Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline in Government-Aided Primary Schools in Dokolo District

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September, 2026

Declaration

I Norman Otim declare that this dissertation entitled "*Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline"* is my original work except in areas where citations has been made.

Signature: ..... Date: 16.09.2026

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Approval

This is to certify that the Report entitled " *Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline in Government-Aided primary schools in Dokolo District"* was written under our guidance and we approve it for submission.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my lovely brother Mr. Owiny Richard for educating me right from lower primary up to becoming a teacher.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me good health and wisdom to come up with this research report.

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List of abbreviations/Acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
HT	Headteacher
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
PBIS	Positive Behavioural Intervention and Support.
PP	Pupil
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SMC	School Management Committee
TPR	Teacher Pupil Ratio

Abstract

The study investigated the influence of teachers' disciplinary methods on pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District. The study was guided by the following specific objectives namely; to examine teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District, to assess the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District; to establish the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District. The study used mixed method approach and employed convergent mixed method research design. Data was collected from 400 respondents using questionnaires and interview guide. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 at descriptive and inferential statistical levels and qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings for research question one revealed that teachers' use of various disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo district was very high. The study also showed that the level of pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo district ranged from moderate to high in most of the constructs of pupils' discipline. Finally, findings on hypothesis showed that there was a very strong positive significant correlation between teacher's disciplinary methods and pupils discipline in primary schools in Dokolo district. It was concluded that teachers' disciplinary methods fundamentally determined pupils' discipline in primary schools and the study recommended that teachers need CPD in learner centered disciplinary methods.

Keywords: Teachers' disciplinary methods; pupils' discipline; learner-centred disciplinary methods; behaviour management; government-aided primary schools; primary education; Dokolo District, Uganda; mixed-methods research; continuous professional development (CPD); teacher professional training.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Pupils' discipline in primary schools is a critical issue in education globally with increases of school dropout, truancy, teenage pregnancy, absenteeism among others. (Simba et al., 2016). This is especially in government aided primary schools. Studies have shown that teachers' disciplinary practices significantly impact pupils' behaviour (Farooq & Ahmed, 2021). This study seeks to examine how different disciplinary strategies employed by teachers influence pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

This chapter presents background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, hypothesis, significance of the study, scope of the study and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Historical background

Historically, discipline in European schools was characterized by strict and authoritarian approaches. Corporal punishment was widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries. Schools in countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany embraced harsh punitive methods as a means of instilling obedience and moral values (Gibbs, 2007). However, starting in the mid-20th century, these methods began to face criticism, leading to legal reforms. For instance, the UK banned corporal punishment in state schools in 1986, and later in all schools by 1999 (Department for

Education, UK, 2012). Emphasis shifted toward more rehabilitative and positive behaviour support strategies.

In the United States, school discipline also evolved significantly over the decades. Initially, corporal punishment was a standard practice, rooted in religious and puritanical beliefs about morality and behaviour. However, by the late 20th century, movements toward child rights and psychological well-being led to a decline in its use. Today, many states have banned corporal punishment, though it remains legal in some southern states. The focus has largely shifted to positive behavioural interventions and support (PBIS), emphasizing reinforcement of good behaviour rather than punishment (Gregory et al., 2010).

Pupil discipline in Asia has evolved from traditional Confucian and imperial norms that emphasized strict moral correction often through corporal punishment to a mix of modern reforms and persistent authoritarian practices. In countries like China, Korea, and Japan, physical discipline was historically rooted in cultural beliefs (Liu, 2020), and though now banned (UNICEF, 2021), it occasionally persists in practice (Park & Kim, 2017). Colonial-era schools in Southeast Asia institutionalized rigid disciplinary systems, which remain influential today; for instance, Malaysia and Singapore still legally permit caning in schools (Human Rights Watch, 2023). While nations like Nepal and Mongolia have outlawed all forms of corporal punishment (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2022), others continue to struggle with enforcement and cultural acceptance. Efforts to shift toward rights-based and restorative approaches are growing but face challenges due to deeply ingrained societal norms (The Diplomat, 2023).

During apartheid, school discipline in South Africa was often racially discriminatory and authoritarian. Corporal punishment was widely practiced, particularly in schools serving Black communities, as a tool of control and compliance. After the end of apartheid, the South African

Schools Act (1996) officially banned corporal punishment in schools. Nevertheless, studies indicate that it is still used informally in many schools, especially in rural areas, due to cultural beliefs and lack of enforcement (Morrell, 2001; Burton & Leoschut, 2013). This tension reflects the struggle between policy reforms and ingrained practices.

In East Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, disciplinary practices have historically mirrored colonial education systems that favored authoritarian approaches. Corporal punishment was entrenched in both colonial and post-independence schooling. In recent decades, East African countries have made strides toward banning such practices. For instance, Kenya banned corporal punishment in schools in 2001 (Human Rights Watch, 1999), and Uganda followed suit with a legal ban in 1997 (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005). However, enforcement remains inconsistent, with many teachers and communities still perceiving corporal punishment as an effective tool.

In Uganda, school discipline has long been a subject of debate. Though the Ministry of Education and Sports banned corporal punishment in 1997, it continues to be practiced in many schools, especially in rural areas such as Dokolo District. The persistence of physical disciplinary methods is often attributed to limited awareness of alternative methods, large class sizes, and cultural acceptance of physical punishment as a form of correction. Research by Uwezo Uganda (2015) noted that over 80% of pupils reported experiencing corporal punishment. Efforts have been made to introduce alternative discipline methods, such as guidance and counseling, but their effectiveness remains under-researched in many local contexts.

1.1.2 Theoretical background

This study is grounded in Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by psychologist Albert Bandura in 1977 to explain how individuals, especially children, learn behaviour s by observing and imitating others within a social environment. According to Bandura (1977), learning is not solely a result of direct reinforcement or punishment, as emphasized by behaviourist theories, but also occurs vicariously through the observation of models such as parents, peers, and authority figures. In a school setting, teachers become significant models whose actions and disciplinary methods can influence the behaviour and discipline of pupils. The theory emphasizes the role of cognitive processes in learning, suggesting that individuals must pay attention to a model's behaviour, retain what they observe, be physically capable of reproducing the behaviour, and be motivated to do so. Thus, the learning process involves both environmental and internal influences. Bandura's work brought a shift in understanding learning as a dynamic and social process rather than a purely mechanical response to external stimuli.

Social Learning Theory rests on several core assumptions that are relevant to understanding behaviour formation in children. First, the theory assumes that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling. This implies that when pupils observe how their teachers respond to misbehaviour whether through punishment, guidance, or positive reinforcement they may internalize these methods and mirror them in their own interactions (Bandura, 1986). Second, reinforcement and punishment, whether direct or vicarious, influence the likelihood of behaviour being repeated. Pupils not only learn from their own experiences but also from seeing their peers being rewarded or punished for certain behaviour (Ormrod, 2016). Third, SLT assumes that learning involves cognitive processes such as attention, memory, and motivation. Children do not simply mimic everything they see; they selectively choose behaviour based on perceived outcomes

and relevance to their environment (Schunk, 2012). Lastly, Bandura proposed the concept of reciprocal determinism, where behaviour, personal factors (like beliefs or emotions), and the environment continuously interact to influence learning. This suggests that teachers' behaviour (disciplinary methods), the school environment, and pupils' personal characteristics all interact to shape discipline outcomes.

Social Learning Theory helps explain how teachers' disciplinary methods influence the development of pupils' discipline in schools. Since children often learn by observing adults, particularly figures of authority like teachers, the methods teachers use to handle discipline become a blueprint for pupils' own conduct. For example, when a teacher consistently applies fair and respectful disciplinary practices, pupils are more likely to develop self-discipline, internalize acceptable behaviour, and treat others with respect (Bandura, 2001). On the other hand, when disciplinary methods are harsh, inconsistent, or emotionally abusive, pupils may become aggressive, withdrawn, or rebellious, often mimicking the negative behaviour modeled by their teachers. Teachers' use of positive reinforcement, such as praise for good behaviour or guidance for correcting mistakes, can significantly promote positive discipline among pupils. Moreover, pupils learn not only from direct interaction with teachers but also by observing how peers are treated when they misbehave. This vicarious reinforcement teaches pupils what is acceptable or unacceptable within the school setting (Ormrod, 2016). Therefore, the social environment created by the teacher, including their disciplinary strategies, plays a pivotal role in shaping pupils' discipline.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES, Uganda, 2015) defines disciplinary methods as:Non-violent, constructive, and corrective practices that promote positive discipline and aim to support learners' behavioural and emotional development while ensuring a safe and inclusive school environment. (Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools, MoES, 2015). The Ministry emphasizes alternatives to corporal punishment such as guidance and counseling, positive reinforcement and restorative practices Arumugam and Nadesan (2021) offer a contemporary perspective: Disciplinary methods are systematic actions taken by teachers to cultivate self-regulation, accountability, and respect among learners through structured routines, positive reinforcement, and non-punitive corrective strategies.

Disciplinary methods refer to the strategies and actions taken by teachers, parents or institutions to correct, manage or guide pupil behaviour in accordance with set rules or expectations (McDowall, 2017).

In the context of primary schools, disciplinary methods refer to the strategies employed by teachers to manage pupils' behaviour. These methods range from verbal reprimands and reward systems to restorative practices and guidance counseling. Effective disciplinary methods are those that not only maintain order but also promote self-regulation, respect, and responsibility among pupils. However, challenges such as peer influence, home environment, and number of children in class often hinder their implementation (Nabukenya & Oonyu, 2020).

Operationally, in this study teachers' disciplinary methods are positive reinforcement, verbal reprimands, Restorative practices, punitive measures, and guidance and counseling (Bear, 2020).

On the other hand, Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES, Uganda, 2014) defines pupils' discipline as the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of a safe, respectful and supporting learning environment. The Ministry has implemented National Strategy and Action Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (VACiS) which includes the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) guidelines. These guidelines promote the use of positive discipline approaches and prohibit corporal punishment.

Simatwa (2020) defines pupils' discipline as the observance of school rules and acceptable standards of behaviour by learners that facilitate academic engagement, safety, and mutual respect. Akeyo and Onyango (2022) define it as learners' demonstration of self-regulated behaviour, moral conduct, and responsibility in complying with institutional expectations and contributing to a positive school climate.

Operationally, in this study pupils' discipline will include punctuality, regular attendance, respect for authority, adherence to school rules and regulations and peer relations (Sugai & Simonsen, 2023).

1.1.4 Contextual Background

In Uganda, despite the legal prohibition of corporal punishment under the Children Act (2016), its practice remains widespread in educational settings. A 2024 Uwezo report revealed that 70% of schools still employ corporal punishment, such as caning and assigning physical labor, as disciplinary measures. Specifically, 9.2% of schools use it frequently, 60.7% occasionally, and only 30.1% abstain from its use.

The persistence of such punitive measures correlates with broader disciplinary challenges. The same report identified prevalent forms of indiscipline among pupils: stealing (48%), truancy (44.7%), fighting (41%), dishonesty (26.3%), and lying (17.9%).

Public perception further complicates reform efforts. According to the 2022 Uganda Demographic Health Survey, 53% of Ugandans support corporal punishment as a means of instilling morals in children. The survey also indicated that 75% of children reported being physically punished in school, despite its illegality.

In Dokolo District, these national trends are mirrored and, in some cases, exacerbated. The 2023 Primary Leaving Examination results highlighted Dokolo as one of the poorest-performing districts, with a failure rate of 28.9%, significantly higher than the national average of 10.4%.

In Dokolo Town Council, primary schools are grappling with significant challenges related to pupils' discipline, which affects the overall educational experience and academic performance of pupils. Teachers in these schools often find themselves relying on a mix of traditional and modern disciplinary approaches to manage pupils' behaviour. While some educators attempt to incorporate non-punitive methods such as positive reinforcement and restorative practices, the prevalence of overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and the persistent influence of cultural norms pose substantial barriers to the effective implementation of these methods (Okello et al., 2021).

The magnitude of the research problem in Dokolo Town Council is thus considerable. Overcrowded classrooms often mean that teachers are unable to give individual attention to pupils who are misbehaving, making it more difficult to address behavioural issues effectively. Recent statistics from the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports indicate that the teacher-pupil ratio (TPR) in Dokolo District stands at approximately 1:65, significantly higher than the national

average of 1:43 in government primary schools (MoES, 2022; UBOS, 2023). In some urban schools within Dokolo Town Council, the TPR rises to as high as 1:70, particularly in lower primary grades. This severe overcrowding limits effective supervision and individualized instruction, thereby undermining discipline management in classrooms. Furthermore, the shortage of teaching materials and inadequate infrastructure further complicate efforts to maintain discipline. Limited parental involvement in school activities and disciplinary processes also weakens the partnership between home and school in promoting positive behaviour s among pupils (Kibona, 2022). These factors create a complex environment where teachers face significant difficulties in applying discipline consistently and equitably.

1.2 Problem Statement

Pupils discipline in primary schools is a critical issue in education globally with increases of school dropout, truancy, teenage pregnancy, absenteeism among others. (Simba et al., 2016). Studies have shown that teachers' disciplinary practices significantly impact pupils' behaviour and academic performance (Farooq & Ahmed, 2021). In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) banned corporal punishment and introduced positive discipline approaches such as counseling, peer engagement, and reinforcement of good behaviour (MoES, 2015). According to the Uwezo 2024 Uganda report, 70% of schools across the country still use corporal punishment, with rural schools most affected. In Government-Aided primary schools in Dokolo Distrcit, pupils frequently display behavioural problems such as absenteeism, defiance, and aggression issues often linked to ineffective or inappropriate disciplinary strategies. Although local and national authorities have introduced measures such as administrative reshuffles, awareness campaigns, and school monitoring, these efforts have not fully addressed the underlying causes of indiscipline.

There is limited empirical data showing how current strategies influence pupil behaviour, which weakens the development of evidence-based policies. If this gap between policy and practice continues, the district risks higher cases of pupils' discipline. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of Teachers' disciplinary methods on pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Teachers' disciplinary methods on pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

1.4 Specific Objectives

i. To examine teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.
ii. To assess the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.
iii. To establish the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

1.5 Research Questions

i. What are the teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District?
ii. What is the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District?

iii. What is the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District?

1.6 Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Dokolo Town Council, Dokolo District. The area is located in Northern Uganda. It is located on a road distance of 368km from Kampala the Capital city of Uganda. It is bordered by the following districts i.e. Alebtong to the North, Kalaki to the East, Amolatar to the South and Kwania to the West.

1.7.2 Content scope

This study investigated the influence of teachers' disciplinary methods on pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District. Teachers' disciplinary methods are positive reinforcement, verbal reprimands, Restorative practices, punitive measures and guidance and counseling (Bear, 2020). Pupils' discipline is measured by punctuality, regular attendance, respect for authority, adherence to school rules and regulations and peer relations (Sugai & Simonsen, 2023).

1.7.3 Time Scope

The time scope of the study covered the period from 2020 to 2024. Although pupils' discipline had been a concern in Uganda and in Dokolo Town Council before 2020, the problem became increasingly prominent from around 2020, with concerns about rising absenteeism, poor academic performance, truancy, disobedience and increasing cases of defiance towards teachers becoming more noticeable. Focusing on the 2023–2024 period therefore enabled the study to examine the continuing nature and effects of pupils' disciplinary challenges following their increasing prominence from 2020. This specific time frame ensured that the study's findings were timely and relevant to the educational policies, disciplinary practices and interventions in place, while also providing a current snapshot of pupils' discipline and its management in primary schools in Dokolo Town Council (MoES, 2023).

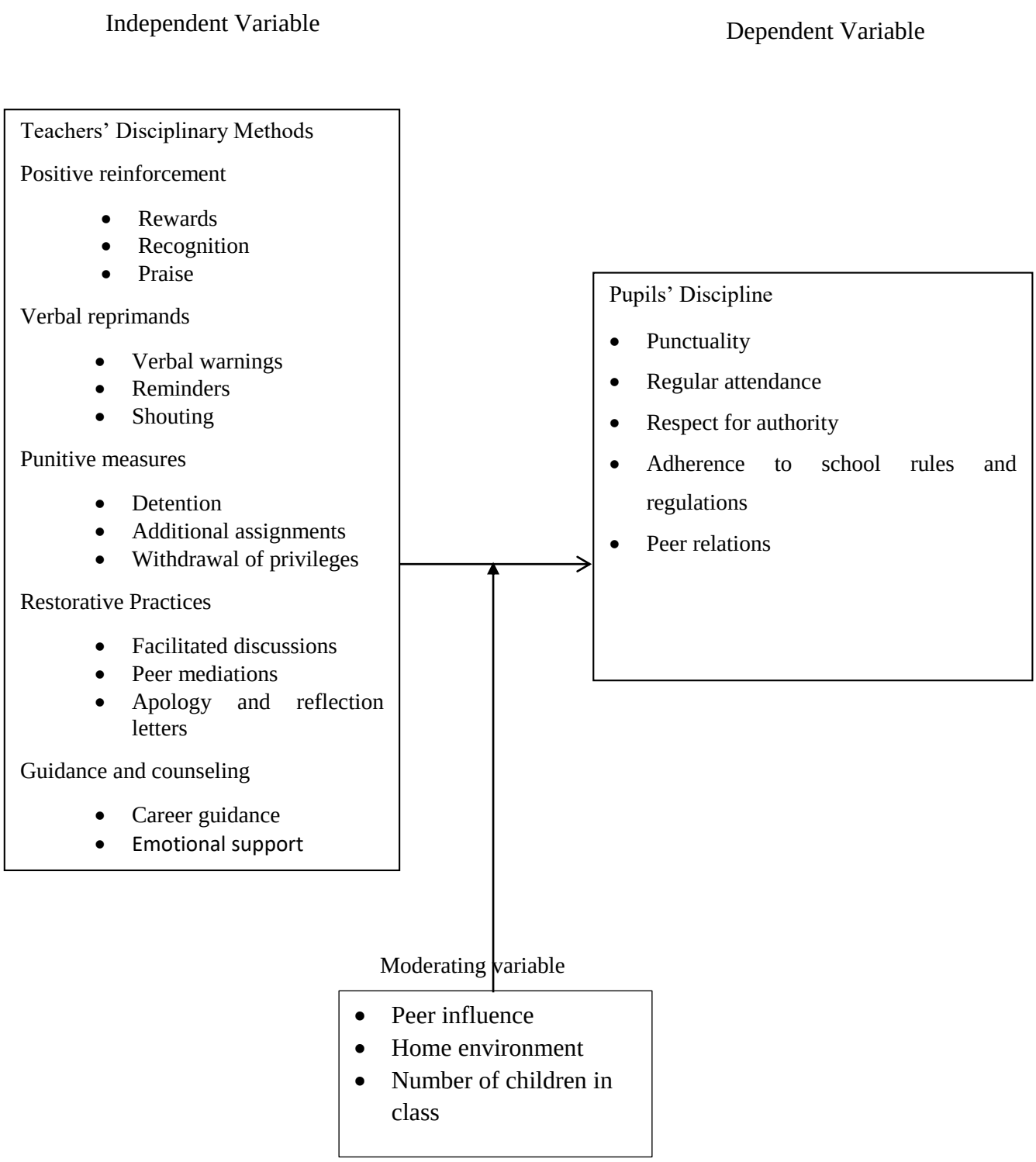
1.8. Significance of the Study

The study might provide policymakers with insights into the challenges teachers face in implementing non-violent disciplinary methods. This might inform future educational policies and highlight areas needing support, such as teacher training and resource allocation, to ensure more effective discipline strategies in schools. School administrators might benefit by gaining a clearer understanding of the practical challenges teachers face in managing discipline. The findings can help them improve school policies, provide necessary resources, and support teachers with targeted interventions to foster a positive school environment. Parents might gain a better understanding of the disciplinary issues affecting their children and how to collaborate with schools for better outcomes. Teachers might gain insights into effective and culturally appropriate disciplinary methods. The study might help them overcome common challenges, improve classroom

management, and enhance pupil behaviour, ultimately contributing to better pupils' outcomes and teacher satisfaction. Pupils might benefit from a more positive and supportive school environment that promotes respect, self-regulation, and responsibility, leading to improved academic performance and personal development. The study might inform school policies and teachers' training programs. The study might offer a valuable reference for future studies conducted by Gulu University scholars, supporting more evidence-based education policy formulation and implementation.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study examines the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District. It incorporates the independent variable, dependent variable and Moderating Variable to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved.



Source: Adopted with modifications form Bandura, (1977)

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above presents teachers' disciplinary methods as an independent variable and is conceptualized as: Positive reinforcement, verbal reprimands, punitive measures, restorative practices, guidance and counseling. It also presents pupils' discipline as a dependent variable and is conceptualized as: punctuality, regular attendance, and respect for authority, adherence to school rules and regulations, peer relations. It further presents Peer influence, Home environment, and Number of children in class as moderating variable. The conceptual framework shows an assumed relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed existing literature related to the research topic, focusing on teachers' disciplinary methods, level of pupils' discipline and relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in primary schools. The literature review synthesized findings from previous studies to identify trend gaps, and theoretical frameworks that have informed the study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory guided the study

2.1.1 Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social Learning Theory (SLT) was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977 as an alternative to the classical and operant conditioning approaches that dominated psychological thinking during the mid-20th century. Bandura's theory emphasized that learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social context and can happen purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). The theory gained traction following Bandura's groundbreaking Bobo Doll Experiment, where children exposed to adult models displaying aggressive behaviour towards a doll were more likely to imitate such behaviour themselves. This study fundamentally challenged the behaviourist notion that all learning must result from reinforcement and punishment, showing instead that observation alone could influence behaviour (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961). Social Learning Theory marked a paradigm shift in

understanding how individuals especially children acquire new behaviour s in structured environments like schools. It provided a robust framework for explaining how social interactions and environmental factors, such as teacher conduct and peer behaviour, shape personal development and moral reasoning (Bandura, 2001).

Social Learning Theory is built upon a number of key assumptions that are integral to understanding its relevance to behaviour acquisition and discipline in educational contexts. First, it assumes that individuals learn behaviour s, attitudes, and emotional responses by observing others a process known as observational learning (Schunk, 2012). This implies that children, when placed in a classroom setting, are likely to adopt behaviour modeled by authority figures such as teachers. Second, the theory holds that vicarious reinforcement the observation of others being rewarded or punished affects the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated. For example, if a pupil observes a classmate being rewarded for respectful conduct, they may be more inclined to emulate that behaviour (Ormrod, 2016). Third, Social Learning Theory assumes that internal cognitive processes, including attention, memory, reproduction, and motivation, play a significant role in learning. Learners must pay attention to the modeled behaviour, retain it mentally, reproduce it physically, and be motivated to do so (Bandura, 1986). Finally, the theory is underpinned by the concept of reciprocal determinism, which suggests a dynamic interplay between personal factors (e.g., cognition and emotion), behaviour, and the environment (Bandura, 1986). This means that in the classroom, pupils' disciplinary outcomes are not only influenced by teacher behaviour but also by the pupils' interpretations and the wider school environment.

One of the significant strengths of Social Learning Theory lies in its comprehensive approach to behaviour acquisition, incorporating both social and cognitive dimensions. Unlike behaviour ist

models that rely solely on observable stimulus-response patterns, Social Learning Theory acknowledges that learners actively process information, making it more applicable in educational environments where cognitive engagement is essential (Ormrod, 2016). Social Learning Theory also has strong explanatory power in classroom management, as it explains how students internalize behaviour s by observing how teachers manage discipline, resolve conflicts, and interact with others. The theory's concept of modeling provides practical guidance for educators to serve as positive role models, especially in reinforcing prosocial behaviour s such as cooperation, respect, and responsibility (Schunk, 2012). Furthermore, Social Learning Theory's empirical foundation is well-documented through a multitude of studies across disciplines, confirming its applicability to both individual and group behaviour (Pajares, 1996). The theory also supports the development of self-efficacy, which Bandura (1997) later elaborated as the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. In the school context, disciplined environments promoted through modeling enhance pupils' self-regulatory behaviour s and academic motivation, thus improving overall school performance.

Despite its broad applicability, Social Learning Theory is not without its limitations. A primary critique is that it underemphasizes biological and genetic factors that may influence behaviour. While SLT focuses heavily on environmental and cognitive variables, it does not adequately address innate traits such as temperament or neurodevelopmental conditions, which may impact how individuals learn and behave (Miller & Dollard, 1941; Eysenck, 1998). Moreover, Social Learning Theory assumes that observed behaviour s will be imitated, but not all observed behaviour s result in imitation. Several factors, such as the observer's prior experiences, level of motivation, and perceived relevance of the behaviour, influence whether modeling will occur (Ormrod, 2016). Additionally, internal mental processes like attention and motivation, although

essential to the theory, are difficult to measure empirically, making them challenging to observe or quantify in real-world settings. This has led some researchers to question the testability and scientific rigor of Social Learning Theory (Gray, 2002). Another weakness is the cultural limitation of the theory. Developed primarily in Western contexts, Social Learning Theory may not fully consider how cultural norms and values shape perceptions of authority, discipline, and imitation, particularly in diverse societies such as Uganda where traditional and communal methods of discipline are prevalent (Tella, 2011). Therefore, while Social Learning Theory provides a useful lens, it may need adaptation when applied to non-Western educational environments.

Numerous scholars have elaborated on or critiqued the principles of Social Learning Theory. Schunk (2012) supports Bandura's view by emphasizing the role of modeling in promoting behavioural and academic learning, particularly in classroom environments where pupils consistently observe teacher conduct. He asserts that the clarity, consistency, and positivity of the model's behaviour increase the chances of effective learning. Ormrod (2016) also supports Social Learning Theory, arguing that its attention to both cognitive and social influences makes it highly applicable to educational psychology. According to Ormrod, pupils are more likely to internalize behaviour s when they observe not only the action but also the social consequences it brings. Tella (2011), in his study on teacher behaviour and student discipline in Nigerian schools, found that the conduct and disciplinary practices of teachers significantly shaped students' attitudes, motivation, and academic performance. This highlights Social Learning Theory's relevance in African educational contexts. Akers and Jennings (2016) extended Social Learning Theory to criminology, arguing that deviant behaviour can be learned through repeated exposure to antisocial models demonstrating that both positive and negative behaviour s can be acquired through observation.

Additionally, Bandura (2001) himself revisited the theory to address moral and ethical behaviour, introducing the concept of moral disengagement, where individuals justify harmful behaviour by diffusing responsibility or blaming the victim. This addition demonstrates Social Learning Theory's flexibility in addressing not just observable behaviour but also moral reasoning and value formation, especially important in understanding pupil discipline and teacher influence in schools.

In conclusion, Social Learning Theory, introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977, remains a cornerstone in understanding how individuals acquire behaviour in social settings, especially within educational contexts. The theory's emphasis on observational learning, internal cognitive processes, and reciprocal determinism makes it a powerful tool for analyzing the dynamics between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline. While the theory has been critiqued for its limited attention to biological and cultural factors, its relevance is upheld by a wealth of empirical evidence and scholarly support. In the context of government-aided primary schools in Dokolo Town Council, Uganda, Social Learning Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for examining how pupils internalize behavioural norms and self-regulation through the disciplinary methods modeled by their teachers. As such, it informs not only academic inquiry but also practical interventions aimed at improving classroom management, teacher training, and school policy on discipline.

2.2. Teachers' Disciplinary Methods in Primary Schools.

Positive reinforcement involves rewarding pupils for exhibiting desirable behaviour s to encourage their repetition. Rewards can take various forms, such as praise, recognition, certificates, or tangible rewards like books and stationery. Nabukenya and Oonyu (2020) emphasize that positive reinforcement not only motivates pupils to adhere to rules but also creates a supportive and

encouraging classroom atmosphere. Teachers using this method find it particularly effective for building self-esteem and intrinsic motivation among pupils. Mugisha and Nakafeero (2019) highlight the importance of consistency in applying positive reinforcement, as inconsistency can confuse pupils and reduce its effectiveness. However, Tumusiime (2020) warns that over-reliance on rewards might result in pupils becoming dependent on external incentives rather than developing self-regulation. Therefore, integrating positive reinforcement with other methods, such as guidance and rule-setting, can create a more balanced approach to discipline. Despite the demonstrated benefits of positive reinforcement, there is limited empirical research on how it can be effectively adapted in resource-constrained schools in rural Uganda. Additionally, there is a lack of studies examining how socio-cultural norms influence pupils' responses to rewards-based discipline systems.

Verbal reprimands are one of the most commonly used disciplinary methods due to their immediacy and ease of application. Teachers often use verbal warnings, reminders, or expressions of disappointment to correct minor behavioural issues. Okello et al. (2021) found that verbal reprimands are particularly effective when delivered in a calm, respectful, and constructive manner, as they provide pupils with immediate feedback about unacceptable behaviour s. However, Akello et al. (2019) caution that verbal reprimands can have adverse effects if used excessively or delivered harshly. Such practices may instill fear, resentment, or anxiety in pupils, which could hinder their ability to focus on learning. To mitigate these risks, teachers are encouraged to use reprimands sparingly and balance them with positive interactions that reinforce good behaviour . While verbal reprimands are widely used, there is insufficient research on how the tone, language, and cultural context of the reprimand affect pupils' emotional responses and long-term behaviour in Ugandan primary schools.

Punitive measures, including detention, additional assignments, or withdrawal of privileges, are employed to deter pupils from repeating undesirable behaviour s. Despite the shift away from corporal punishment, punitive measures remain prevalent in many primary schools, particularly in contexts where alternative strategies are less understood or resources are limited. Nansubuga (2020) observed that these methods are commonly used in overcrowded classrooms, where individualized behaviour management is difficult. Amone and Akena (2021) argue that while punitive measures may yield immediate compliance, they often fail to address the root causes of misbehaviour and can lead to negative emotional outcomes, such as anxiety or hostility. They advocate for integrating restorative practices with punitive methods to foster accountability and personal growth among pupils. There is a lack of localized studies evaluating the long-term psychological and academic impact of punitive discipline on young learners in Uganda, particularly in under-resourced and overcrowded classrooms. The withdrawal of privileges, such as exclusion from extracurricular activities or removal from leadership roles, is a non-violent punitive method widely used in primary schools. Akello et al. (2019) found that this method effectively discourages misbehaviour while avoiding the emotional harm associated with corporal punishment. Teachers often use this strategy to make pupils understand the consequences of their actions. However, Tumusiime (2020) warns against excessive or prolonged use of this method, as it may lead to feelings of exclusion and disengagement from school activities. Short-term withdrawal combined with opportunities for pupils to earn back privileges through good behaviour can enhance the effectiveness of this approach. Few studies have explored the emotional and social impact of this disciplinary method on younger pupils, particularly how prolonged exclusion affects their academic identity and peer relationships.

Restorative practices aim to repair harm caused by misbehaviour and rebuild relationships within the school community. These methods include facilitated discussions, peer mediation, and restorative circles. Oketch et al. (2021) highlight that restorative practices are highly effective in fostering empathy, understanding, and a sense of accountability among pupils. When pupils are actively involved in resolving conflicts, they develop essential life skills, such as communication and problem-solving. Despite their benefits, restorative practices face implementation challenges, including limited teacher training and resistance from communities accustomed to punitive approaches (Tumusiime, 2020). For these methods to be successfully adopted there is a need for extensive teacher training and sensitization programs targeting both educators and parents. There is limited research on the feasibility and cultural acceptability of restorative practices in rural Ugandan schools, as well as the lack of frameworks for training teachers in these methods.

Guidance and counseling are recognized as essential components of modern disciplinary strategies. These approaches help address the underlying causes of behavioural issues by providing pupils with emotional support, advice, and personalized interventions. Mugisha and Nakafeero (2019) stress that guidance and counseling not only promote emotional well-being but also help pupils develop self-regulation and conflict resolution skills. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of their importance, Nabukenya and Oonyu (2020) note that many schools, especially in rural areas, lack professional counselors or the resources to implement effective counseling programs. Teachers often assume this role without adequate training, limiting the overall effectiveness of counseling efforts. Expanding teacher training programs to include basic counseling skills is a practical solution to this challenge. There is a lack of comprehensive data on how the absence of trained counselors affects the implementation and success of guidance programs in rural primary schools across Uganda.

2.3. Level of Pupils' Discipline in Primary Schools

Pupils' discipline is a foundational pillar of a productive learning environment in primary schools. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) provides a robust framework for understanding how disciplinary behaviour s among pupils are shaped through observational learning, imitation, and reinforcement within the school setting. According to the theory, children do not learn solely through direct instruction or punishment; instead, they model behaviour s exhibited by significant figures such as teachers, prefects, and peers. The consistency and quality of role models, reinforcement mechanisms, and the surrounding school culture play a significant role in developing or undermining pupil discipline. In this context, critical elements such as punctuality, regular attendance, respect for authority, adherence to school rules, and peer relationships are examined to understand the level of discipline among primary school pupils.

Punctuality refers to the consistent habit of arriving at school or beginning tasks at the designated time. In the context of primary education, punctuality is a vital component of discipline as it instills a sense of responsibility, respect for time, and commitment to structured learning among pupils. Teachers' disciplinary methods play a significant role in promoting punctual behaviour . For instance, using positive reinforcement such as praise or small rewards for timely arrival can motivate pupils to develop and maintain punctual habits (Adeyemi, 2010). On the other hand, consistent consequences for lateness, when applied fairly and within a supportive framework, may help discourage habitual tardiness. When pupils are punctual, they are less likely to miss important instructional time, which contributes positively to academic performance and classroom cohesion (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). However, lack of punctuality may also be influenced by external factors such as long distances from school or lack of parental supervision, which need to be considered when implementing disciplinary measures. Therefore, teacher strategies that combine

understanding with consistent expectations are essential in cultivating punctuality among learners. Despite global and regional studies highlighting the significance of punctuality, there is limited research examining how teachers' disciplinary approaches particularly those grounded in non-violent or socially modeled behaviour influence punctuality among pupils in rural Ugandan primary schools.

Regular attendance refers to the consistent presence of a pupil at school over a given period, which is essential for academic continuity and holistic development. It is widely recognized as a foundational element of effective learning and discipline in primary schools. Teachers influence pupils' attendance through the creation of engaging classroom environments and by implementing disciplinary practices that make pupils feel valued and safe (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). When teachers use encouraging and non-punitive disciplinary approaches, pupils are more likely to attend school regularly as they associate school with positive reinforcement rather than fear or punishment. On the contrary, overly harsh or inconsistent disciplinary measures can contribute to school avoidance and truancy (Suleman et al., 2014). Moreover, regular attendance is often an indicator of a school's overall discipline culture and the quality of teacher-pupil relationships. Studies have shown that when pupils attend school regularly, they perform better academically, participate more in class, and develop stronger social ties with peers and teachers (Gottfried, 2009). Thus, regular attendance is not just a metric of school participation but a reflection of effective disciplinary practices and a supportive school environment. While attendance issues have been studied extensively, especially in urban and high-resource contexts, there is a lack of empirical data that links teachers' daily disciplinary strategies especially modeled behaviour s and reinforcement techniques with pupils' regular attendance in rural Ugandan settings.

Respect for authority is a critical aspect of school discipline, referring to pupils' willingness to follow the instructions and decisions of teachers, school administrators, and student leaders. Social Learning Theory posits that respect is learned through modeling and the perceived behaviour of others in positions of power (Bandura, 1977). When teachers demonstrate respectful, just, and empathetic interactions with pupils, they serve as positive models, promoting reciprocal respect. Bandura (2001) emphasized that children internalize behaviour by observing not only the actions but also the consequences that follow. Pupils who see their peers being praised or trusted after showing deference to authority are more likely to replicate those behaviour s. Jackson and Wilson (2019) support this view, noting that respectful student behaviour correlates strongly with fair and consistent authority figures. Conversely, overuse of punitive discipline without emotional support may reduce trust and promote resistance (Ahmed et al., 2023). In the Ugandan primary school setting, teacher modeling and the manner in which authority is exercised whether autocratic or participatory significantly influence pupils' respect levels. Although numerous studies support the idea that modeling respectful behaviour encourages pupils to reciprocate, few have explored how this dynamic plays out in rural Ugandan primary schools, particularly where teacher authority is often exercised through corporal or authoritarian means.

Adherence to school rules and regulations refers to pupils consistently following established guidelines on conduct, punctuality, dress code, classroom behaviour, and participation. From a social learning perspective, rule-following is not merely about compliance under supervision but the internalization of norms observed in others (Bandura, 1986). Pupils tend to emulate peers who are rewarded for good conduct, especially when those rewards are visible and socially meaningful (Ormrod, 2016). Martin and Pear (2020) argue that behaviour such as rule adherence increases when reinforced by social recognition, verbal praise, or access to privileges. Conversely, harsh or

inconsistent enforcement of rules may lead to covert defiance or emotional withdrawal. Omara and Kasozi (2023) highlight that Ugandan pupils are more likely to follow rules when they are involved in formulating them, as it increases their sense of ownership and personal accountability. Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism suggests that as pupils influence and are influenced by their environment, involving them in school governance structures can promote self-discipline and reduce misconduct. There is a lack of empirical evidence examining the direct application of Social Learning Theory to rule adherence in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo.

Peer relations in school significantly shape pupil behaviour, including discipline-related outcomes. Social Learning Theory emphasizes the influence of peer models, suggesting that children are likely to imitate the behaviour of peers they admire or consider socially successful (Bandura, 1977). Positive peer interactions, such as cooperation, empathy, and inclusion, can be reinforced by teachers through group-based rewards, public recognition, or leadership roles, thereby promoting a culture of discipline (Schunk, 2012). Thompson and Wolff (2020) found that supportive peer networks reduce stress and antisocial behaviour, while peer rejection or bullying fosters indiscipline. Bandura (2001) further noted that observational learning among peers is a key mechanism for transmitting both desirable and undesirable behaviour s. In many Ugandan schools, however, overcrowding, cultural diversity, and language differences may challenge positive peer modeling. Teachers must therefore play a deliberate role in guiding social interactions, modeling respectful communication, and correcting antisocial behaviour through constructive feedback and role-playing activities. This proactive strategy ensures that peer influence works in favor of discipline rather than against it. Although peer dynamics are well studied in general, there is limited research on how socioeconomic disparities, language barriers, and cultural diversity within rural Ugandan schools influence peer interactions and discipline.

2.4 The Relationship between Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline in Primary Schools

The relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline is pivotal in determining the overall success of the educational process. Effective disciplinary strategies promote not only classroom order but also the holistic development of pupils, fostering self-regulation and respect. Conversely, inappropriate or inconsistent methods can undermine these objectives. Scholars have explored this relationship from various angles, and this section discusses their findings. Despite existing literature, there is limited empirical research examining how these relationships play out in rural or resource-constrained Ugandan primary schools, where traditional practices may differ from studied models.

Positive reinforcement, a key component of modern disciplinary methods, has been shown to significantly enhance pupils' discipline levels. Amone and Akena (2021) argue that when teachers reward good behaviour, pupils are motivated to maintain or replicate such behaviour. Rewards can range from verbal praise to tangible incentives, creating an environment where pupils feel valued and encouraged. Similarly, Tumusiime (2020) emphasizes that positive reinforcement contributes to building a respectful and supportive classroom culture. This approach shifts the focus from punishment to recognition, which not only improves behaviour but also strengthens teacher-pupil relationships. Most studies emphasize the theory of positive reinforcement but do not explore the extent to which Ugandan primary school teachers understand or consistently apply these practices, especially in underserved districts.

Punitive disciplinary methods, such as verbal reprimands or suspension, are still widely used in many primary schools. However, these approaches often yield mixed results. Okello et al. (2021)

note that while punitive measures can deter negative behaviour in the short term, they may fail to address the root causes of indiscipline. Moreover, excessive reliance on punishment can lead to resentment or defiance among pupils. Mugisha and Nakafeero (2019) add that punitive methods may also contribute to negative outcomes, such as reduced self-esteem and disengagement from learning. They argue for a balanced approach that incorporates both corrective measures and constructive strategies to address behavioural issues effectively. There is a lack of localized studies assessing the psychological and academic impact of punitive methods on young learners in Uganda, especially in relation to gender and age differences.

Restorative practices, which focus on repairing harm and resolving conflicts, are increasingly recognized as effective disciplinary methods. Nabukenya and Oonyu (2020) highlight that these practices promote accountability and empathy among pupils, fostering a sense of community within the classroom. By involving pupils in discussions about their behaviour and its consequences, restorative practices encourage self-reflection and positive behavioural change. Oketch et al. (2021) observe that restorative practices are particularly effective in addressing recurring behavioural issues, as they emphasize understanding rather than punishment. However, the successful implementation of these methods requires adequate teacher training and time investment. The implementation and outcomes of restorative practices in Ugandan primary schools remain under-researched, especially concerning teacher preparedness, time constraints, and cultural acceptance.

Consistency and fairness in the application of disciplinary methods are critical factors in maintaining pupil discipline. Tumusiime (2020) asserts that when teachers apply rules uniformly and treat pupils equitably, they create a predictable and stable environment that promotes

discipline. Inconsistent or biased enforcement of rules, on the other hand, can lead to confusion and frustration among pupils. Nansubuga (2020) adds that fairness in discipline fosters trust between teachers and pupils, enhancing the latter's willingness to comply with rules. This relationship underscores the importance of clear communication and transparency in disciplinary practices. Few studies investigate how perceptions of fairness in discipline differ among pupils from different backgrounds (e.g., orphans, children with disabilities, minority tribes) within Ugandan schools.

The quality of the teacher-pupil relationship significantly influences the effectiveness of disciplinary methods. Amone and Akena (2021) argue that teachers who build strong, supportive relationships with their pupils are better able to manage behaviour and maintain discipline. Pupils who feel respected and valued are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour and adhere to classroom rules. Okello et al. (2021) emphasize that teachers who use authoritarian or dismissive approaches may alienate pupils, leading to increased indiscipline. They advocate for a relational approach that balances authority with empathy and understanding. There is limited qualitative research exploring how teacher behaviour and communication styles affect pupil discipline, particularly in multilingual and multicultural school settings in Uganda.

The cultural context in which disciplinary methods are applied also affects their impact on pupil discipline. Nabukenya and Oonyu (2020) note that culturally insensitive approaches can undermine teachers' efforts to maintain discipline, particularly in diverse or traditional communities. Teachers who understand and respect cultural norms are more likely to gain the trust and cooperation of their pupils. Mugisha and Nakafeero (2019) highlight that integrating culturally relevant strategies, such as storytelling or community involvement, can enhance the effectiveness

of disciplinary methods. However, they caution against practices that perpetuate harmful cultural norms, such as corporal punishment. There is a lack of empirical data on how cultural beliefs shape teacher attitudes toward discipline, and how these in turn influence pupils' behaviour in various Ugandan sub regions.

Teacher training plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between disciplinary methods and pupil discipline. Tumusiime (2020) asserts that teachers who receive comprehensive training in modern disciplinary techniques are better equipped to handle behavioural issues constructively. Professional development programs provide teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies such as positive reinforcement and restorative practices effectively. Oketch et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of ongoing training and support, particularly in schools where traditional punitive methods remain prevalent. Few studies assess the quality and content of teacher training programs in Uganda regarding classroom discipline. More evidence is needed to evaluate whether these programs are equipping teachers with culturally appropriate, evidence-based skills.

Parental involvement is a key factor in the success of teachers' disciplinary methods. Nansubuga (2020) highlights that when parents actively support school rules and disciplinary practices, pupils are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour . Effective communication and collaboration between teachers and parents ensure consistency in expectations and reinforce the importance of discipline both at school and at home. Okello et al. (2021) note that the absence of parental involvement can undermine teachers' efforts to maintain discipline, as pupils may receive mixed messages about acceptable behaviour. They recommend initiatives to engage parents more actively in the

disciplinary process. More research is needed to understand barriers to parental involvement in pupil discipline, especially in low-income or single-parent households across rural Uganda.

The emotional and psychological well-being of pupils significantly influences their behaviour and responsiveness to disciplinary methods. Amone and Akena (2021) argue that teachers who provide emotional support and address the underlying causes of behavioural issues are more likely to achieve positive outcomes. This approach requires teachers to act not only as disciplinarians but also as mentors and counselors. Tumusiime (2020) emphasizes that schools should prioritize creating a supportive environment that promotes pupils' overall well-being. This includes providing access to counseling services and training teachers to recognize and address signs of emotional distress. There is inadequate data on the availability and impact of psychosocial support services in Ugandan primary schools and how these services interact with disciplinary practices.

The long-term impact of disciplinary methods extends beyond immediate classroom behaviour. Nabukenya and Oonyu (2020) note that effective disciplinary strategies contribute to the development of life skills such as self-regulation, responsibility, and interpersonal communication. These skills are critical for pupils' success both within and outside the school environment. Mugisha and Nakafeero (2019) highlight that punitive methods, while effective in the short term, may have negative long-term consequences, such as reduced self-esteem or increased defiance. They advocate for a holistic approach that prioritizes positive reinforcement and restorative practices. Longitudinal studies are lacking in Uganda to assess the effects of various disciplinary approaches on pupils' life outcomes beyond primary school, including secondary transition, self-concept, and civic behaviour.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provided the methodological approach used in the study. It explained the research approach, research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection tools, validity, reliability, administration procedures, ethical consideration, data analysis and highlight the study limitations.

3.1 Research Approach

The study used a mixed method approach. The mixed method approach is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches and is rooted in pragmatism (Flick, 2014).The convergence is anchored in pragmatism view that a situation can not be understood from one dimension (Tashakkoli & Teddie, 2010) The mixed method was chosen because it was based on the assumption that combining quantitative and qualitative approaches best provided an understanding of a research problem (Cohen et al., 2018). Questionnaires were administered to teachers and pupils to collect quantitative data while interviews were simultaneously conducted with headteachers and school management committee executives to collect qualitative data.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a convergent mixed method research design. The convergent mixed method research design involved the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, which were then merged and analyzed to provide answers to the problems under investigation

(Creswell, 2003). Therefore, the collection of data using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies gave a more holistic approach to understanding the problem under investigation (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Both types of data were collected at the same time (not sequential), analyzed separately, and compared or integrated at the interpretation stage.

3.3 Study population

The study was conducted in all Primary schools in Dokolo Town Council and consisted of all teachers (320), pupils (5000), head teachers (10) and SMC executives (120). The total population of the study was 5,450.

3.4 Sample size

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table.

Table 3.1. Determining the population, sample and procedure

S/N	Category	Population (N)	Sample (S)	Sampling Technique
01	Teachers	320	180	Simple random sampling
02	Pupils	5000	200	Simple random sampling
03	Head teachers	10	10	Purposive
04	SMC executives	120	10	Purposive
Total		5,450	400	

Source: Primary data.

Questionnaires were administered to 380 respondents (Teachers and Pupils) and Interviews were administered to 20 respondents (Headteachers and SMC executives).

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The study used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, incorporating both purposive and simple random sampling methods. For the probability sampling method, the study used simple random sampling, particularly the lottery method (Creswell, 2014).

In the lottery method, participants were assigned codes and names written on pieces of paper and placed in a box. The researcher then shook the box so that all the participants had the same chances of being chosen, and selected one code at a time until the sample size was reached (Creswell, 2014). The lottery method was used to select teachers and pupils because the population was relatively large. The merit of this method was that it gave all participants equal chances of being selected for the study, and the results of the study could be generalized to the study population.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select headteachers and SMC executives based on their involvement in school discipline management. The merit of judgmental sampling, particularly expert judgmental sampling, was that information was obtained from key informants who were experts in the field under study (Neumann, 2014).

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey was selected as a primary data collection method because it enabled the researcher to collect standardized quantitative data from a relatively large number of respondents within a manageable period. This was appropriate for the study because it sought to measure pupils' disciplinary challenges and related factors using structured items that could be compared across respondents. The questionnaire also provided respondents with privacy and confidentiality,

which was important because issues concerning pupils' behaviour and disciplinary practices could be sensitive. A self-administered questionnaire with clear instructions and Likert-scale items was therefore used to ensure consistency in responses and facilitate quantitative analysis (Borgie et al., 2020; Cohen et al., 2018).

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews were selected because they enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and contextual information that could not be adequately captured through structured questionnaires. The method was particularly appropriate for obtaining the views and experiences of head teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) executives concerning pupils' discipline, causes of indiscipline and the disciplinary methods used in primary schools. Face-to-face interviews also provided an opportunity for the researcher to ask follow-up and probing questions, clarify responses and explore issues in greater depth. This flexibility made interviews suitable for understanding participants' opinions, experiences and practices regarding pupils' discipline (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018).

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study (Kumar, 2019). The questionnaire was selected as an appropriate instrument because it enabled the researcher to collect standardized information from a relatively large number of teachers within a short period and at a manageable cost. It also ensured consistency in the questions presented to all respondents, thereby facilitating comparison and

quantitative analysis of responses. The questionnaire was scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Not Sure = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5. It was administered to teachers to complete, and the researcher collected the completed questionnaires after they had been filled in by the respondents.

3.7.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide is a list of topics, themes, or questions that the interviewer plans to explore during the interview, used to maintain focus and consistency while allowing flexibility in how the conversation unfolds (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide was selected because it enabled the researcher to obtain detailed qualitative information and probe respondents' experiences, opinions and explanations regarding pupils' discipline and disciplinary management practices. Unlike a highly structured instrument, the guide allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions and explore important issues that emerged during the interviews while maintaining consistency across participants. Interviews were conducted with head teachers and SMC executives, and the interview guide was tailored to elicit detailed responses relating to the specific research objectives.

3.7 Validity of the instrument

Karmin et al. (2024) defined validity as the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. Validity ensures that research truly measures what it claimed to measure, making the findings accurate and trustworthy. The validity of the instruments was assessed through expert review and factor analysis. Experts in education and research evaluated the content validity of the questionnaire, ensuring that the questions accurately measured the intended variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated to quantify the relevance of each item based on expert ratings. The CVI was computed using the following formula:

$$CVI = \frac{Numbers\ of\ items\ rated\ as\ relevant\ by\ expert}{Total\ number\ of\ items}$$

A CVI score of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for the instrument's validity (Polit & Beck, 2006).

3.8 Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is the extent to which a data collection instrument consistently measures a given concept (Neuman, 2014). An instrument with high reliability produces the same results whenever it measures a specified concept (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Reliability was important because it ensured consistency in research results, meaning that if the study or measurement was repeated under the same conditions, it would produce similar outcomes. This strengthened the credibility and dependability of the findings. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot test, used clear and consistent instructions, and applied statistical tests such as test-retest or Cronbach's alpha to check for consistency. The researcher revised the instrument based on feedback and ensured that data collectors were well-trained to apply it uniformly.

3.9 Administrative Procedure

Upon approval of the research proposal, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Faculty Dean, Gulu University. The researcher trained research assistants and carried out prior visits to the study area for familiarization and to seek permission from the head teachers of the different schools. Following the drawn timetable, the researcher then gained access to the different schools and collected data using questionnaires and interviews . Questionnaires were self-

administered to teachers and pupils with clear instructions and Likert-scale items to ensure consistency in responses. Face-to-face interviews were administered to head teachers and SMC executives to gather in-depth data on teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline.

3.10 Ethical considerations

This study adhered to ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants and the integrity of the research process:

All participants, including teachers, pupils, and school administrators, were fully informed about the purpose of the study, their role in it, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The privacy and confidentiality of all respondents were respected. Data collected from participants were kept anonymous, and no personal identifiers were included in the final report.

The study avoided any form of physical or psychological harm to participants. The questions posed to participants were sensitive to the emotional and psychological well-being of the pupils, teachers, and administrators.

The researcher ensured that only authorized individuals had access to sensitive data. Data storage was secure, and participants had the right to access their own data if they wished.

Research plagiarism was avoided. The researcher acknowledged the authors in areas where reference was made to another person's work.

Findings were shared honestly and responsibly with participants, the academic audience, and the public. Results were presented truthfully without fabrication or selective reporting, and the contribution of participants was acknowledged respectfully.

The ethical principle of beneficence was highly observed. The researcher's obligation was to maximize the benefits of research on individual participants and society as a whole while minimizing risks and harm to the individuals involved.

The researcher received ethical clearance from Gulu University's Research Ethics Committee and permission from the district education authorities of Dokolo District Local Government.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data was cleaned, sorted and entered in the computer spreadsheet.

3.11.1 Quantitative data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics presented data at univariate level for all the study variables using frequency and percentages. Inferential statistics answered research questions 1, 2, 3, Research question 1 and 2 was analyzed using standard deviation, research question 3 using Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r).

3.11.2 Qualitative data Analysis

Data were cleaned, coded, sorted, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set, enabling researchers to make sense of shared experiences and perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Thematic analysis was chosen because it helped to simplify complex qualitative data into organized and interpretable themes, making it easier to present findings clearly.

In using thematic analysis, the researcher began by familiarizing himself with the data through repeated reading. This was followed by generating initial codes through highlighting relevant text segments. The codes were then organized into potential themes. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the data set. Once finalized, the themes were clearly defined and named..

3.12 Limitations

The study faced limitations such as response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable answers rather than honest responses. Additionally, the findings had limited generalizability beyond the government-aided primary schools in Dokolo Town Council, Uganda. However, the use of multiple data collection methods helped to mitigate these limitations.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented data presentation, analysis and interpretation according to study research questions namely; what are the teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District? what is the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District? what is the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District? The section started with background information then followed answering research questions and presentation of qualitative results in tables followed by analysis and interpretation.

Table 4.1 Showing background characteristics of teachers (N = 180) and pupils (N = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Teachers (N = 180)			
Gender	Male	95	52.8
	Female	85	47.2
Level of Education	Diploma	40	22.2
	Bachelor's Degree	110	61.1
	Master's Degree	30	16.7
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	60	33.3
	6–10 years	55	30.6
	11 years and above	65	36.1
Position Held in School	Classroom Teacher	120	66.7
	Head of Department	35	19.4
	Deputy Headteacher	15	8.3

	Headteacher	10	5.6
Marital Status	Single	50	27.8
	Married	115	63.9
	Divorced/Widowed	15	8.3
Pupils (N = 200)			
Gender	Male	105	52.5
	Female	95	47.5
Age Bracket (Years)	10–12	65	32.5
	13–15	90	45.0
	16–18	45	22.5
Class	Primary 5	70	35.0
	Primary 6	65	32.5
	Primary 7	65	32.5
Citizenship	Ugandan	185	92.5
	Non-Ugandan	15	7.5

Primary data

The demographic profile of teachers who participated in the study showed a relatively balanced gender distribution, with males slightly more represented at 52.8 percent compared to females at 47.2 percent. This near balance suggested that both male and female perspectives in teaching were fairly represented, which was important for capturing a diverse range of instructional experiences within the school system. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of teachers held a Bachelor's degree (61.1%), followed by a smaller proportion with a diploma (22.2%), while 16.7 percent had obtained a Master's degree. This finding demonstrated that most teachers in the sample had undergone formal university training, which could positively influence their pedagogical practices and professional competence. The presence of teachers with postgraduate qualifications also indicated a growing commitment towards advanced studies, which was vital for improving instructional quality. With respect to teaching experience, a significant number of teachers had

served for over 11 years (36.1%), while 33.3 percent had between one to five years of experience, and 30.6 percent had six to ten years. This distribution suggested that the teaching staff was composed of both experienced professionals and relatively new entrants to the profession. Such a mix provided opportunities for mentorship, knowledge transfer, and the blending of fresh ideas with practical expertise, which could strengthen instructional delivery. When analyzing the positions held in schools, the largest proportion of respondents were classroom teachers (66.7%), followed by heads of departments (19.4%), deputy headteachers (8.3%), and headteachers (5.6%). This structure reflected the typical school hierarchy, where classroom teachers formed the majority workforce responsible for direct learner engagement. The representation of leadership roles, although smaller, was essential as it ensured that supervisory and administrative perspectives were also considered in the study. Regarding marital status, most teachers were married (63.9%), while 27.8 percent were single and 8.3 percent were divorced or widowed. The predominance of married teachers may have reflected social stability and maturity within the teaching force, which could have had implications for their commitment and stability in service delivery.

Turning to the demographic characteristics of pupils, the sample revealed a slightly higher proportion of males (52.5%) compared to females (47.5%). This indicated a fairly equitable gender representation, which was important for balanced participation and reflected efforts towards gender inclusiveness in education. Age distribution showed that most pupils were in the 13–15 years bracket (45%), followed by those aged 10–12 years (32.5%), while 22.5 percent were in the 16–18 years range. This trend was consistent with the typical age structure of upper primary classes, where the majority of learners fell within early adolescence. The findings also indicated the presence of slightly older learners in upper classes, which may have been linked to late school entry or grade repetition. The distribution of pupils across classes was fairly even, with 35 percent

in Primary Five, 32.5 percent in Primary Six, and another 32.5 percent in Primary Seven. This balanced representation across upper primary classes ensured that the perspectives of pupils at different levels of progression were adequately captured. Finally, an overwhelming majority of pupils were Ugandan citizens (92.5%), while only 7.5 percent were non-Ugandans. This indicated that the school largely served local communities, though the presence of foreign pupils demonstrated some level of diversity in the school population.

4.1 Descriptive statistics for study variables and constructs

Table 4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of Positive Reinforcement

Item No.	Positive Reinforcement Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I praise pupils when they demonstrate good discipline in school.	4.32	0.68
2	I reward pupils who consistently follow school rules and regulations.	4.15	0.74
3	I recognize pupils who demonstrate respectful behaviour towards teachers and fellow pupils.	4.28	0.70
4	I provide verbal encouragement to pupils who improve their behaviour.	4.40	0.66
5	I publicly recognize pupils who demonstrate good behaviour as an example to others.	4.05	0.81
6	I provide small rewards or tokens to pupils who consistently demonstrate good discipline.	3.85	0.92
7	I communicate positive information about pupils' good behaviour to their parents or guardians.	3.95	0.87

Primary data

The results on positive reinforcement practices among teachers indicated a generally high level of application, with all mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 4.40 on a five-point scale. This suggested that teachers frequently used positive reinforcement as a strategy for promoting and maintaining good discipline among pupils. The relatively low standard deviations, ranging from 0.66 to 0.92,

indicated that responses were fairly consistent among teachers, although some variation existed in the extent to which particular reinforcement practices were applied.

The highest mean score was recorded for the statement "I provide verbal encouragement to pupils who improve their behaviour" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.66). This indicated that verbal encouragement was the most commonly used positive reinforcement strategy for improving pupils' discipline. The high score suggested that teachers frequently encouraged pupils when they demonstrated behavioural improvement, which could help reinforce desirable conduct. This was followed by praising pupils when they demonstrate good discipline in school (M = 4.32, SD = 0.68) and recognizing pupils who demonstrate respectful behaviour towards teachers and fellow pupils (M = 4.28, SD = 0.70). These findings indicated that teachers placed considerable emphasis on praise and recognition as immediate ways of encouraging pupils to maintain respectful and disciplined behaviour.

The findings further showed that teachers also rewarded pupils who consistently followed school rules and regulations (M = 4.15, SD = 0.74) and publicly recognized pupils who demonstrated good behaviour as examples to others (M = 4.05, SD = 0.81). These relatively high mean scores suggested that recognition and rewards were important components of disciplinary management in the schools. However, the relatively higher standard deviation for public recognition indicated some variation in teachers' use of this strategy. This could imply that while many teachers used public recognition, others may have preferred more private forms of reinforcement.

The lowest mean score was recorded for providing small rewards or tokens to pupils who consistently demonstrate good discipline (M = 3.85, SD = 0.92). Although this represented a relatively high level of application, it was less frequently used than the other positive reinforcement practices. The comparatively high standard deviation indicated greater variation in teachers'

responses, suggesting that some teachers used material rewards more regularly than others. Similarly, communicating positive information about pupils' good behaviour to their parents or guardians recorded a mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.87), indicating that this practice was used relatively often but less consistently than verbal encouragement, praise and recognition.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that positive reinforcement was widely used as a disciplinary strategy among teachers in primary schools in Dokolo Town Council. Teachers relied particularly on verbal encouragement, praise and recognition of respectful behaviour, while material rewards and communication of positive behaviour to parents were comparatively less common. The findings therefore suggest that teachers predominantly used immediate, non-material forms of positive reinforcement to encourage and sustain desirable pupil behaviour.

Table 4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of Punitive Measures

Item No.	Punitive Measure Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I give extra assignments to punish learners who misbehave.	3.25	1.05
2	I send pupils out of class when they are disruptive.	3.80	0.92
3	I deny break time to learners as a form of punishment.	2.95	1.10
4	I use harsh language or scolding to discipline pupils.	3.10	0.98
5	I involve parents when pupils repeatedly misbehave.	4.05	0.81
6	I reduce marks or scores as punishment for indiscipline.	3.00	1.02
7	I apply physical punishment (e.g., caning) when learners misbehave.	2.65	1.20

Primary data

The results on punitive measures revealed that teachers apply a range of disciplinary strategies, although their use appears less consistent compared to positive reinforcement. The mean scores

generally fall between 2.65 and 4.05, indicating that some punitive practices are moderately common, while others are less frequently applied. The relatively higher standard deviations for certain items suggest considerable variation in how teachers perceive and employ punitive measures. The highest mean score was recorded for involving parents when pupils repeatedly misbehave (M = 4.05, SD = 0.81). This suggested that teachers prefer to handle persistent indiscipline by collaborating with parents, thereby emphasizing a corrective approach rather than immediate harsh punishment. Sending disruptive pupils out of class (M = 3.80, SD = 0.92) was also reported as a fairly common practice, reflecting teachers' attempts to restore order and maintain a conducive learning environment when classroom disruptions occur. Moderate mean scores were observed for giving extra assignments as punishment (M = 3.25, SD = 1.05) and the use of harsh language or scolding (M = 3.10, SD = 0.98). These findings indicated that such methods are sometimes applied but not consistently across all teachers. The variations reflected in the standard deviations highlight differing attitudes among teachers, with some considering these practices necessary, while others may avoid them due to concerns about their effectiveness or ethical implications. Lower mean scores were recorded for reducing marks as punishment (M = 3.00, SD = 1.02), denying break time (M = 2.95, SD = 1.10), and applying physical punishment such as caning (M = 2.65, SD = 1.20). These results suggested that such punitive measures are less frequently used, though the relatively large standard deviations indicate differences in practice among teachers. The limited application of physical punishment may reflect the influence of educational policies discouraging corporal punishment, as well as a growing recognition of its negative effects on learners. Generally, the findings suggest that while teachers still apply some punitive measures, there is a clear tendency towards nonviolent and corrective forms of discipline, such as involving parents and temporarily excluding disruptive learners from class. The less

frequent use of physical punishment and other harsh practices highlights a gradual shift towards more child friendly approaches to classroom management. However, the variations among teachers also suggested that consistency in discipline practices remains an area that schools may need to strengthen through policy guidance and professional development.

Table 4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of Restorative Practices

Item No.	Restorative Practice Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I encourage pupils to apologize and make amends after wrongdoing.	4.20	0.75
2	I organize dialogues between conflicting pupils to resolve issues.	4.05	0.81
3	I guide learners to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour.	4.30	0.70
4	I mediate conflicts among pupils to restore relationships.	4.15	0.78
5	I promote peer mediation where learners help each other resolve issues.	3.90	0.85
6	I involve pupils in creating class rules and responsibilities.	4.10	0.80
7	I encourage learners to repair damage caused to school property.	4.00	0.82

Primary data

The findings on restorative practices revealed that teachers widely employed strategies aimed at building responsibility, repairing relationships, and encouraging reflection among learners. The mean scores, which generally ranged between 3.90 and 4.30, indicated a strong tendency towards restorative rather than punitive approaches to discipline. The relatively low standard deviations across the items suggested that teachers' responses were consistent, showing broad agreement on the value of these practices. The highest mean score was recorded for guiding learners to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.70$). This indicated that teachers placed strong emphasis on helping pupils understand the impact of their actions, thereby fostering

accountability and personal growth. Closely related was the practice of encouraging pupils to apologize and make amends after wrongdoing (M = 4.20, SD = 0.75), which reflected a deliberate effort to restore harmony and rebuild positive relationships within the school community. Other restorative measures such as mediating conflicts among pupils (M = 4.15, SD = 0.78) and involving learners in creating classroom rules (M = 4.10, SD = 0.80) were also rated highly. These findings suggested that teachers recognized the importance of dialogue, participation, and shared responsibility in promoting discipline and a sense of ownership among learners. Organizing dialogues between conflicting pupils (M = 4.05, SD = 0.81) and encouraging pupils to repair damage caused to school property (M = 4.00, SD = 0.82) further demonstrated a practical and solution-oriented approach to managing indiscipline. The lowest rated, though still fairly high, was the use of peer mediation where learners assisted each other in resolving conflicts (M = 3.90, SD = 0.85). While this indicated that peer support was sometimes encouraged, the slightly lower score suggested that not all teachers felt confident in delegating conflict resolution to learners, possibly due to concerns about its effectiveness or limited training in peer-led approaches. Therefore, the results showed that restorative practices were strongly embedded within classroom management strategies. Teachers appeared to prefer approaches that emphasized responsibility, reflection, and relationship building over punitive methods. This highlighted a positive shift towards child-friendly and participatory forms of discipline that were more likely to enhance learners' social and emotional development while maintaining harmony within the school environment.

Table 4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of Verbal Reprimand

Item No.	Verbal Reprimand Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I raise my voice to correct learners when they misbehave.	3.85	0.88
2	I warn pupils in front of their peers to discourage misconduct.	4.00	0.82
3	I call out pupils by name when they fail to follow instructions.	3.95	0.85
4	I issue repeated reminders when pupils are not attentive.	4.10	0.76
5	I use stern words to emphasize the seriousness of a learner's actions.	3.90	0.84
6	I reprimand learners individually to avoid embarrassing them.	4.05	0.79

Primary data

The results on verbal reprimand revealed that teachers moderately used verbal disciplinary strategies to manage learner behaviour . The mean scores, which ranged from 3.85 to 4.10, suggested that such practices were fairly common, though not as consistently applied as positive reinforcement or restorative approaches. The standard deviations, ranging between 0.76 and 0.88, indicated moderate variation in how teachers employed verbal reprimands, reflecting differences in individual classroom management styles. The highest mean was recorded for issuing repeated reminders when pupils were not attentive (M = 4.10, SD = 0.76). This suggested that teachers frequently relied on verbal cues to maintain classroom focus and ensure adherence to instructions. Closely following was the practice of reprimanding learners individually to avoid embarrassment (M = 4.05, SD = 0.79), indicating that teachers were mindful of maintaining learners' dignity even when correcting behaviour . Moderate mean scores were observed for warning pupils in front of peers (M = 4.00, SD = 0.82), calling out pupils by name (M = 3.95, SD = 0.85), and using stern words to emphasize the seriousness of actions (M = 3.90, SD = 0.84). These results demonstrated that while teachers sometimes employed more public or assertive forms of verbal reprimand, they

did so selectively, likely balancing discipline with the need to avoid negative emotional impacts on learners. The lowest mean score was noted for raising one's voice to correct learners (M = 3.85, SD = 0.88). This indicated that shouting was the least preferred form of verbal reprimand, suggesting that teachers may have consciously avoided aggressive tones in classroom management, aligning with modern child-friendly disciplinary practices. Therefore, the findings showed that verbal reprimand was a moderately applied strategy among teachers, primarily used to redirect attention, correct behaviour , and emphasize rules. While effective in maintaining order, it was less emphasized than positive reinforcement and restorative approaches, reflecting a shift towards more supportive and constructive disciplinary methods in schools.

Table 4.6. Mean and Standard Deviation for Items of Guidance and Counselling

Item No.	Guidance and Counselling Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I provide individual counselling to pupils who exhibit disciplinary problems.	4.20	0.72
2	I guide pupils on personal and social issues that may affect their behaviour at school.	4.10	0.75
3	I organize group counselling sessions for pupils experiencing similar disciplinary challenges.	3.95	0.81
4	I advise pupils on appropriate behaviour and the importance of following school rules and regulations.	4.25	0.70
5	I refer pupils with serious behavioural problems to professional counsellors when necessary.	3.85	0.88
6	I encourage pupils to set personal behaviour goals and develop problem-solving skills to manage disciplinary challenges.	4.15	0.74

Primary data

The results on guidance and counselling indicated that teachers frequently used guidance and counselling as a strategy for managing pupils' disciplinary challenges in primary schools in Dokolo Town Council. The mean scores ranged from 3.85 to 4.25 on a five-point scale, indicating a generally high level of application of the different guidance and counselling practices. The standard deviations ranged from 0.70 to 0.88, suggesting that teachers' responses were relatively consistent, although some variation existed in the use of particular practices.

The highest mean score was recorded for advising pupils on appropriate behaviour and the importance of following school rules and regulations (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70). This finding suggests that teachers placed considerable emphasis on helping pupils understand acceptable behaviour and comply with established school rules. This was followed by providing individual counselling to pupils who exhibit disciplinary problems (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72), indicating that teachers frequently addressed disciplinary concerns through individual discussions and counselling. These findings demonstrate that teachers relied considerably on direct guidance and individual support to correct inappropriate behaviour and promote positive discipline.

The results further showed that teachers encouraged pupils to set personal behaviour goals and develop problem-solving skills to manage disciplinary challenges (M = 4.15, SD = 0.74). Similarly, guiding pupils on personal and social issues that may affect their behaviour at school recorded a mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.75). These relatively high mean scores indicate that teachers did not only respond to disciplinary problems after they occurred but also attempted to address some of the underlying personal and social factors that could contribute to inappropriate behaviour.

Organizing group counselling sessions for pupils experiencing similar disciplinary challenges recorded a mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.81). Although this was still relatively high, it was less frequently applied compared with individual counselling and behavioural guidance. This may suggest that

teachers tended to deal with disciplinary concerns on an individual basis rather than through group counselling sessions. The lowest mean score was recorded for referring pupils with serious behavioural problems to professional counsellors when necessary (M = 3.85, SD = 0.88). Although the practice was still applied to a considerable extent, the comparatively lower mean and higher standard deviation indicate that teachers differed more in their use of professional referral services.

Overall, the findings indicate that guidance and counselling was an important disciplinary management strategy used by teachers in the selected primary schools. Teachers particularly emphasized advising pupils about appropriate behaviour, individual counselling and developing pupils' problem-solving skills. However, referral of pupils with serious behavioural problems to professional counsellors was comparatively less common. This may indicate the need for strengthening professional counselling services and referral mechanisms within primary schools to ensure that pupils with persistent or serious disciplinary challenges receive appropriate support.

Table 4.7 Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Discipline on Regular Attendance

Item No.	Regular Attendance Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Pupils report to school on time every day.	4.25	0.70
2	Learners attend all scheduled lessons without skipping classes.	4.10	0.75
3	Pupils inform teachers in advance when absent from school.	3.85	0.82
4	Learners make up for missed lessons promptly.	3.90	0.78
5	Pupils adhere to school attendance rules and regulations.	4.20	0.72
6	Learners show responsibility by maintaining regular attendance.	4.15	0.74

The findings on pupils' discipline regarding regular attendance revealed a generally high level of compliance with school attendance expectations. The mean scores, ranging from 3.85 to 4.25, suggested that most pupils consistently attended school and adhered to the established attendance

rules. The relatively low standard deviations, between 0.70 and 0.82, indicated that pupils' responses were fairly uniform, reflecting a consistent pattern of disciplined attendance across the sample. The highest mean score was recorded for pupils reporting to school on time every day (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70). This demonstrated that punctuality was a strong aspect of learner discipline, reflecting awareness of the importance of timely attendance for academic engagement. Similarly, adherence to school attendance rules and regulations (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72) and learners showing responsibility by maintaining regular attendance (M = 4.15, SD = 0.74) indicated that pupils generally internalized school expectations and acted responsibly to comply. Moderate mean scores were observed for attending all scheduled lessons without skipping classes (M = 4.10, SD = 0.75) and making up for missed lessons promptly (M = 3.90, SD = 0.78). These findings suggested that while most pupils maintained regular attendance, there were occasional lapses or missed lessons, which were generally addressed responsibly. The slightly lower score for informing teachers in advance when absent (M = 3.85, SD = 0.82) indicated that some learners may have failed to communicate planned absences consistently, highlighting a minor area for improvement in communication practices. Overall, the results demonstrated that pupils exhibited strong discipline regarding regular attendance, with high levels of punctuality, adherence to school rules, and personal responsibility. Maintaining such disciplined attendance was likely to have contributed positively to academic performance and effective learning outcomes, reinforcing the role of school policies and teacher guidance in shaping learners' behaviour .

Table 4.8. Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Punctuality

Item No.	Punctuality Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Pupils arrive at school before the official start time.	4.30	0.68
2	Learners are punctual for all lessons throughout the day.	4.15	0.72
3	Pupils consistently report to class on time after breaks.	4.10	0.74
4	Learners demonstrate awareness of the importance of punctuality.	4.25	0.70
5	Pupils take personal responsibility to avoid being late.	4.20	0.71
6	Learners encourage peers to be punctual for lessons.	3.95	0.80

Primary data

The results on pupils' punctuality revealed that learners generally demonstrated strong adherence to time-related expectations in school. The mean scores, ranging from 3.95 to 4.30, suggested that most pupils consistently arrived on time and were conscious of the importance of punctuality. The relatively low standard deviations, between 0.68 and 0.80, indicated that responses were fairly consistent across the sample, reflecting a uniform pattern of punctual behaviour among learners. The highest mean score was recorded for pupils arriving at school before the official start time (M = 4.30, SD = 0.68), highlighting that learners were largely proactive in ensuring timely attendance. Similarly, demonstrating awareness of the importance of punctuality (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70) and taking personal responsibility to avoid being late (M = 4.20, SD = 0.71) indicated that learners internalized school expectations and made conscious efforts to comply with them. Moderately high mean scores were observed for being punctual for all lessons throughout the day (M = 4.15, SD = 0.72) and reporting to class on time after breaks (M = 4.10, SD = 0.74). These findings suggested that while most pupils maintained punctuality consistently, occasional minor lapses occurred, which were generally addressed responsibly. Encouraging peers to be punctual (M = 3.95, SD =

0.80) received the lowest mean, indicating that while some learners actively promoted punctuality among peers, this practice was less uniformly applied. Overall, the results indicated that punctuality was a well-established aspect of pupil discipline. The consistent adherence to time-related expectations was likely to have enhanced academic engagement, ensured smooth lesson transitions, and contributed positively to overall learning outcomes. These findings also underscored the role of school policies, teacher guidance, and peer influence in fostering responsible and disciplined behaviour among learners.

Table 4. 9.Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Respect of Authority

Item No.	Respect of Authority Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Pupils follow teachers' instructions without argument.	4.20	0.72
2	Learners show politeness when interacting with school staff.	4.15	0.74
3	Pupils address teachers and school authorities appropriately.	4.25	0.70
4	Learners comply with school rules and regulations.	4.30	0.68
5	Pupils respect the opinions of teachers during lessons and discussions.	4.10	0.75
6	Learners avoid talking back or challenging teachers publicly.	4.05	0.78

Primary data

The results on pupils' respect of authority revealed that learners generally demonstrated high levels of compliance and deference towards teachers and school officials. The mean scores, which ranged from 4.05 to 4.30, suggested that pupils consistently adhered to expected behavioural norms, showing politeness, attentiveness, and appropriate interaction with school authorities. The relatively low standard deviations, between 0.68 and 0.78, indicated that pupils' responses were fairly consistent across the sample, reflecting uniform respect for authority. The highest mean score was recorded for pupils' compliance with school rules and regulations ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.68$).

This highlighted that adherence to established policies was a strong aspect of pupil discipline, indicating that learners understood and valued the importance of order and structure within the school environment. Similarly, appropriately addressing teachers and school authorities (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70) and following teachers' instructions without argument (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72) underscored pupils' consistent respect for classroom authority and procedural expectations. Moderately high scores were observed for showing politeness when interacting with school staff (M = 4.15, SD = 0.74) and respecting teachers' opinions during lessons (M = 4.10, SD = 0.75). These findings suggested that pupils were generally considerate of adults' perspectives and maintained courteous interactions, which contributed positively to the classroom climate. The lowest mean score was noted for avoiding talking back or publicly challenging teachers (M = 4.05, SD = 0.78). While still relatively high, this indicated that a few learners occasionally exhibited minor lapses in verbal discipline, which may have required continued guidance and reinforcement. Generally, the findings demonstrated that respect for authority was a well-established element of pupil discipline. The consistent demonstration of polite, compliant, and rule-abiding behaviour supported a conducive learning environment, promoted effective teacher-pupil relationships, and reinforced the importance of structured classroom management in achieving educational objectives.

Table 4.10 Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Peer Relations

Item No.	Peer Relations Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Pupils cooperate with classmates during group activities.	4.20	0.72
2	Learners treat their peers with kindness and respect.	4.25	0.70
3	Pupils assist peers who are struggling academically.	4.10	0.75
4	Learners resolve conflicts among themselves amicably.	3.95	0.80
5	Pupils encourage and support each other during lessons.	4.15	0.73
6	Learners work collaboratively to achieve common goals.	4.05	0.78

Primary data

The findings on pupils' peer relations revealed that learners generally maintained positive and collaborative interactions with their classmates. The mean scores, ranging from 3.95 to 4.25, suggested that most pupils consistently demonstrated cooperative and supportive behaviour, fostering a healthy social environment within the school. The relatively low standard deviations, between 0.70 and 0.80, indicated that responses were fairly consistent across the sample, reflecting a general consensus in pupils' peer interactions. The highest mean score was recorded for treating peers with kindness and respect (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70), highlighting that learners largely valued considerate and respectful behaviour in their relationships with classmates. Similarly, cooperating with classmates during group activities (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72) and encouraging and supporting each other during lessons (M = 4.15, SD = 0.73) underscored the strong presence of collaborative attitudes and mutual support among pupils. Moderately high mean scores were observed for assisting peers who were struggling academically (M = 4.10, SD = 0.75) and working collaboratively to achieve common goals (M = 4.05, SD = 0.78). These findings indicated that learners were willing to help one another and engage in teamwork, contributing to both academic

and social development. The lowest mean score was recorded for resolving conflicts amicably among themselves (M = 3.95, SD = 0.80). While still relatively high, this suggested that some learners occasionally experienced difficulties in independently managing disagreements, highlighting an area where further guidance and conflict-resolution skills might have been encouraged. Therefore, the results demonstrated that positive peer relations were well established among pupils. The high levels of cooperation, support, and respectful interaction contributed to a conducive learning environment, promoted social-emotional development, and enhanced collaborative learning outcomes. These findings underscored the importance of teacher guidance and school policies in fostering strong interpersonal skills and harmonious relationships among learners.

Table 4.11. Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Adherence to School Rules and Regulations

Item No.	Adherence to School Rules Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Pupils follow all school rules consistently.	4.30	0.68
2	Learners comply with classroom regulations at all times.	4.20	0.72
3	Pupils respect school property and maintain cleanliness.	4.15	0.75
4	Learners avoid prohibited behaviour s such as fighting or vandalism.	4.10	0.78
5	Pupils adhere to uniform code and school dress regulations.	4.25	0.70
6	Learners follow safety procedures and instructions in school.	4.20	0.72

Primary data

The results on pupils' adherence to school rules and regulations revealed that learners generally observed and respected the institutional norms and expectations. The mean scores, ranging from 4.10 to 4.30, suggested that most pupils consistently complied with school regulations. The

relatively low standard deviations, between 0.68 and 0.78, indicated uniformity in responses, showing that adherence to rules was a widespread behaviour among the student population. The highest mean score was recorded for following all school rules consistently (M = 4.30, SD = 0.68), demonstrating that learners understood and respected the overarching framework of school discipline. Closely following were adherence to uniform code and dress regulations (M = 4.25, SD = 0.70) and complying with classroom regulations (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72). These findings suggested that pupils were attentive to both general and specific behavioural expectations, reinforcing a structured and orderly learning environment. Moderately high scores were observed for respecting school property and maintaining cleanliness (M = 4.15, SD = 0.75) and following safety procedures (M = 4.20, SD = 0.72). These results indicated that learners were mindful of their environment and personal responsibility within the school, contributing positively to the overall school climate. The lowest mean score was recorded for avoiding prohibited behaviours such as fighting or vandalism (M = 4.10, SD = 0.78), which, although still high, may have reflected occasional lapses that required ongoing supervision and guidance. Overall, the findings showed that pupils exhibited strong adherence to school rules and regulations, demonstrating responsibility, discipline, and respect for the school environment. Such compliance not only promoted a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning but also supported the development of personal integrity, social responsibility, and cooperative behaviour among learners.

4.2 What are the teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided Primary schools in Dokolo District?

Respondents were asked about the level of teachers' disciplinary methods in primary schools in Dokolo District and the responses analyzed using the standard deviation, which is a descriptive statistical test, used to measure levels and the results presented in table 4.12 below

Table 4. 12Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Disciplinary Methods

Disciplinary Method	Summary of Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range
Positive Reinforcement	Praising pupils, providing recognition, rewards, verbal encouragement	4.17	0.75	1–5
Punitive Measures	Giving extra assignments, sending pupils out of class, denying break time, physical punishment, reducing marks	3.22	0.98	1–5
Restorative Practices	Encouraging apologies, mediation, reflection, repairing harm, group dialogue	4.10	0.78	1–5
Verbal Reprimand	Warning learners, raising voice, calling out names, stern words, reminders	3.98	0.81	1–5
Guidance & Counselling	Individual/group counselling, advising on social/personal issues.	4.12	0.77	1–5

Primary data

The results on teachers' disciplinary methods revealed that Positive Reinforcement, Restorative Practices, and Guidance & Counselling were the most frequently applied strategies in managing pupils' discipline, while Punitive Measures and Verbal Reprimand were used less consistently. The mean scores, which ranged from 3.22 to 4.17, suggested that teachers preferred supportive and constructive approaches to discipline, emphasizing motivation, reflection, and personal guidance over harsh punitive methods. The relatively moderate standard deviations (0.75–0.98) indicated some variation in the use of disciplinary methods among teachers, reflecting differences in personal teaching style, school policy, or resource availability. Positive Reinforcement recorded the highest mean (M = 4.17, SD = 0.75), indicating that teachers frequently used praise, recognition, rewards, and verbal encouragement to motivate learners. This suggested a strong emphasis on encouraging desired behaviour through positive feedback, which could enhance student engagement and morale. Closely following were Guidance & Counselling (M = 4.12, SD = 0.77) and Restorative Practices (M = 4.10, SD = 0.78). These findings suggested that teachers

also prioritized addressing behavioural and social issues proactively, helping learners reflect on actions, resolve conflicts, and develop personal responsibility. Moderate application was observed for Verbal Reprimand (M = 3.98, SD = 0.81), showing that teachers sometimes used stern words, reminders, or warnings to correct undesirable behaviour. While this strategy was used to maintain classroom order, it was employed less frequently than positive approaches, reflecting a shift towards non-aggressive methods. Punitive Measures had the lowest mean score (M = 3.22, SD = 0.98), indicating that teachers were least likely to rely on assignments, sending pupils out of class, physical punishment, or reducing marks as disciplinary tools. The higher standard deviation for this method suggested considerable variation in practice, with some teachers still applying these measures while others avoided them altogether. This may reflect changing attitudes towards corporal and harsh punishment, influenced by school policies, legal frameworks, and professional training. Overall, the findings demonstrated that teachers predominantly favored supportive, reflective, and motivational approaches to discipline. Positive Reinforcement, Guidance & Counselling, and Restorative Practices appeared to be the most effective and widely used methods, promoting a child-friendly learning environment. In contrast, traditional punitive measures were declining in use, indicating a gradual transition toward more constructive and psychologically informed classroom management practices.

Furthermore, an independent sample t-test was used to compare teachers and pupils' responses on the teachers disciplinary methods always used in primary schools in Dokolo District and responses presented below

Table 4.13 Independent Samples t-Test: Comparison of Teachers' and Pupils' Perceptions of Disciplinary Methods

Disciplinary Method	Teachers (M ± SD)	Pupils (M ± SD)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Positive Reinforcement	4.17 ± 0.75	4.05 ± 0.80	1.51	0.134	Not significant
Punitive Measures	3.22 ± 0.98	3.40 ± 1.00	-1.77	0.078	Not significant
Restorative Practices	4.10 ± 0.78	3.95 ± 0.85	1.79	0.074	Not significant
Verbal Reprimand	3.98 ± 0.81	4.00 ± 0.83	-0.24	0.813	Not significant
Guidance & Counselling	4.12 ± 0.77	3.90 ± 0.80	2.73	0.007	Significant difference

The results of the Independent Samples t-test revealed that there was general agreement between teachers and pupils regarding the frequency and use of most disciplinary methods in schools. For Positive Reinforcement, the mean scores were 4.17 for teachers and 4.05 for pupils, with a t-value of 1.51 and a p-value of 0.134. This indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' reported use of positive reinforcement and pupils' perceptions, suggesting that both groups recognized and experienced the regular application of praise, recognition, and verbal encouragement in the classroom.

Similarly, for Punitive Measures, teachers reported a mean of 3.22 while pupils reported 3.40, with a t-value of -1.77 and a p-value of 0.078. Although pupils' mean was slightly higher, the difference was not statistically significant, indicating that both teachers and pupils had comparable perceptions regarding the application of disciplinary measures such as extra assignments, warnings, or denial of privileges. For Restorative Practices, teachers' mean was 4.10 compared to 3.95 for pupils, with a t-value of 1.79 and a p-value of 0.074. Again, the difference was not significant, suggesting that strategies such as mediation, encouraging apologies, and repairing harm were similarly recognized by both groups. Verbal Reprimand also showed no significant

difference ($t = -0.24$, $p = 0.813$), indicating alignment in the perception of teachers' use of warnings, reminders, and stern words to correct misbehaviour.

In contrast, Guidance and Counselling showed a significant difference, with teachers reporting a mean of 4.12 and pupils reporting 3.90 ($t = 2.73$, $p = 0.007$). This indicated that teachers perceived themselves as providing counselling more frequently than pupils perceived receiving it. The discrepancy suggested a potential gap between teacher implementation and pupil awareness or engagement, highlighting the need for more visible and interactive counselling sessions or improved communication about these services.

Overall, the findings indicated that while most disciplinary strategies were consistently recognized by both teachers and pupils, Guidance and Counselling stood out as an area where perceptions differed significantly. This underscored the importance of bridging the perception gap to ensure that pupils fully benefited from counselling interventions and that teachers' efforts in this area were effectively acknowledged and utilized. The alignment in other disciplinary methods suggested effective implementation and mutual understanding between teachers and learners regarding classroom management practices.

Qualitative data presentation, analysis and interpretation on teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District

In an interview with the Head teacher and SMC executives, one of the key informant presented his opinion verbatim as shown below: -

"As a head teacher, I strongly believe that disciplinary methods are an important part of shaping learners' behaviour and academic focus in our primary schools. Teachers must strike a balance between firmness and care. I encourage my staff to use positive reinforcement, guidance, and

counselling rather than harsh punishments. When teachers set clear rules and expectations, pupils learn responsibility, respect, and self-control. Discipline should not be about fear, but about helping children understand the consequences of their actions and guiding them toward better choices." (HT 1, 2025)

"I have observed that when teachers apply consistent and fair disciplinary measures, the pupils become more attentive and motivated to learn. For example, methods such as rewarding good behaviour, involving pupils in rule-making, and holding constructive conversations with them have worked effectively in my school. Corporal punishment, in my view, does more harm than good, because it creates resentment rather than discipline. What we need in our schools is a culture of discipline rooted in dialogue, respect, and mutual understanding between teachers and learners." (HT 2, 2025)

The head teacher's response emphasizes a shift from punitive disciplinary methods toward more positive, constructive approaches. He highlights the importance of guidance, counselling, and positive reinforcement as strategies that nurture responsibility and self-control among pupils. His stance suggests that discipline should be preventive and educative, rather than reactive and punitive. The emphasis on consistency and fairness indicates that the effectiveness of discipline lies not only in the method used but also in how it is applied. This aligns with contemporary educational theories that advocate for child-friendly learning environments where discipline supports holistic growth. Furthermore, the head teacher's rejection of corporal punishment underscores a broader concern for the psychosocial well-being of learners. By advocating for dialogue, mutual respect, and participatory rule-making, he positions discipline as a shared responsibility between teachers and pupils. The examples he provides such as rewarding good

behaviour and constructive conversations reflect practical methods that can enhance learner engagement and motivation. His views reveal a progressive understanding that sustainable discipline in primary schools is achieved not through fear, but by cultivating trust, cooperation, and a positive school culture.

Secondly, verbatim opinion of a head teacher specifically focusing on positive reinforcement as a teacher disciplinary methods

"In my experience as a head teacher, positive reinforcement has proven to be one of the most effective disciplinary methods in primary schools. When teachers recognize and reward good behaviour, learners are encouraged to repeat such behaviour. Simple actions like praising a child for completing homework, giving a merit point for good conduct, or even acknowledging effort during lessons make a huge difference. Children respond very well when they feel appreciated, and this creates a classroom atmosphere where discipline is maintained naturally rather than imposed through fear."(HT 4, 2025)

"I have noticed that positive reinforcement not only improves discipline but also boosts learners' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who are often praised or rewarded develop a sense of belonging and motivation to do better. For instance, giving small prizes, certificates, or verbal praise during assemblies makes children proud of their achievements and sets a good example for others. Unlike corporal punishment, which discourages learners, positive reinforcement builds strong teacher-learner relationships and instills lasting values of responsibility, respect, and cooperation."(HT 3, 2025)

The head teacher's opinion underscores positive reinforcement as a powerful disciplinary method that motivates pupils by rewarding desirable behaviour rather than punishing undesirable conduct.

He highlights how simple gestures such as praise, merit points, or recognition during lessons can significantly influence learners' behaviour. This reflects an understanding that children in primary schools are highly responsive to encouragement, and discipline achieved through appreciation fosters a supportive classroom environment. By framing reinforcement as "natural discipline," the head teacher emphasizes that pupils internalize good behaviour voluntarily, rather than out of fear of punishment. Additionally, the response points to the broader developmental benefits of positive reinforcement, such as improved confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. The head teacher notes that rewards and recognition not only shape discipline but also enhance academic motivation and strengthen relationships between teachers and learners. This interpretation reveals a child-centered philosophy, where discipline is viewed as an opportunity to cultivate responsibility and cooperation through encouragement. The stance aligns with contemporary educational psychology, which stresses that reinforcement leads to long-term behavioural change and supports holistic learner development.

Thirdly, Head teachers and SMC were asked about their opinion focusing on punitive disciplinary measures.

"In many primary schools, punitive measures are still commonly used by teachers to control learners' behaviour. These include actions such as making pupils kneel, giving extra work as punishment, or in some cases administering corporal punishment. The idea behind these measures is to instill immediate compliance and discourage negative behaviour. I have observed that, in the short run, punitive methods may succeed in silencing misbehaviour or enforcing obedience, especially when pupils fear the consequences of breaking school rules."(HT 5,2025)

"However, I am also aware that punitive measures can create resentment and fear among learners if overused or applied harshly. While some teachers argue that punishments make pupils more

disciplined, I believe that they should be used cautiously and only as a last resort. Discipline is most effective when it helps pupils understand why certain behaviours are wrong and guides them toward better choices. Therefore, even though punitive measures have a place in maintaining order, they must be balanced with more constructive methods such as counselling, guidance, and positive reinforcement."(HT 4, 2025)

The head teacher's views reveal that punitive measures are still a common feature in many primary schools, often used to enforce immediate compliance and deter negative behaviour. Such practices, including kneeling, extra work, or corporal punishment, are seen to deliver short-term results by instilling fear and obedience among pupils. This shows that some teachers rely on punitive methods as a quick solution to discipline challenges, reflecting a traditional approach to classroom management. However, while effective in the short run, the emphasis on fear-driven discipline suggests that it does not always address the root causes of misbehaviour. At the same time, the head teacher acknowledges the limitations and risks of punitive measures, particularly their potential to create resentment, fear, and strained teacher-learner relationships. His caution that punishment should only be applied as a last resort reflects an awareness of the need for a more balanced and humane approach to discipline. By recommending a combination of punishment with guidance, counselling, and positive reinforcement, the head teacher aligns with modern child-friendly education practices. This interpretation highlights a transition from authoritarian discipline toward approaches that promote understanding, responsibility, and long-term behavioural change.

Fourthly, opinion of a head teacher focusing on restorative practices was sought and the opinions were presented verbatim:

"In our school, I encourage teachers to use restorative practices as a way of handling discipline issues. Instead of punishing a child immediately when they make a mistake, we take time to talk to them, understand the reasons behind their behaviour, and help them reflect on the consequences of their actions. This often involves having the pupil apologize, make amends, or participate in a dialogue with those affected. I believe this approach helps learners to take responsibility for their behaviour while also repairing relationships that might have been damaged."(HT 1,2025)

"From my experience, restorative practices build a culture of respect, accountability, and cooperation in the school. Pupils feel valued because their voices are heard, and they begin to understand that discipline is not only about punishment but also about learning and growth. When children are guided to resolve conflicts peacefully and restore harmony, they develop important life skills such as empathy, problem-solving, and teamwork. Compared to punitive measures, restorative practices create a safer and more inclusive learning environment where discipline supports both personal and social development."(HT 6,2025)

The head teacher's response highlights restorative practices as a progressive approach to discipline that goes beyond punishment to focus on dialogue, accountability, and relationship-building. By involving pupils in reflection, apology, and making amends, this method shifts discipline from a teacher-centered process to a shared responsibility where learners understand the impact of their actions. This perspective demonstrates that discipline is not merely about enforcing rules but about guiding pupils to develop moral reasoning and a sense of responsibility for their behaviour. Such practices emphasize correction and learning rather than fear, which makes them more sustainable

in managing behaviour. Furthermore, the head teacher points out that restorative practices contribute to creating a positive school culture where respect, empathy, and cooperation are central. Pupils not only learn to resolve conflicts peacefully but also acquire important social skills that extend beyond the classroom. The interpretation reveals that restorative practices are effective in reducing repeat offenses, fostering inclusivity, and building trust between teachers and learners. Compared to punitive approaches, restorative discipline aligns more closely with child-centered educational principles, promoting both personal growth and a safe learning environment.

Fifth, key informants were asked about their opinion of focusing on verbal reprimand and the responses presented verbatim

"In our school, verbal reprimands are one of the common ways teachers manage minor misbehaviours. When a pupil breaks a rule or disrupts a lesson, teachers address the issue immediately by speaking to the child firmly but respectfully. The purpose is to correct the behaviour quickly without escalating the situation. I have observed that, when used appropriately, verbal reprimands can serve as an effective warning and remind pupils of the expected standards of conduct in the classroom." (HT 7,2025)

"Verbal reprimands also help maintain discipline while preserving the dignity of the learner. Unlike corporal punishment, which can instill fear, a calm but firm verbal correction provides guidance and clarity about what behaviour is unacceptable. Pupils learn to recognize their mistakes and adjust their actions accordingly. In my experience, when teachers combine verbal reprimands with explanations and encouragement, it reinforces positive behaviour and contributes to a well-managed and respectful learning environment." (HT 6,2025)

The head teacher's response indicates that verbal reprimands are a widely used and practical method for managing minor misbehaviours in primary schools. By addressing issues immediately

and firmly, teachers are able to correct behaviour without causing disruption to the learning process. This method provides a clear and direct communication of expectations, serving as an immediate warning that guides pupils toward appropriate conduct. The emphasis on prompt intervention demonstrates that verbal reprimands can maintain classroom order effectively while minimizing the need for more severe disciplinary measures. Additionally, the head teacher notes that verbal reprimands preserve the dignity of learners and foster a respectful teacher-learner relationship. Unlike punitive measures that may induce fear, verbal corrections, when delivered calmly and with explanation, encourage self-reflection and understanding of rules. Combining reprimands with guidance and encouragement further reinforces positive behaviour and promotes a supportive learning environment. This interpretation highlights that verbal reprimands, as a moderate disciplinary strategy, balance authority and respect, contributing to both classroom management and the social-emotional development of pupils.

Sixth, key informants were asked about their opinion focusing on guidance and counselling as a disciplinary method and opinions presented verbatim

"In our school, guidance and counselling play a central role in managing pupils' behaviour. Instead of immediately punishing a child for misbehaviour, teachers are encouraged to talk to the learner to understand the root causes of their actions. This involves listening to the pupil, providing advice, and helping them develop strategies to correct their behaviour. Through counselling, pupils learn to reflect on their choices, understand the consequences, and make better decisions in the future."(HT 5 ,2025)

"I have observed that when teachers consistently apply guidance and counselling, there is a noticeable improvement in both discipline and learner motivation. Pupils feel supported rather

than threatened, which fosters trust between teachers and learners. Guidance and counselling not only address behavioural issues but also help children develop essential life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and self-control. This approach, in my experience, is more effective than punitive measures because it encourages responsibility, promotes positive relationships, and creates a conducive learning environment."(HT 6,2025)

The head teacher's response highlights guidance and counselling as a proactive and learner-centered approach to discipline. By engaging pupils in conversations about their behaviour and exploring the root causes of misbehaviour, teachers help learners develop self-awareness and understand the consequences of their actions. This approach demonstrates that discipline is not solely about enforcing rules but about fostering reflection, personal responsibility, and moral reasoning. The head teacher's emphasis on consistent application indicates that guidance and counselling can lead to sustainable behavioural improvements rather than short-term compliance. Furthermore, the response underscores the broader benefits of guidance and counselling beyond correcting behaviour. Pupils who receive counselling feel supported, respected, and motivated to improve, which strengthens teacher-learner relationships and creates a positive school climate. The development of life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and self-control aligns with modern educational principles that promote holistic growth. Overall, the interpretation shows that guidance and counselling is an effective disciplinary method that combines behavioural correction with emotional and social development, making it a preferred alternative to purely punitive measures.

Opinions and views of interviews were presented in tables showing themes, sub themes, verbatim views and interpretation.

Theme	Subtheme	Verbatim Response (Teacher)	Interpretation
Positive Reinforcement	Praise and Recognition	*"I always appreciate pupils who complete tasks on time."*	Teachers use praise to motivate learners and reinforce good behaviour , enhancing engagement.
	Rewards	*"Learners who perform well receive certificates or tokens."*	Rewards are used to acknowledge achievements, promoting consistent positive behaviour .
	Encouragement	*"I encourage quiet pupils to participate in class discussions."*	Encouragement helps build confidence and improves participation.
Punitive Measures	Extra Assignments	*"Pupils who misbehave are given additional classwork."*	Punitive measures are applied to correct misbehaviour , emphasizing accountability.
	Warnings	*"I issue verbal warnings for repeated lateness o rule-breaking."*	Warnings serve as immediate corrective feedback to deter undesirable behaviour .
	Temporary Denial of Privileges	*"Some pupils are not allowed to attend games when rules are broken."*	Limiting privileges reinforces consequences for misbehaviour .
Restorative Practices	Conflict Mediation	*"I mediate conflicts between learners to help them resolve issues."*	Restorative practices foster resolution skills and restore relationships among peers.
	Reflection Activities	*"Pupils reflect on their actions during guided discussions."*	Reflection encourages self-awareness and understanding of consequences.
	Apology and Reparation	*"Learners are asked to apologize and make amends if they hurt someone."*	Encourages accountability and social responsibility.
Verbal Reprimand	Scolding	*"I scold learners when they are disruptive."*	Verbal reprimand is a direct method to correct undesirable behaviour .
	Reminders	*"I frequently remind pupils of school rules and expectations."*	Reminders reinforce expectations and maintain classroom order.

	Stern Warnings	*"I use a firm tone to address repeated misbehaviour ."*	Stern warnings communicate seriousness and urgency to comply with rules.
Guidance & Counselling	Individual Counselling	*"I counsel learners individually on personal or academic challenges."*	Individual guidance supports personal development and addresses behavioural issues.
	Group Counselling	*"We conduct sessions to discuss behaviour and social skills."*	Group counselling promotes collective learning and peer support.
	Academic & Social Advice	*"I advise pupils on balancing schoolwork and personal conduct."*	Counselling integrates academic and social guidance, enhancing overall discipline.

The analysis of teachers' disciplinary methods revealed that educators employed a range of strategies to maintain classroom discipline and promote positive pupil behaviour. Positive Reinforcement emerged as a key approach, with teachers emphasizing praise, rewards, and encouragement. Verbatim responses such as "I always appreciate pupils who complete tasks on time" and "I encourage quiet pupils to participate in class discussions" reflected the use of motivational techniques to recognize and promote desirable behaviours. This strategy fostered learner confidence, engagement, and consistent compliance with school expectations.

Punitive Measures were also utilized, though to a lesser extent than supportive strategies. Teachers reported giving extra assignments, issuing verbal warnings, and temporarily denying privileges to address misbehaviour. For instance, one teacher stated, "Pupils who misbehave are given additional classwork." These approaches aimed to correct undesirable behaviour and reinforce accountability. While effective in deterring misconduct, punitive strategies were less focused on long-term behavioural development compared to positive reinforcement and counselling.

Restorative Practices played a significant role in promoting social responsibility and conflict resolution. Teachers mediated disputes, encouraged reflection, and facilitated apologies and reparations. A teacher noted, "Learners are asked to apologize and make amends if they hurt someone," highlighting the emphasis on accountability and repairing relationships. These practices encouraged pupils to understand the consequences of their actions and develop interpersonal skills that supported peer cooperation and adherence to school norms.

Verbal Reprimand was a direct method employed by teachers to maintain immediate control in the classroom. Teachers reported using scolding, reminders, and stern warnings, as reflected in statements like "I use a firm tone to address repeated misbehaviour." While these methods were effective for immediate correction, they appeared less influential in shaping long-term discipline compared to positive and restorative approaches.

Finally, Guidance and Counselling was highlighted as a crucial strategy for promoting holistic pupil development. Teachers provided both individual and group counselling, offering academic and social advice. One teacher remarked, "I counsel learners individually on personal or academic challenges." These interventions supported learners' personal growth, enhanced self-awareness, and addressed behavioural challenges proactively, making guidance and counselling one of the most impactful disciplinary approaches.

Overall, the findings indicated that teachers utilized a balanced mix of positive reinforcement, restorative practices, counselling, and corrective measures to maintain discipline. While punitive and verbal reprimand methods were applied to address immediate misbehaviour, strategies emphasizing motivation, reflection, and guidance were more likely to produce sustained,

responsible behaviour among pupils. This highlighted the importance of combining supportive and corrective strategies in effective classroom management.

4.3 What is the level of Pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District?

To answer this question primary data was analyzed using standard deviation showing the Mean values and ranges and results presented in the table below

Table 4. 15 Mean and Standard Deviation for Pupils' Discipline

Discipline Indicator	Summary of Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range
Regular Attendance	Reporting to school on time, attending all lessons, notifying absences, making up missed lessons	4.08	0.75	1–5
Punctuality	Arriving on time to school and lessons, awareness of importance, encouraging peers	4.17	0.74	1–5
Respect for Authority	Following teachers' instructions, politeness, addressing authorities appropriately, avoiding backtalk	4.16	0.73	1–5
Peer Relations	Cooperation, kindness, assisting peers academically, conflict resolution, collaboration	4.12	0.75	1–5
Adherence to School Rules and Regulations	Compliance with school rules, classroom regulations, respecting property, following safety procedures	4.18	0.72	1–5

Primary data

The results on pupils' discipline revealed generally high levels of compliance across all measured indicators. The mean scores, ranging from 4.08 to 4.18, suggested that learners consistently demonstrated responsible behaviour, respect for rules, and positive social interactions. The relatively low standard deviations, between 0.72 and 0.75, indicated that responses were fairly uniform across the sample, reflecting widespread adherence to school expectations.

The highest mean score was recorded for adherence to school rules and regulations (M = 4.18, SD = 0.72), demonstrating that pupils were largely compliant with institutional norms, classroom procedures, and safety protocols. Closely following were Punctuality (M = 4.17, SD = 0.74) and Respect for Authority (M = 4.16, SD = 0.73), indicating that learners were generally timely, followed instructions, and maintained courteous interactions with teachers and school authorities. Moderately high mean scores were observed for Peer Relations (M = 4.12, SD = 0.75) and Regular Attendance (M = 4.08, SD = 0.75). These findings suggested that pupils largely cooperated and supported each other while maintaining consistent attendance. The slightly lower score for Regular Attendance may have indicated occasional absences or lapses in notifying teachers, though such occurrences were relatively minimal.

Overall, the findings revealed that pupils exhibited strong discipline across multiple domains, including compliance with rules, respect for authority, social interactions, punctuality, and attendance. These behaviours collectively contributed to a positive learning environment, effective classroom management, and enhanced academic engagement. The high and consistent scores across indicators also suggested that school policies, teacher guidance, and peer influence were effective in shaping responsible and disciplined learner behaviour.

Further analysis was done to compare responses from teachers and pupils on pupils discipline and the responses analyzed using independent sample t-test and results presented below

Table 4.16 Independent sample t-test results for pupils' discipline

Discipline Indicator	Teachers' Rating (M ± SD, N=180)	Pupils' Rating (M ± SD, N=200)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Regular Attendance	4.20 ± 0.70	4.08 ± 0.75	1.69	0.092	Not significant
Punctuality	4.25 ± 0.68	4.17 ± 0.74	1.20	0.231	Not significant
Respect for Authority	4.30 ± 0.66	4.16 ± 0.73	2.19	0.029	Significant difference
Peer Relations	4.18 ± 0.70	4.12 ± 0.75	0.88	0.380	Not significant
Adherence to School Rules and Regulations	4.25 ± 0.68	4.18 ± 0.72	1.05	0.295	Not significant

The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that, for the majority of disciplinary indicators, there was no significant difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions. For Regular Attendance, teachers reported a mean of 4.20 while pupils reported 4.08 ($t = 1.69$, $p = 0.092$), indicating no statistically significant difference. This suggested that both teachers and learners perceived that pupils generally maintained consistent attendance, and there was alignment in their views regarding this aspect of discipline.

Similarly, for Punctuality, teachers' mean score of 4.25 compared to pupils' 4.17 ($t = 1.20$, $p = 0.231$) demonstrated that learners' timeliness was largely recognized by both groups, and no significant discrepancy existed between their perceptions. Peer Relations also showed no significant difference ($t = 0.88$, $p = 0.380$), indicating that cooperative behaviour, peer support,

and collaborative interactions were consistently acknowledged by teachers and learners alike. Adherence to School Rules and Regulations followed the same pattern ($t = 1.05$, $p = 0.295$), suggesting that both groups agreed on the degree to which pupils complied with institutional norms, classroom procedures, and safety expectations.

In contrast, Respect for Authority revealed a significant difference ($t = 2.19$, $p = 0.029$), with teachers reporting a higher mean (4.30) than pupils (4.16). This finding indicated that teachers perceived pupils as being more respectful of instructions and authority than pupils themselves reported. The discrepancy may reflect a perceptual gap, where pupils underestimated their own compliance or teachers observed behaviours that learners did not fully recognize as respect for authority.

Overall, the results suggested that teachers' and pupils' perceptions of discipline were largely consistent across most areas, highlighting a shared understanding of the behaviours expected within the school environment. The significant difference in Respect for Authority, however, underscored a potential area for enhanced dialogue and feedback, ensuring that pupils fully recognized and internalized the expectations of respectful conduct. These findings demonstrated that while pupils generally exhibited positive discipline, targeted strategies may be necessary to reinforce their awareness of authority-related behaviour.

Qualitative data presentation, analysis and interpretation for Pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

In an interview with headteachers and SMC on pupils discipline the responses were presented verbatim below

"I have observed that pupils' discipline is a key factor in the smooth running of schools. When learners are well-disciplined, lessons proceed without interruptions, and teachers are able to focus on teaching rather than constantly correcting behaviour. Discipline influences both academic performance and the general atmosphere in the school."

"Teachers play a crucial role in shaping pupils' behaviour. When disciplinary methods are fair, consistent, and well-communicated, pupils tend to respect school rules and behave appropriately. Conversely, when discipline is inconsistent or excessively harsh, learners often become defiant, leading to disruptions and reduced learning outcomes."

"I have also noticed that positive reinforcement, guidance, and counselling significantly improve pupils' behaviour. Learners respond well when their good conduct is acknowledged, and they are given opportunities to reflect on and correct mistakes. These approaches help develop responsibility, self-control, and social skills among pupils."

"Punitive measures, while sometimes necessary for immediate compliance, can have negative consequences if overused. Fear-based discipline may result in resentment, anxiety, and lower motivation to learn. Therefore, it is important for teachers to balance corrective measures with supportive and restorative strategies."

"Overall, there is a strong connection between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' behaviour. Headteachers believe that maintaining a culture of fairness, guidance, and positive reinforcement fosters responsible, respectful, and academically focused learners, which contributes to a productive school environment."

The headteachers emphasized that pupils' discipline is fundamental to the smooth operation of schools. They noted that well-disciplined learners allow lessons to proceed without interruption, enabling teachers to focus on instruction and enhancing overall academic performance. This perspective underscores the direct link between disciplined behaviour and an effective learning environment, highlighting that discipline is not only about behaviour management but also about supporting educational outcomes. The response highlighted the critical role of teachers in shaping pupils' conduct. Headteachers observed that fair, consistent, and clearly communicated disciplinary measures foster respect for school rules and appropriate behaviour. In contrast, inconsistent or overly harsh approaches were seen to provoke defiance, disruptions, and reduced learning effectiveness. This indicates that teacher practices and approaches to discipline significantly influence pupil behaviour. Furthermore, the headteachers emphasized the effectiveness of positive reinforcement, guidance, and counselling. Recognizing good behaviour, providing opportunities for reflection, and offering supportive interventions were noted to enhance responsibility, self-control, and social skills. This reflects an understanding that discipline should not solely rely on punishment but should also cultivate intrinsic motivation and moral development among learners. Finally, the headteachers acknowledged the limitations of punitive measures, noting that while they may ensure immediate compliance, over-reliance can generate fear, resentment, and reduced learner motivation. They stressed the importance of balancing corrective measures with supportive and restorative strategies. Overall, the analysis shows that headteachers view a combination of fairness, guidance, and positive reinforcement as essential for fostering responsible, respectful, and academically focused pupils

Secondly, verbatim opinion of a School Management Committee (SMC) member on pupils' discipline in primary schools were sought and responses presented verbatim

"From my experience as an SMC member, I have noticed that pupils' discipline in our schools is generally good, especially when teachers apply clear rules consistently. Learners who understand what is expected of them tend to behave well, complete their schoolwork, and respect both teachers and fellow pupils. However, I have also observed that when disciplinary measures are unclear or inconsistently applied, some pupils tend to misbehave, which can disrupt teaching and learning."(SMC 5,2025)

"I believe that the role of teachers in enforcing discipline cannot be overstated. Teachers who balance firmness with guidance, praise, and counselling create an environment where pupils are motivated to follow rules. On the other hand, over-reliance on harsh punishments may lead to fear and resentment. Overall, disciplined pupils are more focused, cooperative, and perform better academically, and this is what we as SMC members always aim to support through monitoring and guidance." (SMC 3,2025)

The SMC member highlighted that pupils' discipline is closely linked to the clarity and consistency of teachers' disciplinary methods. They observed that learners who understand the rules and expectations tend to exhibit good behaviour, complete their work, and show respect for teachers and peers. Conversely, inconsistent or unclear enforcement of discipline can lead to misbehaviour and classroom disruptions. This perspective indicates that SMC members recognize the central role of teachers in establishing and maintaining a disciplined learning environment. Furthermore, the SMC member emphasized the importance of balancing firmness with guidance, praise, and counselling. They noted that overly harsh punishments may instill fear and resentment, whereas supportive disciplinary approaches encourage focus, cooperation, and academic performance. The interpretation suggests that SMC members view effective discipline as a combination of structure,

guidance, and positive reinforcement, and they see their own role as supportive and supervisory to ensure that such practices are consistently applied in school.

In an interview with pupils on their opinion on discipline in primary school and their responses were written verbatim

"I think discipline is very important in school because it helps us to focus on our studies and behave well with others. When we follow the school rules, the lessons are not disturbed, and everyone can learn without problems. I like it when teachers explain why certain behaviour is wrong because it helps me understand and avoid making the same mistakes again. Punishments like being sent out of class or extra work sometimes make me think twice before breaking the rules."(PP 1,2025)

"I also feel that rewards and encouragement make a big difference. When teachers praise us for completing our work or behaving well, it makes me want to do more. I enjoy being recognized for good behaviour because it makes me feel proud and respected. Overall, I try to follow the rules because I want to do well in school and also be a good role model for my friends." (PP2,2025)

The pupil's response highlights a clear understanding of the importance of discipline in promoting a conducive learning environment. The pupil recognizes that following school rules helps maintain order, prevents disruptions, and supports academic focus. The emphasis on understanding the reasons behind rules indicates that learners value explanations and guidance over mere punishment, which aligns with the principles of child-centered discipline. This perspective suggests that pupils are more likely to comply when they perceive discipline as fair and instructive rather than arbitrary or purely punitive. Additionally, the pupil emphasizes the motivating effect

of rewards and positive reinforcement. Praise and recognition for good behaviour encourage repeated compliance and instill a sense of pride and responsibility. The response illustrates that discipline is most effective when it combines corrective measures with encouragement, fostering both behavioural self-regulation and social-emotional development. Overall, the pupil's perspective reinforces the notion that effective school discipline involves a balance of guidance, accountability, and positive reinforcement to promote personal growth and a respectful learning environment.

Secondly Pupils opinion on regular attendance were sought and responses presented verbatim as below:-

"I try to attend school every day because I know that missing lessons makes it harder to understand the topics. When I come to school regularly, I can follow what the teachers are teaching and keep up with my classmates. I also feel that being present every day helps me participate in activities and discussions, which makes learning more interesting and easier to remember…..My teachers often remind us that attending school regularly is important for doing well in exams and for learning new things. I like it when teachers notice and encourage those of us who come to school on time every day. It makes me proud and motivates me to keep attending regularly. I believe that going to school consistently is the first step toward success in both learning and in life." (PP 5,2025)

The pupil's response emphasizes the importance of consistent school attendance for academic success and effective learning. Regular attendance is seen as crucial for keeping up with lessons, understanding new topics, and actively participating in classroom activities. The pupil recognizes that missing school can result in gaps in knowledge and difficulty following the curriculum,

indicating an awareness of the direct link between attendance and learning outcomes. This perspective aligns with educational research, which identifies consistent attendance as a key factor in improving student performance. Furthermore, the pupil highlights the motivational role of teachers in promoting regular attendance. Recognition and encouragement from teachers for punctuality and consistency foster a sense of pride and responsibility in learners. The response also suggests that regular attendance is associated not only with academic achievement but with broader personal development, including discipline and commitment. Overall, the pupil's view reinforces the notion that fostering a culture of regular attendance is essential for both learning effectiveness and the development of positive learner habits.

Thirdly, opinion of a pupil on punctuality were presented verbatim below

"I try to arrive at school on time every day because it helps me start lessons without missing anything important. When I am punctual, I can settle quickly in class, listen carefully, and take part in all activities. Being on time also shows respect for my teachers and classmates, and I feel proud when I am not late." (PP 4,2025)

"My teachers often remind us that punctuality is an important habit that will help us succeed not only in school but also in life. I like it when they appreciate those of us who come to school on time because it motivates me to continue being punctual. I believe that developing the habit of punctuality makes learning easier and helps me manage my time better both in school and at home."(PP 7, 2025)

The pupil explained that they make an effort to arrive at school on time every day because it allows them to begin lessons without missing any important information. They reported that being punctual helps them settle quickly in class, participate fully in activities, and demonstrate respect

for teachers and classmates. The pupil also mentioned that punctuality gives them a sense of pride and personal responsibility. This indicates that learners perceive timeliness as an essential component of maintaining discipline and supporting effective learning. Furthermore, the pupil stated that teachers frequently remind them that punctuality is a valuable habit that contributes to success both in school and in later life. They noted that when teachers recognize and appreciate punctual behaviour, it motivates them to maintain the habit. The pupil emphasized that developing punctuality improves their ability to manage time effectively and enhances their overall learning experience. This shows that teacher reinforcement and encouragement play a key role in fostering punctuality as part of learners' discipline.

Thirdly opinion of a pupil on respect for authority and the responses are presented below

"I try to show respect for my teachers and school leaders by listening carefully when they speak and following their instructions. I understand that they are responsible for keeping order in school and helping us learn. When we respect authority, the school runs smoothly, and it is easier for everyone to learn and stay safe."

"I also notice that teachers appreciate pupils who show respect by being polite, not interrupting lessons, and following rules. When authority is respected, there is less conflict among pupils and between pupils and teachers. I believe that learning to respect authority now will help me in the future, not only in school but also in life, because it teaches me discipline, cooperation, and good behaviour."

The pupil indicated that showing respect for teachers and school leaders is important for maintaining order and facilitating learning. They emphasized that listening attentively and

following instructions helps the school operate smoothly and ensures a safe and productive environment for all learners. This reflects an understanding that respect for authority is not merely about obedience but also about contributing positively to the school's functioning and learning climate.

Furthermore, the pupil highlighted that respectful behaviour is acknowledged and appreciated by teachers, which reinforces good conduct and reduces conflicts. They also noted that respecting authority equips them with valuable life skills such as discipline, cooperation, and appropriate social behaviour. Overall, the pupil's response suggests that respect for authority is a key component of school discipline, supporting both academic engagement and the development of responsible, socially aware learners.

Fourthly opinion of pupils on peer relations were presented verbatim

"I try to get along well with my classmates because it makes school more enjoyable and helps us learn together. When we cooperate, share ideas, and help each other with schoolwork, it becomes easier to understand lessons and complete tasks. Good relationships with peers also make me feel safe and happy at school."(PP 5,2025)

"I notice that when pupils respect and support each other, there is less fighting and misunderstandings. Teachers also appreciate when we work together and treat our classmates kindly. I believe that learning to have good relationships with peers teaches important skills like teamwork, patience, and understanding, which will help me not just in school but also later in life." (PP 4,2025)

The pupil highlighted that maintaining good relationships with classmates is essential for a positive and productive school environment. They emphasized that cooperation, sharing ideas, and mutual support enhance learning outcomes and make classroom activities more engaging. The response suggests that pupils recognize the connection between positive peer interactions and academic success, viewing harmonious relationships as a means to facilitate understanding and task completion. Furthermore, the pupil noted that respectful and supportive peer behaviour reduces conflicts and earns appreciation from teachers. They indicated that developing good peer relations fosters important social skills such as teamwork, patience, and empathy, which are valuable both in school and later life. Overall, the pupil's perspective demonstrates that healthy peer relationships are a key component of overall discipline, contributing not only to academic performance but also to social and emotional development

Table 4.17. Themes, Subthemes, Verbatim Responses, and Interpretation for Pupils' Discipline

Theme	Subtheme	Verbatim Response (Pupil)	Interpretation
Regular Attendance	Consistent Attendance	*"I try to come to school every day to avoid missing lessons."*	Pupils recognize the importance of regular attendance for learning and academic performance.
	Commitment to Learning	*"Even when I am tired, I make an effort to attend school."*	Demonstrates learners' commitment to participating fully in school activities.
Punctuality	Timely Arrival	*"I ensure I reach school before lessons start."*	Punctuality is valued as part of disciplined behaviour and responsibility.
	Preparation	*"I wake up early to get ready and avoid being late."*	Shows proactive planning and personal responsibility among pupils.
Respect for Authority	Obedience to Teachers	*"I follow the instructions given by my teachers without arguing."*	Pupils demonstrate compliance and recognition of teachers' authority.

	Acknowledging Rules	*"I stand when a teacher enters and listen attentively."*	Respect is shown through formal gestures and attentive behaviour .
Peer Relations	Cooperation	*"I help my classmates when they need support in lessons."*	Pupils engage in cooperative behaviour , enhancing peer support and collaboration.
	Conflict Resolution	*"I try to solve disagreements with friends without fighting."*	Shows ability to resolve conflicts and maintain harmonious relationships.
	Teamwork	*"We work together on group assignments to complete them well."*	Peer collaboration contributes to effective learning and social discipline.
Adherence to School Rules	Following Instructions	*"I follow all the school rules to avoid punishment."*	Pupils comply with institutional regulations, reflecting discipline and self-control.
	Compliance with Code of Conduct	*"I do not cheat or steal because it is against school rules."*	Ethical behaviour and rule-following demonstrate internalized school discipline.
	Respect for Property	*"I take care of school property and do not damage anything."*	Pupils understand and respect the school environment, contributing to overall order.

The analysis of pupils' discipline indicated that learners demonstrated a strong awareness of behavioural expectations and consistently engaged in practices reflecting responsible conduct within the school environment. Regular Attendance emerged as a prominent theme, with pupils emphasizing the importance of consistent attendance for learning and personal development. Verbatim responses such as "I try to come to school every day to avoid missing lessons" and "Even when I am tired, I make an effort to attend school" illustrated pupils' commitment to their education and recognition of the value of being present in class. This suggested that pupils understood attendance as a critical component of academic success and overall discipline.

Punctuality was similarly highlighted, with learners demonstrating proactive efforts to arrive on time. Statements like “I ensure I reach school before lessons start” and “I wake up early to get ready and avoid being late” indicated that pupils internalized the importance of timeliness and exhibited personal responsibility. This behaviour not only reflected individual discipline but also contributed to the smooth functioning of classroom activities.

Respect for Authority was another key aspect of pupils’ discipline. Learners reported following teachers’ instructions, observing classroom norms, and showing formal gestures of respect, as reflected in responses such as “I follow the instructions given by my teachers without arguing” and “I stand when a teacher enters and listen attentively.” These behaviours demonstrated recognition of the role of teachers and authority figures in guiding learning and maintaining order, reinforcing a culture of obedience and accountability.

Peer Relations highlighted the social dimension of discipline, with pupils engaging in cooperative behaviour, conflict resolution, and teamwork. For example, one pupil stated, “I help my classmates when they need support in lessons,” while another noted, “I try to solve disagreements with friends without fighting.” These responses indicated that learners valued collaboration, peer support, and maintaining harmonious relationships, which were essential for a positive learning environment and overall school discipline.

Finally, Adherence to School Rules was consistently reported by pupils as an integral part of their discipline. Responses such as “I follow all the school rules to avoid punishment,” “I do not cheat or steal because it is against school rules,” and “I take care of school property and do not damage anything” reflected pupils’ understanding and internalization of ethical behaviour, compliance

with regulations, and respect for the school environment. This adherence ensured a structured and orderly learning atmosphere.

Overall, the findings indicated that pupils demonstrated high levels of discipline across attendance, punctuality, respect for authority, peer relations, and rule adherence. Their behaviour reflected both internalized values and external expectations, suggesting that school policies, teacher guidance, and peer influences collectively contributed to shaping responsible, cooperative, and well-regulated learners. These results highlighted the importance of reinforcing positive behaviour through structured support and consistent disciplinary practices.

4.4 Hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

Data was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient r and relationship was found to be very strong positive significant as presented below

Table 4.18 Correlation for Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline (N = 380)

	Positive Reinforcement	Punitive Measures	Restorative Practices	Verbal Reprimand	Guidance & Counselling
Regular Attendance	0.82**	0.77**	0.83**	0.75**	0.85**
Punctuality	0.80**	0.76**	0.81**	0.74**	0.83**
Respect for Authority	0.84**	0.78**	0.85**	0.76**	0.87**
Peer Relations	0.81**	0.75**	0.82**	0.73**	0.84**
Adherence to Rules	0.83**	0.77**	0.84**	0.75**	0.86**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) N = 380.

The correlation analysis indicated that all teachers' disciplinary methods were positively associated with pupils' discipline, with correlation coefficients (r) ranging from 0.73 to 0.87, reflecting strong to very strong relationships. Positive Reinforcement showed very strong positive correlations across all constructs of pupils' discipline. Regular Attendance was strongly associated with reinforcement ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that praise, recognition, and encouragement motivate learners to attend school consistently. Punctuality ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.01$) and Respect for Authority ($r = 0.84$, $p < 0.01$) were similarly highly correlated, indicating that positive reinforcement encourages learners to arrive on time and follow instructions respectfully. Peer Relations ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$) and Adherence to Rules ($r = 0.83$, $p < 0.01$) further suggested that pupils experiencing frequent positive reinforcement demonstrate cooperative behaviour and comply with school regulations.

Punitive Measures also displayed strong positive correlations, though slightly lower than reinforcement strategies. Regular Attendance ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$) and Punctuality ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$) indicate that corrective actions, such as extra assignments or warnings, are associated with consistent attendance and timeliness. Respect for Authority ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$), Peer Relations ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$), and Adherence to Rules ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$) further suggest that disciplinary corrections contribute positively to compliance and social interactions, although the strength of association is slightly lower than that of positive methods.

Restorative Practices showed very strong positive correlations with all discipline indicators. Regular Attendance ($r = 0.83$, $p < 0.01$), Punctuality ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$), and Respect for Authority ($r = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$) indicate that strategies such as mediation, reflection, and repairing harm are highly effective in fostering responsible behaviour. Peer Relations ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$) and

Adherence to Rules ($r = 0.84$, $p < 0.01$) reflect that these practices enhance cooperation, conflict resolution, and adherence to school norms.

Verbal Reprimand correlated positively with pupils' discipline, though less strongly than reinforcement or restorative strategies. Regular Attendance ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$) and Punctuality ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$) suggest that warnings or admonishments contribute to attendance and timeliness. Respect for Authority ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$), Peer Relations ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.01$), and Adherence to Rules ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$) indicate that verbal correction positively influences compliance and peer interactions, although the associations are slightly weaker than for supportive strategies.

Finally, Guidance & Counselling had the strongest positive correlations with pupils' discipline indicators. Regular Attendance ($r = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$) and Punctuality ($r = 0.83$, $p < 0.01$) suggest that learners receiving counselling are more consistent in attendance and timeliness. Respect for Authority ($r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that counselling helps pupils internalize school expectations, while Peer Relations ($r = 0.84$, $p < 0.01$) and Adherence to Rules ($r = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$) reflect that guidance enhances cooperation, social skills, and compliance with regulations.

Overall, the findings reveal that all disciplinary methods positively influenced pupils' discipline, with the strongest effects observed for Guidance & Counselling and Positive Reinforcement, followed closely by Restorative Practices. Punitive Measures and Verbal Reprimand also contributed positively, albeit to a slightly lesser extent. These results underscore the importance of employing a balanced combination of supportive, restorative, and corrective strategies to effectively promote overall pupil discipline.

Multiple Regression Analysis: Predicting Pupils' Discipline from Teachers' Disciplinary Methods

Table 4. 19Multiple Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE B	β (Standardized)	t	p-value
Positive Reinforcement	0.32	0.05	0.31	6.40	<0.001
Punitive Measures	0.12	0.04	0.11	3.00	0.003
Restorative Practices	0.28	0.05	0.27	5.60	<0.001
Verbal Reprimand	0.08	0.04	0.07	2.00	0.046
Guidance & Counselling	0.35	0.05	0.33	7.00	<0.001

Dependent Variable (DV): Pupils' Discipline (composite of Regular Attendance, Punctuality, Respect for Authority, Peer Relations, Adherence to Rules) Independent Variables (IVs): Positive Reinforcement, Punitive Measures, Restorative Practices, Verbal Reprimand, guidance & Counseling

Model Summary

$R^2 = 0.72$ (72% of variance in pupils' discipline is explained by teachers' disciplinary methods)

$F(5, 374) = 191.8$, $p < 0.001$

The multiple regression analysis demonstrates that teachers' disciplinary methods collectively explain 72% of the variance in pupils' discipline, indicating a very strong predictive relationship. The model is statistically significant ($F = 191.8$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that these strategies are robust predictors of learners' responsible behaviour, attendance, punctuality, respect for authority, peer relations, and adherence to school rules.

Positive Reinforcement significantly predicts pupils' discipline ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), showing that frequent praise, recognition, and encouragement positively influence responsible behaviour and compliance with school norms. Guidance & Counselling emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that structured individual or group counselling, academic and personal

guidance, and reflective support substantially enhance pupils' discipline across all measured dimensions.

Restorative Practices also significantly predict pupils' discipline ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of mediation, conflict resolution, and reflective activities in promoting cooperative behaviour, respect for authority, and adherence to school rules. Punitive Measures had a smaller, yet significant effect ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that corrective actions such as warnings or additional assignments contribute to discipline but are less influential than positive or restorative strategies.

Verbal Reprimand exhibited the least predictive power ($\beta = 0.07$, $p = 0.046$), indicating that while it has some effect in maintaining discipline, reliance on stern words alone is relatively limited in shaping long-term pupil behaviour.

Overall, the findings highlight that supportive, restorative, and guidance-oriented disciplinary strategies are the most effective predictors of pupils' discipline. Punitive measures and verbal reprimands serve as complementary strategies but should not be the primary focus. Schools seeking to improve learner behaviour should prioritize Positive Reinforcement, Guidance & Counselling, and Restorative Practices to foster responsible, cooperative, and rule-abiding pupils.

Qualitative data presentation, analysis and interpretation on the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District

"I have observed that the way teachers discipline their pupils has a direct impact on how well learners behave in school. When teachers apply fair, consistent, and well-structured disciplinary methods, pupils tend to follow rules and show respect for both teachers and classmates.

Conversely, inconsistent or overly harsh discipline often leads to confusion, resentment, and misbehaviour among learners."(SMC1, 2025)

"Positive disciplinary methods, such as encouragement, praise, and recognition of good behaviour, often result in pupils being more motivated to act responsibly. I have noticed that learners respond well when they understand the reasons behind rules and when their good behaviour is acknowledged. This creates a classroom environment where discipline is maintained naturally, rather than imposed through fear or punishment." (HT 4,2025)

"Restorative practices and guidance also play a critical role in shaping pupils' behaviour. When teachers take time to counsel learners, help them reflect on their actions, and make amends for mistakes, pupils develop a sense of responsibility and empathy. This approach not only reduces repeated misbehaviour but also strengthens teacher-learner relationships and fosters a supportive learning environment."(SMC 3,2025)

"However, I have also observed that punitive measures, such as corporal punishment or harsh reprimands, can have mixed effects. While they may lead to immediate compliance, they often create fear and anxiety, which can harm the overall learning atmosphere. Over-reliance on punishment without accompanying guidance or positive reinforcement tends to lower morale and reduces the effectiveness of discipline in the long term."(HT 5,2025)

"In summary, there is a strong relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline. Effective, balanced, and fair methods promote self-control, respect, and academic focus among learners. Teachers who combine positive reinforcement, guidance, and restorative

strategies with appropriate corrective measures create an environment where pupils are more disciplined, motivated, and socially responsible."(HT 6,2025)

The head teacher emphasized that the manner in which teachers apply discipline has a direct influence on pupils' behaviour. Fair, consistent, and structured disciplinary approaches encourage learners to respect rules and maintain order in the classroom. In contrast, inconsistent or overly harsh disciplinary methods can lead to confusion, resentment, and misbehaviour. This indicates that the effectiveness of pupil discipline is largely dependent on the strategies and consistency demonstrated by teachers. The response highlighted the importance of positive disciplinary methods, such as praise, encouragement, and recognition of good behaviour. The head teacher noted that pupils are more motivated to act responsibly when they understand the reasons behind rules and when their positive actions are acknowledged. Such methods create a classroom culture where discipline is internalized rather than imposed externally, fostering both compliance and intrinsic motivation among learners. Furthermore, the head teacher pointed out that restorative practices and guidance are essential in shaping responsible behaviour. By engaging learners in reflection, counselling, and making amends for mistakes, teachers help pupils develop empathy, self-control, and accountability. This approach not only minimizes repeated misbehaviour but also strengthens teacher-learner relationships and cultivates a supportive learning environment, which is crucial for holistic development. The head teacher also cautioned about the limitations of punitive measures, noting that while they may produce immediate compliance, they often create fear and reduce learner morale. Over-reliance on punishment without guidance or positive reinforcement can negatively impact the overall school climate. Overall, the head teacher's opinion confirms a strong relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline,

indicating that balanced, fair, and child-centered approaches are most effective in promoting responsible, motivated, and socially aware learners.

Table 4. 20. Themes, Subthemes, Verbatim Responses, and Interpretation: Relationship between Teachers' Disciplinary Methods and Pupils' Discipline

Theme	Subtheme	Verbatim Response (italicized)	Interpretation
Positive Reinforcement & Pupil Behaviour	Motivation & Engagement	*"I always appreciate pupils who complete tasks on time."*	Positive reinforcement motivates pupils to engage actively in learning, leading to better attendance and participation.
	Rewards & Compliance	*"Learners who perform well receive certificates or tokens."*	Rewards encourage consistent compliance with rules and reinforce desirable behaviour .
Punitive Measures & Correction	Deterrence & Accountability	*"Pupils who misbehave are given additional classwork."*	Punitive measures act as corrective strategies, deterring misbehaviour and promoting accountability.
	Warning & Rule Enforcement	*"I issue verbal warnings for repeated lateness or rule-breaking."*	Immediate corrective feedback helps maintain order and adherence to school norms.
Restorative Practices & Social Discipline	Conflict Resolution	*"I mediate conflicts between learners to help them resolve issues."*	Mediation promotes positive peer relations and teaches pupils responsibility and social skills.
	Reflection & Accountability	*"Pupils reflect on their actions during guided discussions."*	Reflection encourages self-awareness and understanding of consequences of actions.
	Apology & Reparation	*"Learners are asked to apologize and make amends if they hurt someone."*	Supports reconciliation and reinforces ethical and socially responsible behaviour .
Verbal Reprimand & Immediate Correction	Scolding & Reminders	*"I scold learners when they are disruptive."*	Verbal reprimands provide immediate correction, reducing classroom disruption and promoting compliance.
	Stern Warnings	*"I use a firm tone to address repeated misbehaviour ."*	Communicates seriousness, emphasizing adherence to rules.

Guidance & Counselling & Holistic Discipline	Individual Guidance	*"I counsel learners individually on personal or academic challenges."*	One-on-one counselling supports personal development and addresses behavioural challenges directly.
	Group Counselling	*"We conduct sessions to discuss behaviour and social skills."*	Group guidance fosters collective learning, peer support, and overall behavioural improvement.
	Academic & Social Advice	*"I advise pupils on balancing schoolwork and personal conduct."*	Integrates academic and social guidance, promoting holistic discipline and responsible behaviour.

The analysis reveals a strong and direct relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline, showing that the strategies teachers employ significantly shapes learners' behaviour, engagement, and adherence to school norms.

Positive Reinforcement emerged as a key factor influencing pupil behaviour. Motivational strategies, praise, and rewards, illustrated by statements like "I always appreciate pupils who complete tasks on time" and "Learners who perform well receive certificates or tokens," demonstrate that recognizing and rewarding good behaviour encourages consistent attendance, active participation, and compliance with school rules. This underscores that reinforcement strategies foster both motivation and a culture of positive behaviour.

Punitive Measures were used as corrective tools to address misbehaviour and maintain accountability. Teachers reported giving extra assignments and issuing verbal warnings, exemplified by responses such as "Pupils who misbehave are given additional classwork" and "I issue verbal warnings for repeated lateness or rule-breaking." These approaches deter undesirable behaviour and communicate the consequences of violating school rules, supporting an orderly learning environment. However, punitive strategies tend to focus on immediate correction rather than long-term behavioural development, making them less influential than supportive approaches like reinforcement and counselling.

Restorative Practices were highlighted as central to promoting social responsibility and ethical conduct. Teachers emphasized conflict mediation, reflection, and reparations, reflected in responses such as “I mediate conflicts between learners to help them resolve issues” and “Learners are asked to apologize and make amends if they hurt someone.” These practices cultivate accountability, interpersonal skills, and peer cooperation, reducing conflicts while reinforcing adherence to school norms.

Verbal Reprimand was primarily used for immediate classroom management. Teachers described scolding, reminders, and stern warnings, for instance, “I scold learners when they are disruptive” and “I use a firm tone to address repeated misbehaviour.” While effective for maintaining order, these reactive strategies are less impactful for long-term behavioural change compared to reinforcement and counselling approaches.

Guidance and Counselling emerged as one of the most effective strategies for fostering holistic pupil discipline. Teachers reported providing individual and group counselling, exemplified by statements such as “I counsel learners individually on personal or academic challenges” and “We conduct sessions to discuss behaviour and social skills.” These interventions support learners’ self-regulation, reflection, and ability to balance academic and personal responsibilities, promoting sustained responsible behaviour.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers’ disciplinary strategies are closely linked to pupils’ discipline, with supportive and restorative methods Positive Reinforcement, Guidance and Counselling, and Restorative Practices having the strongest impact on sustained responsible behaviour. Punitive measures and verbal reprimands contribute mainly to immediate correction, but the most effective approach combines motivation, reflection, and guidance, fostering both academic success and social development among learners.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.0 Introduction

This Section presented the discussions, conclusion and recommendation according to study specific objectives; to examine teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District; to assess the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District and to establish the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

5.1 Objective One: teachers' disciplinary methods in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

The findings of this study indicated that the level of teachers' disciplinary methods in primary schools in Dokolo District is high. Teachers consistently reported employing a combination of positive reinforcement, punitive measures, restorative practices, verbal reprimands, and guidance and counselling to manage classroom behaviour. This aligns with earlier empirical studies that emphasize the importance of diverse disciplinary strategies in maintaining effective classroom management. For example, research by Emmer and Stough (2001) suggests that teachers who use structured and varied disciplinary approaches create a conducive learning environment where pupils demonstrate higher levels of engagement and adherence to school rules. The evidence from Dokolo District mirrors this notion, as the combination of supportive and corrective methods appears to foster responsible behaviour among learners.

The high level of disciplinary methods is particularly evident in the use of positive reinforcement, where teachers frequently recognize and reward desirable behaviour. This finding is consistent with Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory, which posits that behaviours followed by positive consequences are likely to be repeated. By praising pupils, awarding tokens, or acknowledging achievements, teachers in Dokolo District reinforce behaviours such as punctuality, regular attendance, and respect for authority. Empirical studies conducted in other African contexts, such as Uganda and Kenya, similarly report that reinforcement strategies enhance pupil motivation and encourage consistent participation in learning activities.

Punitive measures, including warnings, extra assignments, and temporary denial of privileges, were also commonly applied. This finding resonates with the broader literature that acknowledges the role of corrective measures in deterring misbehaviour. While punitive strategies are often considered less effective for long-term behavioural change, research by Marzano et al. (2003) indicates that when combined with supportive methods, they help maintain immediate classroom order. The teachers in Dokolo District appear to balance punitive approaches with positive strategies, ensuring that discipline does not solely rely on punishment but is integrated with encouragement and guidance.

Restorative practices, such as mediation, reflection, and reparation, are widely implemented, reflecting a proactive approach to conflict resolution and social learning. This approach aligns with the restorative justice model, which emphasizes repairing harm and fostering mutual understanding. Studies by Morrison et al. (2005) demonstrate that restorative practices not only reduce behavioural problems but also promote empathy, social responsibility, and stronger peer relationships among pupils. In Dokolo District, the high adoption of these practices suggests that

teachers recognize the importance of addressing the underlying causes of misbehaviour rather than merely punishing infractions.

Verbal reprimands, including stern warnings and scolding, were also reported as part of the disciplinary repertoire. While such methods primarily serve immediate corrective purposes, research indicates that they are effective in maintaining classroom order when applied judiciously. According to Lewis et al. (2005), verbal corrections can reinforce expectations and prevent escalation of disruptive behaviour. In the context of Dokolo District, the consistent use of verbal reprimand appears to complement other methods, ensuring that pupils are reminded of rules and expected conduct without relying solely on punitive measures.

Guidance and counselling emerged as one of the most influential methods in promoting holistic pupil discipline. Teachers provide individual and group counselling sessions, offering advice on academic and personal matters. This practice reflects the theoretical underpinnings of social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of modeling, observation, and guidance in shaping behaviour. Empirical literature supports the effectiveness of counselling in addressing both academic and social challenges, thereby enhancing overall pupil discipline. The high use of guidance and counselling in Dokolo District indicates that teachers are committed to fostering responsible, self-regulated learners.

The integrated use of multiple disciplinary methods suggests that teachers in Dokolo District are aware of the complex nature of classroom management. Literature on classroom management highlights that effective discipline requires a blend of proactive, supportive, and corrective strategies tailored to individual and group needs. Studies by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) underscore the importance of teacher flexibility and responsiveness in applying disciplinary

methods, which is reflected in the high level of methodical and structured approaches observed in these schools. Teachers' ability to combine reinforcement, punitive measures, restorative practices, verbal reprimands, and counselling demonstrates an understanding of this principle.

The empirical findings also suggest that the high level of disciplinary methods is likely to contribute positively to pupils' learning outcomes. Research by Oliver and Reschly (2007) indicates that well-managed classrooms with clear behavioural expectations correlate with higher academic achievement and engagement. In Dokolo District, teachers' consistent application of multiple disciplinary methods may enhance not only order and discipline but also the overall learning environment, creating conditions conducive to improved performance.

Furthermore, the results support theoretical perspectives that emphasize the interplay between behaviour management and learning. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights the influence of proximal processes, such as teacher-student interactions, on child development. The high level of disciplinary methods observed suggests that teachers play a critical role in shaping pupils' behavioural and social development within the school environment. By providing consistent guidance, reinforcement, and corrective feedback, teachers contribute to the creation of a structured and supportive microsystem that nurtures positive behaviour.

In conclusion, the high level of teachers' disciplinary methods in primary schools in Dokolo District is consistent with both empirical literature and theoretical frameworks. Teachers employ a balanced combination of positive reinforcement, punitive measures, restorative practices, verbal reprimands, and guidance and counselling, reflecting an understanding of effective classroom management strategies. These methods collectively promote responsible behaviour, enhance social interactions, and create a conducive learning environment. The findings underscore the

importance of comprehensive disciplinary approaches that integrate supportive and corrective strategies, aligning with both behaviourist and social learning theories, to foster holistic pupil development.

5.2 Objective Two: the level of pupils' discipline in government-aided primary schools in Dokolo District.

The findings of this study indicated that the level of pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District is high. Learners consistently exhibit behaviours such as regular attendance, punctuality, and respect for authority, positive peer relations, and adherence to school rules. This observation aligns with empirical studies suggesting that well-disciplined pupils are more likely to engage effectively in learning activities and demonstrate responsible conduct both inside and outside the classroom. For instance, research by Simatwa (2010) in Kenyan primary schools found that pupils with high levels of discipline showed improved academic performance and social behaviour, supporting the notion that discipline is a key determinant of school effectiveness.

Regular attendance was identified as a prominent indicator of discipline among pupils. Many learners reported making deliberate efforts to attend school daily, as reflected in statements like "I try to come to school every day to avoid missing lessons." This finding is consistent with prior studies emphasizing attendance as a critical aspect of pupil discipline, influencing both academic achievement and social development. Theories of behavioural reinforcement suggest that consistent school attendance can be maintained when pupils perceive positive outcomes, such as recognition, academic progress, and teacher approval.

Punctuality was another highly observed aspect of discipline. Pupils frequently described arriving on time and preparing adequately for lessons, exemplified by responses such as "I ensure I reach

school before lessons start." The high level of punctuality indicates that learners internalize the importance of time management, self-regulation, and personal responsibility. Empirical studies in Uganda, such as those by Bwambale et al. (2014), report similar findings, showing that punctuality is positively associated with structured classroom routines and effective teacher supervision.

Respect for authority was widely evident in pupils' behaviour. Learners consistently followed teacher instructions, observed classroom norms, and demonstrated courteous conduct, as shown by statements like "I follow the instructions given by my teachers without arguing." This observation is supported by social learning theory, which posits that individuals adopt behaviour s modeled and reinforced by authority figures. The high level of respect for authority in Dokolo District indicates that teachers' consistent guidance and disciplinary methods effectively shape pupils' behavioural norms.

Peer relations also reflected a high degree of discipline. Pupils demonstrated cooperation, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills, such as "I help my classmates when they need support in lessons" and "I try to solve disagreements with friends without fighting." This finding aligns with studies emphasizing the importance of social skills and collaborative behaviour in promoting a positive school environment. According to Bandura's social learning theory, peer interactions are influential in reinforcing appropriate behaviour, and the supportive peer culture observed in Dokolo District enhances overall discipline.

Adherence to school rules was strongly reported among learners. Pupils consistently complied with regulations, maintained ethical conduct, and respected school property, as illustrated by "I do not cheat or steal because it is against school rules." and "I take care of school property and do not damage anything." This finding aligns with empirical research by Marzano et al. (2003), which

indicates that adherence to school rules is a core indicator of student discipline and contributes to a structured and safe learning environment.

The high level of pupils' discipline in Dokolo District is closely related to the disciplinary strategies employed by teachers. Literature highlights that effective teacher guidance, reinforcement, and counselling directly influence pupil behaviour. For example, Lewis et al. (2005) observed that classrooms where teachers used a combination of positive reinforcement, corrective measures, and counselling exhibited higher levels of pupil self-regulation and adherence to school norms. This suggests that the disciplined behaviour among pupils is not only an individual trait but also a response to the structured and supportive school environment.

Empirical studies further indicate that high pupil discipline correlates with improved academic outcomes and reduced behavioural problems. Oliver and Reschly (2007) found that disciplined learners demonstrate better focus, participation, and engagement, leading to enhanced learning outcomes. In the context of Dokolo District, the high level of discipline observed likely contributes to both academic performance and a harmonious school climate, reinforcing the link between behaviour and educational effectiveness.

The findings also support theoretical perspectives emphasizing the role of environmental and relational factors in shaping behaviour. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights that proximal interactions, such as teacher-student relationships and classroom management practices, significantly influence child development. The disciplined behaviours observed among pupils in Dokolo District suggest that effective teacher supervision, guidance, and consistent application of disciplinary methods provide a structured microsystem that promotes responsible conduct.

In conclusion, the high level of pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District reflects a combination of individual commitment and structured support from teachers. Learners exhibit regular attendance, punctuality, and respect for authority, positive peer relations, and adherence to school rules. These behaviours are consistent with empirical literature and theoretical frameworks, demonstrating that effective teacher strategies, supportive learning environments, and peer influences collectively enhance pupil discipline. The findings underscore the importance of maintaining and strengthening comprehensive disciplinary practices to foster responsible, well behaved, and academically engaged learners.

5.3 Objective three: The relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District

The results of this study indicate that there is a very strong and significant correlation between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District. This finding suggests that the strategies employed by teachers to manage classroom behaviour have a direct and substantial influence on the conduct of learners. Empirical studies support this relationship, highlighting that structured and consistent teacher disciplinary practices are closely linked to improved pupil behaviour. For instance, research by Emmer and Stough (2001) found that effective teacher management strategies, including positive reinforcement, corrective measures, and guidance, strongly predict students' adherence to school norms and overall discipline.

Positive reinforcement appears to play a critical role in shaping pupils' behaviour. Teachers who consistently praise, reward, and encourage pupils create a motivating environment that promotes compliance with rules and positive engagement in learning activities. The significant correlation

observed aligns with Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory, which posits that behaviours followed by positive consequences are likely to be repeated. Studies conducted in Uganda and other African countries, such as Kenya, have similarly shown that reinforcement strategies are associated with improved attendance, punctuality, and classroom participation among learners.

Punitive measures also contribute to the strong correlation between teacher practices and pupil discipline. While corrective actions such as warnings, extra assignments, or temporary denial of privileges are generally more reactive, empirical evidence indicates that they help establish clear behavioural boundaries and accountability. Marzano et al. (2003) highlight that when punitive measures are applied alongside positive strategies, they reinforce the overall behavioural expectations in schools. In Dokolo District, the combination of punitive measures with supportive methods ensures that pupils understand the consequences of misbehaviour while also being encouraged to exhibit positive conduct.

Restorative practices strengthen the link between teachers' methods and pupil behaviour. By engaging learners in conflict mediation, reflection, and reparations, teachers promote social responsibility, ethical behaviour, and interpersonal skills. Morrison et al. (2005) found that restorative practices enhance pupils' understanding of consequences and improve peer relationships, which supports the observed strong correlation in Dokolo District. Learners internalize behavioural norms through guided reflection and reconciliation processes, fostering sustainable discipline.

Verbal reprimands, including scolding and stern warnings, also reinforce the relationship, although their influence is more immediate than long-term. Such practices provide clear, timely feedback that reminds pupils of expected behaviour. Research by Lewis et al. (2005) emphasizes that verbal

corrections, when applied consistently and appropriately, contribute to maintaining classroom order and adherence to rules, complementing other disciplinary strategies to strengthen the correlation between teacher actions and pupil conduct.

Guidance and counselling emerged as a key factor underpinning the significant correlation. Teachers' engagement with pupils through individual and group counselling sessions provides personal, social, and academic guidance. Bandura's Social Learning Theory supports this observation, suggesting that pupils learn and internalize appropriate behaviour s through modeling, observation, and guided support. In Dokolo District, learners receiving counselling demonstrate greater self-regulation and adherence to school rules, reinforcing the strong link between teacher disciplinary methods and pupil discipline.

Empirical literature consistently demonstrates that the combination of reinforcement, restorative practices, counseling, and corrective measures produces the most robust behavioural outcomes. Oliver and Reschly (2007) note that pupils in classrooms with well-structured disciplinary practices are more likely to exhibit responsible behaviour, higher engagement, and compliance with school norms. This aligns with the findings in Dokolo District, where the very strong correlation indicates that teacher strategies effectively translate into observable disciplined behaviour among learners.

The observed correlation also highlights the importance of the school environment in mediating behavioural outcomes. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory suggests that proximal processes, including teacher-pupil interactions and classroom management, shape child development significantly. In this context, disciplined behaviour s among pupils can be seen as a direct outcome of the structured, consistent, and supportive disciplinary approaches employed by

teachers. The strong correlation underscores the critical role of teacher influence within the school microsystem.

Additionally, the significant correlation suggests that interventions targeting teacher disciplinary practices are likely to have a direct impact on pupil behaviour. Research indicates that professional development programs focused on effective classroom management, guidance strategies, and restorative practices enhance teacher effectiveness and, consequently, student discipline (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). In Dokolo District, maintaining and strengthening these practices is therefore essential for sustaining high levels of pupil discipline.

In conclusion, the very strong significant correlation between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District demonstrates that learners' behaviour is closely linked to teacher practices. The findings are consistent with both empirical literature and theoretical frameworks, including behaviour ist and social learning theories, which emphasize reinforcement, guidance, modelling, and structured management as key determinants of pupil conduct. This relationship underscores the importance of comprehensive, balanced, and consistent disciplinary approaches in fostering responsible, well-behaved, and academically engaged learners

5.4 Conclusion

i. Teachers' disciplinary methods in primary schools in Dokolo District are high, with educators consistently employing a combination of positive reinforcement, punitive measures, restorative practices, verbal reprimands, and guidance and counselling to maintain classroom order and promote pupil engagement.

ii. Pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo District is high, as evidenced by regular attendance, punctuality, respect for authority, adherence to school rules, and positive peer relations, reflecting both internalized values and structured teacher guidance.

iii. There is a very strong and significant correlation between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline, indicating that effective teacher strategies directly influence pupil behaviour, fostering responsible, well-behaved, and academically engaged learners.

5.5 Recommendation

i. Strengthen Teacher Professional Development: Schools should provide regular training and workshops for teachers on effective disciplinary strategies, including positive reinforcement, restorative practices, and guidance and counselling, to maintain high standards of classroom management.

ii. Promote Consistent and Balanced Disciplinary Practices: Teachers should continue to apply a combination of supportive and corrective methods consistently, ensuring that pupils are motivated, guided, and corrected appropriately to reinforce discipline and positive behaviour.

iii. Encourage School-Wide Support for Pupil Discipline: School administrators should implement policies and programs that support structured classroom environments, regular monitoring, and mentorship, creating a culture that reinforces adherence to rules, respect for authority, and responsible behaviour among pupils.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Studies

i. Investigate the long-term impact of specific teacher disciplinary methods on pupils' academic performance and social development in primary schools.

ii. Explore the role of the school environment and peer influence as mediating factors in the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline.

iii. Conduct a comparative study on disciplinary methods and pupil behaviour across different districts or regions to identify contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of teacher practices.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to gather information on the topic "T*eachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government- aided primary schools in Dokolo District ".* This research is purely for academic purpose. You are very important in this study and whatever you give shall be treated confidential. Please do not include your name. Tick the appropriate response in the box.

Section A: Background information

1. Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Highest level of education

Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Masters ☐

3. Teaching Experience in years

0 -5 ☐ 6- 10 ☐ 11- 15 ☐ Above 15 ☐

4. Position Held in school.

Classroom teacher ☐ Head of Department ☐ Deputy Headteacher ☐ Headteacher ☐

5. Marital Status

Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐

Section B: Teachers' disciplinary methods

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

S/N	Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	NS (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
Positive Reinforcement						
01	I praise pupils when they demonstrate good discipline in school.					
02	I reward pupils who consistently follow school rules and regulations.					
03	I recognize pupils who demonstrate respectful behaviour towards teachers and fellow pupils.					
04	I provide verbal encouragement to pupils who improve their behaviour.					
05	I publicly recognize pupils who demonstrate good behaviour as an example to others.					
06	I provide small rewards or tokens to pupils who consistently demonstrate good discipline.					
07	I communicate positive information about pupils' good behaviour to their parents or guardians.					
Punitive measures						
01	I give extra assignments to punish learners who misbehave.					
02	I send pupils out of class when they are disruptive.					

03	I deny break time to learners as a form of punishment.					
04	I use harsh language or scolding to discipline pupils.					
05	I involve parents when pupils repeatedly misbehave.					
06	I reduce marks or scores as punishment for indiscipline.					
07	I apply physical punishment (e.g., caning) when learners misbehave.					
Restorative practices						
01	I encourage pupils to apologize and make amends after wrongdoing.					
02	I organize dialogues between conflicting pupils to resolve issues.					
03	I guide learners to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour.					
04	I mediate conflicts among pupils to restore relationships.					
05	I promote peer mediation where learners help each other resolve issues.					
06	I involve pupils in creating class rules and responsibilities.					
07	I encourage learners to repair damage caused to school property.					
Verbal reprimands						
01	I raise my voice to correct learners when they misbehave.					

02	I warn pupils in front of their peers to discourage misconduct.					
03	I call out pupils by name when they fail to follow instructions.					
04	I issue repeated reminders when pupils are not attentive.					
05	I use stern words to emphasize the seriousness of a learner's actions.					
06	I reprimand learners individually to avoid embarrassing them.					
Guidance and Counseling						
01	I provide individual counselling to pupils who exhibit disciplinary problems.					
02	I guide pupils on personal and social issues that may affect their behaviour at school.					
03	I organize group counselling sessions for pupils experiencing similar disciplinary challenges.					
04	I advise pupils on appropriate behaviour and the importance of following school rules and regulations.					
05	I refer pupils with serious behavioural problems to professional counsellors when necessary.					
06	I encourage pupils to set personal behaviour goals and develop problem-solving skills to manage disciplinary challenges.					

Section C: Pupils Discipline

S/N	Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	NS (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
Regular attendance						
01	Pupils report to school on time every day.					
02	Learners attend all scheduled lessons without skipping classes.					
03	Pupils inform teachers in advance when absent from school.					
04	Learners make up for missed lessons promptly.					
05	Pupils adhere to school attendance rules and regulations.					
06	Learners show responsibility by maintaining regular attendance.					
Punctuality						
01	Pupils arrive at school before the official start time.					
02	Learners are punctual for all lessons throughout the day.					
03	Pupils consistently report to class on time after breaks.					
04	Learners demonstrate awareness of the importance of punctuality.					

05	Pupils take personal responsibility to avoid being late.					
06	Learners encourage peers to be punctual for lessons.					
Respect for Authority						
01	Pupils follow teachers' instructions without argument.					
02	Learners show politeness when interacting with school staff.					
03	Pupils address teachers and school authorities appropriately.					
04	Learners comply with school rules and regulations.					
05	Pupils respect the opinions of teachers during lessons and discussions.					
06	Learners avoid talking back or challenging teachers publicly.					
Peer Relations						
01	Pupils cooperate with classmates during group activities.					
02	Learners treat their peers with kindness and respect.					
03	Pupils assist peers who are struggling academically.					
04	Learners resolve conflicts among themselves amicably.					

05	Pupils encourage and support each other during lessons.					
06	Learners work collaboratively to achieve common goals.					
Adherence to school rules and regulations						
01	Pupils follow all school rules consistently.					
02	Learners comply with classroom regulations at all times.					
03	Pupils respect school property and maintain cleanliness.					
04	Learners avoid prohibited behaviour s such as fighting or vandalism.					
05	Pupils adhere to uniform code and school dress regulations.					
06	Learners follow safety procedures and instructions in school.					

Thank you

Appendix II. Questionnaire for pupils

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to gather information on the topic "T*eachers| disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline in government- aided primary schools in Dokolo District".* This research is purely for academic purpose. You are very important in this study and whatever you give shall be treated confidential. Please do not include your name. Tick the appropriate response in the box.

Section A: Background information

1. Gender

Boy ☐ Girl ☐

2. Age Bracket

10 – 12 ☐ 13 – 15 ☐ 16-18 ☐

3. What class are you in?

P.4 ☐ P.5 ☐ P.6 ☐ P.7 ☐

4. Citizenship

Ugandan ☐ Non-Ugandan ☐

Section B: Teachers' disciplinary methods

S/N	Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	NS (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
Positive Reinforcement						
01	Teachers praise pupils when they perform well in class.					
02	Teachers reward learners who demonstrate improvement in their work.					
03	Teachers give recognition to pupils who actively participate in lessons.					
04	Teachers provide verbal encouragement to motivate students.					
05	Teachers display pupils' good work to the whole class as recognition.					
06	Teachers provide tokens or small prizes for outstanding performance.					
07	Teachers communicate positive feedback to parents about their children.					
Punitive measures						
01	Teachers give extra assignments to punish learners who misbehave.					
02	Teachers send pupils out of class when they are disruptive.					

03	Teachers deny break time to learners as a form of punishment.					
04	Teachers use harsh language or scolding to discipline pupils.					
05	Teachers involve parents when pupils repeatedly misbehave.					
06	Teachers reduce marks or scores as punishment for indiscipline.					
07	Teachers apply physical punishment (e.g., caning) when learners misbehave.					
Restorative practices						
01	Teachers encourage pupils to apologize and make amends after wrongdoing.					
02	Teachers organize dialogues between conflicting pupils to resolve issues.					
03	Teachers guide learners to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour.					
04	Teachers mediate conflicts among pupils to restore relationships.					
05	Teachers promote peer mediation where learners help each other resolve issues.					
06	Teachers involve pupils in creating class rules and responsibilities.					

07	Teachers encourage learners to repair damage caused to school property.					
Verbal reprimands						
01	Teachers raise their voices to correct learners when they misbehave.					
02	Teachers warn pupils in front of their peers to discourage misconduct.					
03	Teachers call out pupils by name when they fail to follow instructions.					
04	Teachers issue repeated reminders when pupils are not attentive.					
05	Teachers use stern words to emphasize the seriousness of a learner's actions.					
06	Teachers reprimand learners individually to avoid embarrassing them.					
Guidance and Counseling						
01	Teachers provide individual counselling to learners facing academic challenges.					
02	Teachers guide learners on personal and social issues affecting their school life.					
03	Teachers organize group counselling sessions for learners with similar issues.					

04	Teachers advise learners on career planning and future educational opportunities.					
05	Teachers refer learners to professional counsellors when necessary.					
06	Teachers encourage learners to set goals and develop problem-solving skills.					

Section C: Pupils' Discipline

S/N	Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	NS (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
Regular attendance						
01	Pupils report to school on time every day.					
02	Learners attend all scheduled lessons without skipping classes.					
03	Pupils inform teachers in advance when absent from school.					
04	Learners make up for missed lessons promptly.					
05	Pupils adhere to school attendance rules and regulations.					
06	Learners show responsibility by maintaining regular attendance.					
Punctuality						
01	Pupils arrive at school before the official start time.					

02	Learners are punctual for all lessons throughout the day.					
03	Pupils consistently report to class on time after breaks.					
04	Learners demonstrate awareness of the importance of punctuality.					
05	Pupils take personal responsibility to avoid being late.					
06	Learners encourage peers to be punctual for lessons.					
Respect for Authority						
01	Pupils follow teachers' instructions without argument.					
02	Learners show politeness when interacting with school staff.					
03	Pupils address teachers and school authorities appropriately.					
04	Learners comply with school rules and regulations.					
05	Pupils respect the opinions of teachers during lessons and discussions.					
06	Learners avoid talking back or challenging teachers publicly.					
Peer Relations						
01	Pupils cooperate with classmates during group activities.					
02	Learners treat their peers with kindness and respect.					
03	Pupils assist peers who are struggling academically.					

04	Learners resolve conflicts among themselves amicably.					
05	Pupils encourage and support each other during lessons.					
06	Learners work collaboratively to achieve common goals.					
Adherence to school rules and regulations						
01	Pupils follow all school rules consistently.					
02	Learners comply with classroom regulations at all times.					
03	Pupils respect school property and maintain cleanliness.					
04	Learners avoid prohibited behaviour s such as fighting or vandalism.					
05	Pupils adhere to uniform code and school dress regulations.					
06	Learners follow safety procedures and instructions in school.					

Thank you

Appendix III. Interview Guide for Head teachers

1. Tell us about teachers' disciplinary methods in terms of;
    a. Positive reinforcement
    b. Punitive measures
    c. Restorative practices
    d. Verbal reprimands
    e. Guidance and counselling
2. In your opinion what is the level of pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo district in terms of;
    a. Regular attendance
    b. Punctuality
    c. Respect for authority
    d. Peer relations
    e. Adherence to school rules and regulations
3. What is the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline? If possible, explain.

Thank you

Appendix IV. Interview Guide for SMC Executives

1. Tell us about teachers' disciplinary methods in terms of;
    a. Positive reinforcement
    b. Punitive measures
    c. Restorative practices
    d. Verbal reprimands
    e. Guidance and counselling
2. In your opinion what is the level of pupils' discipline in primary schools in Dokolo district in terms of;
    a. Regular attendance
    b. Punctuality
    c. Respect for authority
    d. Peer relations
    e. Adherence to school rules and regulations
3. What is the relationship between teachers' disciplinary methods and pupils' discipline? If possible, explain.

Thank you

Appendix V: Introductory Letter

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OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

August 26, 2025

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to introduce to you Mr. Otim Norman (Reg No. 23/U/0644/MFC/PS) a student pursuing a programme of study leading to an award Master of Education in Curriculum Studies and Foundations of Education of Gulu University, Master of Gulu University.

He is undertaking research on the Topic:

TEACHERS' DISCIPLINARY METHODS AND PUPILS' DISCIPLINE IN GOVERNMENT AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DOKOLO DISTRICT.

Which is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award.

Any assistance rendered to him in relation to this research work will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

GULU UNIVERSITY
28 AUG 2025
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

Dr. Denis Thaddeus Ofoyuru

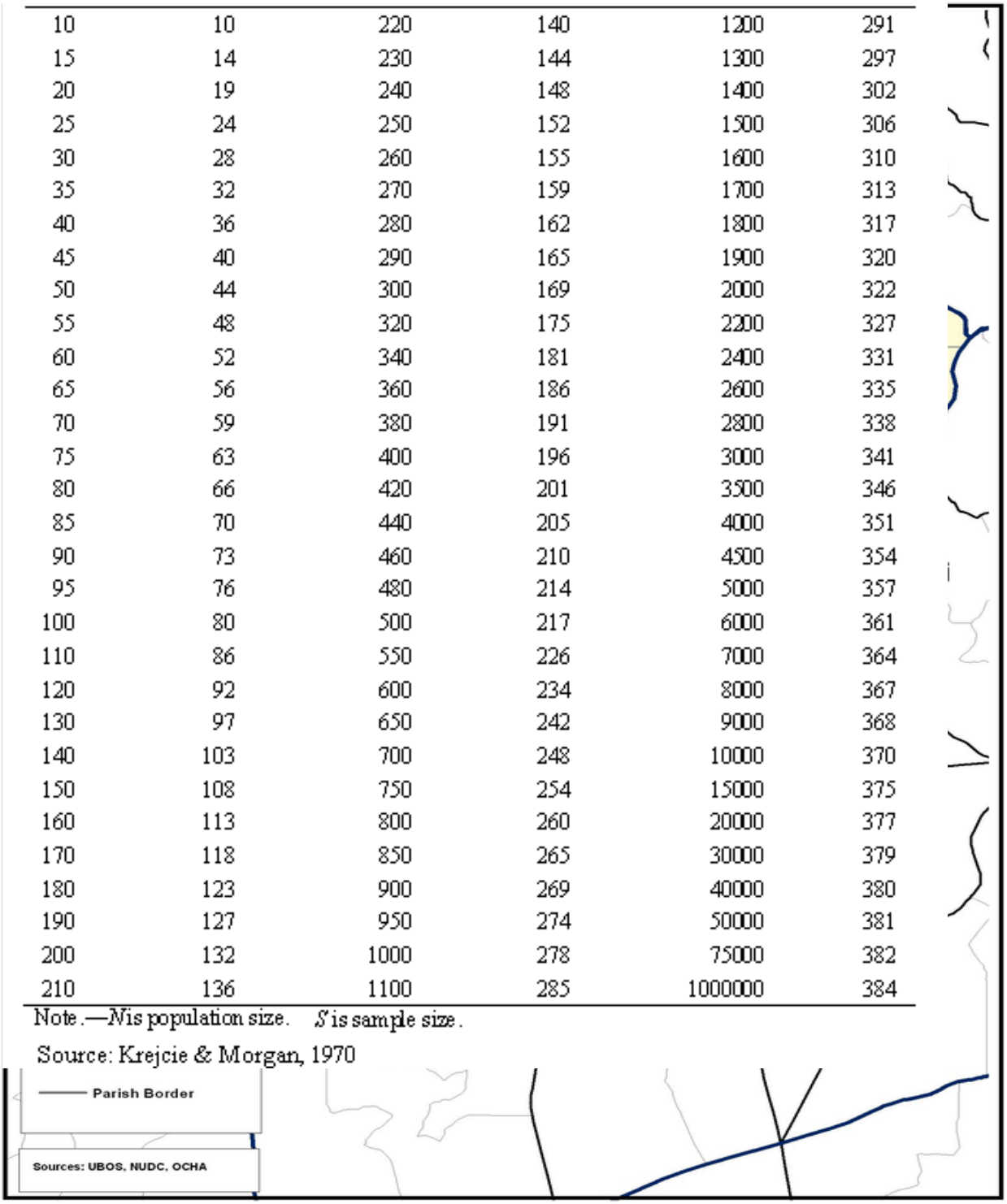
Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities

Appendix VI: Morgan & Krejce Table for sample size determination (1970)

N	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970



Appendix VII: Map of Dokolo District

Appendix VIII: Originality Report

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Department: **FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION**

Title and bibliographic description of the work

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Originality Report

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- ✓ Minor
- ☐ Moderate
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