

Learners' Views on the Effects of Disciplinary Measures in South African Schools

Cosmas Maphosa* and Kuttickattu John Mammen

Walter Sisulu University, Nelson Mandela Drive Campus, Mthatha, South Africa

KEYWORDS Learners' Views. Learner Indiscipline. Punishment. Schools

ABSTRACT This paper is a part of a larger study on learner indiscipline in South African schools. The study was a descriptive survey and made use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The paper is based on learners' views on the effects of disciplinary measures used by teachers in South African schools. The sample consisted of 280 learners who were selected through stratified random sampling from 15 independent schools in Mthatha district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data whilst phenomenological interviews were used to collect additional qualitative data. SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis and emerging key issues led to themes that guided analysis. The paper documents learners' reports on the different kinds and forms of punishment currently used in schools. In general, the conclusions from the learners' views were that the different disciplinary measures used to deal with indiscipline seemingly failed, *inter alia*, to: help the offenders to understand disciplinary problems; teach responsible behaviour, behaviour accountability, respect for the rights and feelings of others or conflict resolution; avoid resentment of educators; deter offenders. The study also found that the learners view that the disciplinary measures which are currently used in schools largely led to negative rather than positive effects. The study recommends the use of supportive, proactive and cooperative disciplinary measures to deal with learner indiscipline. Such measures ensure positive and long-lasting effects necessary for the development of self discipline and responsible behavior amongst learners.