

Order, Safety, and Student Discipline: An Evaluation of Committee Effectiveness Amid Rising Student Cases

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Abstract

This study evaluated school committee effectiveness in managing rising student behavioral issues. Utilizing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, it combined quantitative surveys from 77 school personnel with qualitative interviews from ten students and five teachers.

Findings indicated that while committees had successfully transitioned toward “Positive Discipline”—prioritizing counseling, parental involvement, and community service over punitive measures—significant structural gaps persisted. Quantitatively, the greatest burden was an increased workload, which contributed to burnout among mid-career professionals. Conversely, the lowest-rated area was the effectiveness of technological monitoring and formal reporting systems. Qualitatively, primary challenges included resistance to authority and external security threats, such as gangs near the school perimeter. Statistical analysis via Pearson correlation showed no significant link between the impact of discipline cases and strategic success, suggesting that rising case volumes did not inherently dictate intervention outcomes.

The study concluded that the shift toward restorative justice was culturally accepted but technically unsupported, hindered by the lack of a structured digital reporting framework.

Recommendations included implementing a comprehensive digital student profiling system, strengthening partnerships with local barangay officials for perimeter security, and providing staff with specialized de-escalation training. By bridging the gap between restorative philosophy and modern infrastructure, school committees could more effectively maintain safety and order.

Keywords: *school committee, student discipline, restorative justice, positive discipline, safety and order, teacher burnout, community service*

INTRODUCTION

Schools were meant to be institutions for learning, growth, and character-building, but sustaining consistent order and discipline was a continuous struggle. Teachers and school administrators frequently struggled with disruptions in the classroom, absenteeism, and disrespect, which not only hindered learning but also strained teacher-student relationships (Kazak & Koyuncu, 2021). Such negative behaviors had the potential to devalue students' academic success, emotional health, and long-term commitment to education. Policy enforcement and disciplinary procedures were frequently employed to encourage positive conduct, but research showed that excessive dependence on exclusionary discipline such as suspension could be ineffective and even exacerbate undesirable conduct (Dahm, 2024). Teachers and school administrators, therefore, were confronted daily with the dilemma of sustaining the enforcement of the rules while employing supportive interventions.

Shaping a positive school climate of safety, respect, and belonging was linked to lower rates of disruptive behavior and higher levels of student engagement (Encina & Berger, 2021). Empirical evidence confirmed that when students perceived their school climate as safe and respectful, they were more likely to adhere to expected behavior and stay engaged in the classroom (Osterman, 2023). Punishment-based models of discipline, conversely, had the effect of eroding social cohesion and causing higher levels of stress, anxiety, and disengagement (Duarte et al., 2023). As schools strove to create inclusive and caring climates, the discourse on discipline shifted away from punishment-based models toward those that emphasized community building, accountability, and respect.

Today's educational conversation focused on discipline as more than about imposing strict rules but on creating a climate of mutual responsibility and trust. Practices like restorative practices were in the spotlight for having the ability to repair relationships and resolve underlying tensions before they escalated into areas of discipline (Alonso-Rodríguez et al., 2025). Research indicated that when schools used conversation-based strategies like restorative circles and mediation, they not only decreased harmful incidents but also enhanced students' social and emotional competency (Giles-Mitson, 2021).

Student misconduct in the classroom continued to plague teachers, influencing instructional delivery and student performance. As Oestar and Oestar (2022) noted, typical misconduct behaviors that were typically included were inattentiveness, disruptions in the classroom, tardiness, absenteeism, and verbal bullying. Further, the Learning Policy Institute (2023) documented that schools that used restorative practices had fewer fights, bullying, office referrals, and suspensions, as well as better school climate perceptions. This indicated that a shift away from exclusionary discipline towards proactive, community-based approaches could be more effective in addressing student misconduct.

Student discipline, safety, and order in schools were issues that crossed the globe and infused educational systems across the world. One national survey of 4,800 public schools in the United States reported over 857,000 violent and 479,500 non-violent discipline events in one year (Phelps et al., 2024). Additionally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicated that nearly 19.3% of students reported receiving unfair or disproportionate disciplinary treatment, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, which was linked to poorer mental health and reduced school connectedness (Krause, 2024).

In the Philippines, the latest national statistics underscored the endemic nature of discipline and safety concerns in schools. In 2021-2022, the Department of Education accounted for more than 264,000 physical bullying cases, 7,758 cases of cyberbullying, and 17,258 cases of social bullying (Department of Education, 2023). Likewise, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated that 43% of Filipino girls and 53% of boys were bullied at least several times a month—approximately twice the respective international averages—while 8% of Filipino students did not feel safe in classrooms (OECD, 2023).

To help make schools safer and more disciplined, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced various policy interventions. Most prominently, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 enacted a zero-tolerance policy against corporal punishment, bullying, and physical abuse with the mandate to set up Child Protection Committees at all levels of schools (DepEd, 2012). More recently, DepEd Order No. 3, s. 2021 expanded the initiative by setting up Child Protection Units at division, region, and central levels with the mandate not only to respond to incidents but also to promote protective and preventive actions within schools (DepEd, 2021). While such regulations exhibited policy-level commitment to student well-being, their enforcement at the school level was yet to be thoroughly scrutinized.

In Cavite, Dasmariñas City, joint efforts between barangays and schools had been helpful in establishing child protection and discipline programs. Natanawan and Dausan (2022) discovered that early detection mechanisms, immediate response mechanisms, incident monitoring, and training of personnel helped prevent cases of child abuse; however, one major difference that arose from their analysis involved inconsistency between schools and barangays in implementing these programs. A recent report of one school in Dasmariñas City for the school year 2024-2025 indicated a significant incidence of lesser and serious offenses among students: of 84 reported cases, 54 (64%) were contributed by Grade 9, with offenses ranging from cheating and disruptive behavior to serious offenses such as cyberbullying, possession of prohibited substances, and bringing lethal weapons.

Based on these assumptions, the current research sought to assess the efficiency of the Committee on Student Discipline in sustaining discipline and promoting good conduct among students. Although disciplinary committees had been established to address student violations of school policies, little research had been done on the perception that students held on their

efficiency, fairness, and contribution. Moreover, most available research targeted program adoption, such as restorative practices, rather than the practice itself and its application in school settings (Learning Policy Institute, 2022); committee-level process research such as decision-making processes, inter-disciplinary teamwork, and protocol consistency was lacking specifically in the Cavite setting. This study endeavored to address these limitations by gauging discipline committee effectiveness in local schools, targeting both effects and processes and establishing how committee actions were associated with student order, safety, and just discipline.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on three complementary theories—Social Order Theory, Disciplinary Power Theory, and Organizational Effectiveness Theory—which together provide a multi-layered lens for examining student discipline and the work of school committees in sustaining a safe learning environment.

Social Order Theory provided the foundational perspective. It holds that a stable and functional school environment depends on the acceptance and maintenance of established norms, rules, and institutions that regulate behavior and prevent disorder. Within this frame, the rising frequency of student discipline cases represents a challenge to the existing social order, and the committee on student discipline serves as the social mechanism responsible for enforcing the social contract, upholding expected behaviors, and restoring order following a violation. This perspective directly informed the questions on the committee's workload and on the strategies employed against bullying and disruptive behavior.

Disciplinary Power Theory, associated with the work of Michel Foucault, complemented this focus on norms by shifting attention from simple rule enforcement to the continuous mechanisms through which institutions regulate conduct. Modern schools operate through disciplinary power—constant surveillance, hierarchical observation, and normalizing judgment aimed at correcting and shaping behavior. The committee embodies this power not only by sanctioning transgressions but also by setting norms, monitoring conduct, and classifying behavior as acceptable or deviant. This lens was especially relevant to how committees modified their disciplinary approaches, reframing such modifications as adjustments to the techniques of disciplinary power rather than mere procedural change.

Organizational Effectiveness Theory framed the evaluation of outcomes. It asserts that an organization is effective when it achieves its goals, adapts to its environment, and uses its resources efficiently. Treating the school as a formal organization whose goals include safety, order, and a positive learning climate, the committee's effectiveness was measured by its capacity to manage rising challenges and to implement strategies that minimized disruption. This theory grounded the inferential component of the study—whether the frequency of cases was

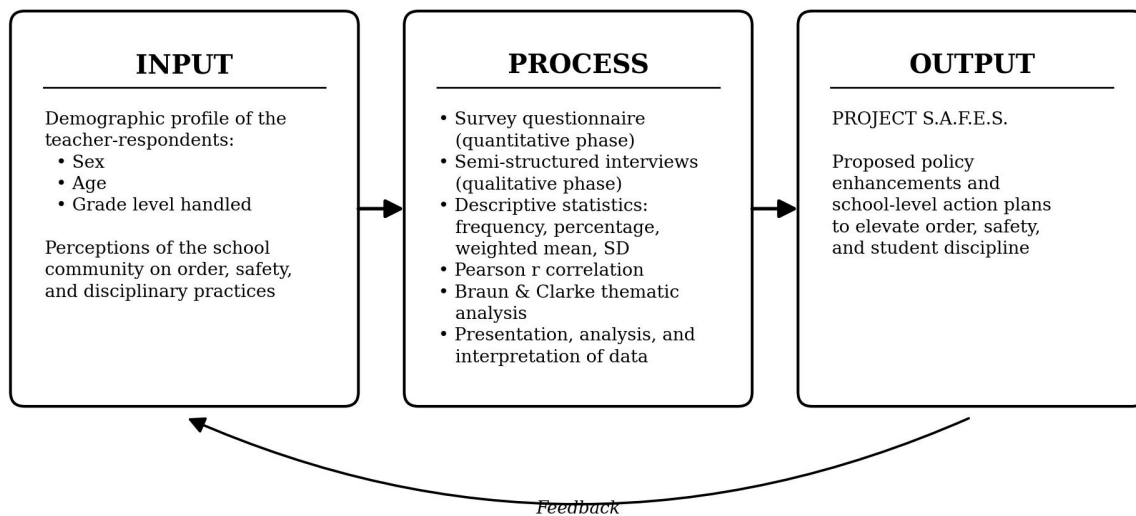
associated with the strategies employed—and the output, which proposed program improvements to enhance organizational effectiveness in matters of order, safety, and discipline.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study followed the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which illustrated the logical connection among the variables of the study. Consistent with the sequential explanatory design, it began with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data to further clarify and expand the quantitative results.

Figure 1

Conceptual Paradigm of the Study



As presented in Figure 1, the input included the teacher-respondents' demographic profile and the school community's perceptions of order, safety, and disciplinary practices, which served as the basis for measuring teachers' experiences of the prevailing disciplinary climate. The process involved the administration of a survey questionnaire to gather quantitative data, followed by qualitative interviews to expound on student and committee experiences; quantitative data were described using frequency, percentage, and mean, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The output of the study was a set of proposed policy enhancements and school-level action plans, operationalized as PROJECT S.A.F.E.S.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing rate of student offenses and incidents of discipline in schools was a source of worry as to the efficacy of the available disciplinary actions. While the majority of schools had established a school-based discipline committee to ensure order, safety, and appropriate behavioral interventions, there was no proper comprehension of students' and teachers' views about the role and efficacy of the committees. This study aimed to measure the effectiveness of

the school-based discipline committee in creating a safe and orderly learning environment based on both quantitative and qualitative information.

Specifically, the research aimed to respond to the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher respondents, in terms of:
 - 1.1 sex;
 - 1.2 age; and
 - 1.3 grade level handled?
2. What impact does the increasing frequency of student discipline cases have on the workload and decision-making processes of school committees?
3. What strategies do school committees employ to assess and address incidents of bullying, violence, or disruptive behavior among students?
4. What are the primary challenges encountered by school committees in maintaining safety and order within educational institutions amid the rise in student behavioral issues?
5. In what ways have school committees modified their disciplinary approaches in response to the escalating number of student misbehavior cases?
6. Is there a correlation between the increasing frequency of student discipline cases and the strategies employed by school committees to maintain safety and modify disciplinary approaches?
7. Based on the results of this study, what program may be proposed to elevate the order, safety, and discipline among students?

Hypothesis

Based on the inferential question presented above, the researcher formulated the following null hypothesis to be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the increasing frequency of student discipline cases and the strategies employed by school committees to maintain safety and modify disciplinary approaches.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods research design, specifically the sequential explanatory design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), a sequential explanatory design consists of two distinct phases in which quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to explain, clarify, or expand the quantitative

findings. The integration of both phases provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either quantitative or qualitative methods alone.

During the first phase, quantitative data were collected from junior and senior high school teachers through a survey questionnaire to determine their perceptions of the implementation and effectiveness of the school's disciplinary system. The second phase involved qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews with selected teachers and students using purposive sampling, conducted after analyzing the quantitative results to obtain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and explanations. The integration of the quantitative and qualitative results occurred during the interpretation stage, where findings from both phases were compared, connected, and synthesized.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents for the quantitative phase consisted of 77 junior and senior high school teachers teaching Grades 8 to 12 in a selected secondary school in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, during the School Year 2025–2026. To be eligible, teachers had to be officially assigned to teach Grades 8 to 12 during the study period and to have had direct or indirect involvement with the school's disciplinary system, such as referring students to the Committee on Student Discipline, participating in disciplinary proceedings, or handling students with disciplinary concerns.

For the qualitative phase, the respondents consisted of 10 students and 5 teachers. Student participants were required to be officially enrolled in Grades 8 to 12 during the School Year 2025–2026 and to have directly experienced or been significantly involved in a disciplinary case handled by the committee. The teacher participants consisted of one teacher from each secondary grade level who were either current members of the Committee on Student Discipline or teachers with substantial experience in referring student disciplinary cases. Participation in both phases was entirely voluntary.

Sampling Technique

Different sampling techniques were used in each phase to ensure that the participants could provide the data needed to address the research objectives. For the quantitative phase, total population sampling was employed, including all 77 junior and senior high school teachers teaching Grades 8 to 12. Total population sampling was deemed appropriate because the target population was relatively small and manageable, allowing the researcher to obtain comprehensive data from all eligible teacher-respondents without the need for sample selection.

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was utilized. Criterion sampling was used to select student participants based on predetermined inclusion criteria, while maximum variation purposive sampling was employed to select teacher participants representing each grade level. A total of 15 participants were included in the qualitative phase, consisting of 10 students from Grades 8 to 12 and 5 teachers, with one teacher representing each grade level from Grade 8 to

Grade 12. This sampling strategy ensured that participants possessed firsthand knowledge and diverse perspectives regarding disciplinary practices.

Research Instrument

This study utilized two research instruments consistent with the sequential explanatory mixed methods design. The first was a researcher-made survey questionnaire, administered during the quantitative phase to gather data on the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, the impact of the increasing frequency of student discipline cases on the workload and decision-making processes of school committees, and the strategies employed in assessing and addressing incidents of bullying, violence, and disruptive behavior. The second was a semi-structured interview guide, used during the qualitative phase to obtain in-depth insights into the challenges encountered by school committees and the disciplinary approaches they adopted.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A gathered the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, and grade level taught. Section B measured the perceived impact of the increasing frequency of student discipline cases on the workload and decision-making processes of school committees. Section C assessed the strategies employed by school committees in addressing incidents of bullying, violence, and disruptive behavior, focusing on investigative procedures, collaboration among stakeholders, parental involvement, counseling interventions, documentation practices, policy implementation, restorative approaches, and continuous improvement of disciplinary procedures. The interview guide consisted of two central questions, supported by probing questions, exploring the primary challenges encountered and how committees modified their disciplinary approaches.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Prior to administration, both instruments underwent validity and reliability procedures. The initial drafts of the survey questionnaire and interview guide were submitted to a panel of three experts—a School Principal, a Master Teacher, and a Professor from the University of Perpetual Help System—who examined the instruments in terms of relevance, clarity, appropriateness, organization, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Content validity and face validity were established, and all comments were incorporated into the final version. The survey questionnaire subsequently underwent a pilot test, and its internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87, which exceeded the 0.70 threshold and indicated a high level of internal consistency and a dependable instrument. The semi-structured interview guide was not subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha; instead, its trustworthiness was established through expert validation, alignment with the research objectives, and consistent interview procedures.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection procedure was implemented in two distinct, sequential phases. The initial phase focused on gathering numerical data from the entire population of 77 Grade 8 to 12 teachers. Following approval of the school administration and informed consent, the researcher administered the standardized survey questionnaire, either through a secure online platform or in a physical, paper-and-pencil format, utilizing Likert scales and typically allowing a two-week window for completion.

Upon completion and analysis of the quantitative data, the second, qualitative phase commenced with the purposively selected sample of 10 students and 5 teachers. The researcher sought separate informed consent from all 15 participants and, in the case of minor students, from their parents or legal guardians, with assent obtained from the students themselves. Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face or virtual interviews using a pre-developed interview protocol; interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were carefully organized, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the findings. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were applied to the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data, in order to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the responses.

Frequency and Percentage

Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize and describe the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of sex, age, and grade level taught, thereby addressing research question 1.

Weighted Mean

The weighted mean was employed to determine the impact of the increasing frequency of student discipline cases on the workload and decision-making processes of school committees and the strategies employed by the committees in addressing incidents of bullying, violence, and disruptive behavior. It was used to analyze the respondents' level of agreement with each statement in research questions 2 and 3.

Standard Deviation

The standard deviation was used to measure the variability, dispersion, and consistency of the respondents' answers. A low standard deviation indicated that the responses were closely clustered around the computed mean, while a high standard deviation suggested greater variation in the perceptions of the participants.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r)

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used for research question 6 to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the increasing frequency of student discipline cases and the strategies employed by school committees. Statistical significance was determined using the corresponding p -value at the 0.05 level of significance.

Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to answer research questions 4 and 5. The analysis followed six phases: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The identified themes were supported by representative verbatim excerpts from the participants to enrich the quantitative findings.

Ethical Consideration

This study strictly adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report—Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice. Respect for Persons was observed through voluntary participation and informed consent, with parental or guardian consent sought for participants under 18 years of age. Beneficence was ensured by protecting participants from physical, emotional, or psychological injury and by administering the survey in a neutral, non-intrusive manner in secure locations. Justice was upheld through equitable selection of respondents across grade levels. In compliance with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012), all responses were handled with confidentiality: personal identifiers were not collected, physical records were stored in a locked cabinet, and electronic information was kept in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher, research adviser, and authorized statistician. The study observed the University of Perpetual Help System–Institutional Ethics Review Board (UPHS-IERB) standard operating procedures and guidelines.

RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented below in an itemized and elaborated form for clearer interpretation.

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1.1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Profile in Terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	28	36.4
Female	49	63.6
Total	77	100.0

The gender breakdown of the 77 respondents showed a clear preponderance of female educators, with 63.6% being female teachers and 28 male respondents accounting for 36.4% of the total. This demographic trend was consistent with both worldwide and country-specific statistics of teaching, where the majority of educators at the secondary school level were women. Literature indicated that female teachers were more inclined to utilize a restorative style of conflict resolution and verbal de-escalation (Thurman, 2025; Quail & Ward, 2020), while male respondents remained critical to ensuring that the study on workload, burnout, and safety did not retain an exclusively female optic (Singer, 2023). The distribution was broad enough to capture the true faculty composition and provided a robust basis for evaluating the teaching staff's perception of the disciplinary committee's effectiveness.

Table 1.2

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Profile in Terms of Age

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
26–30	16	20.8
31–35	19	24.7
36–40	26	33.8
41–45	9	11.7
46–50	7	9.1

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Total	77	100.0

The data showed a predominantly mid-career workforce. The largest single group fell within the 36–40 bracket (26 respondents, 33.8%), and when combined with the 31–35 bracket (19 respondents, 24.7%), teachers aged 31 to 40 accounted for 58.5% of the respondents. This indicated that most participants had moved beyond the novice stage and were likely at the peak of their professional practice, placing them at the center of classroom instruction and disciplinary work. Early-career teachers in the 26–30 bracket (16 respondents, 20.8%) may have faced the steepest learning curve in managing student behavior and were potentially more susceptible to early-career fatigue, while the more senior teachers in the 41–45 (11.7%) and 46–50 (9.1%) brackets contributed administrative experience. The concentration in the 31–40 range is particularly relevant to the high mean values later reported for increased workload and burnout, since teachers of this age often navigate heavy professional demands compounded by domestic responsibilities, situating the committee between traditional discipline and the newer restorative practices.

Table 1.3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Profile in Terms of Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
8	15	19.5
9	15	19.5
10	15	19.5
11	16	20.8
12	16	20.8
Total	77	100.0

The even distribution across grade levels was relevant to the study's scope. Grade 12 formed the largest individual group with 16 participants (20.8%), reflecting the more complex disciplinary problems that tended to arise in the final year of secondary school (Magallanes et al., 2022). Grades 8, 9, and 10 each had 15 respondents (19.5%), and such uniformity helped the study's reliability by ensuring there was no grade-level bias in the findings. Grades 11 and 12 combined constituted 41.6% of the respondents, indicating that a large portion of the study was shaped by the perspectives of teachers handling senior students. The total of 77 educator-

respondents signified an adequately representative sample across the pivotal grade levels (Kareem et al., 2023).

2. Impact of Increasing Frequency of Student Discipline Cases on Workload and Decision-Making

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Impact of the Increasing Frequency of Student Discipline Cases on the Workload and Decision-Making Processes of School Committees

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. The rising number of student discipline cases has significantly increased the workload of school committees/teachers.	3.39	0.566	Agree
2. The frequency of discipline cases makes it difficult for committees/teachers to thoroughly investigate each incident.	3.14	0.663	Agree
3. Committee members/teachers feel pressured to make quick decisions due to the high volume of cases.	2.91	0.672	Agree
4. The complexity of student misbehavior cases requires more time and resources from committees/teachers.	3.35	0.532	Agree
5. Dealing with discipline cases distracts the committee/teachers from other important tasks, such as academic planning.	3.21	0.675	Agree
6. The increasing caseload has led to a feeling of burnout among committee members/teachers.	3.26	0.594	Agree
7. Committees are often forced to handle minor issues that should be managed by teachers.	2.75	0.728	Agree
8. The growing number of cases has resulted in a more reactive, rather than proactive, approach to discipline.	3.06	0.635	Agree

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
9. It is challenging for committees/teachers to ensure fairness and consistency across all discipline decisions.	2.97	0.668	Agree
10. The stress from handling a high volume of cases negatively impacts the quality of committee/teachers decisions.	3.13	0.656	Agree
Average Mean	3.12	0.639	Agree

Note. 1.00–1.49 Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49 Disagree; 2.50–3.49 Agree; 3.50–4.00 Strongly Agree

The respondents agreed that the rising number of student discipline cases has significantly increased the workload of school committees and teachers ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.57$). This finding indicates that managing an increasing number of disciplinary incidents requires additional time, effort, and administrative responsibilities, which may affect the efficiency of school committees in carrying out their decision-making and other school-related functions. The volume of infractions essentially defined the everyday duties and professional obligations of the staff (Sambo & Dilabayan, 2024).

The lowest mean in this data set concerned committees being required to handle minor disciplinary issues that should be managed by teachers ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.73$). This showed a fracture in the hierarchy in which minor cases were “trickling up,” bypassing the teacher level, hindering administrative service and leaving committee members unable to address issues that pertained to actual safety.

Overall, the respondents agreed that the increasing frequency of student discipline cases has an impact on the workload and decision-making processes of school committees and teachers ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.64$). The score illustrated that the frequency of discipline cases was an administrative obstacle and an endemic issue that was reducing school governance, pushing the process toward reactive crisis management rather than proactive academic management (Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou, 2023). This suggested that, in the absence of specific mechanisms for constraining case processing and providing emotional support to staff, the emotional health of educators and the school's disciplinary system would continue to decline.

3. Strategies Employed by School Committees

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategies Employed by School Committees to Assess and Address Incidents of Bullying, Violence, or Disruptive Behavior

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. The school committee/teachers has clearly communicated new or modified disciplinary rules to the student body.	2.49	0.821	Disagree
2. School committees/teachers have implemented programs that focus on conflict resolution and peer mediation.	2.56	0.786	Agree
3. There is an increased focus on restorative justice practices, such as discussions and apologies, instead of just punishment.	2.61	0.781	Agree
4. The school has a clear system for reporting student misbehavior that is easy to understand and use.	2.48	0.883	Disagree
5. School committees/teachers have improved security measures to maintain safety on campus.	2.58	0.833	Agree
6. Disciplinary measures now include counseling or guidance to address the root cause of misbehavior.	2.66	0.883	Agree
7. The school has involved students in creating or reviewing the student discipline policies.	2.60	0.847	Agree
8. Committees/teachers have become more lenient in their disciplinary actions to avoid escalating conflicts.	2.69	0.765	Agree
9. The school is using technology, such as surveillance cameras, to monitor student behavior.	2.48	0.883	Disagree

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
10. The school committee/teachers works closely with parents to address student behavior issues.	2.75	0.876	Agree
Average Mean	2.59	0.836	Agree

Note. 1.00–1.49 Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49 Disagree; 2.50–3.49 Agree; 3.50–4.00 Strongly Agree

The respondents agreed that school committees and teachers work closely with parents to address student behavior issues ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.88$), the highest-rated indicator. This reinforced the theory of collaborative advantage with external stakeholders, as engaging the home setting fundamentally supports finding the underlying causes of misconduct and sustaining behavioral management outside of school (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Kamara et al., 2023).

Conversely, the respondents disagreed that the school has a clear and easy-to-understand system for reporting student misbehavior ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.88$) and that the school uses monitoring tools such as surveillance cameras ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.88$). These findings suggested an urgent need for improved school infrastructure, indicating that reporting and case-tracking mechanisms were outdated and that committees were relying on manual oversight, which was particularly challenging given the volume of cases (Lee & Zhao, 2025).

Overall, the respondents agreed that the strategies were present ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.84$). While committees were attempting positive strategies such as restorative justice, counseling, and parental involvement, these strategies were likely to be constrained by the absence of substantive structural supports, tools, and systems (Stewart & Ezell, 2022). For the “Order, Safety, and Student Discipline” framework to be effective, school systems needed to bridge their restorative goals with more instrumental and technological systems (Katic & Alba, 2025; Berhanu, 2023).

Qualitative Phase

4. Primary Challenges Encountered by School Committees

Theme 1: Resistance to Authority and Disrespectful Behavior

Participants collectively implied that resistance to authority and disrespectful behaviors were common challenges within their school environments. The “pasaway” or naughty attitude of some students, described as difficult to engage in constructive dialogue, was the most difficult to manage, and students often outright defied the committee's instructions. These sentiments described a school climate in which the committee's power was rendered ineffective by a culture of defiance, indicating that the “increasing student cases” were being driven by an absence of accountability and that the school needed more intensive, holistic behavioral modification

programs targeting the root cause rather than the superficial defiant behavior (Friaes et al., 2023; Matesan, 2025).

Theme 2: External Security Threats and Peer Influence

Interviews underscored a “perimeter challenge” in which school committee authority was tested by unpredictable situations just outside the school. Students described threats from “gangs” and organized groups, as well as “abangan” groups that waited during dismissal to ambush students; incidents of “pag-aaway” and “panggugulo” near the school entrance created “danger zones” that negatively impacted morale and safety. The findings indicated that the school committee had to work hand in hand with the barangay and local law enforcement to alleviate these external concerns (Respicio, 2025; Argosino, 2025).

Theme 3: Substance Use and Complex Behavioral Addictions

Data pointed to a modern threat to order in the form of substance use and behavioral addictions. Participants noted that students were increasingly “prone sa mga bisyo” (prone to vices), including the use of marijuana and vaping, and were resourceful in concealing banned materials such as vapes in covert locations. This reflected serious health and legal issues that required the committee to reallocate resources toward the health, safety, and security of the setting, and to strengthen searches and substance-abuse education (Wang et al., 2025; Pelo et al., 2021).

Theme 4: Serious Behavioral Violations and Recidivism

Teacher interviews showed that the school climate was negatively affected by serious behavioral violations, including drug use in school restrooms and “repeated rule violations” and ongoing “disputes.” This portrayed a situation of recidivism in which typical disciplinary responses became obsolete in the face of persistent defiance, creating an unbroken cycle that expended the committee's finite resources (Akilith, 2023). A lack of awareness among students of the impact of their behavior further risked the “moral safety” of the school (Florian et al., 2023).

Theme 5: Systemic Gaps in Reporting and Consistency

The findings indicated a partial structural crisis within the school's discipline system. Overworked teachers “overlooked” incidents and informally handled them instead of writing them up, creating a disciplinary vacuum in which some violations went unpunished (Palerit & Villocino, 2024). Student “dishonesty” (sinungaling) was a constant obstacle during investigations, and “repeat cases” (paulit-ulit) persisted even among students with disciplinary records. It was therefore clear that the committee could only remain effective amid rising cases if the school implemented more stringent, structural, and data-based approaches such as student profiling (Department of Education, 2024).

5. Modifications in Disciplinary Approaches

Theme 1: Shift Toward Restorative Justice and Counseling

Student interviews indicated a clear evolution in school governance toward restorative justice and counseling. The school had transitioned into using “guidance” and constant reminders as a primary tool, and students who committed violations were referred to the discipline office to “get counsel and advice” rather than solely punishment. Students were also required to provide a “narrative” before any sanction, ensuring input in the process and reducing complaints about fairness and due process (Schultz, 2023; Susiani et al., 2023).

Theme 2: Implementation of Community Service as a Penalty

The results demarcated a move toward sanctions focused on restorative work and responsibility. Community service was intended to help students develop a strong sense of “pagsisisi” (remorse), and students referred to it as “tamang parusa” (the correct punishment), indicating that they viewed an appropriate relationship between rule-breaking and working to improve the school community. This was among the most noticeable administrative shifts for the academic year, illustrating progress toward positive discipline (Rijal, 2025; Kumashiro, 2024; Belmonte, 2022).

Theme 3: Increased Strictness and Parental Involvement

Students reported more rigorous enforcement of school policies, including formal processes that required “pinatawag ang magulang” (a call to the parents). Committee members had become “stricter,” giving specific, structured punishments, and the school adopted a firm stance on high-level violations that endangered safety, with serious infractions such as vaping applied “fair and consistent” and, where warranted, resulting in expulsion (Welsh, 2023; Friaes et al., 2023).

Theme 4: Shift Toward Positive Discipline and Counseling-Based Interventions

Teacher reflections showed progression toward positive discipline through “reflection” sessions in which students examined their behavior and its consequences, aimed at building internal rather than external motivation to comply. “Counseling” and “guidance” were incorporated as first-order responses, and the school “actively” sought parents' advice before determining consequences, reflecting a more legally justified, compassionate, and collaborative model aligned with Child Protection Policies (Escobal et al., 2023; Zainul Arifin & Tumin, 2025).

Theme 5: Institutionalizing Accountability through Community Service and Formal Profiling

Educator interviews revealed a strategic shift toward more extensive management and character education. The school adopted community service as a main intervention and sought to develop a “comprehensive student profiling system” to track habitual offenders and evidence intervention. It promoted “Homeroom Guidance” and distributed the student handbook to parents, and restructured its process so that cases were first handled at the “Adviser level,” reserving the

Guidance Office for the most serious cases. This provided evidence of a more professional and tiered disciplinary system responding to the increasing number of student cases (Mastul et al., 2023; Iloka, 2025; Osegbue et al., 2025).

6. Correlation Between Frequency of Discipline Cases and Strategies Employed

Table 6

Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the Relationship Between the Increasing Frequency of Student Discipline Cases and the Strategies Employed by School Committees to Maintain Safety and Modify Disciplinary Approaches

Variables	r	p	Interpretation	Decision
Impact of Student Discipline Cases on School Committees vs. Strategies to Maintain Safety and Modify Disciplinary Approaches	-.240	.504	Not Significant	Accept Ho

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

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the impact of the increasing frequency of student discipline cases on school committees and the strategies employed to maintain safety and modify disciplinary approaches. The analysis revealed a weak negative, non-significant correlation, $r = -.240$, $p = .504$. The negative sign suggested that as the perceived negative impact of discipline cases on the committee (such as burnout and workload) increased, the perceived effectiveness of disciplinary strategies tended to decrease; however, because the value was closer to zero than to -1, the strength of this relationship was low (Cohen & Smith, 2024).

Because $p = .504$ exceeded the .05 threshold, the correlation was not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that the committee's ability to implement strategies such as restorative justice or parental engagement was somewhat independent of the stress caused by rising cases. Alternatively, this non-significant result highlighted the “infrastructure gap” identified in previous findings: the failure of strategies such as reporting systems and technology might have been due to a lack of funding and resources rather than the emotional state or workload of the teachers (Foster & Arunas, 2024).

7. Proposed Program: PROJECT S.A.F.E.S.

Based on the results, PROJECT S.A.F.E.S. (Strategic Action for Enhancing Security and Student Discipline) was proposed to shift the school's approach to discipline from a reactive to a proactive, digitalized one grounded in community involvement. Its target audience comprised students, teachers, discipline committee members, and school management.

The first component, Digitalization and Workflow Optimization, is enabled through a Student Discipline Management Information System (SDMIS) that connects behavioral data, cases, and counseling processes within a database and automates a three-tier case escalation process, thereby reducing paperwork and committee burnout. The second, a Restorative Justice and Accountability Framework, introduces a Restorative Justice and Accountability Protocol (RJAP) featuring structured “Reflection and Reform” alternatives to suspension, Peer Mediation Councils, and meaningful community service in place of exclusion. The third, Perimeter Security and External Safety Alliances (“Bantay Paaralan”), secures a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with barangay authorities, improves internal surveillance in strategic locations, and institutes a controlled dismissal process. The fourth, the Resilient Educators and Committee Empowerment Series (RECES), provides de-escalation and crisis-intervention training, Child Protection Policy and Positive Discipline orientation, and committee mental-health rotations.

Table 7

Proposed Program to Elevate Order, Safety, and Student Discipline (PROJECT S.A.F.E.S.)

Program Component	Objective	Key Activities	Target Metric / Budget	Expected Output
Digitalization	Improve the efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of student discipline records through a digital case-management system.	Launch and deploy the SDMIS Portal; conduct orientation and hands-on training for committee members and teachers; digitize existing records; implement electronic case logging, tracking, and report generation.	50% reduction in paper-logging time; 100% of committee members trained; 90% of cases encoded via the portal within six months. Budget: PHP 45,000 (6 months).	Lower committee burnout; transparent, faster data access; fully operational SDMIS; improved case monitoring and documentation.
Restorative Justice	Promote positive behavior, conflict resolution, and student accountability through restorative disciplinary	Peer Mediation & Alternative-to-Suspension (ATS) tracks; peer-mediation training for student leaders and teachers; restorative circles and conflict-resolution	30% reduction in repeated Tier 1/Tier 2 offenses; 90% of identified students complete the ATS program.	Enhanced student accountability without exclusion; reduced repeat offenses; improved

Program Component	Objective	Key Activities	Target Metric / Budget	Expected Output
	practices.	conferences; counseling, reflection, and behavior coaching.	Budget: PHP 20,000 (quarterly, 12-week cycle).	conflict resolution and peer relationships.
Perimeter Security	Secure the school perimeter from external threats during entry and dismissal.	Barangay Patrol MOA (“Bantay Paaralan”); installation of surveillance cameras in strategic locations; controlled, monitored dismissal at exit points.	Zero external perimeter incidents during dismissal.	Safer transit zones; minimization of illicit student vices; reduced influence of outside groups.
Capacity Building (RECES)	Equip educators and committee members to manage complex behavior and sustain their well-being.	De-escalation and non-violent crisis-intervention training; Child Protection Policy and Positive Discipline orientation; committee mental-health rotations.	100% of committee members trained.	Proactive, resilient educators; consistent application of positive discipline; reduced staff burnout.

DISCUSSION

The general interpretation of the findings reveals that although the school committee has instituted structured disciplinary practices, its effectiveness remains constrained by an infrastructure gap between a restorative, people-centered philosophy and the technical systems required to sustain it. Read together, the quantitative and qualitative results portray a committee that has embraced positive discipline in principle but continues to operate with reactive, manual, and under-resourced mechanisms. The discussion below interprets the findings by theme, integrating the study's theoretical anchors and related literature.

Workload, Burnout, and the Strain on Social Order

The strongest quantitative signal was the burden that rising case volumes placed on committees and teachers ($M = 3.39$), concentrated among mid-career educators aged 31 to 40. This finding is consistent with Social Order Theory: as the frequency of violations rises, the mechanism charged with restoring order is itself destabilized, and the very personnel expected to uphold the social contract are pushed toward burnout and reactive crisis management. The

literature corroborates this dynamic. Chatzipanagiotou and Katsarou (2023) describe how escalating demands drive school leaders from proactive governance toward crisis response, while Alam et al. (2024) link the fair and consistent enforcement of rules—difficult to sustain under heavy caseloads—to positive discipline outcomes. The implication is that order is not threatened by student misconduct alone but by the erosion of the committee's capacity to respond, underscoring the need for structural relief rather than mere exhortation to do more.

The Infrastructure Gap and Organizational Effectiveness

The lowest-rated indicators—the clarity of reporting systems and the use of monitoring technology (both $M = 2.48$)—exposed a committee relying on manual oversight in a setting that demands data-driven tools. Viewed through Organizational Effectiveness Theory, the school's shortfall was less a failure of commitment than of capacity: the resources and systems needed to operationalize its goals were absent. This reading is reinforced by the inferential result. The weak, non-significant correlation between the impact of cases and the strategies employed ($r = -.240$, $p = .504$) indicates that strategic implementation was largely independent of workload pressure—committees persisted with restorative strategies out of institutional mandate and professional dedication—while the failure of reporting and surveillance systems was attributable to funding and infrastructure constraints rather than to teacher stress (Foster & Arunas, 2024). Berhanu (2023) similarly attributes the underperformance of school-based management systems to structural and resource deficits, supporting the conclusion that upgrading reporting and monitoring infrastructure is the most consequential lever available to the school.

Resistance, External Threats, and the Reach of Disciplinary Power

The qualitative themes—resistance to authority and “pasaway” defiance, external “abangan” and gang threats at the perimeter, covert substance use, and systemic gaps in reporting—illustrate the limits of disciplinary power as conceived by Foucault. Where surveillance and normalizing judgment cannot reach—beyond the school gate, inside restrooms, or within a culture of concealment and dishonesty—the committee's authority is tested and its corrective mechanisms falter. The persistence of “repeat cases” (paulit-ulit) reflects recidivism that ordinary sanctions no longer deter (Akilith, 2023; Friaes et al., 2023), while unreported incidents create a disciplinary vacuum in which rules appear optional (Palerit & Villocino, 2024). These findings argue for extending the committee's reach through community partnerships and improved surveillance of concealed spaces, and for replacing informal handling with dependable, data-based profiling so that patterns of behavior can be tracked and addressed.

The Shift Toward Positive Discipline and the Primacy of Collaboration

Against these challenges, the study's most encouraging finding was the cultural embedding of positive discipline. Both students and teachers described a move away from purely punitive measures toward counseling, mediation, reflection sessions, student narratives, and community service—practices students perceived as “fair and consistent” and, in the case of

community service, as “tamang parusa” (the correct punishment). This aligns with a broader literature documenting the benefits of restorative and reinforcement-based approaches for school climate and student behavior (Belmonte, 2022; Escobal et al., 2023; Tantu & Marina, 2023). Notably, parental engagement was the highest-rated strategy ($M = 2.75$) and, in the qualitative phase, the most effective deterrent to serious violations such as bullying and vaping—confirming that discipline is a multi-party responsibility rather than a matter of student–teacher relations alone (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Kamara et al., 2023). Yet the value of these practices is bounded by the same infrastructure gap: restorative aspirations perceived as fair still depend on documentation, follow-through, and tracking that the current manual system cannot reliably provide.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Taken together, the findings carry clear implications for stakeholders. For teachers, they point to continuous training in de-escalation and inclusive, restorative strategies, coupled with wellness support to mitigate burnout among the mid-career cohort that carries the disciplinary load. For school administrators, they justify investment in a digital reporting and student-profiling system, adaptive surveillance of concealed spaces, and perimeter-security partnerships with barangay authorities. For curriculum and guidance planners, they support a tiered, progressive structure that resolves minor offenses through in-class reflection while reserving counseling and community service for serious cases. For policymakers, they argue for strengthening the implementation of child-protection and positive-discipline policies and, crucially, resourcing the infrastructure those policies require. In sum, the philosophy of restorative discipline has taken root in the school, but its promise will remain unrealized until it is matched by modern reporting infrastructure, structured community partnerships, and sustained investment in staff capacity and well-being—precisely the integration that the proposed PROJECT S.A.F.E.S. is designed to achieve.

CONCLUSION

The in-depth examination of the quantitative data, integrated with the qualitative interview responses of students and teachers, yielded a coherent picture: a school committee that has genuinely embraced positive, restorative discipline yet remains constrained by workload, weak reporting infrastructure, and threats that extend beyond its walls. From this evidence, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Maintaining the order of the school fell largely to mid-career educators aged 31 to 40, who were under the greatest professional strain and recorded the highest mean score for increased workload. The role of managing chronic discipline cases transformed educators into crisis managers, producing burnout that could destabilize the school's leadership over the long run and diminish the consistency of disciplinary decisions.

2. Student misbehavior had grown more sophisticated, particularly the covert use of vapes and other substances in “hidden” places such as restrooms, and existing facilities were unprepared to detect or deter it. The “Disagree” rating for reporting and surveillance systems confirmed that the committee's tools remained 20th-century methods applied to 21st-century problems.
3. Rapid, unmonitored dismissal exposed students to safety risks exacerbated by threats beyond the school's control. The committee's effectiveness was hindered by the absence of structured collaboration with barangay-level law enforcement, and accounts of gang activity and “abangan” ambush groups revealed a tangible danger to students at the perimeter.
4. The study's central positive finding was the successful embedding of “Positive Discipline.” A visible shift among both students and staff toward restorative approaches—counseling, mediation, reflection, narratives, and community service—established a disciplinary process widely perceived as “fair and consistent,” signaling a cultural change from punitive to rehabilitative practice.
5. The involvement of parents was the most effective safety and risk-management strategy. A cross-accountability bridge between the institution and the home was especially powerful in deterring serious breaches such as bullying and vaping, affirming discipline as a shared, multi-party responsibility.
6. Teacher burnout and overwork produced a systemic gap in discipline. Fatigued teachers overlooking “minor” incidents created inconsistency that emboldened repeat offenders and complicated formal investigations; absent user-friendly reporting structures, the committee could not build the ongoing, evaluative profile of student behavior that effective intervention requires.
7. No statistically significant relationship existed between the frequency and impact of discipline cases and the strategies employed by the committee, indicating that the quality of strategic implementation was shaped less by caseload pressure than by the presence or absence of enabling infrastructure and resources.

Overall, the study concludes that the school's restorative philosophy is culturally accepted but technically unsupported. Its committees are willing and, in orientation, effective, but they are asked to sustain a modern, relational approach to discipline with outdated, manual, and under-resourced systems. Bridging this gap—through digital reporting and profiling, community-based perimeter security, tiered restorative processes, and sustained investment in staff capacity and well-being—is therefore the decisive condition for the committee to maintain safety and order amid rising student cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the overall results and the existing issues in student discipline and committee performance, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school should implement a digital student profiling and reporting system, shifting from informal and manual to formal and digital reporting practices, with automated notifications for “repeat cases” to enable a data-driven analysis of intervention effectiveness.
2. The school should forge stronger security links with the barangay, pursuing a Memorandum of Agreement to secure the perimeter from outsiders and “abangan” groups, and increasing the visibility of barangay tanods during dismissal hours.
3. The school should improve surveillance and infrastructure in hidden spaces such as restroom entrances and areas behind classroom doors, using additional adult presence or intrusion-detection measures—while respecting learners' privacy—to identify concealed behaviors such as vaping and drug use.
4. The school should strengthen programs for parental involvement beyond enforcement, conducting parent-teacher workshops on the student handbook and “Positive Discipline” practices at home.
5. The school should adopt a tiered, progressive structure within the Positive Discipline program, handling minor offenses through in-class reflection sessions and reserving counseling and community service for major offenses, thereby freeing the guidance office to focus on serious issues such as violence and drug abuse.
6. The school should provide appropriate training and wellness services for educators—including conflict-resolution and de-escalation training and regular wellness checks—to address workload and burnout among mid-career teachers.
7. The school should expand restorative justice through peer mediation, training student leaders to help resolve minor issues with teacher support, reducing the number of cases referred to the committee and instilling self-regulation skills among students.

By bridging the gap between restorative philosophy and modern infrastructure, school committees may more effectively maintain safety and order amid rising student cases.

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