

Maintaining Discipline: How Do Learners View the Way Teachers Operate in South African Schools?

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KEYWORDS Forms of Indiscipline. Disciplinary Strategies. Punishment. Self-discipline.

ABSTRACT The study is part of a larger study on the management of learner indiscipline in schools. The study sought to establish learners' views on the most frequent disciplinary measures instituted against them for minor and major forms of indiscipline committed in South African schools. The study followed a descriptive survey design and made use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study used 280 learners selected from 15 independent schools in Mthatha district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected from selected students thorough a semi-structured questionnaire and interviews. The SPSS statistical package version 17 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis as emerging key issues led to themes that guided analysis. The study found that from the learners' point of view, teachers mostly employed punitive disciplinary measures when dealing with student indiscipline in schools and measures such as verbal reprimands, talking to students, kneeling on the floor, corporal punishment and sending learners out of class for minor forms of indiscipline whereas talking to learners, guidance and counseling, suspension and detention were frequently used to deal with major forms of indiscipline. The study also found that teachers still viewed disciplining learners as synonymous to punishing them. The study recommends the establishment of staff development workshops to equip teachers with skills to embrace supportive, proactive and cooperative disciplinary measures when dealing with learner indiscipline.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers in South Africa often find themselves in a dilemma of having to find effective ways of dealing with learner indiscipline in schools while at the same time protecting children's rights. Constitutional requirements call for the upholding, preservation and protection of children's rights and hence harsh and punitive disciplinary measures have been outlawed. On the other hand, indiscipline by students in South African schools is on the increase (Aziza 2006; de Wet 2007; Masitsa 2008). Teachers have to deal with this challenge of growing indiscipline in schools. Forms of indiscipline experienced in schools range from minor forms such as noisemaking and late-coming to major forms such as bullying, assault and possession and use of dangerous weapons. Disciplinary measures used have to comply with constitutional requirements of upholding the rights of the child (Republic of South Africa 1996). Disciplinary measures used to deal with different forms of student indiscipline encountered in schools everyday are also based on dif-

ferent theoretical assumptions underpinning the use of such measures.

Punishment involves a sanction or a penalty as a result of a child's behaviour that is unacceptable and is used to extinguish such behaviour (Children's Aid Foundation 2009; Robinson 2007). It may be regarded as the imposition of something negative or unpleasant on a person or an animal in response to behaviour deemed wrong by an individual or group. Punishment, in the school environment, is often imposed by authority figures such as the teachers and school principals. The school operates with laid out roles and codes of conduct and anyone who transgresses these rules may have to be punished. It may also have to be clarified that punishments differ in intensity as these range from simple reprimands, denial of privileges to intentional inflicting of pain by use of corporal punishment. Kleining (1972) argues that there is no connection between punishment and changed behaviour since people can be punished and still repeat offence. This calls for consideration of the way punishment is administered if it is to produce desired results. On the other hand, discipline involves all methods used to train and teach children self-control and socially acceptable behavior (Children's Aid Foundation 2009). Discipline does not inflict physical or psychological harm to a child.

Nelsen (1996) advocates for positive disci-

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pline and argues that in any attempt to make children better, it is not useful to make them feel worse by way of punishing them. Nelsen (1996) further contends that physical punishment only helps to breed resentment, revenge, rebellion and retreat on offenders. It is clear that reliance on physical punishment may not yield the desired results in offenders. Hence, the need to embrace approaches that nurture self-discipline in learners.

The retributive theory of punishment is premised on the need to punish offenders because they deserve to be punished (Zaibert 2006). The retributive theory of punishment states that when a child breaks laid down rules, he or she has to be punished. The suffering of the child who commits an offence is seen as good in itself and this type of punishment does not consider the benefits derived from punishment. In the school or classroom environment, a perpetrator may be punished for any offence committed mainly because they would have committed an offence and have to be punished. Such a view of punishment emanates from the need for revenge (Wilde 1995). Such punishments are often harsh and inhumane (Van Wyk 2001). Therefore, when teachers administer punishment it is always vital to note from which theory of punishment the administration of punishment is informed.

It is further argued that the retributive theory focuses on the offence itself as the reason for administering a certain type of punishment and there are different moral bases for retribution (McConville 2003). The retributive proponents such as Nozick (1983) contend that punishment is justified as a form of vengeance or 'payback' that any perpetrator of misbehavior has to suffer because they have forced others to suffer. However, Nozick (1983) differentiates between retribution and revenge. Retributive punishment is not concerned with prevention or rehabilitation but simply settles a score (Noguera 2003). Therefore, the revenge aspect of retribution may acquire negative connotations. The fact that disciplinary measures with a retributive inclination strive for revenge and make the perpetrator feel wrong and suffer the pain, may indicate wrong motives behind the use of such disciplinary measures.

On the other hand, the utilitarian theory of punishment is underpinned on punishing offenders in order to discourage, or "deter," future wrongdoing (Zaibert 2006). The utilitarian theory

is "consequentialist" in nature. It recognizes that punishment has effects or results for both the perpetrator and the environment in which he or she lives. The theory contends that the total good produced by the punishment should exceed the total evil (Lewis 1997). In other words, punishment should be humane. It should not be excessive or too harsh. As already noted, utilitarian punishment aims to deter future occurrences. Deterrence takes different forms. There is general deterrence in which general rules are already put in place with the expected punishments (Reyna 2001). This is common in classrooms where there could be rules that stipulate that if a learner does not do homework, he or she would be punished in a certain way. These are meant to be deterrent measures since anyone who commits the offence will do so fully aware of the repercussions.

There is also an element of specific deterrence in utilitarian punishment as stated by Lewis (1997). Whereas general deterrence strategies focus on future behaviors, preventing individuals from engaging in deviance or indiscipline by affecting their rational decision making process, specific deterrence focuses on punishing known deviants in order to prevent them from ever again violating the rules (Weiner et al. 1997). Punishment may be administered in full view of others so that they really learn the consequences of breaking rules in the hope that they will be deterred from breaking them in future (Weiner et al. 1997). General deterrence means that punishment should prevent other people from committing crimes and serves as an example to all others that breaking of rules or laws attracts punishment.

The Utilitarian rationale for punishment is also premised on the need to rehabilitate offenders. The goal of rehabilitation is to prevent future crime by giving offenders the ability to succeed within the confines of the law (Adams 1992). There is more understanding of the offender and the need to nurture the offender and bring him or her to understand and appreciate that it is not beneficial to engage in deviant behaviour or crime (Reyna 2001). The offender has to be given room to reform and be able to teach others how to live within the confines of expected rules and regulations and thereby contributing to the maintenance of discipline.

A third major rationale for punishment is denunciation and under the denunciation theory,

punishment should be an expression of societal condemnation (Carlsmith 2002). In the context of a classroom, punishment of this nature shows the learner who breaks rules that the whole class condemns him or her. The denunciation theory has combined elements of both utilitarianism and retribution. It is utilitarian because the prospect of being publicly denounced serves as a deterrent. Denunciation also has retributive elements because it promotes the idea that offenders deserve to be punished by being named and shamed.

School discipline is imperative for any meaningful teaching and learning to take place in any school. Schools should ensure a safe and peaceful environment in which to learn and work (Tauber 2007). Conducive learning environments are often disrupted by learners who misbehave and this often calls for the institution of necessary disciplinary measures to deal with indiscipline. Disciplinary sanctions, however, should be fair, objective, and appropriate to the form of indiscipline and age of the learner (McConville 2003). If precautions are not taken to ensure the fair administration of punishment, the very purpose of punishing may be counterproductive.

Every effort should be made to help the learner understand that the sanction is a result of serious inappropriate behaviour and, as much as possible, encourage the learner to learn from his/her mistakes. It is only when learners understand and appreciate their wrong doing, that they would also embrace the disciplinary measures given and avoid future occurrence of such behaviour. It is the responsibility of teachers to determine the measures to be taken when learners must face the consequences of inappropriate or disruptive conduct. Establishing rules and using reward and sanction to enforce rules are some useful guidelines to school rule formation. Incentive-based rules improve discipline more than punishment-based rules, which hurt the teacher-pupil relationship. Reward-based discipline also builds trust and fosters a positive environment (Gray 2002).

In punishment-based disciplinary measures, teachers and other staff members in schools may use punitive measures to prevent learners from committing a crime, causing injury or damage or causing a disruption. It is important to note, at this juncture, that corporal punishment, which is defined as any intentional application of force for the purpose of punishment, is unlawful, hence the encouragement to use of other alternative

disciplinary measures (Hart and Cohen 2001; Strauss 2001).

Punishment-based disciplinary measures can be considered to be deductive methods as they start from the establishment of rules and then punishment of a learner when he or she breaks them. In this method, it doesn't matter much whether the learner understands the reasons for the rule, while on the contrary, inductive methods begin with concrete events and move from the concrete to the general (Carlsmith 2002). In administering punishment, the teacher needs to tell the learner how wrong he or she was. The offender has to understand the disciplinary problem, its effects and magnitude in order to appreciate disciplinary measures given.

The wrongness is explained in terms of the effect the misbehavior has had on others and/or on the learner, rather than only in terms of whether an established rule has been broken. For the inductive methods to work, there has to be consistent and informative communication between the educator and the learner (Scarlet 2008). The need for communication and the supplying of the right information to the perpetrator of indiscipline in the administration of any disciplinary measure is, therefore, critical in ensuring that the disciplinary measure is well received and has a positive effect on the perpetrator.

This study sought to find out disciplinary measures in use in selected schools in the Mthatha district. This was done by looking at disciplinary measures that were used to deal with different forms of learner indiscipline encountered in schools. The prime purpose being to link clearly the disciplinary measures used and the acts of indiscipline encountered with a view to establishing how indiscipline was practically managed in the schools. The theories of punishment and discipline helped to ascertain the standpoint from which aspects of management of indiscipline emanated or the philosophy behind certain disciplinary approaches and decisions.

METHOD

The study was a descriptive survey of schools in one circuit in one educational district. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative data were sought as flesh to beef up the quantitative bones (Onwuegbuzi and Teddlie 2003).

Sample: Twenty learners drawn from each of the fifteen schools participated in the study. Strati-

fied random sampling was employed to select learners from different type of schools namely the junior secondary and high schools. The biographical variables of the learners who constituted the sample for the study are shown on Table 1.

Instruments: A learners' questionnaire was used to collect data from learners regarding how learners viewed the different disciplinary approaches used by teachers to manage indiscipline in schools. The questionnaire had both open-ended and closed-ended items. Open-ended questions allowed the researchers to collect in-depth information from respondents. Interviews were a supplementary source of data collection in the study in line with the adopted style to combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study. Interviews were preferred to other forms of data collection as they enabled the researchers to naturally converse with the learners. This allowed the learners to freely express their feelings. The interviews also enabled the researchers to probe and prompt on answers given and this flexibility of interviews made it possible for the researchers to gather as much information as possible.

Reliability and Validity: The main statistical measure to determine reliability of the main gathering tool, the questionnaire was the use of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The researcher made use of an SPSS generated Cronbach alpha coefficient calculation for all sections of the questionnaire for learners used to collect data in this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient average for the learners was 0.7. Since 0.7 indicates an acceptable reliability coefficient, the coefficients of all sections were found to be reliable hence the safe conclusion that the questionnaire used in this study as main data collection tools was reliable. Validity means that findings are based on research evidence that does not fluctuate (Niemann et al. 2002). A lot of measures were also employed in ensuring the validity of the instruments. The questionnaire was given to an expert Professor in discipline and punishment who analysed its suitability in line with the research questions. The expert's comments further helped to improve the validity of the questionnaires. The pilot test also helped to improve the learners' questionnaires as well as the interview schedules.

Procedures: The researcher administered the questionnaire with the assistance of contact persons who had been identified in the participating

schools. Through the use of trained contact persons the administration was easily done to ensure a high return level. A total of 280 usable questionnaires were returned out of the 300 administered, marking a 93.3% return rate. This very high return rate could be attributed to the facts that the researchers and contact persons were on the ground to administer and collect questionnaires and the learners themselves were very eager to participate in the study.

Ethical Issues: Permission to conduct interviews for research purposes was sought from principals well in advance and necessary appointment were made in such a way that research activities did not interfere with teaching and learning in the school. The research participants completed an informed consent form after the purpose of the study was explained to them. All participants under the age of sixteen had the consent form filled in on their behalf by their parents or guardians.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analysed statistically with the aid of the SPSS version 17 software whereas qualitative data was analysed using content analysis and reporting took form of narratives and thick description.

RESULTS

It is evident from Table 1 on the biographical variables for learners that learner respondents to the questionnaire were drawn from varying and different backgrounds. The majority of the respondents, 58.9% (N=165) were female whereas 41.1% (N=115) were male. There was nothing unusual about this distribution as female learners outnumbered their male counterparts in most of the schools' enrolment figures. The majority of the respondents, 49.6% (N=139) were in the 15–17 years age group. However, all age groups were fairly represented. The respondents to the questionnaire were also drawn from different grades ranging from grade 7 to grade 12. The majority, however, 20% (N=56) were from Grade 12. It is clear that respondents to the questionnaire were drawn from varying genders, age groups, grade levels and school types (junior and senior) in an attempt to obtain representative views on the issues under investigation.

What can be drawn from Table 2 is that there were statistically significant differences among respondents in favour of those who confirmed the use of verbal reprimands, talking to learners, kneeling on the floor, corporal punishment and

Table 1: Biographical variables for learners (N=280)

Biographical variable	Variable description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	41.1
	Female	165	58.9
Age Group	12 -14	79	28.2
	15 - 17	139	49.6
	18 - 20	60	21.4
	Over 20	2	0.7
Grade Level	7	39	13.9
	8	44	15.7
	9	51	18.2
	10	41	14.6
	11	49	17.5
	12	56	20.0
School Type	Junior secondary school	129	46.1
	High school	151	53.9

sending learners out of class and those who denied the use of these measures. This suggests that, from the learner respondents' perspectives, these were seemingly commonly used measures in dealing with minor or less serious forms of learner indiscipline. There were also statistically significant differences between respondents in favour of those who denied the use of verbal insults, ignoring, denial of privileges and not marking learners work and those who confirmed the use of these measures. This suggests that these measures, from the learner respondents' perspectives, were not commonly used in dealing with minor forms of indiscipline. Another observation from the table is that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents who confirmed the use of demotion from leadership position, menial tasks and manual tasks and those

who denied the use of this. This suggests that no statistically conclusive decision could be reached on the common use of such disciplinary measures in dealing with minor forms of indiscipline.

In interviews, some learners revealed the psychological impact of some disciplinary measures in use. As one interviewee revealed, she was really afraid of one of her lady teachers, who was always verbally insulting them at the slightest provocation. Some of the insults, as the interviewee puts it, 'deeply hurt us'. Below are some of the views of the interviews quoted verbatim:

Learner V

Our English teacher does not mark books of those who submit the books late. This forces us to always submit our work for marking on time.

Learner W

Some of the teachers in this school they beat students a lot. Some carry switches every time they come for lessons.

(Note - Switch means cane for learners)

Learner X

All misbehaving learners are detained in class at the end of the day.

Learner Y

Our Maths teacher punishes the whole class if he finds us making noise in class. This is unfair because some of us don't make noise.

Table 2: Learners' responses and statistical significance regarding disciplinary measures used for minor indiscipline (N=280)

Disciplinary measures for minor offenses	Responses				Significance		
	Yes	%	No	%	χ^2	df	P
Verbal reprimands	252	90.0	28	10	179.200	1	0.000*
Talking to learners	237	84.6	43	15.4	134.414	1	0.000*
Demotion from leadership positions	137	48.9	143	51.1	0.129	1	0.720
Manual tasks	130	46.4	150	53.6	1.429	1	0.232
Kneeling on the floor	195	69.6	85	30.4	43.214	1	0.000*
Sending learners out of class	191	68.2	89	31.8	37.157	1	0.000*
Denial of privileges	85	30.4	195	69.6	43.214	1	0.000*
Menial tasks	136	48.6	144	51.4	0.229	1	0.633
Corporal punishment	192	68.6	88	31.4	38.629	1	0.000*
Verbal insults	89	31.8	191	68.2	37.157	1	0.000*
Ignoring	85	30.4	195	69.6	43.214	1	0.000*
Not marking learners' work	82	29.3	198	70.7	48.057	1	0.000*

*df =1, $p < 0.05$. Statistically significant difference between participants who said 'yes' and those who said 'no' because p is less than 0.05

Learner Z

Some of teachers often talk to students who misbehave and appeal to them not to misbehave again.

The verbatim quotations capture learners' views of the way teachers operated in schools on the issue of maintaining discipline.

Table 3 shows that there were statistically significant differences between respondents in favour of those who said 'yes' and those who said 'no' to the use of talking to learners, guidance and counseling, suspension and detention. This suggests that, according to learner respondents, these were common disciplinary measures used to deal with major forms of indiscipline. There were also statistically significant differences between respondents who said 'yes' and those who said 'no' to the use of demotion, referral to psychologists, expulsion and transferring. A conclusion that could be arrived at is that from the learner respondents' perspectives, it seems that such disciplinary measures were not commonly used in dealing with major forms of indiscipline. There were no statistically significant differences between the respondent who said 'yes' and those who said 'no' to the use of community service, manual labour, stress and anger management techniques suggesting that the use of these could not be conclusively ascertained statistically.

The interviews revealed the following on how schools dealt with major forms of indiscipline:

Learner A

All students who drink and smoke at school are sent to fetch their parents but they remain in school and they still drink and smoke.

Learner B

The school forces students who misbehave a lot to transfer from the school. Parents are told to look for a place somewhere for their child.

Learner C

The school suspends the trouble makers from school. They go away for a while and later come back.

Learner D

Students who cause problems in this school are sent to the deputy head who often talks to them, writes their names down, warns them and keeps watching them.

Learner E

I am not aware of any learner who was expelled from this school.

The verbatim quotations capture learners' views of the way teachers operated in schools on the issue of maintaining discipline.

Table 3: Learner responses and statistical significance regarding disciplinary measures used for major indiscipline (N=280)

Disciplinary measures for major offenses	Responses				Significance		
	Yes	%	No	%	χ^2	df	p
Guidance and Counseling	195	69.6	85	30.4	43.214	1	0.000*
Talking to learners	244	87.1	36	12.9	154.514	1	0.000*
Suspension	189	67.5	91	32.5	34.300	1	0.000*
Detention	163	58.2	117	41.8	7.557	1	0.006*
Demotion	110	39.3	170	60.7	12.857	1	0.000*
Manual labour	126	45.0	154	55.0	2.800	1	0.094
Use of anger management techniques	150	53.6	130	46.4	1.429	1	0.232
Use of stress management techniques	150	53.6	130	46.4	1.429	1	0.232
Expulsion	103	36.8	177	63.2	19.557	1	0.000*
Referral to psychologist	108	38.6	172	61.4	14.629	1	0.000*
Community service	123	43.9	157	56.1	4.129	1	0.42
Transferring	91	32.5	189	67.5	34.300	1	0.000*

*df =1, p<0.05. Statistically significant difference between participants who said 'yes' and those who said 'no' because p is less than 0.05

DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the different kinds of disciplinary measures used to deal with both minor and major forms of learner indiscipline. The study found that most of the disciplinary measures employed for both minor and major forms of learner indiscipline were punitive and reactive. This finding confirms an assertion by Gultig (2002) that teachers in South Africa had serious challenges of maintaining discipline and authority in a democratic environment. The use of punitive disciplinary measures is indicative of these challenges as such approaches are not in line with the required democratic school environment. It becomes paradoxical that teachers are expected to be authority figures while at the same time creating democratic learning environments in which there should be consultation of and participation by learners in all issues of discipline.

In dealing with minor forms of indiscipline, measures such as verbal reprimands, demotion, manual tasks, sending learners out of class, kneeling on the floor and denial of privileges were found to be the most common disciplinary measures as learner respondents reported. These measures are in line with the retributive theories of punishment (Zaibert 2006). The main purpose of disciplinary measures chosen is to 'fix' the perpetrator yet the reasons behind such forms of punishment make it problematic in dealing with cases of learner indiscipline in the classroom.

In dealing with major forms of learner indiscipline, measures such as suspension, detention, demotion, and manual labour were found to be the most common disciplinary measures. These findings confirmed observations by Van Wyk (2001) that most teachers in South Africa had limited knowledge of disciplinary strategies. A typical example is a classroom situation where noisemakers or disruptive learners were asked to kneel on the floor. Such a disciplinary measure is not only meaningless but infringes on the rights of the learner, as it is tantamount to torture. Some learners interviewed revealed that they enjoyed being asked to kneel on the floor rather than to be beaten. Such disciplinary approaches confirmed they were biased towards assertive theories of discipline which relied heavily on teacher control (Arthur-Kelly et al. 2006).

The finding from the study that corporal punishment was practised in some of the schools,

despite the fact that it has been outlawed, is really an unfortunate one. Such a finding is consistent with reports by Kivilu and Wandai (2009) and Makapela (2006) that teachers still used corporal punishment in schools and felt disempowered to preside over discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. The use of corporal punishment further confirms the use of disciplinary approaches derived from the retributive and denunciation theories of punishment (Zaibert 2005). The negative effects of corporal punishment are well documented (Morell 2001). Some teachers injure learners when administering corporal punishment and are often arrested for assault (Sokopo 2010). Some educators seem to believe that there is no discipline without corporal punishment (Durrant 2000; Maphosa and Shumba 2010). A new orientation on the issue of discipline is necessary for teachers in line with the view that:

Maintaining a disciplined environment conducive to learning does not necessarily mean adopting tough policies to keep students silent in their seats. Most important, a learning environment requires an ethic of caring that shapes staff- student relationships (US Department of Education 1993 cited in Rosen 1997).

Teachers should embrace alternative disciplinary measures and avoid the use of corporal punishment. Its use is simply taking an unnecessary and expensive risk as one may end up being hauled before the courts. It is vital to mention the need to protect and uphold children's rights in schools. The use of reactive disciplinary approaches found to be in use in schools also corroborated the view by Scarlet (2008) that most disciplinary approaches in use in schools lacked the ability to help prevent indiscipline. Most disciplinary measures waited for an offence to be committed before they were brought into effect. Such approaches may often be too late and too little in instances where the perpetrator of the indiscipline injures another or commits murder. Investing time and energy in preventive and proactive disciplinary measures become critical.

The finding that suspension and expulsion were also confirmed to be disciplinary measures used in schools to deal with major forms of learner indiscipline support previous findings by Aziza (2001) that the rate of suspensions and expulsions was high in some South African schools. The question is on how useful the two

are as disciplinary measures. In suspension, for example, the child loses out on learning time and may never catch up with the work done by others in his or her absence. In expulsion, the school system would have abdicated its duties, accepted failure and condemn the child to a life out of school and possibly to more problems. The study found that very few learners confirmed the use of transferring offenders to other schools as a disciplinary measure. This is commendable as transferring offenders is offloading a problem to other people instead of dealing with it.

In further elaborating on the importance of preventive disciplinary measures Marsh (2000) and Tomczyk (2000) postulate that preventive disciplinary strategies underline well-disciplined schools that place emphasis on a learner-centered environment, incorporating teacher-learner problem solving activities, as well as activities to promote student self-esteem and sense of belonging, and are more effective in reducing behavior problems than punishment. It was evident from the findings that disciplinary measures were top-down in nature and learners were rarely involved in the formulation of school rules and in deciding the kind of punishment an offender should receive. Document analysis on sampled class rules also indicated a serious deficiency in learner consultation and learner empowerment. Most rules were also noted to be negative, where learners were simply told what not to do, yet viable alternative behaviours were not spelt out. A look at this school rule adapted from one of the schools further clarifies the point. The rule stated:

The school discourages any form of fighting/stealing/and lying among learners. Any learner found fighting, lying or stealing will be dealt with accordingly.

Such a rule sounds negative and threatening. The existence of such rules in schools ties in well with an observation by Agbenyega (2006) that discipline in most schools entails strict control of learners by enforcing school rules. Punitive measures are taken against those who transgress the given rules. Such findings refute claims in the literature of the use of cooperative and non coercive disciplinary approaches (Canter 2007). The approaches in use were found to be actually non cooperative and very forceful.

Another omission in the disciplinary measures found to be in use is the purposeful attempt to employ measures that teach self-discipline. This finding reinforces an observation by Wayson and Lasley (1984:421) that;

...rather than rely on power and enforce punitive models of behavior control, [staff] share decision making power widely and so maintain a school climate in which everyone wants to achieve self-discipline.

In such a scenario, disciplinary measures move away from the control emphasis to a more consultative and empowering bias. When learners understand why they should behave well and consider themselves to be important stakeholders in every decision making process in the school, it goes a long way in inculcating responsible behaviour that becomes part of learners' ways of life in and out of school (Noguera 2002). In this regard, the ultimate goal of school discipline is, as stated by Wayson and Lasley (1984: 419), "to teach student to behave properly without direct supervision." This is more useful than waiting to deal with indiscipline after a case, which may at times be a grave one.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teachers still viewed disciplining learners as synonymous to punishing them. It also concludes that in disciplining students, teachers mostly rely on punishment-based disciplinary measures. The study also concludes that teachers' awareness and use of disciplinary measures that are supportive and help learners to understand their disciplinary problems and ultimately develop a sense of responsibility for their behaviour were virtually non-existent. The study also concludes that teachers lacked strategies to prevent occurrences of learner indiscipline in schools and most of the strategies in use in schools only help to deal with manifested cases of indiscipline. Such approaches are often too late and too little to deal with the problems associated with learner indiscipline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the establishment of staff development workshops to equip educators with skills to embrace supportive, proactive and cooperative disciplinary measures when dealing with learner indiscipline.

The study also recommends compulsory short courses on classroom management for teachers as these would assist teachers to understand, appreciate and use alternative and supportive disciplinary measures.

Teachers should also embrace disciplinary strategies that are preventive in nature. Such approaches help to identify learners with disciplinary problems long before the manifestation of cases of indiscipline. Use of such approaches avoids attending to cases of disciplining after cases of indiscipline have occurred as some of the cases have resulted in fatalities in schools.

Teachers should avoid the use of disciplinary measures meant to 'fix' learners as disciplinary measures premised on making learners 'pay back' for their offences are often counterproductive as they result in resentment and more aggression from learners.

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