
**EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES BY HEAD TEACHERS' FOR ENFORCING SCHOOL RULES AND
MAINTAINING STUDENT DISCIPLINE IN SHEEMA MUNICIPALITY, UGANDA**

Ahimbisibwe k Gideon

Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This study, conducted in a specific educational context, sought to explore the relationship between the implementation of school rules and regulations by Head Teachers and the maintenance of student discipline in selected secondary schools. The research, employing quantitative methods and statistical analysis, uncovered a robust and statistically significant correlation between the effective enforcement of school rules by Head Teachers and the high levels of student discipline within these educational institutions. Consequently, it can be concluded that Head Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student discipline through the consistent enforcement of school regulations, and their active engagement with educators, students, and parents is essential for fostering a shared understanding and ensuring the uniform application of these rules. As a result, it is recommended that schools periodically review and update their rules and regulations for relevance and effectiveness while encouraging Head Teachers to collaborate with stakeholders to maintain a conducive learning environment.

Key words: Effective Strategies, School Rules and Student Discipline

Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of education, the role of head teachers in ensuring a conducive and disciplined learning environment is paramount. Across the globe, school rules and regulations stand as the cornerstone of maintaining order, fostering positive behavior, and nurturing the academic and personal development of students (Richard, 2022). In the heart of Sheema Municipality, situated in the southwestern region of Uganda (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023), this study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the effective strategies employed by head teachers to enforce school rules and maintain student discipline (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Sheema Municipality, like many other educational settings, grapples with the challenge of balancing academic rigor with the promotion of positive conduct among students. The task of head teachers in this context is both complex and pivotal, as they are tasked with upholding and implementing the rules and regulations that underpin the educational process (Mark et al., 2023). This research seeks to shed light on the multifaceted strategies employed by these educational leaders, the challenges they face, and the outcomes of their efforts, all within the unique context of Sheema Municipality, Uganda. As we delve into this study, we aim to uncover the valuable insights and lessons that can be drawn from their experiences, with the overarching goal of contributing to the ongoing discourse on enhancing discipline and order in educational institutions (Micheal et al., 2023).

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Corresponding: Author: gid2christ@gmail.com

Background

The importance of maintaining discipline in schools cannot be overstated, as it plays a fundamental role in creating an optimal learning environment (Christopher, Methodius, et al., 2022). To achieve this, schools must establish clear policies defining acceptable behavior and institute consequences for those who deviate from these norms. Furthermore, educators should receive training in positive discipline strategies that foster respect, responsibility, and cooperation (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). The development of a supportive school climate that promotes social-emotional learning and nurtures strong relationships between students and adults has proven effective in reducing disciplinary issues (Thapa et al., 2013). Addressing the root causes of misbehavior, such as trauma, poverty, and mental health concerns, is essential to preempt future disciplinary challenges (Zulaikah & Rebecca, 2023). In the context of Uganda, the maintenance of discipline within schools is a pressing concern for educators and policymakers (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). The Ugandan government has set forth disciplinary guidelines that prioritize positive reinforcement and non-punitive approaches to discipline (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). However, the implementation of these guidelines is hampered by resource limitations and insufficient teacher training (Mugabi & Mpagi, 2019). Additionally, the continued use of corporal punishment in Ugandan

schools, despite its illegality, remains a troubling issue (Victoria et al., 2023). It is evident that there is a compelling need for investment in teacher training and resources to promote positive discipline strategies and reduce punitive measures (Emmanuel et al., 2023).

Within Sheema Municipality, the maintenance of discipline in secondary schools is a matter of significant concern for educators, parents, and students alike (Victor et al., 2023). Current discipline strategies in these schools encompass detention, suspension, and even caning, among other punitive measures. However, there is a growing demand to explore alternative, positive, and more effective disciplinary approaches that contribute to a conducive learning environment (Allan et al., 2023). One such approach involves establishing a nurturing school climate that encourages positive relationships between students and teachers (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Additionally, educators can adopt restorative justice methods that focus on repairing harm and rebuilding relationships rather than punitive measures (Petersen & Lupton-Smith, 2017). In light of these challenges and the need for improved discipline strategies in Sheema Municipality's secondary schools, this study seeks to examine the effective strategies employed by head teachers to enforce school rules and maintain student discipline.

Statement of the problem

Schools are seen as important places where students are expected to learn discipline and self-control (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022), but that seems to be lacking in Sheema Municipality (Ayebare, 2018). In the

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past years (2012-2016), students' discipline issues within secondary schools in Sheema Municipality have been at insurmountable levels (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). The prevalent strikes in Sheema municipality led to the destruction of school properties (Victor et al., 2023). For example, in 2013, students at Nganwa High School burnt the school administration block (New vision, July 30th, 2013), and in the same year, students at Sacred Heart Secondary School Mushanga, were involved in arson at school for three consecutive times. 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 (Richard et al., 2022). 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 (Godfrey et al., 2023). There is limited research on Head Teachers' enforcement of school rules on students' discipline in Sheema Municipality. It is against this background that this study was instituted to examine whether the head teachers' enforcement of school rules and regulations have an impact on students' discipline in selected secondary schools in South Western Uganda (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022).

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the effective Strategies by head teachers' for Enforcing School Rules and Maintaining Student Discipline in Sheema Municipality, Uganda.

Method

The research design for this study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively explore the effective strategies used by head teachers in Sheema Municipality, Uganda, for enforcing school rules and maintaining student discipline. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provided a holistic understanding of the subject matter, allowing for a richer analysis and interpretation of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire, based on a Likert scale, was administered to a sample of head teachers in selected secondary schools, providing quantifiable data on their enforcement strategies. Concurrently, in-depth interviews with a subset of prefects were conducted to gain deeper insights into the nuances of their approaches (Denscombe, 2014). The sampling method employed was purposive sampling, ensuring that the selected schools and head teachers were representative of the population under investigation, thereby enhancing the study's external validity (Yin, 2018). The collected data was analyzed using thematic content analysis for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for quantitative data, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the strategies employed by head teachers in Sheema Municipality, Uganda, in enforcing school rules and maintaining student discipline (Nelson et al., 2022).

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Results**Head teacher's enforcement of school rules and regulations**

Head teacher's enforcement of school rules and regulations in this study were studied using 8 quantitative items on which respondents were requested to do self-rating. Table 1 gives arising results.

Table 1: Head teacher's enforcement of school rules and regulations

Indicators of Head teacher's enforcement of school rules and regulations	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev
My head teacher consistently enforces school rules and regulations	2 1.4%	1 0.7%	3 2.1%	37 26.4	97 69.3%	4.61	0.705
My head teacher is strict in enforcing disciplinary actions for students who break school rules	2 1.4	2 1.4	8 5.7%	68 48.6%	60 42.9%	4.30	0.765
My head teacher effectively communicates school rules and regulations, as perceived by parents and students.	3 2.1	1 0.7	6 4.3%	68 48.6%	62 44.3%	4.32	0.78
My head teacher ensures that the teachers are aware of and adhere to school rules and regulations.	1 0.7%	2 1.4%	6 4.3%	71 50.7%	60 42.9%	4.34	0.69
My Head Teacher opens to feedback from teachers regarding school rules and regulations.	3 2.1%	2 1.4%	7 5.0%	81 57.9%	47 33.6%	4.19	0.78
My head teacher works	3	2	3	60	72	4.40	0.794

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tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports and promotes adherence to rules and regulations.	2.1%	1.4%	2.1%	42.9%	51.4%		
My head teacher ensures that the consequences for breaking school rules are fair and consistently applied.	1 0.7%	4 2.9%	5 3.6%	68 48.6%	62 44.3%	4.33	0.744
My head teacher works tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports the rules and regulations.	1 0.7%	1 0.7%	12 8.6%	66 47.1%	60 42.9%	4.31	0.72

The findings in Table 1 on whether the respondents' head teacher consistently enforces school rules and regulations, cumulatively the majority of the respondents (95.7%) agreed while 2.1% disagreed and 2.1% were not sure. The mean = 4.61 was close to code 5 which on the scale used corresponded to strongly agree (Zowena et al., 2023). This implied that the respondents' head teacher consistently enforces school rules and regulations. With respect to whether the respondents' head teacher is strict in enforcing disciplinary actions for students who break school rules, the majority (91.5%) agreed while 2.8% disagreed and 5.7% were undecided. The mean = 4.30 close to code 4 meant that the respondents agree (Wegulo et al., 2023). This implied that the respondents' head teacher is strict in enforcing disciplinary actions for students who break school rules. Regarding as to whether the respondents' head teacher effectively communicates school rules and regulations, as perceived by parents and students, the majority of the respondents (92.9%) agreed while 2.8% disagreed and 5.7% were undecided (Annet et al., 2023). The mean = 4.32 close to code 4 meant that the respondents agreed that their head teacher effectively communicates school rules and regulations (W. Paul & Kazaara, 2023).

With respect to whether the respondents' head teacher ensures that the teachers are aware of and adhere to school rules and regulations, the majority percentage (93.6%) agreed while 2.1% disagreed and 4.3% were undecided. The mean = 4.34 close to code 4 which on the scale used, meant that the respondents agreed. This implied that the respondents' head teacher ensures that the teachers are aware of and adhere to school rules and regulations (K. Paul et al., 2023).

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In relation to whether the respondents' head teacher opens to feedback from teachers regarding school rules and regulations, cumulatively the majority of respondents (91.5%) agreed while 3.5% disagreed and 5.0% were undecided. The mean = 4.19 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree. This implied that the respondents' head teacher opens to feedback from teachers regarding school rules and regulations (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

As to whether the respondents head teacher works tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports and promotes adherence to rules and regulations, the majority of the respondents (94.3%) agreed while 3.5% disagreed and 2.1% were undecided. The mean = 4.40 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggesting that the respondents head teacher works tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports and promotes adherence to rules and regulations (Bank et al., 2023).

As regards to whether the respondents' head teacher ensures that the consequences for breaking school rules are fair and consistently applied, a majority of respondents (92.9%) agreed while 3.6% disagreed and 3.6% were undecided. With a mean = 4.33 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggested that in the respondents' head teacher ensures that the consequences for breaking school rules are fair and consistently applied (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022).

With respect to whether the respondents head teachers works tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports the rules and regulations, the majority percentage (90.0%) of the respondents agreed while 1.4% disagreed and 8.6% were undecided. With a mean = 4.31 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded to agree, suggested that the head teachers works tirelessly to create a positive school culture that supports the rules and regulations (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). To get an average view on how respondents rated on demographic characteristics, an average index demographic was created and results are offered in Figure 1:

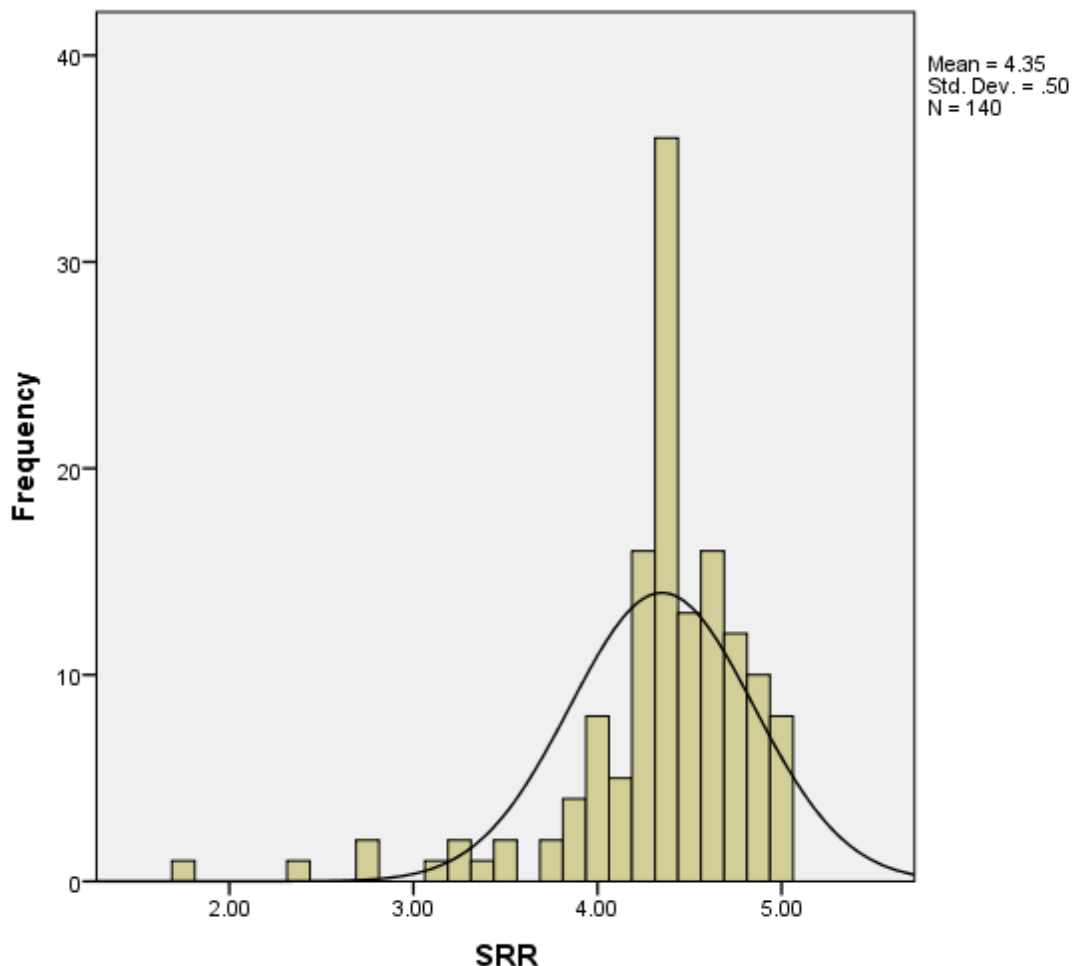


Figure 1: Histogram and curve showing distribution of respondents on head teachers enforcement school rules and regulation.

The histogram and curve show that majority of the study respondents were concentrated on the right side of the histogram and curve which implied that the head teachers enforced school rules and regulations. To find out whether there was a relationship between head teachers enforcement of school rules and regulation and students' discipline, Pearson's correlation coefficient index was run as in Table 1.

Table 2: Pearson's product moment correlation index between student discipline and school rules and regulations

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	Pearson's correlation	Student discipline	School Rules and Regulation
Student discipline	Pearson correlation	1	0.567**
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	140	140
School Rules and Regulation	Pearson correlation	0.567**	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 school rules and regulations $r = 0.567^{**}$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$, less than 0.05. This suggests that there was a moderately high significant relationship between student discipline and school rules and regulations at the five percent level 2-tailed (Nelson et al., 2023). Thus, it implies that improving head teachers enforcement of school rules and regulation increases the students' discipline.

To triangulate with the quantitative responses, Qualitative analysis was done in accordance to the study research questions. For instance the first research question was how do you perceive the Head Teacher's implementation of school rules and regulations in maintaining discipline among students in our school. To answer this question; participant A stressed that;

"From my perspective, the Head Teacher's implementation of rules and regulations is somewhat strict. While I understand the importance of discipline, I believe they could be more flexible in certain situations, considering individual circumstances of students. A more personalized approach might foster a better learning environment."

This statement implies that the head teacher's approach to implementing rules and regulations is characterized by a degree of strictness. While the researcher recognizes the importance of discipline, they suggest that there might be an opportunity for greater flexibility, particularly in situations where the individual circumstances of students come into play. This, according to the speaker, could lead to a more personalized approach that enhances the overall learning environment. Similarly, participant C stressed that;

I appreciate the Head Teacher's efforts to enforce school rules, but I sometimes feel that they could be more proactive in addressing disciplinary issues. Waiting for incidents to occur before taking action might not be the most effective strategy. Preventative measures and positive reinforcement could complement their approach well."

The statement implies that the Head teacher's commitment to enforcing school rules, yet suggests that a more proactive approach to addressing disciplinary matters, including preventative measures and positive reinforcement, could enhance the overall effectiveness of their strategy, rather than solely relying on reacting to incidents.

When the respondents were asked on the question; can you share any specific instances where you have observed the Head Teacher's use of school rules and regulations positively influencing students' discipline? One of the study participants stressed that (Wegulo et al., 2023);

I recall an incident where a group of students was repeatedly disruptive in my classroom. I reported the issue to the Head Teacher, and they promptly addressed it. The Head Teacher held a meeting with the students involved, emphasizing the importance of respecting classroom rules and the impact their behavior had on the learning environment. The students were given a warning and clear consequences if they continued their disruptive behavior. Surprisingly, since then, the students became more respectful and focused in class, indicating how the Head Teacher's intervention positively influenced their discipline (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022).

In the given scenario, the respondent recounts an occurrence involving persistent disruptions caused by a group of students within their classroom. Upon recognizing the issue, the respondent took the initiative to inform the Head Teacher, who promptly took action. The Head Teacher organized a meeting with the involved students, during which they underscored the significance of upholding classroom rules and highlighted how the disruptive behavior negatively impacted the overall learning environment. As a result of this intervention, the students were provided with a warning along with clear consequences that would follow if they continued their disruptive conduct. In a related development, participant c stressed that (Godfrey et al., 2023);

"In our school, we have a policy regarding tardiness. One morning, a student arrived late to my class for the third time in a week. As per the school rules, I informed the Head Teacher about the situation (Brighton et al., 2023). The Head Teacher spoke to the student privately, discussing the importance of punctuality and its impact on their academic performance. The student was given a detention and extra help in time management. From that point forward, the student arrived on time consistently, demonstrating how the Head Teacher's enforcement of the rule positively influenced their discipline (Micheal et al., 2023).

From the students' perspective, on the question in your role as prefects, how do you think the Head Teacher's enforcement of school rules and regulations impacts your ability to maintain discipline among your peers? Prefect stressed that;

The Head Teacher's strict enforcement of school rules is beneficial for me as a prefect. When students see that the rules are consistently upheld by the Head Teacher, they are more likely to take my role seriously. It becomes easier to maintain discipline because students understand that consequences are inevitable if they misbehave (Victoria et al., 2023).

The statement emphasizes that the Head Teacher's consistent enforcement of school rules positively influences the role of the speaker as a prefect. When students witness the Head Teacher's strict adherence to rules, they are more likely to take the prefect's role seriously. This, in turn, facilitates the speaker's task of maintaining discipline, as students recognize the inevitability of consequences for misbehavior. The Head Teacher's commitment to enforcing

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rules not only helps maintain order but also supports the speaker's role in fostering respect for rules and authority among students (Richard et al., 2022).

Prefect B stressed that;

Sometimes, the Head Teacher's enforcement of rules can be too harsh, making it challenging for me as a prefect to maintain discipline without causing conflicts. I believe a more balanced approach that combines understanding and support with discipline would be more effective in gaining the respect and cooperation of our peers."

The statement suggests that while the head teacher's stringent rule enforcement can make maintaining discipline challenging for the speaker as a prefect and potentially lead to conflicts, the speaker advocates for a more balanced approach that combines understanding, support, and discipline. They believe that integrating empathy and assistance into disciplinary actions could foster better relationships between prefects and peers, ultimately earning respect and cooperation. This approach is seen as a way to maintain order while also promoting fairness and considerateness, enhancing the overall school environment.

Discussion

The main objective of the study was to find out the relationship between Head Teachers' enforcement of school rules and regulations and student discipline in selected secondary schools. The findings indicate a strong and statistically significant correlation between Head Teachers' implementation of school rules and regulations and student discipline in the selected secondary schools. These findings implied that the effective enforcement of school rules and regulations by Head Teachers is closely associated with maintaining high levels of student discipline within the chosen secondary schools. This correlation finding is consistent with various studies reviewed in the literature. Adebayo and Akinloye (2016) highlight the purpose of school rules and regulations in creating a structured environment that fosters positive behavior and discipline among students. This aligns with the positive correlation observed, indicating that well-established rules and regulations are linked to higher levels of student discipline.

Amponsah et al. (2017) also support the notion that schools with clear and concise rules and regulations are more effective in promoting positive behavior and discipline among students. Their emphasis on involving students in rule development resonates with the idea of student buy-in and compliance contributing to improved discipline. Okello and Wabwire (2014) found that schools with well-defined rules and regulations experienced lower instances of student misbehavior. This reinforces the positive correlation between adherence to rules and student discipline. Odeyemi and Adekola (2017) emphasize the role of head teachers in enforcing rules and regulations, aligning with the idea that consistent enforcement is pivotal in promoting a culture of discipline.

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Sserwaniko (2019) and Tukur and Ahmad (2015) similarly stress the significance of clear and concise rules in reducing cases of indiscipline and promoting positive behavior. The recommendation to involve stakeholders echoes the importance of collaborative efforts in rule development and enforcement. Yapıcı and Köse (2019) further underscore the role of head teachers in effective rule implementation, emphasizing the use of various disciplinary measures to ensure compliance. In summary, the presented study findings and the reviewed literature converge to highlight the positive correlation between adherence to school rules and regulations and student discipline. Well-defined rules, consistent enforcement, involvement of stakeholders, and the use of diverse disciplinary measures collectively contribute to promoting positive behavior and discipline among students.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study concluded that a robust and statistically significant correlation exists between the implementation of school rules and regulations by Head Teachers and student discipline within the selected secondary schools. Effective enforcement of these rules by Head Teachers is closely associated with maintaining high levels of student discipline in these educational institutions. As a result, it was recommended, in light of the initial objective, that schools engage in periodic reviews of their existing school rules and regulations to ensure their relevance and effectiveness in upholding student discipline. Additionally, Head Teachers should take proactive measures to foster a shared understanding and consistent enforcement of school rules and regulations among educators, students, and parents.

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