

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINARY POLICIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY PUPILS IN KAJJANSI TOWN COUNCIL. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT.

Background:

This study aimed to assess the relationship between school management policies and the academic performance of primary pupils in Kajjansi Town Council, Wakiso District.

Methodology:

A descriptive correlational and cross-sectional survey design was used. A total of 134 respondents were selected as the study respondents.

Results:

According to the findings, there was a fairly good positive significant correlation ($r=0.673$, $sig=0.000$) between disciplinary policy and the educational performance of the primary pupils.

Conclusion:

There was a fairly good positive significant correlation ($r=0.673$, $sig=0.000$) between disciplinary policies and the academic performance of primary pupils in Kajjansi Town Council hence a positive relationship between disciplinary policies and academic performance of pupils in primary schools. Therefore, disciplinary policies have a significant relationship with the academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in the Kajjansi Town Council

Recommendations:

The results of the study also suggest the use of corporal punishment as a tool for discipline in public secondary schools in Kampala City, Uganda. The findings suggest that there is a strong belief that consistent enforcement of disciplinary policies creates a safe and disciplined learning environment, promotes character development, and fosters positive relationships among stakeholders.

Keywords: *Disciplinary policies, Academic performance, Primary pupils, Kajansi Town Council*

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INTRODUCTION.

School management policies play a crucial role in the academic performance of pupils. These policies help ensure that the school environment is conducive to learning and that pupils have the necessary resources and support to achieve their academic goals. Well-designed policies can ensure that the school has clear expectations and standards for academic performance, that resources are allocated fairly and appropriately, and that teachers have the training and support they need to provide quality instruction. In the Kajjansi town council, there are several school management policies relating to school fees, discipline, school learning environment, feeding, curriculum development, assessment policies, and sports policies (Nanyonjo, 2023). However, the academic performance of primary pupils in selected primary schools

in Kajjansi Town Council was poor with an average score of 55.4%, which is slightly below the national average of 59.2% (Wakiso District Education Department, 2020). The most recent published data on the academic performance of pupils in government primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council is from the 2021-2022 academic year. According to this data, the overall performance of pupils in the town was below average. Specifically, the average scores for English, Mathematics, and Science were 38%, 34%, and 32% respectively in Mock examinations. Additionally, the average scores for the three compulsory subjects (English, Mathematics, and Science) were below the national average of 45%, 42%, and 41% (Lukenge, 2019). If this problem is not addressed, it may lead to low self-esteem, stress, and lack of motivation to study hence school dropouts and poor job prospects in the future.

Disciplinary policies establish the rules and expectations for behavior within the school. These policies help create a positive and safe learning environment for students (Anderson, Ritter, & Zamorro, 2019). When these policies are effectively implemented and enforced, they help to maintain order in the school and reduce disruptive behavior, leading to a more conducive learning environment. This enables students to focus on their studies and ultimately improves their academic performance (Jabbar et al., 2022).

Disciplinary policies outline the rules, regulations, and consequences for student's behavior in the school environment. These policies set expectations for student conduct, address issues such as bullying, cheating, and disruptive behavior, and provide a framework for maintaining discipline and order within the school (Ssenyonga, Katharin, Mattonet, Nkuba, & Hecker, 2022). By promoting a safe and respectful learning environment, disciplinary policies can positively impact the academic performance of primary pupils. When students feel safe and supported, they are more likely to engage in learning and perform better academically (Najoli, Runhare, & Ouda, 2019).

School fees policies also indirectly impact the academic performance of primary pupils. School fees can influence the accessibility and affordability of education for certain families. If the fees are excessively high or if families face financial hardship in paying them, it may lead to some students being unable to attend school or facing challenges in accessing necessary resources and support. This can hurt their academic performance (Oyugi & Gogo, 2019). The study covered the relationship between disciplinary policies and the academic performance of primary pupils. Further, the study covered the literature review in line with the study objectives; and theories related to the study and identified gaps in the study. This therefore prompted the researcher to examine the effects of school management policies on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Kanjansi Town Council.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

Theoretical review.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) is a widely used social cognitive model that explains human behavior based on individuals' intentions and beliefs. This review examines the application of TPB in the context of disciplinary policies and their impact on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools.

The theory of Planned Behavior posits that behavioral intentions are influenced by three main factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the educational context, attitudes refer to individuals' beliefs about the positive or negative consequences of adhering to school management policies (Davis et al., 2002). Subjective norms refer to the influence of significant

others, such as teachers, parents, and peers, on behavior, and perceived behavioral control refers to individuals' perception of their ability to perform the desired behavior (Lee et al., 2010).

Several studies have explored the impact of disciplinary policies on academic performance. For example, a study by Smith and Johnson (2010) found that schools with strong disciplinary policies and clear academic expectations had better student outcomes compared to schools with weak policies. This finding supports the idea that positive attitudes toward school management policies can lead to improved academic performance.

Research has shown that positive attitudes towards school management policies are associated with higher levels of academic engagement and motivation. For instance, a study by Brown and Jones (2015) found that students who perceived school management policies as fair and consistent reported higher academic self-efficacy and better academic performance.

Disciplinary policies in educational institutions play a crucial role in maintaining a conducive learning environment and promoting positive behavior among students. However, the effectiveness of such policies on academic performance remains debated. This literature review explores the existing research to evaluate the impact of disciplinary policies on the academic performance of pupils.

Nicholas O. S et al., 2012, in their study, they demonstrated that effective disciplinary policies positively affect academic achievement. They argued that schools with clear and consistently enforced policies experience fewer disruptions, allowing students to focus on their studies without unnecessary distractions.

Anderson (2018) examined the impact of exclusionary discipline strategies, such as suspensions and expulsions, on students' academic outcomes. The study found that students who had experienced exclusionary discipline exhibited lower academic performance than their peers who had not faced such sanctions. This suggests that harsh disciplinary measures can have detrimental effects on academic progress.

Mendez, Knoff, and Ferron (2022), examined the relationship between the availability of supportive discipline programs and academic achievement. Their findings revealed that schools implementing positive discipline interventions saw improved student behavior and subsequently better academic performance. These programs focused on proactive strategies such as classroom management techniques, social-emotional learning, and conflict resolution skills.

Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2019), studied the disproportionate impact of disciplinary actions on minority and low-income students. They found that a high reliance on punitive discipline practices, such as suspensions, led to negative academic outcomes, particularly for these student groups. The findings suggest that disciplinary policies should consider the potential disparities in their impact on different student populations.

Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2022) conducted a meta-analysis to explore the relationship between disciplinary practices and academic achievement. The study found that punitive discipline measures negatively affected academic outcomes, leading to lower test scores and diminished engagement in the learning process. In contrast, positive and proactive approaches to discipline were associated with higher academic achievement.

Batool et al., (2023) investigated the impact of school climate and classroom management strategies on academic performance. Their findings indicated that a positive school climate, characterized by clear and consistent discipline policies, was associated with higher academic achievement. Additionally, effective classroom management strategies, such as positive reinforcement and student engagement, were found to contribute to better academic outcomes.

The literature review demonstrates the significant influence of disciplinary policies on the academic performance of pupils. Clear and consistently enforced policies, as well as proactive and supportive discipline interventions, have been found to positively impact academic achievement. On the other hand, exclusionary and punitive disciplinary measures can have detrimental effects on students' academic progress. Educational institutions must prioritize the implementation of effective disciplinary policies that promote a positive learning environment and support students in their academic pursuits.

METHODOLOGY.

Research Design.

A descriptive correlational and cross-sectional survey design was used. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted because it permitted the researcher to study a target population by studying a representative cross-section of the population to arrive at findings that were logical and applicable to the entire target population.

The study also used a mixed research approach using quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. Quantitative techniques were applied to numeric data and qualitative techniques were deployed for non-numeric data, such as respondents' views or opinions, preferences, attitudes, and feelings.

Study setting.

The study was conducted in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council, Wakiso District. Wakiso District lies in the Central Region of the country, bordering Nakaseke District and Luweero District to the north, Mukono District to the east, Kalangala District in Lake Victoria to the south, Mpigi District to the southwest, and Mityana District to the northwest. Wakiso, where the district headquarters are located, lies approximately 20 kilometres (12 mi), by road, northwest of Kampala, the capital of Uganda and the largest city in the country. The coordinates of the district are:00 24N, 32 29E.

Target Population.

The target population for this study comprised four primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council. These were Kawotto primary school, Kitende primary school, Mpumudde primary school, and St Anthony primary school. These schools were selected due to the poor academic performance of the pupils in the Primary Leaving Examinations. The study used head teachers, primary seven pupils, and teachers of the selected primary schools as elements for the study. These particular pupils were selected because they were more understanding and had knowledge of school policies and academic results for performance over the years. The head teachers and teachers were selected to participate in the study because they are the implementers of school policies both in class and outside class and qualitatively measure the pupils' academic performance. The study used information from 6 years i.e. from (2018-2022) to examine the relationship between school management rules and the academic performance of pupils in the selected primary school. The selected period provided ample information for analysis in line with the study, particularly on academic performance.

A target of 213 participants will be used in this study. This will consist of 04 head teachers, 54 teachers, and 155 primary seven pupils (Kajjansi Town Council Education Department, May 2023).

Table 1: Target population.

Selected primary schools	Head teachers	Teachers	Primary seven pupils
Kitende C.O.U Primary School	01	15	45
Kawotto primary school	01	14	34
Mpumudde primary school	01	13	36
St Anthony primary school	01	12	40
Total	04	54	155
Target Population			213

Source: Kajjansi Town Council Education Department, (May, 2023)

Sample size.

Table 2: Population size, sample size, and sampling technique.

Selected participants	Population size	Sample size	Sampling technique
Head teachers	04	04	Purposive sampling
Teachers	54	51	Purposive sampling
Students	155	79	Simple random sampling
Target Population	213	134	

Source: Kajjansi Town Council Education Department, (May 2023)

A sample is a subset of the population that is chosen to represent a population in a given research study (Lopez & Whitehead, (2013). For this study, the researcher adopted the Kreijcie & Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size. Therefore, 134 respondents were selected as the study respondents as seen in Table 2.

Sampling Techniques.

The researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select the respondents for the study. Under non-probability sampling, purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. These included teachers and head teachers since they have in-depth knowledge about school management policies and the academic performance of pupils in selected schools.

Simple random sampling was used to select pupils in primary seven to participate in the study. The method was used to allow all the pupils to participate in the study and eliminate bias.

Research Instruments.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The interview guides were used to collect information from teachers and head teachers while questionnaires were used to collect information from primary seven pupils. Secondary data was collected by use of a documentary review list.

Questionnaires.

This technique involved the use of written down items to which the respondent individually responds in writing. The items were in the form of statements. The reason for choosing this technique was to administer a large population in a short period. The questionnaire was structured into sections that sought responses for the demographic characteristics of respondents, open-ended and Likert format questions that were in line with the study objectives.

Interviews.

This is person-to-person verbal communication in which a person asks the other questions to elicit information or opinion. This instrument helped the researcher to collect information that cannot be directly observed. Data from head teachers and teachers was obtained by the use of interviews. This was used to acquire in-depth information about the study topic.

Documentary Review Checklist.

Information was sourced from documents related to the area of study. These documents were studied and critically reviewed while keeping ethical standards in mind. They were used to examine the effectiveness; relevance and appropriateness of the language including those related to the policies and background information of the organization mainly the end-of-term reports, and general staff meeting minutes.

Research procedure.

The researcher sought an introductory letter from the School of Graduate Studies and Research of Team University which was presented to head teachers of the selected primary schools in Kajjansi town council seeking authorization to conduct research and request them to participate.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respective respondents developed with the guidance of the supervisor. He further made appointments with the respondents on when, where, and at what venue they met to conduct interviews or administer questionnaires.

The researcher also made use of secondary data by reviewing available relevant textbooks, journal articles, periodicals, manuals, dissertations, and publications and visiting Newspapers both international and local. The authors of these articles were fully cited and accredited for their contribution to this research.

Validity and Reliability.

To ensure that the selected data collection instruments were capable of collecting the data that they were meant to collect and that they could consistently measure the variables that they were supposed to measure, the instruments were pre-tested for validity and reliability.

Validity of the study.

This study subjected its instruments of data collection to face validity because it ensured the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the inferences made from the results. With the help of the supervisor, the correctness of research elements in collecting data intended was done based on the Four (4) Point Scale of relevance, clarity, simplicity, and ambiguity.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) for the item was determined by dividing the number of valid questions (relevant) by the total number of questions in the instrument. Only those instruments with CVI that were over 70% in CVI were selected to collect data for the study.

Reliability of the study.

The instruments for data collection were tested for internal reliability from within the school, but a total number of 5 respondents were used in the study.

Data Analysis.

The study collected qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was edited and grouped by theme before being analyzed using content analysis. Quantitative data was entered into a data sheet using coded values and manipulated using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 18.0 Windows). Descriptive statistics were obtained and cross-tabulations of some items were made to obtain relationships and tested using Pearson correlation coefficients significant at 0.01 levels. Additionally, frequency counts and percentages were obtained to facilitate interpretations and conclusions. Graphic illustrations were used to summarize and portray the general trends of the results. Direct quotations from documents and interviews were used to illustrate ideas and opinions.

Variables.

The study conceptualized disciplinary policies as the independent variable and academic performance as the dependent variable. The academic performance of pupils was explained by national examination scores, classroom evaluations, and teacher evaluations.

Ethical Considerations.

The Researcher sought permission from the School of Graduate Studies and Research after defending the proposal and will obtain an Introductory letter to go within the field.

The Researcher sought the consent of the respondents to participate in the study and feel free to provide relevant information for the study.

Further, the Researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the research project and the expected outcome of the study.

The researcher assured the respondents that the information provided was treated with maximum confidentiality, and secrecy and was only used for academic purposes.

Further, the Researcher credited and extended his gratitude to all previous researchers whose literature contributed to this study.

RESULTS.

Disciplinary policies and academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

To bring out the intended findings, the researcher used a Likert format scale with 5 5-point scale and the findings were summarized and presented as follows. The degrees were 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- Not sure, 4- Agree and 5- Strongly disagree.

Descriptive findings on disciplinary policies in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

Table 3: Descriptive findings of disciplinary policies and academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

The school has a disciplinary committee that is functional hence ensures discipline among pupils.	4.4	0.2
Teacher engagements with indisciplined pupils is more effective in improving pupil behaviours and academic performance	1.7	0.4
Suspension of pupils has a direct impact on their academic performance	4.1	0.8
Expulsion of pupils from school has a direct impact on academic performance and schools dropouts in Kajjansi Town Council.	4.6	0.5
When disciplinary policies are enforced consistently, they create a safe and disciplined environment for learning and this conducive atmosphere enables students to focus better, participate actively in classroom activities, and engage with their studies effectively demonstrating improved academic performance.	4.4	0.2
Disciplinary policies often emphasize punctuality, regular attendance, and adherence to the school timetable which instill values good time management and ensure pupils attend classes regularly hence improved academic performance	2.7	0.4
Disciplinary policies focus on character development by promoting values such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility which encourage pupils to develop traits that are essential for success not only in their studies but also in their personal and professional lives	4.1	0.3
Implementing disciplinary policies involves clear communication between teachers, students, and parents which promotes positive relationships and mutual respect among all stakeholders for academic excellence of pupils.	1.6	0.5

According to findings in Table 3, on the statement “The school has a disciplinary committee that is functional hence ensures discipline among pupils” the average response was 4.4 with a standard deviation of 0.2. Therefore, school disciplinary committees are essential in ensuring discipline among pupils in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

On the statement “Teacher engagements with indisciplined pupils is more effective in improving pupil behaviours and academic performance” the average response was 1.7 with a standard deviation of 0.4.

Therefore, teacher engagements with undisciplined pupils do not effectively improve pupil behaviors and academic performance in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

On the statement “Suspension of pupils has a direct impact on their academic performance” the average response was 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.8. Therefore, the suspension of pupils as a punishment for bad behavior impacts pupils' attendance of class lessons and academic performance in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

On the statement "Expulsion of pupils from school has a direct impact on academic performance and school dropouts in Kajjansi Town council" the average response was 4.6 with a standard deviation of 0.5. Therefore, the expulsion of pupils from school has a direct impact on academic performance and school dropouts in selected primary schools in Kajjansi Town Council.

The study findings suggest that when disciplinary policies are enforced consistently, they create a safe and disciplined environment for learning. This conducive atmosphere enables students to focus better, participate actively in classroom activities, and engage effectively with their studies, leading to improved academic performance. The mean score for this statement was 4.4, indicating a high level of agreement among the participants.

On the other hand, the participants had a lower level of agreement (mean score of 2.7) when it came to the emphasis of disciplinary policies on punctuality, regular attendance, and adherence to the school timetable. This suggests that the participants were not fully convinced that these aspects of disciplinary policies directly lead to improved academic performance.

The participants, however, had a high level of agreement (mean score of 4.1) that disciplinary policies focus on character development by promoting values such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility. They believed that these values encourage pupils to develop traits that are not only beneficial for their academic success but also for their personal and professional lives.

Lastly, the participants strongly agreed (mean score of 1.6) that implementing disciplinary policies involves clear communication between teachers, students, and parents. They believed that this clear communication promotes positive relationships and mutual respect among all stakeholders, ultimately leading to the academic excellence of pupils.

Overall, the study findings suggest that there is a strong belief that consistent enforcement of disciplinary policies creates a safe and disciplined learning environment, promotes character development, and fosters positive relationships among stakeholders. However, there may be some doubts regarding the direct impact of certain aspects of disciplinary policies, such as punctuality and attendance, on academic performance.

Correlational findings.

Table 4: Correlation findings on school policies and academic performance of pupils in Kajjansi town council.

		Disciplinary policies	Academic performance
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.673**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	120	120

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

Source: Primary (2023)

According to the findings in Table 4, there was a fairly good positive significant correlation ($r=0.673$, $sig=0.000$) between disciplinary policies and the academic performance of primary pupils in Kajjansi Town Council.

Regression analysis of school management policies and academic performance of pupils in Kajjansi Town Council.

Table 5: Regression findings on school management policies and academic performance of pupils in Kajjansi Town Council.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0,801 ^a	0,642	0,631
2	0,701 ^b	0,491	0,501
3	0,601 ^c	0,362	0,361

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,831	,000		2,234	,000
	Disciplinary	1,029	,000	,016	1,516	,000

Source: Primary (2023).

The academic performance of pupils was 63.1% explained by disciplinary policies (Adjusted R Square = 0.631) (Table 5). The remaining 36.9% was explained by other variables that were outside the study. The regression model was also valid (sig.0.000 <.05). Therefore, having an efficient disciplinary committee, disciplinary actions, and procedures in primary schools significantly contributes to improving the behavior of pupils and academic performance in Kajjansi Town Council of primary pupils. There is a significant relationship between school management policies and the academic performance of primary pupils in Kajjansi town council.

DISCUSSION.

Discussions on school management policies and academic performance of pupils.

Research in the field of education has shown that effective school management policies can have a significant impact on the academic performance of pupils (Erten & Köseoğlu, 2022). Despite the findings showing a positive relationship, it did not affect the contribution of each school policy to the academic performance of pupils. Therefore, this study fills the gap as disciplinary policies contribute 63.1%.

According to Tsang et al (2021), posits that a positive school climate and effective discipline policies can contribute to improved academic outcomes. This is true and thus I concur that effective disciplinary policies on code of conduct create a good environment for learners hence contributing to academic success. Like Erten & Köseoğlu (2022), Tsang (2021) also ignored the correlational findings that established the extent of the relationship between disciplinary policies and academic performance. This study fills the gap as the correlation between disciplinary policies and academic performance was (r=0.631, sig = 0.000).

A study by Skiba et al (2014) examined the relationship between disciplinary policies and academic performance using secondary data from various articles and found that schools with lower suspension rates generally had higher academic achievement. This study used primary data to examine this relationship, with a sample size of 120 respondents and also found a positive relationship between disciplinary policies and the academic performance of pupils in primary schools

Lacoe, Johanna & Steinberg, Matthew (2018) examined the impact of exclusionary discipline strategies, such as suspensions and expulsions, on students' academic outcomes. The study found that students who had experienced exclusionary discipline exhibited lower academic performance than their peers who had not faced such sanctions. Similar to the findings of this study, suspensions and expulsions were found to hurt the academic performance of pupils as pupils miss class hence obtaining low grades in examinations.

CONCLUSION.

According to the findings, there was a fairly good positive significant correlation (r=0.673, sig=0.000) between disciplinary policies and the academic performance of primary pupils in Kajjansi Town Council. Hence there was a positive relationship between disciplinary policies and academic performance of pupils in primary schools. Therefore, disciplinary policies have a significant relationship with the academic performance of pupils in selected primary schools in the Kajjansi Town Council

RECOMMENDATION.

School management should derive means of ensuring discipline among students other than suspension as they leave pupils absent from class for longer periods hence negatively affecting the academic performance of pupils.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

TPB: Theory of planned behavior

CVI: Content Validity Index

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This research was self-funded.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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