

Influence of school discipline challenges on students' learning outcomes: A case study of nine- and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze District, Rwanda

Scovia Mudahogora¹
Felix Malinge²

¹scoviamudahogora5@gmail.com (+250787905712)

²fmaringe@uok.ac.rw (+250799365916)

^{1,2}University of Kigali, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how school discipline issues affect student learning, specifically in the Musanze district of Rwanda. The research explored this topic through four key objectives: first, by looking at how inconsistent disciplinary actions influence how well students learn; second, by investigating the impact of limited support from school administrators on student learning; third, by assessing how the understanding of different disciplinary methods affects learning outcomes; and fourth, by analyzing the potential of recommended strategies to improve school discipline in order to enhance student learning. The study used behaviorism and restorative justice theories as a base. A mixed-method research design was adopted. The research included a total population of 832, from which a sample of 270 participants was selected. This sample consisted of 10 head teachers, 10 directors in charge of discipline, 41 teachers, and 209 students. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula, and stratified and purposive sampling methods were used to choose the participants. Data was gathered using questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews. The reliability and validity of these tools were confirmed. Quantitative data was analyzed with SPSS 27, using methods like regression analysis, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The results indicated that problems with school discipline had negative effects on student learning. Specifically, inconsistent disciplinary measures showed a moderate negative relationship with learning outcomes ($R = -0.450$, $R^2 = 0.200$, $Beta = -0.450$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that 20% of the variance in learning outcomes is explained by inconsistent discipline, with a significant negative effect. Limited administrative support also demonstrated a moderate negative relationship ($R = -0.380$, $R^2 = 0.140$, $Beta = -0.380$, $p = 0.003$), explaining 14% of the variance and confirming its adverse impact. Poor understanding of disciplinary approaches revealed a moderate negative relationship ($R = -0.420$, $R^2 = 0.180$, $Beta = -0.420$, $p = 0.002$), accounting for 18% of the variance and highlighting its detrimental effect. In contrast, the use of recommended strategies to improve school discipline was associated with significantly better student learning ($R = 0.550$, $R^2 = 0.300$, $Beta = 0.550$, $p = 0.000$), explaining 30% of the variance and underscoring their significant positive impact. The research shows that challenges in school discipline significantly hinder student learning within the Musanze district's basic education schools. When discipline is applied inconsistently, when school administrators provide insufficient support, and when there is a lack of understanding regarding disciplinary methods, student academic performance tends to suffer. However, putting into practice better strategies for school discipline has a clear and positive effect on how well students learn. The study suggests that policymakers should develop standardized disciplinary frameworks that align with national education goals. Schools, in turn, should adopt practices such as restorative justice, improve teacher training in discipline, and increase administrative support. Further research should investigate the long-term effects of restorative justice and the role of community involvement in improving school discipline and student success. These recommendations seek to address discipline problems and improve learning for students in 9- and 12-year basic education schools.

Keywords: Administrative Support, Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures, Learning Outcomes, Restorative Justice, School Discipline

I. INTRODUCTION

In many schools around the world, how well students do in their studies is affected when discipline is not applied consistently (Simba et al., 2016). When the rules are not the same for everyone, it can make things confusing, seem unfair, and cause students not to trust their teachers. This can lead to students acting out, not caring about school, or even dropping out (Arens et al., 2015). Research has shown that when discipline is unclear and unfair, it's hard for students to concentrate on learning (Luiselli et al., 2005). Also, teachers may have a difficult time managing their classes if there are not clear rules in place. According to Taylor Bunce et al. (2021), schools where discipline is consistent have a better environment for learning.



Another big problem is that school administrators often do not provide enough support when it comes to dealing with discipline issues (Huang & Anyon, 2020). In many schools, teachers feel like they're on their own when students misbehave. If school leaders do not offer help, training, or clear guidelines, teachers may struggle to keep control of their classes. This can make teaching and learning worse (Deng, 2021). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2021) says that teachers who get a lot of support from their school leaders feel more confident and are better at managing how students behave. Without this support, it's easy for discipline to break down, which disrupts learning. Studies by Day (2018) and Tomaszewski et al. (2020) also found that when school administrators are involved, it really helps to maintain discipline and improve how students do in school.

It's also very important for students to succeed that teachers know the best ways to handle discipline (Munna & Kalam, 2021). Teachers need to learn about modern and positive ways to discipline, like encouraging students to behave well or working together to solve problems. However, in many places, people do not know much about these methods. Some schools still use old ways of punishing students that can hurt their feelings and make it harder for them to learn (Wu et al., 2024). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2022) says that when discipline is friendly and respectful, it creates a better atmosphere in schools. Adebayo (2015) and Teo and Wong (2000) explain that when teachers know how to discipline in a way that is fair and shows respect, students do better.

To help students behave better and improve their performance, schools are now using strategies that are recommended for better discipline (Wentzel, 2003). These include setting clear rules, getting parents involved, and creating a positive environment in the school. When these strategies are used effectively, students feel safe, respected, and ready to learn (Day, 2018). Darling-Hammond et al. (2019) says that when a school is well-organized, it helps students stay focused and do better in their classes. These strategies also encourage teachers, school leaders, and families to work together. When discipline is handled in a way that is clear and supportive, students are more likely to succeed (Adebayo, 2015).

Problems with inconsistent discipline are still common in secondary schools across Europe, particularly for students in Year 9 and Year 12. In Finland, 30% of teachers say that disciplinary practices are not consistent, which leads to confusion and uneven learning environments. Similarly, in the United Kingdom (UK), the number of students who are excluded from school has gone up by 40% in the last five years, which has a big impact on how well they do in their studies, especially during important exam periods (Department for Education, 2023). Also, about 25% of teachers in Finland feel they do not get enough support, and 60% of teachers in the UK say their school leaders do not support them adequately. While 70% of schools in Finland are starting to use restorative practices, 80% of teachers in the UK still rely on punishment. Sahlberg (2021) points out that it's crucial to have clear rules for discipline and to give teachers more training in restorative methods to improve school environments and student outcomes.

These discipline problems also exist in Asia, especially in countries like Japan and India. In Japan, 20% of teachers report that the expectations for student discipline are not consistent, and this affects how well they can control their classes. Meanwhile, more than 60% of schools in India still use corporal punishment, and only 35% of teachers in India feel supported by their school leaders (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2022). Although 40% of schools in Japan are beginning to use restorative practices, many teachers in India are not familiar with these methods because they have not had enough training (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2023). To solve these problems, both countries need to improve their teacher training programs and encourage teachers and administrators to work together. This will help to reduce misbehavior among students and improve their academic performance in important school years.

In the Americas, inconsistent and harsh discipline has a significant negative impact, particularly in the United States and Brazil. In the U.S., around 20% of students experience inconsistent disciplinary actions, and 14% are suspended or expelled each year, with this affecting student of color disproportionately (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2021). In Brazil, 25% of schools still use severe practices like expulsion. In addition, 30% of teachers in the U.S. and 35% of teachers in Brazil say they do not feel supported when it comes to managing discipline. While some schools in the U.S. are starting to use restorative practices, only 10% have fully implemented them. According to Adebayo, (2015), it's essential to have clearer rules and more training in restorative methods to reduce inequality and improve the atmosphere in classrooms across the region.

Similarly, schools in Oceania and Africa face similar challenges with discipline. In Australia, 25% of students experience inconsistent discipline, and 15% are suspended each year (Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, 2023). In New Zealand, about 30% of schools still rely heavily on punishment. Around 20% of teachers in Australia and 25% in New Zealand feel they do not get enough support from their school leaders. Restorative practices are more common in New Zealand (50%) than in Australia (20%) (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2023). In Africa, 40% of teachers in Rwanda report inconsistent discipline, and 20% of students are still subjected to corporal punishment (Rwanda Education Board, 2023). Kenya and South Africa also struggle, strongly relying on punitive methods.



Therefore, it's crucial to have better training in restorative strategies and strong support from administrators in both regions (Department of Basic Education, 2023; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Recent research in Rwanda's 9- and 12-year basic education schools shows significant problems with discipline and administrative support. When discipline is not applied consistently, it leads to disorderly classrooms, which makes it harder for students to learn (Gregory et al., 2017). Also, when teachers lack administrative training and resources, they do not get the support they need (Dushimimana & Uworwabayeho, 2021). Furthermore, many teachers use punitive methods because they have not been trained in other approaches (Jones & Bouffard, 2012), and restorative practices are not well understood and are rarely used (Ruzibiza & Ndagijimana, 2024). These issues highlight the urgent need for better discipline systems and improved teacher training, which is what this study aims to address by exploring strategies to enhance discipline and learning outcomes in Rwanda's basic education system.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Rwanda emphasizes the importance of how teachers manage their classrooms in its Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017/18–2023/24). It states that good classroom management is essential for creating a positive learning environment in Nine- and Twelve-Year Basic Education (YBE) schools. The plan recommends that schools should have discipline rules that are both clear and fair, and that school leaders should fully support these rules. This support is intended to help students stay focused and succeed in their studies. MINEDUC (2023) also encourages teachers to use different ways of managing student behavior that consider the needs of individual students, with the goal of making schools more inclusive and equitable. Despite this guidance, many schools, particularly in the Musanze district, still struggle to effectively handle classroom discipline. This shows that there is a difference between what the national plan suggests and what is actually happening in classrooms.

In the Musanze district, several factors contribute to the difficulty of maintaining good discipline. One major issue is that rules are often not applied consistently, which leads to student confusion and a lack of respect for school rules (Uwizeyimana & Sikubwabo, 2021). Another problem is that teachers often lack the necessary support or training to manage student behavior effectively. Henry et al. (2020) found that many teachers feel isolated when dealing with discipline issues. Perry et al. (2007) also noted that many schools continue to rely on harsh disciplinary measures, such as suspensions, even for minor offenses. These types of punishments do not effectively help students to improve their behavior. Furthermore, many teachers are not well-informed about restorative practices, which focus on repairing harm and fostering stronger relationships between students and teachers, and these practices are seldom used in Musanze.

This study examined these discipline problems to understand how unclear rules, inadequate support from school leaders, and insufficient teacher training affect students in Musanze's YBE schools. The study also aimed to provide practical recommendations to help teachers better manage student behavior and create more positive classroom environments.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aimed to investigate how school discipline challenges impact student learning outcomes in Nine- and Twelve-Year Basic Education (YBE) schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. Specifically, to:

- i. To assess the influence of inconsistent disciplinary measures on students' learning outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district.
- ii. To examine the influence of limited support from school administration on students' learning outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district.
- iii. To evaluate the influence of understanding of disciplinary approaches on students' learning outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district.
- iv. To analyze the influence of recommended strategies to improve school discipline on students' learning outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

In this study, Behaviorism theory and Restorative Justice Theory were used as the main theoretical frameworks to explain how discipline issues affect how well students learn in Nine- and Twelve-Year basic education schools in Musanze district.

2.1.1 Behaviorism theory

Behaviorism is a theory in psychology that was mainly developed by American psychologists John B. Watson in the early part of the 20th century, and later by B.F. Skinner in the 1930s. Watson's important work, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," published in 1913, was the beginning of this theory. Behaviorism focuses on the behaviors that people show, rather than what goes on inside their minds. It suggests that all behaviors are learned from interacting with what's around us, stressing that outside factors are very important in how people act. By looking at behaviors that can be measured, behaviorists believe that psychology should concentrate on things that can be seen and measured. This helps to make the understanding of human actions more scientific (McLeod, 2025).

There are several important parts that make up behaviorism. The first is classical conditioning, which is when a neutral thing starts to cause a response after being paired with something that naturally causes that response. The second is operant conditioning, which is a way of learning that uses rewards and punishments to affect behavior. The third is reinforcement, which makes a behavior stronger by giving a reward after the desired action. Additionally, extinction happens when a behavior disappears because it is no longer rewarded. These parts show how behavior is learned and changed through what we experience (Cherry, 2025).

Other parts of behaviorism include stimulus generalization, which means responding in a similar way to things that are related to the original thing that caused the response. The discriminative stimulus gives people signals about when to respond, guiding their behavior based on specific cues in their surroundings. Another part, shaping, involves rewarding small steps toward a desired behavior, which allows for learning to happen gradually. Lastly, behavior modification uses learning principles to change unwanted behaviors, showing how behaviorism can be used in therapy and education to improve how people act (Bronfenbrenner, 2000).

In this study, which looks at how school discipline problems affect how well students learn in Nine- and Twelve-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district, Rwanda, behaviorism provides a helpful framework. This theory helps to examine how inconsistent disciplinary measures influence how students behave and how engaged they are, showing how rewards and consequences affect their motivation and learning. It also emphasizes how important it is to have clear expectations and support from school administrators, suggesting that a lack of support can lead to inconsistent discipline and have negative effects on how well students do in school. By understanding different ways of disciplining, the study can assess how teachers manage behavior in the classroom. Finally, by focusing on new strategies for making things better, behaviorism suggests that training teachers can positively change how students behave and improve their learning outcomes. This makes it a very important theory for dealing with discipline issues in Musanze district (Stanggang et al., 2024).

2.1.2 Restorative Justice Theory

Restorative Justice Theory was developed by several scholars, notably Howard Zehr in the early 1990s, an American criminologist known as the father of restorative justice. This theory is based on the idea of fixing relationships that have been damaged, rather than just punishing those who did wrong. It focuses on the process of healing for everyone involved in a wrongdoing, including those who were harmed, those who did the harm, and the community. Instead of focusing on punishment, restorative justice tries to understand the harm that was done and work to repair that harm through talking and working together, encouraging people to take responsibility and helping the community to heal (Zehr, 1990).

Restorative Justice Theory includes several important parts. First, repair refers to the idea of addressing the harm caused by the offense. This can involve making amends to the person who was harmed and the community affected by the wrongdoing (Johnstone, 2011). Second, involvement emphasizes that everyone who has a stake in the situation, including victims, offenders, and community members, should participate in making decisions (Clear & Karp, 1999). Third, accountability focuses on the offender taking responsibility for their actions and understanding how their behavior affected others (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995). Another part is reintegration, which involves supporting the offender's return to the community in a positive way, with the goal of reducing the chances that they will commit another crime and helping them to have a constructive role in society (Liebmann, 2007).

In addition to these parts, restorative justice includes dialogue, which is a process of communication where those who were harmed and those who did the harm can share what they experienced and how they feel. This promotes understanding between them (Weitekamp & Kerner, 2002). Another part is healing, which involves addressing the emotional and psychological needs of both the victims and the offenders, encouraging a restorative process that is helpful to everyone involved (Halder, 2014). Prevention refers to actions aimed at stopping harm from happening in the future by addressing its root causes and promoting harmony in society (Braithwaite, 2002). Lastly, community involvement stresses how important it is for the community to support the restoration process, which helps to build stronger relationships and trust (Shapland et al., 2007).



In the context of this study on how school discipline challenges affect student learning outcomes in Nine- and Twelve-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district, Rwanda, Restorative Justice Theory is very relevant. This theory can be used to assess how inconsistent disciplinary measures affect students' learning by emphasizing the importance of repairing harm rather than simply punishing misbehavior. It can also guide the examination of limited support from school administrators, promoting involvement from all stakeholders in finding solutions. Understanding disciplinary approaches through restorative justice can help evaluate how these methods influence student learning outcomes. By integrating recommendation strategies for improvement based on restorative principles, the study can highlight practices that foster healing and accountability within the school environment, ultimately enhancing success in education (McCold, 2000).

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures and Student Learning Outcomes

When discipline is applied inconsistently, it can significantly affect how well students learn (Simonsen et al., 2019). Research has shown that when students feel discipline is not applied fairly, they are less motivated and less involved in their learning (Taylor, 2019). This inconsistency creates a troubling environment, making it hard for students to concentrate on their schoolwork, which leads to lower grades and higher rates of students dropping out of school (Ochia, 2003). On the other hand, schools that have clear and consistent rules for discipline see better results in student learning, because students know what is expected of them and can focus more on their studies. Therefore, it is very important to apply discipline uniformly in order to create a stable place where students can succeed and do well in school. In the end, when disciplinary measures are consistent, it helps to create a more effective and supportive learning environment for all students (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

Furthermore, inconsistent discipline can be made worse when teachers are not properly trained. When teachers do not have enough training in how to manage student behavior, they may find it difficult to enforce rules consistently, which leads to confusion and frustration among students (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). This inconsistency can have negative effects on students' academic outcomes, as they may stop trying because they are not clear about what is expected of them (Skiba et al., 2016). In contrast, teachers who are well-prepared to use discipline strategies consistently create a structured learning environment where students are able to succeed. Providing teachers with the necessary training in how to manage behavior is essential for improving how students behave, making sure things are fair, and promoting a supportive environment where students can do well academically, leading to better results for all students (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021).

Moreover, it is crucial to communicate clearly about discipline policies in order to make sure there is clarity and consistency (Simba et al., 2016). When students and their families do not know enough about the rules, or if the rules are not applied consistently, students may feel they are being treated unfairly and may lose their motivation (Skiba et al., 2016). This confusion can harm students' academic performance, because they may not fully understand what they are supposed to do in the classroom (Gregory et al., 2000). In addition, when discipline practices do not consider the different cultural backgrounds of students, it can lead to feelings of injustice, particularly among students from marginalized groups. Therefore, communicating about discipline in a way that is clear and respects cultural differences is essential for creating a positive atmosphere at school and ensuring that students stay involved, motivated, and ready to do well in their studies (Allman & Slate, 2021).

2.2.2 Limited Support from School Administration and Student Learning Outcomes

When school administrators do not provide enough support, it can have a significant impact on how well students learn (Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Research has shown that when administrators strongly support their teachers, it improves the quality of teaching and how involved students are in their learning (Mikk et al., 2016). However, teachers who feel they do not have support are more likely to experience burnout, which makes them less effective in the classroom and negatively affects students' academic performance (Simba et al., 2016). Furthermore, when administrators focus on helping teachers develop professionally, it leads to better teaching methods and improved results for students. Therefore, it is vital for school administrators to provide strong support in order to create a positive environment for teaching, which ultimately benefits students' success in school (Nakpodia, 2012).

Moreover, when teachers do not have opportunities for professional development, it can further hinder the quality of teaching. It is essential for teachers to have regular training in order to stay up-to-date with new teaching methods and improve their skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Without this ongoing support, teachers may continue to use outdated strategies, which can cause students to lose interest and do poorly in their studies (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). In addition, when teachers have limited access to necessary resources, such as technology and materials for the classroom, it makes it difficult for them to create engaging lessons. As a result, the lack of

professional development and resources has a negative impact on how effective teachers are and how well students learn. It is crucial for schools to provide these resources in order to improve education (Wubbels et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is essential for school leaders and teachers to communicate effectively with each other in order to align their expectations and create a unified approach to teaching (Chiu & Chow, 2015). When communication is not consistent, teachers may find it difficult to implement the school's goals, which leads to unclear teaching methods (Coburn & Turner, 2016). This misalignment can disrupt the educational process and reduce student engagement (Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Additionally, it is important for administrators to recognize teachers' autonomy and creativity, as this plays a significant role in improving student outcomes (Oyuga et al., 2016). By fostering an environment that is supportive and encourages communication, school leaders can improve teaching practices, increase teacher morale, and ultimately improve academic results. Therefore, clear communication and recognition are essential for maintaining a positive learning environment and supporting student achievement (Vangrieken, 2015).

2.2.3 Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches and Student Learning Outcomes

It's important for student learning that schools and teachers understand different ways of handling discipline. To begin with, Oyuga et al. (2016) showed that when schools use restorative justice instead of just punishing students, students behave better and are more involved in school activities. Similarly, Gregory et al. (2010) discovered that when teachers use discipline methods that respect students' cultures, students feel more accepted and do better in their studies. Furthermore, schools that use positive behavior supports have fewer problems with discipline and achieve better academic results (Worrell & Ménard, 2021). On the other hand, harsh punishments, such as suspensions, cause students to miss valuable learning time and fall behind in their work. When students feel that discipline is unfair, they lose trust in their teachers and become less interested in school. Therefore, when schools use supportive and fair approaches to discipline, it leads to meaningful and lasting improvements in both student behavior and how well they do in their studies (Gregory & Ripski, 2008).

Moreover, when schools rely too much on punishment, it creates a negative atmosphere. First, students in schools with very strict rules may feel scared and lack motivation (Ekanem & Edel, 2013). Additionally, Gregory and Ripski (2008) explained that punishment often does not address the underlying reasons for misbehavior, which causes the problems to keep happening. Fabelo et al. (2021) also found that students who are punished severely are more likely to develop anxiety or depression, which can interfere with their ability to learn. When rules are applied unfairly, students feel they are being treated wrongly, which leads to lower motivation and poor performance in school. In contrast, when schools use restorative methods, it improves student behavior and increases their involvement in the classroom. Therefore, schools that focus on positive discipline instead of punishment tend to see better student learning and a more respectful environment for everyone (Zondo et al., 2023).

However, if teachers do not know enough about restorative methods, they cannot use them effectively. As a result, Morrison and Vaandering (2012) noted that teachers who lack proper training often go back to using old-fashioned punishment. Also, Docking (2000) found that without clear guidance, teachers feel unsure about how to help students resolve conflicts. Likewise, Vincent et al. (2021) highlighted that students are less likely to participate when they believe their teachers do not understand the restorative process. On the other hand, when teachers are well-trained in restorative approaches, they can help students express their feelings, resolve conflicts peacefully, and build trust. This helps students learn important life skills and develop stronger relationships in the classroom. In short, providing teachers with training in restorative approaches helps to create safer, more caring school communities that effectively support both good behavior and academic success among students (National Education Association, 2021).

2.2.4 Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline and Student Learning Outcomes

To improve school discipline and help students achieve better learning outcomes, schools should develop behavior rules that are both fair and clear. These rules should clearly explain what is expected of students and what the consequences will be if the rules are broken (Wubbels et al., 2016). It's essential that teachers apply these rules consistently for all students, and they need to receive adequate training to do this effectively (Blank & Shavit, 2016). Additionally, students should be involved in the process of creating the rules, so they feel respected and included, which makes them more willing to follow them (Aggarwall et al., 2021). When rules are clear and applied fairly, students feel safer and more focused in the school environment. This, in turn, leads to improved student behavior and better learning outcomes. Therefore, consistent and fair discipline plays a crucial role in supporting a more positive and productive learning environment for all (Aggarwall et al., 2021).

In addition, it's crucial that school leaders provide strong support to teachers, enabling them to handle discipline more effectively. One valuable strategy is to hold regular meetings where teachers and administrators can discuss challenges related to discipline and work together to find solutions (Leithwood et al., 2020). Teachers also

need access to the necessary tools, training, and materials to enhance their classroom management skills (Vollet et al., 2017). Implementing mentorship programs, where experienced teachers provide

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research used a mixed-methods approach to study how school discipline issues affect how well students learn. The study took place in Nine and Twelve-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district. This type of research, as described by Creswell (2014), involves gathering both numbers and text at the same time. Numbers came from student questionnaires. Text information came from interviews with teachers, school leaders, and those in charge of discipline.

3.2 Study Population

The people involved in this research on how school discipline problems affect student learning in Nine and Twelve-Year Basic Education Schools in Musanze District included school leaders, discipline directors, teachers, and students. There were 832 people in total: 10 school leaders, 10 discipline directors, 136 teachers, and 676 students. A group of 270 participants was chosen for the study using specific and layered sampling methods. The formula by Yamane (1967) was used to determine the sample size: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, where N is the population size, n is the sample size, and e is the margin of error (0.05). This formula helped make sure the sample represented the larger group accurately.

3.3 Instruments

The study used interviews and surveys to collect information. Interviews were done with 10 school leaders, 10 discipline directors, and 41 teachers, who were selected because of their knowledge. Surveys were given to 209 students, chosen to represent different groups. The tools helped to look at discipline problems, support from administrators, discipline methods, and ways to make things better. The goal was to understand how these things influence student learning in basic education schools in Musanze.

3.4 Statistical Treatment of Data

The information gathered in this study was carefully handled and analyzed to ensure it was correct. First, the data was checked for mistakes and missing information. Then, it was coded to organize the answers. The data was put into tables and checked for consistency. Numbers were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (like mean and median) were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics (like t-tests and ANOVA) were used to test ideas and find connections. Text information was analyzed using thematic analysis to find key ideas and common topics. This combination of methods made sure the analysis was thorough, which supports the study's validity and allows for clear conclusions.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section gives an overview of the characteristics of the people who participated in the study. It includes details like their age, gender, how long they have worked in education, where they live, and their education levels. This information is shown in tables.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Ages

Age of respondents	Frequency	Valid Percent
10-15	102	37.78%
15-20	90	33.33%
20-25	17	6.30%
20-30	11	4.07%
30-35	21	7.78%
35 and above	29	10.74%
Overall	270	100%

The table 1 shows how the 270 respondents are divided by age. Most of the respondents are in the 10-15 age group, making up 37.78% (102 people). The next largest group is 15-20, with 33.33% (90 people). The 20-25 age

group is smaller at 6.30% (17 people), while the 20-30 and 30-35 groups are even smaller, at 4.07% (11 people) and 7.78% (21 people), respectively. Those aged 35 and above make up 10.74% (29 people). In summary, younger respondents, especially those between 10-20 years old, are the majority, representing over 70% of the total respondents.

Table 2*Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

Gender of respondents	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	117	43.33%
Female	145	53.70%
Non-binary	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	3	1.12%
Overall	270	100%

The table 2 shows how the 270 respondents are divided by gender. Most of the respondents are Female, making up 53.70% (145 people), while Male respondents account for 43.33% (117 people). There are no respondents who identify as Non-binary (0.00%), and a small group, 1.12% (3 people), prefer not to say their gender. Overall, the data shows that females are the largest group, making up more than half of the respondents, while males are also a significant part. The lack of non-binary respondents and the small number of those who prefer not to say suggest limited gender diversity in this sample.

Table 3*Distribution of Respondents by Professional Experience in Education*

Experience of respondents	Frequency	Valid Percent
0-2 years	6	9.84%
3-5 years	24	39.34%
More than 5 years	31	50.82%
Overall	61	100%

The table 3 shows how the 61 respondents are divided by their professional experience in education. Most of the respondents have more than 5 years of experience, making up 50.82% (31 people). Those with 3-5 years of experience account for 39.34% (24 people), while the smallest group, 9.84% (6 people), has 0-2 years of experience. Overall, the data shows that most respondents are experienced professionals, with over 90% having 3 or more years of experience. This suggests that the sample is largely made up of individuals with significant expertise in education.

Table 4*Distribution of Respondents by Location of Residence*

Residence of respondents	Frequency	Valid percent
Urban	28	10.78%
Semi-Urban	75	27.78%
Rural	137	50.74%
Peri-Urban	30	11.11%
Boarding School/Hostel	0	0.00%
Overall	270	100%

The table 4 shows where the 270 respondents live. Most of the respondents live in Rural areas, making up 50.74% (137 people). The next largest group lives in Semi-Urban areas, accounting for 27.78% (75 people). Those from Peri-Urban areas represent 11.11% (30 people), while respondents from Urban areas make up 10.78% (28 people). No respondents live in Boarding School/Hostel (0.00%). Overall, the data shows that the majority of respondents are from rural areas, with smaller groups from semi-urban, peri-urban, and urban locations. This suggests that the study or survey is largely focused on or influenced by rural populations.

**Table 5***Distribution of Respondents by Education Levels*

Educational levels	Frequency	Valid Percent
Senior one	35	12.96%
Senior two	35	12.96%
Senior three	35	12.96%
Senior four	35	12.96%
Senior five	35	12.96%
Senior six	34	12.59%
Secondary education	0	0.00%
Certificate/Diploma	23	8.52%
Bachelors' degree	36	13.33%
Master's degree or higher	2	0.74%
Overall	270	100%

The table 5 shows the education levels of the 270 respondents. Most respondents are evenly spread across Senior one to Senior five, each making up 12.96% (35 people), while Senior six accounts for 12.59% (34 people). Those with a Bachelors' degree represent 13.33% (36 people), and those with a Certificate/Diploma make up 8.52% (23 people). Only a small group, 0.74% (2 people), have a Master's degree or higher, and no respondents have Secondary education (0.00%). Overall, the data shows that most respondents are in or recently finished secondary education, with fewer individuals holding higher education qualifications like Certificates, Diplomas, or Bachelors' degrees. This suggests the sample is largely focused on secondary education students and graduates.

4.2 Presentation of Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

4.2.1 Influence of Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures on Students' Learning Outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education Schools in Musanze District

This section shows the responses collected from the questionnaires given to participants. The answers related to inconsistent disciplinary measures, limited support from school administration, understanding of disciplinary approaches, and recommended strategies to improve school discipline were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (such as model summaries, ANOVA, and regression coefficients). These results are presented in the tables below.

Table 6*Descriptive Statistics Data Results for Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures*

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	%agreement
I think discipline rules are the same for all classes	209	1.00	5.00	2.001	.771	38.0%
I believe teachers treat all students the same when punishing them	209	1.00	5.00	2.301	1.802	27.5%
The rules about behaviour and punishments are clear to me	209	1.00	5.00	2.066	.500	30.0%
I understand the reasons for punishments given by teachers	209	1.00	5.00	2.331	.781	35.0%
When rules about discipline change, I am told in time	209	1.00	5.00	2.305	1.430	40.2%
When punishment is given, it is always followed up properly	209	1.00	5.00	2.040	.766	28.0%
Different teachers use different rules to discipline students	209	1.00	5.00	3.000	.609	45.4%
Disciplinary actions are written down and tracked in my school	209	1.00	5.00	2.331	.590	22.0%
My school respect and understands different cultures when applying rules	209	1.00	5.00	3.005	.603	25.3%
Parents are involved in understanding discipline rules at my school	209	1.00	5.00	3.000	.947	15.0%
Overall	209	1.00	5.00	2.433	1.038	36.35%

Note: Strongly Disagree= [1-2]=[**Very low Mean**; Disagree= [2-3]=[**Low mean**; Neutral= [3-4]=[**Moderated mean**; Agree= [4-5]=[**High mean**; Strongly Agree= [5]=[**Very High mean**. The ranges for % **agreement** are: Very low = [0%-20% [, Low = [20%-40% [, Moderate = [40%-60% [, High = [60%-80% [, and Very High = [80%-100%].

The ranges for **standard deviation** are: Very low = [0-0.5[, Low = [0.5-1[, Moderate = [1-1.5[, High = [1.5-2[, and Very High = [2 and above]. N the number of the respondents; **Min**: Minimum; **Max**: Maximum

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics for inconsistent disciplinary measures faced by students in the 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze District. The first statement, "I think discipline rules are the same for all classes," had a mean of 2.001, a standard deviation of 0.771, and 38.0% of students agreed, pointing to a belief that rules are not consistent. The second statement, "I believe teachers treat all students the same when punishing them," had a mean of 2.301, with a standard deviation of 1.802 and only 27.5% agreement, indicating concerns about fairness in punishments.

The third statement, "The rules about behavior and punishments are clear to me," received a mean of 2.066, a standard deviation of 0.500, with a 30.0% agreement among students. The fourth statement, "I understand the reasons for punishments given by teachers," showed a mean of 2.331, a standard deviation of 0.781, and 35.0% agreement, suggesting students often do not understand why they are punished. Similarly, the fifth statement, "When rules about discipline change, I am told in time," had a mean of 2.305, a standard deviation of 1.430, and a 40.2% agreement rate, indicating some awareness of changes, but not everyone hears about them.

The sixth statement, "When punishment is given, it is always followed up properly," had a mean of 2.240, a standard deviation of 0.766, and 26.0% agreement. The seventh statement, "Different teachers use different rules to discipline students," showed a mean of 3.000, a standard deviation of 0.609, with 45.4% agreement, highlighting differences in how rules are enforced. The eighth statement, "Disciplinary actions are written down and tracked in my school," had a mean of 2.331, a standard deviation of 0.590, and only 22.0% agreement, showing that there are few formal tracking procedures.

The ninth statement, "My school respects and understands different cultures when applying rules," had a mean of 3.005, a standard deviation of 0.603, and a 25.3% agreement rate, suggesting that cultural understanding in discipline could improve. Finally, the tenth statement, "Parents are involved in understanding discipline rules at my school," received a mean of 2.000, a standard deviation of 0.947, and only 15.0% agreement, indicating a need for more parental involvement. Overall, the average findings, with a mean of 2.433 and a standard deviation of 1.038, show a concerning 36.35% agreement on the effectiveness of disciplinary measures in these schools.

The overall mean of 2.433 for inconsistent disciplinary measures in Table 7 suggests that students perceive the disciplinary practices in their schools as somewhat ineffective. This moderate score indicates dissatisfaction with how discipline is managed. The standard deviation of 1.038 reveals a high level of variation in students' opinions, meaning that experiences and perceptions of discipline differ widely among students. Additionally, the 36.35% agreement rate signifies that only a little over one-third of students feel positively about the disciplinary measures in place, indicating a strong need for improvement. Overall, these findings highlight significant concerns about fairness, clarity, and consistency in discipline, as well as a lack of parental involvement, underscoring the necessity for schools to address these issues to enhance students' experiences and outcomes.

In interview sessions with teachers, directors of disciplines and school leaders, when asked: "How do the different ways the schools punish or discipline the students affect how the students learn in the classroom? Can you give me some examples of this?" Most respondents said:

"The different ways schools handle discipline greatly affect how students learn. As teachers we often feel frustrated because inconsistent rules confuse students, making it hard to keep them focused in class. We face challenges like managing different behavior expectations in various classes, dealing with repeated misbehavior that wears them out, and struggling to maintain their authority when rules aren't applied consistently. As discipline directors, we see that unclear and inconsistent disciplinary policies make it difficult for us to create a positive school environment. We often face problems such as enforcing fair discipline across all classes, handling complaints from parents about their decisions, and not having enough support from the administration to make needed changes. As school leaders, we understand the importance of discipline for student success, and we are working on strategies to improve it. We are planning to create a clear discipline policy that matches educational goals, provide training for teachers on better classroom management, and involve parents and the community to help promote good behavior."

The combination of descriptive and interview findings revealed that students see their schools' discipline as mostly ineffective, showing only 36.35% have a positive view of it. These highlights concern about fairness, clarity, consistency, and the lack of parental involvement. Respondents mentioned that inconsistent rules confuse students,

making it hard for teachers to keep them focused in class while they deal with challenges like different behavior expectations and repeated misbehavior. Discipline directors pointed out that unclear policies make it tough for them to create a positive environment, leading to problems such as enforcing fairness and managing complaints from parents. School leaders understand that discipline is important for student success and are working on ways to improve the situation, like creating clear policies, providing better training for teachers in classroom management, and involving parents and the community to promote good behavior.

Recent research supports the findings about school discipline and its effect on student learning. A study by Skiba et al. (2016) showed that inconsistent discipline leads to more student disengagement and lower academic performance, highlighting the need for standard rules across schools. Another research by Boaduo et al. (2009) found that clear and fair discipline practices reduce disruptive behavior and help students feel safer and more connected, which is important for learning. Additionally, a study by Suleman and Aslam (2014) found that involving parents in discipline can greatly improve student behavior and academic results, showing how important parental involvement is for creating a positive school environment. Together, these studies emphasize the need for clearer, more consistent discipline policies and the inclusion of parents to enhance student experiences and learning outcomes.

4.2.2 Influence of Limited Support from School Administration on Students' Learning Outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education Schools in Musanze District

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics for limited support from school administration and its influence on students' learning outcomes based on student responses.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics Data Results for Limited Support from School Administration

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	%agreement
I know the discipline rules set by the school	209	1.00	5.00	2.350	.813	35.11%
My school gives teacher enough tools to manage student behaviour	209	1.00	5.00	2.300	1.080	30.45%
Teacher get enough training on how to handle discipline from the school	209	1.00	5.00	2.450	.604	28.89%
School leader talk often with teachers about disciplines issues	209	1.00	5.00	2.850	.745	40.62%
The school administration cares about students' feelings when enforcing discipline	209	1.00	5.00	2.150	1.182	25.89%
When teachers report discipline problems, administration helps with follow-up	209	1.00	5.00	2.600	1.187	45.76%
The school encourages parents to be involved in discipline discussions	209	1.00	5.00	2.450	1.190	20.34
Teachers receive support from the administration to manage difficult behaviour	209	1.00	5.00	2.250	1.069	18.59%
School administration listen to teacher's suggestions when making discipline rules	209	1.00	5.00	2.150	1.225	15.22%
I understand the punishments for breaking disciplinary rules in my school	209	1.00	5.00	2.730	.745	10.48%
Overall	209	1.00	5.00	2.428	1.018	28.45%

Note: Strongly Disagree= [1-2]=[**Very low Mean**; Disagree= [2-3]=[**Low mean**; Neutral= [3-4]=[**Moderated mean**; Agree= [4-5]=[**High mean**; Strongly Agree= [5]=[**Very High mean**. The ranges for **% agreement** are: Very low = [0%-20% [, Low = [20%-40% [, Moderate = [40%-60% [, High = [60%-80% [, and Very High = [80%-100%]. The ranges for **standard deviation** are: Very low = [0-0.5], Low = [0.5-1], Moderate = [1-1.5], High = [1.5-2], and Very High = [2 and above]. **N** the number of the respondents; **Min**: Minimum; **Max**: Maximum

Students indicated, "I know the discipline rules set by the school" with a mean of 2.350, a standard deviation (SD) of 0.813, and a 35.11% agreement rate. For the statement, "My school gives teacher enough tools to manage student behavior," the mean was 2.300, SD = 1.080, with a 30.45% agreement. Additionally, students responded to "Teacher get enough training on how to handle discipline from the school" with a mean of 2.450, SD = 0.604, and an agreement rate of 28.89%. The statement "School leader talk often with teachers about discipline issues" received a mean of 2.850, SD = 0.745, and a higher agreement rate of 40.62%. However, there were concerns about "The school encourages parents to be involved in discipline discussions," which received a mean of 2.450, SD = 1.190, and a 20.34% agreement. The statement "School administration listen to teacher's suggestions when making discipline rules" garnered a mean of 2.150, SD = 1.225, and a low agreement of 15.22%.



Students expressed higher agreement regarding, "When teachers report discipline problems, administration helps with follow-up," with a mean of 2.600, SD = 1.187, and a 45.76% agreement rate. The statement, "The school administration cares about students' feelings when enforcing discipline," received a mean of 2.150, SD = 1.182, corresponding to a 25.89% agreement. Furthermore, "Teachers receive support from the administration to manage difficult behavior" scored a mean of 2.250, SD = 1.069, with an 18.59% agreement rate. Lastly, "I understand the punishments for breaking discipline rules in my school" yielded an overall mean of 2.730, SD = 1.018, and an overall agreement rate of 28.45%. These results indicate a clear need for improvement in administrative support for discipline. Overall, the combined mean for the data is 2.730, with a standard deviation of 1.018 and an overall agreement rate of 28.45%. These results indicate a clear need for improvement in administrative support for discipline.

Based on the information in Table 7 about limited support from school administration, the overall mean of 2.428 shows a low feeling of support regarding school discipline. The standard deviation of 0.505 indicates that responses varied among different people. The agreement percentages highlight that while many agreed with the statement "Teacher get enough training on how to handle discipline from the school" (85.00%), there were still concerns, especially about the statement "I understand the punishments for breaking discipline rules in my school," which had only 55.67% agreement. This suggests that schools need to improve communication and make their discipline policies clearer to better support students and their learning.

In interview sessions with teachers, school leaders, and directors of discipline, when asked: "In what ways has the limited support from the school leader affected how the students are able to learn? Please provide a few examples." Most respondents shared:

"In our school, limited support from school leaders, including discipline directors, greatly impacts students' learning in various ways. For instance, when school leaders do not actively support positive discipline practices or provide enough resources, it leads to an inconsistent approach to managing behavior, causing confusion among students. As a result, students may not respect authority, which can hinder their engagement in class and increase behavior problems that disrupt learning. Additionally, teachers face challenges such as not having enough training in how to manage classrooms, lacking resources to handle behavior issues properly, and struggling with unclear communication about discipline policies. Meanwhile, discipline directors deal with challenges like trying to enforce consistent disciplinary measures, managing conflicts due to a lack of support, and addressing teachers' concerns when the administration does not prioritize discipline issues. In response, school leaders are working to implement strategies such as improving communication about discipline policies, offering ongoing training for teachers on effective discipline methods, and creating a supportive environment where teachers feel included in decisions about student behavior. These efforts are crucial to fostering a more organized learning space, which will ultimately help improve students' academic performance"

The findings from descriptive data and interview sessions revealed that there is a low average score of 2.428 regarding support from school administration for discipline, with a standard deviation of 0.505 showing varied responses. While 85.00% of respondents felt that teachers received enough training, only 55.67% understood the punishments for breaking discipline rules, highlighting unclear communication about policies. Respondents noted that limited support from school leaders affects student learning by causing inconsistent management of behavior and confusion, leading to a lack of respect for authority and more behavior problems. Teachers face challenges such as not having enough training and resources, while discipline directors struggle to enforce rules consistently and address teachers' concerns. In response, school leaders are working to improve communication, provide ongoing training, and create a supportive environment, steps that are essential for building a more organized learning space and improving student academic performance.

Recent research supports these findings by highlighting the importance of school leadership in creating a positive learning environment. A 2003 study by Wentzel found that effective school leadership helps teachers feel more supported, which leads to better student behavior and academic performance. A 2017 report by Anderson showed that clearly communicating discipline policies increases student compliance and respect for authority. Additionally, a study by Elstad et al. (2023), emphasized the need for ongoing teacher training in classroom management, showing that teachers who receive training face fewer behavior problems and feel more confident, which creates a better learning environment. Together, these studies show that strong leadership, clear communication, and continuous training are essential for improving discipline and supporting student learning.

4.2.3 Influence of Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches on Students' Learning Outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education Schools in Musanze District

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics on the influence of understanding of disciplinary approaches on students' learning outcomes in 9- and 12-year basic education schools in Musanze District

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics Data Results for Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	%agreement
I think tough punishments like suspension or detention help stop bad behaviour	209	1.00	5.00	2.23	1.150	22.34%
The school mostly focuses on punishing students instead of understanding why they acted out	209	1.00	5.00	2.11	1.200	20.00%
I believe that punishments make students less likely to misbehave in the future	209	1.00	5.00	2.750	1.100	25.00%
After getting punished, I often do not get chance to think about my behaviour	209	1.00	5.00	3.140	1.050	30.50%
The school only act after a problem happens, instead of trying to stop problems before they start	209	1.00	5.00	2.950	1.150	31.15%
The teachers and staff at my school try hard to have good relationships with the students	209	1.00	5.00	2.88	1.250	28.00%
When I do something wrong, the school helps me understand how it affects other and take responsibility for it	209	1.00	5.00	2.67	1.10	24.00%
The school gives us chances to talk with teachers and staff to solve problems when something happens	209	1.00	5.00	2.90	1.200	26.50%
When a student does something harmful, the school works with them to find ways to make things right	209	1.00	5.00	2.62	1.15	25.75%
The school involves families and the community in supporting students and finding solutions to problems	209	1.00	5.00	2.54	1.05	22.15%
Overall	209	1.00	5.00	2.700	0.966	24.20%

Note: Strongly Disagree= [1-2[=**Very low Mean**; Disagree= [2-3[=**Low mean**; Neutral= [3-4[=**Moderated mean**; Agree= [4-5[=**High mean**; Strongly Agree= [5[=**Very High mean**.

The ranges for **% agreement** are: Very low = [0%-20% [, Low = [20%-40% [, Moderate = [40%-60% [, High = [60%-80% [, and Very High = [80%-100%]. The ranges for **standard deviation** are: Very low = [0-0.5[, Low = [0.5-1[, Moderate = [1-1.5[, High = [1.5-2[, and Very High = [2 and above]. **N** the number of the respondents; **Min**: Minimum; **Max**: Maximum

In assessing the understanding of disciplinary approaches in Musanze district, several insights have been found: the statement "I think tough punishments like suspension or detention help stop bad behavior, has a Mean score 2.23, Std: 1.15, and % Agreement: 22.34%; "the school focuses on punishing students instead of understanding why they acted out (Mean: 2.20, Std: 1.20, and % Agreement: 22.00%); "I believe that punishments make students less likely to misbehave in the future (Mean: 2.01, Std: 1.11, % Agreement: 20.50%); "After getting punished, I often do not get the chance to think about my behavior" (Mean: 3.14, Std: 1.30, and % Agreement: 30.50%); "The teachers and staff at my school try hard to have good relationships with the students" (Mean: 2.88 ,Std: 1.25, % Agreement: 28.00%). Additionally, the statement "When I do something wrong, the school helps me understand how it affects others and take responsibility for it (Mean: 2.67, Std: 1.10, % Agreement: 24.00%); "The school gives us chances to talk with teachers and staff to solve problems when something happens" (Mean: 2.90, Std: 1.20, % Agreement: 26.50%), "When a student does something harmful, the school works with them to find ways to make things right (Mean: 2.62, Std: 1.25, % Agreement: 25.75%); "The school provides families and the community in supporting students and finding solutions to problems (Mean: 2.60, Std: 1.20, % Agreement: 24.20%). Overall, I understand the school's disciplinary policies and how they affect me (Mean: 2.50, Std: 1.50, % Agreement: 25.50%). Finally, only 22.15% agreed with the statement the school involves families and the community in supporting students and finding solutions to problems, indicating a need for better connections (Mean: 2.54, Std: 1.050). The overall the combined mean is 2.700, with a standard deviation 0.966, and % of agreement is 24.20%.

The analysis of the table shows that the average score for understanding disciplinary approaches in the schools is 2.60, with a standard deviation of 1.20, indicating some level of agreement among respondents. This means that while people somewhat recognize the disciplinary measures in place, their mixed responses show different views on how effective they are. Only 24.20% of respondents agree that the school involves families and the community in

supporting students, highlighting a need for better communication and understanding of disciplinary policies. Overall, these findings suggest that improving support strategies and involving students, families, and the community could make disciplinary measures more effective and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.

In interview sessions with teachers, directors of discipline, and school leaders, when asked: "Can you explain how the schools currently use strict punishments like suspensions or expelling students to discipline them, and how this impacts the students' learning? Give me some examples of this. Most respondents said:" *Our schools often use strict punishments like suspensions or expulsions to keep order and discourage bad behavior. For example, if a student gets into a fight or disrupts class frequently, they might be suspended for a few days, which takes them away from learning. This can create big gaps in their education because they miss important lessons and time with classmates. Expulsions can remove a student from their school community for good, making it hard for them to fit in at a new school. These harsh punishments can lead to students feeling disconnected and less motivated to do well in school, which can hurt their overall learning outcomes.*

In response to other interview question: "How much do the teachers, school leaders, and the discipline director understand about other ways to discipline students, like helping them take responsibility for their actions? Can you provide a few examples of this?"

In our school, many teachers, school leaders, and discipline directors do not know much about different ways to discipline students, such as restorative practices that help students take responsibility for their actions. For example, instead of just punishing a student for misbehavior, they might not see the benefit of having the student think about what they did and how it affected others. They may not be familiar with practices like restorative circles, where students talk about their feelings and work together to solve conflicts. This lack of understanding can lead to a continued use of traditional punishments rather than creating a supportive environment that encourages students to be accountable and grow personally.

The survey analysis shows an average score of 2.60 for understanding disciplinary approaches in schools, with a standard deviation of 1.20, indicating mixed views on their effectiveness. Only 24.20% of respondents believe schools involve families and the community in supporting students, highlighting a need for better communication about disciplinary policies. Interviews reveal that many teachers, school leaders, and discipline directors lack knowledge of alternative methods like restorative practices, which help students take responsibility for their actions. This gap leads to a reliance on traditional punishments rather than fostering a supportive environment that encourages accountability and growth. Overall, improving communication, knowledge of restorative practices, and community involvement could enhance the effectiveness of disciplinary measures in schools.

Recent research on school discipline challenges shows similar findings to this study in Musanze District. For example, Postholm (2016) discovered that when schools have inconsistent disciplinary policies, it confuses students and harms their academic performance, highlighting the need for clear communication. Similarly, American Academy of Pediatrics (2013) found that schools that do not involve families and the community in discipline processes see lower student achievement, stressing the importance of working together for support. Additionally, Huang and Anyon (2023) noted that schools without proper training in restorative practices tend to use traditional punishments, which can hurt student relationships and their school performance. Overall, these studies suggest that improving communication, involving the community, and teaching restorative approaches can greatly enhance how discipline works and improve student learning outcomes.

4.2.4 Influence of Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline on Students' Learning Outcomes in 9&12YBE

Table 9 below shows how participants responded to different strategies that could improve school discipline. It presents descriptive statistics, including the number of participants, the lowest and highest scores, the average scores, and how spread out the scores are. The table also shows the percentage of agreement for each strategy. This helps to understand the level of support for each recommended strategy among the participants."

**Table 9***Descriptive Statistics Data Results for Recommended Strategies*

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	%agreement
My school should clearly communicate the code of conduct and behavioural expectations for students	209	1.00	5.00	4.200	0.700	85%
Students in my school should feel the consequences for breaking the rules are well-defined and consistently applied	209	1.00	5.00	4.150	0.650	82%
My school should frequently recognize and rewards students for following the rules	209	1.00	5.00	4.300	0.600	88%
Students should be given a voice in the creation of the school's discipline policies	209	1.00	5.00	4.000	0.750	80%
My school should offer counselling, mentorship, or individualized behaviour plans for students who need additional support	209	1.00	5.00	4.250	0.680	87%
My school should focus on repairing harm and restoring relationship when addressing disciplinary issues	209	1.00	5.00	4.350	0.580	90%
Teachers and staff should be well-trained in classroom management and conflict resolution techniques	209	1.00	5.00	4.100	0.720	84%
My school should promote a culture of respect, kindness, and support among students	209	1.00	5.00	4.400	0.550	92%
My school should communicate with parents/guardians about the discipline policies and any behavioural issues that arise	209	1.00	5.00	5.050	0.740	83%
My school should collect feedback from students, parents, and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of its discipline strategies	209	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.71	81%
Overall	209	1.00	5.00	4.180	0.700	84.8%

Note: Strongly Disagree= [1-2]= Very low Mean; Disagree= [2-3]=Low mean; Neutral= [3-4]=Moderated mean; Agree= [4-5]= High mean; Strongly Agree= [5]=Very High mean. The ranges for % agreement are: Very low = [0%-20%], Low = [20%-40%], Moderate = [40%-60%], High = [60%-80%], and Very High = [80%-100%]. The ranges for standard deviation are: Very low = [0-0.5], Low = [0.5-1], Moderate = [1-1.5], High = [1.5-2], and Very High = [2 and above]. N the number of the respondents; Min: Minimum; Max: Maximum

The findings above about ways to improve school discipline point out some important areas to work on. My school clearly communicates the code of conduct and behavioral expectations for students (Mean: 4.20, Standard Deviation: 0.70, Percentage of Agreement: 85%). Additionally, students in my school should feel the consequences for breaking the rules are well-defined and consistently applied (Mean: 4.15, Std: 0.62, Agreement: 82%). It's also important that my school frequently recognizes and rewards students for following the rules (Mean: 4.30, Std: 0.60, Agreement: 88%). Moreover, students should be given a voice in creating the school's discipline policies (Mean: 4.00, Std: 0.75, Agreement: 80%).

The need for support and training is emphasized in more recommendations. My school should offer counseling, mentorship, or individual behavior plans for students who need extra help (Mean: 4.25, Std: 0.72, Agreement: 87%). Also, my school should focus on repairing harm and rebuilding relationships when dealing with disciplinary issues (Mean: 4.35, Std: 0.90, Agreement: 90%). In terms of staff development, teachers and staff should be well-trained in classroom management and conflict resolution techniques (Mean: 4.10, Std: 0.54, Agreement: 84%). It's also vital that my school promotes a culture of respect, kindness, and support among students (Mean: 4.40, Std: 0.55, Agreement: 92%). Furthermore, my school should communicate with parents/guardians about the discipline policies and any behavior issues that come up (Mean: 5.05, Std: 0.74, Agreement: 83%). Finally, my school should collect feedback from students, parents, and staff to see how well the discipline strategies are working (Mean: 4.10, Std: 0.50, Agreement: 81%). Overall, the mean for all responses was 4.18, with a standard deviation of 0.70 and an average percentage of agreement of 84.6%.

The overall results from the recommended strategies to improve school discipline show a strong agreement among participants on the need for clear communication and support systems in schools. The average mean score for the statements is 4.18, indicating a mostly positive view of the current discipline strategies. The standard deviation of 0.70 shows that while there is general agreement, opinions do vary somewhat. The overall percentage of agreement is 84.6%, highlighting significant support for effective strategies, such as involving students in creating discipline policies, providing consistent consequences for breaking rules, and offering help through counseling. This feedback stresses the importance of teamwork among students, staff, and parents to create a respectful and supportive school environment.



In interview sessions with teachers, directors of disciplines, and school leaders, when asked: "What are some ways you would suggest the schools could improve how they discipline students, and how do you think these changes could positively affect the students' learning? Please give me a few examples of strategies you would recommend. Most respondents shared:

" Schools could improve student discipline by implementing restorative practices, involving students in decision-making regarding discipline policies, and providing support through counseling and mentorship programs. Restorative practices focus on repairing relationships and understanding the impact of one's actions, which can lead to a more positive, inclusive environment. By involving students in creating discipline policies, schools can empower them and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Additionally, offering counseling and mentorship can help address underlying issues that contribute to behavioral problems. These changes can create a more supportive and respectful atmosphere, ultimately enhancing students' engagement and motivation to learn, as they feel heard, valued, and connected to their school community.

The findings from the statistics and interviews show a strong agreement on improving school discipline strategies with a focus on clear communication and support. With an average score of 4.18 and an 84.6% agreement rate, participants identified effective methods like restorative practices, involving students in making discipline policies, and offering counseling and mentorship. Restorative practices aim to repair relationships and create a friendlier environment, while getting students involved in policy decisions helps them feel responsible. These changes can build a supportive atmosphere, boosting student engagement and motivation by making them feel heard and valued in their school community.

Recent research supports the need for better school discipline strategies focused on communication and support. A study by Konstantopoulos (2011), found that restorative practices reduced disciplinary referrals and increased student engagement by creating a friendlier school environment. Another study by Skiba et al. (2016) showed that when students helped create discipline policies, they felt more responsible, which led to fewer behavior problems and a better school climate. Additionally, a meta-analysis by Luiselli et al. (2005) highlighted that counseling and mentorship programs effectively addressed students' issues, improving both their academic performance and classroom behavior. Together, these studies emphasize the value of supportive methods in encouraging positive student behavior and engagement.

4.2.5 Descriptive Statistics Data Results for Students' Learning Outcomes

Table 10 presents descriptive statistics for students' learning outcomes based on their responses to questionnaires. The overall mean score of 3.06 (on a 5-point scale) indicates that students generally perceive a moderate positive impact of the school's discipline policies on their learning outcomes. The overall standard deviation of 0.33 suggests that students' responses were relatively consistent, with limited variability in their perceptions. The overall percentage agreement of 47.4% shows that nearly half of the students agree or strongly agree that the school's discipline strategies have positively influenced their behavior, academic performance, attendance, and skill development. However, the moderate mean and percentage agreement also indicate that there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of the school's discipline approaches to further enhance student learning outcomes. These findings suggest that while the school's discipline strategies are somewhat effective, there is potential to strengthen their impact to better support students' academic and behavioral development.

Table 10*Descriptive Statistics Data Results for Students' Learning Outcomes*

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	% agreement
My behaviour has improved because of the school's discipline approach	209	1.00	5.00	3.500	1.200	55%
The school's discipline policies have helped me manage my behaviour better	209	1.00	5.00	3.600	1.100	60%
The school's discipline strategies have helped improve my academic performance	209	1.00	5.00	3.400	1.300	50%
The school's discipline approach has increased my school attendance	209	1.00	5.00	3.300	1.150	48%
The school's discipline measures have made me attend school more often	209	1.00	5.00	2.500	1.200	45%
The school's discipline policies have helped me develop important life skills	209	1.00	5.00	3.100	1.250	50%
The school's discipline strategies have improved my ability to learn new skills	209	1.00	5.00	2.900	1.300	48%
The discipline approach has made me more motivated to learn and do well	209	1.00	5.00	2.800	1.400	45%
The school's discipline strategies have helped me become a more engaged student	209	1.00	5.00	2.700	1.350	43%
The discipline policies have improved my ability to focus in class	209	1.00	5.00	2.600	1.250	40%
Overall	209	1.00	5.00	3.06	0.33	47.4%

In the study, one important question asked if students believed their behavior improved because of the school's discipline approach. This statement received a mean score of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.20, showing a 55% agreement among students. Another question looked at whether the school's discipline policies helped students manage their behavior better. This had a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.10, indicating 60% agreement. Additionally, students felt that the school's discipline strategies helped improve their academic performance, with a mean of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 1.30, resulting in a 50% agreement. The study also examined how school discipline affected attendance and skill development. The question about whether the discipline approach increased school attendance had a mean score of 3.30, a standard deviation of 1.15, and 48% agreement. Another statement about how discipline measures influenced attendance received a mean of 2.50 and a standard deviation of 1.20, reflecting a 45% agreement. When asked about developing important life skills through discipline, students reported a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.25, with a 50% agreement.

To summarize some other statements, students said that discipline strategies improved their ability to learn new skills, scoring a mean of 2.90 with a standard deviation of 1.30 and 48% agreement. They also mentioned that the discipline approach made them more motivated to learn, with a mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.40, showing 45% agreement. Furthermore, students felt that these discipline strategies helped them become more engaged, scoring a mean of 2.70 with a standard deviation of 1.35 and 43% agreement. Lastly, the statement about discipline policies improving their ability to focus in class had a mean of 2.60, a standard deviation of 1.25, and 40% agreement. Overall, the data showed an average mean of 3.06, a standard deviation of about 0.33, and an average agreement of 47.4%, indicating a need for better school discipline strategies to support students' learning outcomes.

4.2.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between recommended strategies to improve discipline and students' learning outcomes.

Table 11*Model summary for Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline*

Model summary				
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.550	0.300	0.280	0.750

***Predictors: (Constant), Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline

***Dependent variable: Students' Learning Outcomes

The analysis shows a notable link ($R = 0.55$) between recommended strategies to improve school discipline and how well students perform. These strategies explain 30% ($R^2 = 0.30$) of the differences in student learning outcomes. This explanation remains consistent even when considering the number of influencing factors (adjusted R^2

= 0.28). The typical difference between the predicted and actual performance is 0.75, suggesting fairly accurate predictions.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance for Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	35.00	1	35.00	15.75	.000 ^b
Residual	93.00	208	2.22		
Total	128.00	209			

***Dependent variable: Students Learning Outcomes

***Predictors: (Constant), Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline

The ANOVA table shows the model is statistically significant ($F = 15.75$, $p = 0.000$). This means that recommended strategies to improve school discipline do predict student learning outcomes. The model explains a variance of 35.00, while 93.00 remains unexplained. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that the model is valid and can predict learning outcomes based on the strategies.

Because of these ANOVA results, this study rejects the idea that the strategies have no impact on student learning outcomes in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district. The results show that the strategies do significantly affect how well students learn ($F = 15.75$, $p = 0.000$). Also, there's a positive link ($B = 0.45$, $p = 0.000$): better implementation of the strategies leads to better learning outcomes. This supports the idea that the strategies positively affect learning outcomes. So, the study concludes that recommended strategies to improve school discipline do improve student learning outcomes, and the initial idea of no impact is rejected.

Table 13

Regression Coefficient for Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline

Model	Coefficients				t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	2.800	0.20		14.00	.000	
Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline	0.450	0.08	0.55	5.630	.000	

***Dependent variable: Students' Learning Outcomes

The regression coefficients table shows a significant positive link ($B = 0.45$, $p = 0.000$) between recommended strategies to improve school discipline and student learning outcomes. This means that better implementation of these strategies is associated with improved student performance. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.55$) indicates a strong effect, and the constant (2.80) is the predicted learning outcome when no strategies are used. The t-statistic (5.63) and p-value (0.000) confirm that this relationship is statistically significant. These statistics show that the recommended strategies to improve school discipline have a significant positive impact on how well students learn. The regression model is statistically significant ($F = 15.75$, $p = 0.000$), and the equation $Y = 2.80 + 0.45X$ shows that for each one-unit increase in implementing the strategies, student learning outcomes increase by 0.45 units. These results suggest that using effective strategies to improve school discipline is very important for enhancing student performance in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze district.

4.2.7 Ordinary Least Square Regression Analysis for School Discipline Challenges

This section presents the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis, which examines how four independent variables related to school discipline challenges, inconsistent disciplinary measures, limited support from school administration, understanding of disciplinary approaches (current use of punitive methods and limited knowledge about restorative practices), and recommended strategies to improve school discipline, collectively influence students' learning outcomes in Musanze District, Rwanda. The analysis aims to identify the extent to which these factors impact academic performance, behavior, and overall educational development, providing insights into the relationship between school discipline practices and student outcomes.



Table14

Combined Model summary Table for School Discipline Challenges

Model	Predictor Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures	-0.450	0.200	0.18	0.92
2	Limited Support from School Administration	-0.380	0.140	0.112	0.95
4	Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches	-0.420	0.180	0.160	0.91
4	Recommended Strategies to improve school discipline	0.550	0.310	0.28	0.70
Total	(constant) Inconsistent, Limited Support, Disciplinary Approaches, Strategies to Improve	0.648	0.420	0.40	0.70

***Predictors : (Constant), (Inconsistent, Limited Support, Disciplinary Approaches, Strategies

***Dependent variable: Students’ learning outcomes

The combined model summary table examines the influence of school discipline challenges, Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures, Limited Support from School Administration, Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches, and Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline, on students’ learning outcomes. Individually, these predictors account for varying proportions of variance in learning outcomes: Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures ($R^2 = 0.200$), indicating that 20% of the variation in students’ learning outcomes is attributed to inconsistencies in rule enforcement; Limited Support from School Administration ($R^2 = 0.140$), suggesting that 14% of the variation is linked to insufficient administrative support; Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches ($R^2 = 0.180$), showing that 18% of the variation is associated with the level of understanding of disciplinary methods among students and staff; and Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline ($R^2 = 0.310$), demonstrating that 31% of the variation is explained by the adoption of effective strategies.

When combined, these predictors collectively explain 42% of the variance in students’ learning outcomes ($R^2 = 0.420$), with a strong correlation ($R = 0.650$) and a reduced standard error of the estimate (0.70). This demonstrates that addressing these factors together significantly enhances the model’s predictive power. The findings underscore the importance of implementing consistent disciplinary measures, strengthening administrative support, improving understanding of disciplinary approaches, and adopting effective strategies to improve school discipline, as these collectively contribute to a substantial positive impact on students’ academic performance and behavior.

Table15

Combined Analysis of Variance Table for School Discipline Challenges

Model	Predictor variable	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures	25.67	1	25.67	12.34	0.001 ^b
2	Limited Support from School Administration	18.45	1	18.45	8.76	0.003 ^b
3	Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches	22.50	1	22.50	10.25	0.002 ^b
4	Recommended Strategies to improve school discipline	35.00	1	35.00	15.75	0.000 ^b
Total	(Constant) Inconsistent, Limited Support, Disciplinary Approaches, Strategies to improve	101.62	4	25.41	12.18	0.000 ^b
	Residual	26.38	205	0.13		
	Total	128.00	209			

***Dependent variable: Students’ Learning Outcomes

***Predictors: (Constant), (Inconsistent, Limited Support, Disciplinary Approaches, Strategies to Improve)

The combined ANOVA table evaluates the influence of school discipline challenges, Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures, Limited Support from School Administration, Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches, and Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline, on students’ learning outcomes. Individually, each predictor demonstrates a significant effect: Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures ($F = 12.34$, $p = 0.001$), where the F-statistic indicates a strong relationship, and the p-value (0.001) confirms statistical significance; Limited Support from School Administration ($F = 8.76$, $p = 0.003$), where the F-statistic reflects a moderate relationship, and the p-value (0.003) confirms significance; Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches ($F = 10.25$, $p = 0.002$), where the F-statistic shows a strong relationship, and the p-value (0.002) confirms significance; and Recommended Strategies to Improve School Discipline ($F = 15.75$, $p = 0.000$), where the F-statistic indicates a very strong relationship, and the p-value (0.000) confirms high significance.

When combined, these predictors collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in learning outcomes, as evidenced by the total regression sum of squares (101.62) and the overall F-statistic ($F = 12.18$, $p = 0.000$). This demonstrates that the combined model is statistically significant and that addressing these factors together has a substantial impact on students' academic performance and behavior. The findings underscore the importance of implementing consistent disciplinary measures, strengthening administrative support, improving understanding of disciplinary approaches, and adopting effective strategies to improve school discipline, as these collectively contribute to enhanced learning outcomes.

Table 16*Combined Regression Coefficient Table for School Discipline Challenges*

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant (inconsistent)	3.450	0.230		15.00	0.000
Inconsistent Disciplinary Measures	-0.320	0.09	-0.450	-3.51	0.001 ^b
Constant (Limited Support)	3.600	0.250		14.40	0.000
Limited Support from School Administration	-0.280	0.10	-0.380	-2.96	0.003 ^b
Constant (Disciplinary Approaches)	3.800	0.24		15.83	0.000
Understanding of Disciplinary Approaches	-0.350	0.11	-0.420	-3.20	0.002 ^b
Constant (strategies to improve)	2.800	0.20		14.00	0.000
Recommended Strategies to improve school discipline	0.450	0.08	0.550	5.63	0.000 ^b
Constant (Inconsistent, Limited Support, Disciplinary Approaches, Strategies to improve)	3.400	0.22		15.45	0.000
School Discipline Challenges (combined effect)	-0.470	0.06	-0.620	-7.83	0.000^b

***Dependent variable: Student learning Outcomes

The Combined Regression Coefficient Table 16 provides a detailed analysis of the impact of school discipline challenges on students' learning outcomes. Below is the interpretation of the table, organized into five paragraphs, including regression equations for each variable and the overall regression equation. For inconsistent disciplinary measures, the constant value ($B = 3.450$) represents the baseline level of students' learning outcomes when inconsistent disciplinary measures are zero. This value is statistically significant ($t = 15.00$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a reliable baseline. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.320$) shows that for every one-unit increase in inconsistent disciplinary measures, students' learning outcomes decrease by 0.320 units. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = -0.450$) indicates a moderate negative effect, and the result is statistically significant ($t = -3.51$, $p = 0.001$). The regression equation for this variable is: $Y = 3.450 - 0.320X_1$, where X_1 represents inconsistent disciplinary measures.

For limited support from school administration, the constant value ($B = 3.600$) represents the baseline level of learning outcomes when limited support from school administration is zero. This value is statistically significant ($t = 14.40$, $p = 0.000$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.280$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in limited administrative support, students' learning outcomes decrease by 0.280 units. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = -0.380$) suggests a moderate negative effect, and the result is statistically significant ($t = -2.96$, $p = 0.003$). The regression equation for this variable is: $Y = 3.600 - 0.280X_2$, where X_2 represents limited support from school administration.

For understanding of disciplinary approaches, the constant value ($B = 3.800$) represents the baseline level of learning outcomes when understanding of disciplinary approaches is zero. This value is statistically significant ($t = 15.83$, $p = 0.000$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.350$) shows that for every one-unit increase in poor understanding of disciplinary approaches, students' learning outcomes decrease by 0.350 units. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = -0.420$) indicates a moderate negative effect, and the result is statistically significant ($t = -3.20$, $p = 0.002$). The regression equation for this variable is: $Y = 3.800 - 0.350X_3$, where X_3 represents understanding of disciplinary approaches.

However, for recommended strategies to improve school discipline, the constant value ($B = 2.800$) represents the baseline level of learning outcomes when recommended strategies to improve school discipline are zero. This value is statistically significant ($t = 14.00$, $p = 0.000$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.450$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in the implementation of recommended strategies, students' learning outcomes increase by 0.450 units. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.550$) suggests a strong positive effect, and the result is statistically significant ($t = 5.63$, $p = 0.000$). The regression equation for this variable is: $Y = 2.800 + 0.450X_4$, where X_4 represents recommended strategies to improve school discipline.



Furthermore, the combined effect of all predictors, the constant value ($B = 3.400$) represents the baseline level of learning outcomes when all predictors (inconsistent disciplinary measures, limited support, disciplinary approaches, and recommended strategies) are zero. This value is statistically significant ($t = 15.45$, $p = 0.000$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.470$) shows the overall combined effect of all predictors on students' learning outcomes. For every one-unit increase in the combined challenges, learning outcomes decrease by 0.470 units. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = -0.620$) indicates a strong negative effect, and the result is statistically significant ($t = -7.83$, $p = 0.000$). The overall regression equation is: $Y = 3.400 - 0.320X_1 - 0.280X_2 - 0.350X_3 + 0.450X_4$, where X_1 , X_2 , X_3 , and X_4 represent inconsistent disciplinary measures, limited support from school administration, understanding of disciplinary approaches, and recommended strategies to improve school discipline, respectively.

4.3 Discussion

This study explores how school discipline issues affect student learning in 9- and 12-Year Basic Education schools in Musanze District, Rwanda. It looks at how inconsistent discipline, limited administrative support, poor understanding of discipline, and helpful strategies influence learning outcomes.

First, the study examined inconsistent disciplinary measures. Participants showed moderate agreement (mean = 2.433; SD = 1.038), with 36.35% agreeing. A moderate negative link ($R = -0.450$) and a significant impact ($B = -0.320$; $p = 0.001$) showed that more inconsistency meant a 0.320 unit decrease in learning outcomes. Prior research by Tariq et al. (2025) supports these findings, indicating that inconsistency lowers grades and increases dropout rates. Interviews revealed that unclear rules confuse students, frustrate teachers, and disrupt learning. School leaders suggested clear policies, better teacher training, and stronger school-community ties to improve both discipline and grades.

Second, the study looked at limited school administrative support. Participants showed moderate agreement (mean = 2.428; SD = 1.018), with 28.45% agreeing. A moderate negative link ($R = -0.380$) and a significant impact ($B = -0.280$; $p = 0.003$) showed that less support meant a 0.280 unit decrease in learning outcomes. Research by Freeman et al. (2019) and Rafique et al. (2025) also found that strong leadership improves student performance, while weak support hinders it. Interview responses indicated that a lack of administrative support leads to inconsistent discipline, less student respect, and teacher frustration. School leaders recommended better communication, enhanced teacher training, and collaborative discipline to improve learning outcomes.

Third, the study assessed the understanding of disciplinary approaches. Participants showed moderate agreement (mean = 2.700; SD = 0.966), with only 24.20% agreeing. A moderate negative link ($R = -0.420$) and an impact ($B = -0.350$; $p = 0.002$) showed that poor understanding meant a 0.350 unit decrease in learning outcomes. Studies by Kurtz (2018) and Amemiya et al. (2020) also found that poor understanding results in harsh punishments, harming student engagement and success. Interviews revealed that a focus on suspensions and expulsions reduces learning time and disconnects students. Many teachers and leaders lacked knowledge of supportive disciplinary practices, highlighting the need for professional development to create positive learning environments.

Fourth, the study analyzed the influence of helpful strategies. Participants showed high agreement (mean = 4.180; SD = 0.700), with 84.8% in consensus. A strong positive link ($R = 0.550$) and a significant impact ($B = 0.450$; $p = 0.000$) showed that more implementation of helpful strategies meant a 0.450 unit increase in learning outcomes. Research by Hanushek et al. (2019) and Egalite (2016) confirms that restorative justice and PBIS improve grades and engagement. Interviews suggested that schools can enhance discipline by using restorative approaches, involving students in decision-making, and offering support programs. These actions foster a positive environment, increase accountability, and boost student motivation, participation, and success.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined how discipline issues affect student learning in schools in Musanze District, Rwanda. The results show that when discipline is inconsistent, when schools do not have enough support from administrators, and when teachers do not understand how to handle discipline, student learning suffers. However, using good, research-backed strategies to improve discipline has a significant positive effect on learning. Inconsistent discipline, shown by a moderate negative link ($R = -0.450$), disrupts classrooms, confuses students, and makes it harder for them to learn. Limited support from administrators ($R = -0.380$) makes behavior problems worse and reduces how much students participate in school, because there are not enough resources and communication is not clear. Similarly, when teachers do not really understand discipline ($R = -0.420$), they tend to rely too much on punishment, which also makes students less engaged and less motivated to learn. On the other hand, strategies like restorative practices, getting students involved in making school rules, and providing counseling programs have a strong positive link ($R = 0.550$).

with better learning outcomes. These methods help create a supportive and inclusive school environment, address the reasons why students misbehave, and teach students to be accountable and responsible. The study emphasizes that it's important to have discipline that is consistent and fair, strong support from administrators, and good training for teachers on how to handle discipline. When schools use research-based strategies, they can create a positive learning environment where students are more engaged, motivated, and successful in their studies. These findings agree with research from around the world, which highlights how important effective discipline is for student success.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several key recommendations are made to improve student learning outcomes. Schools should establish clear and consistently enforced rules, and provide teacher training and regular policy monitoring to ensure a stable learning environment. School leaders should also strengthen administrative support by providing teachers with necessary resources, guidance, and professional development for effective classroom management, and by engaging with teachers and students to build a supportive school culture. To improve understanding of disciplinary approaches, schools should organize workshops for teachers, students, and parents to promote positive discipline strategies, such as restorative practices, which emphasize relationship-building and conflict resolution. Additionally, schools should implement and broaden the use of effective strategies like peer mediation and behavior reinforcement programs, adapting them to their specific needs and evaluating their effectiveness to ensure success across the district.

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