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## **Stakeholder Collaboration in Managing Student Behavior and School Discipline: A Cambodian Primary School Case Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Improving student behavior and maintaining school discipline remain central concerns for educational administrators, teachers, and policymakers in Cambodia, where schools navigate the competing pressures of cultural tradition, limited resources, and evolving community expectations. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to generate descriptive and interpretive insight into how parents, school principals, teachers, and other institutional actors perceive and enact school discipline policies at the primary school level. Data were collected through structured in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires, with audio recordings and verbatim transcripts produced for all interview sessions. A total of 48 participants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising five school directors, five vice-directors, five librarians, 20 classroom teachers, four parents, two Buddhist monks, one non-governmental organization volunteer, and one representative each from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, a provincial department of education, and a district office of education, drawn from both public and private primary schools in Cambodia. Thematic analysis of the data identified four dimensions of student behavior, two domains of institutional disciplinary practice, and six categories of stakeholder involvement. Schools that demonstrated stronger coordination among stakeholders reported fewer students requiring formal disciplinary intervention. Four principal challenge clusters were identified, encompassing family disengagement, teacher capacity limitations, peer influence, and external cultural pressures. The findings underscore the need for adaptive, morally grounded, and collaboratively governed disciplinary frameworks that respond to the growing complexity of primary school environments in Cambodia.*

**Keywords:** *Parental Involvement, Positive Behavior Support, School Discipline, Stakeholder Collaboration, Student Behavior*

## INTRODUCTION

The history of formal schooling in Cambodia is deeply rooted in Buddhist monastic traditions, in which temples served as the primary sites of literacy development, moral instruction, and ethical conduct (Loeung & Nara, 2025; Suparmanto et al., 2023). Within these settings, student discipline was guided by a philosophy of duty and communal respect rather than punitive enforcement, with teachers modeling virtuous behavior as the principal means of behavioral guidance (Hansen, 2007). Colonial disruption throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combined with widespread socioeconomic hardship, progressively weakened this tradition by creating structural barriers that drew many children away from schooling entirely (Bao et al., 2025). These historical forces eroded the institutional capacity of schools to sustain their moral and civic functions, while simultaneously reshaping the expectations that families and communities held concerning student behavior. The legacy of this period continues to inform the values and tensions that characterize contemporary school discipline in Cambodia.

In recent decades, Cambodian schools have progressively shifted away from authoritarian disciplinary models toward frameworks that emphasize restorative justice, positive behavior reinforcement, and proactive teacher-student communication (Cantera-Rios et al., 2024). The Royal Government of Cambodia, in collaboration with UNICEF, formally introduced the Positive Discipline Programme into public primary schools in 2015, training thousands of teachers and school directors in child-centered and non-punitive behavioral strategies. Research has consistently demonstrated that restorative practices can reduce disciplinary infractions and improve school climate by addressing the relational and contextual roots of misconduct rather than its surface manifestations (Acosta et al., 2016; Arrington, 2025). Despite this progress, significant challenges persist, particularly regarding resource disparities between urban and rural schools and the residual influence of culturally embedded norms surrounding authority and obedience. These tensions underscore the need for empirical investigation into how discipline is actually practiced, negotiated, and sustained within Cambodian school communities.

This study is theoretically grounded in two complementary frameworks that together account for the multi-layered nature of student behavior. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory conceptualizes child development as the product of dynamic interactions between the individual and nested environmental systems, spanning the family and classroom, home-school linkages, institutional policy, and broader cultural values (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). This framework is particularly well-suited to the Cambodian context, where student behavioral outcomes are shaped simultaneously by family socialization, school governance, community norms, and national policy directives. Bandura's social learning theory

complements this perspective by positing that children acquire behavioral patterns primarily through observation, modeling, and reinforcement within their immediate social environments (Asanjarani et al., 2022). Together, these frameworks support a multi-stakeholder analytical lens through which the roles of principals, teachers, parents, and community actors can be examined as mutually constitutive contributors to school disciplinary culture.

A substantial body of literature has examined the relationship between disciplinary frameworks and student behavioral outcomes across diverse educational contexts. Lee et al. (2021) demonstrated, in a study involving 224 elementary schools, that school-wide positive behavioral interventions significantly reduced disciplinary referrals and exclusionary outcomes across student populations differentiated by gender, race, and disability status. Their findings underscored the importance of institutional consistency and administrative leadership in sustaining behavioral improvement at the system level. Calderon-Villarreal et al. (2025) further found that parental involvement barriers, including low socioeconomic status and demanding work schedules, substantially undermined students' capacity for self-regulated behavior, indicating that effective discipline management must extend beyond school boundaries into family and community spheres.

Further scholarship has explored how restorative and collaborative approaches reshape behavioral norms within schools. Lodi et al. (2021), in a systematic review of restorative justice applications across multiple educational contexts, established that structured restorative circles, peer mediation, and restorative conferences are among the most effective tools for improving school climate and building prosocial competencies. In the Southeast Asian context specifically, Ruos et al. (2025) found that autonomy-supportive instructional behaviors exerted significant positive effects on learning motivation among Cambodian high school students, reinforcing the view that behavioral management is intrinsically linked to pedagogical quality. These findings collectively affirm that disciplinary outcomes are best addressed through coordinated, multi-actor engagement rather than isolated administrative responses.

Despite this growing body of literature, comparatively little empirical research has examined the specific mechanisms through which multi-stakeholder collaboration shapes disciplinary culture in Cambodian primary schools. Much of the existing scholarship draws on Western institutional frameworks or relies predominantly on quantitative outcome measures, limiting its applicability to the sociocultural and policy landscape of Cambodia. There is a notable absence of studies that simultaneously capture the perspectives of school administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders, religious figures, and governmental officials within the same institutional setting. The present study addresses this gap through a qualitative case study design that documents the lived experiences of multiple stakeholder groups across public and private primary schools in Cambodia. The

study is guided by three research questions: (1) How do school principals collaborate with stakeholders to enhance student behavior and school discipline? (2) What challenges are encountered in efforts to improve student behavior and school discipline? (3) What measures have been adopted to address these challenges?

The novelty of this study lies in its deliberate integration of diverse institutional voices within a unified ecological and social learning theoretical framework, applied to the specific historical and policy context of Cambodia. By incorporating perspectives from Ministry of Education representatives, school directors, classroom teachers, parents, monks, and non-governmental organization volunteers, this research produces contextually grounded findings that extend beyond the generalized prescriptions found in the broader international literature. The study does not merely describe disciplinary conditions but maps the stakeholder dynamics that either facilitate or obstruct effective discipline management in practice. These insights are intended to inform policymakers, school administrators, and community stakeholders seeking to develop more coherent, equitable, and culturally appropriate disciplinary frameworks at the primary school level in Cambodia and comparable developing country contexts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **School Leadership and Institutional Governance of Discipline**

School principals occupy a central role in shaping the disciplinary culture of educational institutions (Nurhemah & Putri, 2025). Their leadership decisions, including the policies they set, the professional development they facilitate, and the norms they model, directly influence how discipline is enacted across classrooms and communicated to families. Owens and McLanahan (2020) demonstrated that the relationships among principals, assistant principals, and teachers are critical determinants of how school-wide disciplinary practices are structured and applied, with principal modeling of non-punitive approaches shown to reduce both exclusionary outcomes and disparities across student groups. This underscores the importance of administrative coherence in translating policy intent into consistent disciplinary practice.

The vice-principal's role extends beyond policy enforcement to include instructional coaching, conflict mediation, and the development of individualized behavioral plans for students with persistent conduct concerns (Ho et al., 2024). Effective deputy leadership involves sustained communication with teachers to monitor behavioral trends, guide classroom management responses, and ensure that disciplinary decisions are both fair and educationally purposeful. Dutta and Sahney (2022) confirmed that principal instructional leadership, when aligned with a positive school climate, produced measurable improvements in teacher performance and student achievement, illustrating how governance-level decisions cascade into classroom-level outcomes. In the Cambodian context, where formal

administrative structures are still maturing, the collaborative exercise of leadership between directors and vice-directors is particularly significant in establishing the predictability and fairness that effective discipline requires.

Library and resource staff, while less frequently discussed in disciplinary literature, also contribute to the behavioral ecology of schools by offering structured, non-punitive learning environments that can serve as alternatives to exclusionary discipline (Merga, 2021). These personnel often develop informal relational knowledge of students that informs early identification of behavioral risks. Pollock et al. (2025) noted that principals allocate considerable time to student discipline and attendance issues, frequently experiencing emotional strain in doing so, which suggests that distributing disciplinary responsibilities across a wider range of staff is a practical strategy for sustaining institutional capacity. Recognizing this distributed dimension of governance is essential to understanding how Cambodian primary schools negotiate the daily complexity of behavioral management.

### **Teacher Practice and Classroom Behavioral Management**

Teachers are the most direct institutional agents of behavioral guidance, operating at the intersection of policy directives and students' lived school experiences. Effective classroom management encompasses not only the establishment of clear expectations and consistent consequences, but also the cultivation of supportive teacher-student relationships that reduce the motivation for disruptive behavior in the first place (Islam & Ahammad, 2025). Chow et al. (2024), in a systematic meta-review of classroom management measures across primary and secondary settings, found that high-quality management is characterized by proactive scheduling, responsive relational practice, and structured student engagement rather than by reactive or punitive strategies. These findings reinforce the view that classroom order is a product of relational investment as much as procedural enforcement.

Professional development plays a decisive role in equipping teachers with the skills needed to manage diverse behavioral presentations. Korpershoek et al. (2016), in an updated meta-analysis encompassing 76 controlled intervention studies, confirmed that classroom management interventions produce small but statistically significant improvements in students' behavioral, social-emotional, and motivational outcomes in primary education, particularly when interventions address teacher-student relationships alongside behavioral strategies. Teachers in Cambodia frequently manage large and heterogeneous classrooms with limited access to specialized support, making the quality and consistency of pre-service and in-service training a pressing policy concern (Banh, 2025; Sok & Heng, 2024). Developing teachers' capacity for data-informed behavioral decision-making, trauma-sensitive communication, and social-emotional learning integration is therefore an institutional priority that the present study sought to explore.

## **Parental Involvement and Community Engagement in School Discipline**

Parental involvement represents one of the most robust predictors of positive student behavioral and academic outcomes documented in the educational research literature. Kim (2022) second-order meta-analysis synthesizing over 1,100 primary studies across 23 meta-analyses found that parental involvement, particularly in the form of high academic expectations and consistent home-school communication, yielded a positive effect on student learning. When families and schools operate as coordinated partners, students receive consistent behavioral guidance across domestic and institutional contexts, which substantially strengthens the effectiveness of school-based disciplinary frameworks. The establishment of structured and culturally responsive channels of communication between teachers and parents is therefore a foundational element of any coherent approach to discipline management (Nafisah et al., 2023).

However, access to meaningful parental involvement is not equally distributed across all family contexts. Calderon-Villarreal et al. (2025) found that barriers including low socioeconomic status, demanding employment, limited educational backgrounds, and language differences substantially reduced parental participation in school life, with direct consequences for students' capacity for self-regulation and behavioral compliance. These findings are particularly pertinent to the Cambodian primary school context, where many families in rural and peri-urban areas face compounding socioeconomic pressures that limit their capacity to engage with schools. Addressing these barriers requires schools to design flexible, inclusive, and culturally sensitive engagement strategies rather than relying on conventional attendance-based models of parental participation.

Community actors, including non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, and local governance bodies, constitute an additional layer of behavioral influence that is often underutilized in formal disciplinary planning (Ngulube et al., 2024). In Cambodia, where Buddhist monks and community elders retain significant moral authority, their participation in school life can reinforce prosocial norms and provide students with extended networks of ethical guidance (Loeung & Phal, 2025). Asanjarani et al. (2022) demonstrated, drawing on social learning theory, that parental disciplinary strategies significantly mediate the relationship between family environment and students' academic conduct, suggesting that community-level interventions targeting parenting norms and practices can complement school-based behavioral programs. The present study examines how these multi-actor relationships are negotiated and sustained within the specific institutional and cultural landscape of Cambodian primary education.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach grounded in a phenomenological design, which was selected for its capacity to illuminate the lived

experiences and situated perspectives of individuals directly involved in the governance and practice of school discipline (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Phenomenological inquiry is particularly well-suited to educational contexts in which institutional phenomena are experienced differently across roles and settings, as it enables researchers to move beyond surface-level descriptions and engage with the subjective meanings that participants attach to their experiences (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). The research was conducted across both public and private primary schools in Cambodia, involving a total of 48 purposively selected participants whose roles afforded direct and varied engagement with student behavioral management. These included five school directors, five vice-directors, five librarians, 20 classroom teachers, four parents, two Buddhist monks, one representative each from the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Department of Education, and a District Office of Education, and one non-governmental organization volunteer. Purposive sampling was employed throughout the selection process, guided by the principle that participants should be chosen on the basis of their capacity to provide information-rich accounts relevant to the research questions rather than for the purpose of statistical representativeness (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). This sampling strategy ensured that the full spectrum of institutional actors shaping disciplinary culture in Cambodian primary schools was represented within the study's participant group.

Data were collected through two primary instruments: structured in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant, following a protocol that allowed sufficient flexibility to probe emergent issues while maintaining focus on the three core research questions (Ruslin et al., 2022). All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity of participants' own words and expressions. Open-ended questionnaires were administered as a supplementary instrument to capture written reflections that participants may not have articulated readily in face-to-face settings, thereby broadening the evidential base available for analysis. Data analysis proceeded through thematic analysis, involving iterative cycles of reading, coding, and categorization to identify patterns of meaning across the full dataset. Member checking and peer debriefing were employed as primary strategies for establishing the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, consistent with established standards for rigorous qualitative inquiry (Johnson et al., 2020). Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study, including the assurance of voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the right of participants to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study are organized around three interconnected areas that correspond directly to the research questions: student behavior patterns and

participation, institutional disciplinary structures and stakeholder roles, and the challenges that impede effective discipline management. Data were drawn from structured in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires administered to 48 purposively selected participants across public and private primary schools in Cambodia. The thematic analysis produced a rich set of themes and sub-themes that are presented and discussed below, with each section drawing on representative participant voices alongside interpretive commentary that situates the findings within the broader scholarly literature.

### **Student Behavior Patterns: Participation, Respect, and Misbehavior**

Across all participant groups, student behavior emerged as the most frequently discussed and consequential theme, functioning as what grounded theorists would call a central or axial category around which all other disciplinary concerns converged. The thematic analysis identified four primary dimensions of student behavior: active participation in learning, demonstration of respect toward teachers and peers, engagement with academic work, and engagement in forms of misbehavior. These dimensions are summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1** Themes and Sub-themes of Student Behavior

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Indicators / Examples</b>
<b>Theme 1: Student Participation</b>	Class Participation School Participation	Discussion and debate; group and individual work; presentations; games; seeking help; asking questions (P01); showcasing talents; holding contests; maintaining a clean environment (P09)
<b>Theme 2: Student Respect</b>	Respect for teachers; Respect for peers; Gratitude; Respect for the learning environment	Active listening; following instructions; kindness and empathy; inclusion; conflict resolution; expressing thanks; acknowledging effort; mindfulness and reflection
<b>Theme 3: Academic Work</b>	Assignments; Productive learning activities; Note-taking; Test preparation	Taking care of facilities; proper use of equipment; respecting rules; noise control; reporting concerns (P13)
<b>Theme 4: Student Misbehavior</b>	Verbal Bullying Physical Bullying	Insults; teasing; threats; harassment; exclusion; manipulation; hitting; kicking; pushing; theft of belongings; attention-seeking; passive-aggressive behavior (P15)

**Source:** Author's Analysis (2025)

Student participation was described by participants as one of the most reliable indicators of positive behavioral orientation. One principal (ID=P01) stated that

structuring lessons to invite debate, questioning, and collaborative problem-solving produced students who were more invested in maintaining orderly conduct, as active engagement gave them a sense of ownership over their learning environment. This finding aligns with research demonstrating that class participation directly supports student motivation and academic performance when teachers provide structured feedback on student contributions (Ley et al., 2022). Respect-related behaviors, including active listening, conflict resolution, and expressions of gratitude, were similarly linked by participants to the relational quality of teacher-student interactions rather than to formal rule-following. Student misbehavior, by contrast, was documented across two broad categories: verbal bullying, encompassing insults, teasing, threats, and social exclusion, and physical bullying, encompassing hitting, pushing, theft, and forced actions. These behavioral categories are consistent with internationally recognized typologies of school bullying and their associated psychosocial consequences (Adams & Hannum, 2018).

### **Institutional Disciplinary Structures and Stakeholder Roles**

The second major finding concerns the disciplinary structures that Cambodian primary schools have developed and the roles that multiple stakeholder groups play within them. Participants described two overlapping dimensions of institutional discipline: the specific disciplinary actions applied in response to student misconduct, and the broader school regulations that establish behavioral expectations. These are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2** Themes and Sub-themes of School Discipline

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Indicators / Examples</b>
<b>Theme 1: Disciplinary Actions</b>	Academic Punishment; Verbal Warnings; Labor as Punishment	Copying or reciting lessons; extra homework; detention; academic probation; positive reinforcement; letter of apology; referral to principal; suspension; expulsion (P15, P27)
<b>Theme 2: School Regulations</b>	Dress code; Punctuality; Health and safety; Special education regulations	Standardized uniforms; dress guidelines; time-out; gardening tasks; community service; attendance records; excused/unexcused absences; health and hygiene; anti-discrimination provisions for students with disabilities (P17, P28, P11)

**Source:** Author's Analysis (2025)

Disciplinary actions in the schools studied ranged from academically oriented responses, such as copying or reciting lessons, extra homework, and academic probation, to more formal measures, including verbal warnings, referral to the principal, suspension, and in serious cases, expulsion. Positive reinforcement was

identified by participant P15 as an important complement to corrective responses, a finding that directly supports the literature on positive behavioral interventions and their effectiveness in reducing exclusionary discipline outcomes (Lee et al., 2021). School regulations covered dress code, punctuality, health and safety, and, notably, specific protections for students with disabilities, with participant P11 emphasizing that preventing discrimination against disabled students was an explicit institutional priority. The involvement of six distinct stakeholder groups was documented, spanning the Ministry of Education, school leadership, teachers, parents, Buddhist monks, and non-governmental organizations, each contributing to the disciplinary culture through a distinct but overlapping set of functions. Ministry-level engagement focused on policy development, curriculum integration, and teacher training, while school directors concentrated on setting expectations, monitoring behavioral data, and celebrating positive conduct. Monks contributed through moral instruction, mindfulness practices, and community engagement, and NGO representatives provided anti-bullying programs, mentoring services, and capacity-building support for both teachers and parents.

This multi-actor configuration of school discipline governance provides empirical support for the application of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory in the Cambodian educational context (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). The findings confirm that student behavioral outcomes are not shaped by classroom dynamics alone but by the cumulative and interactive influence of family, school, community, and national policy environments. The governance structures identified in this study extend and enrich the theoretical framework applied in the introduction by demonstrating concretely how each systemic layer contributes to the disciplinary culture of primary schools in Cambodia.

### **Challenges in Improving Student Behavior and School Discipline**

The third major area of findings concerns the challenges that participants identified as limiting the effectiveness of existing disciplinary efforts. Four thematic clusters of challenges were identified, as presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3** Themes and Sub-themes of Challenges in Improving Student Behavior

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Indicators / Examples</b>
<b>Theme 1: Family Factors</b>	Collaboration; Family behavior; Family attitudes; Domestic violence; Financial problems	Insufficient monitoring time; lack of guidance; poor collaboration with neighbors and teachers (P13); bad role modeling; spoiling children; children not following parental advice (P16, P18)
<b>Theme 2: Teacher Factors</b>	Classroom management issues; Teacher collaboration	Weak classroom interventions; lack of clear instruction; poor relationship-building with parents and community (P13, P19)

Theme	Sub-theme	Indicators / Examples
<b>Theme 3: Peer Influence</b>	Peer pressure; Gang behavior; Drug abuse	Disruptive classroom behavior; gang involvement; substance abuse; negative peer pressure (P27)
<b>Theme 4: Cultural Factors</b>	External cultural influence; Disrespectful behavior	Inappropriate media and clothing influences from foreign cultures; disrespectful conduct toward teachers and peers (P23)

**Source:** Author's Analysis (2025)

Family-related factors were identified as the most pervasive source of disciplinary challenge. Participants described situations in which parents lacked sufficient time to monitor children's behavior, provided inconsistent or absent behavioral guidance, or inadvertently reinforced problematic conduct through permissiveness. Participant P16 noted that children who received poor behavioral modeling at home frequently exhibited the same patterns in school, while participant P18 described instances in which parents' tendency to shield children from consequences undermined teachers' disciplinary efforts. These observations resonate strongly with the findings of Calderon-Villarreal et al. (2025), who demonstrated that parental involvement barriers arising from socioeconomic pressure and limited educational background directly undermine students' capacity for self-regulation, and with Asanjarani et al. (2022), who confirmed through a social learning framework that parental disciplinary strategies significantly mediate students' academic conduct.

Teacher-related challenges centered on weaknesses in classroom management capacity and insufficient collaboration between teachers and the wider school community. Several participants highlighted that when teachers lacked the skills to deliver clear, engaging instruction, students became disengaged and more prone to disruptive behavior, creating a cycle in which poor pedagogy and poor conduct reinforced one another. This finding directly supports Korpershoek et al. (2016) meta-analytic conclusion that classroom management interventions must address teacher-student relationships and instructional quality in tandem, not merely procedural behavioral responses. Peer influence and cultural factors constituted additional challenge clusters, with participants reporting concerns about gang-related activity in surrounding communities, substance exposure, and the disruptive influence of foreign media content on students' behavioral expectations and dress norms. Adams and Hannum (2018) similarly found, in a multilevel study across Chinese schools, that peer group dynamics and the competitive social atmosphere of schools significantly amplified bullying and conduct problems, suggesting that peer-level behavioral norms require targeted institutional attention.

Taken together, the findings of this study largely support and extend the body of research cited in the introduction, while also producing contextually specific insights that the existing literature had not fully articulated. The study's confirmation that active student participation and relational respect between teachers and students are central to positive behavioral outcomes extends the findings of Ruos et al. (2025), who demonstrated in a Cambodian high school context that autonomy-supportive teaching significantly improved student motivation. The present study adds to this by showing that these relational dynamics are equally operative at the primary school level and are strongly mediated by the quality of stakeholder collaboration around behavioral norms rather than by instructional factors alone.

The multi-stakeholder governance structure documented in this study extends rather than contradicts the findings of Lee et al. (2021) on school-wide positive behavioral interventions. While Lee et al. (2021) established the effectiveness of system-level behavioral frameworks within a predominantly quantitative, Western school context, the present study demonstrates that comparable multi-actor coordination occurs organically in Cambodian primary schools through culturally specific channels, including the moral authority of Buddhist monks and the community engagement functions of NGOs. This finding suggests that the applicability of positive behavioral systems theory to non-Western educational contexts is broader than previously demonstrated, provided that culturally embedded actors are recognized as legitimate components of the disciplinary ecosystem rather than supplementary additions.

The study's findings on family-related challenges and peer influence as impediments to effective discipline management both support and extend the conclusions of Lodi et al. (2021), who found in their systematic review that restorative practices succeed most fully when they are embedded in broader relational and community contexts. The Cambodian case reinforces this conclusion by showing that restorative or positive disciplinary approaches are systematically undermined when the family and community layers of the bioecological system are not functioning in alignment with school-level expectations. This represents an important contribution to the literature: it positions family-school misalignment not merely as a contextual challenge but as a fundamental structural issue that any effective disciplinary framework in developing country contexts must explicitly address. Future research and policy development should therefore focus on designing structured family engagement models that are sensitive to the socioeconomic realities and cultural norms of Cambodian communities, rather than adopting family involvement approaches designed for more resource-advantaged settings.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how multi-stakeholder collaboration shapes student behavior and school discipline in Cambodian primary schools, what challenges impede effective disciplinary management, and what strategies have been adopted in response. The findings reveal that disciplinary culture in these schools is sustained through the coordinated, though not always formalized, engagement of a broad network of actors spanning school leadership, classroom teachers, parents, Buddhist monks, non-governmental organizations, and governmental bodies at the district, provincial, and national levels. Institutional disciplinary practices encompass a continuum of responses, from academically oriented corrective measures such as repeated lesson recitation and additional assignments to more formal sanctions including suspension and expulsion, alongside regulatory frameworks governing dress, punctuality, health, and the rights of students with disabilities. These structures reflect a system in active transition, moving away from purely punitive approaches toward frameworks that incorporate positive reinforcement, restorative communication, and community-based moral guidance.

Despite these institutional efforts, four persistent challenge domains were identified as substantially limiting disciplinary effectiveness: family-level disengagement, teacher capacity constraints, peer and gang-related influences, and the disruptive impact of external cultural pressures on students' behavioral norms. The most consequential of these is the misalignment between home and school behavioral expectations, arising from insufficient parental monitoring, inconsistent reinforcement of school rules within the domestic environment, and structural barriers that prevent many families from participating meaningfully in school life. The cultural challenge dimension, encompassing the influence of foreign media, peer group norms, and community-level gang activity, adds a layer of complexity that is specific to Cambodia's current period of rapid social and economic change and that existing disciplinary frameworks have not yet adequately addressed. Taken together, these challenges confirm that disciplinary improvement cannot be achieved through school-level intervention alone but requires the sustained alignment of family, community, and institutional action.

The findings carry several practical implications for policymakers, school administrators, and community stakeholders. Schools are recommended to establish structured monthly home-school communication cycles, utilize counseling facilities as dedicated spaces for addressing culturally sensitive behavioral concerns, and deepen institutional partnerships with local religious leaders and community organizations to reinforce moral education beyond the classroom. At the policy level, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is encouraged to develop contextually adapted family engagement frameworks that acknowledge the socioeconomic realities of Cambodian households and equip schools with the

resources needed to sustain meaningful parental outreach. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-methods designs to assess the sustained impact of specific stakeholder collaboration models on student behavioral outcomes, and should extend inquiry to secondary school settings and rural communities where disciplinary challenges may differ substantially from those documented in this study.

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