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### The Role of Discipline Committees in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment in Secondary Schools in Morogoro Municipal Council, Tanzania

<sup>1</sup> Christer Mezza, <sup>2</sup> Onesmo Amos

<sup>1,2</sup> Jordan University College, A Constituent College of St. Augustine University of Tanzania, P. O. Box 1878, Morogoro, Tanzania

Corresponding Author: **Christer Mezza**

#### Abstract

This study investigates the role of discipline committees in fostering a conducive learning environment in secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal Council. The study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy and employed a mixed research design. The study targeted teachers, students, and school heads from selected secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. The sample size comprised 62 respondents, including 50 teachers, 10 students, and 2 school heads. Teachers were selected using a simple random sampling technique, while students and school heads were chosen through purposive sampling. Data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Validity and reliability were ensured through supervision advice and the Cronbach alpha method, with a resulting Cronbach alpha of 0.860 indicating internal consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using

descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process. The study concludes with a consensus among participants regarding the crucial role of discipline committees in fostering a positive learning atmosphere within Morogoro's secondary schools. It highlights unanimous acknowledgment of these committees' effectiveness in maintaining discipline, promoting favourable conduct, and creating a conducive environment for learning. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Morogoro's secondary schools continue to prioritize and support discipline committees, as they are instrumental in upholding discipline, nurturing desirable behaviour, and ultimately contributing to students' academic success and well-being.

**Keywords:** Discipline Committees, Conducive Learning Environment and Secondary Schools

#### 1. Introduction

Discipline committees play a crucial role in shaping the personality development of students in secondary schools. The practices employed by these committees significantly impact the overall character-building and academic performance of students (An, 2022) <sup>[1]</sup>. Effective disciplinary practices promote a positive school climate and create an environment conducive to learning, personal growth, and social development (Babey *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[2]</sup>. Conversely, ineffective or inappropriate disciplinary practices can have detrimental effects on students' well-being, self-esteem and academic engagement (Gregory *et al.*, 2016) <sup>[4]</sup>. Across Africa, discipline committees have emerged as important mechanisms for maintaining order, ensuring adherence to school rules, and promoting positive behaviour among students (Adeyemo, 2016). These committees often employ various disciplinary measures, including counselling, detention, suspension, or expulsion, to address misconduct and maintain a conducive learning environment.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, discipline committees face unique challenges related to limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and socio-economic disparities, which can complicate the implementation of effective disciplinary practices (EdData, 2015) <sup>[3]</sup>. Moreover, cultural norms, such as corporal punishment, may persist in some regions, potentially hindering students' personality development and well-being.

In the context of East Africa, discipline committee practices vary across different countries and regions. While some countries have adopted progressive disciplinary approaches focusing on restorative justice and holistic development, others may rely on more traditional punitive measures (Kosgei, 2020) <sup>[6]</sup>. These variations highlight the need for context-specific research to understand the influence of discipline committee practices on personality development at the local level.

Likewise in Tanzania, discipline committees play a critical role in secondary schools, ensuring the maintenance of discipline and order (Paul, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has outlined guidelines for disciplinary procedures in schools, emphasizing the importance of fair and inclusive practices (United Republic of Tanzania, 2014) <sup>[15]</sup>. However, there is limited empirical research specifically investigating the impact of discipline committee practices on the personality development of students in Tanzania. Morogoro municipality, located in the eastern part of Tanzania, has numerous secondary schools. The municipality faces unique socio-cultural and economic dynamics that may influence the functioning of discipline committees and their impact on students' personality development. However, there is limited research examining the specific roles employed by discipline committees in Morogoro municipality and their effects on students' personal growth and character formation.

Moreover, understanding the role of discipline committees in fostering a conducive learning environment in secondary schools in Morogoro municipality is crucial for developing evidence-based policies and interventions that promote positive student outcomes. By examining the local context, this study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge base and provide recommendations for enhancing discipline committee practices to facilitate the holistic development of students in the region.

## 2. Statement of Problem

At the heart of this study is a profound concern regarding the influence of discipline committee practices on the personality development of secondary school students in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. The effectiveness of these committees in shaping character and behaviour raises critical questions about their impact on the overall personal growth of students. Discipline, being a crucial element in the educational environment, significantly contributes to moulding students' personalities (Khatun *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[5]</sup>. However, the potential misalignment between disciplinary practices and their intended role in fostering positive development is a key issue in Morogoro municipal. Besides, while existing research has explored the general impact of discipline on student development, this study sought to look at the intricacies of local disciplinary methods. The proposed solution involves a thorough investigation that aims to provide valuable insights to inform the refinement of disciplinary strategies. By doing so, the research endeavours to contribute significantly to the positive development of students in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. Through this localized approach, the study ultimately aims to shed light on the specific dynamics influencing student development within the Tanzanian educational context, filling a notable gap in the current body of knowledge.

## 3. Research Question and Research Hypothesis

**QN:** What is the effectiveness of parental involvement in the supervision of subject-based homework in public secondary schools in Morogoro municipality?

**Ha:** There is a significant relationship between teaching experience and the perception that discipline committees support and promote positive behaviour and character development among students.

## 4. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory, formulated by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, is rooted in the belief that individuals learn by observing, imitating, and modelling the behaviour of others. Within the educational context, this theory suggests that students can acquire academic behaviours and skills through the observation and imitation of the actions demonstrated by their parents or caregivers. Bandura emphasized the significance of social influence in the learning process, stating that individuals, especially children, learn not only from direct experiences but also by witnessing the behaviours and consequences experienced by others in their social environment.

The strength of the Social Learning Theory lies in its explanatory power regarding how behaviour is acquired from the surrounding environment and how observational learning contributes to skill acquisition (Schunk, 2012). This theory provides a strong framework for understanding the influence of parental behaviour, including supervision, on students' academic achievements. It highlights the role of modelling and the impact of role models, such as parents, in shaping academic behaviours and habits in children.

However, the weakness of the Social Learning Theory is its limited emphasis on individual cognitive processes (Muro & Jeffrey, 2012). The theory doesn't deeply explore the internal cognitive mechanisms that mediate the influence of observed behaviour on learning. Additionally, it may simplify the complicated interplay of various factors influencing academic achievement, potentially neglecting the complexities of individual differences and diverse learning environments.

Social Learning Theory is particularly suitable for studying the role of discipline committees in fostering a conducive learning environment in secondary schools in Morogoro, Tanzania, because it emphasizes the importance of observational learning and social influence in behaviour development. Discipline committees are pivotal in modelling and reinforcing appropriate behaviours and norms within the school environment. By applying Social Learning Theory, this study can explore how students observe and imitate the behaviours and practices promoted by these committees, thereby shaping their conduct and contributing to a positive school climate. The theory helps to understand the mechanisms through which disciplinary practices and role models within the school setting influence student behaviour, fostering a safe and productive learning atmosphere.

## 5. Review of Empirical Studies

Fernández-Alonso *et al.* (2017) conducted a study in Spain to explore the connection between different styles of parental involvement at home and academic performance. They used a random sample of 26,543 Spanish students, with an average age of 14.4. The study found that students whose parents had a more distal or indirect style of family involvement tended to achieve better results compared to those from homes with a more controlling style. The researchers used hierarchical-linear models to analyze the data and found that parental involvement styles have an impact on individual and school-level achievement, even after considering other factors.

Yu *et al.* (2022) investigated how parental involvement contributes to children's academic achievement during school closure in China. The study involved 229 primary school children and their parents. The researchers measured children's academic achievement before and after the school closure, parental involvement, and children's learning engagement during the closure. After accounting for gender, age, grade, and socioeconomic status, the study found that children's learning engagement fully mediated the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. Additionally, parental psychological control moderated the association between parental involvement and children's learning engagement. Specifically, higher levels of parental psychological control strengthened the contribution of parental involvement to children's learning engagement. The study also revealed that higher levels of Chinese parental psychological control did not always lead to lower academic outcomes in the context of COVID-19.

Ayimbile *et al.* (2022) examined the level of parental involvement in monitoring the academic performance of senior high school students in the Kassena Nankana municipality in Ghana. The study used purposive and random sampling techniques to select the participants, which included 50 parents, 100 teachers, and 100 students. The researchers collected data using a self-developed questionnaire and analyzed it using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that parental involvement in monitoring academic performance was very low within the municipality. The results also indicated that poverty, low level of education, single parenting, work overload of parents, negative attitudes between teachers and parents, and large family size were the major barriers to parental involvement in monitoring students' academic performance.

Fajoji *et al.* (2015) investigated the relationship between parental involvement in children's education and the academic achievement of primary six pupils in Edo State, Nigeria. The study used an ex-post facto research design and included 1,895 primary six pupils. The researchers collected data using an instrument called PIRS and analyzed it to examine the influence of parental involvement on pupils' academic achievements in English Language, Mathematics, and Integrated Science. The study found a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement in these subjects, indicating that higher levels of parental involvement were associated with higher achievement.

Ntitika (2014) studied the parental characteristics that influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Isinya District, Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey research design and included 42 PTA members, 150 students, and 4 principals. The researchers collected data using questionnaires and interview guides and analyzed it using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study found that positive parental attitudes, parental level of education, economic stability, and family structure all had an impact on students' academic performance.

Kikoti (2018) explored parents' participation in improving students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Tanzania. The study was conducted in Sumbawanga Municipal and involved three community secondary schools with 97 respondents, including heads of schools, students, teachers, and parents. The researchers

used purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select the participants. The study found that there was minimal parental participation in the education of their children, which contributed to poor performance among students. The challenges faced by parents in enhancing their children's performance included poverty, poor communication between parents and teachers, lack of education, and poor communication between parents and their children.

## 6. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology applied in the study. It adopted a pragmatic research philosophy and employed a mixed research design. The study targeted teachers, students, and school heads from selected secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. The sample size comprised 62 respondents, including 50 teachers, 10 students, and 2 school heads. Teachers were selected using a simple random sampling technique, while students and school heads were chosen through purposive sampling. Data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Validity and reliability were ensured through supervision advice and the Cronbach alpha method, with a resulting Cronbach alpha of 0.860 indicating internal consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process.

## 7. Findings and Discussion of the Study

The findings of this study are presented in this section, reflecting the data collected and analyzed to address the research objectives. The findings are organized into distinct subsections, starting with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by an in-depth analysis of parental involvement and its impact on student academic performance. Each subsection provides detailed insights supported by statistical data and qualitative information obtained through surveys and interviews.

### 7.1 Demographic Characteristics

This subsection presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. Understanding the demographic profile is crucial as it provides context to the data and helps in interpreting the results accurately. The analysis aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the respondents, which serves as a foundation for understanding the subsequent findings.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics (n=50)

Item	f (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	15 (30%)
Female	35 (70%)
<b>Age</b>	
21-30	5 (10%)
31-40	19 (38%)
41-50	15 (30%)
51 and above	11 (22%)
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	
0-5	7 (14%)
6-10	8 (16%)
11-15	13 (26%)
16 and above	22 (44%)
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	
Diploma	12 (24%)

Degree	30 (60%)
Masters or Others	8 (16%)

Source: Field Data (2024)

The demographic characteristics presented in Table 1 offer valuable insights into the composition of the study participants, shedding light on various aspects such as gender distribution, age range, teaching experience, and educational qualifications.

Firstly, the gender distribution reveals a significant majority of female participants, comprising 70% of the sample, while males represent 30%. This gender disproportion within the sample could potentially influence the perspectives and experiences shared during the study, as gender dynamics may play a role in shaping attitudes and approaches toward discipline in secondary schools.

Secondly, examining the age distribution, the highest percentage of participants fall within the 31-40 age bracket, making up 38% of the sample, followed by the 41-50 age group at 30%. This distribution suggests a relatively balanced representation across different age groups, indicating a diverse range of experiences and perspectives among the participants. However, it's worth noting that there is a smaller representation of younger teachers aged 21-30, constituting only 10% of the sample, which could have implications for understanding contemporary challenges and approaches in secondary education.

Thirdly, the distribution of teaching experience highlights a considerable proportion of participants with 16 or more years of experience, accounting for 44% of the sample, while those with 11-15 years make up 26%. This indicates a predominantly experienced cohort of educators, whose insights and perspectives may be shaped by years of practice and exposure to various disciplinary issues and strategies within school settings.

Lastly, regarding educational qualifications, the majority of participants hold a degree (60%), followed by those with a diploma (24%), and a smaller percentage with a master's degree or higher (16%). This distribution suggests a relatively well-educated sample, with the majority possessing at least an undergraduate degree, which could potentially influence the depth of understanding and analysis regarding discipline-related issues and practices in secondary education.

### 7.2 The Role of Discipline Committees in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment in Secondary Schools

This subsection examines the primary goal of the study, which is to understand how discipline committees contribute to creating a positive learning environment in secondary schools. The analysis incorporates quantitative data gathered from questionnaires as well as qualitative insights obtained from interviews.

**Table 2:** Teachers Responses on the Role of Discipline Committees in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment in Secondary Schools (n=50)

Item / Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Discipline committees effectively address behavioral issues in secondary schools	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	36 (72%)	11 (22%)	4.1200
Discipline committees play a crucial role in maintaining a positive learning environment	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	31 (62%)	16 (32%)	4.2200
Discipline committees contribute to reducing troubles in the classroom	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	21 (42%)	24 (48%)	4.3200
Communication and collaboration between discipline committees and teachers in addressing student behaviour	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	23 (46%)	23 (46%)	4.3600
Discipline committees enforce consequences consistently and fairly	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	24 (48%)	17 (34%)	4.0800
Discipline committees help students understand the importance of respect and responsibility in a school setting	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	26 (52%)	17 (34%)	4.1400
Discipline committees help create a sense of safety and security for students and staff in secondary schools	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	20 (40%)	23 (46%)	4.2400
Discipline committees support and promote positive behaviour and character development among students	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	24 (48%)	23 (46%)	4.3400
Strategies and interventions implemented by discipline committees increase student behaviour	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	32 (64%)	15 (30%)	4.1800
Involvement of discipline committees maintaining a conducive learning environment in secondary schools	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	31 (62%)	15 (30%)	4.1400

Source: Field Data (2024)

Data in Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the role of discipline committees in fostering a conducive learning environment in secondary schools. The data indicates a strong positive perception among respondents regarding the effectiveness and importance of these committees. One of the key areas highlighted is the effectiveness of discipline committees in addressing behavioural issues. A substantial 94% of respondents agree or strongly agree that these committees handle behavioural problems effectively, as reflected by a mean score of 4.1200. This suggests that the committees are trusted to manage and mitigate disruptive behaviours, contributing significantly to the overall discipline within schools. The

results concur with a study by Adeyemo (2016) discipline committees have emerged as important mechanisms for maintaining order, ensuring adherence to school rules, and promoting positive behaviour among students.

The role of discipline committees in maintaining a positive learning environment is also highly regarded, with 94% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing on their importance (mean score of 4.2200). This highlights the committees' crucial role in creating and sustaining an atmosphere where students can focus on learning without distractions caused by behavioural issues. These results are in parallel with a study by Khatun *et al*, (2018) [5] who observed that discipline, being a crucial element in the

educational environment, significantly contributes to moulding students' personalities. Moreover, 90% of respondents believe that discipline committees contribute significantly to reducing troubles in the classroom, as indicated by a mean score of 4.3200. This high level of agreement highlights the committees' effectiveness in maintaining order and ensuring that classrooms remain conducive to learning. These verdicts are in parallel with a study by Babey *et al.* (2019) [2] who found that effective disciplinary practices promote a positive school climate and create an environment conducive to learning, personal growth, and social development. Effective communication and collaboration between discipline committees and teachers are seen as vital, with 92% of respondents supporting this view (mean score of 4.3600). This strong endorsement points to the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility in managing student behaviour, suggesting that discipline committees and teachers must work closely to address issues promptly and effectively. These findings were supported by a Head of School B who pointed out the following:

*"Teamwork in our school is paramount in managing student behaviour. It's not solely the duty of teachers or administrators, but a collaborative effort. When we work together, we create a supportive environment conducive to positive behavioural outcomes for our students."* HoS B, Personal Communication, May 20, 2024).

Consistency and fairness in enforcing consequences are crucial for maintaining discipline, and 82% of respondents agree or strongly agree that discipline committees uphold these principles (mean score of 4.0800). This indicates that most respondents trust the committees to administer discipline in a manner that is perceived as just and equitable, which is essential for maintaining student respect and compliance. These results were supported by students from Secondary School B who concur that committees inspire trust in disciplinary matters, crucial for upholding student compliance and respect. The consensus emphasizes the significance of administering discipline justly and equitably, fostering a conducive environment for maintaining order and integrity within educational institutions. Discipline committees are also seen as instrumental in helping students understand the importance of respect and responsibility within the school setting. With 86% of respondents in agreement (mean score of 4.1400), it is clear that these committees play a key role in instilling important values in students, which are foundational for their personal development and the school's overall culture. These findings align with Khatun *et al.*, (2018) [5], who noted that discipline, as a fundamental aspect of the educational environment, plays a significant role in shaping students' personalities.

Safety and security are paramount in any educational setting, and 86% of respondents believe that discipline committees significantly contribute to creating a safe environment for both students and staff (mean score of 4.2400). This perception emphasizes the committees' role in ensuring that schools are safe havens where education can take place without fear or intimidation. These findings were supported by a Head of School A who pointed out the following:

*"Our committees play a pivotal role in ensuring that our schools are safe havens where education flourishes without fear or intimidation. We prioritize creating an environment where every student feels secure and supported to pursue their academic goals with confidence and peace of mind."* (HoS A, Personal Communication, May 17, 2024).

The promotion of positive behaviour and character development is another area where discipline committees are seen as effective. An impressive 94% of respondents agree or strongly agree that these committees support and promote positive behaviours (mean score of 4.3400). This indicates a strong belief in the committees' role in fostering not just academic success but also the holistic development of students. These findings align with a study by An (2022) [1] who suggested that practices employed by these committees significantly impact the overall character-building and academic performance of students. The effectiveness of strategies and interventions implemented by discipline committees is reflected in the 94% agreement (mean score of 4.1800) that these measures positively influence student behaviour. This high level of confidence suggests that the interventions used by the committees are seen as practical and beneficial in promoting good behaviour among students. These results were supported by students from Secondary School B who unanimously agreed that committee interventions effectively promote positive student behavior. Practical strategies foster a conducive learning environment. Consensus underscores the benefits of these interventions in shaping students' conduct positively, reflecting collective satisfaction and support. Finally, the involvement of discipline committees in maintaining a conducive learning environment is acknowledged by 92% of respondents (mean score of 4.1400). This broad agreement highlights the essential role these committees play in creating and maintaining an environment where learning can thrive, free from the disruptions of behavioural issues. These findings are in agreement with the study by Babey *et al.*, (2019) [2] who point out that, effective disciplinary practices promote a positive school climate and create an environment conducive to learning, personal growth, and social development.

### 7.3 Hypothesis Testing

This section provides the findings from an ANOVA analysis aimed at exploring a significant relationship between teaching experience and the perception that discipline committees support and promote positive behavior and character development among students. Table 3 presents the results of ANOVA.

**Table 3:** Hypothesis Testing Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.477	3	.492	.817	.491
Within Groups	27.743	46	.603		
Total	29.220	49			

Source: Field Data (2024)

With regards to the statistics in Table 3, the non-significant p-value of 0.491, obtained from the ANOVA test (F = 0.817), suggests that there is no statistically significant

difference in the perception of discipline committees as promoters of positive student behaviour and character development across different levels of teaching experience. Therefore, we fail to find evidence to support the idea that teaching tenure significantly impacts this perception. This outcome emphasizes the need to explore additional factors that may influence individuals' views on the role of discipline committees in fostering positive student conduct.

## 8. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.1 Summary of Findings

The study found strong agreement among respondents regarding the effectiveness and importance of discipline committees in secondary schools. They are perceived as crucial for addressing behavioural issues, maintaining a positive learning environment, and reducing classroom disruptions. The study also found effective communication and collaboration between committees and teachers are highlighted as essential for managing student behaviour. Moreover, respondents trust discipline committees to enforce consequences fairly, promote positive behaviour, and contribute to students' character development. Nevertheless, the tested hypothesis revealed no significant difference in perceptions across different levels of teaching experience, suggesting that teaching tenure does not significantly influence these views, and thus highlights the need to consider other factors shaping perceptions of discipline committees.

### 8.2 Conclusions

The study showed the consensus among participants on the pivotal role of discipline committees in nurturing a favourable learning atmosphere in secondary schools. The outcomes highlighted unanimous acknowledgment of these committees' efficacy in upholding discipline, cultivating favourable conduct, and establishing an environment conducive to learning.

### 8.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is strongly recommended that secondary schools continue to prioritize and support discipline committees. These committees play a pivotal role in maintaining a positive learning environment by effectively upholding discipline, promoting desirable behaviour, and fostering conditions conducive to learning. Sustained investment in these committees and their activities is crucial for the overall well-being and academic success of students in secondary schools.

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