	353	100

Source: Field Data 2025

Table 4.1 presents the response rate of the study participants. Out of the 353 research instruments that were distributed to the respondents, a total of 282 instruments were successfully returned, representing a response rate of 80%. However, 71 instruments were not returned, which accounted for 20% of the total.

An 80% response rate is considered highly satisfactory in social science research. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 70% and above is regarded as very good, as it

enhances the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study findings. Similarly, Kothari (2014) emphasizes that a high response rate minimizes non-response bias, thereby increasing the accuracy of the data collected.

The fact that the majority of the respondents returned their instruments indicates a high level of commitment, interest, and cooperation from the participants in this study. This suggests that the data collected is not only representative but also dependable for making conclusions about classroom management strategies and students' discipline in Mbarara City secondary schools. On the other hand, the 20% non-response rate may be attributed to factors such as limited time, lack of interest, or other personal commitments of some respondents, but it did not significantly affect the study since the achieved rate was above the acceptable threshold.

Genders of respondents

The study was gender sensitive, it involved both males and females to avoid gender bias and the findings are summarized in the table 4.2

Table 4.2 Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	175	62.0
Female	107	38.0
Total	282	100.0

Source: Field data 2025

Table 4.2 presents the gender distribution of respondents who participated in the study. Out of the 282 respondents, the majority were male teachers (175, representing 62.0%), while female

teachers accounted for 107 (38.0%) of the sample. This distribution suggests that teaching in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City is male-dominated, although a significant proportion of females are also actively engaged. The overrepresentation of male respondents may be attributed to the fact that, in many Ugandan secondary schools, particularly in urban centers like Mbarara, male teachers are more likely to be recruited in larger numbers compared to their female counterparts (MoES, 2022). This trend could also be linked to the perception that secondary school teaching, especially in subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Technical fields, is male-oriented (Mulkeen, 2010).

However, the presence of 38% female participation shows that women also make a substantial contribution to the teaching workforce in Mbarara City. This gender balance, though unequal, is still sufficient to provide perspectives from both sexes and reduces the risk of gender bias in the findings. Moreover, including both male and female teachers enriches the study since gender can influence classroom management strategies as well as approaches to handling student discipline. For example, some studies have observed that female teachers are often associated with more nurturing and relational approaches to classroom management, while male teachers may adopt more authoritative or disciplinary approaches (Eagly & Wood, 2013)

4.2 Classroom management strategies utilized by teachers in lower secondary classrooms

The first objective of this study was to establish the various classroom management strategies utilized by teachers in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools, Uganda. To fulfill this objective, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data from teachers and students to gain insights into the techniques teachers employ in managing their classrooms effectively. Classroom management was considered a critical aspect of this study

because it directly influences not only the teaching and learning environment but also the overall discipline and academic performance of students.

Table 4.3 Classroom management strategies utilized by teachers in lower secondary classrooms

Statement	S.A	A	N	D	SD
I establish clear rules and procedures for classroom behavior.	210 (74.4%)	59 (20.9%)	0 (0%)	13 (4.6%)	0 (0%)
I involve students in developing classroom rules.	40 (14.1%)	58 (20.5%)	0(0%)	180 (63.8%)	4 (1.4%)
I apply discipline measures consistently and fairly.	180 (63.8%)	47 (16.6%)	23 (8.1%)	11 (3.9%)	0(0%)
I use rewards and praise to promote good behavior.	0 (0%)	92 (23.6%)	0 (0%)	15 (5.3%)	175 (62.0%)
I use a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged.	215 (76.2%)	52 (18.4%)	0 (0%)	15 (5.3%)	0 (0%)
I handle disruptive behavior calmly and professionally.	55 (19.5%)	170 (60.2%)	0 (0%)	42 (14.8%)	15 (5.3%)
I monitor student behavior throughout the lesson	203 (71.9%)	42 (14.8%)	0(0%)	37 (13.1%)	0(0%)

Source: Field data 2025

The findings presented in table 4.3 reveal that the majority of teachers in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City establish clear rules and procedures for classroom behavior. Specifically, 74.4% of respondents strongly agreed and 20.9% agreed with this statement, while only 4.6% disagreed. This indicates that most teachers value structure and predictability, which are essential for maintaining order in the classroom. One head teacher emphasized this point during an interview, stating: *“We encourage our teachers to begin every term by laying down clear rules so that learners know exactly what is expected of them. Without such rules, discipline becomes very difficult to maintain.”* Source: Field Data.2025

This testimony highlights how school leadership also prioritizes clarity and consistency in behavior expectations. According to Marzano (2003), establishing clear rules enhances predictability and provides students with a secure learning environment, which explains why it is among the most common practices.

However, when it comes to involving students in developing classroom rules, the data presents a contrasting picture. A significant 63.8% of respondents disagreed, while only 14.1% strongly agreed and 20.5% agreed that they involve learners in the rule-making process. This suggests that teachers largely adopt a teacher-centered approach to classroom management, where rules are imposed rather than negotiated. During the interviews, one head teacher admitted: *“Our teachers rarely involve students in making rules because they fear it may undermine authority. Yet I believe involving learners could promote a sense of ownership and reduce cases of indiscipline.”* Literature, however, indicates that when students participate in rule-making, they are more likely to respect and adhere to those rules (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Thus, this low level of involvement may undermine student ownership of discipline.

In terms of applying discipline measures consistently and fairly, the findings are more positive. A total of 80.4% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they are consistent and fair in disciplinary matters. Only a small percentage expressed neutrality or disagreement. This demonstrates teachers’ awareness of the importance of fairness, which is critical in avoiding perceptions of favoritism. Supporting this, a head teacher remarked: *“Fairness is key. When students see that punishments are applied equally, they respect the system more. But when they suspect bias, they easily become rebellious.”* This indicates that most teachers strive for fairness in handling disciplinary issues. Fairness is crucial in avoiding perceptions of bias, which can negatively affect student-teacher relationships (Emmer & Stough, 2001).

The results on the use of rewards and praise to promote good behavior, however, show a worrying trend. An overwhelming 62.0% strongly disagreed with this practice, while only 23.6% agreed. This suggests that positive reinforcement is rarely employed in classrooms across Mbarara City secondary schools. Many teachers appear to rely more on punishment than on recognition of positive behavior. As one head teacher lamented: *“Teachers here are quick to punish but very slow to praise. Yet sometimes a simple word of encouragement can change a child’s attitude far better than punishment.”* This observation reveals a missed opportunity in using motivational strategies to shape behavior positively. According to Skinner’s reinforcement theory (1953), positive reinforcement through rewards and praise is highly effective in shaping behavior. The low emphasis on this strategy may limit motivation and long-term positive discipline among students.

On a more encouraging note, most teachers reported using a variety of teaching methods to keep learners engaged. About 76.2% strongly agreed and 18.4% agreed that they employ diverse instructional strategies. This reflects an understanding that engaging lessons reduce opportunities for disruptive behavior. Similarly, a majority of teachers (79.7%) confirmed that they handle disruptive behavior calmly and professionally. While 20.1% disagreed, this suggests that most teachers remain composed under pressure, an important trait for effective classroom management. One head teacher explained: *“We always advise teachers not to lose their temper before students. A calm teacher can solve a conflict better than an angry one.”* This shows that teachers appreciate the role of engaging pedagogy in minimizing disruptive behavior. Research confirms that when lessons are engaging, opportunities for misbehavior decrease significantly (Marzano, 2007).

Finally, monitoring student behavior throughout the lesson emerged as another strength. About 71.9% strongly agreed and 14.8% agreed that they constantly observe learners' actions during lessons. Only 13.1% disagreed. This proactive strategy is consistent with Kounin's concept of "withitness," which stresses the teacher's awareness of everything happening in the classroom. As a head teacher put it: *"The best-managed classes are those where teachers are alert. Once learners notice that a teacher is watchful, they are less likely to misbehave."* This proactive approach is consistent with the concept of "withitness" highlighted by Kounin (1970), which stresses that effective teachers remain alert and aware of all student activities, reducing opportunities for misbehavior

Generally, the findings show that teachers in Mbarara City secondary schools excel in establishing clear rules, monitoring students, applying discipline fairly, and engaging learners through varied methods. However, they fall short in two critical areas: involving students in decision-making and using rewards and praise as positive reinforcement. These weaknesses suggest that classroom management in the region is still heavily inclined towards authoritative approaches, with limited use of student-centered and motivational strategies. The testimonies from head teachers confirm this reality, showing that while structure and consistency are prioritized, the role of encouragement and student involvement is undervalued. This imbalance may explain why cases of indiscipline persist despite teachers' efforts.

The level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda.

The second objective of this study was to examine the level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools, Uganda. To fulfill this objective, the

researcher sought to assess how students in these schools demonstrate acceptable behavior, adherence to established rules, respect for authority, and responsibility for their learning.

Table 4.5 Level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools-Uganda.

Statement	S.A	A	N	D	SD
Students in my class show respect for the teacher and classmates	54 (19.1%)	195 (69.1%)	0 (0%)	30 (10.6%)	3 (1.0%)
Cases of indiscipline have reduced due to my management strategies	130 (46.0%)	86 (30.4%)	0 (0%)	40 (14.1%)	26 (9.2%)
Students understand the consequences of their misbehavior.	65 (23.0%)	151 (53.5%)	23 (8.1%)	20 (7.0%)	21 (7.4%)
My classroom is generally free of behavioral disruptions.	21 (7.4%)	86 (30.4%)	50 (17.7%)	68 (24.1%)	57 (20.2%)
Students arrive to class on time and are prepared to learn.	122 (43.2%)	68 (24.1%)	40 (14.1%)	52 (18.4%)	0 (0%)
Bullying and fighting among students are rare in my classroom.	78 (27.6%)	180 (63.8%)	20 (7.0%)	4 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
Students complete their assignments and homework regularly.	86 (30.4%)	173 (61.3%)	0 (0%)	20 (7.0%)	3 (1.0%)
Students actively participate in classroom activities without causing disruptions.	25 (8.8%)	72 (25.5%)	2 (0.7%)	120 (42.5%)	63 (22.3%)
There is minimal use of mobile phones or other distractions during lessons.	240 (85.0%)	42 (14.8%)	0	0	0
Students demonstrate self-discipline and manage their behavior appropriately.	7 (2.4%)	50 (17.7%)	0	150 (53.1%)	73 (25.8)
There is clear respect for classroom rules and routines among students.	75 (26.5%)	201 (71.2%)	0	6 (2.1%)	0
Peer pressure negatively affecting discipline in class is well managed	195 (69.1%)	46 (16.3%)	0	40 (14.1%)	1 (0.3%)

Source: Field data 2025

The results presented in Table 4.5 show that students in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City secondary schools generally demonstrate moderate to high levels of discipline, though some weaknesses are evident. The overall mean score for all items was 3.67 (SD = 1.02), indicating a fairly positive perception of discipline among teachers, with variations across specific indicators.

To begin with, respect for teachers and classmates was highly emphasized, with a mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.82). About 88.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students show respect, confirming that respect remains a cornerstone of classroom order. One head teacher noted: *“Respect is both taught and modeled by teachers. Where teachers respect learners, it is reciprocated. The few disrespect cases are often linked to external factors such as poor parental guidance.”*

In terms of managing indiscipline, the item *“cases of indiscipline have reduced due to my management strategies”* scored a mean of 3.84 (SD = 1.09). This suggests that most teachers’ strategies are effective, although not uniformly applied. A head teacher testified: *“We encourage teachers to use proactive discipline techniques such as positive reinforcement, but some still rely on punitive methods. Where proactive approaches are consistent, indiscipline cases fall drastically.”*

Students’ awareness of consequences of misbehavior was also highly rated (mean = 3.78, SD = 1.06). This implies that schools effectively communicate rules and sanctions. However, a minority disagreed, showing that some learners still downplay the seriousness of rules.

Interestingly, the statement *“My classroom is generally free of disruptions”* received one of the lowest means (2.81, SD = 1.21). Nearly half of respondents disagreed, pointing to frequent behavioral interruptions, especially in large or overcrowded classrooms. As one head teacher

explained: *“Disruptions are inevitable in crowded classrooms where individual attention is difficult. Teachers often spend more time managing behavior than delivering lessons.”*

Regarding punctuality and preparedness, the results were encouraging (mean = 3.92, SD = 1.04). Most teachers confirmed that students generally arrive on time and ready to learn, though isolated cases of lateness persist. Similarly, bullying and fighting were reported as minimal, reflected in a strong mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.67). This indicates effective anti-bullying measures in schools.

Assignment completion was also rated highly (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.76), suggesting that students take academic responsibilities seriously. However, some teachers mentioned that socio-economic challenges still prevent certain learners from completing homework consistently. A head teacher observed: *“Students from homes without electricity or support often struggle with homework, but in-school homework clubs have helped bridge this gap.”*

The weakest area emerged in *student active participation without disruptions* (mean = 2.61, SD = 1.27) and *self-discipline* (mean = 2.23, SD = 1.08). These low means highlight that many students rely heavily on external control rather than self-regulation. According to one head teacher: *“Our learners are obedient when supervised, but very few demonstrate internal self-discipline. They require continuous monitoring to stay on task.”*

On the other hand, there was strong consensus that students respect classroom rules and routines (mean = 4.21, SD = 0.58) and that peer pressure is generally well managed (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.94). These results imply that institutional frameworks such as guidance and counseling, prefect systems, and peer mentorship programs are effective in curbing indiscipline.

Therefore, the findings reveal that students in Mbarara City's lower secondary classrooms exhibit commendable respect for teachers and rules, reduced bullying, punctuality, and good homework completion. However, challenges persist in sustaining disruption-free classrooms, encouraging active participation, and promoting self-discipline. Head teachers emphasized that where teachers are consistent, proactive, and supported by school systems, discipline thrives. Yet, overcrowding and over-reliance on external supervision weaken overall discipline outcomes.

The relationship between classroom management strategies on student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City-Uganda.

To determine the relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted. Composite scores were calculated for both variables: Classroom Management Strategies and Student Discipline. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Pearson Correlation Between Classroom Management Strategies and Student Discipline in Lower Secondary Schools, Mbarara City

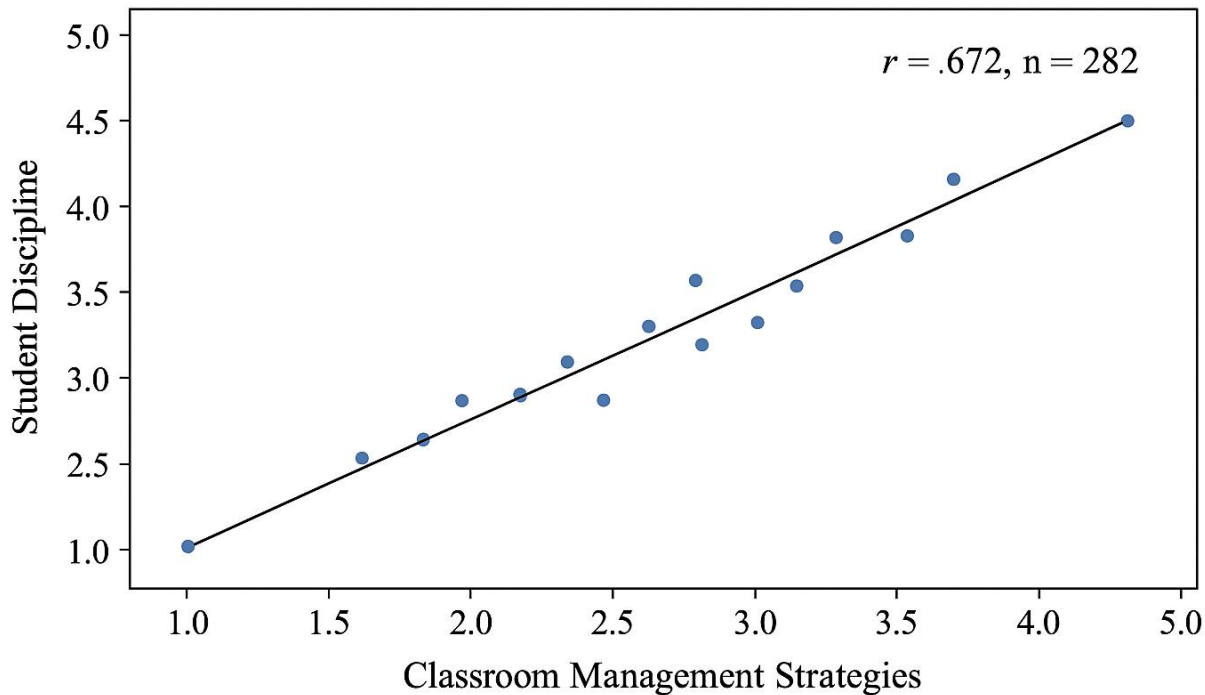
	CM Strategies	Student Discipline
CM Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	43.123
	Covariance	.567
	N	282
Student Discipline	Pearson Correlation	.672**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	36.521
	Covariance	.475
	N	282

Note:

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

- CM Strategies = Composite of all 7 classroom management items
- Student Discipline = Composite of all 12 student discipline items

Classroom Management Strategies and Student Discipline



A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City. The results indicated a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between classroom management strategies and student discipline ($r = .672$, $n = 282$, $p < .01$). This indicates that teachers who employ effective classroom management practices such as clear rule-setting, fair and consistent discipline, active monitoring, calm handling of disruptions, and engaging teaching methods tend to have students who demonstrate higher levels of discipline.

These findings suggest that structured and proactive classroom management strategies are closely associated with desirable behavioral outcomes among learners. In practice, this means that improvements in teacher management strategies can directly enhance students' adherence to rules, respect for authority, punctuality, completion of academic tasks, and self-regulation in the classroom. This underscores the critical role of teacher practices in shaping a disciplined learning environment and aligns with prior research emphasizing the positive impact of well-implemented classroom management on student behavior (Marzano, 2003; Kounin, 1970; Emmer & Stough, 2001).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the study findings, draws conclusions based on the study objectives, and provides recommendations. The study focused on classroom management strategies utilized by teachers, the level of students' discipline, and the relationship between classroom management and student discipline in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City, Uganda. Both quantitative and qualitative data from teachers and students were analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

Discussions

Classroom Management Strategies Utilized by Teachers

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of teachers in Mbarara City secondary schools establish clear rules and procedures for classroom behavior, with 74.4% of respondents strongly agreeing and 20.9% agreeing with this practice. This finding corroborates the assertions of Marzano (2003), who emphasized that setting clear rules enhances predictability and creates a secure learning environment for students. The qualitative testimonies from head teachers reinforce this observation, as one noted: *"We encourage our teachers to begin every term by laying down clear rules so that learners know exactly what is expected of them. Without such rules, discipline becomes very difficult to maintain."* This alignment demonstrates that both

empirical literature and local experiences recognize the central role of structured classroom management in promoting order and facilitating learning.

Conversely, the study revealed that student involvement in developing classroom rules is notably low, with 63.8% of respondents disagreeing with this practice. This indicates a predominance of teacher-centered approaches to classroom management, where rules are imposed rather than negotiated. This finding aligns with the observations of Evertson and Weinstein (2006), who argued that student participation in rule-making promotes ownership and adherence to classroom expectations. During interviews, a head teacher explained: *“Our teachers rarely involve students in making rules because they fear it may undermine authority. Yet I believe involving learners could promote a sense of ownership and reduce cases of indiscipline.”* The combination of quantitative and qualitative data highlights that while rules are clearly defined, the absence of collaborative rule-setting may limit students’ internalization of behavioral expectations, which is consistent with literature emphasizing the benefits of student engagement in management practices.

The study further found that teachers generally apply discipline measures consistently and fairly, with 80.4% of respondents affirming this practice. This demonstrates teachers’ awareness of the importance of fairness in maintaining classroom order and avoiding perceptions of favoritism. Emmer and Stough (2001) support this view, indicating that consistency and impartiality in discipline enhance student respect for rules and authority. A head teacher noted: *“Fairness is key. When students see that punishments are applied equally, they respect the system more. But when they suspect bias, they easily become rebellious.”* This testimony complements the quantitative data, showing that equitable application of rules is both recognized and valued in practice, reinforcing the link between fairness and effective classroom management.

A concerning trend observed in the study is the limited use of rewards and praise to promote positive behavior, with 62% of teachers strongly disagreeing that they employ this strategy. This suggests a reliance on punitive rather than motivational approaches. Skinner's reinforcement theory (1953) emphasizes that positive reinforcement is highly effective in shaping behavior, and similar conclusions were drawn by Rahimi and Karkami (2015), who argued that reward-based strategies are more effective than punishment in maintaining student engagement. One head teacher reflected: *"Teachers here are quick to punish but very slow to praise. Yet sometimes a simple word of encouragement can change a child's attitude far better than punishment."* This finding highlights a gap between theoretical best practices and their implementation, underscoring the need for teacher training in motivational strategies to complement disciplinary measures.

The study also found that the majority of teachers use a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged (76.2% strongly agreed, 18.4% agreed) and handle disruptive behavior calmly and professionally (79.7%). This is consistent with Marzano (2007) and Oliver, Wehby, and Reschly (2011), who emphasized that engaging instructional methods reduce opportunities for misbehavior, and that teacher composure under pressure is critical for effective classroom management. A head teacher explained: *"We always advise teachers not to lose their temper before students. A calm teacher can solve a conflict better than an angry one."* This qualitative insight confirms that teachers recognize the practical importance of calm and engaging pedagogical approaches in managing behavior, aligning with global evidence on the role of instructional strategies in maintaining discipline.

Finally, monitoring student behavior throughout lessons emerged as another strong practice, with 71.9% of respondents strongly agreeing. This proactive approach reflects Kounin's (1970)

concept of “withitness,” emphasizing teacher awareness of classroom dynamics to prevent misbehavior before it escalates. A head teacher noted: *“The best-managed classes are those where teachers are alert. Once learners notice that a teacher is watchful, they are less likely to misbehave.”* The convergence of literature, quantitative data, and qualitative testimony illustrates that vigilant supervision is a critical component of effective classroom management.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that teachers in Mbarara City secondary schools excel in structuring classrooms, monitoring behavior, applying discipline fairly, and engaging students through varied instructional methods. However, gaps remain in student involvement in rule-making and the use of positive reinforcement. These weaknesses reflect a reliance on authoritative classroom management approaches and highlight opportunities for adopting more student-centered and motivational strategies. The qualitative testimonies from head teachers further reinforce these conclusions, providing practical insight into the realities of classroom management within the context of Mbarara City.

Students’ Discipline in Lower Secondary Classrooms

The findings from this study reveal that students in Mbarara City secondary schools generally demonstrate moderate to high levels of discipline, though some areas require improvement. Respect for teachers and classmates emerged as a prominent feature, with 88.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that students exhibit respect. This aligns with Asiyai (2011), who emphasized that maintaining respect is foundational to effective classroom order and student engagement. A head teacher supported this view, noting: *“Respect is both taught and modeled by teachers. Where teachers respect learners, it is reciprocated. The few disrespect cases are often linked to external factors such as poor parental guidance.”* This demonstrates that respect,

cultivated through both teacher behavior and structured rules, remains a cornerstone of discipline in lower secondary classrooms.

The study further indicated that teachers' classroom management strategies effectively reduced cases of indiscipline, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.84 (SD = 1.09). This finding resonates with Ofoyuru and Too-Okema (2019), who reported that structured management strategies such as rewards, punishment, and counseling positively influence student behavior. Qualitative feedback from head teachers emphasized that proactive disciplinary approaches, including positive reinforcement, are effective where consistently applied: *"We encourage teachers to use proactive discipline techniques such as positive reinforcement, but some still rely on punitive methods. Where proactive approaches are consistent, indiscipline cases fall drastically."* This demonstrates the interplay between teacher strategies and student compliance, highlighting the need for consistent implementation to sustain positive behavior outcomes.

Students' awareness of the consequences of misbehavior was also rated highly (mean = 3.78, SD = 1.06), suggesting effective communication of rules and sanctions. This supports Evertson and Weinstein's (2013) findings that proactive management and clear expectations contribute significantly to improved student behavior. However, the presence of a minority of students who downplay rules suggests that communication alone is insufficient without consistent reinforcement and monitoring.

Despite these positive trends, the study found that classrooms are not entirely free from disruptions, with a mean score of 2.81 (SD = 1.21). Nearly half of the respondents indicated frequent behavioral interruptions, particularly in overcrowded classrooms. This observation is consistent with Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who argued that student engagement is influenced by class size, available resources, and instructional strategies. A head teacher noted:

“Disruptions are inevitable in crowded classrooms where individual attention is difficult. Teachers often spend more time managing behavior than delivering lessons.” This highlights the practical challenges faced by teachers in resource-constrained settings, reinforcing the importance of innovative classroom management and engagement techniques to minimize disruptions.

Punctuality and preparedness were relatively strong, with a mean of 3.92 (SD = 1.04), indicating that most students arrive on time and ready to learn. Similarly, instances of bullying and fighting were minimal (mean = 4.18, SD = 0.67), suggesting that preventive strategies and school policies, such as guidance and counseling or peer mentorship, are effective. These results echo Wubbels et al. (2015), who found that positive teacher-student relationships reduce behavioral issues and foster a conducive learning environment. A head teacher reflected: *“Students generally respect rules, and bullying is rare due to supervision by teachers and peer mentors.”* This demonstrates that relational and supervisory interventions play a crucial role in maintaining discipline.

Homework completion and assignment submission were also rated highly (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.76), indicating strong academic responsibility among students. However, qualitative testimonies revealed that socio-economic challenges hinder consistent completion for some learners: *“Students from homes without electricity or support often struggle with homework, but in-school homework clubs have helped bridge this gap.”* This aligns with Marzano and Marzano (2003), who emphasized that environmental factors and institutional support significantly influence student behavior and academic outcomes.

The weakest aspects of discipline were active participation without causing disruptions (mean = 2.61, SD = 1.27) and self-discipline (mean = 2.23, SD = 1.08). These findings suggest that many

students rely heavily on external control rather than self-regulation, reflecting Morrison and Vaandering's (2012) observations that restorative and student-centered approaches can promote responsibility and internalized discipline. A head teacher noted: *"Our learners are obedient when supervised, but very few demonstrate internal self-discipline. They require continuous monitoring to stay on task."* This highlights the need for strategies that cultivate intrinsic motivation and self-management skills, beyond reliance on punitive or supervisory measures.

Finally, strong adherence to classroom rules (mean = 4.21, SD = 0.58) and effective management of peer pressure (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.94) suggest that institutional structures, including guidance programs, prefect systems, and peer mentorship, are instrumental in supporting discipline. This finding complements the literature on proactive classroom management (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013) and relational approaches (Wubbels et al., 2015), showing that when teacher strategies are combined with institutional support, student discipline improves significantly.

In conclusion, the study confirms that students in Mbarara City secondary schools demonstrate commendable respect for teachers, adherence to rules, punctuality, and homework completion. However, challenges persist in maintaining disruption-free classrooms, promoting active participation, and developing self-discipline. Head teachers' testimonies suggest that where teachers are consistent, proactive, and supported by school systems, discipline thrives. These findings underscore the importance of combining structured management strategies with relational, motivational, and restorative approaches, particularly in resource-limited and overcrowded classroom contexts.

The Relationship Between Classroom Management Strategies and Students' Discipline

The study examined how classroom management strategies employed by teachers in lower secondary classrooms influence student discipline in Mbarara City secondary schools. The findings indicate a clear connection between structured teacher practices and positive student behavior, corroborating the assertions of multiple scholars in the literature review.

Firstly, teachers' establishment of clear rules and procedures was identified as the most consistently applied classroom management strategy, with 74.4% of respondents strongly agreeing and 20.9% agreeing that they maintain explicit behavioral expectations. This practice is directly related to higher levels of student respect for teachers and peers, as reflected in the discipline indicators (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.82). These findings align with Evertson and Weinstein (2013), who emphasized that clear routines, consistent expectations, and proactive classroom management reduce behavioral disruptions. A head teacher reinforced this link, stating: *"We encourage our teachers to begin every term by laying down clear rules so that learners know exactly what is expected of them. Without such rules, discipline becomes very difficult to maintain."* This testimony underscores the practical influence of structured management on promoting respect and adherence to rules.

Secondly, the use of diverse teaching methods to keep students engaged was another strategy positively associated with student discipline. The study found that 76.2% of teachers strongly agreed that they employ varied instructional approaches. This corresponds with Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who reported that engaging instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, project-based tasks, and participatory activities enhance student involvement and reduce misbehavior. Qualitative feedback supported this, with one teacher noting: *"When lessons are interesting, students focus more and fewer disruptions occur."*

Therefore, active instructional engagement appears to moderate disruptive tendencies among students, highlighting the link between pedagogical strategies and discipline outcomes.

Thirdly, the consistent and fair application of disciplinary measures was shown to reinforce students' understanding of behavioral consequences. A majority of teachers (80.4%) confirmed that they apply discipline fairly and consistently. This aligns with Ofoyuru and Too-Okema (2019), who suggested that fairness and transparency in disciplinary measures strengthen compliance and reduce behavioral infractions. Head teachers' testimonies emphasized that students are more likely to respect rules when they perceive punishments as impartial: *"Fairness is key. When students see that punishments are applied equally, they respect the system more."* The strong association between fairness and students' perception of rules suggests that consistent disciplinary strategies are fundamental to promoting a disciplined classroom environment.

Despite these positive outcomes, some management strategies were underutilized, particularly involving students in developing classroom rules (63.8% disagreed) and the use of rewards and praise to reinforce positive behavior (62% strongly disagreed). These gaps indicate an overreliance on authoritarian approaches and limited adoption of motivational strategies. Morrison and Vaandering (2012) and Skinner (1953) emphasized that restorative practices and positive reinforcement are critical in cultivating intrinsic discipline and engagement. Head teachers highlighted this concern: *"Teachers here are quick to punish but very slow to praise. Yet sometimes a simple word of encouragement can change a child's attitude far better than punishment."* This underlines the potential for improving student self-discipline and participation by integrating student-centered and motivational strategies alongside traditional rule enforcement.

These findings suggest that the presence of structured, consistent, and engaging classroom management strategies contributes significantly to better student discipline. Proactive strategies, such as clear rules, active monitoring, and varied instructional methods, correlate with higher respect for authority, reduced behavioral disruptions, and improved adherence to classroom routines. Conversely, limited use of student participation and positive reinforcement corresponds with lower levels of intrinsic self-discipline and active engagement. This balance between authoritative and motivational strategies appears critical for achieving comprehensive classroom discipline.

The quantitative patterns observed in this study provide a rationale for testing the statistical relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline. Given the observed associations where effective management aligns with higher discipline levels and gaps in participatory or reinforcement strategies correspond with weaker discipline the Pearson correlation coefficient can quantify the strength and direction of this relationship. This statistical test will help determine whether the relationship is significant and substantiate the qualitative and descriptive evidence with empirical rigor.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions were drawn regarding classroom management strategies, student discipline, and their interrelationship in lower secondary schools in Mbarara City, Uganda.

Firstly, the study established that teachers in lower secondary classrooms employ a variety of classroom management strategies to maintain order and facilitate learning. Most teachers reported establishing clear rules and procedures, monitoring student behavior consistently,

applying discipline measures fairly, and using diverse instructional methods to engage learners. However, there were notable gaps in involving students in rule-making and using rewards and praise as positive reinforcement, indicating that classroom management practices remain largely teacher-centered and authoritative. These findings suggest that while teachers prioritize structure and consistency, motivational and student-centered strategies are underutilized.

Secondly, the study examined the level of students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms and found that students generally exhibited moderate to high levels of discipline. Most learners demonstrated respect for teachers and peers, punctuality, adherence to rules, and completion of assignments. Nevertheless, challenges were observed in sustaining disruption-free classrooms, encouraging active participation, and fostering self-discipline, particularly in large or overcrowded classrooms. This highlights that while formal classroom management strategies support order, students' internalization of discipline remains uneven, often relying on external supervision and teacher control.

Finally, the analysis of the relationship between classroom management strategies and student discipline revealed a strong positive and statistically significant correlation. This indicates that effective classroom management practices are associated with higher levels of student discipline. Teachers' consistent, structured, and proactive approaches create environments conducive to positive behavior, demonstrating that strategies such as clear rules, continuous monitoring, and fair application of discipline play a critical role in shaping students' conduct.

Therefore, the study concluded that effective classroom management strategies are essential for fostering discipline in lower secondary classrooms. While teachers demonstrate competence in maintaining order, there is a need to incorporate more student-centered and motivational approaches to enhance engagement and self-regulation among learners. Strengthening these

practices could improve both classroom behavior and overall learning outcomes in Mbarara City secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that teachers in Mbarara City secondary schools adopt more student-centered classroom management approaches. While the study showed that teachers effectively establish rules and monitor behavior, involving students in developing classroom rules and routines can enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility. When learners participate in setting expectations, they are more likely to comply voluntarily, which fosters internalized self-discipline and reduces reliance on external supervision.

Additionally, teachers should incorporate positive reinforcement strategies such as praise, recognition, and rewards to motivate students toward desirable behavior. These strategies not only encourage engagement but also help create a positive learning environment where students feel valued and respected.

School administrators and headteachers are encouraged to provide continuous professional development for teachers on modern and evidence-based classroom management practices. Training should include techniques for fostering positive student-teacher relationships, implementing restorative discipline methods, and managing large classrooms effectively.

Support from the administration, including clear policies and guidance on consistent disciplinary measures, is essential for ensuring that teachers can apply these strategies effectively. Schools should also invest in improving classroom environments by providing adequate resources, suitable layouts, and tools that facilitate student engagement and minimize behavioral disruptions. Such improvements can enhance both teaching effectiveness and student discipline.

At the policy level, education authorities and policymakers should develop guidelines and frameworks that promote proactive, student-centered classroom management across secondary schools. Policies should encourage the integration of motivational strategies and restorative practices in daily classroom routines.

Furthermore, measures to reduce class sizes and improve resources are critical in supporting teachers' ability to maintain discipline and engage students effectively. Recognition programs that reward schools or teachers who demonstrate excellence in classroom management can also motivate the adoption of innovative and effective strategies.

Finally, for future research, it is recommended to investigate the long-term effects of student-centered classroom management on both academic outcomes and behavioral development. Studies could also explore the applicability and effectiveness of restorative discipline approaches in Ugandan classrooms and compare practices between urban and rural settings. Such research would provide deeper insights into the contextual factors affecting classroom management and student discipline, offering practical solutions for improving education quality in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESPONDENTS



BISHOP STUART UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 09 Mbarara-Uganda

Tel: +256 485-433468

E-mail: rec@bsu.ac.ug

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Study title: Classroom Management Strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City Secondary Schools

Principal Investigator(s): **Katusiime Patience**

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by **Katusiime Patience**, a researcher affiliated with Bishop Stuart University. This consent form explains the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and your rights as a participant.

What you should know about this study:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

If you agree to participate, your role and responsibilities will be clearly explained.

Purpose of the Study

You are being invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore the relationship between classroom management strategies employed by teachers and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in secondary schools in Mbarara City. This study seeks to gather insights from teachers and students to identify effective strategies and understand how they impact academic outcomes.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview or fill out a questionnaire about your experiences with classroom management and academic performance. The interview will take approximately 20 to 35 minutes, and the questionnaire will take around 20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous, and your participation will be voluntary.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no known significant risks or discomforts associated with this study. However, if you feel uncomfortable at any point, you have the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences.

Benefits

While there may be no direct benefits to you for participating, your involvement in this study will help identify effective classroom management strategies that may lead to improved academic performance in Mbarara City secondary schools.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your identity will not be linked to any of the data collected, and any information you provide will be anonymized and used solely for the purposes of this study. The data will be stored securely and only accessible to the researchers.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any point without any penalties. If you withdraw, any information you provided will be excluded from the analysis.

Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns, please contact:

1. Katusiime Patience

Principal Investigator

Bishop Stuart University

P.O. Box 09, Mbarara, Uganda

Tel: +256 751-349100

2. Dr. Godfrey Zaari Rukundo

Chairman, BSU-REC

P.O. Box 09, Mbarara, Uganda

Tel: +256 772 663 671

What Your Signature Means

By signing this form, you confirm the following:

You have read and understood the purpose, procedures, benefits, and potential risks of this study.

Your participation is voluntary, and you have had the chance to ask questions.

You agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: Date:

Researcher's Signature: Date.....

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear respondent,

I am Katusiime Patience, a postgraduate student of Bishop Stuart University offering a Master's Degree of Education in Management, planning and Administration, conducting a research study about "**Investigating the relationship between classroom Management Strategies and Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms in Mbarara City Secondary Schools**". You have been selected to participate in this study because your experiences and opinions are important in helping us understand how classroom management affects student discipline. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes related to this study. Your honest responses will contribute significantly to improving classroom management practices and enhancing student discipline in our schools. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

(Please tick the appropriate response)

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age Group:

20–30 years ☐ 31–40 years ☐ 41–50 years ☐ 51 years and above ☐

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Section B: Classroom Management Strategies

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I establish clear rules and procedures for classroom behavior.					
2	I involve students in developing classroom rules.					
3	I apply discipline measures consistently and fairly.					
4	I use rewards and praise to promote good behavior.					
5	I use a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged.					
6	I handle disruptive behavior calmly and professionally.					
7	I monitor student behavior throughout the lesson.					

Others please specify;

.....

Section C: Student Discipline

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Students in my class show respect for the teacher and classmates.					
2	Cases of indiscipline have reduced due to my management strategies.					
3	Students understand the consequences of their misbehavior.					
4	My classroom is generally free of behavioral disruptions.					
5	Students arrive to class on time and are prepared to learn.					
6	Bullying and fighting among students are rare in my classroom.					
7	Students complete their assignments and homework regularly.					
8	Students actively participate in classroom activities without causing disruptions.					
9	There is minimal use of mobile phones or other distractions during lessons.					
10	Students demonstrate self-discipline and manage their behavior appropriately.					

11	There is clear respect for classroom rules and routines among students.					
12	Peer pressure negatively affecting discipline in class is well managed.					

Others please specify;

.....

What classroom management strategies do you find most effective in promoting discipline?

.....

What challenges do you face in managing classroom behavior?

.....

What recommendations would you make to improve student discipline in your school?

.....

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Instructions: Please tick the most alternative answer and fill in the spaces provided.

Section A: Background of the study

1. Gender ☐
 - i. Male
 - ii. Female ☐
2. Age years
3. Level of education / class
 - i. S.1-S.2 ☐
 - ii. S.3-S.4 ☐
 - iii. S.5-S.6 ☐

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Classroom management strategies used by school teachers in Mbarara City.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The teacher uses clear rules to manage the classroom.					
2	The teacher rewards students for good behavior.					

3	The teacher maintains a structured and organized classroom environment.					
4	The teacher addresses disruptive behavior immediately.					
5	The teacher creates engaging activities to keep students focused.					
6	The teacher uses positive reinforcement (praise, encouragement) frequently.					
7	The teacher promotes mutual respect among students.					
8	The teacher encourages student participation in classroom discussions.					
9	The teacher applies consistent consequences for misbehavior.					
10	The teacher is flexible and adapts classroom management strategies when needed.					

In your opinion, what do teachers do to maintain discipline in your classroom?

.....

What would you recommend teachers do to improve student discipline?

.....

THANK YOU

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Head Teachers and Directors of Studies

Questions

- i. What classroom management strategies do teachers in your school typically use to maintain order and promote a positive learning environment?
- ii. How do teachers address behavioral issues in the classroom, and what specific techniques have been most effective?
- iii. Do teachers receive any training on classroom management, and if so, how does this training influence their teaching practices?
- iv. In your experience, how do classroom management practices influence Students' discipline in lower secondary classrooms?
- v. Can you provide an example where effective classroom management led to noticeable improvements in student academic outcomes?
- vi. Do you believe that schools with more structured classroom management see better academic results, and why or why not?

THANK YOU

Appendix 5: Budget

Number	Item	Quantity	Unit cost	Total costs
1	Stationary			
	Pens & pencils	10dozens	10,000=	100,000=
	Papers	10dozens	15,000=	150,000=
	Note books	10dozens	1,500=	15,000=
	Markers	10	1,500=	15,000=
	Ink pads	10	1,500=	15,000=
2	Field work			
	Transport (to & from)	10trips	50,000=	500,000=
	Meals	20meals	5,000=	100,000=
	Accommodation	10days	10,000=	100,000=
	Field attires e.g. gum boots, umbrella		50,000=	50,000=
	Airtime		50,000=	50,000=
3	Secretarial			

	Typing and printing		100,000=	100,000=
	Photocopy		200,000=	200,000=
	Binding	10	10,000=	100,000=
4	Compensation	325	2,000=	650,000=
	Total			2,145,000=

Appendix 6: Work Plan

Activity	April 2024	May 2024	Jan 2025	March 2025	March 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025
Concept paper								
Proposal writing								
Proposal presentation								
BSU-REC approval								
Data collection								
Data analysis								
Submission of Dissertation								