



# Headteachers' Learner Discipline Management Practices on the Implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Ugunja Sub- County, Siaya County Kenya

Evans Oloko Nyakodhe, Pamela Ochieng & Joyce Kamau  
Mount Kenya University

Email: [evansoloko94@gmail.com](mailto:evansoloko94@gmail.com)/[pochieng@mku.ac.ke](mailto:pochieng@mku.ac.ke)/[jmkamau@mku.ac.ke](mailto:jmkamau@mku.ac.ke)

**Abstract:** *This study examined headteachers' learner discipline management practices and their influence on the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public primary schools in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Operant Conditioning Theory. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sample size comprised 257 respondents, including 1 Sub-County Director of Education, 1 QUASO, 15 head teachers, and 240 teachers. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that discipline management practices significantly influence CBC implementation. The study concluded that some of the current discipline management practices are not fully aligned with CBC requirements and recommend adoption of learner-centered discipline approaches and training of headteachers.*

**Keyword:** *Learner Discipline Management Practices, Implementation, Competency Based Curriculum, Head teachers*

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## 1. Introduction

The role of management practices in enhancing learning outcomes in educational institutions has been widely emphasized by scholars. For instance, Bettinger (2010) found that incentives such as rewards improved learners' performance in mathematics, although the effect was not consistent across other subjects. Similarly, Grave (2011) established that discipline-related factors such as class attendance and completion rates significantly contributed

to improved academic performance. While these studies highlight the importance of discipline and incentives in enhancing academic outcomes, they do not adequately address their influence on the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which is the focus of the current study.

A study by Ishida and Miwa (2012) revealed that in Japan, learning institutions disciplinary environs appear to not have a direct influence on learners' achievement

academically. Nevertheless, learners who conveyed directly having been victimized recorded lower scores in exams compared to ones who reported not having been victimized within the school compound in Japan. Ehiane (2014) while assessing discipline and learner performance academically in Nigeria established that over 70 per cent of participants held that learning institution discipline management impacted academic achievements of learners.

In Kiambu County, a Kenyan study by Alice, Rosemary and Alice (2022) revealed that school heads' management abilities greatly influenced CBC implementation in the study locale. In Nakuru County, Njoro Sub-County, a study by James, David and Peter (2020) established that a positive relationship existed between learners' discipline management and learners' achievement academically in the study area as management of learners' discipline resulted in a 47.4% variance in pupils' performance academically. Further, better academic outcomes were found in schools with disciplined learners. Information contained in this section was used to inform the need for the present study to examine head teachers learner discipline management practices and its effects on competency based curriculum (CBC) implementation in Public Primary Schools (PPS), in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective implementation of any curriculum requires a well-disciplined learning environment. In public primary schools, headteachers are responsible for managing learner discipline through various strategies aimed at ensuring adherence to school rules and regulations. These practices are expected to support effective curriculum implementation. However, in Ugunja Sub-County, concerns have been raised regarding the inadequate implementation of key components of the CBC, including instructional delivery and learner assessment. This raises questions about whether existing discipline management practices are suitable for supporting CBC implementation. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of headteachers' learner discipline management practices on CBC implementation in public primary schools in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County, Kenya.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of headteachers learner discipline management practices on the implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

Objectives addressed by this study are:

1. To identify headteachers learner discipline management practices in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya
2. To examine the influence of headteachers learner discipline management practices on the implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya

## 1.4 Research Questions

Research questions answered by the study are as follows:

1. Which are the headteachers learner discipline management practices in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya?
2. How has headteachers discipline management practices influenced the implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

By highlighting the influence of headteacher' discipline management practices on the implementation of the CBC in PPS, the study hopes to raise awareness of the actual effects the adopted discipline management practices has on CBC implementation. This is in a bid to elicit actions from education stakeholders and policy makers on the need for discipline management practices suited for CBC implementation instead of continuing with practices suited for different systems of education.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Headteachers' Learner Discipline Management Practices and CBC Implementation

One of the management practices at the head teachers' disposal is discipline management and Bennett and Kalish (2006) noted that learner punishments do not affect their academic achievements further holding that recurrent learner punishment normally result in aggression and as a result maladjustment of such learners. At the same time, maladjusted learners often become truant and accompanied by poor academic achievements. Baker and Gerler (2001) disagree with these results by showing that punishing learners has moderate effect on their academic achievement within secondary school learning institutions. Also, their results showed that fitting punishment results in learners being obedient to set regulations as well as rules and accordingly enhancing learners' academic achievements. The two studies are, however, outdated

given the period in which they were conducted. The studies also looked at learners' performance and not competency-based curriculum implementation in primary schools an area addressed in the current study.

In Chicago, New York City, Washington, D.C. and Dallas district public primary schools, a study by Fryer (2010) showed that enticements given for academic outcomes namely excellent test scores were not as effective as those given for educational contributions, for instance school attendance, proper conduct or putting on uniforms. These outcomes point to punishments not being cost effective within academic settings. The reviewed study focused on use of incentives to enhance learners' achievement and not the use of incentives to improve teachers' motivation towards competency based curriculum implementation, an issue addressed in the present study.

In Nigeria, a study by Usman, Haliru and Hassan (2020) established that punishing learners affected learner academic outcomes negatively within secondary schools, rewarding them positively influenced their academic achievements while counseling within schools also positively influenced learners' academic achievements. The study relied on both primary and secondary data whereas the current study focuses on primary data utilization only. The reviewed study also employed a different study design from that of the present study areas addressed in the present study.

In Heliwa District, Benadir Region Somalia, Mohamed (2021) showed that effectual management of discipline by school principals was inspired in controlling learners' behaviors and therefore comprise emotional impact on learner's overall achievements academically. This study was centered in private schools; the target population was secondary schools and employed a different study from that of the present study.

A study by Chebet (2018) among secondary schools in Kween District, Uganda revealed that each secondary school possessed scripted regulations and rules that they do not have an understanding of. Therefore, some of these regulations and rules need changes while others do not have consistency in their execution raising discontent among learners resulting in riots and misbehavior. The study also found poor time management within schools with no attention paid to set timetables. There was unfair administration of punishments within schools that caused anger and discontent resulting in indiscipline instances such as violence among learners, vandalizing school properties as well as riots. Similarly, this study was based in private school, did not focus on primary school level of education and neither did it look at competency based curriculum implementation unlike the present study.

A study by Karim (2014) on discipline management and learners academic achievements within private secondary learning institutes of Mbale Municipality Kenya established that punishments administration was the main academic achievement predictor among learners followed closely by issuance of rewards. Rewards issuance only affected learners' academic achievements only when issued alongside punishments. On the other hand, time kipping was found to have no effect on learners' academic achievements. The study by Karim also looked at private and non-public primary schools, focused on secondary and non-primary schools, used a different study design, relied on primary and secondary data and focused on discipline and learners' academic outcomes and not discipline management practices and competency based curriculum implementation an area the present study addressed.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Operant conditioning theory as advanced by Skinner in 1904-1990 was used to inform this study. The theory holds that repeated behaviors are those that are rewarded and those met with no rewards are never repeated (Skinner, 1904-1990). The theory holds that a person's behavior is shaped by associated consequences. Skinner's 1904-1990 theory relates to fact that behaviours can change whenever a person is subjected to a stimulus. Be it negative or positive stimulus, individuals will logically change their acts whenever subjected to either positive or negative reinforcement aftereffects. The theory holds that individuals learn that particular behaviours can result in rewards or sanctions and hence either repeat the act or adjust and adapt it (Skinner, 1904-1990).

This theory is a learning process whereby intentional behaviours are altered by association with the removal and or addition of incentive or aversive stimulant. The regularity or period of said behaviours might rise via reinforcement or reduce via extinction or punishment (Skinner, 2014; Schultz, 2015). It is held that reinforcements are environmental stimuli which heighten behaviours, while penalties are seen as stimuli that reduces behaviours. These two types of stimuli are further grouped as negative and positive that correspondingly entail environmental stimuli removal or addition (Skinner, 1938). This theory is relevant for the present study as it highlights the importance of discipline management and also highlights best discipline management practices for achieving a specific behavior or goal within an organization. The theory therefore supports the idea that discipline management do affect CBC implementation hence its adoption by the current study.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualized that the independent variable under investigation which include headteachers' learner discipline management practices have the potential of

positively or negatively influencing academic performance of public primary school pupils depending on headteachers' competencies in employing the said management practices (See figure 1)

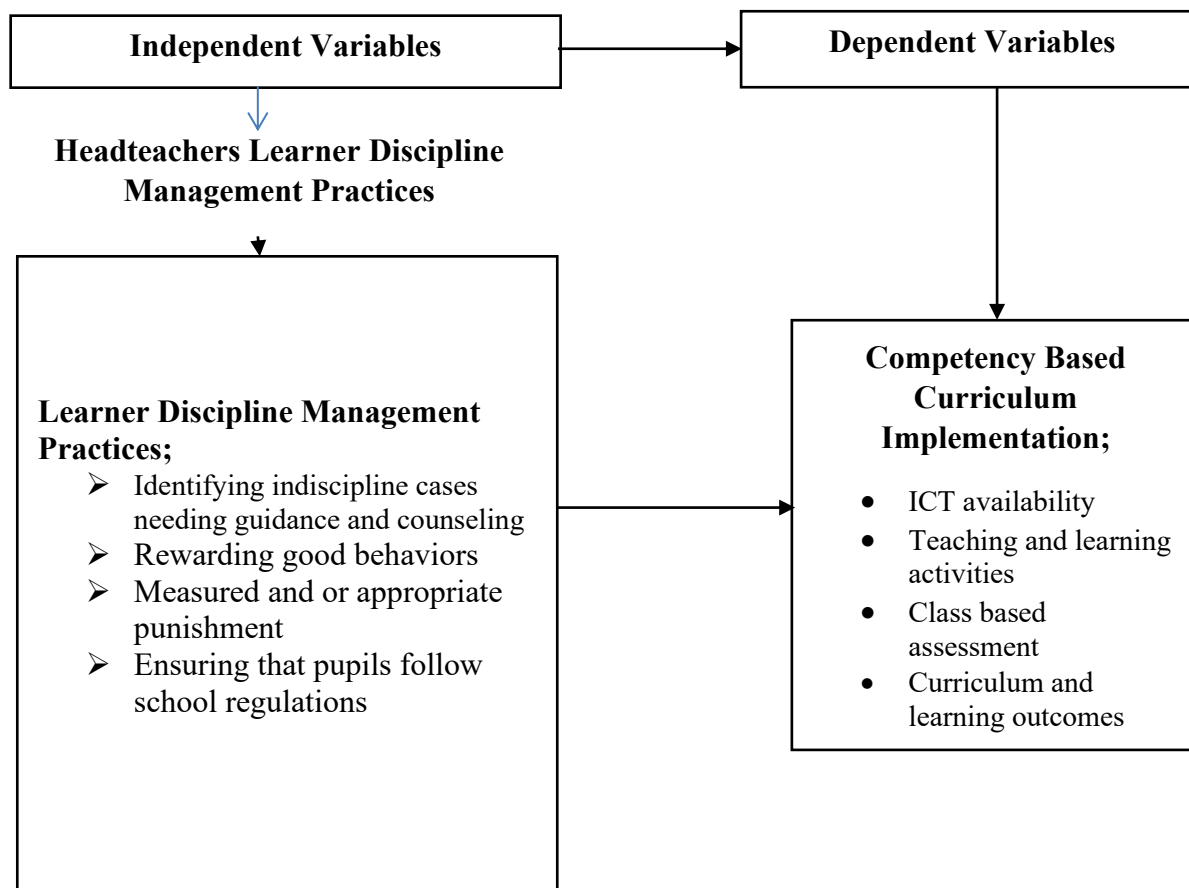


Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation of the Conceptual Framework  
Source: Researcher (2024)

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The present study made full use of a study design known as descriptive survey which is a single-phased method made use of in gathering either quantitative or open ended data in a set topical issue at the same time and with similar importance (Creswell, 2013). Justification for the adoption of this design lies in the fact that through it more than one data collection and analysis approaches were used by the researcher. It further allowed for comparison of the analyzed qualitative and quantitative statistics by the study (Creswell, 2013). Study variables under investigation were

headteachers' financial, instructional, human resource and discipline management practices that were herein referred to in this study as the independent variables while academic performance was the dependent variable.

### 3.2 Targeted Population

Ugunja sub-county has a total of 68 public primary schools and therefore the target population was 1 sub-county director of education, 1 QUASO, 68 headteachers and 604 teachers from the 68 public primary schools

### 3.3 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where, n = desired sample size at 95% confidence interval  
N = Target Population (674)

e = Confidence level of 5% (decimal equivalent is 0.05)

Thus, desired sample was:

$$N_0 = \frac{674}{1 + 674(0.05)^2}$$

$N_0 = 257$  respondents

Participants were selected via purposive and simple random sampling approaches. The researcher first used

simple random sampling to select schools included in the study by first tearing 68 pieces of blank papers, write numbers 1 to 15 in only 15 pieces leaving 53 pieces blank, folded each paper individually, placed in a basket and shook, visited all the 68 schools and requested school headteachers to pick a piece of paper from the basket and only 15 schools whose headteachers picked papers with numbers 1-15 written on them selected for field work. After this process, purposive sampling was used to select headteachers from the 15 sampled schools to participate in the study and 1 QUASO. Lastly, simple random sampling was employed to select the needed 240 teachers from the selected 15 schools whereby 16 teachers were selected from each of the 15 schools until the required sample of 240 teachers were reached. Following the sampling, all sampled respondents were given research tools. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample size of 15 principals and 240 teachers as shown below.

**Table 1: Sampling Grid**

Respondents Categories	Population	Sample Size	Percentage	Sampling Techniques
Teachers	604	240	40.0	Simple random sampling
Headteachers	68	15	22.0	Purposive sampling
Sub-county director of education	1	1	100.0	Purposive sampling
QUASO	1	1	100.0	Purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>38.0</b>	

### 3.4 Research Instruments

The study made use of structured questionnaires for teachers to gather quantitative data while qualitative data was collected using interview schedule for headteachers, QUASO and sub-county director of education.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Participants were selected using both simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling was used to select 15 schools from the 68 public primary schools. This was done through a lottery method where numbered papers were drawn. Headteachers from the selected schools were purposively included in the study. Additionally, 240 teachers were selected using simple random sampling, with approximately 16 teachers drawn from each selected school. The Sub-County Director of Education and QUASO were purposively selected due to their administrative roles in education.

### 3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies and percentages, while inferential statistics involved linear regression analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The regression model used was:  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ , where: Y = CBC implementation,  $X_1$  = Headteachers' discipline management practices,  $\beta_0$  = constant,  $\beta_1$  = regression coefficient and  $\epsilon$  = error term.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Influence of Headteachers Learner Discipline Management Practices on the Implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya

This sub-topic was addressed by gathering various data from participants and findings presented in the following tables.

**Table 2: Main Discipline Management Practice by the School Head Teacher**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Identifying indiscipline cases needing guidance and counseling	47	19.6
	Rewarding good behaviours	53	22.1
	Measured and or appropriate punishment	26	10.8
	Ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations	64	26.7
	Creating routine to be followed in school	50	20.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings indicate that a majority of teachers (26.7%) identified enforcement of school regulations as the most commonly used discipline management practice by headteachers. Other practices included rewarding good behavior, creating routines, providing guidance and counseling, and administering appropriate punishment. These findings suggest that headteachers rely heavily on regulatory approaches, although a combination of strategies is evident. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize both preventive and corrective approaches to discipline management. In a rejoinder, a study by Mwangi (2015) in Nyeri County revealed that TVET institutions used both preventive and corrective strategies in dealing with student's indiscipline although corrective strategies were more commonly applied. In Voi sub-county, Boniface (2016) revealed that the deputy principal managed student discipline through both preventive and corrective measures.

Both qualitative and quantitative data gathered and presented show that numerous discipline management

strategies were being employed by public primary school headteachers while implementing CBC. These included identifying indiscipline cases needing guidance and counseling, rewarding good behaviour, measured and or appropriate punishment, ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations and creating routine to be followed in school. However, the main discipline management practice employed by headteachers according to teachers was ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations a view similarly held by the interviewees. Hence ensuring adherence to school regulations by all appears to be the main discipline management practice used by most headteachers of public primary schools to ensure that CBC is implemented effectively.

#### **4.2 Influence of Headteachers Learner Discipline Management Practices on the Implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya**

**Table 3: Influence of Headteachers Learner Discipline Management**

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Creating routine to be followed in school has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation	116	48.3	70	29.2	11	4.6	20	8.3	23	9.6
Ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation	98	40.8	66	27.5	26	10.8	24	10.0	26	10.8
Measured and or appropriate punishment for offenses has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation	128	53.3	54	22.5	6	2.5	36	15.0	16	6.7
Rewarding good behaviours has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation	166	69.2	48	20.0	0	0.0	10	4.2	16	6.7

Identifying indiscipline cases needing guidance and counseling has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation	165	68.8	29	12.1	10	4.2	22	9.2	14	5.8
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Findings reveal that 48.3% of the participants strongly agreed that creating routine to be followed in school has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation, 40.8% strongly agreed that ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation, 53.3% strongly agreed that measured and or appropriate punishment for offenses has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation, 69.2% strongly agreed that rewarding good behaviours has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation while 68.8% strongly agreed that identifying indiscipline cases needing guidance and counseling has enhanced competency based curriculum implementation. These findings imply that in the study area, discipline management practices adopted by headteachers greatly influenced CBC implementation. Other studies have also yielded similar results though in different contexts, for instance, a study by Bettinger (2010) showed that gifts issued to learners with good grades only amplified test scores in mathematics among learners. A study by Usman, et al. (2020) also established that discipline management also affected learners' performance as punishing learners affected learner academic outcomes negatively within secondary schools, rewarding them positively influenced their academic achievements while counseling within schools also positively influenced learners' academic achievements. These studies, however, focused on learner performance while the present study focused on curriculum implementation. Therefore,

headteacher discipline management practices are crucial for curriculum implementation in public primary schools.

Both quantitative and qualitative data attest to the fact that headteacher discipline management practices influence CBC implementation in schools. Hence, appropriate discipline management practices must be adopted by public primary school headteachers in Ugunja sub-county in order to boost CBC implementation. A related study supports the importance of discipline management to academic performance; a study by Karim (2014) on discipline management and learners' academic achievements within private secondary learning institutes of Mbale Municipality Kenya established that punishments administration was the main academic achievement predictor among learners followed closely by issuance of rewards. Rewards issuance only affected learners' academic achievements only when issued alongside punishments. On the other hand, time kipping was found to have no effect on learners' academic achievements.

### 4.3 Relationship between Headteachers Learner Discipline Management Practices on the Implementation of the CBC in PPS in Ugunja Sub-County, Siaya County Kenya

**Table 4: Relationship between Headteachers Learner Discipline Management Practices on Implementation of the CBC**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	3.470	.179			19.379	.000
Discipline management practices	.266	.053	.311		5.048	.000

a. Dependent Variable: competency based curriculum implementation

The regression results indicate a statistically significant relationship between discipline management practices and CBC implementation ( $p < 0.05$ ). The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.311$ ) implies that a unit increase in discipline management practices leads to a 0.311 increase in CBC implementation. This confirms that discipline management practices are a significant predictor of CBC implementation in public primary schools. Wakaraka and Mugwe (2023) revealed that school supervision practices had the greatest influence on the students' academic achievement in public secondary school in Kiambu County followed by target setting. Theories that guided the present

study are strengthened by these results which hold that there is a significant relationship between headteacher discipline management practices and CBC implementation as the results prove this.

#### Summary of Findings

Findings of the study show that the main discipline management practice by headteachers was ensuring that both staff and pupils follow school regulations while others were identifying indiscipline cases needing guidance and counseling, rewarding good behaviour, measured and or appropriate punishment and creating routine to be followed

in school. Findings further showed that there was great influence of discipline management practices adopted by headteachers on CBC implementation in the study area.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that headteachers' discipline management practices significantly influence the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum. However, some of the existing practices may not fully align with the learner-centered approaches required under CBC, thereby limiting effective implementation.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that headteachers adopt learner-centered discipline management practices that align with the principles of CBC. Additionally, there is a need for continuous professional development and training for headteachers on modern discipline management strategies that support competency-based learning.

#### Acknowledgement

Efforts of other researchers has been acknowledged via the provision of in text citations and a reference list in this research.

#### Conflict of Interest

Claimants to this article are us its authors and there is no any other party or group that can lay claim to it. It is a extracted from a thesis submitted to Mount Kenya University.

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