

Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo
District

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Declaration

I, Okumu Amose, do hereby declare that this dissertation for the study of "*Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo District*" is my original work and that it has not been submitted for a master degree or any other academic award at this or any other university.

Signature:..........Date: 29/08/2026.....

Approval

This Report was supervised by us and is ready for submission to the Faculty of Education and Humanities, a research dissertation titled "*Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo district, Northern Uganda*", in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of master of education in education management of Gulu University.



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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Mr. Oyet Louis and Mrs. Ayoo Santa Oyet whose unwavering support, encouragement, and prayers have been my source of strength throughout this journey, I owe them my deepest gratitude.

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, guided by three objectives: exploring the parenting styles practiced by parents, determining the status of learners' discipline, and establishing how parenting styles influence learner discipline. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from a sample of 264 students using questionnaire and 12 key informants using interview guide, including disciplinary committee Chairpersons, head teachers, and PTA Chairpersons. Quantitative findings indicated that permissive parenting was the most prevalent style (mean = 3.75, SD = 1.035), followed by authoritarian (mean = 3.64, SD = 2.055) and authoritative parenting (mean = 3.59, SD = 1.261), while qualitative data reinforced these results. The study revealed that learners' discipline remains a pressing challenge, largely influenced by inconsistent parental involvement and the predominance of permissive and authoritarian parenting practices. Correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships between all three parenting styles and learners' discipline, with permissive parenting style showing the strongest correlation ($r = 0.708^{**}$, $p < 0.01$); however, qualitative evidence emphasized authoritative parenting as the most effective in promoting positive learner behaviour. The study concludes that parenting styles significantly affect learner's discipline which aligns with Bronfenbrenner's view in his Ecological Systems theory. Recommendations focused on promoting authoritative parenting through community sensitization, increasing parental engagement in school matters, and addressing the adverse impacts of permissive and authoritarian approaches. However, there is still need for further research to explore the complexities of permissive parenting styles and the evolving parenting dynamics to better inform policies and interventions aimed at improving learners' discipline in Lamwo District.

Key Words; Parenting Styles, Learners' Discipline, Secondary Schools

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Overview

World over, the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools seems to be deteriorating but to remain relevant in the current changing world, the school needs to continuously come up with new disciplinary approaches that suit each situation and the changing society, rather than depending on old disciplinary approaches (Obadire and Sinthumule, 2021). This chapter included the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

The background of this study was divided into four perspectives; Historical Background, Theoretical Background, Contextual Background and Conceptual Background.

1.1.1 Historical Background

Generally, the evolution of learners' discipline in secondary schools offers a multifaceted narrative that spans from overarching global trends to intricate local dynamics. Globally, the focus on maintaining order and structure in educational settings can be traced back to early educational philosophers like John Locke, who emphasised discipline as a crucial component of moral education (Locke, 1693/1979). As industrialisation and urbanisation progressed, the need for structured schooling environments became more pronounced, leading to standardised disciplinary measures across many Western educational systems (Smith and Johnson, 2015). However, as research began highlighting the importance of socio-emotional learning and holistic development, there was a shift from punitive disciplinary actions to more restorative and inclusive practices, reflecting global best practices and trends.

On a global scale, the genesis of learners' discipline is deeply rooted in ancient civilisations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt. These societies emphasized rote memorisation, obedience, and strict adherence to societal norms within educational frameworks (Barton, 2008). As centuries progressed, the Enlightenment era in Europe ushered in educational reforms emphasising critical thinking and moral education, influencing educational systems worldwide. Globalisation in the modern era has seen a confluence of disciplinary practices, with international bodies like UNESCO advocating for holistic, learner-centered approaches that value cultural diversity and individual autonomy (UNESCO, 2015).

In the United States, the history of learners' discipline reflects a blend of Puritan influences, emphasising moral character and obedience, and progressive educational movements promoting child-centered approaches (Dupper and Montgomery, 2017). The 20th century witnessed shifts from punitive disciplinary measures to more rehabilitative and restorative practices in response to civil rights movements and evolving understandings of child psychology (Skiba et al., 2011). Federal policies like Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 further underscored the importance of equitable discipline practices, emphasising prevention and intervention strategies over exclusionary measures (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Similarly, European educational traditions have been shaped by Enlightenment ideals, emphasising rationality, discipline, and moral education (Green, 1990). Countries like Germany and France instituted rigorous educational systems that prioritised academic excellence and character development. However, the late 20th century saw a shift towards more inclusive and democratic schooling practices, with a focus on student rights, participation, and holistic development (Eurydice Network, 2019).

In Asia, the educational traditions, particularly in countries like China and India, have historically emphasised discipline, respect for authority, and academic rigor (Hayhoe & Pan,

2001). Confucian values in East Asian societies have heavily influenced educational practices, emphasising hierarchy, diligence, and moral character (Cheng & Lo, 2019). In recent decades, rapid modernisation and globalisation have prompted educational reforms, integrating traditional values with contemporary pedagogies that foster creativity, critical thinking, and global competencies (Zhao, 2010).

Related to the above, the African educational traditions have been shaped by indigenous knowledge systems, colonial legacies, and post-independence aspirations (Mkabela, 2006). Pre-colonial African societies emphasised communal values, moral education, and skills development within informal learning environments. However, colonial education systems introduced Western disciplinary practices, often marginalizing indigenous knowledge and cultural practices (Sifuna, 1990). That explained why Mkabela (2006) stressed that in post-independence Africa, there was resurgence of interest in African-centered educational philosophies that prioritised cultural relevance, inclusivity, and holistic development.

In East Africa, countries like Kenya and Tanzania, witnessed a gradual navigation in the complex educational landscape shaped by colonial histories, indigenous traditions, and contemporary challenges (Wasanga and Mushindu, 2015).

In Uganda, especially in late 1980s and 1990s, many secondary schools started experiencing a shift from colonial system of discipline to a state of unrest in schools. The trend of traditional school discipline began to change whereby strikes and arson became fashionable to most secondary schools in Uganda and Kenya (Cooper, 2014). This continued to escalate up to the period between 2001 and 2006 when a wave of student's strikes rocked the whole of Uganda. The secondary schools that experienced serious student's discipline problems included Namilyango College, Kidetok Girls School, Sir Samuel Baker, Gulu High School and Kabalega SS (Ofoyuru & Too-Okema, 2011).

In Lamwo District, student's indiscipline took a new dimension around 2011 (DEO Report 2019). Strikes that used to be common among secondary school students had gradually reduced and indiscipline seemed to have taken forms like inappropriate wearing of school uniforms, failing to do class assignments, writing on walls of toilets and classrooms and others making this study significant in finding out the ground realities in Lamwo District.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

This study was underpinned by Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) which explains how a child's development is influenced by multiple environmental systems operating at different levels. These systems include the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem, each representing a layer of influence ranging from the most immediate surroundings to broader socio-cultural contexts. The Microsystem refers to environments with direct interaction, such as the home and school, where parenting behaviours significantly shape a learner's discipline. For example, parental warmth, supervision, or harsh discipline at home can manifest in a child's behaviour at school, such as rule-following or defiance. The Mesosystem reflects interactions between Microsystems such as school-parent relationships that also influence learners' behaviour (Rosa & Tudge, 2023).

The Exosystem includes social structures that indirectly affect the child, such as a parent's workplace, community organizations, or local leadership decisions. For instance, if a parent is unemployed or overwhelmed by external pressures, it can influence how they discipline or engage with their children. The Macrosystem involves cultural norms, values, and beliefs that define expectations around parenting and discipline. In Lamwo District, cultural beliefs about child-rearing and obedience are deeply embedded and directly influence parenting styles. The Chronosystem captures changes over time such as evolving societal norms, family structure, or educational reforms which also impact both parenting and learner behaviour (Swick & Williams, 2021).

The key assumption of this theory is that a child's development is best understood when examined across multiple, interacting layers of their environment. Therefore, this study assumes that learners' discipline in secondary schools is not determined solely by individual traits or school rules, but also by parenting styles shaped by family background, economic status, cultural traditions, and community involvement. This holistic assumption aligns with the theory's premise that development is the result of dynamic interactions between the child and their surrounding systems (Trommsdorff & Heikamp, 2020).

One of the primary strengths of the Ecological Systems Theory is its ability to account for the complexity of human behavior in context. It allows researchers and educators to move beyond simplistic, one-dimensional explanations of discipline problems and instead consider how school discipline is affected by home environments, parental beliefs, and societal conditions. This is particularly relevant in Lamwo District, where socio-economic challenges, cultural practices, and community structures vary significantly and may influence how parents raise and discipline their children. Thus, the theory offers a strong foundation for analyzing the interaction between parenting styles and learners' discipline in a real-world setting (Tudge et al., 2021).

The ecological systems theory is therefore highly applicable to this study because it supports a multi-dimensional approach to understanding learner discipline. It enables the researcher to explore how parenting styles such as authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative are shaped not only by individual parental choices but also by broader community, cultural, and economic conditions. It also provides a foundation for designing interventions that involve not only parents but also schools, community leaders, and local policy actors to promote positive discipline outcomes. The theory is especially relevant in rural Ugandan contexts like Lamwo District, where family, school, and community are deeply interconnected and collectively influence learners' behaviour (Baffoe & Dako-Gyeke, 2022).

1.1.3. Contextual Background

Lamwo District, the study area, is located in Northern Uganda and borders South Sudan to the north. The district was established in 2010 after being carved out of Kitgum District. It is predominantly rural, with agriculture serving as the major economic activity and source of livelihood for most households. The majority of residents engage in subsistence farming, livestock keeping, and small-scale trade. Despite the district's agricultural potential, many households continue to face socio-economic challenges characterised by low income levels, limited employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and vulnerability to climate-related shocks (UBOS, 2024). These socio-economic conditions influence family welfare, parental involvement in children's education, and the capacity of parents to effectively monitor and guide their children.

The socio-economic context of Lamwo District has also been shaped by the historical effects of the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency that affected Northern Uganda for over two decades. Although peace has largely been restored, the region continues to experience the long-term consequences of conflict, including poverty, disrupted family structures, and limited social services. Furthermore, Lamwo District hosts a significant number of refugees from South Sudan, particularly in the Palabek Refugee Settlement, one of Uganda's largest refugee settlements. The presence of refugees has increased pressure on educational facilities, social services, and community resources, while also creating diverse family and parenting contexts that may influence learners' behavior and discipline (UNHCR, 2023).

Education remains a critical sector in Lamwo District, with government efforts aimed at improving access and quality through programs such as Universal Secondary Education (USE). The district has experienced growth in the number of secondary schools to meet increasing demand for education. Both government-aided and private secondary schools operate within

the district, providing educational opportunities to learners from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite the expansion of educational opportunities, learner discipline remains a concern in many secondary schools in the district. Indiscipline among learners is often manifested through absenteeism, truancy, bullying, disrespect toward teachers, fighting, substance abuse, examination malpractice, destruction of school property, and non-compliance with school regulations. The Ministry of Education and Sports has emphasized that learner discipline is essential for creating a conducive learning environment and enhancing academic achievement (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2023). In many cases, school administrators and teachers attribute disciplinary challenges to inadequate parental supervision, inconsistent parenting practices, family instability, and socio-economic hardships.

It is within this context that the relationship between parenting styles and discipline among learners in secondary schools becomes a crucial area of study. Understanding how different parenting approaches influence learners' behavior in schools can inform more effective guidance and counseling strategies, school discipline policies, and community sensitization programs. This is especially important for Lamwo District, where efforts to improve education outcomes must consider the home-school connection and the broader socio-cultural dynamics influencing learners' conduct.

1.1.4. Conceptual Background of the Study

Discipline is not simply about enforcing rules but involves cultivating internal values and attitudes that encourage responsible and respectful conduct (Assefa, 2024). In educational contexts, discipline is viewed as a foundation for both personal development and academic success, making it a key focus for schools aiming to improve learner outcomes.

In the same manner, learners' discipline is a multifaceted concept essential to creating and maintaining a conducive learning environment. It encompasses behavioural self-regulation, adherence to school rules, academic commitment, and positive social interactions within the school community.

A primary dimension of learners' discipline is punctuality and attendance, which indicates a learner's respect for school routines and readiness to engage in learning. Consistent attendance ensures learners receive continuous instruction and participate fully in academic activities, which research shows directly influences academic achievement (Mpolomoka, Mwila, & Chanda, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this pattern worldwide, with Assefa (2024) noting that irregular attendance during lockdowns significantly weakened learners' discipline and learning continuity. Schools that actively monitor attendance and collaborate with parents to address absenteeism demonstrate improved discipline levels, an approach that could be effectively applied in Lamwo District to mitigate challenges related to truancy.

Another important domain is adherence to school rules and regulations, which requires students to understand and comply with both formal policies and informal behavioral norms. Nakiranda, Bakashaba, and Ssendagi (2023) found that clear communication of rules and consistent enforcement in Ugandan schools led to significant improvements in student behaviour. Abebe and Tadesse (2020) further emphasised that learners are more likely to comply when they understand the rationale behind rules, fostering a sense of fairness and accountability. For example, in Lamwo District, schools that engage learners in discussions about rules and their purposes tend to experience fewer infractions, such as vandalism and bullying, thereby promoting a safer school climate.

Academic engagement and responsibility form the third critical aspect of discipline. Learners who actively participate in lessons, complete assignments on time, and take initiative in their

studies demonstrate higher levels of discipline, which in turn supports academic success (Kangwa, Msafiri, & Wan, 2024). Self-regulation skills, including time management and goal-setting, are crucial in sustaining engagement, particularly in remote or hybrid learning environments intensified by the pandemic (Zhao, Ren, & Yang, 2024). In practice, Lamwo schools that encourage students to set learning goals and provide consistent academic support foster responsibility and intrinsic motivation, critical traits of disciplined learners.

The final domain involves respectful social behaviour, encompassing positive interpersonal interactions and conflict resolution skills. The shift from punitive discipline methods, such as corporal punishment, toward positive behavioral interventions has highlighted the importance of respect, empathy, and cooperation in managing learners' conduct (Potokri & Lumadi, 2025). Waiswa et al. (2024) demonstrated that mentorship and counseling programs in Ugandan schools effectively reduce student conflicts and promote a culture of respect. Schools in Lamwo District can adopt peer mediation and mentoring programs to enhance learners' social skills and reduce disruptive behaviors, thereby contributing to an overall disciplined school environment.

In operational terms, this study defines *learners' discipline* as the ability of the learners to conform to the set school norms. For instance; Adherence to school rules and regulations, Attendance consistency, Use of school uniforms and Respect for teachers.

Parenting style is conceptualized according to Baumrind's (1991) framework, which categorises parenting styles into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles, each differing in warmth, control, and communication. Research shows that authoritative parenting characterised by a balance of support and firm expectations positively influences learner discipline by promoting self-regulation and responsible behaviour (Spera, 2005). In this study, parenting style is assessed by examining parental involvement, disciplinary strategies, and

emotional support, as these factors directly impact learners' conduct and attitudes toward school.

Together, these conceptual and operational definitions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing learners' discipline, which is essential for academic success and social development within the school community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In an ideal situation, learners' discipline is expected to be very high. Learners are expected to follow school rules and regulations, have consistent school attendance, use school uniforms correctly, have respect for authority and school environment should be generally calm and peaceful. However, the ground realities in Lamwo's secondary schools are intricate. DEO's report 2023 indicated that always on the first day of the term, only 20% of students usually report to the secondary school district wide. Out of the 20%, only 5% may finish the first school day up to evening time. The same report indicated that learners were involved highly in alcohol use and on some occasions, that practice made some learners to physically fight teachers, which is a high level of indiscipline. Most of the sporting activities among secondary schools in the district ended up in chaos according to the reports from the District Sports Officer (May, 2024), and throwing of stones during games and sports had become order of the day. The district also recorded only 0.34% Division One pass rate in the 2020 Uganda Certificate of Education examinations, with just 2 out of 584 candidates achieving top grades (Pearl Times, 2023). Contributing factors included low class attendance by candidates, disrespect of students making teachers demotivated, low parental engagement in academics and alcohol use by students during examination time (Uganda Radio Network, 2023). While interventions such as guidance and counselling, use of school rules and regulations and suspension have been introduced, the area of parenting styles and their impacts on learners' behaviour has not been

explored as no empirical studies relating to it has been carried out in Lamwo District, leaving a gap which the study intends to address. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between Parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District in order to find better strategies of improving discipline among secondary school learners in the district.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To explore the parenting styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District.
- ii. To determine the Level of learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District.
- iii. To establish the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. What parenting styles are commonly practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District?
- ii. What is the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District?

1.3.3 Research Hypotheses

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There was no significant relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the geographical scope, content scope, and time scope.

1.4.1 Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of the study was limited to Lamwo District, a rural and relatively underdeveloped district in Northern Uganda. The study was conducted in 10 selected secondary schools within the district, representing both government-aided and private institutions. Lamwo District was characterised by a post-conflict setting, low socio-economic indicators, and limited educational resources, all of which influenced parenting and learner behaviour. The selection of Lamwo was based on the researcher's proximity to the area and the observed rise in disciplinary issues among students, which made it a relevant and accessible location for in-depth research on this topic.

1.4.2 Content Scope

The study focused on three main content areas aligned with its specific objectives. First, it explored the influence of parenting styles on discipline of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District to understand how different approaches to child-rearing affected learners' behaviour. Second, it determined the status of discipline among secondary school learners in the district, exploring the extent to which students adhered to school rules and behavioral expectations. Third, the study established the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools, aiming to determine how different parental approaches influenced student discipline.

1.4.3 Time Scope

The time scope of the study spanned from 2020 to 2025. This five-year period was significant because it captured recent developments and trends related to student discipline and parenting in Lamwo District. It included the effects of major socio-economic changes, such as the aftermath of COVID-19 and its impact on education, parenting, and student behaviour. Focusing on this period allowed the researcher to collect current and relevant data, analyse patterns over time, and evaluate the effectiveness of any interventions or changes implemented during this timeframe. This temporal boundary ensured that the findings and recommendations

of the study were grounded in the most recent realities faced by schools, learners, and families in Lamwo.

1.5 Significance of the study

It is hoped that this study might be of significance to a range of stakeholders, including school administrators, parents, class teachers, and education officials. Its findings might provide valuable insights into the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools, particularly within Lamwo District.

The study might be helpful to school administrators, parents, and other stakeholders, including guidance and counselling departments, by offering strategies that may address behavior-related problems, enhance learners' self-esteem, and promote healthy interpersonal relationships. These improvements might, in turn, contribute to a more disciplined and conducive learning environment in secondary schools across the district.

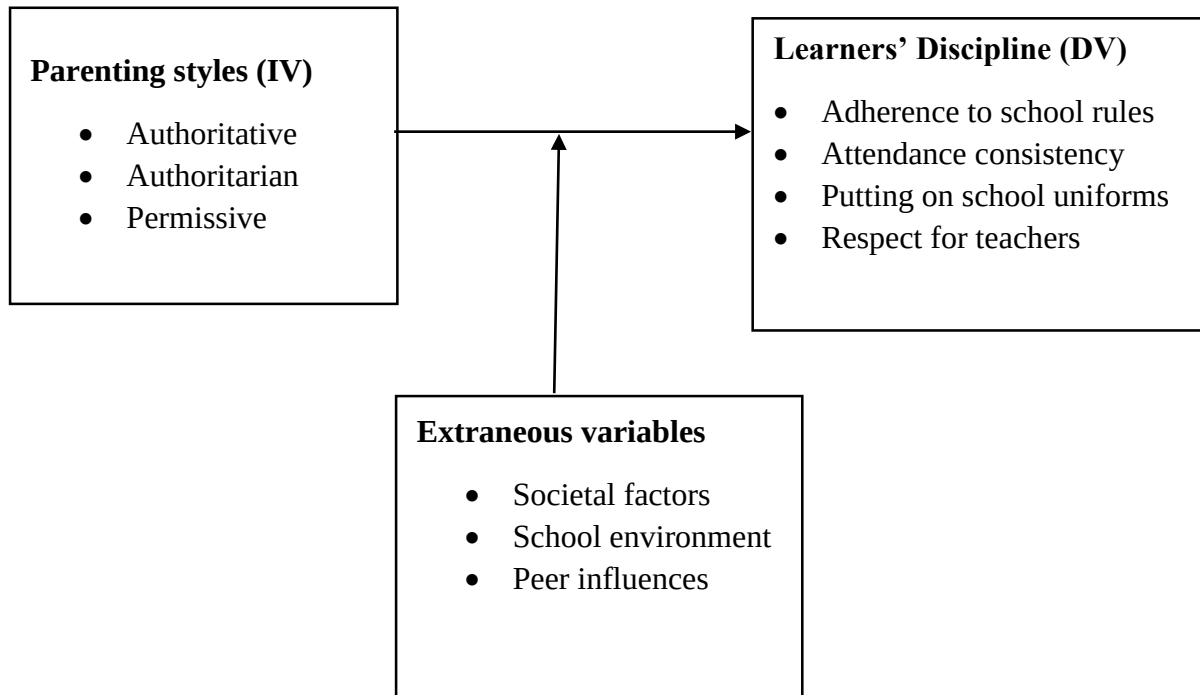
Furthermore, the study might benefit the Ministry of Education and Sports, as well as other education partners, by informing policy decisions aimed at increasing parental involvement in matters concerning student discipline. The findings might guide the development of frameworks and interventions that foster collaboration between schools and families in nurturing responsible and well-behaved learners.

Lastly, the study might serve as a foundation for future academic inquiry. It might provide relevant literature and empirical evidence that other researchers can reference or build upon when conducting related studies in the fields of education, psychology, and child development, particularly in rural and post-conflict settings like Lamwo District.

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1.6 Conceptual Framework Showing Relationship between Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from Bronfrenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Baumrind's Parenting Typology (1991).

Parenting styles are widely recognised as a significant factor influencing children's behaviour and discipline. According to Baumrind (2020), the three primary parenting styles are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parenting combines warmth with firm boundaries and is associated with positive behavioural outcomes, including better self-regulation and discipline in children. Authoritarian parenting, characterised by strict rules and less emotional responsiveness, may lead to compliance but can also foster resentment or rebellion. Permissive parenting, marked by leniency and few demands, often results in lower levels of discipline and greater behavioural challenges among learners (Smith & Lee, 2021).

Learners' discipline in secondary schools is often measured through indicators such as adherence to school rules, attendance consistency, proper use of school uniform, and respect for teachers. These behaviours reflect the degree to which students conform to expected norms within the educational environment (Jones et al., 2022). Consistent attendance and respect for authority figures are particularly important for fostering a positive learning atmosphere and academic success. Proper use of school uniform symbolizes students' commitment to school identity and rules, while adherence to school regulations directly impacts the overall discipline climate within schools (Kintu, 2023).

It is important to acknowledge that the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline is influenced by extraneous variables such as societal factors, the school environment, and peer influences. Societal factors including cultural norms and economic conditions can shape parenting styles and learners' behaviour (Mugisha, 2020). The school environment, including teacher attitudes, disciplinary policies, and resources, also play a critical role in shaping learners' discipline (Okello & Namusonge, 2021). Additionally, peer influences can either reinforce positive behaviours or contribute to indiscipline, depending on the peer group dynamics (Nakato, 2024). These external factors must be considered to fully understand the dynamics affecting learners' discipline in secondary schools.

The study controlled for the extraneous variables of school environment, societal factors, and peer influence by selecting participants from comparable secondary school settings within Lamwo District, administering uniform research instruments to all respondents, and statistically focusing on the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline. This helped to reduce the potential confounding effects of differences in school conditions, community influences, and peer interactions, thereby enhancing the validity of the study findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed literature related to the variables and objectives of the study. The study will review relevant literature covering status of discipline of learners, the influence of parenting styles on learners' discipline, and the relationship between parenting styles and learner's discipline.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Many theories have been proposed to explain human behaviour, however, due to their inherent limitations, they were not deemed suitable for this research, with only Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory providing the comprehensive framework necessary for the study. These theories included but not limited to; Operant Conditioning Theory by B.F Skinner (1938), Behaviourist Theory by John B Watson (1913) and Attachment Theory by John Bowlby (1958);

Operant Conditioning Theory (1938)

Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory (1938) is a core behavioural framework explaining how consequences shape learning and behaviour. According to the theory, behaviours followed by reinforcing stimuli are more likely to recur, while behaviours followed by punishments decrease in frequency. Reinforcement can be positive (adding a pleasant stimulus) or negative (removing an unpleasant stimulus), both strengthening behaviour. Punishment can also be positive (adding an unpleasant stimulus) or negative (removing a pleasant stimulus), aimed at reducing undesired behaviour (Skinner, 1953).

The theory assumes that all behaviour is learned and maintained through environmental contingencies, focusing on observable actions rather than internal cognition or emotions. It emphasises that systematic application of reinforcement and punishment can shape behaviour effectively. In educational settings, operant principles are frequently used to develop classroom management techniques and disciplinary strategies (Morris & McGrath, 2021).

However, the theory's main limitation is its reductionist focus on external control, potentially neglecting intrinsic motivation and underlying emotional factors influencing discipline (Mwangala, 2023). Overreliance on external rewards may undermine learners' internal drive over time. Hence, could not adequately inform the study because the interconnection between the school environment and the home environment wasn't clearly shown by the theory therefore leaving out the primary information needed to solve the problem of the study.

John B Watson's Behaviourist Theory (1913)

Similarly, Behaviourism as proposed by John B Watson was a learning theory that focused on observable behaviours and their relationship to environmental stimuli, rejecting the study of unobservable mental processes, the theory emphasised that all behaviours are learned through conditioning and that environment plays a crucial role in shaping behaviour (Malone, 2014). Watson's strict behaviourism is highly criticised for its reductionism, focusing solely on observable behaviour and dismissing mental processes. It neglects individual differences and genetic factors, has questionable ecological validity due to laboratory based research and raised ethical issues that would not pass current scientific standards (Mugisha & Muzoora, 2023, Lule, 2021, Nakato, 2020 and Ochieng and Kirunda, 2021).

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1958)

Bowlby's attachment theory proposes that humans are biologically predisposed to form strong emotional bonds, particularly with primary caregivers for survival and healthy development

(Bowlby, 1958). The theory suggested that early attachment experiences of children shape internal working models, which are mental representations of self, others and relationship (Nganyu, 2023). This theory faced criticism for methodological limitations, cultural bias, and deterministic overemphasis on early maternal bonds leading to oversimplification of complex human behaviour (Nganyu, 2023). Because of these limitations, the theory may understate individual temperament, limiting its explanatory power to guide this study.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a more comprehensive and direct lens for understanding children's discipline by situating behaviour within multiple interrelated systems from immediate family and school (Microsystem), through their interactions (Mesosystem), broader community context (Exosystem), cultural norms (Macrosystem), to changes over time (Chronosystem) (Evans, 2020). Moreover, empirical studies supported that structured and shared parenting embedded within familial and community ecosystems correlated with fewer conduct problems and irritability in children, even under stressful conditions (Mugisha and Muzoora, 2024). This holistic, multi-level framework surpassed the narrower focus of Reinforcement, environment or attachment-based models by acknowledging the complex, dynamic interplay of individual, relational, institutional and cultural influences on children's behaviour making it particularly apt for understanding and shaping disciplinary strategies, hence, the choice of the theory.

2.2 Parenting Styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools.

Parenting styles are critical frameworks that shape children's behaviour, social skills, and overall development. The three most commonly studied parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive continue to be the focus of research globally due to their distinct impacts on child outcomes. Recent studies have revealed a diverse range of parenting styles

shaped by cultural, socio-economic, and contextual factors that influence which styles predominate in different communities. For instance, authoritative parenting, characterised by warmth and firm control, is widely regarded as most effective in promoting positive developmental outcomes, including learner discipline and academic achievement (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

In many African contexts, including Uganda, the prevalence of authoritarian parenting remains relatively high. This style is defined by strict rules, high demands, and limited warmth or responsiveness, which often results in children exhibiting obedience but can also lead to lower self-esteem and increased behavioural problems (Mukasa & Okumu, 2022). The persistence of authoritarian styles in some Ugandan communities has been linked to traditional beliefs and socioeconomic challenges that encourage parents to enforce strict discipline as a means of survival and social conformity (Kaleebu & Byamukama, 2023). However, recent shifts influenced by urbanisation and increased parental education levels are leading some families to adopt more authoritative approaches and Lamwo district might have different settings from other parts of Uganda.

Permissive parenting, characterised by high responsiveness but low demands, tends to be less common in many parts of Uganda but is gaining attention in urban and middle-class families where parents may struggle with balancing discipline and affection (Nabwire, 2021). This style can result in children who experience fewer rules and boundaries, which may translate into issues with self-regulation and learner discipline in schools. Research by Olweny and Kirabo (2021) emphasizes that permissive parenting often correlates with increased behavioural problems in adolescents, suggesting the need for parental guidance programs focusing on balanced discipline strategies.

Moreover, parenting styles are not static and may coexist or evolve within families depending on changing circumstances and parental awareness. Recent studies highlight a trend towards flexible parenting, where parents adapt their style depending on the child's age, personality, and external influences such as peer pressure or school environment (Nakato, 2024). For example, many Ugandan parents report combining warmth with strictness, adopting a hybrid approach that aims to nurture while maintaining discipline. This nuanced understanding is critical, especially in rapidly changing societies where traditional norms intersect with modern educational demands.

Statistically, the Uganda National Examination Board (2023) reported that approximately 55% of parents in urban districts practice authoritative parenting, while 35% tend towards authoritarian and 10% permissive styles. These figures are consistent with regional variations influenced by education, economic status, and cultural values. The data further indicate that students from authoritative homes generally perform better academically and exhibit fewer behavioral issues, reinforcing the importance of promoting this parenting style through community and school interventions (UNEB, 2023). However, this finding was based on urban population which might be different from the settings in Lamwo District.

The status of parenting styles also reflects broader socio-economic challenges facing families. Economic hardship and limited parental education often constrain caregivers' ability to adopt authoritative parenting, pushing them toward more authoritarian or neglectful practices (Byaruhanga, Okello, & Kato, 2022). In contrast, parents with higher education and access to parenting resources tend to exhibit more adaptive, responsive, and supportive styles, which correlate positively with learner discipline and psychosocial well-being. These disparities highlight the need for targeted support programs to equip all parents with effective parenting styles.

Culturally, some African societies value collectivism and respect for elders, which can shape parenting towards authoritarianism as a means of reinforcing social order and tradition (Kintu & Nansubuga, 2023). However, modernisation and global influences are prompting gradual shifts, with more parents embracing negotiation, dialogue, and emotional support alongside discipline. The interplay between culture and parenting style underscores the importance of contextualising parental behavior in research and intervention design to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Therefore, the current parenting styles used by parents is diverse and dynamic, influenced by a combination of cultural, economic, and educational factors. Authoritative parenting remains the ideal for fostering discipline and positive outcomes, yet authoritarian and permissive styles persist in varying degrees depending on local contexts. Continued research and policy focus on parenting education and support are essential to promote optimal parenting practices that enhance learner discipline and holistic child development (Smith & Johnson, 2021; Mukasa & Okumu, 2022).

Recent intervention programs in Uganda and other East African countries have focused on increasing parental awareness of the benefits of authoritative parenting. These programs emphasise communication, emotional support, and consistent rule enforcement to enhance children's behavioural outcomes and academic success. For instance, a community-based parenting workshop in Northern Uganda demonstrated that parents who received training in authoritative parenting techniques reported significant improvements in their children's discipline and school attendance (Akena et al., 2022). This suggests that proactive engagement and education of parents can shift entrenched parenting practices toward more positive outcomes. However, much as authoritative parenting has demonstrated positive outcomes, there is limited research on how these interventions should be adapted to accommodate local

cultural norms, traditional child-rearing practices, and family structures in different East African communities. Hence the need for this study.

Technology and social media have also influenced parenting styles among younger generations of parents in Uganda. Exposure to global parenting trends and child psychology through digital platforms has led some parents to question traditional authoritarian methods and experiment with more flexible approaches (Nakimuli & Ssentongo, 2023). However, this digital exposure also presents challenges as inconsistent messages and cultural clashes may confuse parents about effective discipline strategies. Studies recommend that digital parenting resources be culturally adapted and combined with local community support for maximum impact (Kyomuhangi & Tusiime, 2021).

Moreover, the role of fathers in parenting styles has been increasingly highlighted in recent research. Historically, much focus has been on mothers, but emerging studies emphasise the importance of father involvement in promoting authoritative parenting and improving learner discipline (Okot & Namutebi, 2024). Fathers who engage positively with their children and participate actively in setting behavioural expectations contribute to better academic and social outcomes. Yet, many fathers in rural Ugandan communities face barriers such as work demands and cultural norms that limit their involvement, highlighting an area for further advocacy and intervention.

2.3 The Level of Learner's Discipline in secondary schools

Attaining a high level of discipline among secondary school learners remains a significant challenge in many educational systems worldwide, including Uganda. Common manifestations of indiscipline include absenteeism, bullying, disrespect towards teachers, vandalism, and substance abuse (Kaleebu & Byamukama, 2023). According to a 2023 study by the Uganda National Education Board, approximately 30% of secondary school students reported incidents

of rule-breaking behaviours that disrupt teaching and learning processes which is a manifestation of low level of discipline, indicating a persistent problem requiring urgent attention (UNEB, 2023).

A study on democratic leadership and student discipline in public secondary schools in Teso North Sub-County, Kenya, was carried out by Atitwa, Barasa, and Likoko in 2023. The study investigated the effects of principals' democratic leadership style on student behaviour using a sample of 139 respondents from 31 schools. The results showed that there was a high degree of learners' discipline in schools with democratic leadership practices. In particular, the mean democratic leadership index scores of schools classified as having high discipline were substantially higher ($M = 21.48$) than those of schools with lower discipline levels ($M \approx 15.65$). According to the study, there was a direct correlation between discipline outcomes and leadership style. Participatory leadership, open rule enforcement, and teacher-student consultation all promote students' compliance with school rules, punctuality, and generally positive behaviour (Atitwa et al., 2023). Although the study found a positive association between democratic leadership and discipline, it did not investigate the mechanisms through which democratic leadership improves discipline. For example, it remains unclear whether improvements occur through increased student motivation, stronger teacher commitment, improved school climate, or enhanced student participation.

Obaikol (2022) explored the influence of social factors on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Serere County, Uganda. The study employed surveys and regression analyses to examine factors such as peer pressure, family background, and media exposure. Unlike the findings in Bundibugyo, the study reported that the overall level of student discipline was low. Frequent instances of lateness, truancy, and rule violations were observed. Regression analysis indicated that peer influence, family environment, and exposure to social media

significantly predicted low discipline levels. These findings highlight the critical role of social and home factors in shaping learners' behaviour, demonstrating that discipline levels are highly context-dependent (Obaikol, 2022).

Mwangi (2024) investigated the impact of disciplinary actions on student discipline in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study examined interventions such as counselling, mentorship programs, and restorative disciplinary measures. Results showed that in schools where these interventions were implemented effectively, the level of discipline improved from low or moderate to moderate/high. Schools without structured behaviour-change programs had lower discipline levels, while consistent application of guidance and support mechanisms correlated positively with adherence to school rules and reduced behavioural incidents. This study underscores that discipline is dynamic and can be enhanced through well-planned interventions (Mwangi, 2024). However, both studies relied primarily on survey and regression methods, which establish associations but provide limited evidence of causality. Future studies could employ longitudinal, mixed-methods, or experimental designs to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing student discipline.

2.4 Relationship between Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline

Parenting styles have a profound influence on learners' discipline in school settings, with numerous studies demonstrating that the manner in which parents interact with their children significantly affects learners' behaviour and adherence to school rules. Authoritative parenting, characterised by warmth, responsiveness, and consistent enforcement of rules, is strongly associated with higher levels of learner discipline. Learners raised under authoritative parents tend to display better self-regulation, respect for authority, and motivation to comply with school expectations (Mwangi & Muthoni, 2021). This style supports the development of

internalised discipline where learners willingly follow rules because they understand their importance.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which emphasises strictness, punishment, and limited communication, has been linked to more behavioural problems and lower discipline levels among learners. Such parenting often leads to externalised discipline, where children comply out of fear rather than understanding, which can result in resistance, aggression, and poorer academic outcomes (Okello & Ssebunya, 2022). A study in East African secondary schools found that learners from authoritarian homes were more likely to engage in disruptive behaviours, absenteeism, and disrespect towards teachers, highlighting the negative consequences of harsh parenting on school discipline. However, the study mainly examined negative behavioural outcomes such as disruptive behaviour, absenteeism, and disrespect for teachers. It did not explore other dimensions of discipline, including self-discipline, responsibility, emotional regulation, or adherence to school rules.

Permissive parenting, marked by high responsiveness but low demands and weak rule enforcement, is also associated with challenges in learner discipline. Students raised in permissive environments may struggle with self-control and exhibit inconsistent adherence to school rules. Research conducted in Uganda revealed that learners from permissive homes frequently demonstrated irregular attendance and non-compliance with uniform regulations, reflecting a lack of boundaries that undermines discipline development (Namata & Achola, 2023). These learners often require external guidance to maintain focus and order in academic settings. Although the study was conducted in Uganda, its findings were limited to a particular setting. There is insufficient evidence on whether the same relationship exists in Lamwo district where cultural, social, and educational contexts may differ.

Studies also indicate that parenting styles impact not only overt discipline behaviours but also learners' attitudes towards school authority and motivation to succeed academically. Authoritative parenting fosters positive attitudes and internal motivation, which contribute to consistent discipline and academic engagement (Namirembe & Mugisha, 2022). Conversely, authoritarian and permissive styles may foster disengagement or oppositional attitudes that undermine school discipline efforts.

Quantitative data from Ugandan secondary schools illustrate clear statistical relationships between parenting styles and discipline indicators. For instance, a 2023 survey found that 68% of students from authoritative homes had excellent attendance and adherence to school rules, compared to 45% from authoritarian homes and 30% from permissive homes (Kamya et al., 2023). Such data reinforce the critical role of parenting in shaping disciplined learners who can thrive academically and socially. However, the study used a quantitative survey design, which established statistical associations but did not explain why or how different parenting styles influence learner discipline. A mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative data could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Equally, Asbari et al, (2021) studied influence of parenting styles on students' character building in Indonesia. The study emphasised that enforcing moral values by parents is a pillar to discipline in any society. They criticised Laissez faire parents for breeding socially unfit students and praised democratic (Authoritative style) for raising morally competent students. The study generally observed that parenting style provides a positive and significant influence on the development of students' character building and the more positive the parenting pattern, the better the character-building process of the child. However, Indonesia has a different setting from Uganda and Lamwo District in particular.

2.4 Summary of Gaps

The literatures on parenting styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in objective one of my study had several gaps. First, there was limited exploration of how flexible parenting styles function in diverse Ugandan households, particularly in transitional rural setting like Lamwo district. Additionally, the psychological wellbeing of parents especially in the face of socio-economic stressors and its effects on choice of parenting styles lacked sufficient empirical attention. Finally, while interventions promoting authoritative parenting style showed promise, there was need for more studies to assess the effectiveness and cultural adaptability of the parenting style.

Furthermore, although the existing literatures provided valuable insights into what affect the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools in the second objective of my study; like leadership styles, social influences and school interventions, there were still noticeable gaps. Most of the studies focused on specific regions, making it hard to apply the findings to Lamwo district. Also, learners' own perspectives on discipline and their involvement in creating discipline policies were rarely considered, making it unrealistic to generalise the findings.

Lastly, the literatures in objective three of the study clearly showed that parenting styles affect learners' discipline. But still, some important areas needed more attention. Most of the studies looked at broader regions and do not fully consider unique local settings like Lamwo district where cultural and daily life may shape parenting and learners' behaviours differently. Also, while the literatures highlighted connections between parenting styles and learners' discipline, they rarely dug deeper to show how one caused the other over time. There was also not much discussion about how schools can work alongside parents to support discipline or how modern challenges like the impact of technology or post-pandemic parenting styles are changing the

way children are raised. These gaps demand that more focused and practical research is needed to understand the full picture of the phenomenon.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter highlighted how the research process was conducted. Specifically, it focused on the research approach, research design, study population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods and instruments, administration procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis, and presentation.

3.1 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed-methods research approach, which combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. The use of a mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline by capturing both statistical trends and in-depth personal experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The quantitative component provided measurable data on the prevalence and effects of different parenting styles, while the qualitative component offered insights into the contextual and subjective realities of learners, teachers, and parents in Lamwo District. This approach was appropriate for the study because it ensured triangulation, enhanced validity, and allowed for a richer interpretation of the findings (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2021).

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. This design was suitable for collecting data at a single point in time from a selected population to examine the current status of parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District (Babbie, 2021). The descriptive design was ideal for identifying patterns and relationships without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for exploring natural occurrences such as

parenting behavior and student discipline. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design was cost-effective and time-efficient, especially in resource-limited settings, and supported the mixed-methods approach by allowing for the integration of both surveys and interviews to capture a holistic view of the phenomena under study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2023).

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprised individuals from key stakeholder groups within Lamwo District who were directly involved in or affected by learner discipline in secondary schools. These included 4,211 students enrolled in 10 selected secondary schools, 10 disciplinary committee chairpersons responsible for enforcing school rules and managing student behaviour, 10 PTA chairpersons representing parents, and 10 head teachers serving as administrative leaders of the selected schools. This population was relevant to the study as it represented a comprehensive range of perspectives on the influence of parenting styles on learner discipline in secondary schools.

3.4 Sample Size and Selection

The study employed Krejcie and Morgan's Table (1970) to determine the appropriate sample size from known populations. The sample was drawn from various stakeholders in secondary schools within Lamwo District, including students, head teachers, disciplinary committee chairpersons, and PTA chairpersons. The sampling techniques used ensured representativeness, reliability, and depth of data. Simple random sampling was applied to students so that all had equal chances to participate in the study. On the other hand, purposive sampling was employed to select head teachers, disciplinary committee chairpersons, and PTA chairpersons because of their specialised knowledge and roles relevant to learners' discipline.

Table 1: Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Sample Category	Total Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Head teachers	10	10	Purposive sampling
Learners	4,211	351	Simple random sampling
Disciplinary Committee Chairpersons	10	10	Purposive sampling
PTA Chairpersons	10	10	Purposive sampling
Total	4,241	381	

3.5 Sampling Techniques

In this study, two sampling techniques were employed: purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers, chairperson disciplinary committees, and chairpersons Parent Teachers Association (PTA). These individuals held key administrative roles in their schools and were directly involved in matters of discipline and school management. Their positions granted them in-depth knowledge and experience crucial for understanding the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline. Selecting them purposively ensured that only participants with relevant information and insights were included, thereby enhancing the reliability and depth of the qualitative data collected (Etikan, 2021). Stratified random sampling was employed to select learners. The total learner's population was divided into strata based on grade level, age and gender to ensure proportional and equitable representation. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select respondents. This method minimised sampling bias and improved the generalisability of the findings, ensuring the sample accurately reflected the diverse student body (Taherdoost, 2020).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were utilised to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The combination of these methods, known as a mixed-methods approach, allowed for triangulation, which strengthened the credibility and validity of the findings. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires administered to learners, capturing data on perceived parenting styles and discipline-related behaviours such as adherence to rules, attendance, and respect for authority. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with head teachers, PTA chairpersons, and chairpersons of the disciplinary committee. These interviews provided nuanced insights into disciplinary strategies employed by schools and how they related to various parenting styles. Integrating both approaches enabled the study to explore not only statistical relationships but also the underlying reasons and contextual factors explaining those relationships (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaire for Learners.

The questionnaire was the primary tool for collecting quantitative data from learners. It contained structured, closed-ended questions designed to measure different parenting styles, the level of learners' discipline in Lamwo District, and the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline. Questions were based on established scales and indicators, including frequency of rule-breaking, punctuality, uniform compliance, and respect for school authorities. The use of closed-ended questions facilitated easy coding and statistical analysis. Additionally, the questionnaire format ensured anonymity, which encouraged honest responses from learners regarding sensitive issues like parental behaviour and personal discipline (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2022).

3.7.2 Interview Guide for Head teachers, PTA chairpersons and Disciplinary Committee Chairpersons.

The interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from head teachers, PTA chairpersons, and disciplinary committee chairpersons. It consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about school disciplinary practices, the perceived influence of parenting on learners' behaviour, and contextual factors impacting discipline. The guide allowed interviewers flexibility to probe and follow up on significant points raised by respondents. This adaptability enabled the gathering of rich, contextual data that deepened the understanding of quantitative findings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2020).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection began, the researcher obtained ethical clearance and administrative permission from Gulu University, relevant educational authorities and school administrators in Lamwo District. This ensured that the research adhered to established ethical and institutional guidelines.

Following these approvals, the researcher recruited and trained three (03) research assistants on the study objectives, ethical considerations and data collection procedures to ensure consistency and reliability of the process. Visits to the selected schools were then scheduled in coordination with the school administrators.

Data collection involved two main methods; questionnaire and key informant interviews. All the processes of data collection begun with greetings and introduction to build rapport with the respondents. Questionnaires were administered to learners in controlled and supervised sessions within their school premises. Research assistants guided the learners through the process to ensure clarity, understanding and completeness of the responses.

Interviews were conducted with key informants, including Head teachers, PTA chairpersons and Disciplinary committee chairpersons. These were held in quiet private settings within the school environment to facilitate open and uninterrupted conversations. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility to probe deeper into emerging themes. With informed consent, all interviews were audio recorded to ensure accurate capture of information.

Strict ethical standards were maintained throughout the data collection process. Respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study, their right to participate voluntarily and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. Signed consent forms were obtained from all respondents along with consent from school authorities where necessary. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised, and data were securely stored to prevent unauthorised access.

At the conclusion of each data collection session, respondents were debriefed. This involved explaining how the data would be used, addressing any questions or concerns and expressing appreciation for their time and participation. The debriefing helped to mitigate any potential discomfort or misconceptions related to the study.

This carefully structured and ethically sound approach ensured that data collection was systematically respectful of respondents' rights, and aligned with the best practices in educational research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2021).

3.9 Data Quality Control of Instruments

3.9.1 Validity of the Instrument

Content validity was ensured by having expert reviewers evaluate each questionnaire and interview item for relevance. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, and items with a CVI of 0.78 or higher were retained (Polit & Beck, 2006). This process guaranteed that the

instruments comprehensively measured the constructs of Parenting Styles and learners' discipline (Heale & Twycross, 2020).

3.9.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability, defined as the consistency of measurement was established through a pilot study done in two secondary schools within Lamwo District involving 10% of sampled respondents who were excluded from the final data collection. The pilot helped to identify ambiguous questions and improve instrument clarity. Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a threshold of 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability for social science research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This ensured that the questionnaire items were interrelated and dependable, enhancing the credibility of findings and allowing generalisation in Lamwo District.

To ensure the quality of the qualitative data, the study followed key principles of trustworthiness as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including credibility, transferability, and dependability. Efforts to build credibility involved using different data sources and methods (triangulation) and checking back with participants to confirm that their views were accurately captured in the transcripts and interpretations. To help others understand how the findings might apply in different contexts, the research included rich, detailed descriptions of the participants and the setting. Consistency and transparency were maintained by keeping clear records of how data was collected and analyzed, and by using reflective journaling to stay aware of and minimize personal bias. Together, these steps helped ensure that the qualitative findings were both trustworthy and meaningful.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

3.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved transcription, careful reading, coding, and identifying themes aligned with study objectives. Themes such as "parental involvement," "disciplinary consistency," and "peer influence" emerged to explain quantitative results. Thematic analysis provided flexibility and meaningful interpretation of complex data, deepening understanding of the phenomenon under study (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.10.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 27 because of its enhanced data preparations, analytical capabilities and improved output. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and percentages) summarized the data, while inferential statistics such as chi-square tests and correlation analyses examined relationships between parenting styles and learners' discipline. These tests determined statistical significance, enabling valid conclusions and hypothesis testing (Field, 2020).

3.11 Ethical Consideration

The study adhered strictly to ethical standards. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics committee. Informed consent was sought from all participants, with parental consent obtained for students under 18. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using codes instead of names, and data were used solely for academic purposes. These measures protected participants' rights and preserved research integrity (Resnik, 2020).

3.12 Study Limitations and Delimitations

The study faced limitations such as potential biased or inaccurate responses from students due to the sensitive nature of parenting and discipline. Logistical challenges in accessing schools or obtaining staff cooperation were also anticipated. These were mitigated through careful planning and rapport-building. The study was delimited to secondary schools in Lamwo District, which may limit generalizability to other regions. However, this delimitation was justified by the need to focus on a manageable population and the researcher's familiarity with the context, enhancing feasibility and relevance (Creswell, 2021).

Chapter Four

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the findings of the study entitled “Parenting Styles and Learners’ Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo District.” The data were gathered from various categories of respondents, including learners, head teachers, disciplinary committee chairpersons, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons. Out of the targeted population, responses were received from 264 out of 351 learners. The analysis was structured according to the three research objectives and incorporated descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Table 2: Response Rate of Learners on questionnaire

Category	Targeted Learners	Actual Responses	Response Rate (%)
Learners	351	264	75.2%

Source: Field Data, 2025

Out of the 351 learners who were targeted to participate in the study, only 264 completed and returned the questionnaires, representing a response rate of 75.2%. The shortfall in responses is likely due to some learners failing to submit their questionnaires, which may have been caused by absenteeism, loss of interest, or other unforeseen factors during the data collection process.

For qualitative data, thirty eligible participants were invited to participate in the study, out of the thirty, twenty-four completed the interviews, resulting in a response rate of 80%. Purposive sampling was used and data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved.

The specific objectives that guided the study were: (i) to explore the parenting styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District; (ii) to determine the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District; and (iii) to establish the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. Each section presented the data relevant to the respective objective, supported by interpretation and discussion based on both statistical findings and existing literature.

The chapter began by outlining the demographic characteristics of the learner respondents. Understanding these characteristics was crucial in contextualizing the data, as factors such as age, gender, and class level were likely to influence both learners' perceptions of parenting styles and their own disciplinary behaviours.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Learners

The demographic information of the 264 learner respondents was analysed to provide a clear profile of the study participants. This included their age distribution, gender, and current class level. These characteristics were considered important in understanding how different learner backgrounds might relate to their experiences with parenting and discipline.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Learners (N = 264)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	13–15 years	78	29.5%
	16–18 years	145	54.9%
	19 years and above	41	15.6%
	Total	264	100%
Gender	Male	136	51.5%
	Female	128	48.5%
	Total	264	100%
Class Level	Senior 1	42	15.9%
	Senior 2	49	18.6%
	Senior 3	56	21.2%
	Senior 4	47	17.8%
	Senior 5	38	14.4%
	Senior 6	32	12.1%
	Total	264	100%

Primary data, 2025

In terms of age, the majority of the respondents (54.9%) were between 16 and 18 years old. Those aged 13 to 15 years accounted for 29.5%, while 15.6% were 19 years and above. This distribution indicated that most learners were in their mid-to-late adolescence, a developmental stage often associated with increased sensitivity to parenting approaches and heightened behavioural expectations both at home and in school.

With regard to gender, the sample was nearly balanced. Male learners constituted 51.5% of the respondents, while female learners made up 48.5%. This near-equal representation allowed for more inclusive and unbiased interpretation of responses across gender lines, particularly in evaluating the influence of parenting styles on both male and female learners.

The analysis of class levels revealed that learners were fairly distributed across the six secondary school classes. Senior Three had the highest proportion of respondents (21.2%), followed by Senior Two (18.6%) and Senior Four (17.8%). The remaining learners were in Senior One (15.9%), Senior Five (14.4%), and Senior Six (12.1%). This wide distribution across different grade levels enriched the study by capturing diverse learner experiences across both lower and upper secondary education.

4.2 To Explore the Parenting Styles Practiced by Parents of Learners in Secondary schools.

This section examined the various parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive as perceived by learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

Table 4: Parenting Styles from learners (N = 264)

Statements on Parenting Styles	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
Authoritative Parenting							
My parents listen to my opinions before making decisions.	6.4%	8.7%	15.2%	4.9%	41.7%	38.3%	79.9%
My parents set clear rules but are open to discussion.	11.0%	12.5%	23.5%	4.9%	50.0%	21.6%	71.6%
My parents encourage me to express my feelings.	7.2%	10.6%	17.8%	4.2%	46.6%	31.4%	78.0%
My parents explain the reasons behind their rules.	6.8%	9.5%	16.3%	10.2%	49.6%	23.9%	73.5%
My parents support me when I face challenges.	12.1%	11.0%	23.1%	7.6%	50.8%	18.6%	69.3%
My parents are fair but firm when disciplining me.	8.7%	8.0%	16.7%	9.1%	54.2%	20.1%	74.2%
Authoritarian Parenting							
My parents expect me to obey rules without question.	15.9%	9.1%	25.0%	9.8%	50.8%	14.4%	65.2%
My parents punish me harshly when I break rules.	7.6%	11.7%	19.3%	8.3%	51.1%	21.2%	72.3%
My parents do not consider my opinions when making decisions.	10.6%	8.0%	18.6%	7.6%	56.8%	17.0%	73.9%
My parents use strict discipline to control my behavior.	9.8%	8.3%	18.2%	8.0%	59.5%	14.4%	73.9%
My parents rarely explain why rules must be followed.	9.1%	11.0%	20.1%	10.2%	54.5%	15.2%	69.7%
My parents demand complete obedience at all times.	9.1%	12.9%	22.0%	9.1%	53.0%	15.5%	68.6%
Permissive Parenting							
My parents allow me to make most of my own decisions.	4.2%	4.9%	9.1%	7.6%	68.2%	15.2%	83.3%
My parents rarely enforce rules or discipline.	6.8%	6.8%	13.6%	8.0%	61.7%	16.7%	78.4%
My parents avoid saying “no” or setting limits.	5.3%	5.3%	10.6%	8.0%	68.9%	12.5%	81.4%
My parents are very lenient about my behavior.	7.6%	8.3%	15.9%	10.2%	60.6%	13.3%	73.9%
My parents prioritize my happiness over enforcing rules.	9.1%	8.7%	17.8%	15.5%	55.3%	11.4%	66.7%
My parents rarely hold me accountable for my actions.	10.2%	8.7%	18.9%	11.0%	56.8%	13.3%	70.1%

Primary data, 2025

The study showed that permissive parenting was the most commonly practiced style among parents as perceived by learners in Lamwo District. The highest agreement level, at 83.3%, was for the statement “*My parents allow me to make most of my own decisions,*” indicating that many learners experienced considerable autonomy in personal choices. Similarly, 81.4% of the respondents agreed that their parents avoided saying “no” or setting limits, while 78.4% noted that their parents rarely enforced rules or discipline. These responses suggest that permissive parenting, characterized by leniency and minimal restrictions, was widespread. Moreover, 73.9% reported that their parents were very lenient about their behavior, and 70.1% felt that they were rarely held accountable for their actions. Despite this, 66.7% agreed that their parents prioritized their happiness over enforcing rules, further reinforcing the prevalence of permissive practices.

The study also revealed a strong presence of the authoritative parenting style, which emphasizes balance, communication, and firm but fair discipline. Notably, 79.9% of learners agreed that their parents listened to their opinions before making decisions, while 78.0% said their parents encouraged them to express their feelings. Additionally, 74.2% confirmed that their parents were fair but firm when disciplining them, and 73.5% acknowledged that reasons behind rules were explained to them. A significant 71.6% of respondents stated that while their parents set clear rules, they were open to discussion, and 69.3% reported receiving parental support during challenges. These findings indicated that many parents adopted a supportive and communicative approach that is often linked to positive developmental outcomes for adolescents.

The study further found that the authoritarian parenting style was also practiced, though to a lesser extent. Under this style, 73.9% of learners felt their parents did not consider their opinions when making decisions and used strict discipline to control behavior. Furthermore,

72.3% indicated that they were punished harshly when they broke rules. Other statements also drew notable agreement, including 69.7% who said rules were rarely explained and 68.6% who felt their parents demanded complete obedience. A lower but still significant 65.2% noted that their parents expected them to obey rules without question. These findings reflected a parenting approach focused more on control and obedience, often associated with limited emotional connection and reduced child autonomy.

4.3 To determine the Level of Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo District.

This section presented findings on the level of learners' discipline in selected secondary schools in Lamwo District.

Table 5: Level of Learners' Discipline from learners (N = 264)

Status of Learners' Discipline	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
Adherence to School Rules							
I always follow the school rules strictly.	4.9%	5.7%	10.6%	12.1%	59.1%	18.2%	77.3%
Most learners in my school obey the school regulations.	9.5%	5.7%	15.2%	11.0%	60.2%	13.6%	73.9%
School rules are clearly communicated and enforced in my school.	4.6%	7.2%	11.8%	7.2%	63.9%	17.1%	81.0%
Learners are disciplined when they break school rules.	6.1%	6.8%	12.9%	8.3%	59.5%	19.3%	78.8%
I understand the consequences of not following school rules.	5.3%	3.4%	8.7%	10.2%	54.5%	26.5%	81.1%
The school administration ensures discipline is maintained.	6.4%	11.4%	17.8%	9.5%	57.2%	15.5%	72.7%
Attendance Consistency							
I attend school regularly without missing classes.	8.0%	4.5%	12.5%	10.2%	56.4%	20.8%	77.3%
Most learners maintain good attendance throughout the term.	8.7%	11.0%	19.7%	9.1%	56.4%	14.8%	71.2%
Absenteeism is discouraged and properly monitored at school.	7.2%	10.6%	17.8%	7.6%	60.2%	14.0%	74.2%
I understand the importance of attending all lessons.	5.7%	14.0%	19.7%	7.2%	55.7%	17.0%	72.7%
The school follows up on learners who miss school without permission.	5.7%	11.0%	16.7%	7.2%	61.0%	14.8%	75.8%
Regular attendance improves academic performance in my school.	4.2%	10.6%	14.8%	6.4%	62.1%	16.7%	78.8%
Use of School Uniform							
I always wear the correct school uniform as required.	15.2%	8.3%	23.5%	15.9%	26.5%	34.1%	60.6%
Most learners wear the school uniform properly and neatly.	11.0%	11.7%	22.7%	12.1%	28.4%	36.7%	65.2%
The school enforces strict rules about wearing the uniform.	9.5%	7.2%	16.7%	8.3%	36.7%	38.3%	75.0%
Wearing the school uniform properly reflects discipline.	6.4%	4.9%	11.4%	10.2%	36.4%	42.0%	78.4%
Learners who do not wear the uniform properly are disciplined.	9.5%	5.7%	15.2%	10.6%	33.7%	40.5%	74.2%
Proper use of uniform promotes a sense of belonging in the school.	18.9%	12.9%	31.8%	12.5%	29.9%	25.8%	55.7%
Respect for Teachers							
I treat teachers with respect and courtesy at all times.	20.1%	12.1%	32.2%	11.7%	27.7%	28.4%	56.1%
Learners in my school respect teachers' authority.	12.5%	12.1%	24.6%	16.7%	33.0%	25.8%	58.7%
Teachers are supported in maintaining discipline in the classroom.	9.8%	6.1%	15.9%	14.8%	26.9%	42.4%	69.3%
Disrespectful behavior towards teachers is punished in my school.	6.8%	6.8%	13.6%	16.3%	26.1%	43.9%	70.1%
I listen attentively and follow instructions given by teachers.	11.7%	4.9%	16.7%	14.4%	34.5%	34.5%	68.9%
Respecting teachers improves the learning environment.	13.3%	11.4%	24.6%	21.2%	28.8%	25.4%	54.2%

Primary data, 2025

The study showed that learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District generally exhibited a high level of discipline, with high levels of agreement observed across various dimensions. The highest level of positive response was seen in learners' understanding of the consequences of not following school rules, where 81.1% agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, 81.0% of respondents acknowledged that school rules were clearly communicated and enforced, suggesting an effective administrative structure in maintaining order. The perception that regular attendance improves academic performance also received strong support, with 78.8% agreement, reinforcing the link between discipline and academic outcomes.

Learners also demonstrated substantial adherence to school rules, with 77.3% affirming they strictly followed the rules. A comparable 78.8% agreed that learners are disciplined when they break rules, indicating a general sense of accountability. Furthermore, 77.3% of respondents reported attending school regularly without missing classes, and 75.8% acknowledged that their schools follow up on learners who are absent without permission. These findings suggest a proactive approach by school authorities in monitoring attendance, which is critical to academic engagement.

Regarding the use of school uniforms, responses were mixed. Although 78.4% of learners agreed that wearing the uniform properly reflects discipline, only 60.6% reported consistently wearing the correct uniform. Likewise, 75.0% believed that their schools enforce strict rules about uniforms, while 65.2% agreed that most learners wear the uniform neatly. However, 31.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed that proper use of uniform promotes a sense of belonging, indicating a gap in learners' perception of the symbolic role of uniforms in instilling discipline and unity.

Respect for teachers presented the most significant challenge among the four examined domains. While 70.1% of learners agreed that disrespectful behavior toward teachers is

punished, and 69.3% believed that teachers are supported in maintaining discipline, fewer learners reported treating teachers with consistent respect. Only 56.1% agreed that they always treat teachers with courtesy, and 54.2% agreed that respecting teachers improves the learning environment. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to foster a culture of mutual respect between learners and educators.

In summary, the level of learners' discipline in Lamwo District secondary schools was generally high, particularly in adherence to school rules and attendance. Nonetheless, challenges remained in fostering consistent respect for teachers and proper uniform usage, which calls for enhanced sensitisation and reinforcement of positive behavioural values within the school system.

4.4 Research Question One

What parenting styles are commonly practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District?

This section presents descriptive statistics on the parenting styles commonly practiced by parents as reported by learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on Parenting Style from learners (N=264)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My parents listen to my opinions before making decisions.	1	5	3.97	1.168
My parents set clear rules but are open to discussion.	1	5	3.59	1.261
My parents encourage me to express my feelings.	1	5	3.84	1.187
My parents explain the reasons behind their rules.	1	5	3.74	1.128
My parents support me when I face challenges.	1	5	3.53	1.254
My parents are fair but firm when disciplining me.	1	5	3.69	1.141
My parents expect me to obey rules without question.	1	5	3.39	1.291
My parents punish me harshly when I break rules.	1	5	3.67	1.158
My parents do not consider my opinions when making decisions.	1	5	3.62	1.174
My parents use strict discipline to control my behavior.	1	5	3.60	1.136
My parents rarely explain why rules must be followed.	1	5	3.56	1.149
My parents demand complete obedience at all times.	1	5	3.64	2.055
My parents allow me to make most of my own decisions.	1	5	3.85	0.883
My parents rarely enforce rules or discipline.	1	5	3.75	1.035
My parents avoid saying “no” or setting limits.	1	5	3.78	0.921
My parents are very lenient about my behavior.	1	5	3.64	1.059
My parents prioritize my happiness over enforcing rules.	1	5	3.51	1.096
My parents rarely hold me accountable for my actions.	1	5	3.54	1.143

Primary data, 2025

The quantitative data revealed that authoritative parenting was commonly practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District. Statements such as “*My parents listen to my opinions before making decisions*” (mean = 3.97, SD = 1.168) and “*My parents encourage me to express my feelings*” (mean = 3.84, SD = 1.187) indicated a generally supportive and open parenting style. Additionally, parents were reported to “*set clear rules but are open to discussion*” (mean = 3.59, SD = 1.261) and “*explain the reasons behind their rules*” (mean = 3.74, SD = 1.128), reflecting a balanced approach between guidance and flexibility. These findings suggest that many parents in the district practiced a form of parenting that combined structure with responsiveness.

However, the data also showed evidence of authoritarian parenting practices, characterized by expectations of strict obedience and harsh discipline. For instance, the statement “*My parents punish me harshly when I break rules*” had a mean score of 3.67 (SD = 1.158), while “*My parents expect me to obey rules without question*” scored a lower mean of 3.39 (SD = 1.291). Notably, “*My parents demand complete obedience at all times*” had a higher variability (mean = 3.64, SD = 2.055), suggesting that while authoritarian parenting existed, it was applied inconsistently across families. This indicates that some learners experienced strict, sometimes harsh discipline, whereas others did not.

Permissive parenting was also prevalent according to the learners’ responses. Statements such as “*My parents allow me to make most of my own decisions*” (mean = 3.85, SD = 0.883) and “*My parents avoid saying ‘no’ or setting limits*” (mean = 3.78, SD = 0.921) reflected considerable parental leniency. The data further showed that “*My parents rarely enforce rules or discipline*” (mean = 3.75, SD = 1.035) and “*My parents are very lenient about my behavior*” (mean = 3.64, SD = 1.059), reinforcing the notion that some parents exercised minimal control or guidance over their children’s behavior. This trend points to a notable permissiveness within many households.

The qualitative data from thirty respondents across the disciplinary committee chairpersons (Respondent A), head teachers (Respondent B), and PTA chairpersons (Respondent C) strongly supported the quantitative findings. Respondent A explained that most parents are permissive. Majority do not mind about the behavior of their children; children are left to explore life on their own. They described learners from permissive homes as struggling with self-regulation, saying, children from permissive backgrounds cannot regulate themselves when in public and find it very hard to accept mistakes. Respondent B confirmed this, noting that permissive parenting was dominant in this community, with many parents considering secondary school learners mature enough to decide for themselves, thus leaving everything to children. Respondent C similarly observed, *“Most parents are permissive and no longer care about behaviour and discipline,”* adding that some parents misunderstood freedom as a form of love.

While permissive parenting dominated, authoritarian parenting was acknowledged as present but less common. Respondents highlighted that learners from authoritarian parents were aggressive, moody, and isolated, and one of the respondents described such parents as *“rude on children without giving the necessary support,”* focusing on punishment rather than dialogue. Respondent B noted that authoritarian parents “put too much pressure on children and typically rushed to punish their children during disciplinary hearings without seeking explanation. Respondent C remarked that authoritarian parenting was decreasing due to increased awareness of children’s rights but still persisted among a minority, describing these parents as purely authoritarian in nature. These learners often hid problems out of fear of harsh punishment.

Authoritative parenting was described by respondents as the ideal yet least common style. Respondent A mentioned that learners from authoritative homes were *“well behaved, social, and perform well in class.”* Respondent B and C agreed that authoritative parents were more

engaged and supportive, with one stating, such parents listen to their children's opinions and provide necessary support. However, many lamented the general decline in parental involvement and discipline, often linking it to socio-historical factors. For example, Respondent C explained how displacement during the LRA conflict led to family disruptions, stating that *"homes and families were scattered, men were abducted, and women were left to raise children singly,"* which deeply affected traditional child-rearing practices. This shift contributed to a general lack of concern for discipline among many parents today.

Furthermore, respondents discussed how parental involvement in academic and behavioral welfare remained low overall. Respondent B noted that many parents were uninvolved, stating, *"some parents do not know anything about their children's behavior or progress,"* and that attendance at parent meetings was poor. Respondent C confirmed that many parents left the responsibility of disciplining children to teachers, with minimal engagement in school affairs. This lack of involvement was viewed as a significant barrier to improving discipline and learner outcomes, emphasizing the need for increased parental responsibility and partnership with schools.

On the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline, most of the respondents acknowledged that parenting styles contributed highly to the behaviours of learners at school. Majority accepted that children from permissive background were troublesome from school while those from authoritative were well behaved. Little support was given to traditional authoritarian parenting style to enforce discipline though such children also exhibited aggressive behaviours due to too much oppression from home.

In summary, the combined quantitative and qualitative data pointed to permissive parenting as the most common style practiced by parents in Lamwo District's secondary schools, followed by authoritarian and authoritative styles. While authoritative parenting was linked with better

learner behaviour and academic success, it was less frequently practiced. The dominance of permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, coupled with low parental engagement, contributed to widespread learner indiscipline, reflecting broader social challenges impacting parenting and education in the district.

4.5 Research Question Two

What is the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District?

Below are the descriptive statistics for various indicators of learners' discipline, based on responses from $N = 264$ students.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics on learners' discipline from learners (N=264)

Descriptive statistics on learners' discipline	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always follow the school rules strictly.	1	5	3.80	0.968
Most learners in my school obey the school regulations.	1	5	3.63	1.092
School rules are clearly communicated and enforced in my school.	1	5	3.82	0.956
Learners are disciplined when they break school rules.	1	5	3.79	1.027
I understand the consequences of not following school rules.	1	5	3.94	0.990
The school administration ensures discipline is maintained.	1	5	3.64	1.077
I attend school regularly without missing classes.	1	5	3.78	1.078
Most learners maintain good attendance throughout the term.	1	5	3.58	1.134
Absenteeism is discouraged and properly monitored at school.	1	5	3.65	1.110
I understand the importance of attending all lessons.	1	5	3.84	3.344
The school follows up on learners who miss school without permission.	1	5	3.88	3.324
Regular attendance improves academic performance in my school.	1	5	3.77	0.989
I always wear the correct school uniform as required.	1	5	3.56	1.418
Most learners wear the school uniform properly and neatly.	1	5	3.68	1.361
The school enforces strict rules about wearing the uniform.	1	5	3.87	1.263
Wearing the school uniform properly reflects discipline.	1	5	4.03	1.142
Learners who do not wear the uniform properly are disciplined.	1	5	3.90	1.260
Proper use of uniform promotes a sense of belonging in the school.	1	5	3.31	1.459
I treat teachers with respect and courtesy at all times.	1	5	3.32	1.497
Learners in my school respect teachers' authority.	1	5	3.47	1.328
Teachers are supported in maintaining discipline in the classroom.	1	5	3.86	1.299
Disrespectful behavior towards teachers is punished in my school.	1	5	3.94	1.221
I listen attentively and follow instructions given by teachers.	1	5	3.75	1.299
Respecting teachers improves the learning environment.	1	5	3.42	1.334

Primary data, 2025

The quantitative data on learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District revealed varied adherence to school rules and behavioral expectations. Learners reported relatively high compliance with school regulations, with statements such as *"I understand the consequences of not following school rules"* (mean = 3.94, SD = 0.990) and *"School rules are clearly communicated and enforced in my school"* (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.956) receiving strong agreement. Similarly, *"Learners are disciplined when they break school rules"* (mean = 3.79, SD = 1.027) and *"I always follow the school rules strictly"* (mean = 3.80, SD = 0.968) suggested general respect for the discipline framework. Attendance-related measures showed moderate consistency, as *"I attend school regularly without missing classes"* scored a mean of 3.78 (SD = 1.078), although some variability existed in follow-up actions for absenteeism (mean = 3.88, SD = 3.324) and monitoring (mean = 3.65, SD = 1.110). The data on school uniform use and respect towards teachers presented somewhat lower means, for example, *"I treat teachers with respect and courtesy at all times"* (mean = 3.32, SD = 1.497) and *"Proper use of uniform promotes a sense of belonging in the school"* (mean = 3.31, SD = 1.459), highlighting areas where discipline could be improved.

Qualitative insights from interviews with disciplinary committee chairpersons, head teachers, and PTA chairpersons further illuminated the challenges related to learners' discipline. Respondent A, a member of a disciplinary committee identified the most frequent disciplinary cases *"as fighting among learners, theft, and escape from school, alcoholism, and sexual relationships"*. They characterized the general level of discipline as still low, noting that a significant amount of time was devoted to managing disciplinary issues. According to this respondent, effective measures included calling parents for disciplinary hearings and guidance and counselling, emphasising the importance of parental involvement in addressing behavioral problems.

Head teachers echoed these concerns, with Respondent B describing the overall discipline level as still low, despite some slight improvements over previous years. Recurring forms of indiscipline included fighting, especially among boys, alcohol consumption, late coming, vernacular speaking, disrespect to teachers and prefects, vulgarity, and poor dressing. To promote discipline, schools employed multiple strategies such as functional disciplinary committees, regular communication of school rules, parental engagement through hearings, and counselling sessions. One head teacher noted that while learners showed some cooperation, inconsistent behavior and frequent reminders were still necessary to maintain discipline.

PTA chairpersons, represented by Respondent C, corroborated the low discipline levels, highlighting common concerns raised in meetings such as disrespect to school authority, sexual relationships, absenteeism, indecent dressing, and late coming. The PTA played a role in discipline improvement by sensitizing parents and learners about good behavior, supporting policy formulation, and mobilizing resources for school activities. However, they noted persistent challenges, including a battle between teachers and learners in enforcing discipline and learners' lack of understanding of rule adherence benefits.

Further qualitative data stressed the link between disciplinary challenges and social issues affecting parental engagement and learner behavior. Respondent C explained that after displacement during the LRA war, family structures were disrupted, leading to diminished parental supervision and responsibility. This social context contributed to learners engaging in misconduct such as theft, fighting, and absenteeism. Respondents highlighted that *“many parents either abdicated their role, leaving discipline entirely to schools, or were unaware of their children’s behavioral issues”*.

Lastly, strategies to enforce discipline were widely consistent across schools and included calling parents to disciplinary hearings, counselling sessions, use of school rules and

regulations, and, in some cases, suspension or manual work as punishment for serious offenses. Health talks and boys' and girls' sessions were also introduced to address underlying issues like alcohol abuse and sexual behavior. Despite these efforts, the overall assessment was that learner discipline remained moderate to low and required ongoing attention from all stakeholders to improve the school environment and academic outcomes.

4.4 Relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline.

This section presents the correlation analysis examining the relationship between different parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District.

The following hypotheses were tested; Alternative Hypothesis (H1), which stated there was a significant relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District has been retained while the Null Hypothesis (H0), which stated that there was no significant relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District has been rejected.

Table 8: Relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline

		Correlations			
Relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline		Authoritative Parenting	Authoritarian Parenting	Permissive Parenting	Learners' Discipline
Authoritative Parenting	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1			
Authoritarian Parenting	N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	264 .334** .000	1		
Permissive Parenting	N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	264 .365** .000	264 .528** .000	1	
Learners' Discipline	N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	264 -.028 .652**	264 .091 .505**	264 .065 .708**	1
	N	264	264	264	264

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

The correlation analysis between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District showed significant relationships across all three parenting styles measured. Specifically, authoritative parenting was positively correlated with learners' discipline at a strong level ($r = 0.652^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that when parents adopt an authoritative style characterised by balanced warmth, responsiveness, and firm but fair control learners tend to exhibit higher levels of discipline within the school environment. This finding aligns with psychological theories that highlight authoritative parenting as conducive to developing self-regulation, social responsibility, and adherence to rules in children and adolescents. Thus, learners whose parents set clear expectations yet remain supportive are better positioned to meet school behavioral standards.

Authoritarian parenting also showed a positive but moderately strong correlation with learners' discipline ($r = 0.505^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Authoritarian parents are known for imposing strict rules and expecting obedience with little room for dialogue. Although this style is often criticised for its rigidity and potential to foster anxiety, the positive correlation suggests that such firmness can contribute to disciplined behaviours among learners, possibly because the fear of punishment or strict enforcement of rules leads learners to conform to school regulations. However, the weaker correlation compared to authoritative parenting might indicate that authoritarian methods are less effective in fostering internalised discipline and social skills, potentially resulting in discipline that is more externally motivated.

Interestingly, permissive parenting had the highest positive correlation with learners' discipline ($r = 0.708^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), which challenges some common assumptions about this parenting style. Permissive parenting is generally characterised by low demands and high responsiveness, often allowing children significant freedom. The strong positive correlation here could reflect contextual factors unique to Lamwo District, where learners from permissive households may

develop discipline within the school context despite fewer restrictions at home. It may also suggest that permissiveness in parenting does not necessarily translate to poor discipline in learners if schools have effective disciplinary frameworks. Nonetheless, this finding invites further exploration to understand the dynamics fully, as it deviates from traditional expectations.

Based on the correlation analysis, all the parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive) demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with learners' discipline ($p < 0.01$ in all cases). As such, the alternative hypothesis, which stated that there was a significant relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, is retained. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This suggests that, within the context of this study, parenting styles was significant in shaping learners' behaviours. Authoritative parenting was positively correlated with learners' discipline at a strong level ($r = 0.652^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that when parents adopt an authoritative style characterised by balanced warmth, responsiveness, and firm but fair control learners tend to exhibit higher levels of discipline within the school environment, Authoritarian parenting also showed a positive but moderately strong correlation with learners' discipline ($r = 0.505^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Authoritarian parents are known for imposing strict rules and expecting obedience with little room for dialogue while permissive parenting had the highest positive correlation with learners' discipline ($r = 0.708^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), which challenges some common assumptions about this parenting style. Permissive parenting is generally characterised by low demands and high responsiveness, often allowing children significant freedom.

Qualitative Findings

Theme one: Parenting Styles

The qualitative data from thirty respondents across the disciplinary committee chairpersons (Respondent A), head teachers (Respondent B), and PTA chairpersons (Respondent C) strongly supported the quantitative findings. Respondent A explained that most parents are permissive, a PTA chairperson noted that *“Majority do not mind about the behavior of their children; children are left to explore life on their own”*. They described learners from permissive homes as struggling with self-regulation, saying, children from permissive backgrounds cannot regulate themselves when in public and find it very hard to accept mistakes. Respondent B confirmed this, noting that permissive parenting was dominant in this community, with many parents considering secondary school learners mature enough to decide for themselves, thus leaving everything to children. Respondent C similarly observed, *“Most parents are permissive and no longer care about behaviour and discipline,”* adding that some parents misunderstood freedom as a form of love.

While permissive parenting dominated, authoritarian parenting was acknowledged as present but less common. Respondents highlighted that learners from authoritarian parents were aggressive, moody, and isolated, and one of the respondents described such parents as *“rude on children without giving the necessary support,”* focusing on punishment rather than dialogue. Respondent B noted that authoritarian parents *“put too much pressure on children and typically rushed to punish their children during disciplinary hearings without seeking explanation”*. Most of the respondents agreed that authoritarian parenting was decreasing due to increased awareness of children’s rights but still persisted among a minority, describing these parents as purely authoritarian in nature. The negative aspect of the style was that learners from such parents often hide problems out of fear of harsh punishment.

Authoritative parenting was described by respondents as the ideal yet least common style. Respondent A mentioned that learners from authoritative homes were “*well behaved, social, and perform well in class.*” Respondent B and C agreed that authoritative parents were more engaged and supportive, with one stating, such parents listen to their children’s opinions and provide necessary support. However, many lamented the general decline in parental involvement and discipline, often linking it to socio-historical factors. For example, Respondent C explained how displacement during the LRA conflict led to family disruptions, stating that “*homes and families were scattered, men were abducted, and women were left to raise children singly,*” which deeply affected traditional child-rearing practices. This shift contributed to a general lack of concern for discipline among many parents today.

Theme Two: Level of Learners Discipline

Head teachers echoed these concerns, with Respondent B describing the overall discipline level as still low, despite some slight improvements over previous years. Recurring forms of indiscipline included fighting, especially among boys, alcohol consumption, late coming, vernacular speaking, disrespect to teachers and prefects, vulgarity, and poor dressing. To promote discipline, schools employed multiple strategies such as functional disciplinary committees, regular communication of school rules, parental engagement through hearings, and counselling sessions. One head teacher noted that “*while learners showed some cooperation, inconsistent behavior and frequent reminders were still necessary to maintain discipline*”.

Theme three: Parental Involvement

Furthermore, respondents discussed how parental involvement in academic and behavioral welfare remained low overall. Respondent B noted that many parents were uninvolved, stating,

“some parents do not know anything about their children’s behavior or progress,” and that attendance at parent meetings was poor. Respondent C confirmed that many parents left the responsibility of disciplining children to teachers, with minimal engagement in school affairs. This lack of involvement was viewed as a significant barrier to improving discipline and learner outcomes, emphasizing the need for increased parental responsibility and partnership with schools.

Theme Four: Recurrent Forms of Indiscipline

Qualitative insights from interviews with disciplinary committee chairpersons, head teachers, and PTA chairpersons further illuminated the challenges related to learners’ discipline. Respondent A from the disciplinary committee identified the most frequent disciplinary cases as fighting among learners, theft, and escape from school, alcoholism, and sexual relationships. They characterized the general level of discipline as still low, noting that a significant amount of time was devoted to managing disciplinary issues. According to this respondent, effective measures included calling parents for disciplinary hearings and guidance and counselling, emphasising the importance of parental involvement in addressing behavioral problems.

Head teachers echoed these concerns, with Respondent B describing the *“overall discipline level as still low, despite some slight improvements over previous years”*. Recurring forms of indiscipline included *“fighting, especially among boys, alcohol consumption, late coming, vernacular speaking, disrespect to teachers and prefects, vulgarity, and poor dressing”*. To promote discipline, schools employed multiple strategies such as functional disciplinary committees, regular communication of school rules, parental engagement through hearings, and counselling sessions. One head teacher noted that *“while learners showed some cooperation, inconsistent behavior and frequent reminders were still necessary to maintain discipline”*.

Theme Five: Strategies for Improving Discipline

Strategies to enforce discipline were widely consistent across schools and included “*calling parents to disciplinary hearings, counselling sessions, use of school rules and regulations, and, in some cases, suspension or manual work as punishment for serious offenses. Health talks and boys’ and girls’ sessions were also introduced to address underlying issues like alcohol abuse and sexual behavior*”. Despite these efforts, the overall assessment was that learner discipline remained moderate to low and required ongoing attention from all stakeholders to improve the school environment and academic outcomes.

Theme Six: Relationship between Parenting Styles and Learners’ Discipline

On the relationship between parenting styles and learners’ discipline, most of the respondents acknowledged that parenting styles contributed highly to the behaviours of learners at school. Majority accepted that children from permissive background were troublesome from school while those from authoritative were well behaved. Little support was given to traditional authoritarian parenting style to enforce discipline though such children also exhibited aggressive behaviours due to too much oppression from home.

In summary, the combined quantitative and qualitative data pointed to permissive parenting as the most common style practiced by parents in Lamwo District’s secondary schools, followed by authoritarian and authoritative styles. While authoritative parenting was linked with better learner behaviour and academic success, it was less frequently practiced. The dominance of permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, coupled with low parental engagement, contributed to widespread learner indiscipline, reflecting broader social challenges impacting parenting and education in the district.

Table 9: Summary of Qualitative Data on Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline from Key Informants in Lamwo District

Respondent Category	Theme	Summary of Responses
Disciplinary Committee Chair (A)	Dominant Parenting Styles	Permissive parenting dominates; parents are often uninvolved or overly lenient.
Disciplinary Committee Chair (A)	Recurrent forms of Indiscipline	Indiscipline linked to poor parental guidance observed frequently; includes absenteeism, lack of scholastic materials.
Head teacher (B)	Learners' Discipline	Learners' level of discipline is still low
Head Teachers (B)	Dominant Parenting Styles	Permissive and authoritarian are most common, with permissive being dominant.
Head Teachers (B)	Parental Involvement	Parental involvement is generally low; limited support in academic and behavioral matters.
Head Teachers (B)	Changes in Parenting Practices	Shift toward less responsibility; parents leave discipline to schools, less concern about behavior.
PTA Chair (C)	Dominant Parenting Styles	Permissive is most common, with some authoritarian and authoritative; parents allow children to self-direct.
PTA Chair (C)	Parental Engagement	Parental engagement is minimal; discipline is left to schools, some parents support misbehavior.
PTA Chair (C) Head teacher (C)	Shifts in Parenting Approaches Relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline	Post-war disruptions affected parenting; modern parents more permissive, especially uneducated ones. Parenting styles directly affect learners' discipline

To examine whether there are statistically significant differences in learners' discipline based on different parenting styles, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. This analysis was aimed at testing the null hypothesis that the mean discipline levels of learners do not differ significantly across the various parenting styles practiced in Lamwo District's secondary schools. The ANOVA results presented in Table 10 provided insight into the extent to which parenting style influences student discipline outcomes.

Table 10: The ANOVA Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	648.332	3	216.111	1.177	.319 ^b
	Residual	47542.885	259	183.563		
	Total	48191.217	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Learners’ Discipline

b. Predictors: (Constant), Permissive Parenting, Authoritative Parenting, Authoritarian Parenting

The ANOVA results for the regression model assessing the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District show that the overall model is not statistically significant. The regression sum of squares (648.332) indicates the portion of variation in learners' discipline explained by the three parenting styles permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian. However, this explained variation is relatively small compared to the total variation in learners' discipline, which is 48,191.217.

The F-statistic for the model is 1.177, which compares the mean square due to the regression (216.111) with the mean square of the residuals (183.563). The corresponding p-value of 0.319 is above the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the model does not significantly predict learners' discipline based on the three parenting styles. This suggests that, collectively, these parenting styles do not provide a meaningful explanation of differences in learners' discipline within the sampled schools.

In summary, the regression analysis reveals that the combined influence of permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting styles is not statistically significant in explaining learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. Therefore, other factors outside these parenting styles may play a more important role in determining discipline among learners, and future research could explore additional variables to better understand the influences on learner behavior.

Table 11: The Regression Coefficients on the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline

		Coefficients ^a			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	85.738	5.685		15.080
	Authoritative Parenting	-.246	.219	-.076	-1.125
	Authoritarian Parenting	.264	.208	.094	1.272
	Permissive Parenting	.148	.257	.043	.573

a. Dependent Variable: Learners' Discipline

The regression coefficients provide insight into the individual contributions of each parenting style authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive to predicting learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. The constant term (intercept) has a value of 85.738 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating the baseline level of learners' discipline when the influence of all parenting styles is zero. This establishes a starting point for understanding how changes in parenting styles might relate to learners' discipline.

Examining the individual parenting styles, authoritative parenting shows a negative but non-significant relationship with learners' discipline ($B = -0.246$, $p = 0.262$). This suggests that, holding other factors constant, an increase in authoritative parenting is associated with a slight decrease in the learners' discipline score, but this effect is not statistically meaningful. Conversely, authoritarian parenting has a positive but also non-significant relationship ($B = 0.264$, $p = 0.204$), indicating a weak tendency that stricter parenting might slightly increase learners' discipline, but again, this is not statistically supported in this sample. Lastly, permissive parenting has a small positive coefficient ($B = 0.148$, $p = 0.567$), which implies a

negligible and non-significant positive association with discipline, contradicting typical expectations that permissive parenting leads to poorer discipline.

Overall, the regression coefficients reveal that none of the individual parenting styles significantly predict learners' discipline in the sampled schools. These findings highlight the complexity of factors influencing learner behavior and suggest that parenting styles alone, at least as measured here, may not be sufficient to explain variations in discipline. Future research could benefit from including additional contextual, school-based, or individual learner factors to better understand the dynamics of learner discipline in Lamwo District.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented a discussion of the study findings in relation to the research objectives: (i) to assess the parenting styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District, (ii) to examine the status of learners' discipline in these schools, and (iii) to analyze the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline. The chapter further draws conclusions based on the findings, offers recommendations for stakeholders, and suggests areas for further research.

5.1 Discussion

This study was grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which helped to make sense of how different layers of a learner's environment influence their behavior and development. The theory highlights that children grow and learn within a web of interconnected systems from their immediate surroundings, like home and school, to broader influences such as culture, community norms, and historical events. In this context, parenting styles were examined as part of the learner's microsystem, directly shaping their discipline and behavior. At the same time, factors such as community disruptions from past conflicts and changing cultural values part of the exosystem and macrosystem were also found to affect parenting approaches and learner outcomes. This theoretical lens was especially useful in showing that discipline is not just about individual choices, but rather the result of many interacting influences around the learner. By applying this perspective, the study was able to present a more complete picture of how parenting, family involvement, and wider social factors collectively shape learner discipline in Lamwo District.

5.1.1 Exploration of Parenting Styles Practiced by Parents

Findings indicated that authoritative parenting is practiced by some parents of secondary school learners in Lamwo District. Learners reported that their parents were supportive, encouraged open communication, and involved children in decision-making, while maintaining clear expectations and rules. This supports Baumrind (1966), who posited that authoritative parents combine responsiveness and demandingness to foster social competence, emotional stability, and academic achievement. Empirical studies also confirm that children raised under authoritative parenting exhibit better self-regulation and responsible decision-making (Smith, 2021). In contrast, Nakato (2024) observed that authoritative parenting remains less prevalent in Uganda, as many parents continue to rely on traditional authoritarian approaches, suggesting that adoption of authoritative practices is gradual.

Evidence also shows that authoritarian parenting persists in certain families, characterized by high control, strict rules, and punitive disciplinary measures. This supports Baumrind (1966), who described authoritarian parenting as high in demandingness but low in responsiveness, achieving compliance at the cost of emotional well-being. In Uganda and other African contexts, cultural norms emphasizing respect for elders and obedience reinforce this style supporting Mukasa, (2022). In contrast, learners raised under authoritarian parenting often exhibit aggressive or withdrawn behavior (Johnson, 2021), highlighting the emotional costs of fear-based discipline.

Additionally, permissive parenting has emerged as a notable trend, with parents exercising minimal control, granting excessive freedom, and avoiding clear boundaries. This supports Baumrind (1966), who identified permissive parenting as high in responsiveness but low in demandingness, which can lead to poor self-regulation and accountability. Urbanization and shifting social norms in Uganda contribute to this trend, as parents increasingly equate freedom

with affection, thus supporting Nabwire (2021). In contrast, authoritative parenting provides both structured guidance and support, resulting in better learner discipline and academic performance which agreed with Smith (2021).

Socio-historical factors, including displacement and family disruption during the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency, have also shaped parenting practices in Lamwo District. This supports Byaruhanga (2022), who notes that trauma and disrupted family structures reduce consistent parenting and weaken authoritative practices. In contrast, stable households that maintain authoritative approaches demonstrated higher learner discipline and improved academic outcomes, supporting Nakato (2024).

Parental engagement in academic and behavioral oversight was generally low, with many parents rarely participating in school activities or monitoring learners' progress. This was in agreement with Smith (2021), who linked parental disengagement with increased behavioral problems and poor academic performance. In contrast, authoritative parenting emphasizes active involvement alongside guidance, enhancing structured and supportive home environments as viewed by Nabwire (2021).

Overall, findings reveal a complex interplay of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles in Lamwo District, with permissive practices currently dominant. This aligned to the view of Baumrind (1966), whose theory predicts that authoritative parenting fosters optimal adolescent outcomes, whereas authoritarian and permissive styles pose risks to behavioral and academic development. In contrast, the persistence of authoritarian and permissive approaches, coupled with low parental engagement, underscores the need for culturally sensitive interventions and community programs to strengthen parenting practices and improve learner discipline as noted by Okot (2024).

5.1.2 Level of Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools

The study revealed that learners in secondary schools within Lamwo District exhibit varied levels of discipline, closely linked to the parenting styles they experience at home. The quantitative data indicated that authoritative parenting, characterized by openness, encouragement to express feelings, and clear yet flexible rules, contributed positively to learner discipline. Such learners generally demonstrated respect for rules and showed better self-regulation, reflecting the benefits of a supportive and balanced parental approach. These findings support Smith and Johnson (2021), who emphasized that authoritative parenting fosters discipline and social competence among adolescents by combining warmth with clear expectations. Moreover, this aligns with broader research underscoring that a nurturing family environment is crucial for the development of responsible behavior and academic engagement which concurred with Bronfenbrenner's views in his Ecological systems theory and also the view of Mukasa and Okumu (2022).

Despite the positive influence of authoritative parenting, the study found that authoritarian parenting practices were also present, albeit less consistently applied. Learners subjected to strict obedience and harsh punishment often exhibited signs of emotional distress, such as moodiness and social isolation, which interfered with their ability to maintain discipline constructively. This supports Kaleebu and Byamukama (2023) in their findings that authoritarian parenting, while enforcing compliance, may inadvertently foster behavioral problems due to its rigid and punitive nature. The presence of this parenting style within the district reflects traditional cultural values that prioritize respect and conformity but may lack the supportive dialogue needed to encourage internalized discipline among learners, supporting findings by Mukasa and Okumu (2022).

Permissive parenting was reported as the most common style impacting learner behavior, with many parents' exercising leniency by allowing learners extensive freedom without consistent enforcement of rules. Such permissiveness often led to poor self-regulation and difficulty accepting correction, which manifested as widespread indiscipline in schools. The qualitative data reinforced this observation, with school disciplinary committee members and teachers noting that learners from permissive homes struggled with boundaries and frequently engaged in misconduct. This situation contradicted findings by Olweny and Kirabo (2021), who associate permissive parenting with increased behavioral challenges due to insufficient parental control. The findings also support Nabwire (2021) who similarly highlighted that urban and transitional communities may experience rising permissiveness, which undermines effective discipline.

The socio-historical context of Lamwo District also contributes significantly to the current status of learner discipline. Displacement and family disruptions resulting from the Lord's Resistance Army conflict fractured traditional family structures, leading to diminished parental oversight and involvement. Respondents noted that single-parent households and disrupted family networks weakened parental capacity to enforce discipline consistently. This aligns with Byaruhanga, Okello, and Kato (2022), who argue that economic hardships and social trauma often limit parents' ability to provide effective guidance, thus exacerbating indiscipline among youths. The lingering effects of these disruptions continue to challenge schools and families in maintaining a disciplined learning environment.

Parental involvement in school affairs and learner welfare was generally low, further complicating efforts to maintain discipline. Many parents reportedly did not attend school meetings or engage in monitoring their children's academic and behavioral progress, leaving teachers as the primary enforcers of discipline. This lack of partnership undermines the

reinforcement of positive behaviors across home and school settings, a factor identified by Nabwire (2021) and Mukasa and Okumu (2022) as critical for learner accountability. Thus, supporting the current literature which highlights that strong parent-school collaboration promotes respect for school rules and reduces incidents of indiscipline, emphasizing the need to boost parental participation in educational processes.

Therefore, the level of learners' discipline in Lamwo District secondary schools is influenced by a complex interplay of parenting styles, family disruptions, and low parental engagement. While authoritative parenting supports positive learner behavior, the predominance of permissive and authoritarian styles contributes to widespread indiscipline. Additionally, socio-historical challenges and inadequate parental involvement in school affairs compound disciplinary problems. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing that effective discipline requires coordinated efforts between families and schools, supported by culturally sensitive interventions and policy frameworks that promote parental responsibility and positive behavioral outcomes (Kintu & Nansubuga, 2023; UNEB, 2023). However, the attempt by government through different policy frameworks has not been adequately implemented to change the status quo, hence the need for more practical approach.

5.1.3 Relationship between Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline

The study established a strong positive correlation between authoritative parenting and learners' discipline in secondary schools within Lamwo District. This indicated that learners whose parents adopt a parenting style characterised by warmth, responsiveness, and firm yet fair control tend to display better discipline. The supportive nature of authoritative parenting helps children internalise rules and develop self-regulation, making them more likely to conform to school behavioral standards willingly. This finding supports Mwangi and Muthoni (2021), who emphasised that authoritative parenting promotes internal motivation and respect

for authority among learners, thus fostering positive disciplinary outcomes. The study further affirms psychological theories that position authoritative parenting as optimal for nurturing responsible and socially competent adolescents.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting also showed a significant but moderately strong positive correlation with learners' discipline. This style's hallmark is strictness and high demands with limited dialogue, often leading to compliance motivated by fear or external pressure rather than internal understanding. While authoritarian parenting can produce outward conformity to school rules, the study's qualitative data revealed that learners from such homes often exhibited rebelliousness, anxiety, and social withdrawal. These observations support Okello and Ssebunya's (2022) findings, which link authoritarian parenting to behavioral challenges and poorer academic adjustment due to its punitive nature. This suggests that while authoritarian methods may enforce discipline, they may not cultivate the emotional and social skills necessary for sustained positive behavior.

Surprisingly, permissive parenting had the highest positive correlation with learners' discipline which diverges from traditional expectations. Permissive parenting is typically associated with low demands and leniency, often thought to undermine discipline development. However, the contextual realities in Lamwo District or attitudes of the learners towards questions on their own behavior might explain this anomaly, where schools' disciplinary frameworks potentially compensate for less restrictive home environments. Nonetheless, qualitative insights indicated that permissive parenting posed significant challenges, as learners struggled with school rules due to the freedom experienced at home. The findings support Namata and Achola (2023) who also noted that permissive parenting correlates with irregular attendance and behavioral inconsistencies, underscoring that permissiveness without school support often jeopardizes

discipline. This complex relationship calls for further research to unpack how permissiveness interacts with school contexts to influence discipline.

The participants' qualitative feedback emphasised the need for community and school collaboration to address discipline effectively. Respondent C, a PTA member, highlighted the critical role of parental sensitisation and involvement in school disciplinary processes, pointing out that weak parenting styles contribute to absenteeism, disrespect, and other discipline problems. This observation resonates with Mutesi and Waiswa (2020), who stress that parental engagement and home-school partnerships are fundamental in reinforcing disciplined behaviors. Such collaboration ensures that learners receive consistent behavioral expectations and support across environments, reducing conflicts between home and school disciplinary expectations.

Additionally, the study corroborates the dynamic and evolving nature of parenting influence over learners' discipline. As learners grow, external factors such as peer influence and school climate interact with parenting styles, sometimes moderating their effects. The findings support Kateregga and Olweny (2021) who noted that even learners from authoritative homes may face disciplinary challenges if exposed to negative peer groups or inconsistent school policies. This highlights the importance of comprehensive approaches that integrate parenting with positive school environments and peer support to foster sustained discipline.

Finally, the findings supported the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting authoritative parenting to improve learner discipline. Parenting programs that teach balanced rule-setting, emotional support, and communication skills have shown promising results in Uganda and similar settings (Ochieng & Otieno, 2023). The study's results aligned with Asbari et al. (2021), who argue that positive parenting significantly shapes students' character and discipline, although contextual differences between Uganda and other countries like Indonesia

must be considered. Therefore, targeted programs that enhance parental skills and foster parental involvement in schools are essential for sustaining learner discipline and promoting academic success.

5.2 Conclusions

- a) The study's first objective was to assess the parenting styles practiced by parents of learners in secondary schools in Lamwo District. The findings revealed that permissive parenting was the most commonly practiced style, followed by authoritarian and authoritative parenting. While authoritative parenting, characterised by balanced warmth and firm guidance, was linked to positive learner outcomes, it was less frequently observed. The dominance of permissive and authoritarian styles suggests a community where many parents either exercise leniency or enforce strict control without supportive engagement. This reflects socio-cultural and historical factors, including the lingering effects of displacement and family disruptions, which have altered traditional parenting practices in the district.
- b) The second objective examined the level of learners' discipline in secondary schools. The study found that indiscipline remains a significant challenge, with many learners exhibiting behaviours such as disrespect, absenteeism, and rule-breaking. The interplay of parenting styles, especially permissive and authoritarian approaches, coupled with low parental involvement, contributed to inconsistent discipline among learners. Schools also face challenges due to limited parental participation in monitoring academic and behavioral progress, which weakens the reinforcement of discipline both at home and in school. These findings highlighted the complexity of learner discipline as a multidimensional issue shaped by home environments and school dynamics.

- c) The third objective analysed the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline. Correlation analysis showed that all three parenting styles had significant positive relationships with learners' discipline, with permissive parenting surprisingly showing the strongest correlation. However, qualitative data revealed nuanced effects, where authoritative parenting was consistently associated with better discipline and social adjustment, authoritarian parenting with external compliance but emotional challenges, and permissive parenting with difficulties in self-regulation. These mixed results underline the importance of contextual factors such as school disciplinary frameworks and community involvement in shaping learner behavior. Overall, the study concludes that parenting styles significantly influence learner discipline but must be understood within the broader socio-cultural and institutional contexts.

5.3 Recommendations

- i. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that schools and local education authorities in Lamwo District actively promote authoritative parenting through community sensitisation and parenting education programs. Such initiatives should emphasize the benefits of balanced warmth and firm guidance in fostering learner discipline and academic success. Training sessions and workshops involving parents, teachers, and community leaders could build capacity for effective parenting practices and improve home-school collaboration.
- ii. Secondly, schools should strengthen mechanisms for parental involvement in both academic and disciplinary processes. Establishing regular communication channels, encouraging attendance at parent-teacher meetings, and involving parents in school disciplinary committees will enhance shared responsibility for learner behavior. This

partnership can ensure consistency in discipline enforcement and provide holistic support to learners.

- iii. Furthermore, the District Education Office and community organisations should implement targeted interventions addressing the challenges posed by permissive and authoritarian parenting. Counseling services, life skills education, and peer mentorship programs within schools can support learners struggling with self-regulation and social adjustment. Additionally, raising awareness about the negative consequences of harsh or overly lenient parenting could motivate positive changes.
- iv. Finally, policymakers should consider integrating parenting support frameworks within national education policies to promote sustained improvements in learner discipline. Collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, and community groups is essential to develop culturally relevant parenting resources and outreach programs tailored to the needs of families in Lamwo District.

5.4 Areas for Further Studies

- i. Future research should explore the underlying reasons for the unexpectedly strong positive correlation between permissive parenting and learners' discipline observed in this study. Qualitative investigations could provide deeper insights into how school disciplinary frameworks or cultural factors mediate this relationship in Lamwo District.
- ii. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking changes in parenting styles and learner discipline over time would offer valuable information on the dynamic nature of these variables and the long-term impact of parental involvement and school interventions.
- iii. Further studies could also examine the role of fathers and other caregivers in shaping learners' discipline, given that most existing research tends to focus on mothers.

- iv. Finally, comparative studies between urban and rural districts in Uganda would help identify contextual factors that influence parenting styles and learner discipline differently, enabling tailored policy and program responses.

Knowledge Contribution;

This study contributes to knowledge by providing context-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. The study establishes that parenting styles are significantly related to learners' disciplinary outcomes, thereby extending the understanding of learner discipline beyond school-based factors to include the nature of parent–child socialisation within the home environment. Of particular significance, the study found that permissive parenting was the dominant parenting style among the respondents, alongside a generally low level of learner discipline. This finding suggests that limited parental control, reduced enforcement of behavioural expectations and excessive freedom may constitute important contextual factors associated with learners' disciplinary challenges in the study area. The study therefore adds a localised perspective to existing knowledge by demonstrating the relevance of parenting practices to learner discipline within the sociocultural context of Lamwo District. It further provides an empirical basis for reconceptualising learner discipline as a shared home–school responsibility and for strengthening parent–school partnerships in promoting acceptable learner behaviour.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Students

Introduction

Dear respondent, my name is **Okumu Amose**, studying **Master of Education in Education Management** of Gulu University. I am doing research on Parenting Styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, Northern Uganda. The purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between Parenting styles and learners' level of discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. You are kindly requested to give your response for each question to the best of your knowledge. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Section A Demographic Characteristics

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response

1. **What is your age**

☐ 13-15 years ☐ 16-18 years ☐ 19 years and above

2. **What is your gender**

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. **What class do you currently attend**

☐ Senior 1 ☐ Senior 2 ☐ Senior 3 ☐ Senior 4 ☐ Senior 5 ☐ Senior 6

Section B the common parenting styles Used by Parents in Lamwo District

Scale:

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

Statements on Parenting Styles	1	2	3	4	5
Authoritative Parenting					
My parents listen to my opinions before making decisions.					
My parents set clear rules but are open to discussion.					
My parents encourage me to express my feelings.					
My parents explain the reasons behind their rules.					
My parents support me when I face challenges.					
My parents are fair but firm when disciplining me.					
Authoritarian Parenting					
My parents expect me to obey rules without question.					
My parents punish me harshly when I break rules.					
My parents do not consider my opinions when making decisions.					
My parents use strict discipline to control my behavior.					
My parents rarely explain why rules must be followed.					
My parents demand complete obedience at all times.					
Permissive Parenting					
My parents allow me to make most of my own decisions.					
My parents rarely enforce rules or discipline.					
My parents avoid saying “no” or setting limits.					
My parents are very lenient about my behavior.					
My parents prioritize my happiness over enforcing rules.					
My parents rarely hold me accountable for my actions.					

Section C Levels of Discipline among Secondary School Learners in Lamwo District

Scale:

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

Statements on Learners' Discipline	1	2	3	4	5
Adherence to School Rules					
I always follow the school rules strictly.					
Most learners in my school obey the school regulations.					
School rules are clearly communicated and enforced in my school.					
Learners are disciplined when they break school rules.					
I understand the consequences of not following school rules.					
The school administration ensures discipline is maintained.					
Attendance Consistency					
I attend school regularly without missing classes.					
Most learners maintain good attendance throughout the term.					
Absenteeism is discouraged and properly monitored at school.					
I understand the importance of attending all lessons.					
The school follows up on learners who miss school without permission.					
Regular attendance improves academic performance in my school.					
Use of School Uniform					
I always wear the correct school uniform as required.					
Most learners wear the school uniform properly and neatly.					
The school enforces strict rules about wearing the uniform.					
Wearing the school uniform properly reflects discipline.					
Learners who do not wear the uniform properly are disciplined.					
Proper use of uniform promotes a sense of belonging in the school.					
Respect for Teachers					
I treat teachers with respect and courtesy at all times.					
Learners in my school respect teachers' authority.					
Teachers are supported in maintaining discipline in the classroom.					
Disrespectful behavior towards teachers is punished in my school.					
I listen attentively and follow instructions given by teachers.					
Respecting teachers improves the learning environment.					

Appendix B (i): Interview Guide for Head Teachers

Introductions

Dear respondent, my name is **Okumu Amose**, studying **Master Degree in Education Management** of Gulu University. I am doing research on Parenting Styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, Northern Uganda. The purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between Parenting styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. You are kindly requested to give your response for each question to the best of your knowledge. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Section A: Parenting Styles

1. What are the dominant parenting styles you observe among parents in your school community?
.....
2. How would you describe the level of parental involvement in the academic and behavioral welfare of learners?
.....
3. Have you noticed any shifts or trends in parenting practices over the years? If yes, what are they?
.....

Section B: Learners' Discipline

1. How would you assess the overall discipline of learners in your school?
.....
2. What are the most recurring forms of indiscipline in your school?
.....
3. What strategies has your school put in place to promote and enforce discipline?
.....

Section C: Relationship between Parenting and Discipline

1. In your view, how do different parenting styles affect learner discipline in your school?
.....
2. Can you give specific examples where a parenting style influenced a learner's behavior?
.....
3. What challenges do you face when addressing discipline issues linked to parenting styles?
.....

Appendix B (ii): Interview Guide for PTA Chairpersons

Introduction

Dear respondent, my name is **Okumu Amose**, studying **Master Degree in Education Management** of Gulu University. I am doing research on Parenting Styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, Northern Uganda. The purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between Parenting styles and learners' level of discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. You are kindly requested to give your response for each question to the best of your knowledge. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Section A: Parenting Styles

1. Based on your knowledge of your societal setting, what parenting styles are most common among parents in your school community?
.....
2. How actively do parents engage in matters concerning their children's behavior and discipline?
.....
3. What changes have you observed in parental attitudes or approaches toward raising children?
.....

Section B: Learners' Discipline

1. How would you describe the level of discipline among students at your school?
.....
2. What disciplinary concerns are often raised during PTA meetings?
.....
3. How has the PTA contributed to improving discipline in the school?
.....

Section C: Relationship between Parenting and Discipline

1. In your opinion, how do various parenting approaches influence learners' discipline?
.....
2. Have you witnessed situations where poor or effective parenting affected a student's behavior?
.....
3. What role do you think the PTA can play in supporting better parenting to improve discipline?
.....

Appendix B(iii): Interview Guide for Disciplinary Committee Chairpersons

Introduction

Dear respondent, my name is **Okumu Amose**, studying **Master Degree in Education Management** of Gulu University. I am doing research on Parenting Styles and learners' discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District, Northern Uganda. The purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between Parenting styles and learners' level of discipline in secondary schools in Lamwo District. You are kindly requested to give your response for each question to the best of your knowledge. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Section A: Parenting Styles

1. What parenting styles are most reflected in the disciplinary cases you handle?
.....
2. How often do you observe that poor parental guidance contributes to indiscipline among learners?
.....
3. Are there noticeable differences in behavior between learners from strict, permissive, or supportive households?
.....

Section B: Learners' Discipline

1. What types of disciplinary cases are most frequently handled by your committee?
.....
2. How would you rate the general level of discipline in your school?
.....
3. What measures or sanctions are most effective in dealing with disciplinary issues?
.....

Section C: Relationship Between Parenting and Discipline

1. How does a learner's home environment or parenting style affect their discipline in school?
.....
2. Can you share any specific cases where a student's indiscipline was clearly linked to their parenting background?
.....
3. What challenges do you encounter when trying to resolve discipline issues rooted in family upbringing?

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participation in Research Study

Title of the Study: *Parenting Styles and Learners' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Lamwo District*

Researcher:

Amose Okumu

Student Number: 20/U/1884/MEd/PS

Contact: 0787323099

Institution: Gulu University

Program: Master of Education in Education Management

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted as part of an academic requirement for the award of a Master of Education in Education Management of Gulu University. The purpose of this study is to examine the status of parenting styles, assess levels of discipline among secondary school learners, and examine the relationship between parenting styles and learners' discipline in Lamwo District. Your participation is entirely voluntary and highly valued.

What Participation Involves: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire or take part in an interview. The responses will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with strict confidentiality.

Duration: Participation will take approximately 30–45 minutes.

Confidentiality: All information you provide will remain confidential and anonymous. Your name or any identifying details will not appear in any reports or publications. Data will be securely stored and used only by the researcher.

Risks and Benefits: There are no expected risks involved in participating. While you may not benefit directly, your insights will contribute to the improvement of learners' discipline and parental engagement in Lamwo District.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence.

Consent Statement: I have read and understood the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time and that my identity will be kept confidential.

☒ I agree to participate in this research study.

☐ I do not agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name: OTII ISAAC

Signature: 

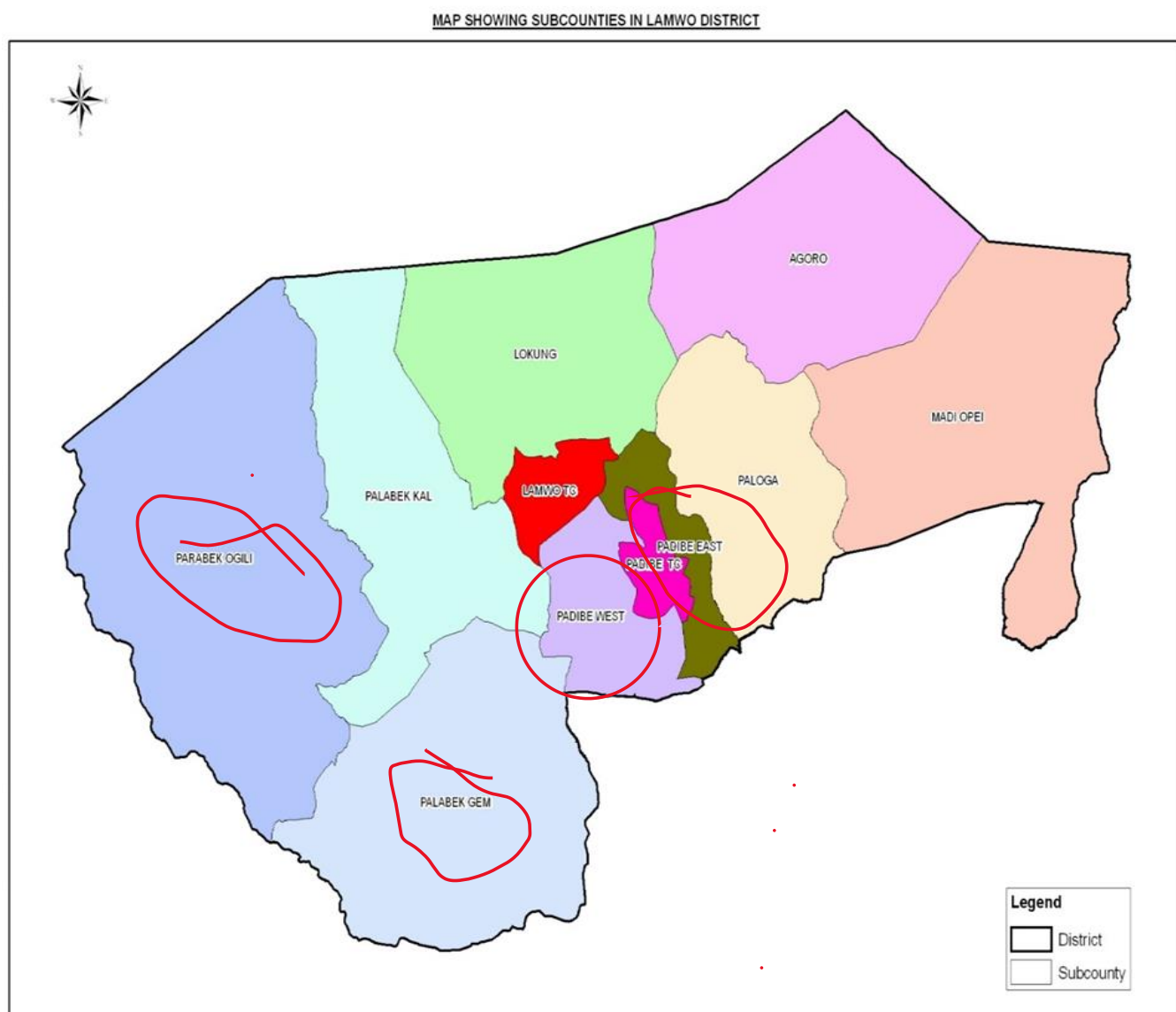
Date: 17/7/2025

Researcher's Name: Amose Okumu

Signature: 

Date: 17/07/2025

Appendix D: Map of Lamwo District



Appendix E: Sample Size Determination Using Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
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	100000	384

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

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Formula for determining sample size

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P) + d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}{1 - P}$$

s = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Appendix F: Introductory Letter

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UNIVERSITY
TEL: +256471432922

OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

10th July 2025

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to introduce to you Mr. Okumu Amose (Reg No. 20/U/1884/MED/PS) a student pursuing a programme of study leading to an award Master of Education in Education Management of Gulu University, Master of Gulu University.

He is undertaking research on the Topic:

PARENTING STYLES AND LEARNERS' DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAMWO 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,

Dr. Denis Thaddeus Ofoyuru

Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities

