

# Headteachers' Management Styles and Secondary School Students' Discipline in Wakiso District, Uganda

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**Abstract:**-The current study was carried out in 25 private secondary schools, randomly selected from five sub counties in Wakiso district which borders Kampala City the capital of Uganda. It examined the relationship between head teachers' dominant management styles and students' discipline. Using cross-sectional survey design with a quantitative approach, the data was collected from 725 respondents, 700 of whom were students and 25 were head teachers. The findings indicated that head teachers' dominantly used management styles do not correlate significantly with the discipline of students. The general conclusion made was that all head teachers use different management style in the execution of their duties; the method which is dominantly used by the head teachers does not influence the discipline of the learners much. Thus, the researcher recommended that since other factors other than the headteachers' management styles mainly impact on the students' discipline, parents should try their best to ensure that they close the social, environmental and economic gaps which can be detrimental to their children.

**Key words:** Management styles; Correlates; Discipline

## I. INTRODUCTION

Schools are, as per the Education (Pre-primary and Post primary), Act 2018 proposed to promote among other things, the moral values of students. In addition, headteachers are supposed to collaborate with the Board of governors to ensure that the schools are properly managed.

By law, certain regulations have to be observed in the management of secondary schools in Uganda. These regulations are enshrined in among other legal documents, the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008. In the management of a secondary school, the head teacher is supposed to do it in consultation with other stakeholders, such as the Foundation body and the Board of Governors' The promotion of moral values is among the national aims of education in Uganda, thus all educational institutions are supposed to see to it that all those who pass through the educational institutions become morally responsible. Though the promotion of moral values is emphasized in every society, the social, political and economic changes in the world over time have brought a dilemma in the field of school management and discipline. Much as students' discipline is important, some schools do not mind much about promoting it (Mutebi, 2013).

Private secondary schools are mushrooming in all districts of the country but their management as well as the discipline of the learners leaves a lot to be desired, hence an issue of concern especially to the parents whose children in such schools are assumed to be the leaders of tomorrow. This cannot be taken lightly because without morals, society is dead (Ssebukoola-Mukasa, 2010).

## *Problem Statement*

With the current educational liberalization which is not properly supervised, there are allegations of increasing students' indiscipline and poor management of the schools (Musinguzi, 2017).The study was thus carried out to ascertain the extent of students' discipline in secondary schools in Wakiso district and to assess the extent to which students' discipline correlates with head teachers' management styles.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In all educational institutions especially in Africa, students' discipline is considered important. Though children have their rights which have to be protected, as enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, they are required to be disciplined.

The government of the republic of Uganda considers good management of schools and learners' discipline as being very important. The Education (Board of Governors) Regulations, 2008 for example in section 3 stipulates that for every post-primary school there shall be a Board of Governors consisting of five members including a chairperson nominated by the foundation body, one local government representative, one nominee of the local council, two representatives of parents of the school, two representatives of the state and one representative of old students. The purpose of this is to ensure that the school is properly managed for the good of society or country at large. Both the Board of governors and the head teachers have to provide for the welfare and discipline of students and staff, as well as ensuring that moral values are upheld in the school, as stipulated in sections 10 (d) and 13 (1) of the Education (Board of Governors) Regulations, 2008. The foundation body is, according to section 13 (3) of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-primary)Act, 2008 has to participate in ensuring proper management of schools

of their foundations and to ensure the promotion of religious, cultural and moral values and attributes in schools of their foundation.

Ssebukoola-Mukasa (2010) reiterates that the management styles of bosses in organizations have an impact on the employees many of whom are parents, and in the end the impact falls on the discipline of children. For example, if bosses are dictatorial there is a likelihood of the employees (parents) to become stressed, and that stress is usually carried home to the children. As parents are stressed they become dictatorial or develop a laissez faire attitude, hence children becoming spoilt. This relates to the study carried out by Okullo (2015) about the management of students' discipline in Arua district. The study found out that though Arua is a rural district, there is a tendency among head teachers of secondary schools to engage in other income generating projects hence use their Deputies and Directors of Studies to manage schools in their absence. In the absence of head teachers at school there is a tendency for teachers not to care much about learner's discipline, hence student's indiscipline. Earlier studies by Namusisi (2012) and Mutebi (2013) report related findings though they were carried out in different districts, Kampala and Mpigi respectively. One of Namusisi (2012)'s surprising findings was that in some private day secondary schools some head teachers pretend to use democratic leadership style and become close to students. In the end, some of them spoil the female children by having sex with them, promising them school fees reduction, financial support and special treatment. The fore mentioned studies were however not carried out in Wakiso district secondary schools, hence the current study.

Laissez faire management style has been blamed for students' and employees' indiscipline in many educational institutions for example, in public universities where there is a lot of bureaucracy and assured job security, as well as liberalism, there have been many allegations of male lecturers having sexual relationships with female students for marks; master-employee sexual relationships for promotion; general students' indiscipline in terms of indecent dressing, alcoholism, stealing, breaking into restaurants near the respective universities during strikes and forcefully eat the food, among other things (Bwire, 2017). This is in line with Muwawu (2016)'s finding in a study he carried out in Masaka district primary schools and found out that in some instances head teachers and teachers impregnate female pupils and settle the matter locally by giving some money to the parents; and to male matters worse, such teachers and head teachers are just transferred from one public school to another, without legal action being taken.

Though today dictatorial management is considered bad, some authors who wrote extensively about children's discipline in central Uganda, such as Kaggwa (1991) and Kirwana-Ssozi (2000) noted that authoritative style was so much used and it helped a lot to get well behaved children. They claim that children were punished by any adult member of society if they

were found doing something wrong. Ssekamwa (1999)'s submission is in total agreement with Kaggwa (1991) and Kirwana-Ssozi (2000). Writing about what was obtaining in schools after the Christian missionaries' introduction of Western education in Uganda, Ssekamwa (1999) notes that laissez-faire management of educational institutions was unheard of especially before 1924 when education in Uganda was still in hands of different Christian missionary groups, before the government of Uganda took control of education in the country. The Christian missionaries used both dictatorial and democratic management styles in their schools. Even the Muslims used dictatorial and democratic styles in the Quran schools, and children's discipline was very good. Any student who misbehaved in any way was expelled, and an expelled learner could not be admitted to another school. Though the above authors talk of what was obtaining in schools in Uganda before the current socio-economic and technological changes, their submissions are relevant today. For example seminaries, primary and secondary schools started and run by different religious denominations tend to have very well disciplined children than their counterparts in the secular schools since in the former schools there is a tendency to use dictatorial method of management, and laissez faire is not entertained at all (Ssebukoola, Mukasa, 2010).

Outside Uganda, in one longitudinal study Dubois et al (1994) showed that family support and the quality of parent-child relationships significantly predicted children's discipline. In a sample of 159 young US adolescents (aged 10 –12) followed in a two year longitudinal study. At-home parental involvement clearly and consistently not only has significant effects on pupil achievement, but also their discipline. Relatedly, Henderson and Mapp (2002) as cited in Mugoma (2016) reviewed a wide range of studies on parent involvement and found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs; be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits; attend school regularly; have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to post-secondary education. Also, Izzo et al (1999) studied four forms of involvement; frequency of parent-teacher contact; quality of parent-teacher interaction; participation in educational activities in the home; and participation in school activities. These factors, as well as family background variables were examined to find any relationship they might have with children's discipline. Consistent with other studies, Izzo et al showed that all forms of parental involvement declined with child's age and that involvement in the home 'predicted the widest range of improvement variance'.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *Research design and Sample Size*

This study employed the cross-sectional descriptive correlational survey design, using the quantitative approach. A

sample size of 700 students and 25 headteachers as respondents was taken. The 25 head teachers of the schools under study were got using universal sampling, and the 700 students were got from 25 secondary schools using Morgan and Krejcie’s method of determining the sample from a given population.

*Measurement of variables and Data Analysis*

In the current study, three head teachers’ management styles were used, namely: democratic, dictatorial and laissez-faire management styles. On the other hand, students’ discipline was measured based on their obedience of school rules and regulations, their interaction with colleagues, teachers, parents and the rest of the people, as well as the extent to which they were sexually moral. The Pearson product moment correlation was used to establish the relationship between the variables of the study.

*Limitations of the study:*

- 1) Attrition/mortality in that not all questionnaires were returned completely answered; and some head teachers made the researcher move several times to them to collect the filled questionnaires. In the end, some of them filled the questionnaires hurriedly, thus a possibility of not having been so accurate in what they filled.
- 2) Uncooperative behavior of some respondents and those who seemed reluctant to give information. This was realized among the first respondents of a school the researcher went to, as some pupils thought that asking them to rate themselves on moral issues could be a way of tricking them which could make them be expelled from school. Having realized this, the researcher and his assistants addressed the pupils about the purpose of the study, and that it was not in any way meant to trick them, their teachers were also requested to go away as the pupils were filling the questionnaires for them to fill them without fear.

**IV. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

Table 1: Relationship between head teachers’ management styles and students’ discipline in secondary schools of Wakiso district, Uganda

Variables correlated	r-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Management styles Vs Students’ Discipline	.095	.311	Insignificant correlation	Accepted

Based on table 1, the sig-value of 0.311 shows that the dominantly used management styles by head teachers do not adequately influence the discipline of secondary school students in Wakiso district of Uganda. This means that the students’ good and bad discipline or moral behavior is mainly caused by other factors, not the management styles head teachers usually use.

**V. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Discussion*

On this research objective, the finding was that the relationship exists, but it is not significant. In other words, head teachers’ dominant methods of management do not influence much the discipline of secondary school students.

This finding disagrees with Kibuuka (1998)’s findings. Kibuuka (1998) explored the factors affecting inter-student aggressive behavior in boarding secondary schools in Uganda. In his findings, he reported that school management had a hand in students’ aggressive behavior, such as fighting, bullying and teasing new students at school. He noted that some schools are reluctant to punish or expel the students who bull and tease the new students which make the vice to increase. Thus, he noted that bullying, teasing and fighting were common in boarding schools. The current study has got opposite findings that they do not exist in primary schools. The difference in the findings could be due to time lag. The current study addressed secondary schools in the year 2017 primary, yet Kibuuka (1998)’s study addressed secondary schools in the year 1998, twenty years back. By 1998 when Kibuuka’s study was carried out the government of Uganda had not yet become so tough on the vice of teasing, but today it is so tough on that vice. In addition, at that time many boarding secondary schools were public and some headteachers employed laissez-faire management because of the job security they were enjoying, unlike today in 2018 when private investment in the education sector has boomed. The founders therefore try to do whatever they can to avert students’ strikes and inter-student aggression which can lead to arson or a particular school becoming hated by parents. Hating a school leads to such a school becoming less popular, losing students and the end result is incurring losses in the investment made.

Ssebukoola-Mukasa (2010)’s submission regarding the role of schools in instilling discipline among the learners is evidently significant. Though the current study did not find a significant relationship, it did not find learners to be clean. Acts of indiscipline, such as sexual relationships among students, sexual relationships between teachers and students, as well as sexual relationships between students and other people outside school, taking marijuana, talking obscenity, stealing, fighting, escaping from school, watching immoral films, among others were found to be existing among students, though not to an alarming extent. The existence of such immoral behaviours is an eye opener for parents and school managers as well as the classroom teachers not to assume that their students are angels. As Muwawu (2016) and Mutebi (2013) who had related findings recommended, it is wrong for parents to assume that the modern school has taken over their responsibility of disciplining children. With the current age of technology which has seen birth to social media platforms such as facebook, twitter, YouTube, internet, some students

see and know more than their parents and teachers. To make matters worse, HIV/AIDS is spreading like wild fire, so if parents, headteachers and teachers ignore the responsibility of guiding children, what will be the future of the children?

There is a link between the findings of the current study and the previous studies. For example, Okullo (2015) noted that though Arua district is rural, some students especially those near or within Arua town were prostitutes, doing it at night to raise school fees, buy smartphones, dresses and have pocket money. He noted that though some of the headteachers are strict on students' discipline, some students do such indiscipline acts outside school and a headteacher cannot get concrete evidence to that effect so that he or she can discipline the respective students accordingly, hence a challenge in instilling discipline in the learners.

Surprisingly, some head teachers do not fully abide by the Education (Board of Governors) Regulations, 2008. For example, though all the sampled schools claimed to have Boards of g

Governors, it was revealed that such boards rarely hold meetings and some times head teachers forge minutes which they present to the inspectors of schools and in other instances the founders of schools especially the business men usurp the powers of the Board of Governors and dictate what is to be done in their respective schools. In that way, even if the head teacher wants some mis-behaved students to be expelled, the school founder can reject it just because of the economic implications it can have on the school. This relates to the claims of Byaruhanga (2004) who reiterate that schools are now merely viewed as economic enterprises for amazing wealth to the founders. It also relates to the assertions of Kibuuka (1988) that the laws of Uganda are so good on paper, they bark a lot but they hardly bite, implying that Ugandan laws are hardly implemented, such as those relating to school management.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study can appropriately lead to the conclusion that all head teachers use different management style in the execution of their duties. The method which is dominantly used by the head teachers does not influence the moral behaviour of the learners much; learners' discipline is mainly dependent on other factors such as social, economic, and environmental, but not one's dominantly used method of management. Though headteachers and classroom teachers guide learners in morality related issues, sometimes the guidance falls on deaf ears.

### Recommendations

1. Since other factors other than the head teachers' management styles mainly impact on the pupils' moral behavior, parents should try their best to

ensure that they close the social, environmental and economic gaps which can be detrimental to their children's discipline.

2. With the current social media platforms which some teachers and parents do not have access to, yet their children have access to them, disciplining children must be a collective effort of the stakeholders in the education system, such as the parents, teachers, head teachers, religious leaders and the government. Dictatorial management may not help much to improve morals of the learners, instead a democratic approach in both school administration and parenting, can be better.

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