

**DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND STUDENT RETENTION IN
GOVERNMENT-AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUUKA DISTRICT,
UGANDA**

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DECLARATION

I, Hesketh Clinton Ngobi declare that this dissertation is my original work, and has never been submitted to any other institution for any award.


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APPROVAL

I acknowledge that this research dissertation was done under my supervision and guidance. It satisfies the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in educational administration, management and planning of Uganda Christian University.

Date: 2nd August 2025
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.....
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Supervisor

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved mums Princess Nairuba Florence Joy (late), Princess Monica Musekwa (late) and Late Jjaja Erina Namayengo Kisira

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	xii
ABSTRACT.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.1.1 Historical Background.....	1
1.1.2 Theoretical Background.....	7
1.1.3 Conceptual Background.....	10
1.1.4 Contextual Background.....	13
1.2 Problem Statement.....	15
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	16
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	16
1.5 Research questions.....	16
1.6 Research hypotheses.....	17
1.7 Conceptual framework.....	18

1.8. Scope of the study	19
1.8.1 Geographical scope.....	19
1.8.2 The content.....	19
1.8.3 Time Scope	20
1.9 Significance of the study.....	20
1.10 Justification of the Study.....	21
1.11 Operational definitions	22
CHAPTER TWO.....	24
2.1 Introduction.....	24
2.2 Theoretical review	24
2.3 Discipline Management strategies and Student retention.....	25
2.3.1 Counselling/ support services and student retention	25
2.3.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention.....	28
2.3.3 Parental involvement and student retention	31
2.4 Summary of Literature	34
CHAPTER THREE.....	36
METHODOLOGY.....	36
3.0 Introduction.....	36
3.1 Research design	36
3.2 Study population	36
3.3 Determination of sample size	37

3.4 Sampling techniques	38
3.4.1 Simple Random Sampling	38
3.4.2 Purposive Sampling	38
3.4.3 Census Inquiry	39
3.5 Data collection methods	39
3.5.1 Questionnaire survey	39
3.5.2 Interviews	40
3.6 Data collection instruments	40
3.6.1 Questionnaire	40
3.6.2 Interview guide	41
3.7 Validity and reliability of Research instruments.....	42
3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments	42
3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments	43
3.7.3 Credibility of Qualitative Data	44
3.8 Data collection procedure	44
3.9 Data processing and analyses.....	45
3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis	45
3.9.3 Qualitative Data Analysis	45
3.10 Measurement of Variables	46
3.11 Ethical considerations.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR.....	47

4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Response rate.....	47
4.3 Back ground variables of respondents	48
4.3.1 Sex of respondents	48
4.3.2 Respondents' Age.....	49
4.4 Empirical Findings.....	50
4.4.1 Student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	50
4.4.2 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	56
4.4.2 Teacher-Student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	62
4.4.2 Parental Involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	67
4.5 To establish the effect of discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	73
CHAPTER FIVE	76
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION,	76
5.1 Introduction.....	76
5.2 Summary of the study findings	76
5.3 Discussion of findings	78
CHAPTER SIX.....	82
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	82

6.0: Introduction.....	82
6.1 Conclusions.....	82
6.1.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	82
6.1.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	83
6.1.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	83
6.2 Recommendations.....	84
6.2.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	84
6.2.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	85
6.2.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District	85
6.3 Areas for future research	86
REFERENCES	87
APPENDICES.....	95
APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for teachers	95
Appendix C: Krejcie and Morgan Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Shows schools, categories, target population, sample size and sampling techniques	28
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CVI -	Content Validity Index
PLE -	Primary Leaving Examinations
UNESCO -	United Nations Education and Scientific Organization
UNICEF -	United Nations International Emergency Fund
UPE -	Universal Primary Education
USE -	Universal Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The research specifically focused on examining how counselling services, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement influence student retention. The problem addressed was the persistent challenge of student dropout despite the presence of universal secondary education. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study targeted a population of 1,392 participants, including students, teachers, head teachers, and district education officials, from which 183 valid responses were obtained. Data were collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interview guides. Reliability of the instruments was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.888, and a Content Validity Index of 83.3%. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 20, with descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression, while qualitative data were analysed thematically using verbatim quotations. The findings revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between counselling services and student retention ($r = .603, p < .001$), teacher-student relationships and student retention ($r = .552, p < .001$), as well as parental involvement and student retention ($r = .552, p < .001$). These results indicated that improvements in these discipline management strategies were associated with higher levels of student retention in government-aided secondary schools. The study concluded that counselling, supportive teacher-student relationships, and active parental involvement are vital components in enhancing student retention. It recommended that schools strengthen counselling services through professional staffing, invest in teacher training to build positive relationships with learners, and establish regular communication channels with parents to promote shared responsibility in education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study investigated the relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in the Luuka District in Uganda. Discipline management strategies were the independent variable, while student retention in government-aided secondary schools was the dependent variable. This Chapter presents the introduction to the study, background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and hypothesis, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical Background

Discipline management strategies in schools are believed to have evolved worldwide; ranging towards more proactive and positive approaches (Amoah et al. 2015). A study by Sugai & Horner (2002) emphasizes the implementation of general school significant behaviour supports as an evolution in discipline practices. This approach emphasises creating a positive school environment through effective preventive strategies and interventions to address behaviour issues (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Furthermore, the study by Jinot and Johannes (2021) introduces a whole-school approach to learner discipline management, emphasising decentralisation models that view schools as communities with a shared mission. This approach emphasizes

the relevance of school-based management and fostering effective community discipline management (Jinot & Johannes, 2021).

An effective discipline management strategy has an effect on student behaviour and thus influences academic outcomes. Accordingly, Martine and Tangi (2022) highlight the relevance of teachers' discipline management strategies in promoting academic attainment of students. Similarly, Kobello et al. (2022) stress the importance of maintaining school discipline through proper implementation of school rules, regulations, policies, counselling, and education for students to support academic success.

Student retention in secondary schools is a vital focus among secondary schools in the United Kingdom and the USA. "The Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)" emphasises the importance of student recruitment and retention to align with government targets (Douglas & Barnes, 2016). This emphasis is not limited to the UK because studies in the US, UK, and Australia for over the years have noted student retention and success as key aspects of education policy (Thomas & Hovdhaugen, 2014). The relevance of student retention is an inter-continental concern, with published efforts to enhance graduation outcomes in various regions, including Europe, Australia, and the USA (Cherian et al., 2020).

For instance, factors influencing student retention have been studied extensively in the UK. For example, research shows that student dropout incidences are influenced by measures of A-level attainment, such as subjects studied and scores achieved (Arulampalam et al., 2004). Accordingly, Tinto's student integration theory and other theories explain student retention and persistence in higher education by looking at how students engage themselves into school academics and

social activities (Tinto, 1975, 1993). It is argued that a student's decision to complete or dropout is greatly affected by their level of academic and social engagement/participation within the school, emphasising the relevance of finance in student retention (Chrysikos et al., 2017).

In addition, resilience is crucial in understanding student retention and success, especially non-traditional students in the UK (Cotton et al., 2017).

In UK and the USA, student retention is dependent on educational qualifications upon admission, for example A-level points in England and Grade Point Averages in the US (Gibbs et al., 2006). Means of enhancing student retention involve evidence-based, proactive systems and initiatives, as seen in studies conducted at the Open University in the UK (Gibbs et al., 2006). Furthermore, using Supplemental Instruction programs improved student performance and retention, particularly in challenging courses (Malm et al., 2018).

In South Africa, a study by Buthelezi and Ajani (2022) emphasises the need of participative management practices in secondary schools to foster administrative functions and overall effectiveness. This shows the trend of more inclusive decision-making processes in educational institutions in patriarchal societies like South Africa. Moreover, in Ghana, studies such as those by Azungah et al. (2018) and Tanner et al. (2022) explore management strategies in various departments and highlight the need for knowledge on management and strategic decision-making. Student retention in South Africa and Ghana has been a topic of interest, with different studies opining different aspects influencing this phenomenon. In South Africa, the impact of COVID-19 on student retention has been published using institutional Data (Branson, 2023).

Additionally, the University of South Africa (Unisa) has developed strategies to enhance student success basing on a socio-critical understanding of student achievement and retention (Archer et al., 2014). The increased accessibility to higher institutions of learning in South Africa has led to increased student population (Pather & Dorasamy, 2018). In Ghana, factors associated with dropout, retention, and graduation of students have been reviewed (Nkutu et al., 2018).

Student retention in Kenya and Tanzania has been a subject of relevant research interest. In Kenya, studies point various factors influencing student retention. For instance, the role of student retention in advancing women's education in Kenya has been examined (Ngala, 2019).

Additionally, the relevance of counselling services in Kenyan universities on student retention rates has been examined (Gathoni et al., 2019). Moreover, the relationship between student safety practices, instruction cultures and motivation practices with student retention in public secondary schools in Kisii County, Kenya, has been investigated (Tikoko, 2020; Ngala, 2020; Ngala, 2019). Accordingly, provision of students' welfare and its influence on discipline management in Kenyan public secondary schools has been investigated by Owuor et al, (2022), stressing the need for tailored welfare services to enhance discipline management.

Additionally, the study by Odhiambo et al. (2017) points towards the necessity for further research to understand the influence of discipline strategies across different counties in Kenya.

In Tanzania, studies such as those by Martine and Tangi (2022) and Simeo and Tangi (2022) have delved into the specific strategies teachers and heads of secondary schools in Tanzania use to manage student discipline. Similarly, research

by Magdalene et al. (2019) has explored the role of guidance and counselling in discipline management in Kenyan secondary schools. Furthermore, the issue of violent discipline by teachers has been highlighted in studies like Masath et al. (2020) and (Masath et al., 2021), emphasising the need for intervention strategies to reduce such practices.

Additionally, emphasis has been put on addressing challenges such as physician attrition in underserved areas. Strategies like increasing the absorption of recent graduates into the public sector and developing rural training tracks have been proposed to mitigate this issue (Goodell et al., 2016). Furthermore, the success of student loans in financing higher education in Tanzania has been highlighted as a factor contributing to increased enrollment among students (Nyahende, 2013).

The evolution of student retention in secondary schools in Uganda is a complex issue influenced by various factors. The introduction of universal primary and secondary education programs in Uganda led to increased enrollment of adolescents in schools (Katahoire et al., 2018). However, despite this increase, Uganda continue facing challenges in expanding and maintaining secondary school enrollment, with growth rates remaining relatively low compared to neighbouring countries (Katahoire et al., 2018).

Factors such as low enrollment rates, retention rates, and proficiency levels in lower secondary schools have been identified as major issues influencing student retention in Uganda (Katahoire et al., 2018; Wamala & Genza, 2022; Tikoko, 2020). The recent launch of the new lower secondary curriculum which emphasizes student-centred learning demonstrates on-going efforts to improve student retention (Kafeero et al., 2020).

According to various studies, discipline management strategies in schools in Uganda have evolved to address various challenges. Emmer and Stough (2001) emphasise the importance of preventive, group-based approaches in classroom management, providing teachers with a foundation to plan and organise activities effectively. Effective management strategies, such as emphasising academic objectives, maximising academic learning time, and adapting curriculum materials based on student characteristics, improve student achievement (Brophy, 1986).

Korugyendo et al. (2022) assessed the impact of guidance and counselling on student discipline in Ugandan secondary schools, indicating the effectiveness of such interventions. Jinot (2018) stresses the need for stakeholders and the Ministry of Education to devise appropriate disciplinary strategies to manage learner Discipline effectively.

Additionally, Mbabazi and Bagaya (2013) recommend adoption of individual and group counselling strategies in Ugandan secondary schools to foster compliance with the code of conduct. Mansor (2017) suggests constructive strategies for indiscipline, including effective classroom management and pupil-peer mentoring systems. Skiba and Peterson (2000) also highlight the relationship between teacher discipline approaches and student behaviours hence noting the role of teachers in developing students' conduct.

Furthermore, factors such as student safety practices, provision of security measures by headteachers, and career guidance and counselling have been found to influence student retention in secondary schools (Anne et al., 2022; Ngala, 2020; Miiro et al., 2018). Stakeholders in Uganda have recognized the importance of school-based guidance and counselling in enhancing student support and teacher

training, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to address student retention issues (Knettel et al., 2019).

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

This study was underpinned by two theoretical frameworks: Tinto's Institutional Departure Theory (1975) and Bean's Student Attrition Theory (1980). Both theories were developed in the United States and have significantly shaped scholarly discourse on student dropout, persistence, and retention in educational institutions. Their integration in this study enables a multi-dimensional understanding of how discipline management strategies may influence student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda.

Tinto's Institutional Departure Theory was developed in 1975 at Syracuse University and remains one of the most influential models explaining student retention in education systems. According to Tinto (1975), student persistence is largely influenced by the degree to which students are academically and socially integrated into the school environment. The theory posits that such integration enhances students' sense of belonging and commitment to their educational goals, thereby reducing the likelihood of dropout (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Nicoletti, 2019; Xu & Webber, 2016).

Tinto's model outlines three phases in the student retention process: separation, transition, and incorporation. These stages reflect the student's gradual adjustment from their pre-entry environment into the institutional culture. When this integration is disrupted—such as through poor disciplinary climates or

exclusionary practices—students may feel alienated, thereby increasing the risk of disengagement and eventual withdrawal.

Despite its popularity, Tinto's theory has been criticised for not sufficiently addressing the complexity of individual student experiences and the external factors influencing dropout (Roberts, 2012; Sweetman et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the model is widely applicable and has been successfully used to investigate factors affecting student retention across various educational settings. For this reason, the present study adopted Tinto's model to examine how discipline management practices within schools may either promote or hinder students' sense of connectedness, academic engagement, and ultimate retention.

Bean's Student Attrition Theory (1980): Developed in 1980 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Bean's Student Attrition Theory provides a complementary perspective by adapting organisational turnover models to explain student withdrawal from academic institutions. Bean (1980) argues that student attrition is shaped by a combination of organisational, environmental, and attitudinal factors. Unlike Tinto, who emphasizes social and academic integration, Bean focuses on students' behavioural intentions, which are influenced by institutional policies, student satisfaction, and perceptions of fairness (Asavisanu, 2017; Williams & Dziurawiec, 2018).

The theory identifies three core assumptions: the importance of organisational support systems, students' level of involvement, and the perceived value of institutional experiences. Central to Bean's model is the idea that retention is an outcome of rational decision-making, where students evaluate their overall

educational experience and decide whether to stay or leave based on perceived benefits or dissatisfaction.

While the model has been critiqued for potentially oversimplifying the varied and complex reasons behind student dropout (Williams & Dziurawiec, 2018), it remains a powerful analytical tool for examining the institutional determinants of student persistence. In the current study, Bean's model is instrumental in assessing how discipline management strategies—especially their clarity, fairness, and consistency—affect students' motivation to remain in school.

The use of both Tinto's and Bean's theories in this study is intentional and justified due to their complementary analytical strengths. Tinto's theory offers a student-centered perspective, focusing on how academic and social integration can foster a deeper commitment to schooling. In contrast, Bean's model emphasizes institutional-level factors such as administrative policies, discipline practices, and organisational support systems.

By combining these frameworks, the study is positioned to capture both internal psychological processes (such as student engagement and belonging) and external structural factors (such as school discipline policies and their implementation). For instance, Tinto's model helps explain how punitive discipline may alienate learners and reduce social integration, while Bean's model clarifies how such institutional practices may negatively affect students' attitudes and increase their intention to drop out. Therefore, using the two theories together provided a holistic lens through which discipline management strategies can be analysed in relation to student retention. This dual-theoretical approach enhances the study's explanatory power and allows for more nuanced conclusions and policy recommendations.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

In this study, the concept of discipline management strategies was conceptualised as the systematic approaches and practices employed by school authorities and teachers to promote order, enforce behavioural expectations, and create a conducive learning environment that supports student engagement and long-term retention. These strategies extend beyond punishment to include preventive and supportive mechanisms aimed at influencing learner behaviour positively. The study considered discipline management strategies as the independent variable, operationalised through four key dimensions: guidance and counselling, stakeholders' cooperation, provision of rewards, and formulation and enforcement of rules and regulations.

Discipline management strategies include approaches and techniques used to maintain order, enforce rules, and regulate learner behaviour within educational institutions (Martine & Tangi, 2022; Kobello et al., 2022; Simeo & Tangi, 2022). These strategies may involve a variety of methods such as guidance and counselling, collaboration with parents and the wider community, the use of rewards and incentives, and the implementation of clear school rules (Simeo & Tangi, 2022). According to Jinot and Johannes (2021), discipline management strategies are the mechanisms through which teachers manage student conduct while creating a conducive environment for learning. The effectiveness of these strategies plays a crucial role in establishing a positive learning atmosphere that contributes to student success and persistence in school (Jinot & Johannes, 2021). Among the approaches under discipline management, school counselling and support services form a core component. These involve a wide range of interventions aimed at supporting learners' mental health, emotional stability, and

general well-being within the school context. Such services may include individual and group counselling, identification of students at risk of dropping out, psychosocial support, parenting interventions, assessments, and school-wide well-being initiatives (Schaffer et al., 2022). These services aim to assist students in overcoming academic, personal, and social difficulties, thereby fostering emotional resilience and encouraging school completion (Britto & Rush, 2013). In the present study, guidance and counselling was examined as a key element of the broader discipline management framework.

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the importance of teacher-student relationships as a crucial part of discipline and retention. These relationships are considered among the most significant interpersonal interactions within schools and have direct implications for student outcomes. Healthy teacher-student relationships contribute to the overall well-being of both teachers and learners (Roffey, 2017), foster student engagement and performance (Martin & Dowson, 2009), and enhance the school's learning environment (Eisenman, 2017; Spilt et al., 2011; Milatz et al., 2015). As Olson and Nayar-Bhalerao (2020) observed, strong relational bonds between teachers and learners boost student motivation and may significantly reduce school dropout, thus increasing retention.

Parental involvement is another strategy relevant to discipline and student outcomes. It includes home-based support such as supervising homework, engaging in educational discussions, and setting home rules, as well as school-based involvement like attending meetings, interacting with teachers, and participating in school decision-making (Goulet et al., 2023; Brown, 2024). Parental involvement

is thus defined as the active participation of parents in their children's academic life and has been associated with improved student achievement and retention (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The present study considered stakeholder cooperation (inclusive of parental engagement) as a critical component of effective discipline management.

The dependent variable in this study was student retention, which was conceptualised as the ability of learners to stay enrolled in school and progress through the education cycle to completion. It encompasses not only physical attendance but also consistent academic engagement and progression from one class to the next without dropping out. As such, student retention refers to the capacity of a school system to maintain learners through to graduation. This study operationalised student retention using three dimensions: school attendance, grade progression, and completion rate.

Student retention in the educational context is generally defined as the ability of learners to persist in their academic journey, remain enrolled in their programs, and complete their educational requirements successfully (Sanavi & Matt, 2022). It is often linked to the term persistence, which reflects the continuity of learners in pursuit of their academic goals. According to Ramos and Sifuentez (2021), student retention encompasses institutional efforts designed to keep students enrolled until the end of the academic program. Initiatives targeting retention focus on increasing student persistence and completion rates, thereby emphasizing the importance of consistent support throughout the learning journey (Ramos & Sifuentez, 2021).

In this study, the relationship between discipline management strategies (IV) and student retention (DV) was examined through a conceptual lens that considers both structural interventions (rules, rewards, stakeholder cooperation) and interpersonal supports (counselling, teacher-student relationships). These strategies were evaluated based on their role in reducing student disengagement and promoting continuous enrolment, ultimately contributing to improved retention outcomes in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Uganda remains a persistent concern, particularly in rural districts such as Luuka District, where the educational system continues to grapple with structural, socio-economic, and school-based challenges. Although the Government of Uganda introduced the Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in 2007 to enhance access to secondary education, the actual retention of learners—especially through the full lower secondary cycle—remains significantly below expected levels (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021).

Recent national statistics show that student dropout rates have increased drastically. For instance, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that lower secondary school dropout rates rose from 18.2% in 2019 to 37.2% in 2021, with average completion rates estimated at 64% for male students and 62% for female students. These figures are even more alarming in rural districts like Luuka, where

poverty, limited school infrastructure, and weak school management systems exacerbate the problem of student retention.

In Luuka District, anecdotal evidence and District Education Office reports indicate that many learners, particularly those in S1 and S2, drop out before completing S4. This is often attributed to a combination of factors, including poor discipline management in schools, inadequate guidance and counselling services, limited parental involvement, and weak teacher-student relationships. School heads and teachers face challenges in implementing effective and structured discipline policies, which affects the learning environment and reduces students' motivation and engagement.

Furthermore, most government-aided secondary schools in Luuka operate with inadequate resources and limited stakeholder collaboration, making it difficult to apply supportive disciplinary strategies such as positive reinforcement, counselling, and consistent rule enforcement. According to the National Planning Authority (2023), the lack of well-coordinated school-level interventions to address behavioural and psychosocial issues is a key contributor to rising dropout rates, particularly in underserved rural schools.

The situation is worsened by the absence of school-based support services to respond to the emotional, academic, and behavioural needs of students. Without effective guidance and counselling structures, students experiencing stress, discipline issues, or social challenges often disengage from school and eventually drop out.

Improving student retention in government-aided schools in Luuka District, therefore, requires a deeper understanding of how discipline is managed at school level. This includes exploring how schools implement guidance and counselling programs, involve stakeholders in school discipline, apply reward systems, and formulate and enforce rules and regulations.

It is against this background that the current study seeks to investigate the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. By situating the inquiry within a localised rural context, the study aims to generate evidence-based insights that can inform policy and school-level interventions to reduce dropout rates and improve student persistence in Uganda's secondary education system..

1.2 Problem Statement

Luuka District continues to face a critical challenge in retaining students in government-aided secondary schools. By 2014, only 22% of students who began Senior One completed Senior Four, illustrating a severe dropout problem (UBOS, 2014). A 2018 survey found that approximately 55% of students in the district dropped out of school, mainly due to extreme poverty, limited access to scholastic materials, child labour, and poor school infrastructure (Mudangha, 2018). Nationally, more than 230,000 students who qualify for Senior One annually fail to reach Senior Four, reflecting a widespread retention issue (Busein, 2024).

The introduction of the Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in 2007 aimed to enhance retention by offering free lower secondary education to primary school graduates. This led to an enrolment increase from about 815,000 in 2006 to nearly

1.2 million in 2009. However, despite this growth, retention rates remain low, especially in rural districts like Luuka.

A review of existing literature reveals a gap in research regarding the link between discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka. While such strategies have been examined in other regions, there is limited empirical evidence specific to Luuka, highlighting the need to investigate how discipline management influences student retention in this unique context.

1.3 Purpose of the study

To investigate the relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District in Uganda.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To examine the relationship between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.
2. To establish the relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.
3. To determine the relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the relationship between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District?

2. What is the relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District?
3. What is the relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District?

1.6 Research hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

1.7 Conceptual framework

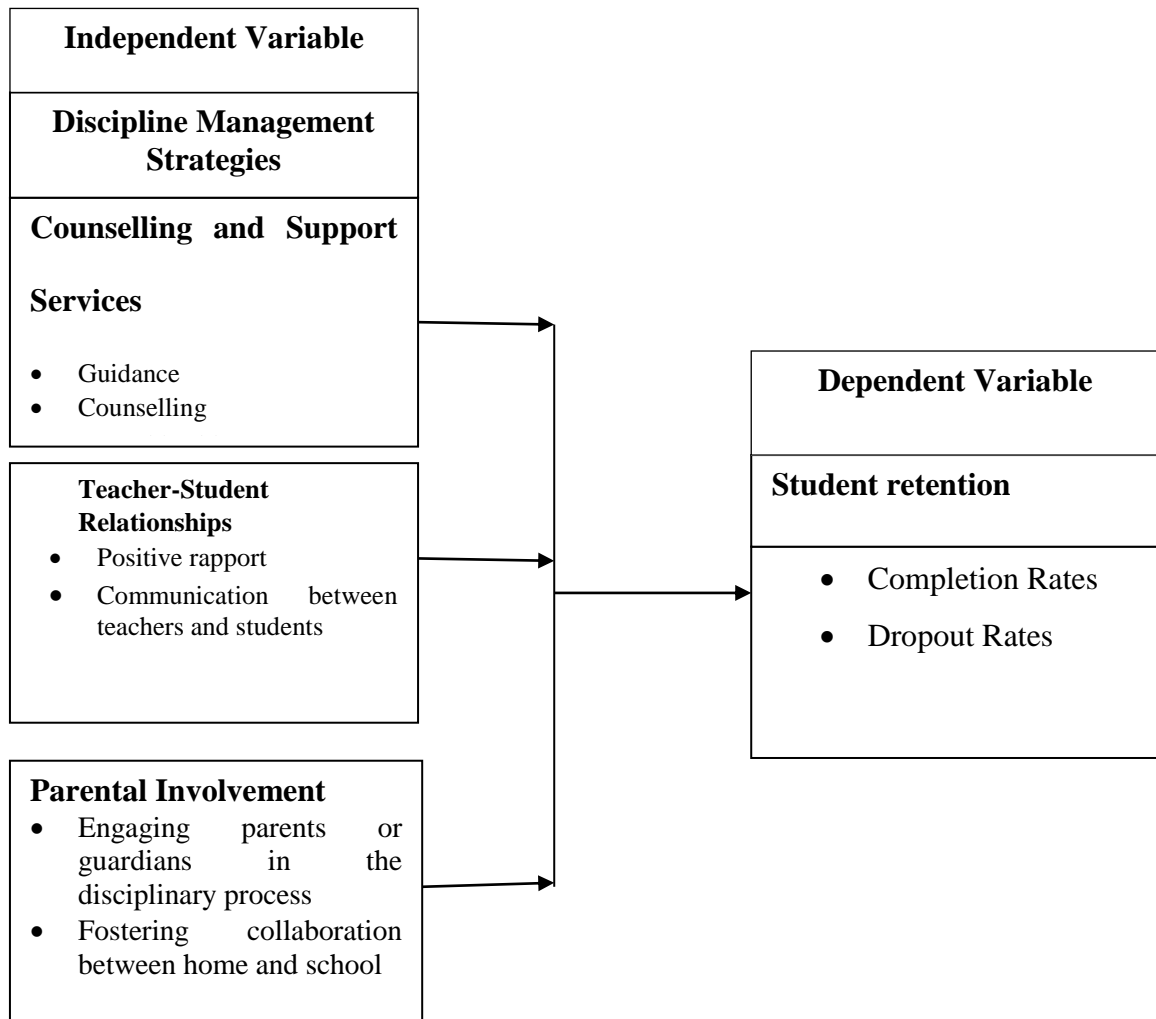


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

Source: *Adopted from Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and modified by the Researcher (2024)*

Figure 1.1 provides a structured approach for investigating the relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda, by considering various variables, dimensions, and indicators.

Effective Discipline management strategies are expected to correlate directly with student retention rates.

1.8. Scope of the study

1.8.1 Geographical scope

This study was conducted in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. Luuka District is found in the Eastern region of Uganda, in Busoga sub region; it is bordered by Buyende District to the North, Kaliro District to the Northeast, Iganga District to the southeast, Mayuge District to the South, Jinja District to the southwest and Kamuli District to the Northwest. Luuka, where the district headquarters are located, is approximately by road northwest of Iganga, the nearest large town, the district coordinates are: 00 42N, 33 18E. The district comprises the following sub-counties: Bukanga, Bukooma, Bulongo, Ikumbya, Irongo, Nawampiti, Waibuga, and several town councils.

Discipline and Student retention challenges have been common in Luuka District thus making it a suitable case study for this research. According to Creswell (2014), selecting a location, which is attributed to the research problem, increases the likelihood of generating meaningful insights. Luuka district's accessibility in terms of transportation and infrastructure is a crucial factor for practical Data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Ensuring the site is accessible allows the Researcher to conduct the study efficiently and within resource constraints.

1.8.2 The content

The study investigated the relationship between student discipline management approaches and retention in government-aided schools, especially secondary schools located in the Luuka district with focus on support services such as

counselling to determine the teacher-student relationship and parental involvement in maintaining student retention in these schools.

1.8.3 Time Scope

The study covered a period of four years to collect and analyse data to establish the relationship between the discipline management approach and student retention in schools. The exact data analysis and timeframe for completing a master's degree in Educational Administration and planning of Uganda Christian University for the 2021-2024 intake.

1.9 Significance of the study

This study may be significant both theoretically and practically within the field of educational administration and planning. It sought to address the pressing issue of student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District by examining the role of discipline management strategies. In Uganda, where student dropout rates remain a challenge in many rural and peri-urban districts, identifying effective school-based approaches to student discipline was critical for sustaining learner engagement and completion rates.

The findings of this study generated new knowledge on the relationship between discipline management and student retention, contributing to the broader field of educational policy and school leadership. The study offered evidence-based insights on how strategies such as guidance and counselling, positive reinforcement, and inclusive school rules influence learner behaviour and attendance. This knowledge may be instrumental to school administrators, education planners, and policymakers in designing and implementing policies that foster a safe, conducive, and learner-friendly school environment.

Additionally, the study may be relevant to the Ministry of Education and Sports and other education stakeholders by providing practical recommendations that can improve the implementation of school discipline policies. It may also stimulate further research on how school management practices affect broader educational outcomes such as academic performance, school climate, and teacher-student relationships.

Furthermore, the research will contribute to the academic fulfillment and completion of the researcher's studies leading to the award of a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Planning of Uganda Christian University.

1.10 Justification of the Study

The relevance of conducting this study lies in urgent need to address student retention within government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda. High dropout rates demonstrates cycles of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage within the district. Students who do not complete their education are less likely to secure stable employment and contribute meaningfully to the economy. This exacerbates existing socio-economic inequalities and hampers overall development efforts.

Failure to address the underlying factors leading to persistent low student retention rates can have permanent consequences on the community and the country as a whole. Without skilled and trained workers, Uganda may struggle to compete in the world economy and achieve sustainable development goals. By investigating the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention, the study can identify specific areas for intervention. This

provides an opportunity to implement targeted measures to improve student outcomes and foster a conducive learning environment.

The socio-cultural and institutional attributes of Luuka District may affect the effectiveness of discipline management strategies. Conducting a context-specific investigation is essential for developing reliable and effective strategies and approaches that address the unique challenges faced by schools in the district. Findings from the study can inform policy makers of the decisions aimed at enhancing student retention and improving the quality of education in government-aided secondary schools. By generating empirical evidence, policymakers can make informed decisions about resource allocation and intervention strategies.

1.11 Operational definitions

Graduation Rates in this study referred to the percentage of students who complete their secondary education within the expected timeframe.

Dropout Rates for this study referred to the proportion of students who leave school before completing their secondary education.

Retention Rates in this referred to the percentage of students who continue progressing through each grade level without interruption.

Student retention therefore referred to the extent to which students remain enrolled in and complete their education within a specified educational institution or program over a given period.

Discipline Management Strategies in the current study referred to the specific techniques, policies, and practices employed by school administrators and educators to maintain order, enforce rules, and promote positive behaviour among students within the school environment.

Teacher-student relationships referred to the quality of interpersonal connections and interactions between educators and students in the classroom and school environment.

Parental Involvement referred to the active participation, engagement, and collaboration of parents or guardians in their children's education and school-related activities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviewed the related literature about discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools through available documents. It explored the theoretical, conceptual and empirical review and were aligned with the study objectives which included counselling/ support services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools, teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools, and parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools), and summary of literature and knowledge gaps.

2.2 Theoretical review

The study adopted Tinto's Institutional Departure theory and Bean's Student Attrition theory, which served as the guiding framework for examining the correlation between discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda.

Tinto's Institutional Departure Model opines that students' participation in an institution's academic and social aspects significantly affects their motivation and commitment to academic goals and, consequently, determines student retention rates (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Lee et al., 2019). However, critiques have surfaced regarding its possibility of thoroughly exploring the difficulties associated with student dropouts and retention, suggesting potential limitations in analysing the factors framing student decisions (Sweetman et al., 2022).

Similarly, Bean's Student Attrition Model (1980), highlights the relevance of organisational factors, student inclusiveness, and involvement in understanding student attrition in higher education (Bean, 1980; Asavisanu, 2017). While the model highlights the relevance of these factors in influencing student persistence, criticisms have been raised regarding its potential oversimplification of the multifaceted reasons behind student attrition (Williams & Dziurawiec, 2018).

However, Bean's model offers a clear sight of analysing the effect of discipline policies, student engagement, and academic support on student retention rates (Asavisanu, 2017). By employing this framework, researcher could easily assess the success of discipline management strategies in promoting student retention and point areas that need improvement to foster more remarkable student persistence in secondary schools within the specified context (Asavisanu, 2017).

2.3 Discipline Management strategies and Student retention

2.3.1 Counselling/ support services and student retention

Student retention is a crucial factor in educational success, and numerous studies emphasise the relevance of guidance and mentoring in enhancing retention rates. Research has shown that mentoring programs offer psychological support and career advancement and fosters student retention (Mascarenhas et al., 2019). Studies have indicated that students who receive mentorship demonstrate higher retention rates than their non-mentored counterparts with similar qualifications (Usmani et al., 2022; Khan & Gogos, 2015). Therefore, aligning students' interests and academic achievements with educational requirements is vital for universities to retain students and assist them in selecting fulfilling academic majors and careers (Nguyen et al., 2016). Early interventions, continuous support, effective

communication, and stakeholder collaboration have been recommended to enhance student retention (Muljana & Luo, 2019). Moreover, implementing guidance programs within universities has been found to extend the retention rates of students at risk of dropping out (Ferrándiz et al., 2022).

In higher institutions of learning, counselling and support services are vital for student retention. Research has consistently indicated that counselling services has a positive impact on student retention rates (Mori, 2020). Studies have indicated that counselling services can enhance student retention by providing essential support (Mori, 2020). While the effects of counselling on retention may vary over time, with some studies suggesting short-term benefits post-treatment (Lockard et al., 2019), overall, “counselling experiences have been significantly correlated with improved student retention” (Trappey et al., 2022).

Accordingly, effective implementation of counselling services has been linked to higher retention rates, with students who engage in counselling being retained at higher rates than those who do not seek counselling (Scofield et al., 2017). The impact of counselling on retention is further supported by evidence showing that “counselling for mental health disorders leads to improved daily functioning and higher academic retention rates”(Kalkbrenner, 2015).

However, studies highlight the importance of creating conducive learning environments that actively engage students and staff in shared learning activities to boost retention (Tinto, 2019). Furthermore, providing targeted support and integrating retention theories into the curriculum, particularly for students on

academic probation, can positively influence persistence and graduation outcomes (McGrath & Burd, 2022).

In addressing the issue of mental health support and student retention, several key factors emerge from the literature. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on college student's mental health has been significant (Son et al., 2020; Elmer et al., 2020; Hamza et al., 2021; Kecojevic et al., 2020; Kaur et al., 2022). Studies emphasise the urgent need for interventions and preventive strategies to address students' mental health, especially during global crises like the pandemic (Zhai, 2024; Zhai & Du, 2020). The importance of social networks and contacts in students' mental health during times of crisis is highlighted, indicating the need for tailored support strategies (Elmer et al., 2020; Kwan et al., 2021).

Additionally, defensive factors such as optimism, help-seeking behaviour, and social support influence academic persistence and student retention (Zhai, 2024). Engaging students in community-based activities and providing personal support have enhanced student wellness and mental health, potentially promoting retention and success (Hermanstyne et al., 2022; Mikell & Davis, 2022). Faculty-to-student mental health support efforts are crucial for improving students' mental health, retention, and academic success (Kalkbrenner & Jolley, 2019).

Education Institutions are encouraged to develop programs that address students' transitional issues, aiming to increase student connectedness, support, and retention (Kwan et al., 2021). Additionally, the provision of mental health support is not only vital at individual campuses but also on a national scale, recognising mental illness as a public health concern (Stegenga et al., 2021). "Resilience plays

a significant role in how students cope with mental health issues, influencing their academic persistence and retention”(Eisenberg et al., 2016; Hartley, 2023).

Educators' roles in supporting students' mental health are crucial, with studies suggesting that being empathic listeners and guiding students to professional resources can be beneficial (Soo, 2023). Understanding student perceptions and experiences is the key to providing adequate mental health resources and improving support services (Fullmer et al., 2021; Nagy et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention

Positive relationships between teachers and students have been associated with improved student adjustment, academic performance, emotional well-being, and increased likelihood of retention or referral for special education (Pianta et al., 1995). “These relationships meet students' need for belongingness, influencing student motivation and engagement”(Spilt et al., 2021; Guo, 2021). Moreover, closeness in teacher-student relationships and attachment security are protective factors against teacher burnout (Milatz et al., 2015).

Research indicates that enhancing teacher-student relationships can improve student outcomes, such as increased academic performance and decreased indiscipline issues (Gehlbach et al., 2021; Huang, 2019). Positive teacher-student relationships are also dependent on teachers' job satisfaction, effectiveness, and well-being (Rabo, 2022; Gyeltshen, 2021). Harmonious teacher-student relationships can create a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment, boosting students' learning motivation and autonomous learning consciousness (Yan, 2019).

Moreover, the status of the relationships between teachers and students influences students' desire and passion for learning and their behaviour, which greatly influences the learning outcomes (Eleje et al., 2022). Better teacher-student relationships have been associated with higher academic achievement, pro-social behaviour, and school adjustment, highlighting their importance in students' overall success (Oreshkina & Greenberg, 2020). These relationships also affect teachers' subjective well-being, mainly when teachers actively cultivate productive relationships with their students (Farhah et al., 2021).

Maintaining rapport between teachers and students has been identified as a critical factor in student retention and graduation rates. For example, a study found that the ratio of library professional staff to students positively correlated with retention and graduation rates (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2021). Additionally, in online learning environments, maximising rapport has been connected to higher student satisfaction, well-being, and reduced attrition rates (Newell & Adam, 2022).

Therefore, ensuring positive collaboration between teachers and students has been related to improved student academic performance and engagement outcomes. Research indicates that fostering good rapport significantly influences student retention rates, course engagement levels, motivation, and overall well-being (Peacock, 2022). Studies have shown that a strong professor-student rapport is associated with favourable student outcomes such as increased course enjoyment, motivation, learning and pro-academic behaviour like attendance and attentiveness (Broom et al., 2022). "This positive relationship extends to student attitudes towards the teacher and course, student motivation, and perceived learning"(Wilson & Ryan, 2015).

Furthermore, positive teacher-student rapport leads to enhanced student participation, social interaction, and a positive learning environment, ultimately resulting in improved learning outcomes (Acharya, 2017). Research has also demonstrated that psychosocial factors, including students' comfort levels in interacting with others, can predict higher retention rates and GPAs (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2015).

Effective communication between teachers and students is crucial for student retention within educational institutions (Tinto, 2016). Research has shown that purposeful interaction between students and faculty, both formal and informal, is strongly associated with student retention (Leary et al., 2020). Additionally, the actions of faculty members, particularly in the classroom, are identified as key factors in enhancing student retention efforts (Tinto, 2006). Establishing good student-teacher relationships through communication can increase teacher job satisfaction, reduce stress, and improve student retention (Guo, 2022).

Nevertheless, various retention strategies are essential for higher education institutions to ensure student persistence (Schee, 2018). Implementing effective student support systems and programs based on understanding cognitive styles and critical thinking skills can positively influence student retention (Arifin et al., 2020). Furthermore, the design of online courses can also influence student retention rates, with online distance learning courses often facing lower retention rates than face-to-face classes (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2017).

“In student retention, the first-year experience course has been highlighted as a significant factor in improving student performance and college GPA and increasing retention rates” (Erickson & Stone, 2012). Additionally, student coaching in distance learning environments has shown promising results in enhancing student

retention (Benaya & Zur, 2019). Student retention is a vast issue influenced by various factors such as academic performance, demographic variables, and the quality of communication and relationships between teachers and students (Weng, 2016).

2.3.3 Parental involvement and student retention

The involvement of parents in the education affairs of their children plays an important role in fulfilling students' interests and aspirations, specifically among the less privileged and minority groups (Wadenya & Lopez, 2018). Furthermore, parental involvement has been found to narrow the academic achievement gap for high school students with emotional and behaviour risks (Lambert et al., 2021). It is widely acknowledged that parental engagement in children's learning at home substantially enhances student achievement (Harris & Goodall, 2018). Additionally, parental involvement fosters student engagement, which is crucial for academic success (Liu et al., 2022).

Parental support has been associated with positive educational outcomes for students across various academic levels. Research suggests that strengthening partnerships between schools and families can enhance communication, increase family participation, and support children's education, ultimately improving student retention and achievement (Ortiz et al., 2018). Involving parents in the school experience can foster student connectedness, which is crucial for student retention (Cartmell, 2015). Studies have indicated that greater parental involvement in educational activities is associated with a reduced risk of grade retention (Amani et al., 2020). Therefore, lack of parental involvement has been

associated with an increased risk of students being retained in later grades (Wofford, 2016).

Moreover, research has shown that parental involvement positively influences student academic achievement, with studies emphasising the significance of parental engagement in increasing educational outcomes, especially for students facing disadvantages (Jeynes, 2017). The union between parental involvement and student academic achievement has been widely explored, with findings indicating that parental participation significantly influences students' academic success (Pinatil et al., 2022). Studies have also emphasized the relevance of parental involvement in students' academic lives, emphasising that the benefits derived from parental support depend on how parents engage with their children academically (Artasthana & Marhaeni, 2017).

Engaging parents or guardians in the disciplinary process is important for student retention in educational institutions. Research has indicated that involving parents in retention decisions can significantly support student achievement (Akmal & Larsen, 2015). Studies have found that parental involvement in school activities and management can improve school performance and academic achievement (Vijayalakshmi & Muniappan, 2016). Furthermore, parental support has been identified as a key factor in preventing college dropout rates among students, especially for underrepresented minorities (Khan, 2017; Wadenya & Lopez, 2018).

Parental involvement not only influences academic performance but also influences student engagement and emotional functioning (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2018; Liu et al., 2022). Accordingly, higher level of parental involvement results

into higher levels of student engagement and emotional well-being (Liu et al., 2022). Additionally, parental involvement can play a fundamental role in narrowing the academic achievement gap for students facing emotional and behaviour risks (Lambert et al., 2021).

Accordingly, involvement of parents in the education of special needs students has proved to improve their academic achievement, emphasising the importance of parental engagement in supporting the learning needs of all students (Rani& Rashid, 2022). By fostering partnerships with parents, educators, and professionals, institutions can address challenges in student retention and academic performance (Abrams & Khaliqi, 2021).

Effective collaboration between home and school is vital for student retention and academic success. Research indicates that effective collaboration between parents and teachers positively influences students' academic performance and behaviour management (Cox, 2015). Studies opine the importance of recognising and meeting students' needs through understanding their home environments and establishing collaborative partnerships between schools and homes (McKernan et al., 2019). Furthermore, effective collaboration between schools and families promote students' volitional functioning and autonomy, contributing to their overall development (Vedeler, 2020).

Parental involvement fosters student engagement, achievement and strengthens school programs (Hall & Quinn, 2014). “Engaging families in activities that foster family engagement, such as home-based reading programs, can align home and school activities to support student learning” (Capotosto et al., 2017). “Effective

home-school partnerships are particularly crucial for students with disabilities, where collaboration between parents and educators is essential for academic success and well-being” (Ang & Spencer, 2022).

Moreover, collaborative testing has improved student retention of course content, indicating that collaborative learning strategies can enhance learning outcomes (Cortright et al., 2023). Creating connections and cooperation among schools, families, and communities can also improve student behaviour and discipline (Sheldon & Epstein, 2022). Nurturing a sense of belonging in school is positively associated with student retention, especially for students at risk of dropping out, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive and supportive school environments (Pendergast et al., 2018).

2.4 Summary of Literature

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the factors influencing student retention, notable gaps warrant further investigation, especially concerning the context of government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda. Firstly, limited research focuses on the effectiveness of discipline management strategies within the unique socio-cultural and educational context of Luuka District. Understanding how disciplinary practices influence student engagement and retention rates in this setting is vital for developing tailored interventions.

Moreover, studies emphasise the significance of counselling services, mentoring programs, and parental involvement, their utility and effectiveness in the Ugandan context, particularly in government-aided secondary schools, remain uncertain.

Differences in culture, socioeconomic factors, and institutional challenges may influence the implementation and outcomes of these strategies, highlighting the need for context-specific research.

Furthermore, the literature review lacks specific information regarding the role of community engagement and local partners in supporting student retention in the Luuka District. Collaborative initiatives involving local stakeholders, such as community leaders, NGOs, and governmental agencies, could enhance the effectiveness of discipline management strategies and contribute to sustainable retention outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the research framework and discusses the research design, study population, sample size, and sampling techniques. It also discusses the Data collection instruments, Research instrument validity and reliability, Research procedure, and Data analysis.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and employed quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design is appropriate for research that involves examination of respondents from a wide range of backgrounds (Amin, 2005), such as students, teachers, head teachers, and District education officers within the study's timeframe. The study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to allow for triangulation, hoping that the former would supplement the latter (Sekaran, 2003). Qualitative methods were used to obtain a thorough explanation. In contrast, quantitative ones were used to collect the Data required to meet the objectives and test the hypotheses supported by the Data (Amin, 2005).

3.2 Study population

The target population of the study was 3,031 respondents, comprising 1,470 teachers, 56 headteachers, 1,503 students, one District Education Officer (DEO), and one District Inspector of Schools (DIS) from government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The inclusion of respondents from government-aided secondary schools was based on the premise that these schools are the primary

providers of formal secondary education in Luuka District and serve a large proportion of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Government-aided schools operate under the policies and oversight of the Ministry of Education and Sports, making them suitable for assessing institutional factors—such as counselling services, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement—that influence student retention. Furthermore, these schools often face challenges related to resource constraints, teacher workload, and student support systems, making them a relevant focus for interventions aimed at improving retention outcomes in Uganda’s public education sector.

3.3 Determination of sample size

The Researcher stratified the population in this study by category (Teachers, Headteachers, students, District Education Officer, and District Inspector of schools). The sample size was based on Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) table of sample determination for each of the population sizes. Table 3.1 summarises the breakdown of appropriate sample sizes and the sampling techniques.

Table 3.1: Target Population, Sample Size, Sampling Techniques, and Instruments

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique	Instruments
DEO	1	1	Purposive	Interview Guide
DIS	1	1	Purposive	Interview Guide
Headteachers	56	5	Purposive	Questionnaire
Teachers	1470	90	Simple Random	Questionnaire
Students	1503	100	Stratified Random	Questionnaire
Total	3031	198		

Sources: Luuka District Education Department Database (2024); Krejcie & Morgan (1970)

3.4 Sampling techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the procedure of choosing the necessary study sample (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The following simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed;

3.4.1 Simple Random Sampling

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), simple random sampling is the selection of a sample so that each participant in the specified population has an equal and independent chance of being chosen. Random numbers were assigned and written ranging from 1 to 1392, folded up, mixed thoroughly and 1392 was chosen. In this case, each name has an equal chance of being chosen. Simple random sampling provides a representative sample of the population, as every member has an equal chance of being selected; It eliminates bias and ensures that everyone is equally likely to be included in the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.4.2 Purposive Sampling

Amin, 2005 defines purposive sampling as selecting the sample purposefully and precisely. The researcher used purposive sampling to select key informants knowledgeable about retention, including students, in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. Purposive sampling was chosen because it is significantly more time and cost-effective than other methods (Amin, 2005). According to Queirós, Faria and Almeida (2017), this technique may not necessarily be a representative sample, but it enables the Researcher to understand the problem in-depth. The purposively selected sample was a rich source of the Data of interest.

3.4.3 Census Inquiry

Census inquiry was used because the entire population of the Headteachers, District Inspector of Schools (DIS) and District Education Officer (DEO) were considered. The census inquiry is an attempt to gather information from every member of the population. Creswell (2012) considers census inquiry as a complete count, and it is also referred to as complete enumeration, which applies to a situation where the "Researcher requires no sampling effort". This study applied census inquiry to the Headteachers, DEO and DIS. Since a school in a District has only one head teacher, one District inspector of schools and one District Education officer, there was no need to undergo any sampling procedure for these population categories.

3.5 Data collection methods

The Researcher collected Data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The following methods were used to collect study findings: the questionnaire. Data was gathered through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews.

3.5.1 Questionnaire survey

A questionnaire is a research instrument comprising a series of carefully formulated questions designed to elicit relevant information from respondents (Enon, 1998). This tool typically includes both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture quantitative data as well as qualitative insights (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). In this study, the questionnaire survey was chosen as a primary data collection tool targeting teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

The rationale for selecting the questionnaire method is rooted in its suitability for studies involving a relatively large sample size. Therefore, questionnaire was an efficient, reliable, and practical tool that aligned with the study's objectives and logistical constraints, while also ensuring broad coverage and depth of information from the target teacher population.

3.5.2 Interviews

An interview is a face-to-face oral/verbal dialogue between a researcher (interviewer) and a respondent (interviewee) in which ideas are exchanged and recorded (Kombo et al., 2006). A structured interview guide was created and distributed to the Headteachers, School inspectors, and the District Education officers. This method was chosen because it is appropriate for producing Data, which is comprehensive. Interviewing is also appropriate for gathering information based on informants' priorities, opinions, and ideas. Informants had the opportunity to expand on their ideas, explain their points of view, and identify what they consider critical factors (Amin, 2005; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.6 Data collection instruments

The following study instruments collected Data: questionnaires and interview guides.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted primarily of closed-ended questions designed for teachers. The rationale for using a closed-ended questionnaire stems from its ability to facilitate structured responses that are easier to quantify, analyze, and compare across a large sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Closed questions also

ensure uniformity and consistency, minimizing the potential for misinterpretation and interviewer bias.

The use of a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree), was particularly appropriate for capturing respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and levels of agreement regarding discipline management practices and their influence on student retention. Likert-scale items are widely recognized for their ability to convert subjective opinions into quantifiable data, which is essential for statistical analysis and interpretation.

Additionally, the questionnaire was systematically structured to include key sections: demographic characteristics of respondents, types of discipline management strategies in use, and the extent of student retention. This organization ensured logical flow and respondent clarity. The instrument was especially appropriate for teachers, whose large numbers and diverse schedules made it impractical to collect data through direct interviews. It also allowed respondents to participate at their convenience, thereby improving response rates and data reliability.

3.6.2 Interview guide

The interview guide was composed of open-ended questions and administered to key education stakeholders, including head teachers, school inspectors, and District Education Officers. The rationale for employing interview guides was to gather in-depth qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. Unlike closed-ended tools, interviews allow for probing, clarification, and elaboration, which enrich the understanding of context-specific experiences and practices (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

Structured interviews using the guide were particularly suitable for respondents in positions of educational leadership and supervision, as they possess specialized knowledge about discipline policies, implementation gaps, and retention challenges within their schools or jurisdictions. These interviews provided opportunities to cross-examine issues identified in questionnaire responses, validate findings, and explore themes that might not have been adequately captured through pre-determined questionnaire items.

3.7 Validity and reliability of Research instruments

3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity determines the degree to which the results are truthful, depending on the instrument designed to measure the concepts under study. In this study, content validity is used to determine the validity of the questionnaire. The content validity of items intended to collect quantitative Data was tested by requesting them from three research supervisors, who checked whether the items on the questionnaire conformed to the study's objectives.

The research supervisors were asked to comment on each question as relevant, irrelevant, or needing improvement. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the three research supervisors from the Department of Education to evaluate the questions. The content validity index (CVI) as recommended by Lynn's (1986) criteria where any CVI greater than 70% is considered excellent, and items are passed as relevant if they were tested by three experts minimum and were all in perfect agreement (Polit et al., 2007) was computed and evaluated as below.

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of questions considered relevant}}{\text{Total No. of questions}} \times 100\%$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{27}{30} \times 100\% \\ &= 90\% \end{aligned}$$

The CVI was found to be 90%, indicating that it was acceptable since it was greater than 70%. According to Lynn's (1986) criteria, any CVI greater than 70% is considered excellent, and items are passed as relevant if tested by three experts minimum and were all in perfect agreement (Polit et al., 2007).

3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument consistently measures a variable across repeated trials under similar conditions (Amin, 2005). In this study, the internal consistency of the research instrument (teachers' questionnaire) was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a widely accepted measure of reliability for scales involving multiple Likert-type items.

To establish reliability, the researcher administered a pilot questionnaire to teachers in one government-aided secondary school that was not part of the actual study sample. The responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine the internal consistency of the instrument.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained was 0.888, as shown in Table 3.2. According to Amin (2005), a coefficient value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable for reliable instruments, while Cronbach (1951) suggests that values above 0.80 demonstrate high internal consistency. Therefore, the reliability coefficient obtained in this study indicates that the questionnaire items were internally consistent and suitable for data collection.

This high level of reliability affirms that the instrument was dependable for measuring the variables related to counselling services, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement in relation to student retention.

Table 3.2 Cronbach Alpha results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.888	27

Source: Result of analysis 2024

3.7.3 Credibility of Qualitative Data

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the confidence in the truth of the data and its interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility was enhanced through several strategies like triangulation, the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide, member checking and reflexive journal to ensure that the qualitative data collected through interviews was trustworthy and accurately reflected the experiences and perceptions of the respondents.

3.8 Data collection procedure

After successfully defending the proposal, the researcher received an introductory letter from Uganda Christian University, which legitimised the Researcher's access to the respondents. The researcher then requested approval from the principals of the selected Secondary Schools to interview the respondents. Research assistants distributed the questionnaires to the target group, which is the school's teachers. After collecting the Data, it was processed and analysed, and then the researcher produced a written report.

3.9 Data processing and analyses

Both quantitative and qualitative Data were analysed

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data collected from the field was sorted, edited, coded and entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This package helped the researcher present Data by generating tables, graphics, and frequency tables. SPSS helped the researcher generate descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations at the univariate level. The relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficient, obtained from the SPSS Data analysis package. This method is preferred to graphical depictions because it standardizes the variables; hence, a scale or unit of measurement change does not affect its value (Amin, 2005). The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique was used to establish the magnitude of the Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in the Luuka District.

3.9.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

An objective coding scheme was applied to Data from interviews in a process commonly known as content analysis. Qualitative Data analysis utilized words to make narrative statements on how categories or themes of Data are related. Once the themes, categories, and patterns were established, Data was evaluated and analysed to determine the adequacy, credibility, usefulness, and consistency of the information.

3.10 Measurement of Variables

Variants were measured to show how each category of questions in the instruments used is handled to come up with the necessary information. The categorical variables were measured using the nominal scale, with numbers assigned to each category only to identify similar objects within a category from different elements in another category. The non-categorical was studied, and the narrative was made to fit the objectives of the study. This established how Discipline management strategies influence student retention in government-aided secondary schools. The researcher used the ordinal measurement scale composed of discrete variables. This scale provides for variables which generate responses that can be ranked. Since this study used a five-point Likert scale, the level of agreement was ranked, ranging from strongly disagree as response 1 to agree as response 5.

3.11 Ethical considerations

This study considered two ethical aspects. First, confidentiality was an important ethical issue to address. Second, to avoid plagiarism, the researcher considered ethical concerns such as copyright, respect, and intellectual property ownership. This was very important when referencing other people's studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The study investigated the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District in Uganda. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the relationship between counselling/ support services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District; establish the relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District; and determine the relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This chapter summarizes the response rate and findings in relation to the study objectives.

4.2 Response rate

A total of 191 teacher questionnaires were distributed, and seven interviews were scheduled with key informants (one DEO, one DIS, and five head teachers), for a combined total of 198 instruments. Of the 191 teacher questionnaires administered, 120 were returned, yielding a response rate of 62.8%. Six of the seven key informants participated in the interviews, giving an interview response rate of 85.7%. Altogether, 126 instruments were completed out of 198, resulting in an overall response rate of 63.6%. According to Amin (2005), a response rate of 74% is considered acceptable; although the questionnaire response rate here falls

below that threshold, the interview response rate is strong, and the combined rate still provides a sufficient foundation for analysis.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Instrument	No. Administered	Returns	Response Rate
Questionnaire	191	120	62.8%
Interview Guide	7	6	85.7%
Total	198	126	63.6%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

4.3 Back ground variables of respondents

This section presents the sample characteristics of the respondents such as their sex, and age of respondents.

4.3.1 Sex of respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their sex. This was intended to ensure proportionate representation in the study from both the male and female participants. Data was collected and presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Sex of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	77	64.2	64.2	64.2
Valid Female	43	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents by sex. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 77 (64.2%) of the

total, while females constituted 43 (35.8%). This distribution reflects the presence of both sexes in government-aided secondary schools within Luuka District. The inclusion of both male and female participants suggests that the study achieved gender representation, thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of the findings in addressing discipline management strategies and student retention in the district.

4.3.2 Respondents' Age

The respondents were asked to indicate their age group in the study and results presented in table 4.3 as follows.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
16-19 years	00	00	00	00
20-30 years	53	44.2	44.2	44.2
31-40 years	39	32.5	32.5	76.7
Valid 41-50 years	21	17.5	17.5	94.2
51 years and above	7	5.8	5.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.3 presents the age distribution of the respondents. The majority, 53 respondents (44.2%), were aged between 20-30 years. This was followed by 39 respondents (32.5%) in the 31-40 years age bracket, 21 respondents (17.5%) aged between 41-50 years, and 7 respondents (5.8%) who were 51 years and above. Notably, there were no respondents in the 16-19 years age category. These results suggest that most respondents were within the youthful to middle-aged bracket, indicating that the teaching and administrative staff in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District are relatively young and energetic.

4.4 Empirical Findings

The views of the respondents were rated on a 5-point Likert scale as Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Not sure (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and strongly disagree (SD) = 1. These findings are presented in line with the study objectives below:

4.4.1 Student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

For this particular research, strongly agree and agree are considered to refer to agree and strongly disagree and disagree are considered to refer to disagree. Mean and Standard deviation are as well applied in the analysis of data. This section presents results on student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District which are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Opinions regarding student dropout rates in government aided secondary schools.

Student dropout rates	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Students in my school are motivated to complete their secondary education	2	1.7	9	7.5	10	8.3	57	47.5	42	35.0	4.07	.941
There are sufficient academic resources available to help students graduate on time	5	4.2	13	10.8	11	9.2	57	47.5	34	28.3	3.85	1.082
Teachers in my school are committed that students graduate	1	.8	7	5.8	2	1.7	71	59.2	39	32.5	4.17	.792
My school has effective programs to support students' academic progress	1	.8	8	6.7	11	9.2	64	53.3	36	30.0	4.05	.858
Many students in my school drop out before completing their education	8	6.7	24	20.0	18	15.0	42	35.0	28	23.3	3.48	1.237
Economic factors contribute significantly to student drop outs in my school	6	5.0	9	7.5	15	12.5	54	45.0	36	30.0	3.88	1.081
There is adequate support for students facing personal challenges to prevent drop out	8	6.7	11	9.2	16	13.3	59	49.2	26	21.7	3.70	1.112
The school environment is welcoming and encourages students to stay	2	1.7	2	1.7	4	3.3	61	50.8	51	42.5	4.31	.765
Students feel safe and supported at my school	3	2.5	5	4.2	5	4.2	64	53.3	43	35.8	4.16	.879
There are strong peer support systems in place in my school	2	1.7	16	13.3	17	14.2	49	40.8	36	30.0	3.84	1.053
Overall Mean											3.95	

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Likert Scale

Strongly agree = Very High
 Agree = High
 Not Sure = Moderate
 Disagree = Low
 Strongly disagree = Very Low

for Mean Values

0-1.0 Very low retention
 1.1-2.0 Low retention
 2.1-3.0 Moderate retention
 3.1-4.0 High retention
 4.1-5.0 Very High retention

The findings from Table 4.4 reveal a generally positive perception of student retention factors in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

First, when asked whether students in their schools are motivated to complete secondary education, 1.7 % of respondents strongly disagreed, 7.5 % disagreed, 8.3 % were not sure, 47.5 % agreed, and 35.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.07, SD = .941). This high level of agreement suggests that most staff perceive strong student motivation. Key Informant 1 noted that, *“We give bursaries to the two best students in each class and provide scholastic materials to the next three, which motivates them to complete their secondary education,”* (Key Informant 1, personal communication, June 2025), illustrating how targeted incentives and materials can bolster student drive.

Next, regarding *“There are sufficient academic resources available to help students graduate on time,”* 4.2 % strongly disagreed, 10.8 % disagreed, 9.2 % were not sure, 47.5 % agreed, and 28.3 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.85, SD = 1.082). Thus, 75.8 % of respondents perceive resources—such as textbooks, laboratories, and qualified teachers—as adequate. Key Informant 3 observed, *“We have qualified teachers, a well-stocked library, and a functional science laboratory, all of which support timely student graduation.”* (Key Informant 3, personal communication, June 2025). The 15.0 % who fell into the “strongly disagree” or “disagree” categories may reflect uneven access or awareness of these academic facilities.

Regarding *“Teachers in my school are committed that students graduate,”* 0.8 % strongly disagreed, 5.8 % disagreed, 1.7 % were not sure, 59.2 % agreed, and 32.5 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.17, SD = .792). With 91.7 % agreement, teacher

dedication clearly emerges as a critical retention factor. Key Informant 5 commented, “*Our teachers prepare schemes of work, lesson plans, and arrive early each day to teach, which ensures students graduate on time.*” (Key Informant 5, personal communication, June 2025). The small 6.6 % disagreement suggests isolated perceptions or limited awareness of overall faculty efforts.

Regarding “My school has effective programs to support students’ academic progress,” 0.8 % strongly disagreed, 6.7 % disagreed, 9.2 % were not sure, 53.3 % agreed, and 30.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.05, SD = .858). Consequently, 83.3 % of respondents affirm the existence of structured academic-support interventions—such as remedial classes, mentorship, or tutoring—within their schools. The 7.5 % in disagreement may be newer staff or those not directly involved in these programs, whereas the 9.2 % “not sure” category may reflect limited exposure to them.

Regarding “Many students in my school drop out before completing their education,” 6.7 % strongly disagreed, 20.0 % disagreed, 15.0 % were not sure, 35.0 % agreed, and 23.3 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.48, SD = 1.237). Thus, 58.3 % of respondents acknowledge significant dropout rates, although 26.7 % disagree. The moderate mean indicates variability across schools: some institutions may already have effective retention measures, while others continue to struggle with attrition.

Regarding “Economic factors contribute significantly to student drop outs in my school,” 5.0 % strongly disagreed, 7.5 % disagreed, 12.5 % were not sure, 45.0 % agreed, and 30.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.88, SD = 1.081). As 75.0 % recognize poverty and related hardships as major dropout drivers, Key Informant 4 stated,

“Economic factors, such as lack of money for food and personal needs, lead many students to stop attending school—even when tuition is free—because they cannot learn on an empty stomach, and ultimately they drop out.” (Key Informant 4, personal communication, June 2025). The 12.5 % “disagree” responses suggest that other factors—cultural norms or infrastructural inadequacies—may also influence attrition, while the 12.5 % “not sure” category indicates some uncertainty about the extent of economic impact.

Regarding “There is adequate support for students facing personal challenges to prevent drop out,” 6.7 % strongly disagreed, 9.2 % disagreed, 13.3 % were not sure, 49.2 % agreed, and 21.7 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.70, SD = 1.112). Thus, 70.9 % perceive that counselling, mentorship, or psychosocial services are sufficient. The combined 15.9 % “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses may stem from schools where such support mechanisms are underdeveloped or poorly communicated, and the 13.3 % “not sure” category likely reflects staff unfamiliarity with available services.

Regarding “The school environment is welcoming and encourages students to stay,” 1.7 % strongly disagreed, 1.7 % disagreed, 3.3 % were not sure, 50.8 % agreed, and 42.5 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.31, SD = .765). With 93.3 % agreement, respondents overwhelmingly perceive a positive climate that fosters retention. The minimal 3.4 % “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses likely reflect a few schools still developing inclusive practices, and the 3.3 % “not sure” group may comprise newer staff members.

Regarding “Students feel safe and supported at my school,” 2.5 % strongly disagreed, 4.2 % disagreed, 4.2 % were not sure, 53.3 % agreed, and 35.8 % strongly

agreed (mean = 4.16, SD = .879). Therefore, 89.2 % of respondents confirm that policies and structures—such as counselling, peer mediation, or child protection committees—are largely effective in promoting student welfare. The 6.7 % “strongly disagree” plus “disagree” responses point to isolated instances where safety or support measures may fall short, while the 4.2 % “not sure” category indicates minor uncertainty about existing protocols.

Finally, regarding “There are strong peer support systems in place in my school,” 1.7 % strongly disagreed, 13.3 % disagreed, 14.2 % were not sure, 40.8 % agreed, and 30.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.84, SD = 1.053). Thus, 70.8 % recognize that peer networks—such as study groups or mentorship pairs—enhance student retention. However, the combined 15.0 % “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses, along with the 14.2 % “not sure” category, suggest that in some schools these peer support structures may be informal, under-resourced, or not sufficiently publicized.

Overall, the composite mean of **3.95** indicated that respondents generally perceived Luuka District’s government-aided secondary schools as supportive of student dropout rates. The highest mean values—specifically, “The school environment is welcoming and encourages students to stay” (M = 4.31) and “Teachers in my school are committed that students graduate” (M = 4.17)—portray the perceived importance of school climate and teacher dedication. Conversely, the mean for “Many students in my school drop out before completing their education” (M = 3.48) and “Economic factors contribute significantly to student drop outs in my school” (M = 3.88) reveal ongoing challenges.

4.4.2 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

This section presents results on counselling services. For this particular research, strongly agree and agree are considered to refer to agree and strongly disagree and disagree are considered to refer to disagree. Mean and Standard deviation are as well applied in the analysis of data as presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Opinions regarding Counselling Services

Counselling Services	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Our school provides adequate guidance and counselling services to support students' academic needs	05	4.2	04	3.3	7	5.8	54	45.0	50	41.7	4.17	.982
The mental health support services available in our school are effective in addressing students emotional and psychological issues	18	15.0	09	7.5	18	15.0	64	53.3	11	9.2	3.34	1.213
Students feel comfortable seeking help from our schools counselling services	04	3.3	05	4.2	14	11.7	55	45.8	42	35.0	4.05	.969
The schools counselling services are well equipped to handle a variety of student issues	06	5.0	25	20.8	10	8.3	48	40.0	31	25.8	3.61	1.218
The guidance counsellors in our school are approachable and provide valuable assistance to students	00	0.0	8	6.7	7	5.8	71	59.2	34	28.3	4.09	.778
Overall Mean											3.85	

Source: Primary Data

Likert Scale		for Mean Values
Strongly agree	= Very High	0-1.0 Very low service
Agree	= High	1.1-2.0 Low service
Not Sure	= Moderate	2.1-3.0 Moderate service
Disagree	= Low	3.1-4.0 High service
Strongly disagree	= Very Low	4.1-5.0 Very High service

The findings from Table 4.5 reveal perceptions of counselling services in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

First, when asked whether “Our school provides adequate guidance and counselling services to support students’ academic needs,” 4.2 % strongly disagreed, 3.3 % disagreed, 5.8 % were not sure, 45.0 % agreed, and 41.7 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.17, SD = 0.982). Thus, 86.7 % of respondents expressed a positive view of the adequacy of these services, while 7.5 % disagreed and 5.8 % were undecided. The high mean indicates a strong consensus that guidance and counselling services sufficiently support students’ academic needs. Key Informant 2 confirmed this, stating that:

“We do have a counselling department which provides adequate guidance and counselling services to support students’ academic needs. In fact, this counselling department has helped a lot in students’ lives—academically and mentally.” (Key Informant 2, personal communication, June 2025).

Next, regarding “The mental health support services available in our school are effective in addressing students’ emotional and psychological issues,” 15.0 % strongly disagreed, 7.5 % disagreed, 15.0 % were not sure, 53.3 % agreed, and 9.2 %

strongly agreed (mean = 3.34, SD = 1.213). In total, 62.5 % of respondents endorse the effectiveness of mental health support services, while 22.5 % disagree and 15.0 % are uncertain. The mean of 3.34 suggests a moderate to high perception of effectiveness, though the relatively large standard deviation points to divergent views—some staff may perceive gaps in emotional and psychological support.

When asked whether “Students feel comfortable seeking help from our school’s counselling services,” 3.3 % strongly disagreed, 4.2 % disagreed, 11.7 % were not sure, 45.8 % agreed, and 35.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.969). Consequently, 80.8 % of respondents believe students feel at ease accessing counselling, 7.5 % disagree, and 11.7 % are uncertain. The mean of 4.05 indicates a high level of comfort, with a low standard deviation reflecting broad agreement.

Key Informant 3 elaborated:

“We have a full-time counsellor who helps students with counselling services, and the students are free with the school counsellor because they go to that department for support.” (Key Informant 3, personal communication, June 2025).

Regarding *“The school’s counselling services are well equipped to handle a variety of student issues,”* 5.0 % strongly disagreed, 20.8 % disagreed, 8.3 % were not sure, 40.0 % agreed, and 25.8 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.61, SD = 1.218). Thus, 65.8 % of respondents rate the equipment and capacity of counselling services positively, while 25.8 % disagree and 8.3 % are undecided. The mean of 3.61 suggests a generally favourable view, with the higher SD indicating notable variation in perceived adequacy of counselling resources.

Finally, for “The guidance counsellors in our school are approachable and provide valuable assistance to students,” 0.0 % strongly disagreed, 6.7 % disagreed, 5.8 % were not sure, 59.2 % agreed, and 28.3 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.778). Overall, 87.5 % of respondents view counsellors as approachable and helpful, 6.7 % disagree, and 5.8 % are uncertain. The mean of 4.09, coupled with the lowest standard deviation among items, reflects strong consensus that counsellors are accessible and effective in providing assistance.

Across all five items, the overall mean was **3.85**, placing counselling services in the “High service” category on the Likert scale. This indicates that, in general, respondents perceived counselling services in Luuka District’s government-aided secondary schools to be reliable and supportive of student retention, with particular strength in guidance adequacy ($M = 4.17$) and counsellor approachability ($M = 4.09$).

Correlation between Counselling/ support services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

It was necessary to find out if there was a relationship between counselling/ support services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The study used the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient technique. The findings are displayed in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Correlation Results for Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools

		Student Retention	Counselling Services
Student Retention	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Counselling Services	Pearson Correlation	.603**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Source: Primary Data

The Pearson correlation between Counselling Services and Student Retention in the Table 4.6 was $r = .603$, $p < .001$ ($n = 120$), indicating a statistically significant, moderately strong positive association: schools perceived to provide more effective guidance and counselling services also tended to report higher levels of student retention. In other words, as respondents' ratings of counselling services increased, their ratings of student retention increased correspondingly, suggesting that robust counselling provisions may play an important role in retaining students in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

Testing Hypothesis

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed. The results revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between counselling services and student retention, with $r = .603$ and $p = .000$ (2-tailed). Since the p-value is less than the conventional significance level of 0.01, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The findings suggest that improved access to and use of counselling services is associated with higher levels of student retention.

4.4.2 Teacher-Student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

This section presents results on teacher-student relationships. For this particular research, strongly agree and agree are considered to refer to agree and strongly disagree and disagree are considered to refer to disagree. Mean and Standard deviation are as well applied in the analysis of data as presented in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Opinions regarding Teacher-Student relationships

Teacher-Student relationships	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
I have a positive rapport with most of my students	2	1.7	5	4.2	2	1.7	70	58.3	41	34.2	4.19	.802
Communication between teacher and student in our school is open and effective	0	0	5	4.2	3	2.5	60	50.0	52	43.3	4.33	.724
Students feel comfortable discussing their academic and personal issues with their teachers	0	0.0	12	10.0	13	10.8	60	50.0	35	29.2	3.98	.898
I make an effort to understand the individual needs and backgrounds of my students	0	0	6	5.0	4	3.3	69	57.5	41	34.2	4.21	.732
Our school promotes strong, respectful relationships between teachers and students	0	0	2	1.7	8	6.7	64	53.3	46	38.3	4.28	.663
Overall Mean											4.20	

Source: Primary Data

Likert Scale		for Mean Values
Strongly agree	= Very High	0-1.0 Very low relationship
Agree	= High	1.1-2.0 Low relationship
Not Sure	= Moderate	2.1-3.0 Moderate relationship
Disagree	= Low	3.1-4.0 High relationship
Strongly disagree	= Very Low	4.1-5.0 Very High relationship

The findings from Table 4.9 reveal a generally positive perception of teacher-student relationships in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. For this analysis, “Strongly agree” and “Agree” are combined as agreement, and “Strongly disagree” and “Disagree” as disagreement. Mean scores and standard deviations are presented alongside the percentages in each response category.

First, in response to “I have a positive rapport with most of my students,” 1.7 % of respondents strongly disagreed, 4.2 % disagreed, 1.7 % were not sure, 58.3 % agreed, and 34.2 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.19, SD = 0.802). Thus, 92.5 % of respondents affirm a positive rapport, 5.9 % express disagreement, and 1.7 % are uncertain. The high mean indicates strong consensus that teachers generally enjoy good relationships with their students. Those who disagreed may be newer staff or may have experienced challenges in establishing rapport.

Next, for “Communication between teacher and student in our school is open and effective,” 0.0 % strongly disagreed, 4.2 % disagreed, 2.5 % were not sure, 50.0 % agreed, and 43.3 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.33, SD = 0.724). In total, 93.3 % perceive communication as open and effective, 4.2 % disagree, and 2.5 % are uncertain. Key Informant 1 explained:

“We always have assemblies, which help us as teachers and students to freely communicate. We also have suggestion boxes whereby students write any concern about their studies, and we communicate to them after reviewing their feedback. This has helped us maintain open and effective communication between teachers and students.” (Key Informant 1, personal communication, June 2025).

The very high mean (4.33) and low SD signal near-unanimous agreement about the importance of regular forums and feedback mechanisms in fostering transparent teacher-student dialogue.

Regarding “Students feel comfortable discussing their academic and personal issues with their teachers,” 0.0 % strongly disagreed, 10.0 % disagreed, 10.8 % were not sure, 50.0 % agreed, and 29.2 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.98, SD = 0.898). Thus, 79.2 % believe students feel at ease seeking help, 10.0 % disagree, and 10.8 % are uncertain. The mean of 3.98 indicates a high—but slightly less unanimous—level of comfort compared to communication overall. Those who disagreed or were unsure may work in contexts where teachers have not yet established enough trust to make students feel fully at ease discussing sensitive concerns.

For “I make an effort to understand the individual needs and backgrounds of my students,” 0.0 % strongly disagreed, 5.0 % disagreed, 3.3 % were not sure, 57.5 % agreed, and 34.2 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.21, SD = 0.732). Hence, 91.7 % affirm that they strive to understand student backgrounds, 5.0 % disagree, and 3.3 % are uncertain. Key Informant 4 noted:

“We conduct one-to-one sessions where each teacher meets individually with their student. These sessions help teachers understand the individual needs and backgrounds of their students. This is where we have put a lot of effort to ensure we know each student’s circumstances.” (Key Informant 4, personal communication, June 2025).

The high mean portrays the perceived importance of personalized attention in strengthening teacher-student bonds.

Finally, for “Our school promotes strong, respectful relationships between teachers and students,” 0.0 % strongly disagreed, 1.7 % disagreed, 6.7 % were not sure, 53.3 % agreed, and 38.3 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.28, SD = 0.663). In total, 91.6 % view their school as fostering respectful interactions, 1.7 % disagree, and 6.7 % are uncertain. The high mean and very low SD indicate widespread consensus that institutional culture actively supports respectful teacher-student rapport.

Overall, the composite mean of all five items is **4.20**, which falls within the “High relationship” category on the provided Likert scale. These results demonstrate that teacher-student relationships in Luuka District’s government-aided secondary schools are perceived as overwhelmingly positive—characterized by strong rapport, open communication, student comfort in seeking help, individualized understanding, and respectful interactions.

Correlation between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

It was necessary to find out if there was a relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The study used the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient technique. The findings are displayed in table 4.10 below;

Table 4.10 Correlation Results for teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools

		Student Retention	Teacher Student Relationship
Student Retention	Pearson Correlation	1	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Teacher Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.552**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.10 above indicated a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and student retention ($r = .552$, $p = .000$). This means that as the quality of teacher-student relationships improves, the level of student retention tends to increase correspondingly. Since the p-value is less than the standard significance level of 0.01, the result is statistically significant, confirming that stronger teacher-student relationships are associated with

improved student retention in these schools. Therefore, teacher-student relationships are a relevant factor influencing students' continued stay in school within the district.

Testing Hypothesis

The hypothesis that was tested stated that:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

The correlation results presented in Table 4.10 revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention ($r = .552$, $p = .000$). Since the p-value (.000) is less than the 0.01 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between teacher-student relationships and student retention. The findings suggest that improving the quality of interaction and rapport between teachers and students is likely to enhance students' willingness and ability to remain in school, thereby contributing positively to student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

4.4.2 Parental Involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

This section presents results on parental involvement. For this particular research, strongly agree and agree are considered to refer to agree and strongly disagree and disagree are considered to refer to disagree. Mean and Standard deviation are as well applied in the analysis of data as presented in Table 4.13

Table 4.13: Opinions regarding Parental Involvement

Student Retention	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Our school actively engages parents or guardians in the disciplinary process	3	2.5	6	5.0	15	12.5	57	47.5	39	32.5	4.03	.939
There is a strong collaboration between home and school in supporting student discipline	8	6.7	11	9.2	12	10.0	57	47.5	32	26.7	3.78	1.139
Parents or guardians are regularly informed about their child's progress and behaviour	2	1.7	10	8.3	12	10.0	67	55.8	29	24.2	3.93	.909
I feel supported by parents or guardians in addressing student issues	9	7.5	19	15.8	13	10.8	55	45.8	24	20.0	3.55	1.194
The school organizes regular meetings and events to foster parent-teacher collaboration	4	3.3	21	17.5	11	9.2	53	44.2	31	25.8	3.72	1.132
Overall Mean											3.80	

Source: Primary Data

Likert Scale

Strongly agree = Very High
 Agree = High
 Not Sure = Moderate
 Disagree = Low
 Strongly disagree = Very Low

for Mean Values

0-1.0 Very low Involvement
 1.1-2.0 Low Involvement
 2.1-3.0 Moderate Involvement
 3.1-4.0 High Involvement
 4.1-5.0 Very High Involvement

The findings from Table 4.13 reveal perceptions of parental involvement in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

First, when asked whether “Our school actively engages parents or guardians in the disciplinary process,” 2.5 % of respondents strongly disagreed, 5.0 % disagreed, 12.5 % were not sure, 47.5 % agreed, and 32.5 % strongly agreed (mean = 4.03, SD = 0.939). Thus, 80.0 % of respondents affirmed that their schools actively involve parents or guardians in disciplinary matters, 7.5 % expressed disagreement, and 12.5 % were uncertain. The mean of 4.03 indicates a high level of agreement. Key Informant 1 explained:

“We do invite parents to come to school to discuss the discipline of their children whenever their children are indisciplined. This helps us as teachers to effectively discuss student discipline with parents, and our students become more disciplined and organized.” (Key Informant 1, personal communication, June 2025).

This confirms that involving parents in disciplinary processes is perceived as a common practice, which likely contributes to greater accountability and, consequently, improved student retention.

Next, for “There is a strong collaboration between home and school in supporting student discipline,” 6.7 % strongly disagreed, 9.2 % disagreed, 10.0 % were not sure, 47.5 % agreed, and 26.7 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.78, SD = 1.139). In total, 74.2 % perceive a robust home-school partnership for discipline, 15.9 % disagree, and 10.0 % are undecided. The mean of 3.78 falls within the “High involvement” category, though the higher standard deviation suggests some variability in responses. This implies that, while most schools have structures for collaboration, a minority of teachers either do not observe this collaboration firsthand or are newly assigned and not yet fully aware of existing mechanisms.

Regarding “Parents or guardians are regularly informed about their child’s progress and behaviour,” 1.7 % strongly disagreed, 8.3 % disagreed, 10.0 % were not sure, 55.8 % agreed, and 24.2 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.93, SD = 0.909). Therefore, 80.0 % of respondents agree that schools keep parents informed about academic progress and conduct, 10.0 % are uncertain, and 10.0 % disagree. The mean of 3.93 indicates a generally positive perception of communication frequency. Key Informant 5 noted:

“We give report cards to students at the end of each term to take to their parents. These report cards show the progress of their children at school. We also send circulars to students to hand to their parents; these circulars outline updates on school activities and academic achievement.” (Key Informant 5, personal communication, June 2025).

This illustrates that regular reporting mechanisms are in place, reinforcing parental awareness—a factor likely conducive to student retention.

For the statement “I feel supported by parents or guardians in addressing student issues,” 7.5 % strongly disagreed, 15.8 % disagreed, 10.8 % were not sure, 45.8 % agreed, and 20.0 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.55, SD = 1.194). Accordingly, 65.8 % of respondents feel supported by parents or guardians when managing student challenges, 23.3 % do not feel supported, and 10.8 % remain uncertain. The mean of 3.55 indicates high—but comparatively lower—perceived support. The relatively large standard deviation suggests divergent experiences: in some schools, parental backing is strong, whereas in others, teachers may feel isolated when attempting to address student behavioural or academic issues.

Finally, for “The school organizes regular meetings and events to foster parent-teacher collaboration,” 3.3 % strongly disagreed, 17.5 % disagreed, 9.2 % were not

sure, 44.2 % agreed, and 25.8 % strongly agreed (mean = 3.72, SD = 1.132). Thus, 70.0 % of respondents perceive that their school holds parent-teacher meetings and events to encourage collaboration, 20.8 % disagree, and 9.2 % are undecided. The mean of 3.72 again falls into the “High involvement” category, though the higher standard deviation points to variability in how consistently schools organize such forums. This suggests that, while many schools do conduct these meetings, some either lack the capacity or have not yet institutionalized them fully.

Across all five items, the overall mean is 3.80, which corresponds to “High involvement” on the Likert scale. In summary, respondents generally perceive parental involvement—through disciplinary engagement, home-school collaboration, regular progress reporting, supportive engagement, and organized meetings—as strong. However, the variation in standard deviations and the presence of “disagree” and “not sure” responses indicate that some schools may still need to strengthen or more consistently implement these parental-involvement structures to maximize their positive impact on student retention.

Correlation between parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

It was necessary to find out if there was a relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The study used the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient technique. The findings are displayed in table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Correlation Results for parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools

		Student Retention	Parental Involvement
Student Retention	Pearson Correlation	1	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Parental Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.552**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Source: Primary Data

The study sought to determine the relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. Table 4.14 above revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between parental involvement and student retention ($r = .552$, $p = .000$). This implies that increased parental involvement is associated with higher levels of student retention. Since the p-value is less than the 0.01 level of significance, the relationship is statistically significant. These findings suggest that when parents or guardians are more actively involved in the educational affairs of their children, such as attending school meetings, monitoring academic progress, and participating in disciplinary processes, students are more likely to remain in school. Therefore, parental involvement is a critical factor influencing student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

Testing Hypothesis

The hypothesis that was tested stated that:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

The results from Table 4.14 showed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between parental involvement and student retention ($r = .552$, $p = .000$). Since the p-value (.000) is less than the alpha level of 0.01, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and student retention. The implication is that higher levels of parental involvement are associated with improved student retention rates in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

4.5 To establish the effect of discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study was planned to establish the effect of discipline management strategies on student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This was done through multiple regression analysis which was performed purposely to examine the strongest predictor variable of discipline management strategies. The aim was to establish which of the 3 components of discipline management strategies i.e., counselling/ support services; teacher-student relationships; and parental involvement has the strongest predictive power on the dependent variable i.e., and student retention in government aided secondary schools.

Table 4.17: Showing coefficient correlation for discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	18.282	2.989		6.116	.000
	Counselling Services	.361	.151	.289	2.384	.019
	Teacher Student Relationship	.459	.196	.233	2.345	.021
	Parental Involvement	.244	.126	.206	1.942	.055

a. Dependent Variable: Student Retention

Source: Primary Data

The multiple linear regression analysis examined the predictive strength of counselling services, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement on student retention. The regression model was statistically significant as seen by the significance values (p-values) for most of the independent variables.

Interpretation

The constant value of 18.282 suggests that when all independent variables are held at zero, the expected mean score for student retention would be 18.282 units.

Counselling Services had a positive and significant influence on student retention ($B = 0.361$, $p = 0.019 < 0.05$), with a standardized beta of 0.289. This indicates that a unit increase in the provision of counselling services is associated with a 0.361 unit increase in student retention, holding other factors constant. The moderate beta coefficient suggests it contributes notably to student retention.

Teacher-Student Relationship also showed a positive and statistically significant effect on student retention ($B = 0.459$, $p = 0.021 < 0.05$), with a standardized beta of 0.233. This implies that a unit increase in positive teacher-student relationships results in a 0.459 increase in student retention, suggesting a meaningful influence.

Parental Involvement had a positive but marginally insignificant influence ($B = 0.244$, $p = 0.055 > 0.05$), with a standardized beta of 0.206. Although the coefficient is positive, the p-value indicates that the effect is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, though it may still be practically relevant.

In summary, counselling services and teacher-student relationships were statistically significant predictors of student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, whereas parental involvement showed a positive but statistically borderline relationship. This suggests that enhancing counselling and building strong teacher-student connections are likely to positively influence student retention.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION,

5.1 Introduction

This study examined the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The previous chapter was concerned with analysing; presenting and interpreting data got from teachers in selected government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This chapter presents the summary, discussion, conclusions and recommendations according to the three specific objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of the study findings

This section presents the summary of findings in line with the specific objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study findings revealed a moderately strong positive and statistically significant correlation between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .603$ and a significance level of $p < .001$. This implies that as the provision and effectiveness of counselling services increase, student retention also tends to improve. The results suggest that counselling services—such as guidance, psychological support, and mental health interventions—are associated with students' likelihood of staying in school. Therefore, strengthening counselling

frameworks within schools could be a vital strategy in improving student retention rates in government-aided secondary schools across the district.

5.2.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study findings revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .552$ and a significance level of $p = .000$. This indicates that improvements in the quality of teacher-student relationships—such as fostering positive rapport, effective communication, and mutual respect—are associated with higher levels of student retention. Since the p-value is well below the 0.01 significance threshold, this relationship is statistically significant, confirming that stronger teacher-student relationships are an important factor influencing students' continued enrolment in these schools. Therefore, promoting healthy and supportive teacher-student interactions could substantially enhance student retention in government-aided secondary schools within the district.

5.2.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study findings indicated a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .552$ and a significance level of $p = .000$. This result implies that increased parental involvement—such as active engagement of parents or guardians in school disciplinary processes, fostering effective collaboration between home and school, attending school meetings, and monitoring students' academic progress—is

associated with higher levels of student retention. Given that the p-value is less than the 0.01 threshold, the relationship is statistically significant. These findings underscore the critical role of parental involvement as a key factor in promoting sustained student enrollment in government-aided secondary schools in the district.

5.3 Discussion of findings

5.3.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study established a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between counselling services and student retention ($r = .603$, $p < .001$), indicating that effective counselling and support services are associated with higher levels of student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This finding aligns with Mori (2000), who demonstrated that counselling positively influences student retention rates by addressing students' academic and psychosocial needs. Similarly, Lockard et al. (2019) suggest that the impact of counselling on retention may vary over time, but overall, positive counselling experiences remain critical in supporting students to stay in school (Trappey et al., 2022).

Further corroborating these results, Kivlighan et al. (2021) emphasize that counselling services contribute to academic success, with many students reporting improved retention and performance following counselling interventions. Hoyt (2021) also highlights the integral role of counselling and academic support services in creating supportive environments that foster student retention. In

addition, Scofield et al. (2017) found that students who actively engage in counselling are retained at higher rates compared to those who do not, reinforcing the importance of these services.

The positive relationship identified in this study resonates with Mascarenhas et al. (2019), who stress the significance of guidance and mentoring in boosting student retention. Mentoring programs not only offer psychological support but also facilitate career advancement, thereby enhancing students' motivation to remain in school. Nguyen et al. (2016) further affirm that academic advising and guidance are vital components for retaining students, particularly at higher education levels, by influencing their academic decisions and persistence.

These empirical findings support theoretical frameworks such as Tinto's Institutional Departure theory and Bean's Student Attrition theory (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Lee et al., 2010), which assert that student persistence is strongly affected by their integration into the academic and social environment of an institution. Effective counselling services promote this integration by fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to academic goals, which in turn enhances student retention.

5.3.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and student retention ($r = .552, p < .001$), indicating that improved teacher-student relationships are associated with higher levels of student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka

District. This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing the pivotal role of teacher-student relationships in influencing student outcomes.

Eleje et al. (2022) found that positive teacher-student relationships significantly enhance students' learning outcomes, as students who perceive their teachers as supportive and understanding are more likely to engage actively in their studies. Similarly, Oreshkina and Greenberg (2010) highlighted that nurturing teacher-student relationships contribute to higher academic achievement and better school adjustment among students. Moreover, Broom et al. (2022) demonstrated that strong professor-student rapport is linked to increased course enjoyment, motivation, and pro-academic behaviours, which are essential factors in student retention.

These findings show the importance of encouraging positive teacher-student relationships as a strategy to enhance student retention in secondary schools. Implementing professional development programs that equip teachers with skills to build and maintain supportive relationships with students could be instrumental in achieving this goal.

5.3.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study identified a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between parental involvement and student retention ($r = .552$, $p < .001$), suggesting that increased parental engagement is associated with higher student retention rates in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the critical role of parental involvement in students' educational success.

Ortiz et al. (2012) found that strengthening partnerships between schools and families improves communication and offers support in children's education, thereby enhancing student retention. Cartmell (2015) noted that engaging parents in school activities fosters student connectedness, which is vital for retention. Additionally, Amani et al. (2020) emphasized that greater parental involvement in educational activities reduces the risk of grade retention. Rani and Rashid (2022) highlighted that parental engagement in the education of special needs students improves academic achievement, reinforcing the importance of parental involvement across diverse student populations.

These findings suggest that schools should actively promote parental involvement through regular communication, inclusive school events, and collaborative decision-making processes to enhance student retention. By creating a welcoming environment for parents and guardians, schools can foster a supportive community that contributes to students' academic persistence and success.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0: Introduction

This study examined the relationship between discipline management strategies and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. The previous chapter was concerned with summary, and discussion of data got from teachers in selected government aided secondary schools in Luuka District. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations according to the three specific objectives of the study.

6.1 Conclusions

On the basis of the study findings, several conclusions were drawn.

6.1.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study findings revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between counselling services and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District ($r = .603$, $p < .001$). This indicates that schools offering more effective counselling and support services tend to retain more students. Key counselling components such as academic guidance, psychosocial support, and mental health interventions are instrumental in fostering a supportive learning environment.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that counselling services are a critical factor influencing student retention. Strengthening these services—by ensuring the

availability of trained counsellors, integrating guidance into school programs, and promoting student access to mental health and psychosocial support—can substantially contribute to reducing dropout rates and enhancing student continuity in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District.

6.1.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study established a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District ($r = .552, p < .001$). This suggests that improved teacher-student relationships are associated with higher student retention levels.

Based on this finding, the study concludes that teacher-student relationships play a crucial role in influencing student retention. When teachers maintain supportive, respectful, and communicative relationships with students, learners are more likely to feel engaged, motivated, and committed to their education. Therefore, enhancing teacher capacity to build and sustain positive interactions with students—through professional development and reflective practice—can be an effective strategy for improving student retention in secondary schools.

6.1.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The study also revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between parental involvement and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District ($r = .552, p < .001$). This indicates that increased parental engagement is positively associated with student retention.

Consequently, the study concludes that parental involvement is a key determinant of student retention. Actively involving parents and guardians in school-related matters—such as disciplinary processes, academic monitoring, and communication with teachers—creates a shared responsibility for the learner’s success. Schools that promote consistent home-school collaboration and provide inclusive platforms for parental participation are more likely to retain students and foster positive educational outcomes.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study conclusions, a number of recommendations were made.

6.2.1 Counselling services and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

The Ministry of Education and Sports should prioritize the recruitment and deployment of qualified school counsellors in all government-aided secondary schools to provide professional psychosocial, academic, and mental health support to students.

School administrators should institutionalize structured counselling programs within the school calendar, ensuring that regular group and individual sessions are conducted to address students’ academic and emotional challenges.

Development partners and NGOs operating in the education sector should support training and capacity-building workshops for school counsellors and teachers on adolescent mental health and counselling techniques to enhance service delivery.

School management committees (SMCs) should allocate budgetary provisions for counselling materials, private consultation spaces, and partnerships with mental health professionals for referral services.

6.2.2 Teacher-student relationships and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

Head teachers should create a school culture that encourages respectful and supportive teacher-student interactions by including relationship-building in school policies and codes of conduct.

Teachers should be regularly trained in student-centred pedagogical approaches, communication skills, and emotional intelligence to improve engagement with learners.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEb) and teacher training colleges should integrate modules on teacher-student relationship management into both pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula.

District education offices should monitor and evaluate the school climate with an emphasis on relational aspects, and recommend interventions in schools with poor teacher-student rapport.

6.2.3 Parental involvement and student retention in government aided secondary schools in Luuka District

Schools should establish regular parent-teacher meetings, joint academic planning sessions, and school community forums to encourage greater parental participation in student affairs.

Parents and guardians should be sensitized—through community barazas and local media—on the importance of their role in monitoring their children’s academic progress and school attendance.

School administrators should implement inclusive communication channels such as SMS alerts, printed newsletters, and home visits to keep parents informed and involved in school activities.

Education authorities should develop and enforce policies that require parental representation in disciplinary committees, school development planning, and academic review panels to foster shared accountability.

6.3 Areas for future research

The following areas were suggested for further research:

Impact of social economic factors on retention rates in government-aided secondary schools

Role of School Leadership and Management styles in schools affects student retention

Effect of parental involvement and support on student retention rates

Impact of Government Policies on Retention Rates aimed at improving retention

Cultural and Community Influences on student Retention

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Respondent,

My name is Hesketh Clinton Ngobi, and I am a student at UCU. To complete the study, please take a few minutes to participate. After you give your consent, please fill out the questionnaire at your convenience. This study investigates the relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District in Uganda.

All information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Your participation in this study is voluntary, but I would be glad if you accepted.

Thank you for being so cooperative.

Sincerely,

Hesketh Clinton Ngobi

SECTION: A

I. Demographics:

Please fill and tick (✓) where applicable.

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Age group

16-19 years

20-30 years

31-40 years

41-50 years

51-plus

Section B: Investigate the relationship between Discipline management strategies and student retention in government-aided secondary schools in Luuka District in Uganda.

Please use the rating scale 1-5 provided below to select the most appropriate option. Tick (✓) the most appropriate number.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A	Counselling and Support Services	SD	D	NS	A	SA
3	Our school provides adequate guidance and counselling services to support student's academic needs					
4	The mental health support services available in our school are effective in addressing students' emotional and psychological issues					
5	Students feel comfortable seeking help from our school's counselling services					
6	The school's counselling services are well-equipped to handle a variety of student issues					
7	The guidance counsellors in our school are approachable and provide valuable assistance to students					
B	Teacher-Student Relationships	SD	D	NS	A	SA
15	I have a positive rapport with most of my students					
16	Communication between teachers and students in our school is open and effective					
17	Students feel comfortable discussing their academic and personal issues with their teachers					
18	I make an effort to understand the individual needs and Bbackgrounds of my students					
19	Our school promotes strong, respectful relationships between teachers and students					
C	Parental Involvement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
27	Our school actively engages parents or guardians in the disciplinary process					
28	There is a strong collaboration between home and school in supporting student Discipline					

29	Parents or guardians are regularly informed about their child's progress and behaviour					
30	I feel supported by parents or guardians in addressing student issues					
31	The school organizes regular meetings and events to foster parent-teacher collaboration					
D	Student Dropout Rates	SD	D	NS	A	SA
36	Students in my school are motivated to complete their secondary education					
37	There are sufficient academic resources available to help students graduate on time					
38	Teachers in my school are committed to ensuring students graduate					
39	My school has effective programs to support students' academic progress					
40	Many students in my school drop out before completing their education					
41	Economic factors contribute significantly to student dropouts in my school					
42	There is adequate support for students facing personal challenges to prevent dropout					
43	The school environment is welcoming and encourages students to stay					
44	Students feel safe and supported at my school					
45	There are strong peer support systems in place in my school					

Thank you for being so cooperative

APPENDIX B: Interview guide for Key informants (Including students who left)

1. Can you describe the counselling and support services currently available to students in your school, and whether these services also target or follow up on students who have dropped out?
2. How often do students utilize these services, and what are the common issues for which both current and formerly enrolled students seek or would have needed help?
3. In what ways do you think these counselling services impact student retention rates? Can you provide specific examples, including instances where lack of access may have contributed to dropout?
4. What mechanisms exist to identify students who might benefit from counselling services, including those at risk of leaving school?
5. How do you measure your counselling programs' effectiveness in improving student retention and possibly reducing dropout rates?
6. What challenges do you face in providing students—especially those vulnerable to dropping out—with adequate counselling and support services?
7. Have you observed any trends in retention rates among students who regularly use counselling services compared to those who have left without utilizing them?
8. What strategies does your school employ to promote positive teacher-student relationships, and how do these strategies also apply to students who eventually leave school?
9. How do you support teachers in building strong relationships with their students, particularly those identified as at risk of dropping out?
10. Can you share examples of positive teacher-student relationships contributing to retaining students or preventing dropouts?
11. What training or professional development opportunities are teachers provided to enhance student interactions and address behavioural issues that could lead to dropout?

12. How do you address conflicts or issues between teachers and students to ensure a supportive learning environment and prevent disengagement that may result in leaving school?
13. What role do you believe teacher-student relationships play in student retention and dropout prevention, and how do you monitor this?
14. Have you implemented specific programs or initiatives to strengthen teacher-student relationships? If so, what has been their impact on both student retention and dropout reduction?
15. What initiatives does your school undertake to encourage and facilitate parental involvement in students' education, especially for students at risk of leaving?
16. How do you communicate with parents about their child's academic progress and any challenges that may lead to school withdrawal?
17. In your experience, how does parental involvement influence student retention rates and dropout risks? Can you provide examples or data to support this?
18. What challenges do you encounter in engaging parents of both current students and those who have dropped out, and how do you address these challenges?
19. How do you measure the level of parental involvement and its impact on both student retention and dropout rates?
20. Can you share any success stories where increased parental involvement has positively impacted a student's decision to stay in school or return after dropping out?
21. What additional support or resources would help improve parental involvement and reduce student dropout?

Thank you for being so cooperative

Appendix C: Krejcie and Morgan Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384
<i>Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size</i>					<i>Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970</i>				



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Office of the Academic Registrar

To

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Academic Research

Christian greetings!

We are honored to introduce to you Mr. Mrs./Miss. NGOBI HESKETH CLINTON

Of Registration Number; RM22/MUC/MED/O10 pursuing a Masters' Degree/Postgraduate Diploma / Bachelor's Degree

He/ she is required to carry out an academic research on the topic

Discipline Management strategies and Student Retention in Government Aided Secondary schools in Luuka District, Uganda

and thereafter produce a well bound hard cover research report (MAROON) in color for undergraduate and three (BLACK) copies for Postgraduate students as a University requirement for the award of a degree/diploma in the academic discipline that he / she is pursuing.

We shall be grateful for the help you may offer to him or her accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



Mr. Akampurira Timothy

Academic Registrar