

How Chaotic and Unmanageable Classrooms Have Become: Insights into Prevalent Forms of Learner Indiscipline in South African Schools

Cosmas Maphosa and Kuttickattu John Mammen*

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

**University of KwaZulu Natal, University Teaching and Learning Office, Howard College
Campus, Durban 4041, South Africa*

Phone: 002774 550 6003; E-mail: maphosacos@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT The study sought to establish teachers' insights into the most prevalent forms of learner indiscipline and ascertain how the insights reflect on safety and security in schools and classrooms. The study was a descriptive survey which employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It looked into insights of 125 teachers selected from 15 independent schools in Mthatha district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected from teachers thorough a semi-structured questionnaire and interviews. The SAS/SAT statistical package version 17 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis on emerging key issues led to themes that guided analysis. The study found that the following forms of indiscipline: noisemaking, non-submission of work for marking, leaving learning materials at home, talking without teacher's permission, teasing other learners, absenteeism, swearing at others and non-completion of given assignments were prevalent in schools participating in this study whereas truancy, bullying, threatening other learners, theft, verbal attacks on fellow learners, assault on fellow learners, graffiti on classroom and toilet walls, vandalising school property, verbal attacks on teachers, substance abuse, sexual harassment, and indecent assaults on female learners were prevalent major forms of indiscipline. The study concluded that there were numerous disciplinary problems in schools as reported by teachers ranging from the minor to more serious ones and recommends that teachers should be always on the lookout for different forms of learner indiscipline in schools and classes in an attempt to create safe and conducive learning environments.

INTRODUCTION

Discipline in the classroom is a prerequisite if any meaningful learning is to take place (Lewis 1999). No meaningful learning can take place in a chaotic environment and Lewis (1999:1) further observes that of all the activities that comprise the role of the teacher, 'classroom discipline is one of the most significant'. The teacher's role is made more problematic when classrooms and schools become unmanageable. Teachers may waste special teaching time trying to settle disciplinary problems.

The issue of learner indiscipline has taken centre stage for a long time internationally and nationally. In the United Kingdom, for example, there are reports of many cases of classroom disorder. Learners are generally noisy, rowdy and disrespectful to educators (Bisetty 2001). Such forms of indiscipline have, invariably, led to a drop in educational standards in United Kingdom schools (Wright and Keetly 2003). There

has also been forms of indiscipline that include the use of drugs, gangsterism and shootings, and most schools worldwide have adopted 'zero tolerance' approaches to indiscipline (Thernstrom 1999). The prevalence of violence, use of foul language and disrespect towards school teaching and non-teaching staff are also confirmed forms of indiscipline in schools in the United States of America (Tomczyk 2000). Thernstrom (1999) highlights some of the common cases of learner indiscipline in Massachusetts in the United States as including rapes, sexual battery, robberies, physical attacks and vandalism. Ngare (2008) reports concern by school principals in Kenyan high schools over the ever increasing number of cases of learner indiscipline in Kenyan schools. Such indiscipline resulted, in some cases, in the destruction of property in schools, violence and substance abuse, and school authorities indicated that indiscipline had reached unmanageable levels.

In South Africa, for example, there are reports of a sharp increase in the number of cases of learner indiscipline in schools and there are cases where some learners are alleged to have mur-

Address correspondence to:
Cosmas Maphosa

dered other learners on the school premises (Thompson 2002; Harber 2001). There are growing concerns about how unsafe school and classroom environments have become. Mtsweni (2008) also confirms disciplinary problems in senior schools in Mpumalanga Province in his study that looked at educators' role in ensuring discipline in schools. Gang related violence is among some of the more serious forms of learner indiscipline in South African Schools (Kgosana 2006). This observation concurs with earlier studies by Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000) and Van Wyk (2001) which acknowledge the presence of unsafe school environments in South African schools. Netshitahame and Vollenhoven (2002) further observe that the problem of violence in schools, like the related problem of violence in society, has become one of the most pressing educational issues in South African schools.

A study by Zulu et al. (2004) investigated 16 High schools in the violence-prone area of Kwa-Mashu in Northern Durban and revealed that violence was prevalent in the schools: learners were largely unsafe in schools and were mistrusted by fellow learners. Violence and indiscipline had severely impeded the culture of teaching and learning in schools. It is indiscipline of this magnitude that is worrisome because schools should be safe and conducive environments for learning and if this is disturbed it becomes a real cause for concern. Forms of indiscipline such as physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, theft, substance abuse and pornography are documented as forms of indiscipline in schools in a study by Aziza (2001).

Forms of Indiscipline: Robertson (1989) identifies types of misbehaviour displayed by learners as those that affect the pupil concerned, for example failing to do assigned work or engaging in activities dangerous to one's own safety and health; those that violate interests of other pupils, such as distracting others from studies, bullying or dangerous behaviour and those which violate the interests of school or community, for example challenging the educator's authority or failure to wear uniform. In this categorization, there is clear evidence that misbehaviour can be targeted differently from the concerned individual to others and to the institution itself. Indiscipline is multi-faceted and could be viewed from many varying angles.

In his study, Matsoga (2003) itemizes the most common forms of indiscipline in schools

as follows: bullying, vandalism, alcohol and substance abuse, truancy, inability and unwillingness to do assigned class work or homework, refusal to take given orders, teasing of other learners, disrespecting educators, swearing at educators or other learners, carrying dangerous weapons to the school, threatening other learners with dangerous weapons, assaulting other learners, murdering other learners or educators, viewing pornographic materials at school and indecent dressing. The issue of violence by learners is a disciplinary cause for concern the world over (Rayburn 2004; Demato and Curcio 2004). If schools experience rampant indiscipline as exhibited in the various forms as noted by Matsoga (2003), teaching and learning become a problem. Disciplined classroom environments are a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. The issue of possession and use of dangerous weapons make school unsafe and there is to control such acts of indiscipline.

Rogers (1998) also observes that some learners exhibit bad behaviours such as answering back, arguing, challenging, procrastinating, talking 'out of turn', getting out of seats 'without permission' and general rowdiness. The issue of gangsterism is one form of misbehaviour that has far reaching consequences in schools. Such forms of indiscipline disturb teaching and learning at classroom level. Forms of learner indiscipline include aggression, disruption, violence, defiance, non-cooperation, non-compliance, refusal, manipulation, confrontation, physical abuse, verbal abuse, bad attitude, swearing, bullying, absconding (Zulu et al. 2004; Wright and Keetly 2003). Instances where there is lack of cooperation from learners make the teacher's task very difficult. There is a need for mutual respect and understanding between teachers and learners if any meaningful learning is to take place.

Learner indiscipline is also very prevalent in South African schools (Thompson 2002; Harber 2001; Mtsweni 2008; Kgosana 2006; Mabeba and Prinsloo 2000; Van Wyk 2001; Netshitahame and Vollenhoven 2002). All these studies confirm the prevalence of learner indiscipline in South African schools. Aziza (2001) highlights the rising number of learners being suspended and expelled from some Western Cape schools. The reasons that led to suspensions and expulsions ranged from physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, theft, substance abuse and pornography (Aziza 2001:159–161). It is inter-

esting to note that the Western Cape, the Province in which the cited study was carried out, shares borders with the Eastern Cape Province in which the present study was carried out. Hence, what happens in this province may, as well, be common in the Eastern Cape Province. While Aziza's (2001) study centred on trends in and reasons for suspensions and expulsions, the present study sought to reveal teachers' perceptions of the management of learner indiscipline in selected Eastern Cape schools.

Learner Indiscipline in Mthatha: Mthatha schools have not been spared from these problems. Mnyaka (2006) acknowledges the prevalence of learner indiscipline, particularly violence in schools in the Libode District in the Eastern Cape Province. Her study looked at how the Whole School Development approach could be used to curb violence in schools. Learner indiscipline in Mthatha schools has resulted in learner deaths in some schools as well as serious injuries within school premises (Ngcukana 2009). The debate on whether schools and classrooms are still manageable and conducive for effective teaching and learning is current and heated and it has taken on another dimension, that of concerns of safety in schools. The researchers' interaction with school principals, teachers and learners in the Mthatha district has shown that indiscipline in Mthatha schools is a major concern as in all other provinces. In one school where the one of the researchers served as a member of the School Disciplinary Committee, there were growing numbers of cases of indiscipline especially among senior phase learners. In the said school there were only ten serious cases of learner indiscipline brought before the School Disciplinary Committee in 2002 but the number increased to fifty in 2007.

In one of the independent schools in the Mthatha district, an incident sparked debate in the press when learners got drunk while on a school excursion. They got suspended and the school authorities almost denied them access to sit for their final Matric examination (Ngcukana 2008). In the researchers' neighbourhood, there is a school in which cases have been reported of learners having been stabbed by other learners in two separate incidents. In 2008, in another Mthatha independent school, a learner was asked to leave class because he refused to obey a teacher's request to remove his hat (which contravened the school's dress code). He went out,

bought petrol and burnt down the teacher's car (Ngcukana and Booie 2008). Disciplinary incidents may vary in magnitude, yet the consequences are often far reaching.

Statement of the Problem: This study was triggered by the escalation of cases of learner indiscipline in schools which now raises safety and security concerns (De Wet 2007; Harber 2001). It is a cause for concern on what really happens in our schools and classrooms. There is a need to ascertain such happenings by engaging the professionals who deal with learners on a day-to-day basis (the teachers), so that nothing is left to assumption or imagination.

Research Questions: The study sought to address the following research questions: (a) What are the most prevalent forms of learner indiscipline in schools and classrooms as reported by teachers? and, (b) How do these insights reflect on safety and security in schools?

METHODOLOGY

The study was a descriptive survey of 15 (fifteen) schools in one circuit in one educational district. These schools were conveniently selected as they were closer to the researchers' place of work. Schools included high schools and junior secondary schools. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative data was sought as flesh to beef up the quantitative bones (Onwuegbuzi and Teddlie 2003).

Sample: Ten teachers drawn from each of the fifteen schools participated in the study. Stratified random sampling was employed to select teachers from different types of schools namely the junior secondary and high schools. The teachers in the sample were also of different age groups, teaching experience and professional qualifications.

Instruments: A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data whilst phenomenological interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The questionnaire was used to collect mainly the quantitative data required for the study. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed and some qualitative data was also collected through the questionnaire as respondents were allowed to comment on issues in some instances. 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 teachers. This allowed the teachers 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 researchers made an SPSS generated Cronbach alpha coefficient calculation for all sections of the questionnaires for educators used to collect data in this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient average for the Educators 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 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 teachers' questionnaires as well as the interview schedules.

Procedures: The questionnaire was administered 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. However, the researchers, through the contact persons, noted that many teachers were reluctant to respond to the questionnaire and it took a lot of patience and persuasion to make them respond. A total of 130 teachers' questionnaires were returned out of the 150 administered, marking an 86.7% return rate. Measures to recover outstanding questionnaires proved fruitless as the challenges ranged from apathy to outright lack of cooperation. Of the 130 returned teachers' questionnaires five were partially completed and could not be analysed, which left the researcher with 125 valid questionnaires for analysis.

Permission to conduct interviews for research

purposes was sought from principals well in advance and necessary appointments were made in such a way that research activities did not interfere with teaching and learning in the schools. The research participants completed an informed consent form after the purpose of the study was explained to them..

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analysed statistically with the aid of the SAS/STAT version 17 software whereas qualitative data reporting took form of narratives and thick description.

RESULTS

Biographical Variables for Teachers

The biographical variables of the educators who participated in the study are shown on Table 1.

The biographical variables for teachers show that respondents to the questionnaire were drawn from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. The majority of the respondents 52% (N=65) were female whereas 48% (N=60) were male. There was nothing unusual about this distribution as teaching appeared to be a female-dominated profession in the area in which the study was carried out. The majority of the respondents 66.4% (N=83) were over the age of thirty and 68.8% (N=86) had teaching experience of more than five years whilst 41.6% (N=52) were holders of at least one degree. What can be gleaned from

Table 1: Biographical variables for teachers (N=125)

Biographical variables	Variable descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	60	48.0
	Female	65	52.0
Age	20 -25	15	12.0
	26 – 30	27	21.6
	31 – 35	40	32.0
	36 – 40	31	24.8
	Over 41	12	9.6
	1 – 5	39	31.2
Teaching Experience	6 – 10	41	32.8
	11 – 15	24	19.2
	Over 15	21	16.8
	Diploma	63	50.4
Professional Qualification	first degree	49	39.2
	Masters	3	2.4
	Others	10	8.0
Type of School	Junior secondary school	50	40.0
	High school	75	60.0

this is that the respondents to the questionnaire were mature, educated and professionally experienced to supply informed views on the different issues related to the management of learner indiscipline in schools mainly based on their experiences and expertise. Respondents were also drawn from both junior secondary schools and high schools in an attempt to capture views from different levels of the education system.

Table 2 summarizes teachers' responses and their statistical significance regarding common minor forms of learner indiscipline. It presents results of teachers' views on the most common minor forms of indiscipline prevalent in their classrooms.

There were statistically significant differences between teachers who confirmed the prevalence of each of these minor forms of indiscipline and those who denied their prevalence. This, therefore, suggests that the minor forms of indiscipline confirmed seemed to be the ones prevalent in schools participating in this study. What could be concluded is that all the minor forms of indiscipline such as noisemaking, non-submission of work for marking, leaving learning materials at home, talking without teacher's permission, teasing other learners, absenteeism, swearing at other learners, minor lies/ dishonesty, non completion of given assignments, unsanctioned movement within the class, late coming, unsanctioned movements out of class, violating school dress code, back chatting teachers, use of vulgar language and forcibly taking fellow learners' be-

longings seemed to be prevalent in schools participating in this study.

Data from Interviews Conducted

In interviews carried out, some teachers confirmed other minor forms of indiscipline such as learners playing with cell phones in classrooms. One Computer Science teacher said it was very difficult to monitor learners during computer lessons as some of them always wanted to view websites that deal with pornography. Some learners were also observed not to keep meal times and would eat in class. Some teachers even noted that some girls in the school wore very short skirts and could not sit properly in class.

The interviewed Computer Science teacher said:

Learners are so addicted to viewing pornography on the internet and it is very difficult to monitor them when they are in the computer laboratory. Many times we disable internet and the pornographic sites but these learners are very cunning, they always find new ways of accessing the prohibited sites.

What came out clearly from the above observation is that exposure to technological advancements also had a bearing on the nature and extent of indiscipline learners were involved in at school. One school where the use of cell phones in the school was banned, learners still smuggled cell phones into the school and would play with them in class.

Table 2: Common minor forms of indiscipline (N= 125)

Minor forms of indiscipline	Responses				Significance		
	Yes	%	No	%	χ^2	df	p
Noisemaking	120	96.0	5	4.0	105.800	1	0.000*
Non submission of work for marking	110	88.0	15	12.0	72.200	1	0.000*
Leaving learning materials at home	109	87.2	16	12.8	69.192	1	0.000*
Talking without teacher's permission	109	87.2	16	12.8	69.192	1	0.000*
Teasing other learners	108	86.4	17	13.6	66.248	1	0.000*
Absenteeism	107	85.6	18	14.4	63.368	1	0.000*
Swearing at other learners	106	84.8	19	15.2	60.552	1	0.000*
Minor lies/ dishonesty	106	84.8	19	15.2	60.552	1	0.000*
Non completion of given assignments	105	84.0	20	16.0	57.800	1	0.000*
Unsanctioned movement within the class	105	84.0	20	16.0	57.800	1	0.000*
Late coming	104	83.2	21	16.8	55.112	1	0.000*
Unsanctioned movements out of class	96	76.8	29	23.2	35.912	1	0.000*
Violating school dress code	90	72.0	35	28.0	24.200	1	0.000*
Back chatting teachers	89	71.2	36	28.8	22.472	1	0.000*
Use of vulgar language	88	70.4	37	29.6	20.808	1	0.000*
Forcibly taking fellow learners belongings	87	69.6	38	30.4	19.208	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

On minor forms of indiscipline some of the interviewed teachers made the following comments:

Teacher P: *It is very difficult to maintain silence in the classroom while teaching. Learners do not listen. Even if you tell them to be quiet they keep making noise.*

Teacher Q: *We have a problem of students who bunk classes. Some of the learners stay in toilets and do not attend some of the lessons.*

Teacher R: *Our main challenge is of learners who do not do schoolwork given by teachers. They just neglect their work.*

Such remarks from teachers underscored how minor forms of indiscipline negatively affected teaching and learning.

Table 3 presents results of teachers' views on the most common major forms of indiscipline prevalent in their classrooms. There were statistically significant differences between teachers who confirmed the prevalence of a major form of indiscipline and those who denied its prevalence. This, therefore, suggests that the major forms of indiscipline confirmed seemed to be the ones prevalent in participating schools. The confirmation of truancy, bullying and threatening other learners, theft, verbal attacks on fellow learners, assault on fellow learners, graffiti on classroom and toilet walls, vandalising school property, verbal attacks on teachers, substance abuse, sexual harassment, and indecent assaults

on female learners as major cases of indiscipline seemed to be prevalent in participating schools.

Seemingly, there were no statistical significant differences between respondents who confirmed and those who denied the prevalence of major forms of indiscipline like bringing dangerous weapons into the schools, viewing of pornographic materials, threatening of teachers, assaults on educators and burning school property. This suggests that these were not common serious forms of indiscipline from the point of view of the educators.

In the interviews some interviewees raised the issue of gangsterism as a concern in schools. One teacher said;

Disciplining learners in this school is risky business because they may team up with their friends and attack teachers outside school. So we (sic) are really afraid of these senior students because you may be attacked with knives or guns after school. They (learners) have gangs in the neighbourhood.

The issue of violence alluded to is a serious problem that affects the safety of other learners in the school.

On the prevalence of major forms of indiscipline, some of the interviewed teachers said:

Teacher X: *There is a lot of drug abuse in this school. Most of the senior boys smoke and drink here at school. It is difficult to catch them but drug abuse is rampant in the school.*

Table 3: Common major forms of indiscipline (N=125)

Major (Serious) forms of indiscipline	Responses				Significance		
	Yes	%	No	%	χ^2	df	P
Truancy	104	83.2	21	16.8	55.112	1	0.000*
Bullying	104	83.2	21	16.8	55.112	1	0.000*
Threatening other learners	104	83.2	21	16.8	55.112	1	0.000*
Theft	101	80.8	24	19.2	47.432	1	0.000*
Verbal attacks on fellow learners.	100	80.0	25	20.0	45.000	1	0.000*
Assaults on fellow learners	97	77.6	28	22.4	38.088	1	0.000*
Graffiti on classroom/ toilet walls	87	69.6	38	30.4	19.208	1	0.000*
Vandalising school property	85	68.0	40	32.0	16.200	1	0.000*
Verbal attacks on teachers	80	64.0	45	36.0	9.800	1	0.002*
Substance abuse	80	64.0	45	36.0	9.800	1	0.002*
Sexual harassment	80	64.0	45	36.0	73.408	1	0.000*
Indecent assaults on female learners	79	63.2	46	36.8	8.712	1	0.003*
Bringing dangerous weapons into the schools	73	58.4	52	41.6	3.528	1	0.060
Viewing of pornographic materials	72	57.6	53	42.4	2.888	1	0.089
Threatening teachers	69	55.2	56	44.8	1.352	1	0.245
Assaults on teachers	61	48.8	64	51.2	.072	1	0.788
Burning school property	52	41.6	73	58.4	3.528	1	0.060

*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

Teacher Y: *Bullying is a real problem. Some learners have dropped out of school as a result of bullying.*

Teacher Z: *It is difficult to be strict with these learners because they even threaten us. Most of the lady teachers cannot discipline the boys. They just ignore them and leave them (to) misbehave.*

Such insights from teachers painted how gloomy the picture was on indiscipline in schools.

DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish common forms of learner indiscipline in schools as reported by teachers and to assess their relative impact on school safety and security. The forms of indiscipline were categorized into minor and major forms. Teacher respondents to the questionnaire and those interviewed concurred that the most common, minor forms of indiscipline in classrooms were non-completion of given assignments, non-submission of work for marking, swearing at other learners, back chatting teachers and unsanctioned movements in and out of the classroom. These findings corroborated with the findings in the literature that showed that classrooms today have become chaotic and disorderly due to rowdy, noisy and disobedient learners who hardly take instructions from teachers (Matsoga 2008; Rosen 1997). However, there was an important revelation from the interviewed teachers who claimed that, while there was indiscipline in classes, the situation could not be deemed to be really out of control. This is contrary to Thernstrom (1999) who comments that classroom situations in American schools were really out of control.

In the open ended section of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to list some common forms of indiscipline other than the ones given. Some of the recurrent forms raised by a number of respondents included playing with cell phones in class, eating in class and gossiping. This further corroborated with findings in literature that learners misbehave in classrooms by exhibiting different forms of indiscipline that negatively affect teaching and learning (Masitsa 2008).

On the issue of major forms of learner indiscipline the study found that bullying, substance abuse, threatening and assault of teachers and fellow learners as well as theft, viewing of pornography and graffiti were among the most com-

mon major forms of learner indiscipline. Such a finding authenticated revelations from the literature study by Aziza (2001) and Mnyaka (2006) of the prevalence of violence in South African schools. Violence is also common and a cause for concern in schools the world over (Ellis 2003; Ortega, Del Rey and Fernandez 2003; Steffgen and Russon 2003; Hernandez and Seem 2004; Rayburn 2004). Some educators interviewed, revealed that there were cases in the schools where learners had been stabbed by other learners using knives or other sharp instruments. They further substantiated the reality of press reports of murders in schools (Ngcukana 2009; Thompson 2002). If learners could be stabbed on the school premises then the possibility of resultant deaths was high. Ngcukana (2009:1) quotes the Member of Executive Council for Education in the Eastern Cape Province, Mahlubandile Qwase as saying, "Violence in our schools has got us really worried as a government." This further affirms concerns by Harber (2001) and Kgosana (2006) that learner violence in South African schools had become a cause for concern in terms of learner safety and security. Some interviewed teachers also revealed situations where learners from other schools would find their way into the school to cause problems.

The revelation in the study of substance abuse as a common serious form of indiscipline in schools confirms the observation by Cheunyane (2008) that many learners attended school while drunk, while others got drunk at school. Learners also used various substances to get intoxicated. It is when learners are drunk that they are prone to committing other forms of indiscipline. One interviewee revealed that some senior girls in the school were involved in drugs. Some learners would take their juice and muffins laced with intoxicants in front of unsuspecting teachers.

The open ended aspect of the questionnaire item allowed respondents to list other forms of indiscipline common in their schools and classrooms than the ones provided. A form of indiscipline raised by some respondents was the issue of learners having love and sexual relations with their teachers. Such a revelation confirmed observations by Omara (2009) that teachers may be a source of learner indiscipline in schools if they fail to behave properly and in *loco parentis*. Omara (2009) argues on what he terms teacher-caused indiscipline in schools, a situation where teachers' bad behaviour may make learners rebel,

threaten others, refuse to study, insult and bully others, or even burn school property. Omara (2009:1) further observes that: *When a teacher is lazy to mark students' work, they follow suit. The same applies to absenteeism. A teacher cannot discipline absentee students when he gives a bad example.*

Teachers, therefore, should set proper and imitable behaviour standards. Ozogwu (2009) further notes that teachers should not use their position to humiliate, threaten, intimidate, harass or blackmail any learner to submit to selfish motives or to engage in sexual misconduct, drug addiction and trafficking, cultism, human trafficking and other related offences (Sadker and Sadker 2003).

Teachers are imitated a lot by learners in the schools and the need for their proper conduct all the times is crucial. Teachers should not be anti-role models who behave so badly that they serve as good examples of what not to do (Orsten et al. 2003; Stoddard 2004; Hans 2009). In situations where male teachers engaged in sexual and love relationships with female learners they set a very bad example as such moves are tantamount to abuse of office and they are gross acts of corruption and immorality (Leach 2002; Human Rights Watch 2001).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there were numerous disciplinary problems in schools as reported by teachers and these ranged from low level to more serious forms of indiscipline. The study further concludes that some forms of indiscipline prevalent in schools impact on the safety and security of other learners.

There are numerous minor forms of indiscipline in schools and these forms of indiscipline negatively affect teaching and learning in the classrooms. Some of the noted minor forms of indiscipline included non-completion of given assignments, non-submission of work for marking, swearing at other learners, back chatting teachers and unsanctioned movements in and out of the classroom. Such form of indiscipline really made classes unmanageable to chaotic to some degree.

The study further concludes that there were major forms of indiscipline that rendered school unsafe. Such major forms of indiscipline included use of drugs, possession and use of dangerous

weapons within school premises. The realization that learners could take and even abuse drugs at school as well as possess and use dangerous weapons serves to highlight how unsafe schools have become.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should be wary of different forms of learner indiscipline in schools and classes in an attempt to create safe and conducive learning environments. Teachers should be aware of the various low-level forms of indiscipline that negatively affect teaching and learning. Schools should have constant staff development workshops that assist teachers in identifying forms of indiscipline and ways to deal with them. The Department of Education should also offer short courses to assist teachers with strategies of managing discipline in the classroom. Such courses should focus on preventive approaches to management of discipline. More emphasis should be placed on positive discipline which teaches learners self-discipline, tolerance and accountability. School environments should take advantage of technological advances and install security cameras that assist to detect learner indiscipline as teachers cannot be everywhere at any given time. Security cameras may enhance student safety in schools. Random searching of learners is important in schools to ensure that learners do not carry and use dangerous weapons on the school. Learners should be empowered to report observed cases of indiscipline in order to deal with cases of indiscipline before they lead to injuries or fatalities. Learner Watch Committees could be formed in school and mandated to be on the lookout for learners engaged in mischief.

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