



Original Article

The Relationship between Learners' Discipline and Retention in Secondary Schools in Rwampara District

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01 September 2022 The study was set to assess the effect of learners' discipline on retention in secondary schools in the Rwampara District. The study population included class teachers and headteachers from both private and government-aided secondary schools. A total of 41 respondents participated in the study. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used. Both interview and questionnaire survey data collection methods were used. The relationship between learners' discipline and their retention in schools was analysed at the bivariate level, where a t-test was used to compare the means of the dependent variable (learners' retention) and independent variable (learners' discipline) provided in SPSS Version 20. The researcher found out that the results were statistically significant as the p-value was less than 0.05 at $p = 0.000$. It was concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between learners' discipline and retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District. It was recommended that the school administrators should always provide guidance and counselling sessions to enable learners to feel motivated while in school, this will increase learners' retention.

Keywords:
*Relationship,
Learners,
Discipline,
Retention,
Secondary
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INTRODUCTION

The study had two variables namely learners' discipline and their retention in secondary schools. Learners' discipline is an independent variable while retention is the dependent variable. Kuloheri (2016) defines learners' discipline as learners' functional product of orderliness, self-control, self-restraint, respect for oneself and others, perseverance, tolerance, and recognition of human dignity. Student Discipline means the procedures of remedial act or penance, other than deferral or dismissal, engaged by workers (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). The discipline of students refers to the guidelines and policies applied in school to bring about student conduct used to inspire self-control (Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014). School dropout in this study refers to someone who has left school before they have finished his / her secondary school level (Lessard, 2014). Changing of school means when someone has altered from one school to another within his/her academic level (Hauge et al., 2014). In this study, learners' discipline was conceptualized as time management, respect for teachers, attending lessons, and following school rules. On the other hand, learners' retention refers to the number of learners who remain in school for four years at the Ordinary level and two years at the Advanced level (Goos et al, 2013).

Learners' discipline and learners' retention are two sides of the same coin. Good academic performance largely depends on learners' retention in schools. However, a report from the inspector of schools in Mbarara District shows that retention of learners in secondary schools has gone down from 25% in 2016 to 15% in 2018 (Inspector of schools, Mbarara District, 2018).

A lot of studies have been done on learners' discipline and retentions for example Altinyelken, 2010; Amukowa, 2013; Browne, 2013; Daniel, 2010; Fang & Schleppegrell 2010. But little has been done on how learners' discipline affects

retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District. This could result into increased crimes, unemployment, and poverty levels because school dropouts end up lacking technical skills and relevant knowledge to fit in the society. It was upon this background that the study set out to assess the relationship between learners' discipline and their retention in secondary schools of the Rwampara District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the relationship between learners' discipline and their retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was guided by two theories namely; Bean's Explanatory Theory of Student Retention (1980) and Astin's Theory of Involvement (1985).

John Bean's Explanatory Theory of Student Retention (1980). In Bean's model, education, social-psychological, and factors related to the environment are predicted to affect the three factors of socialization : (a) education, (b) social, and (c) individual factors. In turn, these factors are predicted to impact dropout patterns in schools.

Bean's model (1980) was developed from the theory of organizational turnover and psychological theories (attitude-behavior, self-efficacy, coping behavioural, and attribution theories) which affected academic performance and public integration. The theory recommends that four groups of variables impact student retention in schools. The first group includes students' discipline as measured by attending lessons, time management, dressing code, respecting teachers, attending school assemblies, and personal hygiene. The second group of variables concerns the student's intention to leave, which is predictable to

be affected by psychological results (satisfaction, goal commitment, institutional quality and stress) and academic achievement variables. The third group of variables includes background and essential variables (academic performance and educational objectives). The final group of variables includes environmental variables (family responsibilities, finances, opportunity to transfer and hours of employment) which have a direct impact on students' decision to retain or leave

Alexander Astin's Theory of Involvement (1985)

Astin's Student Involvement Theory suggests that students study by getting involved. This theory highlights that effectiveness in terms of the degree to which a learner was involved in the organisation is the main important factor in student retention in school. In 1993, he suggested the "Input-Environment-Outcome" (I-E-O) model assist as a conceptual framework for reviewing student retention (Thurmond et al., 2002). The above theories are applicable to the study because they indicate that among the groups of variables that impact student retention, learners' discipline lies under the second group of variables concerned about the student's decision to leave, which is

predictable to be affected by levels of discipline in a school.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used during data collecting and analysis. The study population included class teachers and headteachers from both private and government-aided secondary schools. The study used a sample size of 41 respondents. The validity and reliability of the research instrument were ensured. Data was presented in form of tables, analysed, and interpreted. The relationship between learners' discipline and their retention in schools was analysed at the bivariate level, where a t-test was used to compare the means of the dependent variable (learners' retention) and the independent variable (learners' discipline) provided in SPSS Version 20.

RESULTS

The overall mean score was 3.97 which is an indication that the discipline of learners in school is good in terms of dressing code, respecting teachers, attending lessons, time management, attending school assembly, and personal hygiene.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Learners discipline (n = 35)

Level of Discipline	Not Good		Fair		Undecided		Good		Very Good		Mean Scores
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Dressing code	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5.7	33	94.3	4.94
Respecting teachers	-	-	-	-	2	5.7	13	37.1	20	57.2	4.51
Attending lessons	1	2.9	2	5.7	2	5.7	24	68.6	6	17.1	3.91
Time management	4	11.4	5	14.3	8	22.9	14	40.0	4	11.4	3.26
Attending School Assembly	1	2.9	5	14.3	9	25.7	16	45.7	4	11.4	3.49
Personal hygiene	2	5.7	4	11.4	8	22.9	10	28.6	11	31.4	3.69
Overall mean score											3.97

Source: Field Data, 2019

The overall mean-score of 2.53 means that the level of discipline of learners who dropped out of the school was neutral. Which imply that they had poor dressing code, they could not respect teachers, they

could not respect teachers, they could not attend lessons, they could not manage Time management, they could not attend school assembly and they had poor personal hygiene.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for learners' retention (n =35)

Level of Discipline	1		2		3		4		5		Mean Score
	Not good		Good		Undecided		Good		Very good		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Dressing code	16	45.7	6	17.1	5	14.3	4	11.4	4	11.4	2.26
Respecting teachers	9	25.7	11	31.4	7	20.0	7	20.0	1	2.9	2.43
Attending lessons	4	11.4	9	25.7	19	54.3	3	8.6		0.0	2.60
Time management	10	28.6	12	34.3	13	37.1		0.0		0.0	2.09
Attending School Assembly	5	14.3	7	20.0	9	25.7	9	25.7	5	14.3	3.06
Personal hygiene	5	14.3	9	25.7	11	31.4	10	28.6		0.0	2.74
Overall mean score											2.53

Source: Field Data, 2019

Findings presented in *Table 3*, indicate the t test results for learners' discipline and retention in Secondary Schools in Rwampara District. There is a statistically significant relationship between learners' discipline and retention at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated

that "there is no relationship between learners' discipline and retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District" was rejected. This implies that learners who had good discipline were more likely to stay in school than those with poor discipline.

Table 3: T-Test for Learners' Discipline and Retention in Secondary Schools in Rwampara District

Independent Samples Test										
		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Err. Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supervision	Equal variances assumed	8.750	.000	.075	348	.942	.0416	.5568	1.2823	1.1990
	Equal variances not assumed			.075	5.566	.943	-.0416	.5568	1.4303	1.3470

Responses from interviews about "learners' discipline who are in school since last year" were presented in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Head teacher responses on level of learners’ discipline (n = 5)

Item	Responses	Not good	Fair	Good	Very good
The level of learners’ discipline who are in school	Dressing code	-	-	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
	Respecting teachers	-	1(20%)	3(60%)	1(20%)
	Attending lessons	-	-	1(20%)	4(80%)
	Time management	-	1(20%)	2(40%)	2(40%)
	Attending school assembly	-	-	2(40%)	3(60%)
	Personal hygiene	-	-	4(80%)	1(20%)
The level of learners’ discipline who dropped out of school	Dressing code	4(80%)	1(20%)	-	-
	Respecting teachers	2(80%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	-
	Attending lessons	2(40%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	-
	Time management	3(60%)	-	2(40%)	-
	Attending school assembly	-	3(60%)	2(40%)	-
	Personal hygiene	4(80%)	1(20%)	-	-

From *Table 4*, headteacher responses on the level of learners’ discipline revealed that; students whose dressing code, respecting teachers, attending lessons, time management, attending school assembly, and personal hygiene were good remained in schools, while students whose dressing

code, respecting teachers, attending lessons, time management, attending school assembly, and personal hygiene were not good were not retained in schools. This implies that discipline is responsible for learners’ retention in schools.

Table 5: Head teacher responses on learners’ retention (n=5)

Item	Responses	F	%
Causes of student drop out	Lack of time with teachers	1	20
	Long distances from home to school	1	20
	Financial problem	3	60
	Failing courses/classes	1	20
	Overcrowded class rooms	2	40
	Conflicts with family commitments	1	20
	Insecurity problems	1	20
	Early pregnancy for girls	1	20
	Drug addition	1	20
How can students be encouraged to remain in schools?	Provision of entertainment programs /motivation	2	40
	Parents to become first teachers	1	20
	Teachers to become role models	1	20
	Teacher to have enough time with learners	1	20
What kind of students normally fail to remain in school?	Poor academic performers	1	20
	Later comers	1	20
	Absentees	1	20
	Drunkards and drug users	1	20
	Thieves	1	20

From *Table 5*, it is indicated that the major causes of student dropout rate are a financial problem as revealed by 60% of headteachers, followed by overcrowded classrooms as mentioned by 40% of headteachers. This implies that students who are not

financially catered for tend to become undisciplined. The findings also indicate that provision of entertainment programs /motivation is one of the major ways to make students remain in schools as mentioned by 40% of headteachers. This

implies that entertainment programs/motivation enable students to stay disciplined as their minds will be focused on remaining in schools. The researcher found out that students who normally fail to remain in school are those who are poor academic performers, later comers, absentees, drunkards, drug users, and thieves. This implies that undisciplined students do not stay in schools.

DISCUSSION

The relationship between learners' discipline and retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District

It was revealed that the results were statistically significant as the p -value = 0.000 was less than 0.05. The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between learners' discipline and retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District. This is in line with research findings by Mulwa (2014) who carried out a study about the impact of secondary school prefects' engagement in the controlling of students' discipline on students' retention in Kitui Central who found that all government-aided secondary schools experience students' discipline challenges.

The above study findings differ from the two studies by Mulwa (2014) who left out a gap on the effects of head teachers' alternative disciplinary techniques on learners' discipline and retention in public secondary schools in Kitui County. Also, Makwinja (2017) researched the crisis of student discipline in Botswana schools and the impact of culturally conflicting disciplinary strategies. The study shows that teachers feel disempowered by school discipline rules and students take an advantage of such rules to undermine teachers' authority.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that learners who are in schools have the good discipline that is; they dress properly, respect their teachers, attend lessons, manage time, attend the assembly, and have good personal hygiene. It was also concluded that the level of discipline of learners who dropped out of school was less than those who were in school. That is; they dressed poorly, they did not respect their teachers, they did not respect teachers, they did not attend lessons, they did not manage time, they did not

attend school assemblies and they had poor personal hygiene. It was further concluded that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between learners' discipline and retention in secondary schools in Rwampara District.

Recommendations

The ministry of education should implement practicing regulations that teachers who abuse students' rights are dealt with accordingly based on set rules and regulations by the government.

The government should recruit or implement staff training in secondary schools for indiscipline resolution through short courses or seminars encompassing methods addressing indiscipline cases.

The government should sensitize school headteachers on the various rules and guidelines that the government has put in place to allow students to continue with school in the absence of certain school requirements like uniforms.

The management of schools should identify approaches that can be used to improve students' safety, academic performance, and social learning; in so doing, to improve the discipline of the students.

The government should analyse the use of all disciplinary approaches in government-aided secondary schools and formulate policies on the best alternative disciplinary approaches to be used in the management of learners' discipline in all education institutions to enable students to retain in schools.

School management should properly plan for the time in schools and also make sure that timetables are followed with respect.

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