
**HEAD TEACHERS' COMMUNICATION METHODS AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE IN SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SHEEMA MUNICIPALITY, SOUTHWESTERN UGANDA****Ahimbisibwe k Gideon****Metropolitan International University****Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating the impact of Head Teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools within Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda. Despite the critical role of schools in instilling discipline, Sheema Municipality has faced persistent challenges in maintaining student discipline, leading to destructive strikes and disruptions in the past. The lack of discipline is a concern to various stakeholders and poses a threat to the goals of education. A mixed-method research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Questionnaires were administered to students and teachers, and interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with Head Teachers, students, and teachers. Data analysis involved both statistical techniques and thematic analysis. The study found a moderately high statistically relationship between Head Teachers' communication methods and student discipline. Effective communication strategies play a pivotal role in fostering a conducive environment for maintaining student discipline. The research concludes that Head Teachers' communication methods significantly influence student discipline in selected secondary schools. Effective communication strategies are essential in maintaining student discipline. To enhance student discipline, schools should provide professional development opportunities for Head Teachers, focusing on effective communication skills. Educational institutions should encourage a collaborative approach by involving students and parents in decision-making processes through open forums and feedback mechanisms. This can help in creating a conducive environment for maintaining student discipline and preventing disruptions.

Key words: Communication Methods; Student Discipline**Introduction**

Effective communication is at the heart of successful education. The role of head teachers in shaping school culture, maintaining student discipline, and fostering a positive learning environment is paramount (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). This study investigated the impact of head teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools in Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda.

Background

In the global educational landscape, the issue of student discipline continues to be a matter of paramount concern. The importance of effective disciplinary strategies is universally acknowledged as

a fundamental component for establishing a successful educational environment (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Initiatives like character education programs and restorative justice practices

Received: 16.10.2023**Accepted: 19.10.2023****Published on: 30.10.2023**

Corresponding: Author: gid2christ@gmail.com

have garnered international recognition as alternatives to punitive measures (Hernandez, 2018). Moreover, the worldwide shift towards more student-centric and inclusive approaches to discipline underscores the significance of nurturing positive behaviors and addressing the underlying causes of misconduct, rather than resorting to solely punitive actions (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). These global trends underscore the need for a balanced approach to discipline that prioritizes students' well-being while upholding order within educational institutions (N. Faridah et al., 2023).

However, within the unique context of Sub-Saharan Africa, student discipline presents distinctive challenges. Educational institutions in this region frequently grapple with resource constraints and serve diverse cultural backgrounds (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). In Sub-Saharan Africa, discipline is perceived not only as a means to maintain order but also as a tool for instilling values and ethics (John et al., 2023). The concept of discipline often extends beyond the confines of the school, involving parents, community leaders, and local authorities in shaping students' behavior. Consequently, the Sub-Saharan perspective underscores the importance of community involvement and cultural sensitivity in crafting

effective disciplinary strategies. In the specific context of Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda, the enforcement of school rules and the maintenance of student discipline take on a unique character. Socio-economic conditions, the prevalence of both rural and urban settings, and the local educational infrastructure significantly influence how head teachers approach student discipline (T. Moses et al., 2023). Given limited resources, head teachers in Sheema often resort to creative, context-specific strategies to foster discipline and promote positive behaviors. The intersection of traditional values and modern educational practices creates a dynamic environment in which head teachers must navigate the tension between preserving cultural norms and meeting academic standards (Micheal et al., 2023).

The Sheema perspective on student discipline is deeply intertwined with the region's unique socio-cultural context. An understanding of these dynamics is crucial for the effective implementation of disciplinary measures (Richard, B, & T, 2022). As such, this study aimed at investigating the impact of head teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools in Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Schools are seen as important places where students are expected to learn discipline and self-control (Victor et al., 2023), but that seems to be lacking in Sheema Municipality (Ayebare, 2018). In the past years (2012-2016), students' discipline issues within secondary schools in Sheema Municipality have been at insurmountable levels

Received: 16.10.2023

Accepted: 19.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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(Oromo et al., 2023). The prevalent strikes in Sheema municipality led to the destruction of school properties (Ayebare, 2018). For example, in 2013, students at Nganwa High School burnt the school administration block (Zowena et al., 2023), and in the same year, students at Sacred Heart Secondary School Mushanga, were involved in arson at school for three consecutive times (Isaac et al., 2023). To prevent the situation from culminating into human fatalities, the District Education authorities closed all the 44 secondary schools in Sheema District in 2013; following the deadly nature of strikes the district had faced (Sub-county et al., 2023). These incidents have become a concern to educationists, parents, students and politicians, and if this problem is not solved, the aims and objectives of education will not be achieved and the learning time of innocent learners will be lost (Christopher, Methodius, et al., 2022). There is limited research on Head Teachers' administrative practices on students' discipline in Sheema Municipality to shed light on how head teachers' means of communication, can be used to enhance students' discipline. It is against this background that this study was instituted to examine whether the head teachers' means of communication have an impact on students' discipline in selected secondary schools in South Western Uganda (Kanyerere & Muhammed, 2023).

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of head teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools in Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda.

Method

In this study, a mixed-method research design will be employed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of head teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools within Sheema Municipality, Southwestern Uganda (Smith, 2017; Johnson et al., 2019). This design facilitated a balanced approach by combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. By doing so, it aimed at shedding light on both the quantifiable aspects of this issue, such as the statistical relationships, as well as the nuanced, qualitative insights from the participants.

Data Collection

Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to students and teachers in the selected schools (Jones & Davis, 2018). These questionnaires utilized Likert-scale items to gauge the perceptions of participants regarding head teachers' communication methods and their effects on student discipline (Johnson et al., 2019). Additionally, qualitative data was acquired through in-depth interviews with prefects through focus group discussions (Smith, 2017). The interviews and discussions provided a deeper understanding of the experiences, attitudes, and perspectives of participants regarding the communication methods employed by head teachers and their consequences on student discipline (Brown, 2016; Green & White, 2020).

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Data Instruments and Analysis

The data instruments encompassed questionnaires, and focus group discussion guides (Smith, 2017). For quantitative analysis, the collected data was processed using statistical software, such as SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022), enabling the computation of descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (e.g., correlation and regression analysis) to assess the relationships between head teachers' communication methods and student discipline (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed and analyzed thematically. This process included coding, categorization, and theme development to uncover key insights and patterns in the qualitative data, providing a rich narrative alongside quantitative findings (Green & White, 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). In-text citations were incorporated to credit relevant sources and scholarly literature that inform the study (Smith, 2017; Brown, 2016). Ethical considerations were diligently addressed, encompassing informed consent and data privacy to uphold the ethical standards of the research (Jones & Davis, 2018).

Results

Head teachers' communication methods

Head teachers' communication methods, the first independent variable in this current study was studied using 8 quantitative questions. Respondents were requested to do self-rating on these items basing on Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree. Table 1 gives results.

Table 1: Head teachers' implementation of Communication methods

Indicators of head teachers' communication methods	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev
My head teachers uses emails as his primary communication method with parents	30 21.4%	29 20.7%	22 15.7%	25 17.9%	34 24.3%	3.03	1.49
My head teacher uses online platforms, such as Parent Pay, to communicate with parents	14 10.0%	12 8.6%	20 14.3%	59 42.1%	35 25.0%	3.64	1.23
My head teacher regularly send	9 6.4%	11 7.9%	19 13.6%	58 41.4%	43 30.7%	3.82	1.15

Received: 16.10.2023

Accepted: 19.10.2023

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newsletters to parents							
My headteacher, commonly utilizes phone calls as a method of communication to effectively connect with parents.	1 0.7%	5 3.6%	7 5.0%	55 39.3%	72 51.4%	4.37	0.799
My head teacher recognizes the importance of regularly communicating with parents about their child's progress.	2 1.4%	2 1.4%	8 5.7%	52 37.1%	76 54.3%	4.41	0.786
My head teacher usually uses Face-to-face meetings with parents as a common communication method	5 3.6%	5 3.6%	5 3.6%	56 40.0%	69 49.3%	4.28	0.96
My Head teachers use social media to communicate with parents	6 4.3%	10 7.1%	13 9.3%	74 52.9%	37 26.4%	3.90	1.01
My head teacher utilizes school-wide announcements through public address systems as a prevalent and effective communication method	8 5.7%	7 5.0%	18 12.9%	77 55.0%	30 21.4%	3.81	1.02

The findings in Table 1 on whether the respondents' head teachers' uses emails as his primary communication method with parents, cumulatively the majority of the respondents (42.2%) agreed while 42.1% disagreed and 15.7% were not sure. The mean = 3.03 was close to code 3 which on the scale used corresponded to not sure. This

Received: 16.10.2023

Accepted: 19.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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implied that the respondents' head teacher rarely uses emails as his primary communication method with parents (Racheal et al., 2023).

With respect to whether the respondents' head teacher uses online platforms, such as Parent Pay, to communicate with parents, the majority (67.1%) agreed while 18.6% disagreed and 14.3% were undecided. The mean = 3.64 close to code 4 meant that the respondents agree. This implied that the respondents' head teacher uses online platforms, such as Parent Pay, to communicate with parents (Nelson et al., 2023).

Regarding as to whether the respondents' head teacher regularly send newsletters to parents, , the majority of the respondents (72.1%) agreed while 14.3% disagreed and 13.6% were undecided. The mean = 3.82 close to code 4 meant that the respondents agreed that their head teacher regularly send newsletters to parents (Paul et al., 2023).

With respect to whether the respondents' head teacher, commonly utilizes phone calls as a method of communication to effectively connect with parents, the majority percentage (90.7%) agreed while 4.3% disagreed and 5.0% were undecided. The mean = 4.37 close to code 4 which on the scale used, meant that the respondents agreed. This implied that the respondents' head teacher commonly utilizes phone calls as a method of communication to effectively connect with parents (Brighton et al., 2023).

In relation to whether the respondents' head teacher recognizes the importance of regularly communicating with parents about their child's progress, cumulatively the majority of respondents (91.4%) agreed while 2.8% disagreed and 5.7% were undecided. The mean = 4.41 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree. This implied that the respondents' head teacher recognizes the importance of regularly communicating with parents about their child's progress (K. Faridah et al., 2023).

As to whether the respondents head teacher usually uses Face-to-face meetings with parents as a common communication method, the majority of the respondents (89.3%) agreed while 7.2% disagreed and 3.6% were undecided. The mean = 4.28 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggesting that the respondents head teacher usually uses Face-to-face meetings with parents as a common communication method (Ronet et al., 2023).

As regards to whether the respondents' head teachers use social media to communicate with parents, a majority of respondents (79.3%) agreed while 11.4% disagreed and 9.3% were undecided. With a mean = 3.90 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggested that the head teachers use social media to communicate with parents (Ronald et al., 2023).

With respect to whether the respondents head teacher utilizes school-wide announcements through public address systems as a prevalent and effective communication method, the majority percentage (76.4%) of the respondents agreed while 10.7% disagreed and 12.9% were undecided. With a mean = 3.81 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggested that the head teacher utilizes school-wide announcements through public

address systems as a prevalent and effective communication method (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023a). To get an average view of how teachers rated their head teachers on the communication methods, a histogram and curve were generated as it appears in Figure 1;

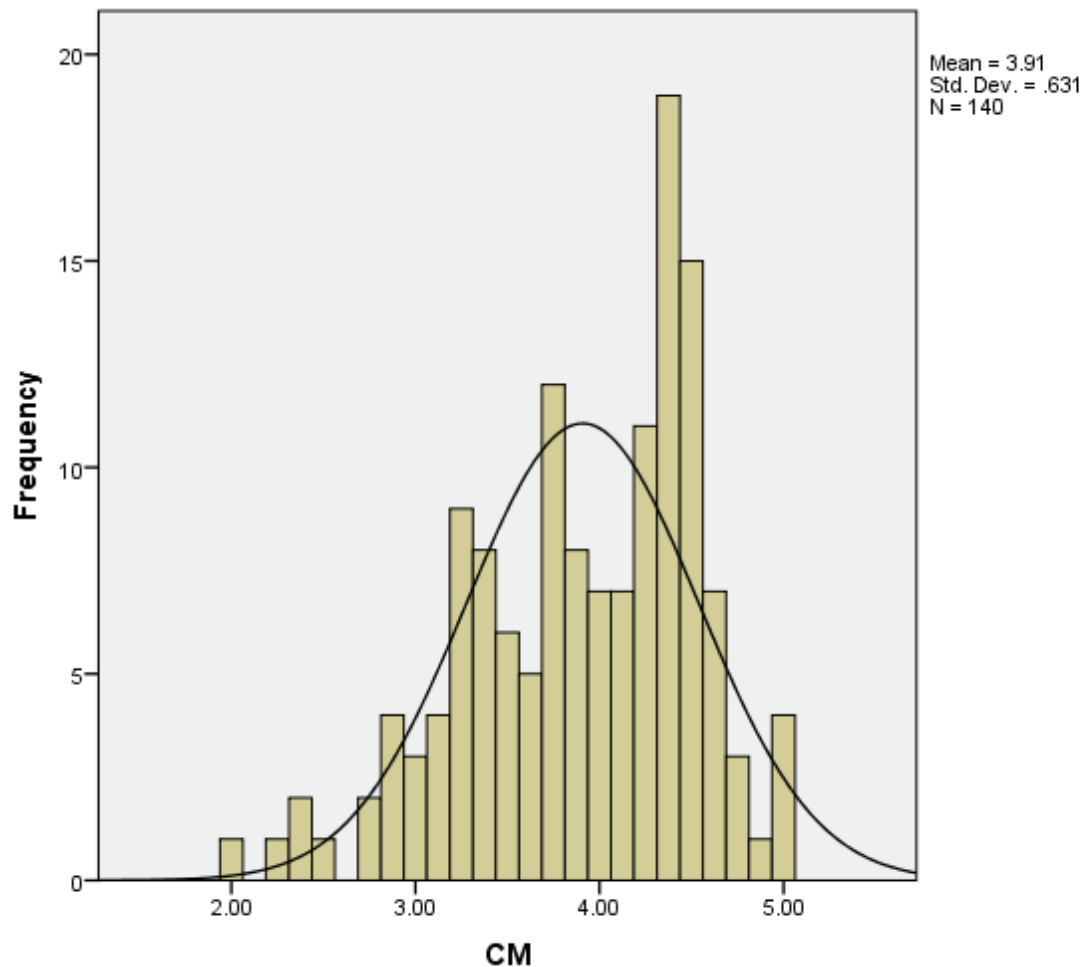


Figure 1: Histogram and curve showing distribution of respondents on head teachers' communication methods

The histogram and curve in Figure 1 indicate that the majority of respondents' responses were clustered towards the right side of the graph. This clustering suggests that head teachers were generally effective in their communication regarding student discipline. To find out whether there was a relationship between head teachers communication methods and students' discipline, Pearson's correlation coefficient index was run as in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson's Product moment correlation index between students discipline and Communication methods.

	Pearson's correlation	Student discipline	Communication Methods
Student discipline	Pearson correlation	1	0. 574**
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	140	140
Communication methods	Pearson correlation	0. 574**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	140	140

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

Table 2 shows Pearson's correlation coefficient index between student discipline and communication methods $r = 0.574^{**}$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$, less than 0.05. This suggests that there was a moderately high relationship between student discipline and communication methods at the five percent level 2-tailed. Thus, it implied that when the communication methods of Head teachers are improved there is a likelihood of improved students discipline and vice versa.

To triangulate with the quantitative responses, Qualitative analysis was done in accordance to the study research questions (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023). For instance the first research question .As prefects, how do you perceive the Head Teacher's means of communication, such as announcements, meetings, or memos, and how do you think it influences students' discipline in our school? Prefect F: Stressed that;

As a prefect, I find the Head Teacher's means of communication quite effective. The announcements are clear and timely, keeping us informed about important school events and updates. The meetings provide an opportunity to address concerns and collaborate on improving the school environment. The memos, though less frequent, serve as written reminders for critical matters. Overall, these communication methods help maintain a sense of order and discipline among students. When the instructions and expectations are communicated well, students are more likely to adhere to the rules and regulations, contributing to a disciplined and organized school atmosphere (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023b).

The statement highlights the positive impact of the Head Teacher's communication approach from the perspective of a prefect. The effectiveness of various communication methods is acknowledged, starting with clear and timely announcements that keep the prefects informed about significant school events and updates. The meetings are recognized as valuable opportunities for addressing concerns and collaborating on enhancing the school environment. Although memos are less frequent, they are valued as written reminders for important matters. These

Received: 16.10.2023**Accepted: 19.10.2023****Published on: 30.10.2023****Corresponding: Author: gid2christ@gmail.com**

communication methods collectively contribute to upholding order and discipline among students. When instructions and expectations are communicated effectively, students are more likely to comply with rules and regulations, fostering a structured and organized school atmosphere.

On this question, Can you share any specific instances where effective communication from the Head Teacher has positively impacted students' discipline? Study participant H stressed that;

From my experience as a prefect, I recall a particular incident where the Head Teacher's communication had a positive impact on students' discipline. When a new school policy was implemented, the Head Teacher held a series of meetings to explain the rationale and expected behavior. This transparent approach helped students understand the reasons behind the policy and motivated them to adhere to it, fostering a disciplined environment both inside and outside the classrooms (Richard, B, Janice, et al., 2022).

The statement recounts a specific situation from the perspective of a prefect, underscoring the constructive influence of the Head Teacher's communication on student discipline. In this particular instance, the Head Teacher's approach to introducing a new school policy is highlighted. Through a series of meetings, the Head Teacher transparently conveyed the policy's purpose and expected conduct to the students (Collins et al., 2023). This clear and open communication method enabled students to grasp the underlying reasons for the policy, which, in turn, encouraged their compliance with it. As a result of this effective communication, not only was discipline nurtured within classroom settings, but it also extended to the broader school environment. The incident underscores the significance of transparent communication in motivating student cooperation and maintaining a disciplined atmosphere both inside and outside the classrooms.

On this question, in your role as prefects, how do you think the Head Teacher's means of communication supports your efforts to maintain discipline among your peers? Participant A pointed out that;

As a prefect, the Head Teacher's means of communication is invaluable in supporting my efforts to maintain discipline among my peers. The clear announcements and memos help reinforce the school's rules, making it easier for me to address any violations. Additionally, the information shared during meetings equips me with valuable insights, enabling me to better communicate and enforce disciplinary measures when necessary.

The statement emphasizes the pivotal role of the Head Teacher's communication style in aiding a prefect's endeavors to uphold discipline among fellow students. The prefect highlights that the Head Teacher's mode of communication holds immense value for them. Clear announcements and memos serve to strengthen the school's regulations,

facilitating the prefect's task of addressing any rule violations promptly. Moreover, the information conveyed in meetings equips the prefect with essential knowledge, enhancing their ability to effectively communicate and implement disciplinary actions as required. Overall, the Head Teacher's communication approach is seen as an indispensable tool in the prefect's efforts to maintain order and discipline within the student community.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of Head Teachers' communication methods on student discipline in selected secondary schools. Results also revealed that Head teachers' communication methods have a positive significant relationship on student discipline in selected secondary schools. The results suggest that the communication methods employed by Head Teachers have a notable and positively significant impact on student discipline within the selected secondary schools. This underscores the vital role that effective communication strategies can play in fostering a conducive environment for maintaining student discipline. The findings of this study underscore the substantial and positively significant influence of Head Teachers' communication methods on student discipline within the selected secondary schools. This highlights the pivotal role that effective communication strategies play in cultivating an environment conducive to sustaining student discipline. This aligns with insights from various researchers within the field. (Oscar et al., 2023) explored the role of head teachers in promoting discipline in Kenyan secondary schools, revealing that communication approaches like newsletters and parent-teacher meetings positively impacted student discipline. Similarly, Mwiria's (2016) study on school leadership practices in Kenyan secondary schools demonstrated that head teachers employing diverse communication means, such as email, text messages, and social media, could enhance student discipline by involving parents in school affairs.

Furthermore, Ayugi and Abenga's (2015) investigation into the Ugandan context established a connection between head teachers' communication skills, positive stakeholder relationships, and improved student discipline. (N. Moses, 2022) work emphasized that a participatory communication style led to successful discipline promotion. Ongowo and Wekesa (2015) identified transparent communication channels like suggestion boxes and regular meetings as promoting student discipline through trust and accountability. Ngunjiri (2017) highlighted the essential role of effective communication, including consistent use of rules, in enhancing discipline. Wangombe (2018) noted that clear communication of expectations and consequences fostered discipline, while Orodho and Gakunga (2016) emphasized that diverse communication channels promoted community and shared responsibility, enhancing discipline. In sum, the alignment between these findings and previous research underlines the central role of effective communication strategies in Head Teachers' capacity to foster student discipline within secondary schools (Wegulo et al., 2023).

Conclusions and recommendations**Received: 16.10.2023****Accepted: 19.10.2023****Published on: 30.10.2023**

Corresponding: Author: gid2christ@gmail.com

It was concluded that Head teachers' communication methods have a significant relationship on student discipline in selected secondary schools. This implied that the communication methods employed by Head Teachers have a notable and positively significant impact on student discipline within the selected secondary schools. It was recommended that schools should provide professional development opportunities for Head Teachers, emphasizing effective communication skills to enhance interactions with students and parents. Furthermore, educational institutions should encourage Head Teachers to foster a collaborative approach by involving students and parents in decision-making processes through open forums and feedback mechanisms.

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