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Management of Students' Discipline and Academic Performance in Schools

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Keywords:

*Student Discipline,
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Performance,
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This study examined the management of students' discipline and its relationship with academic performance in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality. The objectives were to assess the level of discipline management, determine academic performance levels, and explore the correlation between discipline management and academic outcomes. A cross-sectional correlational survey design was employed, utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. A sample of 384 respondents (188 students and 186 teachers) was randomly selected from 10 secondary schools. Data collection tools included self-developed questionnaires, document analysis, and interviews. Data analysis involved ANOVA, mean scores, and Spearman's rank-order correlation. Results revealed a high level of discipline management but low academic performance. No significant relationship was found between discipline management and academic performance. The low academic achievement may be influenced by factors such as students' and parents' socio-economic and financial status. The study suggests that existing disciplinary strategies effectively address indiscipline but recommends revisiting and enhancing policies and interventions to improve academic outcomes across all education levels in the municipality.

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INTRODUCTION

World over, managers of secondary schools are experiencing challenges in maintaining students' discipline (Karugaba, 2009). In recent years, secondary schools have witnessed incessant activities triggered by students' indiscipline that has over time subjected the students to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students extensions in their study years, poor student concentration on academic programs and poor teacher-student relationships leading to tremendous setbacks in students' academic performance; consequently, students' academic performance has comparatively become so low over the years (Sayed, 2004).

Learning Institutions worldwide provide policy frameworks and policy guidelines on student discipline management at all levels of education (Ike, 2006). According to Nwankwo (2000), many secondary schools globally have developed a number of new strategies geared towards the management of student discipline involving student leaders.

Christie (2000) noted that the current status of student discipline management in most secondary schools in Australia was rated high in 1990, whereas at the beginning of the year 2000, during a school survey conducted on secondary school managers to find out the discipline management strategies mostly used in schools, indicated low status of management of students' discipline.

All over the world, investment in education is a critical component of national development efforts; nations today depend increasingly on knowledge, ideas and skills which are produced through education (Bassett, 2006). According to Mumford (2010), nations invest in education because society expects it to contribute to national development through training intellectual resource pool that will,

through further academic pursuit be absorbed by universities and other higher institutions of learning where they will be produced as highly skilled personnel for new knowledge generation through research and innovation to solve developmental problems.

The education sub-sector in Canada has registered a substantial increase in government funding towards high schools in a bid to facilitate management effectiveness (Tettey, 2006). In a similar view, Sayed (2004) investigated the effects of students' discipline management strategies through the survey method in the United States of America and found a low status of discipline management. The study further noted that most high school students who got involved in disciplinary acts were not subjected to penalties as there were no clear and strong policy framework to base on.

Kiggundu (2017) indicated that one of the biggest challenges many secondary schools continue to face globally is the accelerated pressure on managing students' discipline. According to a report commissioned by the universities of New Zealand in 2012, aimed at comparing the strategies used to manage student discipline in New Zealand with those in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, between the years 2005 and 2008 revealed that all secondary schools in these countries had varied ways to regulate discipline. Irrespective of the above concerns, generally, school administrators are faced with constant challenges regarding the management of student discipline (Mumford, 2010).

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, Botswana and South Africa, where the standards of education are higher with an accelerated number of students as compared to other African countries, secondary schools in recent times witnessed incessant cases of students' indiscipline acts (Tettey, 2006). Tettey

further noted that the effect of these repeated students' indiscipline acts has led to a drastic decline in students' academic progress. Managers of most secondary schools have thus suffered tremendous setbacks in the management of students' discipline.

According to Kasozi (2003), students' indiscipline acts in secondary schools in East Africa have, over time, subjected them to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students undeserved extensions in their study years, poor students' concentration on academic programs and poor teacher-student relationships, amongst others. Consequently, students' academic performance has comparatively become so low while various forms of examination malpractice are on the increase. According to Sayed (2004), the situation of low status of student discipline management has assumed such an alarming dimension in most secondary schools in developing countries.

In a study conducted by Mihyo (2007), comparing the level of students' academic performance in government secondary schools in West African Countries with those in private secondary schools revealed that students enrolled in private secondary schools seem to have a higher level of academic performance than those enrolled in government schools.

Mihyo (2007), further indicated in his report that students in government secondary schools are more involved in indiscipline behaviors simply because of the existence of bureaucratic procedures of disciplinary committee actions whereas private schools management structure on discipline management are quicker since students' indiscipline acts like violent strikes in schools threatens their businesses and property and thus, they maximally exploits all avenues in discipline management thus high status of students' discipline management in private schools.

The problem of low levels of student academic performance in secondary schools is more alarming

in African countries. For instance, in Zimbabwe between 2006 and 2007, fifty percent of the students enrolled in high school level failed their final year examinations (Fox, 2003). Across all secondary schools in Uganda, reports from the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and other education agencies have indicated a low level of students' academic performance that is below average. Sixty percent (60%) of the total number of students who registered and sat for the final national examination failed in all the papers they registered for (Fox, 2003). In Northern Uganda, particularly in the districts of Amuru, Pader, Oyam, and Kitgum among others, the districts have registered a drastic decline in performance by 40 % between 2010, 50 % 2011, 55% in 2013 and 65 % in 2014 (National Examination Report to Secondary Schools, 2014).

In addition to the above Businye (2010) in her report while concluding a study on student gang attacks commonly known as (BATAK) a name given to students' hooligan leaders noted that during the year 2006 and 2010 when the student riots were at the peak almost in very many schools, very low level of performance was registered especially by candidate classes who were greatly involved in the strike. Stemming from the private secondary schools mentioned above, the spirit of such hooligan behaviours continued to spread to government schools and circulated in the entire Gulu District before they were gradually dealt with through collective efforts. It is, therefore, not surprising that the major government schools mentioned above registered a high level of failure rate during these hooligan periods.

Statement of the Problem

School administrators continue to maintain a conducive learning environment by ensuring the operation of discipline in schools for good academic performance (Ethiane, 2014). Secondary schools in Uganda are experiencing an accelerated decline in the level of students' academic performance at both ordinary and advanced levels (Kiggundu, 2017). In Northern Uganda over the recent years, particularly

in 2004, over 60% of the total number of students who registered and sat their final year examinations at the ordinary level failed all the papers, and in 2010, 67% of students scored below average while in 2011, 69% of the total number of students scored averagely (DEO Report, 2014). At an advanced level, according to a report by UNEB (2014), the level of failure rose from 50% in 2011 to 65% in 2014, and this declining rate is expected to increase when it remains unchecked (Natal, 2010).

Researchers in recent times indicated that students' poor academic performance is attributed to low levels of students' discipline. Indiscipline in schools manifests itself in students' violent behaviour, refusal to follow school rules and regulations, theft, alcoholism, fornication and dogging lessons (Mpaata, 2008). The fact that various teachers who are on the disciplinary committees to handle indiscipline cases are sometimes over-engaged in it by the schools disrupts learning and has a direct impact on student achievement. Consequently, management of students' indiscipline may cripple the normal functions of school managers. Thus, the study investigated the relationship between the management of students' discipline and academic performance at the O-level in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality.

Main Objective

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at the O-level in Gulu Municipality with the view to improving schools' academic performance.

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific research objectives:

- i. To determine the level of management of students' discipline in secondary schools at O. Level in Gulu Municipality.

- ii. To determine the level of academic performance in secondary schools at O. Level in Gulu Municipality.
- iii. To establish the relationship between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at O. Level in Gulu Municipality.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. What is the level of management of students' discipline in Secondary Schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality?
- ii. What is the level of academic performance in Secondary Schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality?
- iii. What is the relationship between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in Secondary Schools at the O-level in Gulu Municipality?

Scope of the Study

This study was conducted in Gulu Municipality, in Gulu District. Gulu district is bordered by the districts of Oyam from the South, Nwoya from the West, Pader from the East and Lamwo from the North, and it is at a road distance of 332 Km from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. This study investigated the relationship between the management of students' discipline and academic performance at the O-level in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality. The targeted participants were O-level secondary school students, head teachers and teachers. The study considered a period of three years from the year 2012 to 2014, and Data was collected during the period of August 2015.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform Government Ministries of Finance, Economic

Planning and Development, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, Sports and Public Service on the level of discipline management in secondary schools and how it relates to students' academic performance. The study could inform the Government to support school administrators in enforcing student discipline. The findings could also be helpful to policymakers, implementers and education agencies in setting policy frameworks and guidelines on discipline management for improvement in academic performance.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all respondents completed and returned the questionnaires in time, and the information given was correct.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study on the management of students' discipline and academic performance was guided by Theory X and Y, advanced by McGregor. Theory X postulates that workers or employees are lazy and will always avoid responsibility. To achieve high performance, there is a need to coerce, control and even threaten them (Okumbe, 1998). Theory Y postulates that employees are human beings and therefore the role of a manager is to provide an enabling environment that enables employees to realise the potential they are endowed with. McGregor's theory was adopted for this study because there are cases where students just do not want to follow a set code of behaviour in an educational organisation, despite the application of various leadership skills like using set rules and regulations as well as punishments to both deter and retribute the offenders (Okumbe, 1998).

Conceptual Perspective

According to Newman (2005), management of student discipline refers to all forms of well-stipulated policy framework and guidelines that control and regulate students' activities by enforcing, promoting and maintaining only required

and acceptable behaviour in society. Kamukama (2006) referred to the management of students' discipline as involving policy framework and guidelines witnessed in the students' guild, dean of students, faculty and senate committee guidelines on discipline management as well as the functionalities of these policy framework and guideline in the actual provision of required services like students' orientation, training and inductions, guidance and counseling services among others. Fox (2010) dealt with management functions of planning, actuating, organising and directing, among others, to enforce students' discipline.

However, in this study, the management of students' discipline will be looked at in terms of the functionality of secondary school rules and regulations, disciplinary committee, punishment according to level of indiscipline, and the management of students' discipline that encompasses all its' auxiliary structures in discipline implementation, resources and responsible offices and relevant committee in schools. To achieve high performance, Theory X and Y advanced by McGregor would apply to coerce, control and even threaten discipline in students (Okumbe, 1998). The head teachers, as school managers, need to have an effective leadership style to acquaint them with the challenges of disciplining learners. Everard & Morris (1996:14) explained leadership styles as autocratic, paternalistic, consultative as well as democratic. These styles can play a major role in the implementation of discipline.

According to Hollman (2000), academic performance refers to total mark scores obtained from any form of assessment by a student. Bwire (2005) defined academic performance as the total assessment. Branham (2005) referred to academic performance as the overall results obtained from the overall evaluation.

In this study, academic performance was treated as the students' scores of distinctions and passes in first grade, especially at the UCE level. Students'

performance in all forms of assessment and evaluation that a student undergoes during a particular period of his or her studies such as in homework, tests, assignments, attendance, participation and examination among others are equally considered important as it reflects their progress to the next level (Natal, 2010; Hollman, 2000). Drawing from the above background discussion that indicated low status in students' discipline management and low level of students' academic performance in secondary schools worldwide, it was therefore necessary to investigate the situation in Gulu Municipality to ascertain clear measures of dealing with such.

Contextual Perspective of the Study

In Gulu Municipality, the issue of secondary school students' academic performance is still a great challenge, many reports from education agencies have indicated low performance in students' academic performance particularly in Gulu High School (GHS), and Sir Samuel Baker School (SSBS), among others Newman (2014), according to percentage level, GHS scored 30% and SSBS score 45% in last year's Ordinary level national examinations which indicated low level in secondary schools performance too (UNEB Report 2014).

According to Kamukama (2006), the management of students' discipline in secondary schools is reported to be low. Most school managers are not strongly involved in enforcing students' discipline. This vice is reported to be worse in private secondary schools due to their high interest in making profits, hence high enrollments that breed indiscipline behaviour with less effort put into performance improvement and discipline management. For instance, between the years 2006 and 2007, several student riots were witnessed in several private schools, as a result of students' hooligan behaviour. Many atrocities were committed by students of these schools, which have left some of these schools to experience permanent

closure due to the losses incurred during such student riots (Newman, 2010).

Empirical Review

Level of Management of Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools

Ideally, schools set discipline for the proper governing of the various lifestyles of students, that is, the dos and don'ts. (Okumbe, 1998) opines that regulations, on the other hand, are authoritative disciplines with a course of law intended to promote discipline in school. Hernandez, & Seem (2004) argue that the operation of schools is directly influenced by the way the schools administer students' disruptive behaviour. They further explained that the parameters for students' behaviour and academic expectations must be clearly stated to students. If the school administrator fails to establish rules, consequences are ambiguous, and incidents of students' disruptive behaviour will further affect academic performance.

Jones et al. (2002) also concur with Hernandez & Seem (2004). He argues that effective schools demonstrate sound inclusive practices, which include emphasising school discipline, collaborative leadership and good practice. The school discipline, therefore, prescribes the standard of behaviour expected of the teachers and the students.

According to Jeynes (2014), the status of management of student discipline has risen up due to collective actions being implemented particularly in high schools in Australia to deter student strikes that have over time undermined students' academic performance in most Australian secondary schools, school administrators have successfully used policy framework and guidelines as basis of reference to students in enforcing discipline in and outside the school.

According to cross-tabulation and binary logistic regression procedures by Andy Whisman, & Patricia Cahape H. (2014) on the association

between school disciplines and academic performance, findings reveal that when the disciplinary consequences take the form of in-school or out-of-school suspension, the risk for scoring below proficiency increases and the proficiency gap widens.

According to Adams (2003), school rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct in students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003). Also, in admission schools, especially at secondary level, students are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations (Adams, 2003). These rules and regulations specify, in most cases, what school members should do and what they should not do.

Despite this expectation, in most secondary schools in Gulu Municipality, students break these rules and regulations with widespread indiscipline acts such as escaping from schools, girl/boy relationships, theft of learning materials, noise-making, vernacular speaking, late coming, not completing assignment, absenteeism/truancy, disobedience to prefects and teachers, fornication, abuse of drugs and drinking alcohol, use of vulgar language, fighting, sneaking through the fence, idleness, and cheating in exams taking of participating in frequent strikes with closure of schools and suspension of students that affect students' academic performance.

Federici, & Caffentzis (2013) however, in their published report on the management of students' affairs indicated a chronological trend in the status of student discipline management in high schools in the United States and pointed out that most school administrators over time struggles with indiscipline students when it comes to lesson attendance and completing of their assignments. For instance, between 2000 and 2006, when cases of student hooligans were at their peak globally. They further recommended that such hooligan behaviour was being triggered by the low status of discipline

management by school administrators in schools, according to the identified gaps that exist in management functions.

In African states, the status of management of students' discipline in secondary schools is reported very low as compared to that of USA high schools; increasing student activism according to Konings, & Nyamnjoh (2003) has weakened school management and further led to increase students' riots, especially in Nigeria and South Africa. During 2000 and 2006, most schools experienced students' hooligan rampage that exposed the low status of students' discipline management by school managers in schools, including those in Asian countries. What was peculiar in their report, however, was the need to strengthen the enforcement of the policy framework and guidelines in place in a bid to uplift the status of management.

According to a study conducted to by Tettey (2006) to compare the average level of students discipline management with years taken in the school, he noted that across all secondary schools, the status of discipline management is moderately low with exception of a few private schools who emphasizes profit maximization by attracting more number of students to their schools through keeping management status majorly Nigeria.

Although some school administrators have devised creative ways of dealing with student's discipline Musisi (2005), reports that initially, management of student's discipline concentrated at a management level only, however, in the recent years, the role of students' leadership and the entire society efforts in dealing with student's discipline is being widely adopted by many school actors.

In the same line, Fox (2003) while reporting on status of students' discipline management in Nigeria showed that as many secondary schools are being taken over by government of Nigeria, management gaps are being identified especially in non- Christian founded secondary schools thus

portraying low status in students' discipline management by school managers.

Kabangize (2004) carried out a study on students' control through rules and regulations set by individual schools in Uganda and observed that rules and regulations are enforced through prefects' bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents. Cotton (2001) also argued that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding students about the rules and regulations of the school and monitoring their compliance with them. However, it has become normal in many secondary schools for students to break school rules and regulations with impunity, showing a lack of respect to school authority, damaging of school property, beating up their teachers, rioting at any slightest opportunity and even inflicting harm on one another to the extent of using acid as a means of defense. The consequences of such undisciplined behaviour may result in poor students' academic performance.

Throughout Ugandan secondary schools, many scholars who conducted studies on students' discipline management indicated in their studies their low status in managing discipline (Tetty, 2003). According to Fallon (2003), the existence of low status of students' discipline management in most secondary schools in Northern Uganda could be attributed to low parental involvement in helping the school administrators with management issues.

According to the institutions surveyed by Fox (2003) and Tetty (2006), enhancing management functions in dealing with student discipline in the school was reported a substantial decline in management status by 40% in Gulu District, whereas in Kitgum District it was by 50%. From the survey, the need to strengthen and uplift management functions in controlling students' behaviour was recommended. From the above discussions, the general status of student discipline management appears low, thus, there is a need to fill these identified gaps so as to uplift the status of managing discipline in schools.

According to Matsoga (2003), in his study, he discovered the widespread violence and misbehaviour that existed in many secondary schools. This lack of discipline, which interferes with the teaching and learning process, manifests itself in various ways, including bullying, lateness, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy, and inability or unwillingness to do class work at home. School disciplines are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct of students, which implies self-control, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003). However, on admission, students are given a prospectus, which spells out some of these rules, specifying in most cases what students should do and what they should not do.

Adeyemo (1985), in his study on the level of discipline in secondary schools in Nigeria, established that there is widespread violation of school rules and regulations, which was capable of obstructing the smooth management of the school system and thereby affecting students' performance.

According to a cross-sectional survey conducted by Ethiane, O. Stanley (2014) on discipline and academic performance, statistics reveal that 73% of the respondents believed that the management of school discipline has an effect on academic performance. The findings show that effective school discipline should be encouraged in controlling students' behaviour this affects students' general academic performance.

Level of Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

The increasing decline in students' academic performance at the secondary school level is a global issue. The difficulties within OECD countries are well documented. In the United States, for example, about 60% of students who registered and sat for the final year examination in the year 2000 failed to score marks above average, lowering

the level of academic performance further (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001).

A 2000 school survey on improving students' academic achievements in high schools in the USA indicated that 40% of students were unable to achieve in academics as their academic background was poorly established, while at the primary level thus they could not obtain high-level performance (Sanderson, 2000).

In Canada, it has been argued that one of the challenges that many school administrators will continue to face over the next decade or so is the declining level of students' academic performance, which has assumed many policy headlines as very low compared to the past years (Carleton University, 2000). Similarly, it was suggested in France that in the 21st century, there will be a crisis in managing the quality of secondary school education, with an estimated decline in students' academic performance by 67%. This indicated that the level of performance was low across the board (Mathews, 2003).

According to Gimpelson (2001), student's academic performance is low and is an alarming state in Russian secondary schools that warrant appropriate measures, Brown (2003) indicated that the low level of students' performance in Russian high schools could be attributed to an increased number of students per school that unmatched the available teaching and learning resources in schools.

According to Louw (2006), despite the widespread acceptance of the notion that improving student performance may have a high economic and social payoff, policy analysts globally have surprisingly limited hard data on which to base educational strategies for raising students' achievements.

In South Africa, students' level of performance is below the average levels, mainly in mathematics and language tests. Even when compared with students in other African countries, the performance

is still low. Further, the South African government's evaluations of ten years of democracy show little improvement in educational outcomes despite significant policy changes. The low level in students' academic performance remains untouched (Tettey, 2003).

According to most of the studies done on the level of students' academic performance by various scholars like Hansen, & Mastekaasa (2003), it is not surprising that social economic status is one of the major predictor of performance, they argue according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success. It is believed that low socioeconomic status negatively affects academic achievement because low socioeconomic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home.

Graetz (2005) carried out a study on factors affecting students' performance in Nigerian high schools and indicated a low level of performance by some students. He further emphasised that one's educational success depends very strongly on the socioeconomic status of one's parents.

Eamon (2005), Considine, & Zappala (2002) agree with Graetz (2005), in their study on the influence of social and economic disadvantage on the students' academic performance in Zimbabwe and found out that families where the parents were advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a low level of performance and students' achievements.

Research conducted in Ghanaian secondary schools to find out the level of students' academic performance in different subjects indicated a decline in performance by 40% in 2009 and 60% in 2010. In Ghana, two-thirds of its 36,134 registered students in high school scored marks below average in the final examination, thus, low performance (Ghanaweb, 2001), (Obasi, 2001). In Cote d'Ivoire the level of academic performance was reported low by 56% in 2002 and in the same year, the number of

students in secondary schools dwindled from 828 to 412 per school as many students prefer to undertake other skilled training outside the formal school setting (Agbo, 2003; Mullins, 2002).

Agbo further stated that evidence from Côte d'Ivoire suggests that many students' departures from secondary school educational institutions are caused by failure to meet the required average marks to move to the next level.

Considering the above discussions by a number of scholars that generally indicated an alarming level of students' performance in academics across the globe, it is important to note that other high academic performance was also exhibited in Australia and South African secondary schools, which had high discipline management status as quoted by many authors discussed above.

Relationship between Management of Students' Discipline and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

According to Adeniran (2000), significant correlations do exist between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in learning when he was reporting on a study conducted on students' performance at high schools in Australia high schools. Shahjahan et al. (2021) also reported strong correlations between the management of students' discipline and academic performance when comparing students' performance among government-headed schools in Canada against each student's discipline record over the years spent at the university. He further indicated that students who engage in deviant behaviour like rampaging, protest, demonstrations, among others nuisance to society, tend to score low marks in university assessments.

According to a survey conducted by Ethiane (2014) on disciplines and academic performances of some selected secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria had attributed the poor performance of students in academics to a high level of indiscipline among students. Nevertheless, it has become imperative in

recent times that many schools have traded away discipline, which, as a result, has led to poor academic performance of students. This study was carried out to establish the relationships between school discipline and students' academic performance. The study employed a cross-sectional research survey design in which a questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection, in addition to an interview guide and document review. Simple percentages and the Chi-square statistical method were used to analyse the data. However, the findings of the study clearly showed that effective school discipline should be encouraged in controlling students' behaviour, thus affecting students' general academic performance.

According to a survey conducted by Karanja, & Bowen (2012) on students' unrest and indiscipline and academic performance confirms that a negative relationship between student unrest and academic performance in public secondary schools. Employing both questionnaires and interviews in public secondary schools that had gone on strike and those which had not, 86.2% of the respondents agreed that strikes negatively affected the academic performance of the students. A correlation carried out confirms the negative relationship between students' unrest and academic performance. Further, schools where students went on strike showed higher variation in the mean grade when compared to schools where students did not go on strike. The data clearly shows that strikes lead to poor academic performance. The schools that had not been involved in unrest, on average, had more counsellors than the schools that had unrest. This might suggest that one of the solutions to the problem of indiscipline and unrest in public secondary schools is to strengthen counselling.

Indisciplined behaviour always results in a loss of concentration in academics, as evidenced in the work of many scholars. This statement seems to postulate a link between discipline management and students' performance. However, it does not indicate the level of significance (Ajzen, 2002).

Ward (2001) successfully demonstrated that well-behaved students with high self-control tend to avoid deviant behaviour and spend their time at the university committed to their studies and consistently score high marks in their final examination, indicating that academic performance is linked to ways of managing discipline. There is considerable support for the notion that when students' discipline is well-managed, performance could improve (Al-Yafi et al., 2018). This eminently portrays that a correlation does exist between these two variables, whereas the significance level was established, yet it is equally important to assess its significance level to support this relationship.

Numerous studies have continually shown a link between a high level of student discipline management and a high level of academic performance. This is an essential view that emphasises the collective strengthening of discipline management strategies (Anderson, Ritter and Zamarro, 2019). The higher the level of discipline management, the higher the level of academic performance (Goldman et al., 2016). Though several scholars theorised about the relationship between these two variables, high students' academic performance seems not to be triggered only by the level of management of students' discipline but rather a combination of factors (Aswathappa, 2005).

Across all institutions in East and Southern Africa, students' academic performance is correlated with the way discipline is managed in schools (Houenou, 2003). Even in Botswana, where 76% of students who were interviewed on how to uplift their academic performance responded that strengthening the level of management of students' discipline would improve performance (Seoka, 2019). However, much as most scholars portrayed

the existence of correlations between these two variables, they never went further to expose the significance level of these correlations.

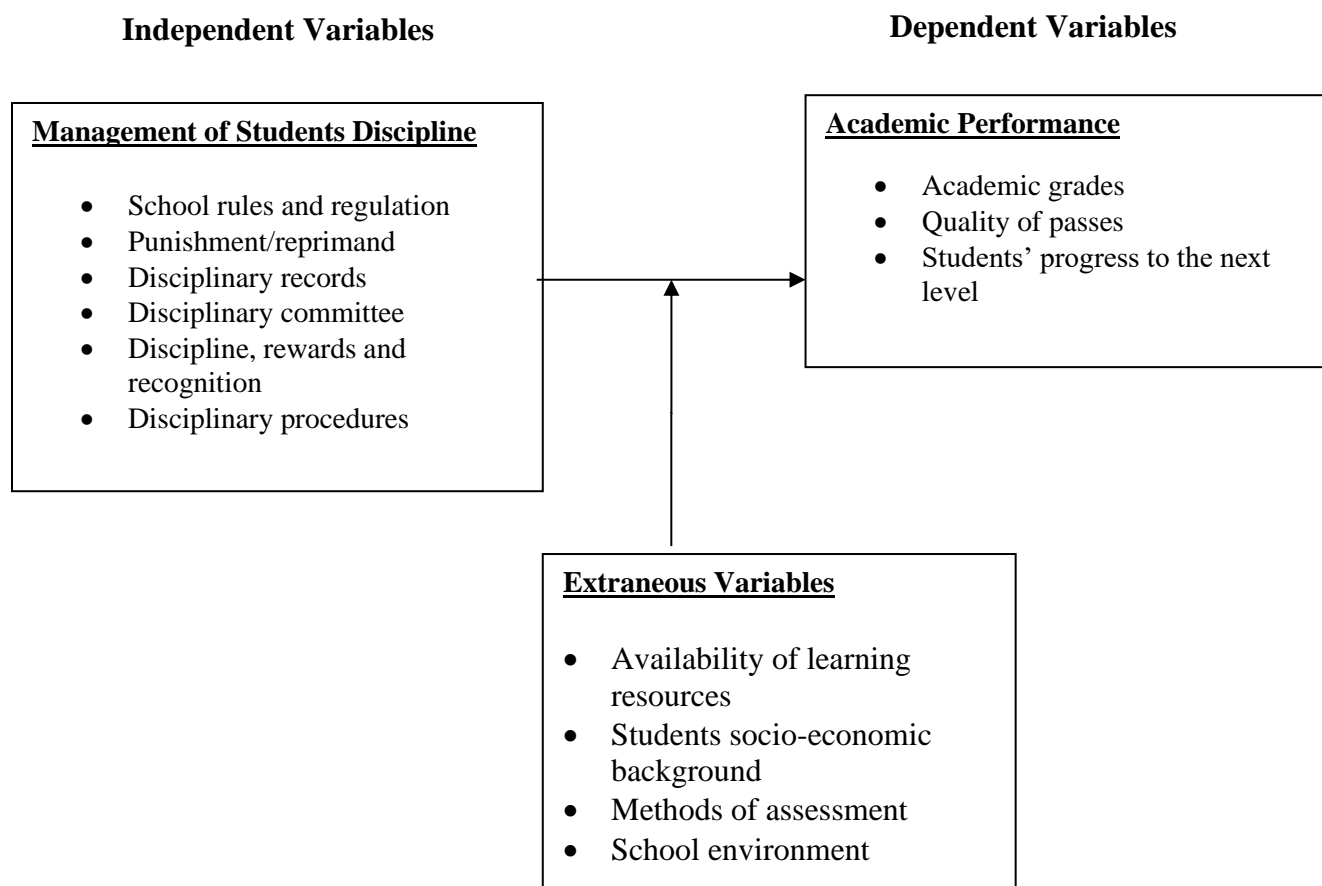
Summary of the Literature

The above facts notwithstanding, Tettey's (2006) report portrays a huge knowledge gap on the management of students' discipline as a key factor undermining the commitment of students to academic performance. Most of the earlier studies concentrated on exposing the role of students socio-economic background as a cause of low performance, in addition, the methodologies they portrayed were quite euro-centric drawing most of their examples from developed countries with unique targets population involved in different teaching and learning styles, resources and environments thus, the significance of this study therefore is to investigate the relationship between management of students' discipline and academic performance with a view to improve on the management of students discipline in secondary schools at O. level in Gulu Municipality and possibly increase the level of academic performance.

Conceptual Framework

In the conceptual framework, two major variables were established in the study; the independent variable management of students discipline is measured under the following constructs: school rules and regulation, punishment/reprimand, disciplinary records, disciplinary committee, discipline, rewards/recognition, disciplinary procedures and the dependent variable measured under academic performance are academic grades, quality of passes and students' progress to the next level.

Figure 1: Below Shows the Relationship between the Level of Discipline Management and Academic Performance in Secondary School at O-level in Gulu Municipality.



Source: Adapted from McGregor's Theory X and Y (2000)

Figure 1 above shows the conceptualisation of the independent variables management of students' discipline in terms of observance of school rules and regulations, punishment/reprimand, disciplinary records and Disciplinary procedures. The dependent variable, academic performance, is considered in terms of academic grades of the students, quality of passes and students' progress to the next level. The study assumed that the level of discipline management affects academic performance. The extraneous variables considered included the availability of learning resources, students' socio-economic backgrounds, methods of assessment and the school environment. The conceptual framework postulated that the level of management of students' discipline influenced the level of academic performance in Gulu

Municipality. The significance of this relationship could, however, be moderated by the intervening variables.

METHODOLOGY

Research Orientation

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. According to Amin (2005), quantitative research helped to describe the phenomena in numbers and measured using statistical methods with emphasis on facts, relationships and causes. The qualitative research design method helped in describing the phenomenon in words instead of numbers. The study took both the quantitative and the qualitative approach because it was based on variables

measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures, and also the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to look at the variables from a variety of perspectives (Oso & Onen, 2008).

Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the attitudes, opinions and feelings as well as experiences of teachers, students and head teachers of the secondary schools in Gulu Municipality. A cross-sectional survey was appropriate because extensive data could be collected at one point in time, and it was very economical (Gall & Meredith, 2003). A cross-sectional survey was also appropriate because data could be collected from a cross-section of a

population in a short time and then results generalised to represent the entire population of the study (Amin, 2005).

Study Population

The target population consisted of 3500 respondents from 20 secondary schools in Gulu Municipality. The respondents consisted of 20 head teachers, 615 teachers and 2865 students (Gulu District DEO Report, 2014).

Sample Size

The study sample consisted of 389 respondents, including 201 students, 169 teachers, and 10 head teachers for the study based on Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table of sample sizes for determining sample size. See (Appendix E).

Table 1: Sampling Frame

| Category of Respondents | Target Population | Sample Size | Percentage | Sampling Technique |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------------------|
| Head Teachers | 20 | 10 | 2.57 % | Purposive sampling |
| Teachers | 615 | 169 | 43.45 % | Simple Random Sampling |
| Students | 2865 | 201 | 51.67 % | Simple Random Sampling |
| Total | 3500 | 389 | 100% | |

Source: (Gulu DEO Report, 2014)

Sampling Procedures

The study used purposive sampling for headteachers because of their technicalities in handling management issues, whereas for teachers and students, simple random sampling was carried out to give target respondents equal opportunity to participate in the study (Amin, 2005). Stratified random sampling was used to select the 10 secondary schools categorised as representative of each category and to account for differences in the sub-category characteristics of the schools (Oso & Onen, 2009).

Data Collection Techniques

This study used two data collection methods to collect data to answer the research question. Closed-ended questionnaires were used for data collection purposes. This was preferred because it saves the

time of respondents and simplifies the management of data (Barifaijo, 2010). According to Amin (2005) questionnaire survey offers greater assurance of anonymity; it is less costly and covers a wider area within a shorter time.

Document analysis was also used to collect secondary information in this study, preferred because it enables the collection of information from a larger sample of respondents (Oso & Onen, 2008; Kombo, 2006). According to Amin (2005), the general advantage of document analysis over other data collection methods is that vital information can be collected from a larger sample instantly.

Data Collection Instruments

This study used a self-administered closed-ended questionnaire survey instrument to collect data from

the sample respondents to save respondents' time (Amin, 2005). These structured questionnaires were administered to the Head teachers, teachers and students whose views, opinions and attitudes were obtained on how discipline management influences students' academic performance. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: A, B and C. Section A sought respondents' background information, Section B was on respondents' views on the level of students' discipline management, and Section C sought respondents' views on the level of academic performance in secondary school at O-level in Gulu Municipality.

Sub-sections A, B, and C were measured using a five-point Likert scale coded as follows. Strongly Agree (SA=1), Agree (A=2), Not Sure (NS=3), Disagree (D=4), and Strongly Disagree (SD=5). A five-point Likert scale was preferred because it enables numerical values to be given to opinions, enables questions to be turned into statements for respondents to indicate the level of agreement and disagreement and allows different statements to be provided in a list for the respondents to complete categorically (Amin, 2005).

Quality Control

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

| Constructs | Anchor Points | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| Discipline | Five Point | .737 | 11 |
| Academic Performance | Five Point | .666 | 10 |
| Overall Value/Total | | .702 | 21 |

Source: Primary Data, August 201

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

Data from questionnaires was compiled, sorted, edited, classified and coded into a coding sheet and analysed using a computerised data analysis package known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 16.0. Research objectives one and two sought the opinion of teachers and students on the level of students' discipline management at the Ordinary level was analysed using Mean Value and ANOVA. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was

Validity & Reliability

Validity: Validity was established using three experts' ratings of people who are knowledgeable in the study area. Three experts from Gulu University read through the tool-questioning statements in the questionnaire to ascertain if it measured what it was intended for (Oso & Onen, 2008). The content validity index (CVI) was calculated based on the number of items declared relevant by the experts divided by the total items in the questionnaire was above 0.7. Thus, the CVI was accepted as valid since it was found to be above 0.7 according to Amin (2005). See Appendix G for more details.

Reliability. The study used Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. Results for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha confirmed that the majority of the measures constructs in the study exhibited good reliability. Table 2 shows the internal consistency of the instrument with the overall reliability coefficient at 0.702, above 0.7 values according to Amin (2005). See Appendix H for more details.

used to determine the existing relationship between the level of discipline management and students' academic performance, since the study involved two variables, this was preferred for predicting the significance of relationships between two variables (Oso, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

Concerns on privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, access, acceptance, freedom

from harm and respect of respondents by the researcher are key (Amin, 2005). Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by asking respondents not to write their names and positions anywhere in the questionnaire and by keeping their identity anonymous, respecting respondents' views and privacy while reporting information obtained from the study. Consent of respondents was obtained up front in the questionnaire, and voluntary participation of respondents in the study was sought. Respondents were assured of freedom from any harm during the study by clearly stating the purpose of the study and how they were to participate using the research instruments. Accessibility and acceptance were guaranteed by obtaining an introductory letter from the faculty, the Dean's office, and the researcher made a prior visit to the study site, made appointment schedules and contacts with respondents before the actual administration of the instrument, usage of acceptable language and ways of communication, including the non- verbal.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The questionnaires used for data collection instruments could have captured data that might be outside the study from respondents, and this might have had an influence on the study results. However, the researcher used more than one instrument that is documentary analysis, to get more information to answer research questions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Background of the Respondents

This section shows the background of the respondents, according to gender, age, and duration of study as per section A of the questionnaire. Frequency counts were used with their respective percentages to understand the characteristics of the Respondents in the study. The details are provided in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (*Student Respondents' Characteristics*)

| | Category | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 81 | 43.1 |
| | Female | 107 | 56.9 |
| | Total | 188 | 100 |
| Age Bracket | 14-18 Years | 146 | 77.7 |
| | 19-22 Years | 33 | 17.6 |
| | 23-25 Years | 9 | 4.8 |
| | Total | 188 | 100 |
| Duration in the School | 1-2 Years | 88 | 46.8 |
| | 3-4 Years | 83 | 44.1 |
| | Above 5 Years | 17 | 9.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100 |

Source: *Primary Data, August, 2015.*

From Table 3 above, it can be noted that the majority of the respondents were female students, 107 (56.9 %). Most of the respondents were in the age bracket of 14-18 years (77.7 %) who have spent 1-2 years (46.8 %) in their current schools. The implication of the background information to this study is that female students had the highest response of 107(56.9%), an indication that female

students were more cooperative than their male counterparts of 81 (43%).

The highest percentage of respondents 146 (77.7%) were aged between 14 to 18 years which are age bracket for the secondary level, and the least number of respondents 9 (4.8%) were between 23 - and 25 years of age these respondents could be studying and working at the same time and these are

not many at secondary school at O. level in Gulu Municipality. 88 (46.8%) spent 1 – 2 years at the O-level, which could be transfer cases compared to (44.1%) who spent 3 to 4 years, believed to have

started from senior one. While 17 (9.0) might be students who repeated or had some problems, they dropped off and resumed studies later.

Table 4: Teacher Respondents' Characteristics

| | Category | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 132 | 70.6 |
| | Female | 55 | 29.4 |
| | Total | 187 | 100 |
| Age Bracket | 20-25 Years | 41 | 21.9 |
| | 26-30 Years | 73 | 39 |
| | 31-35 Years | 38 | 20.3 |
| | 36 and Above | 35 | 18.7 |
| | Total | 187 | 100 |
| | | | |
| Duration in the School | 1-3 Years | 112 | 59.9 |
| | 4-6 Years | 64 | 34.2 |
| | 7-9 Years | 5 | 2.7 |
| | 10 Years and Above | 6 | 3.2 |
| | Total | 187 | 100 |
| Position of Responsibility | Teacher | 106 | 56.7 |
| | Class Teacher | 25 | 13.4 |
| | Head of Department | 30 | 16 |
| | Director of Studies | 10 | 5.3 |
| | Deputy Headteacher | 7 | 3.7 |
| | Headteacher | 9 | 4.8 |
| | Total | 187 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data August, 2015

From Table 4 above, it can be noted that the majority of the respondents were male teachers (70.6 %), those without responsibility (56.7 %) and (21.9 %) were of age brackets 20-25 years, who have spent 1-3 years (59.9 %) in their current schools. The implication of the study indicates that most of the teachers are part-timers without responsibility, and they are less concerned with the discipline of the students and their performance. Secondly, the majority of the age bracket 26-30 years who had spent 1-3 years indicate that they had just completed their course and joined the teaching

service with less experience and could have an influence on the discipline.

The Level of Management of Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools

Specifically, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was adopted to determine the level of discipline in secondary schools at the ordinary level in Gulu Municipality, and this was found to be high based on the interpretation of Table 5 below (tested at a 95% level of confidence). *The mean values were used to denote the category of the responses on the scale of 1-5 as indicated in Table 5 below:*

Table 5: Table (ANOVA) Results on the Level of Management of Students' Discipline

| Study Variables | Respondents Category | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | F | Sig. |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|------|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Discipline | Student Respondents | 188 | 2.01 | 1.083 | .392 | | | | |
| | Teacher Respondents | 187 | 1.81 | .902 | .066 | .285 | .587 | 2.060 | .006 |
| | Total/Average | 375 | 1.91 | .993 | .229 | | | | |

Source: Primary Data August, 2015

From the table above, it can be seen that the overall mean value of Discipline is 1.91. Responses from the students indicate a mean response of 2.01, indicating that students are in agreement with the level of management of discipline in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu municipality. The teachers, on the other hand, in their responses had a strong agreement at the level of management of student discipline in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality (Mean = 1.81). The finding indicates a variation in opinion between teachers and students at (0.006), hence rejecting the hypothesis.

Responses from interviews conducted in some schools for purposes of triangulation during data collection indicate that the management of discipline is high in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality. Respondent X at private school and B from government school had this to say;

X: "Most students admitted here are from different, background, different socio-economic status, and different academic background, some of them are both parents and students and they pay their own fees so they know why they are here, we try our best to guide them in order for them to achieve what they are here for.

Secondly, with so many private schools around, you cannot be too strict on them since they are our source of income. B. stated that discipline has improved due to the intervention of the Gulu District Security Committee in 2008, which wiped away the notorious gang squad which had been terrorising secondary schools in Gulu; the discipline of this school is quite okay, meaning the discipline is high. Respondent C had this to say. With the various levels of disciplinary committees, we can manage them."(Verbatim).

The opinion of those involved in the management of student discipline in the two types of schools denotes that the level of management of student discipline in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu municipality is high. The interviews found the common causes of indiscipline to be abuse of authority; boy-girl relationships; theft; alcoholism; absenteeism, late coming, dosing classes/lessons, fighting, cheating in examinations, and illegal use of phones at school. Therefore, the majority of students affected by the management of student discipline are victims of the above category of indiscipline.

The Level of Academic Performance in Secondary Schools at Ordinary Level

Table 6: Table (ANOVA) Results on the Level of Academic Performance of Students

| Study variables | Respondents on Performance | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | F | Sig. |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|------|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Academic Performance | Student Respondents | 188 | 2.808 | 1.413 | .431 | | | | |
| | Teacher Respondents | 188 | 2.998 | 1.198 | .721 | 1.611 | 2.255 | 1.199 | .303 |
| | Total/Average | 375 | 2.903 | 1.306 | .576 | | | | |

Source: *Primary Data August, 2015*

Specifically, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was adopted to determine the level of academic performance in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality and was found to be average (tested at a 95% level of confidence). The overall mean on academic performance was 2.903. Based on the Interpretation Table (Table 6), academic performance is at an average level. From the table,

it can be noted that the teachers had the highest response to the issues raised on academic performance (Mean = 2.998) while the students had the lowest response (Mean = 2.808), significant at (.303). The documentary analysis of students' performance indicates a poor performance at national exams in the last three years, with a mean average of 12.24, as shown in the table below.

Table 7: UCE Results for the Sampled Schools

| Schools | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | Average |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|---------|
| Average No. of Candidates | 172 | 147 | 86 | 217 | 162 | 145 | 110 | 67 | 248 | 172 | 153 |
| Average No. of Division I | 59 | 18 | 11 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 12.24 |
| Average Percentage in Division I | 34.5 | 12.5 | 12.4 | 4.4 | 1 | 0.23 | 3.2 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 16.9 | 8.7 |
| Average No. of Distinctions | 123 | 31 | 32 | 20 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 18 | 25 |

Source: *UNEB Report, 2012-2014*

Table 8: Student Academic Performance by Grades

| Schools | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | Average |
|--------------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| Percentage | 34.5 | 12.5 | 12.4 | 4.4 | 1 | 0.23 | 3.2 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 16.9 | 12.24 |
| Level | Excellent | Fair | Fair | Poor | Poor | Poor | Poor | Poor | Poor | Good | Fair |
| Figure Grade | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

Source: *Primary Data August, 2015*

The number of distinctions obtained in these schools was analysed in percentages and found to be poor, with an average of 25. Similarly, the average number of Division one is 12.24 as shown in Table 7 above. The standard of academic performance at UCE in secondary schools at the O-level in Gulu Municipality was poor (low) for the past three years. The average percentage of passes in Division One was 8.7% while the average number of distinctions was 25, that is, 16.3 %. This performance is similar

to the national average passes in Division One, which stands at 7.7% (UNEB Report, 2014).

From the interview conducted, responses indicate that the performance in private schools is poor because private schools admit students with poor grades.

“Most students admitted here are residues of PLE, mostly those who scored (2nd, 3rd, and 4th

grades) in PLE, while the cream of PLE (first grade) are taken away by government schools. Responses from interviews conducted in government-aided schools indicate that performance is poor because most parents with money prefer to take their children to schools with good performance outside the district or in the cities (verbatim)."

Further response from interviews indicates low coverage of syllabuses; most syllabuses were completed almost towards the examination, giving little time for revision.

The Relationship between Management of Students' Discipline and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools at O-level

Specifically, Spearman's Rank Order Correlations was used to establish conceptual relationships between discipline level and the level of academic performance. The justification was that the data on academic performance was ordinal and therefore, a non-parametric model for correlation between ordinal data was preferred. The summary results are shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Spearman Rank Correlations Matrix Summary of Management of Students' Discipline and Academic Performance Level

| | | Correlation Summary | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|-----|
| | | Rules and regulation s guide & direct students' behaviour | Disciplinary Committee punish indisciplin e d students | Students' indisciplin e cases are kept in the disciplinar y record book | Suspension & dismissal of indisciplin e d students | Parents of Indisciplin e d Students are invited | Recognitio n & rewards of disciplin e d students | N |
| Academic Performanc e | Student Respondent s | -.433 (.807) | .193 (.592) | -.353 (.317) | -.077 (.832) | .042 (.909) | .340 (.336) | 188 |
| | Teacher Respondent s | -.013 (.862) | .246 (.493) | .246 (.493) | .591 (.072) | - | -.136 (.709) | 187 |
| Average/Total | | -.223 (.835) | .219 (.543) | -.0535 (.405) | .257 (.452) | .042 (.909) | .102 (.523) | 375 |

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data, August 2015

The results in Table 9 above show that the relationship between Discipline management and Academic performance was not statistically significant. The correlation between academic performance and Rules and Regulation was -.223 (p-value = .835), disciplinary committee punishment was .219 (p-value = .543), disciplinary record keeping was .0535 (p-value = .405), suspension and dismissal was .257 (p-value = .452), invitation of Parents was .042 (p-value = .909) and rewards/recognition of disciplined students was .102 (p-value = .523). Overall, evidence supports the null hypothesis that the level of discipline management is not significantly related to academic performance at 5% level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The Level of Management of Student Discipline in Secondary School at O-Level

The study findings revealed that the level of discipline management is high in secondary schools at the ordinary level in Gulu Municipality. This is true with faith-based schools, which are known to have a high level of discipline due to strategies used in managing discipline.

Interview findings with the head teachers, students and teachers of the studied schools agreed that all schools have school rules and regulations to act as a guiding principle for controlling students'

behaviour. These findings are in agreement with Okumbe (1998), who argued that ideally, schools set rules and regulations for the proper governing of the various lifestyles of the students, containing the dos and don'ts.

Adams (2003) also supports this study's finding by portraying that the level of discipline management in secondary schools is high during his schools' study survey conducted in eastern Uganda. He further strengthened his argument by saying that school rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct in students, such as self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to the school authority.

Interview results indicated improvement in discipline in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality due to intervention by the Gulu District Security Committee that wiped away the notorious gangsters who terrorised Gulu district by 2008. This was confirmed by a media report on Touch FM, Gulu in 2008 (Ofoyuru, 2008).

In support of the above, Mafabi (1993) argued that punishments are expected to suppress unwanted responses during the time students are under teachers' observation. This opinion is also shared by Cotton (2000), who said that punishments in a school system are expected to teach students the relationship between their behaviours and the outcome or accountability for their mistakes.

According to the interview findings in this study, some disciplinary Masters and Deputy Head teachers in charge of students' affairs also revealed that discipline of the students needed collective effort and counselling of both students and parents of the students. This view is in agreement with that of Jeynes (2014), who in his study noted that the status of management of students discipline has risen due to collective actions being undertaken particularly in high schools in Australia to deter students' strikes that have over time undermined students' academic performance in most Australian secondary schools. School administrators have

successfully used a policy framework and guidelines as a basis of reference for students in enforcing discipline in and outside the school.

However, it is important to note that other recent researchers like Karanja and Bowen (2012) in their study of discipline management and academic performance in secondary schools in West African countries disagreed with this study's finding when they found that the level of discipline management was low, particularly at the ordinary level. Karanja and Bowen further noted that less effort was being put in by school administrators to ensure the management of student discipline. His argument was incongruent with Graetz (2005), who in his study on discipline management in secondary schools in South Africa also agreed that there was a low level of discipline management in secondary schools.

Kyosaba (2009) in his study on strategies employed for discipline management in secondary schools in Uganda and Mlalazi, Rembe and Shumba (2016) disagreed with this study's findings by indicating that the level of discipline management was low majorly in private schools whose proprietors are geared towards profit maximization at the expense of enforcing discipline.

The Level of Academic Performance in Secondary Schools at O-Level

The study findings here indicate that the level of academic performance in secondary school at O-level in Gulu Municipality is low, although the analysis of the opinion indicated average results. The finding is in agreement with the report from the Gulu District Education Office (GDEO) on the status of academic performance in the district, particularly in 2004, over 60% of total number of students who registered and sat their final year examinations at O. level failed in all the papers, in 2010, 67% of students scored below average while in 2011, 69% of the total number of students scored averagely (GDEO Report, 2014).

Further support to the above finding was a report given by other DEOs from Northern Uganda, particularly in the districts of Amuru, Pader, Oyam and Kitgum among others, that indicated that these districts have registered a drastic decline in academic performance by 40 % between 2010, 50 % 2011, 55% in 2013 and 65 % in 2014. These reports were further substantiated by the National Examination Report to Secondary Schools (2014), which indicated an unprecedented decline in academic performance by 70%.

Across all secondary schools in Uganda, reports from the Uganda National Examinations Board indicated that the students' performance was below average. Sixty percent (60%) of the total number of students who registered and sat for the final national examination failed in all the papers they registered for (Fox, 2003). This, therefore, is incongruent with the current study's finding that indicated a low level of academic performance in secondary schools in Gulu University.

In support of the above findings, the South African government's evaluation of ten years of democracy shows little improvement in educational outcomes despite significant policy changes, and the low level of students' academic performance remains untouched (Tettey, 2003). Similarly, findings in France suggested that in the 21st century, there will be crises in managing the quality of secondary school education, with an estimated decline in students' academic performance by 67%, an indication that the level of performance was low across all boards (Mathews, 2003).

Contrary to the findings and the supporting evidence above, it is important to note that other high academic performance was also exhibited in Australia and other African countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Botswana, secondary schools which had high discipline management status (Tettey, 2006; Jeynse, 2014).

The Relationship between Management of Students' Discipline and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools at O-Level

The finding indicated that no correlation exists between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at the ordinary level in Gulu Municipality. This finding supports the work of Aswathappa (2005), who argued that though several scholars theorised about the relationship between these two variables, high students' academic performance seems not to be triggered only by the level of management of students' discipline but rather a combination of factors.

This study is also in agreement with Sanderson (2000) survey on improving students' academic performance in high schools in the USA which indicated that 40% of students were unable to achieve in academics as their academic backgrounds were poorly established while at the primary level thus they could not obtain a high level of performance. Kyosaba M. (2009) is also in support, recommending that mature-age students be given supplementary years or probation years to test their competency in addition to entrance exams.

Hansen, & Mastekaasa (2003) agreed with the study and urged that socioeconomic status is one of the major predictors of performance; it is believed that low socioeconomic status negatively affects academic achievement because status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home. Graetz (2005) emphasised above that one's educational success depends very strongly on the socioeconomic status of one's parents.

This finding was not supported by a survey conducted by Karanja, & Bowen (2012) on students' indiscipline and academic performance in public schools in Kenya. 86.2% of the respondents indicated that strikes negatively affected the academic performance of the students.

Furthermore, the study finding is in disagreement with that of Andy Whisman, & Patricia Cahape H.

(2014) on the association between school disciplines and math performance in West Virginia. The study employed cross-tabulation and binary logistic regression procedures and used a sample of 160,480 respondents from a population of 225,320. Findings reveal that students with one or more discipline referrals were times more likely to score below proficiency in math than those with no discipline referrals. The study revealed that when disciplinary consequences take the form of in-school or out-of-school suspension, the risk of scoring below proficiency increases and the proficiency gap widens.

Much as this finding is in disagreement with most of the reports which portray a huge gap in the management of discipline as the major factor influencing the level of academic performance, the methodology they used was quite different, with a unique target population involved in different teaching styles, learning styles, resources and environment.

The study findings revealed that the level of discipline management is high in secondary schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality. Research question two sought to find the level of academic performance in secondary school at the O-level in Gulu Municipality. The finding indicated that no significant relationship exists between the management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at the O-level in Gulu Municipality.

The fact that the level of academic performance in secondary school at O-level in Gulu Municipality is low could be influenced by other factors such as the socio-economic and financial status of the parents and the students. It's also believed that the nature of indiscipline at the various schools studied is effectively managed with the use of different strategies and policies to guide the management of discipline at the secondary schools at O-level in Gulu Municipality.

CONCLUSION

The positive significant relationship between funding and support supervision found in this study is an indication that funding status has a close linkage with support supervision. It is not surprising to note that the poor performance in UPE schools in Nwoya district may be attributable to the low funding status by the responsible ministries in the country. Furthermore, in the regression analysis, findings indicated that funding status positively/significantly contributes to predicting the level of support supervision in UPE schools in the Nwoya district.

Arguably, all challenges advanced by the respondents hinged on financial support as the driving force. So long as UPE schools remain underfunded, especially by the government, the recurrence of the challenges reported in this study will not be a surprise to any stakeholder. In addition, there is a shortage of external supervisors or inspectors usually assigned by the Ministry of Education and Sports to assess the level of compliance of school instructional activities due to the large number of UPE schools.

It is therefore sad to note that activities in the UPE schools in the district cannot be implemented due to inadequate and untimely funding, evidenced by irregular support supervision in UPE schools, ineffective delivery of lessons, low morale for teachers and weak school management and administration. However, the working conditions of support supervisors at different levels should also be given focus since they have a substantial role in the improvement of the quality of education in a country. Therefore, funding institutions and other organisations should institute mechanisms that aim at ensuring consistent and sufficient funding for the proper operation of schools if we are to realise quality education.

Recommendations

The study provides the following recommendations:

Policy Makers

Research question one on the level of management of student discipline in secondary schools at O. level in Gulu Municipality provides recommendations to Government Ministries of; Finance Economic Planning and Development, Education Science Technology and Sports and Public Service to further strengthen the policies and guidelines to all those involved in management of discipline in secondary schools at O. level in Gulu Municipality as it seems that collective effort seems to be the best way to go.

Research question two on the level of academic performance in secondary schools at O. level in Gulu Municipality provides recommendations to the government ministries mentioned above to revisit the current policy guideline on education in secondary schools and proper strategies to address the low level of academic performance not only in secondary schools at O. level in Gulu Municipality but to the entire schools facing the same problem.

Research question three on the relationship between the level of management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at the O. level in Gulu Municipality provides recommendations to the above government ministries to take precautions on other factors such as socio-economic, financial difficulties, strengthening education background of all its citizens so that all could have equal chance to quality education but not something similar to education. Remember that education is the backbone of any economy.

Policy Implementers

According to research question one, the study provides recommendations to school administrators and all involved in the implementation of discipline to provide each student with a prospectus so that they get guided on the dos and don'ts and what is expected of them at the end of the study. Research question two provides a recommendation to school administrators to borrow strategies used by another secondary school with high levels of performance to

improve their low level of performance. Research question three provides recommendations to those with financial difficulties who should be helped to get a scholarship or bursary. School administrators should ensure syllabuses are fully covered in time to give ample time for students to conceptualise ready or the examination.

Further Research Areas

The study investigated the level of management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools at the O-level in Gulu Municipality. Therefore, there is a need to research other variables that are likely to influence the low level of academic performance. This case study was confined to Gulu Municipality. Therefore, there is also a need to carry out a similar survey on the level of management of students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools in other regions that could be experiencing the same problem.

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