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Original Research Article

Students' discipline and academic performance indices in Uganda certificate of education examinations

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The objectives were: to ascertain the variation in discipline levels amongst the students from Central and Northern Uganda; the extent to which student disciplines influence students' performances in UCE examinations in schools in Uganda and the strength of influence of the students' disciplines on students' performances in UCE examinations. Data was collected from school leaders, teachers, students and Key informants using interviews, questionnaires and Informal Conversations and analysed using, frequency counts, percentages and t-test. The results showed that students studying in schools in Central Uganda are better disciplined, than the students in Northern Uganda. The students' discipline has the strongest influence on their academic performances.

Key words: School performance index, school , performance Average, (Aggregates), discipline.

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth paper in the series prepared from my thesis for PhD, titled A Comparative Analysis of Factors influencing School Performance Indices (SPI) in Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) Examinations (Odama, 2017).

Uganda realised that high quality, relevant secondary education was vital for the youth to obtain the skills, knowledge and competencies for employment. In turn, this would increase income generation and economic development (Government White Paper, 1992; Funds for NGOs, 2012); Vision 2040, 2010).

Parents, teachers and children themselves would love to see that the children who are in school pass and continue to the next level and in a linear progression, proceed to University and get a job. But this dream does not come true for majority of the children studying in schools in Northern Uganda. The candidates from Central region of Uganda have been performing better than their counterparts from Northern region in Public Examinations including Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations.

Poor performances by students in Public Examinations such as the UCE as reflected in poor SPI undermine the students' chances of joining institutions of higher learning, opportunities for job placement, and active participation in national development. It undermines the Government obligation of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Education For All (EFA) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals, especially, SD Goal 4: "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and Goal 8: "to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". Similarly, Uganda Vision 2040 that provides development paths and strategies to operationalize Uganda's Vision statement which is "A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years" as approved by Cabinet in 2007 will also not be achieved.

In the past up to the mid-1980s, good performances in the Public Examinations including UCE examination were

spread all over the Country's regions. For example, Mugaga (2010) stated that the years 1984 and 1985 belonged to once mighty Secondary school in Arua District (Northern Region) whose two students stunned the country for two consecutive years to be the best in the Country. Olaka, (2008) commented about Sir Samuel Baker School in Northern Uganda "as one of the best in the country during the first twenty years of its existence," Waroom, (2018) likewise commented about "St Aloysius College Nyapea, once being an academic giant in northern Uganda," Tumushabe, (2017) pointed out that "in northern Uganda, the academic rivalries were often between St. Joseph's College, Layibi and Lango College. Another researcher sighted schools like St. Joseph's College, Ombaci in West Nile, in the north. While in Central Uganda, according to Tumushabe, (2017) in academics, there were the famous rivalries between King's College, Budo and St. Mary's College, Kisubi among the boys' schools in the central region, as well as the three-way battle between Mt. St. Mary's Namagunga, Nabisunsa Girls School and Gayaza High School for the girls' schools in central. Therefore Schools in the Northern region were performing just like the schools in Central Uganda in Public Examinations like the UCE. Students from Central region would come to study in schools in Northern Uganda and students from Northern Uganda would go to study in schools from Central Uganda.

But ten years later, Mugaga (2010) noted that some schools that were once top performing schools in UCE examinations from the Northern region of Uganda had declining performances, while some schools in the Central Region had improved performances.

Some concerned members of the community from Gulu in Northern Uganda (Kalokwera, 2019) observed a decline in performances of these traditional academic giants in Gulu. They identified a number of causes why the performances in these schools had declined. Some of these causes included:

1. "Teachers still being stuck in traditional ways of teaching; having more desire for money than for building holistic citizens for community transformation; and teaching pupils to pass examinations rather than to understand fundamentals…".
2. Incompetence exhibited by some Board of Governors who do not do thorough check and balances;
3. Laxity by some parents who are visitors in schools rather than being academic excellence stakeholders to provide checks and balances in learning progress. They are only willing to pay fees, leave the rest of the work as far as education is concerned to teachers;
4. Some Head teachers being incapable.
5. Laxity from other players including the District Education Officers and Inspectors of Schools, Parents Teachers Association (PTA) Executives, Local Councils and Sub-County Chiefs with Uganda's Decentralisation Programme, who equally are expected to supervise the schools and mobilise parents to contribute to education process of their children.

But in a traditional educational model, roles and responsibilities are clear and well-defined. When the concerned members of the community from Gulu in Northern Uganda were identifying the causes for performances declining, they left out another important stakeholder in the teaching learning process – the Learner. All the five blames did not touch the learners themselves leaving a gap for investigation on the learners. Thus, this research focused on the disciplines of the learners. Teachers are responsible for effective delivery of content as well as assessing learning achievement. They are the knowledge experts and their primary role is to impart that knowledge to their learners in effective ways. But, Learners are responsible for attending class and completing reading and other assignments as proscribed by the teacher. Although their first role in the process is as passive listener, listening requires paying attention during class. Outside the class, their role becomes more active, requiring reading and completion of assignments selected by the teacher.

Researchers have observed that students' discipline were an important component in academic performances. Griffin, (1994) observed that discipline is essential particularly during the early years in both primary and secondary schools. It is not only the key to good academic performance, but also a preparation for success throughout life. In fact, it has been observed that good academic qualifications without good foundation of self-discipline, the individual is useless to him/herself, family and the society. Most people equate falling academic standards in schools to low standards of students' discipline. According to Ovell (2001), discipline in schools was essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment. Gitome et al. (2013) found out that where there was good discipline there was improved academic performance. Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014) likewise concluded that discipline was vital for students' academic performance. Nyeko and Odama (2021) have revealed that "the schools were run on strict rules and regulations as a result, the level of discipline on the part of students and teachers was very high, leading to very high academic standards. Many of the students were able to attain higher trainings and University education, and were able to hold various responsibilities in various government institutions". But the same retired Headteacher revealed that "there has been a gradual breakdown in the education system leading to a breakdown in the moral fabric of the schools. Consequently, academic results have greatly deteriorated in most schools, especially, in the Northern Uganda". The deterioration of discipline and morals in Northern Uganda was earlier stated by Ofoyuru. and To-okema. (2011) quoting Byaruhanga, 2004), when they revealed that from 2001-2006, a wave of student strikes rocked the whole country. Schools which experienced serious student discipline problems in the recent past included Namilyango College, Kidetok Girls SS, Kibuli SS, Comboni College-Lira, St. Catherine Girls School, Sir Samuel Baker, Gulu High School, and Kabalega SS. Gulu District in particular suffered alarming deterioration in secondary student discipline in the recent past. Further, they quoted

Touch (2008) that reported that Gulu District Security Committee came up with a list of schools with severe discipline problems including: Gulu Central High school, Layibi College, Gulu College, and Sacred Heart S S. Others were Alliance High School, Gulu SS, and Gulu Parents Comprehensive School. Over 50 head teachers confirmed existence of gangs in secondary schools in Gulu (Ojwee, 2008) which included the most notorius and infamous Kiboko squad. It is observed that most of the schools listed in indiscipline cases are mainly in Northern Uganda.

These indiscipline actions in Ugandan school settings have included: students going on strike where they burn offices; throw stones and destroy window glasses; boycott mock examinations. Other indiscipline cases registered included: drug abuse by students where they drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes. Some students jump over the fence; stay out of class (calculated idleness, work avoidance); dress poorly; sneak out of school without permission; make noise during class, prep; are arrogant to teachers and carry out bullying.

There are two types of discipline, namely, self discipline and general discipline. "Self-discipline appears in various forms, such as perseverance, restraint, endurance, thinking before acting, finishing what you start doing, and as the ability to carry out one's decisions and plans, in spite of inconvenience, hardships or obstacles. Self-discipline also means self-control, the ability to avoid unhealthy excess of anything that could lead to negative consequences" (Sasson, 2016). Low level of individual self-discipline (or self-control as the form of self-discipline) leads to different problems in social and personal life (Duckworth and Seligman, 2006). And vice versa, strong confidence and high level of self-discipline facilitates success, better achievements and reaching the goals (de Ridder et al., 2012) which, in their turn, improve the mood and makes people happier and gladder (Hofmann et al., 2013). General discipline on the other hand would be a personal attribute characterized by obedience, politeness, orderliness and social competence (i.e., ability to get along with other people). It would also include academic efficiency (i.e., competence in undertaking academic tasks and obligations). This is similar to findings in Pasternak's (2013) study that suggested that discipline could be measured by social skills (e.g., obedience, politeness and social competence). Another study by Pasternak (2013) confined the measure of discipline to learning oriented skills (i.e., perseverance, meeting schedules, goal setting and planning for goal achievement, and completion of unpleasant tasks).

In this research, performances in UCE examination was transformed into School Performance Indices (SPI) that are "annual measure" of test score performances of schools expressed as percentages, Mwai and Hassan (2009); (API, 2010). The performances of the candidates in UCE during a period of 10 years were used to calculate SPI using the formular:

$$\text{"SPI} = \frac{\text{SPA for current Year}}{\text{SPA of Base Year}} \times 100$$

SPA = [(number of candidates in Division 1x1) + (number of candidates in Division 2x2) + (number of candidates in Division 3x3) + (number of candidates in Division 4x4) + (number of candidates in Division 5x5)] divided by Total Number of Candidates". Mugimu (2004).

For a decade (2001 to 2011) based on the UCE examination results, schools from Central Uganda still obtained better SPI than the schools from Northern Uganda. For instance, the SPI of the best performing school in UCE examinations in Central Uganda during the ten years (2001 – 2011) was 81.2 and the worst performing school had SPI of 107.0. But the SPI of the best performing school in Northern Uganda was 85.2 while the SPI of the worst performing school was 163.1 (Appendix 1, Odama, 2017). This means that the students from Central Uganda portrayed better academic performance in the UCE examinations than students from Northern Uganda.

Problem Statement

In the past, good performances in UCE examination were spread all over the Country's regions. Schools in the Northern region were performing just like the schools in Central Uganda in Public Examinations like the UCE. Students from Central region would come to study in schools in Northern Uganda and students from Northern Uganda would go to study in schools from Central Uganda, (Olaka., 2008; Waroom, 2018, Tumushabe. 2017).

The schools in the Northern Uganda were sighted in violent strikes-sign of indiscipline, (Byaruhanga, 2004; Touch FM, 2008; Ojwee, 2008; Ofoyuru et al. 2011, Olaka, 2008, Batre., 2012, while the schools in the Central Uganda have not featured in the list of schools as having had violent strikes where libraries and other properties were destroyed. Another revelation was made by one of the 'Old Students' about one school in Northern Uganda (Odama. (2017) that *"from the year 2003 when the students frog jumped their former Headmaster to Education Office, the school's glory as an academic giant with excellent performances in O'level examinations has never been recovered and the academic giant is dying"*.

The students' involvement in violent strikes in Northern Uganda can be compared to other regions in Africa where the researchers all found out that students' indiscipline had negative impact on students' academic performances (Dunham,1984:66; Gregory, 2010; Gitome et al, 2013; Alabi, 2015; and Ruzindana, 2017).

Is what happened in other parts of Africa where students' indiscipline had negative impact on the students' academic achievements the same for Uganda? Have the students' disciplines played a role in causing this disparity in performances in UCE examinations amongst the students in schools from Central and Northern Uganda leading to variations in SPI in UCE examinations?

Theoretical Underpinning

The Resource Based View cited by Mugimu (2004) as held

by Penrose (1959) as observed by Odama (2017) is relevant to this research. The researcher assumed that the selected schools from Central and Northern Uganda had the same amount of resources. It was further assumed that the school leaders from Central and Northern Uganda applied the same management styles in the management of the financial, material and human resources – money, teaching learning materials, infrastructure, teachers and students' leaders as well as students' in disciplines.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to comparatively analyse the influence of students' disciplines on performances in UCE examinations in schools in Central and Northern Uganda as reflected by the School Performance Indices (SPI) in these UCE examinations.

The objectives were: - To ascertain the variation in discipline levels amongst the students from Central and Northern Uganda; to examine the extent to which student disciplines influence students' performances and SPI in UCE in schools in Central and Northern Uganda and to compare the strength of influence of the students' disciplines on students' performances and SPI in UCE examinations in schools in Central and Northern Uganda.

This study was guided by the following hypotheses as shown below:

1. "The discipline of students studying in schools from Central Uganda is not better than of those students studying in schools from Northern Uganda.
2. "There is no difference in the strength of students' factors influencing the SPI in UCE examinations in Central and Northern Uganda".

Review of related literature

Students' Discipline and performance

The researches have revealed that an increase in discipline has a corresponding increase in academic performances. For instance in schools in Muhoroni Sub-County, Kenya, Simba et al., (2016) using descriptive survey and correlational research designs found out that good discipline increase academic performance by 48% ($R=.480$; $p < .05$) and accounted for 23% of variance in the performance ($R^2 = .230$, $p < .05$ among class eight pupils. Secondly, studies by Duckworth and Seligman (2006) in USA and Zhao and Kuo (2015) in China involving Grade 8 and 10 students respectively which focused on self discipline indicated that students' self-discipline related positively and predicted students' academic achievement. The study by Bodovski et al. (2013 among elementary school pupils in USA that focused on the performances in Mathematics likewise revealed that pupils' higher improvement in mathematics achievement was associated with strong school disciplinary climate. Similarly, Ning et al. (2013) in their study observed that better classroom disciplinary climate was found to indicate better school reading performance in 53 of the 65 countries which participated in the 2009 Programme for International Student Association (PISA). According to Karanja and Bowen (2012: p. 15) in Kenya, the major impact of schools strikes on performance was reduction in the academic performance of students as was revealed by 82.6% of the respondents. There was a negative correlation between the students' unrest and academic performance. Schools where students went on strike showed higher variations in the mean grades. Therefore, it was clear that strikes lead to poor academic performance, especially, by the strike ring leaders. This is especially true because they found out that academic performances increased amongst the pupils with increase in the level of discipline. This further confirmed revelation by Whisman and Hammer (2014: p. 11) that consistent with previous research by Falebo et al. (2011), disciplinary involvement among students in West Virginia was strongly associated with poor academic performance. The greater the disciplinary involvement the greater the negative impact on academic students' ability to achieve, especially, when the behaviours resulted in removal from instructional environment by means of in-school or out of-school suspensions. Wakesa and Simatwa (2016: p. 84) concurred with Mobegi (2007) who found out that indiscipline cases contributed to low performance as reported by the headteachers. The headteachers' report was confirmed by the report from the County Quality Assurance Officer who stated that schools that had cases of school unrest and other discipline related issues often performed poorly in academics as reflected in their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results. Similarly, the deputy principals interviewed revealed that an indisciplined student often affected negatively their own as well as others' academic performance. In the focus group discussion with students, they were able to reveal that some of their peers who were bright had their grades dropped drastically due to involvement in indiscipline that often caused them to miss school and/ or class. Such students were described by the peers as being disruptive, not keen on group activity and found little time to concentrate on their studies.

According to Rwamba (2004) and upheld by Karanja and Bowen (2012), in the absence of discipline, the learning and teaching process are hindered. Time is wasted and energy is misdirected to deal with issues emanating from unrest. Karanja and Bowen (2012) observed that students and teachers affected by unrest find it difficult to restore working relations after the unrest because of the emotional and psychological trauma that characterizes the aftermath of the students' unrest that strains further interaction amongst the students and teachers.

According to Otti, (2009); the Director of Providence Heights Secondary School, Iju, Lagos State, Nigeria in an interview with Daily Sun during the 12th valedictory service and graduation ceremony revealed that the school had performed well because discipline ruled the school in all its activities. The school believed that discipline was the bedrock of academic excellence. According to the Director

of the school, discipline enhances smooth and efficient management… and this high level of discipline had helped the school to produce a breed of well-behaved students with outstanding academic performances.

The regions where the previous researches were carried out left out some gaps. For instance, the researches quoted here were carried out in Kenya, USA, China, and Nigeria. On the other hand, the level of education considered was more in Primary and Elementary Schools except a few in Secondary Schools. Further still the researches were pegged to specific subjects like Reading, and Mathematics, except a few considered performances in a Public Examination like UCE. Therefore there is need to investigate further in Ugandan Environment and in Secondary School environment.

There are contrary views among the researchers. For instance, Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2014) among selected high school students in the USA indicated that self-discipline does not predict students' academic achievement. While a few other studies suggest that discipline has minimal, uncertain or non significant influence on students' academic performance or achievement (Gakure et al., 2013; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2014). Similarly, Simba et al. (2016) described the relationship between discipline as moderate (± .30 - .69) and accounted for variance in academic performance of class eight pupils in public primary schools in Muhoroni Sub-County, Kenya, demonstrating that pupils' academic performances depended to some extent on their level of discipline. Therefore, there is need to investigate further in Ugandan Environment and in Secondary school environment. Therefore, findings on impact of discipline on students' academic performance are inconsistent and somehow inconclusive. Furthermore, only a few of the stated previous studies (i.e., Duckworth and Seligman, 2006; Pasternak, 2013; Zhao and Kuo, 2015) were correlational in design.

The focus of the previous researchers left a gap. For instance, Duckworth and Seligman, 2005), (de Ridder et al., 2012); Gakure et al., 2013; Hofmann et al., 2013; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2014); Zhao and Kuo (2015) focused on Self-discipline only which included: perseverance, restraint, endurance, thinking before acting, finishing what one started doing, and as the ability to carry out one's decisions and plans, in spite of inconvenience, hardships or obstacles. Pasternak's (2013) study looked at discipline as social skills (e.g., obedience, politeness and social competence) but this research focused on general student discipline including: ability to get along with other people, academic efficiency (i.e., competence in undertaking academic tasks and obligations

Methods of analysis used in these previous researches were different from the one used in the current research. For instance, Whisman and Hammer (2014) employed cross tabulations and binary logistic regression procedures, Ning et al. (2013) applied Hierarchical linear analyses. But in this research, Odama (2017) applied statistical analyses to establish the relationship between the variables. This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a variety of information on the same issue to help to address the strength of each method to overcome deficiencies in each other.

METHODOLOGY

The study used Concurrent mixed method design. This method design was intended to collect both qualitative and quantitative data in one phase. A cross-sectional parallel survey design, following causal-comparative and a correlational-regression approach was used. The data was analysed separately and then compared and or combined (Pardede, 2018). In this study quantitative data was collected from Students, and Teachers, while qualitative data was collected from Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Career Guidance Teachers, Directors of Studies, Parents and Key Informants.

The analytical survey that applied statistical analyses were used to establish the relationships between the variables Students related factors (students' efforts, students' discipline and students' parents' contributions) and SPI in UCE examinations.

The study population included stakeholders of 18 "traditional" secondary schools established by the Missionaries before Independence and 15 similar secondary schools established by Government after Independence in Central Region and Northern Regions of Uganda. The schools selected were those having both "O" and "A" levels. The Sample included: - 363 students; 198 teachers; 10 head teachers (HT); 10 Deputy Headteachers (DHT), 10 Directors of Studies (DOS), 10 Career Guidance Teachers (CGT), 5 parents and 10 Key Informants (KI). These comprised of Teachers who did not participate in interview guide or questionnaire. Teachers who taught in schools in Central Uganda where the candidates' performances in UCE examinations are good. Headteachers and other Administrators in Education sector who were serving in Northern Uganda but had experience of serving in Central Uganda as either DHTs, DOS, CGTs or Head of Subjects. Parents who decided to transfer their children from schools in Northern Uganda to schools in Central Uganda and Students from Northern Uganda who were studying in schools in Central Uganda

Two-Stage Random Sampling Method was used to sample the schools. The first stratification was based on two (2) administrative regions of Uganda: Central and Northern Uganda. In each region, the Districts where the "traditional" secondary schools existed were purposefully selected; the Central region of Uganda was represented by Kampala, Mukono and Wakiso Districts, while the Northern Region was represented by Arua, Gulu, Kitgum and Zombo districts. The second stratification was based on location of the schools, so both urban and rural schools were included. The students of senior three and five and their parents were randomly selected from each category of schools to participate in the research. Teachers who were teaching

senior three and five classes were purposefully selected. The school leaders, namely, Headteachers (HTs), Deputy Headteachers (DHTs), Directors of Studies (DOS) and Career Guidance Teachers (CGTs) of the selected schools were purposefully selected.

Self-reporting techniques to collect data from the respondents using interview guide were used to collect data from the school leaders and Parents. They were expected to report their views, opinions, perceptions and attitudes on the discipline of the students. Self-constructed close-ended questionnaire (Odama, 2017, Appendix 2, p. 264-275) was designed by the researcher or research assistants to sought information from the senior three and five students; teachers of senior three and five classes in a non-test situation using a 5-likert questionnaires prepared by the researcher. The students and teachers were to "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), be "Neutral" (N), "Disagree" (DA) or "Strongly Disagree" (SDA), or "Very Often" (VO), "Often" (O), "Seldom" (S), "Not At All" (NAT), "Not Sure" (NS) etc. The questionnaires (Odama 2017, Appendix 2, page 270-275) for students in part two, while for teachers (Odama, 2017, Appendix 2, pages 264-270), in part three, among other things sought information on the discipline of the children.

A self-constructed structured open-ended interview guide (Odama, 2017, Appendix 3, see pages 276 - 284) was designed to collect data from the school leaders (Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers (academic), Directors of studies and Career Guidance teachers) and parents. They were visited in their schools and interviewed, while the selected parents were visited by either the researcher or researcher assistants at their different locations and interviewed. All responses were recorded. These respondents were asked to report their views, opinions, perceptions and attitudes on the discipline of the students. This was the type of interview was where the interviewer used the exact same questions on specific topics for each interview, and those questions were carefully worded to avoid ambiguity or specific undesired connotations. The Interview helped to obtain certain qualitative data which could not be brought out using questionnaires. Secondly, complete explanations provided by the Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers (academic), Directors of studies, Career Guidance teachers and parents through the conversations helped, to see perspectives of the school leaders concerning the discipline of the students. Participants also clarified what they meant, with motivations often revealed.

Informal Conversational Interview was used as well because Open-ended Interview guide alone limited flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and secondly, limited naturalness and relevance of questions and answers. During the Informal Conversational Interview questions emerged from the immediate context and relevance of questions, and were asked in natural course of things with no predetermination of questions, topics or wording so as to increase salience and relevance of questions and to match the interview to individuals and circumstances. Lastly, it helped to build interview and more so questions that were asked from observations. However, to avoid the information collected to be less systematic and less comprehensive, the questions were made to arise naturally. The Informal Conversational Interview was administered to Key Informers (KI) that included Odama 2017, Table 3, Page 67: i) Teachers who did not participate in the structured open-ended interview or questionnaire, and especially those who had the experience of teaching in schools in Central Uganda where the candidates' performances in UCE examinations have been observed to be good. ii) Headteachers and other Administrators in the education sector who were serving in Northern Uganda but had experience of serving in Central Uganda as either Deputy Headteachers, Directors of studies, Career Guidance teachers or head of subjects. iii) Parents who decided to transfer their children from schools in Northern Uganda to schools in Central Uganda. iv) Students from Northern Uganda who were studying in schools in Central Uganda. The researcher visited the identified KIs and had one – on - one informal conversation with them. This helped to bring out issues on students' discipline that did not come out through either questionnaires, or interview.

The school Records-Teachers Personal Files, UNEB results, Assessment Records, Minutes of Boards of Governors (BOG) and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, School Timetables (both Official and Extra), Minutes of House, Class, Academic Meetings, were utilized. This helped to find additional information discipline records of students and UCE results from 2001 to 2011.

The Data was analysed in three (3) phases. At the initial stages the results of the UCE examinations (2001 – 2011) from schools in Central Uganda and schools in Northern Uganda were analysed to obtain SPA, SPI and SPC (Odama, 2017). In the second phase, the descriptive responses from the HTs, DHTs, A, DOS, CGTs and parents were grouped to find out which response was most popular or least popular among each category of leaders. Responses from teachers and students were coded from which the school Means $\overline{(X)}$ were calculated. The School Means $\overline{(X)}$ were aggregated into Regional Means $\overline{(X)}$ and used to test the null hypotheses using t-test, α = one tailed = 0.05, df = n-2 where n = number of schools because for the purpose to see whether the differences between the Means of the two groups (Schools in Northern Uganda and Schools in Central Uganda) were statistically significant.

The formular used was:

$$t = \frac{\overline{x_1} - \overline{x_2}}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2 + S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2}}}$$

In the third phase, in order to determine which students' related factors (students' efforts, students' discipline and students' parents' contributions) had the most impact on the students' performances in UCE examinations and

thereafter on the SPI, Partial regression coefficient test was used. Each Partial coefficient of correlation measured the effect of each Independent Variable on the dependent Variable SPI. The formular used was:

1) Y = Bo+Bii (Student Factors) +Error
2) Y = Bo+Bii (School Factors) +Error
3) Y = Bo +Biii (Teachers Factors) +Error

Where Y =SPI the Dependent Variable (DV);
Bo = Constant Factor; and
Bi, Biii, and Biii = Coefficients.

Student Factors (students' efforts, students' discipline) are Independent Variables (IV).

Correlational analysis between Teachers' Qualifications, Teaching Styles, Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline, Effort and School Performance Indices was also done.

FINDINGS

Ascertaining variation in discipline levels amongst the students from Central and Northern Uganda; examining the extent to which student disciplines influenced students' performances and SPI in UCE examination in schools in Central and Northern Uganda was the focus of this paper. Secondly, the strength of influence of the students' disciplines with students' effort, and students' parent's contributions on academic performances and SPI in UCE examinations Therefore, two null hypotheses was tested to answer the assumptions.

Null hypothesis 1, "The discipline of students studying in schools from Central Uganda is not better than discipline of the students studying in schools from Northern Uganda" was tested using t-test.

The teachers' assessment of the discipline of their students (Part E of teachers' questionnaire, Odama, 2017), showed that students from Central Uganda are better disciplined than the students from Northern Uganda. This is supported by the higher percentages of teachers from Central Uganda than the percentages of teachers from Northern Uganda **"**strongly agreeing**"** to statements1 – 8 and lower percentages of teachers from Central Uganda than the percentages of teachers from Northern Uganda **"**disagreeing**"** to statements1, 2, 3,5,6,8, and 10, (Table 1).

The responses by students' on assessment of their own disciplines as reflected by some actions they carry while in school (Item G) on Students' questionnaire (Odama, 2017), contradicted the view held by teachers on their disciplines. Percentages of students who responded did not reflect any significant differences in the discipline of students in schools from Central and Northern Uganda, (Table 2).

The students' responses (Table 3) was confirmed statistically where t calculated (-0.655) based is less than t theoretical (1.746); α one tailed=0.05, df=16, therefore accepting null hypothesis 2, (Table 4) confirming that the disciplines of students studying from schools in Central Uganda are not better than the disciplines of the students of schools from Northern Uganda.

The teachers' responses on their students' disciplines in Table 1 above were coded and means were generated as shown in Table 3 below. The means were used to test statistically the teachers' view. The result shows that t calculated (3.0196) is greater than t-theoretical (2.12), α one tailed =0.05, df = 16 rejecting the null hypothesis, (Table 4) confirming that the discipline of students studying from schools in Central Uganda was better than the discipline of the students studying from Northern Uganda.

Therefore, according to teachers who guide the students there is a difference. The children studying in schools in Central Uganda are more disciplined than those studying in schools in Northern Uganda.

School leaders- headteachers (HT), deputy headteachers (DHT), directors of studies (DOS) and career guidance teachers (CGT) from Central and Northern Uganda agreed with the teachers. Majority of the leaders of schools in Central region assessed their students' disciplines as students had never gone on strike where the disciplines of their children were *"very good"*,*" exemplary" and "commendable". "The students adhere to rules and regulations and are free to communicate their issues to administration through their Prefectoral and school council." (*Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (Table 5). For instance, 85.7% of headteachers from Central Uganda Schools revealed that their schools had never gone on strike. 100% of headteachers from Central Uganda schools revealed that the discipline of their children was *"very good"* and *"exemplary".*100% of the Deputy headteachers from the schools from Central Region of Uganda revealed that the discipline of their students was *"generally good"* because their students had never gone on strike; they adhere to rules and regulations and freely communicate to administration what may be wrong through their leaders. 37.5% of the Deputies used the terms *"commendable"* and *"very good"* respectively to describe the discipline of their students, while 62.5% of the Deputies assessed the discipline of their students as being *"good".* 88.9% of Directors of Studies assessed the discipline of their students as being *"good*"; they stated that "*they follow school routines and obey school rules. Through their Prefectoral and school council, they maintain discipline and keep administration informed of whatever is going on".*100% Career Guidance teachers assessed the discipline of their students as indicated that "*students are disciplined and respect authority;* m*ajority are highly disciplined; Students' discipline is highly commendable and exemplary.* While the headteacher in a school in Northern Uganda who had an experience of teaching in a school in Central Uganda. During an informal interview she revealed that: *"students studying in schools in Central Uganda look at teachers as helpers and mentors and respect teachers while the students from Northern Uganda look down upon teachers and are arrogant".* While from the Northern Uganda, one Head teacher in a school with an experience of teaching in a school in Central Uganda during an informal interview

Table 1. Teachers' Assessment of Students' Discipline Central and Northern Uganda

	Central Uganda						Northern Uganda					
Indicators for **Students' Discipline**	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	**TOT**	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	**TOT**
1. Children keep time in all the activities of the school including classroom lessons.	6 (15%)	7 (40%)	11 (26%)	8 (19%)	0 (0%)	**42 (100%)**	2 (5%)	13 (33%)	5 (14%)	16(43%)	2 (5%)	**38 (100%)**
2. Children cooperate with their teachers and fellow children leadership.	8 (19%)	17 (64%)	7 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**42 (100%)**	5 (13%)	23 (61%)	5 (13%)	5 (13%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
3. Children respect the authority of teachers.	13 (32%)	22 (52%)	5 (12%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	**42 (100%)**	9 (24%)	19 (51%)	8 (22%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
4. Children are willing to discuss issues affecting them with school management and teachers.	9 (21%)	24 (57%)	4 (10%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)	**42 (100%)**	5 (13%)	23 (61%)	7 (18%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
5. Children maintain good student/teacher relationship.	9 (22%)	24 (57%)	6 (14%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	**42 (100%)**	4 (11%)	28 (74%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
6. Children maintain good children/children relationship.	12 (29%)	23 (55%)	5 (11%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	**42(100%)**	8 (21%)	23 (61%)	4 (10%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
7. Children avoid sneaking to go to loiter in town without permission.	12 (29%)	8 (20%)	3 (7%)	14 (34%)	4 (10%)	**42 (100%)**	10 (26%)	11 (29%)	3 (8%)	10 (26%)	4 (11%)	**38 (100%)**
8. Children attend Preps as scheduled and do not disturb during the Preps.	11 (26%)	9 (21%)	12 (29%)	8 (19%)	2 (5%)	**42 (100%)**	4 (11%)	11 (28%)	6 (17%)	17 (44%)	0 (0%)	**38 (100%)**
9. Children are not noisy in the school at all.	1 (2%)	7 (16%)	9 (21%)	22 (52%)	4 (9%)	**42 (100%)**	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	10 (25%)	15 (39%)	5 (14%)	**38 (100%)**
10. The children have never gone on strike	10(24%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)	10 (24%)	13 (32%)	**42 (100%)**	12 (31%)	10 (25%)	2 (6%)	11 (30%)	3 (8%)	**38 (100%)**

KEY
SA = Strongly Agree ,**A** = Agree,**N** = Neutral, **DA** = Disagree, **SDA** = Strongly Disagree **TOT** = Number of Teachers who participated

commented *"students studying in schools in Central Uganda look at teachers as helpers and mentors and respect teachers".* That *"students studying in schools in Northern Uganda look down upon their teachers and are arrogant".* Therefore, in comparison, the school leaders from Northern Uganda have agreed with the teachers and assessed the discipline of their students as being either fair or poor. They even indicated that their schools have gone on strike, where, one HT blamed some malicious teachers and community members to have engineered the strike; yet another HT said that *"the students were not happy with the new style of administration (being rather strict)" (*Items2, 11, and 12, Table 5). The students are described as being "*indisciplined, where they needed close supervision*; *had indiscipline problems such as abuse drugs, jumping the fence and staying out of class*; *dressing poorly, sneaking out of school without permission, smoking, drinking and need a lot of follow up".*

The variation in discipline is reflected in the SPI

Table 2. Students' Assessment of their Discipline Central and Northern Uganda

	Central Uganda						Northern Uganda					
Students' Evaluation of their Disciplines	**VFS**	**SWFS**	**N**	**VUU**	**NS**	**TOT**	**VFS**	**SWFS**	**N**	**VUU**	**NS**	**TOT**
1. How would you evaluate your relationship with other students in this school?	45 (58%)	23 (29%)	10 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**78 (100%)**	40 (64%)	17 (28%)	5 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**62 (100%)**
2. How would you evaluate your relationship with the teachers in this school?	39(50%)	28(36%)	11(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	**78 (100%)**	24(39%)	19(31%)	19 (30%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	**62 (100%)**
3. How would you evaluate your relationship with the administration in this school?	**34(43%)**	**26 (33%)**	**18 (23%)**	**0(0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**78 (100%)**	27 (44%)	16 (25%)	17 (28%)	2(3%)	0(0%)	**62 (100%)**
	VO	**FO**	**O**	**N**	**NS**	**TOT**	**VO**	**FO**	**O**	**N**	**NS**	**TOT**
4. I attend Club meetings with fellow children	22(28%)	30(38%)	19(24%)	5(7%)	2(3%)	**78(100%)**	24(38%)	19(30%)	13(22%)	4(7%)	2(3%)	**62(100%)**
5. I attend games and sports with fellow children	24(31%)	32(40%)	13(17%)	6(8%)	3(4%)	**78(100%)**	26(42%)	16(25%)	16(26%)	3(5%)	1(2%)	**62 (100)**

KEY

VFS = Very friendly and supportive , **SWFS =** Some what friendly and supportive, **N =** Neutral, **VUU =**Very unfriendly and unsupportive, **NS =** Not Sure, **VO =** Very Often, **FO =** Fairly Often **O =** Often, **N =** Neutral, **NS =** Not sure, **TOT =** Number of Students who participated

Table 3. Summary of regional Means for Teachers' and Students' assessment of Students' Discipline

S/NO		**Central Uganda**				**Northern Uganda**		
	School	**School Mean based on Teachers**	**School Mean based on Students**	**SPI**	**School**	**School Mean based on Teachers**	**School Mean based on Students**	**SPI**
1	**School A**	3.6	4.16	99.9232778	**School K**	4	4.77	109.2880
2	**School B**	4.04	4.48	107.004764	**School L**	3.25	4.43	99.6058361
3	**School C**	3.59	4.19	89.156199	**School M**	3.28	4.24	93.5302445
4	**School D**	4	4.12	84.5167012	**School N**	2.7	3.94	-
5	**School E**	3.48	3.63	89.0925176	**School O**	3.04	4.39	100.19665
6	**School F**	3.73	4.14	98.79949534	**School P**	2.84	4.4	104.354844
7	**School G**	3.85	4.14	90.171341	**School Q**	2.57	4.3	229.548
8	**School H**	3.85	4.6	96.4080135	**School R**	2.94	4.2	95.0187259
9	**School I**	4.6	4.37	85.9454				
10	**School J**	3.83	4.11	103.740982				

where in Central Uganda where disciplines are assessed to be good by the teachers and school leaders, the SPI ranges from 81.2 to 107.0 while in Northern Uganda where the discipline levels are low, the SPI ranges from 85.2 to 163.1. The school that earned the worst SPI of 163.1 has been known for constant violent strikes. Thus discipline influences performances in UCE examinations.

In objective two, the strength of students' discipline in influencing the students' academic performances was compared with other two factors – students' effort, students' parents' contributions - that also influence students' academic performances. Thus Null hypothesis 2 "There is no difference in the strength of students' factors influencing the SPI in UCE examinations in Central and Northern Uganda" was tested using regression analysis. The correlation coefficients show that the students' discipline

Table 4. Summary of T-Test for regional Means for Teachers' and Students' assessment of Students' Discipline

	Regions	**Teachers**	**Students**
Variance	Northern Uganda	0.199792857	0.055712
Variance	Central Uganda	0.100267778	0.06836
Average	Northern Uganda	3.0775	4.33375
Average	Central Uganda	3.86625	4.194
n	Northern Uganda	8	8
n	Central Uganda	10	10
df	(n – 2)	16	16
t	Calculated	3.0196	-0.655
t	Theoretical	2.12	1.746
α	One tailed	0.05	0.05

Table 5. Assessment of Students' Disciplines by School Leaders

	Central Uganda				**Northern Uganda**			
Students' Discipline Indicators	**HTs**	**DHTs**	**DOS**	**CGTs**	**HTs**	**DHTs**	**DOS**	**CGTs**
1. schools had never gone on strike	9(85.7%)	10(100%)		10 (100%)	2 (22.2%)			
2. school went on strike where the students complained of feeding	1 (14.3%)				7 (77.8%)			
3.disciplines of their children were *"very good"," exemplary" and commendable*	10(100%)	4 (37.5%)		10 (100%)				
4. discipline of their students were *"generally good"*		10 (100%)				4 (44.4%)		
5. they adhere to rules and regulations		10(100%)						
6. Students freely communicate to administration what may be wrong through their leaders		10 (100%)						
7. The discipline of their students as being *"good".*		6 (62.5%)	9 (88.9%)		2 (22.2%)		5 (62.5%)	3 (33.3%)
8. Students follow school routines and obey school rules.			9 (88.9%)					
9. Through their Prefectoral and school council, they maintain discipline and keep administration informed of whatever is going on.			9 (88.9%)					
10. The discipline of their students is *"average".*			1(11.1 %)		7 (77.8%)			
11. discipline of their students *"fair*								1(16.7%)
12. Students' discipline to be *"poor".*							3(37.5%)	6(66.7%)

KEY
HTs = Headteachers, DHTs = Deputy Headteachers, DOS = Director of Studies, CGTs = Career Guidance Teachers

had the highest influence on SPI .148 (14.8%), p=0.185; followed by students' efforts .131 (13.1%), p=.215; and lastly students' parents' contributions .002 (0.2%), p=0.978, (Table 6). The results of Partial regression model based on the teachers' ratings indicated that when student factor is used as a predictor, there is a high correlation coefficient between student factors and School Performance Index (SPI), R squared =.697 (69.7%), at .000 (100%) significance level. This result supports the partial correlation test where according to the ratings by the teachers, there is a negatively significant correlation between the students' factors and School Performance Index (SPI), r = -.835 (83.5%) at 0.01 significance level (1-tailed), Odama (2017). Secondly, when the school factors are controlled, students' factors are significantly negatively correlated to SPI, r = .734 (74.3%), at 0.001 significance level (1-tailed). When teachers' factors are controlled, there is a negatively significant correlation between the School Performance Index (SPI) and students' factors, r = .792 (79.2%), at .000 significance level (1-tailed), Table 7a and 7b.

The finding from correlational analysis reveals that the relationship between the teachers' Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline and School performance Indices (SPI) was significant at 5% level of significance (p = 0.047, p<0.05). The relationship between the teachers'

Table 6: The comparison of the strength of students' factors influencing the SPI in UCE examinations in Central and Northern Uganda".

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
1	(Constant)	2.092	.538		3.890	.000
	Students' Efforts	.131	.105	.115	1.247	.215
	Students Discipline	.148	.111	.122	1.333	.185
	Parents' Contributions	-.002	.073	-.003	-.028	.978

a. Dependent Variable: School Performance Index (Coded)

Table 7a. Using Partial Regression Analysis, based on teachers' responses

Factor as the Predictor	R Squared	PVC Level	Comments (Result)
Student Factor as Predictor	.697	.000	100% Significant
School Factor as the Predictor	.370	0.010	99.9% significant
Teachers Factors as Predictor	.200	0.07	Not significant

Table 7b. Using Partial Regression Analysis, based on Students' responses

Factor as the Predictor	R Squared	PVC Level	Comments (Result)
Student Factor as Predictor	.059	.347	Not Significant
School Factor as the Predictor	.030	0.507	Not significant
Teachers Factors as Predictor	.002	0.850	Not significant

Table 8. Correlations of Teachers' Qualifications, Teaching Styles, Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline, Effort and School Performance Indices

		Means of teachers qualification	Means of Teachers' Teaching Styles	School Means of Teachers' Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline	School Means for Teachers' Effort	SPI
Means of teachers qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	.143	.280	.013	-.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.571	.260	.958	.725
	N	18	18	18	18	17
Means of Teachers' Teaching Styles	Pearson Correlation	.143	1	.777(**)	.046	-.453
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.571		.000	.857	.068
	N	18	18	18	18	17
School Means of Teachers' Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline	Pearson Correlation	.280	.777(**)	1	.057	-.488(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260	.000		.823	.047
	N	18	18	18	18	17
School Means for Teachers' Effort	Pearson Correlation	.013	.046	.057	1	-.326
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.958	.857	.823		.201
	N	18	18	18	18	17
SPI	Pearson Correlation	-.092	-.453	-.488(*)	-.326	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.725	.068	.047	.201	
	N	17	17	17	17	17

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Strategies for Maintaining Classroom Discipline and teachers' Teaching Styles was found to be significant at 1% level of significance ($p = 0.00$, $p<0.01$, Table 8).

Generally, the results showed that there were differences in the levels of students' disciplines amongst the students in schools in Central and Northern Uganda. Teachers, parents and school leaders of schools from Central and Northern Uganda confirmed that students studying in schools in Central Uganda are better disciplined, than the students studying in schools in Northern Uganda. The students' discipline has been found to have the strongest influence on the SPI.

DISCUSSION

Students' discipline was identified as one of the factors that enhance students' good performances in examinations Otti (2009). Therefore, one of the reasons why the students studying in Schools from Central Uganda perform well in UCE examinations as reflected in high SPA and SPI is because they maintain excellent disciplines as revealed by their school leaders. The students studying in schools in Northern Uganda on the other hand perform poorly in UCE examinations because based on revelation by the Director of Providence Heights Secondary School (2009), discipline was not ruling the activities of the students of schools in Northern Uganda as confirmed by the school leaders and teachers. This finding further agrees with the declaration by one retired Headteacher, as cited by Okuda (2014) who stated that "*when Kiira College Butiiki went on strike in 1984, it took 17 years for the school to perform well in UCE examinations in 2001 when in O' Level 80% of students passed in 1st Grade a record that has never been broken"*. A similar revelation was made by one of the 'Old Students' a school in Northern Uganda that *"from the year 2003 when the students frog jumped their former Headmaster to Education Office, the school's glory as an academic giant with excellent performances in O'level examinations has never been recovered and the academic giant is dying"*. It further agrees with the findings by Scott (2012) that an individual's grit and self-discipline were stronger predictors than IQ of success in populations ranging from urban middle school students to West Point cadets. But the findings contradict the findings of Nyamusana (2010) who concluded that students' discipline alone was not enough for schools to achieve good students' academic performances. She said that availability of sufficient financial resources was the other factor underlying students' academic performances agreeing with human resource-based view by Mugimu, (2004).

Conclusions

The focus was to examine the extent to which students' discipline influence their academic performances UCE examination. Secondly, the strength of students' discipline in influencing their academic performances was compared to the strength of other factors – students' efforts, and contribution by parents was examined

In conclusion, the question by Omiat (2006) that one wonders if the "ground" is level between the candidates in Central and other Regions of Uganda like Northern region is answered that the ground is ideally leveled. The schools chosen from Northern region and Central Region do not have differences in the quantity and quality of instructional resources and the qualifications of the teachers. However, the students in Central Uganda have advantage over the students from Northern Uganda because, they are more disciplined. Therefore, the higher SPI in UCE examinations observed in schools in Central Uganda are a reflection of the students' good disciplines. This makes the teachers to be ready to contribute to their efforts to help the students. Secondly, the question by Karooro (2002) if the candidates from the best performing regions like Central Region had more "potentials" than their counter parts from the poorest performing regions like Northern Region, have been answered by this study. It is not that the students from Central Uganda have more potential but rather they are more disciplined than the students studying in schools in Northern Uganda. The teachers are more willing to help them because of being disciplined. Chances of sending the students away from school or lessons to disrupt smooth teaching learning process are minimized. Incidents of destroying libraries and laboratories leading losses and lack of equipped laboratories and libraries do not arise, to prevent students from greater understanding, reinforcement and retention of subject matter during private studies (Gregory (2010). There is no wastage of time, hence positively affecting their studies hence their performance. Syllabus is able to be completed and coursework is done with less interruptions. While for the students from Northern Uganda following the students' indiscipline, the resource materials and facilities are wasted, teacher-student relations are strained and the climate of mutual respect necessary for learning compromised.

Lastly, the Resource Based View cited by Mugimu (2004) as held by Penrose (1959) as observed by Odama (2017) has been disproved. All the schools selected had the resources but the students in schools in Central Uganda were disciplined while they were concentrating on utelising the resources for the purpose of their academic excellence. While the students from Schools in Northern Uganda like School Q and P through strikes were vandalizing the resources and were not concentrating to make use of the resources to help them excel in their academic performances.

All these gave the opportunity for the schools from Central Uganda to outperform the schools from Northern Uganda in UCE examinations, thus, leading to schools in Central Uganda getting better SPI **(**$81.2 \leq 107.0$ than the schools in Northern Uganda ($85.2 \leq 163.1$). Therefore, the high levels of students' discipline are the students' characteristics that should be developed if good academic achievements are required.

Recommendations

Students should be disciplined in school and follow school rules and regulations. They should cooperate with fellow students and teachers so that they can be helped well.

Government should develop strategies to deal with the problems without violating Government policy where every child has the right to education and the children are expected to be treated equally.

The teachers, especially, those from Northern Uganda should develop better teaching methods that can help to improve the discipline of the students.

The School administrators should use discipline management strategies that can help to reduce the indiscipline levels of the students because according to Ehiane, (2014) school rule and regulation play significant roles in enhancing students academic performance and further when rule and regulation is emphasized, it in a long run prescribes the standard of behaviour expected of students and teachers.

Further research

There is need to investigate why the students in schools in Northern Uganda do not put much effort in their studies and are less disciplined leading to disruption of the teaching learning process and also destroy the resources that help then to learn and improve in academic performances.

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