

## Ubuntu-Informed Approaches to Managing Learner Disruptive Behaviour in Rural South African Classrooms: Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge Systems

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**Abstract.** Learner Disruptive Behaviour (LDB) during lessons is a huge challenge that negatively impacts lesson delivery, instructional effectiveness and academic achievement worldwide. It is also a threat to the psychological and emotional well-being of learners and teachers. Previous studies focused on traditional methods based on behaviouristic and cognitivist strategies to manage LDB. There is limited research on how LDB can be managed through sociocultural grounded approaches. Therefore, this study examines how LDB can be managed within the sociocultural contexts of participants in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) in rural South Africa. The Ubuntu philosophy and the African Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) framework were used to understand how to minimise LDB. A phenomenological research design was used to conduct a qualitative study. The study population comprised all learners and teachers in rural schools in the Vhembe East District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Nineteen participants, including twelve teachers and seven learners, were conveniently sampled for the study, with trustworthiness enhanced through triangulation across interviews, document analysis, and participant observation. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six stages, revealed that modern Western methods are inadequate for managing disruptive behaviour, whereas Indigenous Knowledge Systems grounded in Ubuntu philosophy can enhance teachers' classroom management skills. The study has practical and policy implications by supporting SDG 4, which promotes quality education through inclusive, supportive, and respectful learning environments, and SDG 10, which seeks to reduce educational inequalities in rural contexts. It is therefore recommended that practising teachers integrate African IKS and Ubuntu into class management to strengthen learning outcomes.

**Keywords** Classroom management; learner disruptive behaviour; Ubuntu; indigenous knowledge systems; intermediate phase.

### Introduction

Learner Disruptive behaviour (LDB) is a growing worldwide phenomenon that hinders academic achievement, impedes effective learning, and increases teacher fatigue. LDB refers to actions displayed by a learner during instruction that distract from the teaching-learning process, including making noise, changing seating positions unnecessarily, disrespecting other learners or the teacher, inattentiveness, or aggression (Nguyen & Tran, 2024; Wangdi & Namgyel, 2022). Many schools in developing countries have adopted classroom management policies, models, and approaches originating in Western countries (Burkey et al., 2018), without regard for cultural and contextual conditions, to address LDB. However, these approaches to classroom management are often found to be inadequate in managing LDB in the sociocultural contexts of developing countries.

LDB poses a significant challenge to the effective delivery of quality education in rural schools in Southern Africa, resulting in wasted time, failure to meet learning objectives, and a negative impact on academic performance (Lunga et al., 2021). Past research has also empirically demonstrated that LDB leads

to teacher exhaustion (Kollerová et al., 2023) and may negatively impact teachers' mental health, which may be a reason experienced teachers choose to leave the teaching profession.

The causes of LDB are multifaceted, ranging from teacher-related causes, such as a lack of classroom management or teaching skills (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020), to socio-economic causes such as poverty and inconducive home and school conditions and learner-related causes such as psychological disorders (Burden, 2025; Burkey et al., 2018). Strategies that teachers may use in managing disruptive behaviour include being well-prepared for lessons, maintaining positive relationships with learners, and varying teaching methods to appeal to all learning styles. Additionally, anticipating potential disruptive behaviours and developing effective strategies to respond to them are important (Burden, 2025; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020). Teachers also rely on national and school policies and regulations, which often involve setting school and classroom rules and guidelines to make it clear to learners what behaviours are acceptable (Burden, 2025).

Despite policies and guidelines for managing classroom misdemeanours, rural schoolteachers continue to face serious challenges due to the LDB (Lunga et al., 2021). However, it must be acknowledged that Southern Africa is endowed with vibrant Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that have the potential to shed light on how LDB can be minimised through improving respect, social cohesion, and community unity (Odora Hoppers, 2021). The African IKS are deeply rooted in African cultural values and practices, which are guided by the Ubuntu philosophy (Bhuda & Marumo, 2022). A paucity of empirical research on the management of disruptive behaviour in classrooms persists, despite its serious negative consequences (Burkey et al., 2018; Lunga et al., 2021). This study, therefore, argues that integrating African IKS grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy is a viable approach to addressing the challenges of LDB in rural African communities and similar areas elsewhere. Like Wuta (2022), we propose that Western approaches to educational issues complement African perspectives rather than replace them.

### *Ubuntu and Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

A sociocultural theoretical framework with the potential to shed light on the phenomenon of LDB in South African schools is the Ubuntu philosophy and African IKS (Ubuntu-IKS framework) (Letseka, 2013; Lunga et al., 2021; Ngubane & Makua, 2021). The philosophy of Ubuntu embodies African IKS and is a way of life for African people in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Although there are no equivalent translations that adequately describe what Ubuntu means in English, Waghid (2020) defines it as human interdependence and humaneness. The Ubuntu-IKS framework rejects the Eurocentric view, which emphasises the primacy of individualism, but recognises the interdependence of individuals and their mutual co-existence. In the indigenous Sesotho language, Letseka (2013) summarises the centrality of morality in Ubuntu, noting that “*motho ke motho ka batho babang*”, a statement common across all Bantu languages. Ngubane and Makua (2021) assert that the Ubuntu-IKS framework is based on care, respect, compassion, kindness and generosity towards others.

The Ubuntu philosophy is rooted in the African concept of Ubuntu, which is expressed in African IKS. Kipkoech (2024) defines IKS as a form of non-formal education comprising diverse knowledge systems, including social, legal, and governmental systems, technology, and philosophy, passed from one generation to another through storytelling, songs, and rituals, with strong roots in the community's culture. Gyamerah (2025) argues that grounding educational practices in African cultural contexts is crucial for enhancing learners' self-esteem, cultural awareness, and appreciation. Class management practices rooted in learners' cultural practices are likely to be supported by community members in the areas where these schools are situated, including elders, traditional leaders, parents, and even learners themselves. Basing disciplinary processes on respect, care, compassion, inclusivity, generosity, kindness, and nurturing young people in schools, guided by the Ubuntu-IKS framework, is likely to yield positive results in minimising disruptions in rural classrooms in Africa and similar contexts elsewhere. This is supported by previous studies that revealed that classroom management practices based on the Ubuntu-IKS framework have a positive influence on learner behaviour. It has the potential to reduce LDB, increase inclusivity, and provide emotional support, thereby improving academic achievement (Dube & Higgs, 2024; Mavuso et al., 2023; Mncube & Hadebe-Ndlovu, 2023; Mutanga, 2024).

## Methodology

The study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm, a worldview that holds that reality is socially constructed and subjective, and rejects the ontology that reality exists out there and awaits discovery, as in the natural sciences that seek laws governing humanity (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). The research does not aim to uncover the absolute truth about the phenomenon under study, but rather to interpret the meanings participants attach to disruptive behaviours in classes (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). To achieve its aim, the study adopts a phenomenological research design to explore the cultural contexts and lived experiences of the participants through “direct phenomena experiencing” (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The research is a hermeneutic-phenomenological study, as it goes beyond describing participants' lived experiences to interpret them in search of potential solutions to minimise disruptive behaviours in rural schools (Renjith et al., 2021).

As is customary in research involving human subjects, all procedures for ethical clearance to conduct the study were followed. The university ethics committee and the Department of Basic Education provided permission in March 2024. Informed consent was obtained from participants or their guardians (who were minors) and was granted in the same year as data collection.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. This sampling approach is suitable for qualitative research, as participants who were knowledgeable about learner disruptive behaviour were selected to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Renjith et al., 2021). Twelve teachers at three schools in a rural community in Vhembe East were selected based on their experience managing classes with learners displaying disruptive behaviour. Seven learners in these teachers' classes were purposively selected for document analysis and participant observation, as they displayed disruptive behaviour. The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographic information of the participants*

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> |
|--------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1A                 | 34         | F             |
| 1B                 | 46         | M             |
| 1C                 | 42         | M             |
| 1D                 | 51         | F             |
| 2A                 | 55         | M             |
| 2B                 | 40         | F             |
| 2C                 | 31         | M             |
| 2D                 | 52         | F             |
| 3A                 | 57         | M             |
| 3B                 | 56         | F             |
| 3C                 | 38         | M             |
| 3D                 | 43         | M             |

This study collected data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, following procedures common in qualitative research (Renjith et al., 2021). Data collection occurred from July to September 2024. A semi-structured interview protocol was prepared to guide data collection. The semi-structured interview protocol targeted examples of disruptive behaviour encountered by teachers, potential causes, management strategies and challenges, teachers' experiences in incorporating Ubuntu-IKS-informed practices, school policies, and culturally responsive approaches. The interview protocol was sent to a panel of three university lecturers with expertise ranging from Ubuntu-IKS frameworks to initial teacher education. They assisted in validating the protocol, and we discussed it with them and arrived at the final version.

Instead of a focus group discussion, we employed semi-structured individual in-depth interviews, which were more appropriate for collecting sensitive data on learner behaviour. The interview process occurred in

three phases. The first phase involved individual interviews; the second, member checking; and the last, verification by the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in quiet rooms at the schools where the teachers worked. Each interview lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. The participants were informed of the study's purpose, and the ethical guidelines were followed. Informed consent was sought from the participants. Each participant was informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse effects. Permission to record the interviews using an electronic recording device was requested from each participant and was granted.

Software was used to transcribe the interviews. After transcription, each participant was provided with their interview transcript for member checking to enhance credibility and trustworthiness (Birt et al., 2016). Data analysis of the transcripts commenced after participants confirmed that the transcripts accurately represented their views. Data analysis also included document analysis, which involved analysing learners' marksheets and attendance registers to enhance trustworthiness through triangulation.

Thematic data analysis was conducted following the six stages outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process was not followed linearly, but rather in a recursive manner. It involved familiarising with the data by reading and rereading, generating codes, and then identifying and reviewing the themes. These processes were reviewed several times. Finally, the researchers agreed on the definitions and names of the themes before writing the report. Across all datasets, four overarching themes were generated both deductively and inductively and twelve sub-themes were identified. These themes adequately addressed the research questions. The findings are presented based on the identified themes.

## The Findings

This study uncovered key insights from interviews with Intermediate Phase teachers and classroom observations conducted in selected rural schools. The findings reveal a complex relationship between learner behaviour, socio-cultural influences, and the application of indigenous African values in classroom management. This section presents the study's findings, based on themes that emerged from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The first theme, *teachers' conceptualisation of disruptive behaviour*, addressed the first research question: What disruptive behaviours are observed in the Intermediate Phase, Grades 4 to 6? The second research question: What are the causes of disruptive behaviour in the intermediate phase? was addressed by the second theme - *social and cultural foundations of disruptive behaviour*. The themes, *strategies and practices based on Ubuntu to curb class disruptive behaviour* and *develop a culture-sensitive strategy* addressed the final research question: What strategies can be used to minimise disruptive behaviours? These themes are discussed in this section.

### *Teachers' Conceptualisation of Disruptive Behaviour*

The study revealed various kinds of behaviours that negatively affected learning. Common behaviours reported by the participants include bullying, disrespect for teachers and other learners, making noise during learning activities, fidgeting, fighting, aggressive and threatening behaviour, and disregarding teachers' instructions. Such behaviour interferes with instruction, reduces class time, and weakens peer learning and instructor effectiveness. Among the identified forms of behaviour that negatively influenced learning, the participating teachers conceptualised disruptive behaviour. For example, participant 1A stated:

*"Actions by learners that hamper the smooth running of teaching and learning in schools, I can rather say, naughty behaviour."*

(Participant 1A, Female, 34 years old)

These actions by learners negatively affect the classroom climate, disrupting the learning process. Participant 1B said:

*“I think learner misbehaviour is any form of negative behaviour that is not appropriate to the learner’s age, violates school or classroom rules and norms, and interferes with the maintenance of order in the classroom and the smooth process of teaching and learning.”*

(Participant 1B, Male, 46 years old)

The disruptive behaviours were evident during the classroom observation sessions conducted by the researchers. The disruptive behaviours observed by the researchers include late arrival, chatting during lessons, bullying, unnecessary changes in seating positions, and disrespectful behaviour by a handful of learners, while most learners were making positive contributions to the learning process. The observed disruptive behaviours range from minor misdemeanours that did not significantly affect the flow of teaching and learning to more serious actions that could have rendered the lesson unsuccessful. School management and teachers were able to identify behaviours that negatively impact teaching and learning and make rules. Ignoring these rules and engaging in disruptive behaviours had long-term effects, including poor academic achievement, reduced motivation, and disengagement from learning tasks, as evident in the document analysis.

The researchers analysed the end-of-term reports of learners who persistently engaged in disruptive behaviour. Their performance in Mathematics, English, and Social Sciences revealed a disturbing pattern. Learner A scored 38%, 16%, and 40% in English, Mathematics, and Social Sciences, respectively. Learner B scored 40%, 22%, and 18% in the three learning areas, respectively, while Learner C had no marks in English and Mathematics but scored 16% in Social Sciences. This performance was well below the average class performance across all learning areas. The data from the daily attendance register for a four-week period showed that learner A was absent for 13 days, learner B for 5 days, and learner C for 3 days. Most learners were present on most days. The corroborated data from document analysis and interviews suggest that disruptive behaviour impedes academic performance. Therefore, it is essential that teachers recognise these behaviours and develop effective classroom management strategies to maintain a conducive learning environment.

### *Social and Cultural Foundations of Disruptive Behaviour*

Teachers attributed many behavioural concerns to circumstances outside the classroom, such as poverty, domestic instability, lack of parental support, and emotional trauma. These findings support ecological theories, such as Bronfenbrenner’s (1986), which emphasise how learners are influenced by interconnected systems, including home, school, and community environments. Participant 3C explained how he perceived the link between societal issues like poverty are related to classroom behaviour by saying:

*“This community is characterised by serious poverty. Most learners come from families where both parents are unemployed, relying on monthly government child grants as their sole source of income. That situation can affect the learner and cause them to react by being disruptive here at school.”*

(Participant 3C, Male, 37 years old)

Other participants echoed similar sentiments, reflecting the strong link between disruptive behaviour and home background. For example, participant 3D said:

*“Family background highly influences learners’ behaviour; a learner who does not receive sufficient attention, love and care from home tends to misbehave more in school, especially learners who are not living with parents or living with a divorced or problematic family environment are easily involved in problematic behaviours. If, as teachers, we give ourselves time to check the background of the disrupter, we can always find that something is not right, ... really not right at home.”*

(Participant 3D, Male, 43 years old)

Furthermore, substance and drug abuse were identified as contributing to disruptive classroom behaviour. Participant 2D, a female teacher, stated the following:

*“Drugs and alcohol are the main problems for learners in this school. Before break time, it is easy to manage the class. Some boys always change their behaviour after break due to the drugs that they take during breaks. Disrupters use juice bottles to bring alcohol to the classroom. You will just wonder... why the learner is drunk.”*  
(Participant 2D, Female, 52 years old)

The implications of these findings are that teachers cannot resolve serious classroom problems without the involvement of parents or guardians, who should assist teachers in understanding the causes and potential solutions to persistent disruptive actions by some learners. Therefore, some misdemeanours require parental involvement.

### *Strategies and Practices Based on Ubuntu to Curb Class Disruptive Behaviour*

Instructors who incorporated the Ubuntu values of community, respect, and empathy observed improvements in their learners' behaviour. Rebuilding trust and fostering improved classroom cooperation were made possible through interventions that included group discussions, value-transmitting storytelling, and promoting mutual respect. The findings of this study revealed that schools had available various strategies and practices to curb disruptive behaviours through the application of Ubuntu values and principles. The availability of documents detailing the acceptable norms and values of the institutions, through the code of conduct, disciplinary committees, class prefects, social workers, and meetings between teachers and parents to address disruptive behaviours, indicates that a mix of robust approaches was available to address the problem. Wisdom from the African Indigenous Knowledge Systems requires that no stone be left unturned in rehabilitating the offender; therefore, dialogue is the cornerstone of minimising the negative consequences of disruptive behaviours.

In support of the foregoing, Participant 2B stated the following regarding how school and class rules were created through dialogue, instead of being imposed upon learners and parents, and the availability of support from class prefects and disciplinary committee members to ensure that the principles of fairness in Ubuntu philosophy are entrenched in disciplinary processes:

*“Parents are involved in drawing up the code of conduct for learners .... class prefects are used to monitor disruptors during teaching and learning, and a disciplinary committee is in place for disciplinary actions.”*  
(Participant 2B, Female, 40 years old)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Participant 3A, who stated that:

*“Learners should form part of the code of conduct formulation team. It will help them because they cannot bend or break the laws that they formulated themselves. Parents should also sign the code of conduct at the beginning of every school year, for them to be aware of the consequences, and they can help in moulding good and acceptable behaviours amongst their children.”*

(Participant 3A, Male, 57 years old)

From an African perspective, raising a child is a communal affair, and various members have supporting roles to play. Participant 1B supported this view by stating the need to involve social workers and psychologists in managing disruptive behaviours:

*“Social workers and psychologists should be available to help both teachers and learners with disruptive behaviour and to manage it”.*

(Participant 1B, Male, 46 years old)

The same Participant, 1B, places a premium on the utility value of morals as a cornerstone of good upbringing by stating that:

*“Parents should be encouraged to teach their children morals and assist teachers in addressing the problem of disruptive behaviour in school. Good morals can combat disruptive behaviours among these learners.”*

(Participant 1B, Male, 46 years old)

This study found that experts in other fields, such as social work and psychology, as well as parents, play a critical role in managing persistent behavioural issues, and this was viewed as a productive strategy. Learners often responded more positively when behavioural interventions involved respected community figures, such as social workers, the school principal, and members of the school governing body, reinforcing the relevance of cultural norms and expectations in guiding learner behaviour. This aligns with the Ubuntu philosophy, which holds that community leaders are repositories of wisdom that can be tapped.

### *Developing Culture-Sensitive Strategies*

Findings suggest that effective behaviour management in rural contexts requires blending African indigenous wisdom with contemporary educational methods. Teachers expressed the need for training that integrates Ubuntu principles, emotional support strategies, and culturally relevant practices as the cornerstone of an adaptable, long-term plan for learner behaviour. Teachers reported that punitive measures and referrals to School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) were examples of standard disciplinary processes that were either insufficient or inadequately carried out. These methods did not adequately address the root causes of learner misconduct.

Effective behaviour management is a critical skill for effective teaching and learning. Various factors play a central role in behaviour management, including class size, teachers' skills in managing the class, lesson preparation, and the relationship between the teacher and learners. An understanding of the complexity of disruptive behaviour makes teachers aware that, when such behaviour manifests in classrooms, its causes may be complex; therefore, teachers require patience to comprehend them, in alignment with the Ubuntu philosophy. While experienced teachers often understand the complexity of human behaviour and can utilise strategies they acquired over time, this is not often the case with inexperienced teachers. Regarding these issues, the participants stated the following:

*“New teachers must assist learners rather than disciplining them, give disrupters an ear, but be firm when dealing with them and understand that the disrupters' background can be of good help.”*

(Participant 1D, Female, 51 years old)

Participant 1D considers it critical that teaching should not just be about punishing offenders (apparently what the participant refers to as disciplining), but instead about assisting disruptive learners to reform. An understanding of the learner's background and the potential causes of the misdemeanours is central to overcoming the challenges. The participant's views align well with the Ubuntu philosophy, which values kindness, compassion, respect, and cooperation (Ngubane & Makua, 2024). This was supported by Participant 2A, who said:

*“New teachers should always seek advice from other teachers when experiencing challenges in the classroom.”*

(Participant 2A, Male, 50 years old)

These humanistic values of solidarity and cooperation, when applied to disciplinary matters such as disruptive behaviour and working in the best interests of the offending child, have the potential to contribute positively to the learner's cognitive development. While punishment may have a role, it must only be used as a last resort. Teachers should cooperate with parents to resolve disruptive behaviour. This view was supported by Participant 3B, who said:

*“Parents should be informed about this challenge of disruptive behaviour among Intermediate Phase learners because they often don’t know what is really going on here at school and what we, as teachers, encounter every day.”*

(Participant 3B, Female, 56 years old)

Synergy between parents and teachers in addressing disruptive behaviour can help teachers understand its root causes and explore ways to alleviate it. This was echoed by Participant 3A, who said that teachers should know the background of disrupters for positive interactions and help. Various approaches grounded in humanistic values are available for teachers to explore to minimise the negative effects of disruptive behaviours. These approaches range from knowing learners' names so that, when they engage in such behaviours, the teacher addresses them by name. If the learner realises that the teacher knows them, they are likely to desist from disruptive behaviour. The teacher should be mindful of the seating arrangement in the class. The teacher should experiment with various seating arrangements, mixing learners who tend to be disruptive with those who are composed, and determine which arrangements are more appropriate for their class. This view was put forward by Participant 2C as follows:

*“I always change the sitting positions of learners so that they do not hide behind other learners. Disrupters don’t like sitting in the front row, and that is one thing they hate most. When they are occupying the front seats, it is impossible for them to make noise.”*

(Participant 2C, Male, 31 years old)

Isolation and any form of punishment are extreme measures that should not be used in behaviour management when employing the Ubuntu philosophy, as they may negatively affect learners' rights to education. Only extreme behaviours warrant such actions, and the control measures should be implemented in accordance with the laws and regulations governing their use. Ubuntu philosophy supports the development of a society where forms of violence, particularly against vulnerable members, such as minors, are not regarded as acceptable (Lephoto, 2023; Mekgwe et al., 2025; Singha & Kanna, 2022).

## Discussion

The conceptualisation of the disruptive behaviour in this study aligns with extant literature. For example, Nash et al. (2016) conceptualise disruptive behaviour as any behaviour displayed by a learner that distracts the teacher or other learners, potentially leading to failure to achieve the learning objectives. These authors also cite the same forms of distractions identified in this study as disruptive to learning. Nash et al. (2016) regard the causes of disruptive behaviour as complex, rooted in psychological foundations, often driven by traumatic past events such as fear and anxiety, and requiring reflection and a comprehensive understanding to guide corrective actions. Therefore, the principles of Ubuntu, based on compassion, trust, care, and support (Ngubane & Makua, 2021), are likely to yield better outcomes in cognitively reforming learners who persistently display such behaviours, rather than relying on quick-fix solutions such as punishment. Our findings on the role of community leaders in reducing LDB align with Sikhwari's (2025) study.

The study found that learners who persistently engage in disruptive behaviour are frequently absent from school and have lower academic performance than other learners. Past research consistently demonstrates a correlation between disruptive behaviour and low academic achievement, supporting our findings (Becherer et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Liu, 2024). It is therefore important to reduce disruptive behaviour to improve learners' academic performance. The study revealed that drugs play a role in exacerbating LDB, a finding which aligns with Singwane and Ramoshaa's (2024) study. This is often exacerbated by peer pressure, leading to severe disruptions and lower learning outcomes (Paraman & Mohd Hussain, 2022). This implies the need for strategies that include sociocultural approaches in containing disruptions due to drug abuse and peer pressure.

When schools implement measures suggested in this study, guided by the principles of Ubuntu, they can overcome the learning challenges that hamper the attainment of educational objectives. The findings of

this study, which suggest that Ubuntu should play a critical role in African schools and that collaboration between schools and parents can alleviate most disruptive behaviours, align with past research (Lephoto, 2023; Mekgwe et al., 2025; Singha & Kanna, 2022). Ubuntu principles align with existing frameworks and policies that guide schools in controlling disciplinary issues. When adopted, they help create caring, conducive environments for the proper upbringing of the next generation, thereby contributing to citizens with a solid foundation for a just and democratic society.

### Conclusion

The study found that the learner's disruptive behaviours observed in the Intermediate Phase range from minor to severe. Conventional disciplinary approaches, based on praise and punishment, have been found to be inadequate. The study suggests that complementing formal disciplinary procedures with practices grounded in Ubuntu, which comprise the Indigenous Knowledge Systems, can support more effective procedures with the potential to rehabilitate the offending child. The study's implications for practice suggest that teachers should integrate approaches grounded in learners' communities' cultural practices into their classroom management. Additionally, the Department of Basic Education should conduct professional development workshops to enhance teachers' classroom management skills. The theoretical implications of the study are that it positions Ubuntu-IKS as a viable sociocultural framework for understanding and managing learner disruptive behaviour in African schools, rather than Western-centric approaches, by emphasising relationships, collective responsibility, and moral accountability as key components of effective learner behaviour management.

Furthermore, the study suggests that educational policies, including the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996), can be strengthened by the Ubuntu-IKS frameworks to effectively manage behaviour in schools. Beyond this, the study contributes to advancing SDG 4 by seeking to enhance the quality of education in rural communities through inclusive and supportive approaches to behaviour management, and SDG 10 by reducing educational inequalities in rural schools by lowering LDB to enhance learning outcomes. However, the study has some limitations. Due to its small sample size and qualitative nature, the generalisability of its findings should be approached with caution. Future studies should use larger sample sizes and mixed-methods designs to enhance the generalisability of the findings.

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