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Abstract

Disciplinary measures and learner safety are critical components of effective teaching and learning. Lack of discipline has become a major problem in schools. The abolishment of corporal punishment led to an increase in violent incidents in schools. This study aims to provide educators with useful guidelines to help them understand their roles when instilling discipline in schools and to ensure learners have a clear understanding of the difference between discipline and corporal punishment. The study followed a qualitative research approach in exploring human elements and behavior. Interviews, observations, field notes, and questionnaires were used to collect data, with a case study design. The population consists of principals, disciplinary committee members, educators, and learners from three high schools. We used a purposive sampling method, selecting three members from each of the three schools. We used Skinner's behavioral theory model, which attempts to explain how repeated behavior with rewards alters bad behavior. We applied grounded theory, a method that employs inductive reasoning for data analysis. The study found that teachers, accustomed to the banned use of corporal punishment for discipline, find it challenging to adjust to new forms of discipline. The study revealed that parents find it difficult to accept the long-standing ban on corporal punishment and attempt to coerce teachers into applying it to their children. The study suggested educating learners about their mistakes and motivating them to avoid ill-discipline. Parents should instill morals and discipline in their children from a young age, as they model discipline and behavior at home.

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Review Article**The Obligatory Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers on Learner Discipline, Case of Selected Schools in Nylstroom Circuit***Motsetana Lillian SITHOLE¹  Elias Tsakane NGOBENI²  Itumeleng PHAGE³ **Abstract**

Disciplinary measures and learner safety are critical components of effective teaching and learning. Lack of discipline has become a major problem in schools. The abolishment of corporal punishment led to an increase in violent incidents in schools. This study aims to provide educators with useful guidelines to help them understand their roles when instilling discipline in schools and to ensure learners have a clear understanding of the difference between discipline and corporal punishment. The study followed a qualitative research approach in exploring human elements and behavior. Interviews, observations, field notes, and questionnaires were used to collect data, with a case study design. The population consists of principals, disciplinary committee members, educators, and learners from three high schools. We used a purposive sampling method, selecting three members from each of the three schools. We used Skinner's behavioral theory model, which attempts to explain how repeated behavior with rewards alters bad behavior. We applied grounded theory, a method that employs inductive reasoning for data analysis. The study found that teachers, accustomed to the banned use of corporal punishment for discipline, find it challenging to adjust to new forms of discipline. The study revealed that parents find it difficult to accept the long-standing ban on corporal punishment and attempt to coerce teachers into applying it to their children. The study suggested educating learners about their mistakes and motivating them to avoid ill-discipline. Parents should instill morals and discipline in their children from a young age, as they model discipline and behavior at home.

Keywords: Discipline, corporal punishment, inductive reasoning, ill-discipline, behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

Lack of discipline in schools has become a huge problem, and schools have become unruly. Discipline is defined as “training or conditions imposed for the improvement of physical powers and self-control and systematic training in obedience to regulations and authority” (Smith, 2008). Since the start of democracy in South Africa, the management of discipline has become increasingly difficult for teachers in both secondary and primary schools. The school’s daily normal running is affected, and there are too many disruptions as there will be multiple cases that need time and attention from the teachers.

The South African School Act of 1996, together with the Constitution of South Africa, impacted the management of learner discipline in schools without contravening learner’s rights (Soudien, 2018). The discipline in schools assists learners to improve their behavior (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

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It is clear that corporal punishment does not lead to self-respect but rather promotes hostility and vindictiveness, which results in antisocial behavior (Afong, 2017). Makovec (2018) discovered that learner disciplinary problems differ a great deal and have different origins. Some originate within an individual learner, some from within the school, parents, and educators, as well as from society. These are supported by Afong (2017), who claimed that the behavior is from both inside and outside the school.

2. METHOD

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. It allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. The study employed a qualitative data collection approach by conducting semi-structures interviews with principals (one female, two males), members of disciplinary committees (one female, 2 males), school governing bodies (one female, 2 males), and learners (3 females) from three secondary schools. A purposive sampling technique was used to select twelve participants in each of the three schools to gain a deep understanding of how they maintain discipline in their respective environments. All questions were different for each participant in the same school to ensure an intensive comparative study. Face-to-face, 30-minute interviews were conducted. Thematic analysis was conducted and the elements of trustworthiness were adhered to. The Waterberg District in Limpopo Province, South Africa, encompasses one farm school and two from residential areas.

The social learning theory of teaching and learning is used to teach positive behavior. Positive roles are used to enhance desired behavior and thus turn around the school's culture, which can foster self-efficacy. Positive behavior from teachers helps advance goals and tasks and address other challenges. They tend to view challenges as tasks to master. The teacher's role is to provide reinforcement. Educational research continues to support positive reinforcement. Providing learners with a warm, supportive climate reduces unnecessary problems, as posited by Bear (2020).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Factors Contributing to Ildiscipline

a) Home Environment

Spending less time with children may be one contributing factor to ill-discipline because children lack role models and proper guidance. Dysfunctional families damage self-concept, deprive love and parental affections, and have no control, as explained by Otterpohl et al. (2020). Some are always busy with their own affairs, and learners lack love and care from their parents. Some people work away or are far from home, visiting their children on a regular basis. These learners receive little or no parental guidance and monitoring.

b) Parents

Overprotectiveness may lead to children being ill-disciplined. Parents may interfere with learners' educational needs and refuse to apply punishment on the part of their children, irrespective of what they did. They ignore the competencies that educators have. Parents and teachers have to work together in order to mold a child. When learners come to school late or not at all, it is the responsibility of teachers to investigate the causes and come up with solutions. The government has come up with alternative measures that replace corporal punishment, which has long been abolished.

c) Society

Society has a wide influence on children's behavior. Children who participate in gang activities and face peer pressure often experience violence and discipline issues. Rejection leads to attraction to gangs, as people see it as worth it to join a gang. They may eventually become involved in robberies and muggings. Some learners may come from good, respected families but start misbehaving

immediately when they join groups of those who misbehave, wanting to conform to their peers' suppositions (Mwangi, 2020).

d) Lack of Extracurricular Activities

Learners get committed when engaged in extracurricular activities; their potential is exposed. Their curiosity is stimulated, and they become focused. Those who are hyperactive misbehave if they are not kept occupied. This also molds their behavior when they identify and develop their talents; they then perform academically and behave accordingly.

e) Low Level of Parent's Education

As alluded to earlier, child-headed families contribute to ill-discipline in schools, and a low level of the parents' education is also a factor in ill-discipline. Patterson's social interactional stage model of discipline made assumptions that parents' behavior has a great influence on learner behavior, supporting the idiomatic expression that says "charity begins at home." Therefore, a parent-teacher partnership is a call to maintain learner discipline.

f) Social Media

Violence on social media is portrayed as a normal way of life. If we watch most of the programs on television, they are full of violence, which promotes some form of misbehavior and the use of weapons to fight and instill criminality.

g) Unsafe Conditions

It is safe when learners can learn, develop, and enjoy their lessons. Educators need an environment to teach without threats, violence, or crime where human rights are respected. Parents are welcome to exchange ideas about learning and school developments. The community and different stakeholders can be involved in taking joint responsibility for interacting with educators and school governing bodies.

3.2. Verbatim from Interviews

3.2.1. Theme 1: Teacher roles

3.2.1.1. Sub Theme 1: The rate in which cases of ill-discipline are reported:

Researcher(R): Are there reported cases of ill-discipline in your school?

Participants responded differently to this question, as the schools are situated in different environments. The two participants responded with a yes, while one alluded to the fact that there are no cases reported of such ill-discipline in their school. Their response was:

P1: No.

P2: Yes.

P3: Yes, there are.

Researcher(R): If the answer is YES, the Researcher further asked how they then deal with such. As two of the three principals responded with a yes, they further explained that:

P2: *Mmm.... Actually, when they report a case, we first of all we do have a Disciplinary Committee at the school, so I am referring the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for attention.*

P3: *We call the learners involved, then we interview them, in other words we interrogate them first, on what was reported and from there we minute down whatever they are saying and then from there if we have enough information that actually the learners are involved we ask them to write statements to state exactly what transpired and then from there we phone the parents to tell them that this is what their children did at school. Then we also inform the SGB as well because they are the ones who may tell*

us depending on how the case is and it needs them to be in there, but if it's a case that we may handle it, we do so but still we inform the SGB.

Researcher(R) Learners were asked if there is discipline in their schools, if there is how is it maintained in the school, and they responded as follows:

L1: Yes, there is discipline in school X High School. In class they explain the rules and then if there are issues between learners they resolve the issue at the beginning before it gets out of hand.

L2: Yes is there. That's why discipline e le hona mo skolong, because we feel free like le mo re sa understanding like bare we must feel free, re tle mo bona like ntho e re bonang gore ga re e hlaloganye le he teacher a ka tswa re kgona go ya ko principal ke gore we must feel free, ke batswadi ba rona, that's why go na le discipline.

L3: No, there's not. Mm. Ah they sometimes ... take them to hearings and everything and ba bangwe they suspend them and ba bangwe they get expelled. Suspension for a week.

Researcher(R) The SGB mentioned if they have a policy of discipline, how often they attend to disciplinary offences and the response was:

SGB1: not yet... .. yaahh we most regularly. Let me say most regularly.

SGB2: Yes, we do have. No, it is sometimes, it depends on the case, as and when the case arises, then we sit for that case.

SGB3: Yes, if there is an offence we solve it immediately as it occurs, because we don't want it to escalate, yaa once you leave it, you will have many cases to deal with.

DCM1: The school have a drawn policy on disciplining learners, depending on the seriousness or severance of the matter. Every learner receives the same punishment and treatment because we are striving at all times to be consistent with punishment. We have learnt that when learners are treated fairly and equally, it becomes easier for them to accept and recognise their mistakes.

DCM2: We rely on code of conduct which was a collective from both learners, teachers, and parents' contributions towards the compilation of the rules. Everyone is bound to obey and stick to the rules as agreed upon. Although some learners become rebellious, but they are banded by their signatures appended by both of them, and their parents on the school's code of conduct.

DCM3: Laughing out slightly... It will depend also on the misdemeanor that the child has done. We have got a challenge. The school has a code of conduct, in that code of conduct we have divided our In terms of offences, this one has 50 demerit points, this one 100 demerit points and another one 300 demerit point's ok!!! It becomes easier to discipline learners in hostel because we suspend them, but difficult with a day-scholar. In all cases we inform the parents about what the child have done and then ... the punishment sometimes becomes partial, sometimes is to be harsh, but harsh in a sense that ...ok... sometimes suspend them for a week some we expel from the hostel, some if found with dagga, we inform the parents ok and sit down with the DH. After DH it will be a warning and after second warning then punishment.

3.2.1.2. Sub-Theme 2: Positive reinforcement

Skinner, in his theory, emphasises that reinforcement strengthens behavior. The practice is helpful, especially for primary grade teachers who use behavior to teach learners desirable behavior, rewarding those who behave in an acceptable manner and withholding rewards from those who misbehave. Even though Afong (2017) defers that more explicitly punished learners might get negative attention and may persist with negative behavior.

Researcher(R): How does positive reinforcement affect the learner's behavior in a school and as a principal how does this improve the smooth running of the school?

P1: *There are less cases reported to deal with, instead of solving violent cases that waste time and adding no value to education. I plan for further reinforcement to increase the types of rewards given to learners as motivation.*

P2: *It is so discouraging to realize how majority of learners are not taking rewards positively, they saw them as educators buying attention from learners. They sometimes make jokes about those receiving awards, instead of being motivated they demoralize other learners who works hard for awards.*

P3: *One of my educators made it a tendency of giving a learner R5 each time the learner behaves well, comes in time to class and completes the given work. The learners are likely repeating the behaviors for they wanted to be given the R5.*

3.2.2. Theme 2: Contributory factors

3.2.2.1. Sub-Theme 1: Causes of ill-discipline in schools

Researcher(R): What are really the major causes of ill-discipline in schools that may emerge from both learners and educators?

P1: *Erhh one thing that I have noted as an ill-discipline thing in our school is bunking of classes from both sides of the teachers you find that here is teacher who doesn't attend to a class but is in the school yard and even in terms of learners you'll will find that they stay away from class, busking in the sun, some will stay in the toilets, so...such kinds of behavior it's one thing that is rife in our school Bunking of classes...yes from both sides.*

P2: *Clearing throat first... yaa, you see there is a tendency of learners you know although now it's much better as compared to before, scratching others but nowadays it's much better. I cannot say it is not taking place any longer. There is an element of disrespect amongst educators and bullying taking place, as I speak yesterday, I mean when it was on the 19th, on Tuesday we were at a disciplinary enquiry at with SACE concerning a teacher...mm.... exactly.*

P3: *Aii.... At times we do have a friction between educators and learners, always a factor or sometimes a friction between learners themselves or friction between teachers themselves.*

Researchers: the researcher want to find out if learners in selected schools are disciplined, and if so, what the reasons behind their ill-disciplined behavior are.

Underneath are responses from respondents:

3.2.2.2. Sub-Theme 2: Effects of ill-discipline on learner performance

Researcher(R): For a school to be a conducive place for teaching and learning, discipline should be maintained at all costs. How does ill-discipline affect the results in the school?

DCM1: *Learners do not comply with their submissions and then they fail at the end of the year. Their frequent absenteeism also contributes to their fail rate. Most of them miss classes for no reasons at all.*

DCM2: *Bunking of classes by learners contribute a lot to lowering school results. Learners who also miss lessons fail tests and exams.*

DCM3: *Yaa it is affected, and it is very bad it is really affecting the performance of the learners, the results are going down due to ill-discipline because where there is no discipline there is no results.*

Reflecting on the effects of discipline on learner performance, it is clear that both DC 1 and 2 complain about learners missing classes, which is a reason for poor performance.

On the same interview question, learners responded that:

L1: *Yes, I think so. Because ill-discipline creates a bad image in a learner's mind, and it makes like learners not to be prepared about the future.*

L2: *mm, yes it does. Like it is important gore motho (a person) a be well- disciplined, cause if ha a so we a ka se phomelle (succeed) if you don't listen you don't pass.*

L3: *Yes, because it's obvious that when a learner doesn't do well at school it either ba a tsuba (they smoke) and they disrespect teachers so it affects their school work and le ka mo ba performang (the way they perform) at school.*

3.2.3. Theme 3: Socio-economic factors

3.2.3.1. Sub-Theme 1: Contributory factors

Researcher (R) Identify factors that contribute to ill-discipline in the school.

P1: *Peer pressure plays a major role in learner's behavior. Parents working far and not staying with their children also contribute to ill-discipline.*

P2: *In our school gangsters is a major cause. Learners form groups whereby fights emanates and they use dangerous weapons to attack each other.*

P3: *Substance abuse, possession of cell phones in schools and classrooms as well as being given huge amount of pocket money by either parents or relatives.*

They were asked to describe the level of poverty in their area or school that hampers the school's performance, and the responses from SGB were:

SGB1: *Most parents are unemployed and cannot provide basic needs for their children. Lack of proper infrastructure, learners staying in different places and have no monitoring. Parents are unable to assist their children with school work due to low level of education.*

SGB2: *Our learners are receiving grants which enable them to be the same at school. The social grant helps them with clothes, food and others use it to pay for taxis as a means of transport as they live far from school.*

SGB3: *Our school is surrounded by informal settlements where most parents are unemployed and depend on child support grants, some are child-headed families. The community is facing high rate of unemployment.*

Principals were asked to elaborate on how they deal with it to improve the school's performance, and their responses were as follows:

P1: *School Development Plan is implemented and closely monitored. We also liaise with the Department of Education to provide transport for learners staying far from school. Another initiative that we do is that we appoint parents of needy learners to assist in preparing food for learners and others are appointed as cleaners to clean offices, staffrooms as well as classrooms in the school.*

P2: *Some parents are hired at EPWP just to support their families and to buy school uniform for their children.*

P3: *We grow vegetables in the school garden which is taken care of by hired parents and thereafter they sell the vegetables in order to alleviate poverty that hampers school's performance. Once in a week, those vegetables are prepared and cooked for the learners, to be taught in a full stomach.*

When further asked if stakeholders participate in lending a helping hand towards alleviating poverty in schools, the responses were as follows:

SGB1: *yes, stakeholders are lending a helping hand because some donate school uniform to needy learners, some donate money, some food parcels. There is breakfast served at school, donation by Tiger-brand. Learners are not learning in an empty stomach.*

SGB2: *In our school, we normally receive donations from our councilors, NGO's and other stake-holders like Tiger-brand. It provides breakfast for our learners as well as those who come to school in empty stomach. We benefit a lot from them.*

SGB3: *Various stakeholders provide for learners as follows: Tiger-brand foundation provides breakfast daily to all learners and food parcels quarterly for needy families. NGO's donate clothes for those needy learners too. Kamoka Bush School provides clothes for learners. NSNP provides lunch daily.*

Still on socio-economic factors, Disciplinary Committee Members from the three selected schools were asked if poverty may lead to learners' misbehavior, and below are their responses:

DCM1: *Absenteeism of learners is very high and it affects the daily attendance of learners. Hungry learners will not listen attentively to the educators when teaching and some will be sleeping in class during lesson presentation. Crime rate is so high because community members break into schools to steal.*

DCM2: *If there is poverty there will be no smooth running of the school, because learner's educational needs are not being met. Teaching and learning will be affected a lot because there will be no resources at all.*

DCM3: *We are so lucky that we are having people who are donating food parcels and clothes for the needy and in that way the level of poverty in our community is slightly lowered.*

3.2.3.2. Sub-Theme 2: How socio-economic factors affect learners' behavior:

Financial strain on the parents can cause a child to behave in an unacceptable way or leave school prematurely and join a gang. Fears about financial poverty negatively distress learners' behavior in general.

Researcher(R) As a school governing body, representing parents and stakeholders in the school, how does poverty impact on learner's behavior in this school?

SGB1: *It affects a lot of learners... .. Parents end up holding their children away from school instead of encouraging them to focus and do their school work diligently so. Learners come to school on hungry stomachs, having no enough school uniform and when the uniform is dirty they stay at home. Some travel a long distance to school and miss some periods, especially the first period.*

SGB2: *Some join gangsters in order to possess materials they cannot afford. Parents complains about how their kids always brings valuable things at home that they themselves do not afford. The level of poverty is not at a higher rate as such because we are having people who are donating food parcels, clothes for the needy learners.*

SGB3: *You will always find them hanging around at local shops, wondering what they are doing there... .. They miss lessons to make cash at those local shops. They even buy drugs while hanging there and when they get back into classrooms being under the*

influence, they start misbehaving. There is no smooth running of the school because drugs affect their minds and they no longer respect their teachers as well as their fellow-classmates.

Researcher (R) Corporal punishment has long been abolished in schools. Do you support the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools?

DCM3: No, maybe because I became a teacher during corporal punishment time, so yes but if it is used correctly because there is an abuse of it also yeah.so if it used correctly... sometimes you will find that even the learner themselves say that you know what I deserve these.... If it is used correctly because if you use it with anger, it is no longer a punishment, it is something else hmm so be it absent it is not replaced by anything.. Because when I talk about detention of learners as punishment I have to retain myself also because I have to be there also... because now it is afterschool Friday and I have to go to town, I have to be there until four o'clock.

DCM2: Corporal punishment was abolished in 1996, as it was seen as increasing the level of violence in schools. As it was, it was directly connected to maintaining inconsistency thus I support the abolishment of corporal punishment thereof.

DCM1: Discipline must aim at eh ... at understanding the difference between right and wrong. Knowing that, self-discipline follows hence understanding of responsibilities.

3.2.4. Theme 3: Consequences of imposing corporal punishment

Researcher (R) what are the consequences of educators who still impose corporal punishment?

The participants indicated clearly that the policy dealing with the issue of corporal punishment states that teachers should refrain from that practice. Corporal punishment has been illegal in South Africa since its ban in 1996.

DCM 1: When they are found still using corporal punishment, they may lose their work. They may be expelled and will eventually lose their benefits as teachers.

DCM2: South African Council of Educators (SACE) states it clearly that it is dismissal if one can be found recently still using corporal punishment.

DCM3: I recently attended a workshop on corporal punishment. It was explicitly pointed out that the results of such conduct on learners is nothing else but suspension and expulsion afterwards. South African Council of Educators (SACE) attest to that.

In responding to the researcher's question on the consequences of corporal punishment being imposed on learners, the principals always remind their staff members about the danger of using corporal punishment as follows:

P1: Ensuring that everybody knows the dos and the don'ts, have an open-door policy where people come in and voice out their frustrations. Everybody knowing his/her own roles and responsibilities, I think that will contribute to less use of corporal punishment. Educators are aware that corporal punishment is abolished, and alternative measures are used to discipline learners. They give them extra work, let them pick up papers.... and other effective measures besides corporal punishment.

P2: I always talk about corporal punishment in the information sessions and briefings with staff so that it always reminds them that corporal punishment is a NO....NO.

P3: During morning briefings, we discuss the dos and don'ts... also newly appointed educators are taken into aspect that enable them to discipline learners without the use of corporal punishment. I issue them with the ELRC handbook so that they read for themselves and get a better understanding of the consequences of corporal punishment.

Researcher(R) what do you think can be alternative measures that can be used instead of imposing corporal punishment in schools?

DCM1: I think.... giving learners duties in the classroom e.g. class monitors being chosen make them responsible at the same time. They may alternatively be punished by watering the plants, opening and closing of the windows daily. In this way, they are taught responsibilities at the same time but punished on the other side. I also engage parents and seek for the relevant intervention like social workers. A way of rewarding for good behavior is helping a lot to change bad behavior of ill-disciplined learners. Sometimes I use a demerits principle whereby they lose points.

DCM2: Everybody at this point in time is aware that corporal punishment has long been burned, since it is a form of physical punishment. It should not be used as a way of maintaining discipline, learners can be made to remain behind after-school to study.

DCM3: Instead of imposing corporal punishment in schools, I give them extra work to keep them busy for them not to misbehave in classes.

Researcher(R) For a school to be disciplined and governed, what do you think are proper procedures to be followed as opposed to learners being corporally punished?

P1: The school follow all the school regulations, rules and disciplinary procedures. Parents and educators are trying by all possible means to enforce the same rules so that learners are able to see that whether at home or at school discipline is necessary.

P2: The class teacher and parent involvement are key. The class teacher reports to the Departmental Head and the Departmental Head escalates the matter to the Disciplinary Committee. The committee involves the principal who refer the matter to the School Governing Body. From there the SGB makes the decision depending on the extent of the learners' inappropriate behavior, for example, detention or suspension.

P3: The learner concerned call the parents for them to help the staff on how best the problem can be solved.

Positive re-enforcement as a way of modelling learners' behavior helps curb ill-discipline in schools. Do you agree or disagree with this practice?

SGB1: Yes, I agree. It motivates a learner especially if a learner is rewarded for good behavior or given positive feedback instead of ridicule. Giving learners attention is better than neglecting him/her. We always at the end of the year give awards to best performers and that motivates the entire school to be in a healthy completion, also wanting to be the best and be awarded. In that way they behave accordingly as they are motivated.

SGB2: I agree with the practice because if learners can be motivated in a positive way, they can learn better from their mistakes and become responsible adults in future.

SGB 3: Agree..... If the learners are behaving very badly they end up being drop-outs and as parents or educators we will be blamed for not taking part of modelling those learners. At the end of the day most of our kids end up taking drugs as a way of solving their problems.

On the same interview question, learners themselves responded:

L1: I appreciate the way our school always give best achievers awards, it's indeed a way of making even those who doesn't perform to pull up their socks. Even if our teachers are not in class, we focus on our studies so that at the end we also receive awards. It is so motivating to receive an award that you really worked hard for.

L2: When our teachers attend to their periods and in time, we don't get time to be loose and misbehaving. When we are always hands on and kept busy, there will truly be no time to talk or disturb other learners.

L3: *We usually copy what our teachers are doing, when they absent themselves to class, learners also misses and bunk classes. When they respect each other and learners too, learners copy the behavior and follow suit. Our class teacher used to reward for positive behavior that is why our class is always behaving.*

3.2.5. Theme 5: Punctuality

Researcher(R): In what ways do you manage/motivate both learners and educators to respect time for disciplinary purposes?

P1: *As a principal, I am always leading by example by arriving early at school. Applause and appreciate those that observe time at all costs, during meetings and every time. I also encourage learners to always be on time as a way of preparing them for the future.*

P2: *I manage time for educators by using time book. I highlight the names of those who are late in Z83 and if no improvement shown. I call them individually, to hear their side of the story before taking some further steps. Learners who are punctual are rewarded with gifts such as reading books, pens and pencil depending on what they are running short of.*

P3: *Both of educators and learners in my school knows and understand that time management is very important and that it should be effectively utilise. Educators honour their periods and understands that a day well started its going to be effectively ended.*

Learners were also asked about their observations on not sticking to time on task, and they said:

L1: *Time wasted never regain, time is like a river, and you cannot touch the same water.... Obviously wasting time delays one's performance. It disadvantages yourself if you let it pass.*

L2: *My teachers usually don't finish syllabus and I have realised that it is because they don't stick to their time. They always come to class very late and sometimes even leave before the end of the period. This affects us negatively as we struggle to catch up with time at the end of the year. When learners realize that they are not performing they get out of the way, starting to be rebellious and lose interest in their academic performances hence ill-disciplined.*

L3: *We lack behind with our school work if we don't stick to time. Syllabus cannot be finished and there will be no time for revision and self-study. Go ba boima...It becomes difficult.*

The same way principals and learners found out that time management is important, the disciplinary committee members of the three schools responded as follows:

DCM1: *Curriculum is delayed and not covered, poor performance by learners as a result, there is insufficient amount of work or tasks given and that affects the overall school results.*

DCM2: *Not sticking to time leads someone not to follow curriculum or work schedule.... Not administering the correct number of written tasks as required and the curriculum will not be covered. That teaches learners bad manners such as late coming.*

DCM3: *The results of not sticking to time on task disadvantages learners, they perform not well.*

3.2.6. Theme 6: Factors contributing to learner ill-discipline

3.2.6.1. Sub-Theme 1: Behavior and manners

Zubaida (2009) indicates that most mutual behavioral problems amongst learners include fighting, grabbing another learner's property, shouting, truancy, bullying, viewing pornographic pictures, and threatening teachers. On the other hand, Tebabkha et al. (2021) identified subsequent behaviors exhibited frequently in the classroom, such as walking out on the teacher, making noise, sleeping in class, immorality, and the use of medicine.

Researcher (R) what types of behaviors do you encounter in your schools?

P1: *The school is situated in the vicinity of the small township that makes learners to have regular stops before entering the school campus leading to a problem of late coming. Some goes to an extent of not even arriving, which leads to total absenteeism of most of our learners. You will seldom find them hanging around with friends who are not attending school ... and of cause that's where bad behavior is learnt and copied from.*

P2: *Oh.... I usually call my school Yizo-Yizo. It reminds me of a certain film on television where learners were usually fighting. Time and again learners are brought into my office after a serious fight, when you find out the reason for the fight you will realize that there are gambling taking place within the school yard.*

P3: *My school is located in an isolated bush, whereby no one can reach the place without any means of transport. It is a boarding school and day scholars use common transports to come to school. Late coming is a rare case and punctuality is prerequisite. Learners move out of the school yard only through permission and that help us a lot in as far as discipline is concerned.*

3.2.6.2. Sub-Theme 2: Other Factors

Alternatively, factors such as ineffective teaching, bad staff-behavior, authoritarian methods of administration, harsh school rules, an unsatisfactory curriculum, poor examination results, and poor communication between teachers and learners are other contributory factors that may lead to ill-discipline, as explained by Edward (2021).

Researcher (R): What are other factors that you think are influencing bad behaviors of learners in your school?

DCM1: *Educators do not play their part well; they deliberate their many more tasks to perform and are hesitant to concentrate on the learners hence they feel neglected and start misbehaving. This may be because of too much paper work that the department want teachers to do.*

DCM2: *When the school is underperforming, it is a sign that teaching and learning is somehow compromised and that leads to misbehavior from the sides of the students. They are not encouraged at all and they start to retaliate and causing some troubles in schools.*

DCM3: *In our school there are strict rules that learners need to carry and they are unlikely unable to comply. The rules are harsh and sometimes not easy to abide by hence learners starts to act abruptly. Since it is a boarding school, it imposes stricter rules that separates them from communicating with each other.... Boys and girls.*

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Tebabkha et al. (2021) confirm that the problem of learners' discipline revealed that teachers are demotivated and the problem is escalating. This is because cases are so extreme that learners kill one another, even on school grounds, and teachers are also threatened and killed. Lacoé and Steinberg (2019) posit that a lack of discipline affects academic performance because, in a disordered school environment, effective teaching and learning are not possible; hence, the maintenance of learner discipline is crucial.

Nthebe (2006) concluded that all schools should develop appropriate policies to maintain discipline for the provision of quality education. According to Soudien (2018), the directives are clearly outlined in the South African School Act of 1996 as well as in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The list of responsibilities for managing and controlling learner discipline is outlined for role-players, including the adoption of a code of conduct and the formulation of disciplinary committees.

The study revealed there are various factors contributing to ill-disciplined behavior where educational goals are hindered. Some educators were forced to retire earlier than they should because of the stress they experienced. Filade et al. (2019) emphasize that children are encircled by many people who act as role models, shaping behaviors and actions.

Bandura's theory indicates that a child who has seen parents being kind, caring, and loving will tend to do the same. Contrary to that, one who has seen aggressive behavior is expected to be violent and hostile during conflict and problem solving. Imitation is affected by positive reinforcement or incentives awarded. Bandura supported his theory with a practical example of a child observing one who is rewarded for good conduct being influenced to take up the behavior that was rewarded. Then the particular child will possibly continue with that behavior (Bandura, 1968).

4.1. Consequences of Ill-Discipline

Ill-discipline poses a threat to both learners and also affects teachers drastically in carrying out their daily routine of teaching and learning. It is claimed that even though there are Codes of Conduct to be used to curb ill-discipline, the study claims that the Department of Education is not doing enough to address infrastructure issues to sort out overcrowding, which escalates ill-disciplined behavior among learners. A limited number of learners in a class are manageable and easily controlled as compared to an overcrowded classroom.

Cases are reported to the School Management Team, and the principal should be encouraged to involve stakeholders such as SAPS, social workers, and health professionals to fully participate in the formulation of rules, including parents. The implementation of these roles is of paramount importance. Morel et al. (2011) explain how students' behavior impacts on teachers because a person's patience can only be tested up to a certain limit. Teachers generally feel ill-equipped to deal with troublesome classroom behavior even after courses of training for teaching, which barely touched on the skills necessary for effective classroom management. Failure to recognise and remediate learning difficulties results in behavior difficulties in learners who ultimately find that have nothing or little to offer, as explained by Smith (2008).

My opinion on ill-discipline differs slightly with those of other researchers in a sense that if the management of the school can work co-operatively in instilling discipline in a positive way, most of the schools could become free from ill-disciplined learners. Unity is power, and when learners are given the same treatment, especially for their wrongdoing, they gradually adapt to the required norms of the school. Because of good leadership, determination, flexibility, and resourcefulness with effective strategies for motivating and controlling, learners' ill-discipline can be curbed.

Learners are less likely to disrupt lessons that are interesting, relevant, and worthwhile. Contrary to this, they disrupt those lessons they see as mediocre and boring, or those that are beyond their understanding. Therefore, these factors need to be carefully observed and dealt with effectively to avoid learners being unruly.

The study revealed that educators may offer classroom leadership by addressing punitive forms of control. It further shows how experienced teachers are more knowledgeable as far as authority is concerned, as compared to novice teachers (Leithwood & Louis, 2021). For a teacher to be seen as an authority figure, they must possess good qualities and relate very well with learners. Egunlusi (2020) posits that by possessing these good qualities, a teacher will be able to exercise their authority

effectively. He further alluded to the fact that it is about the teacher's understanding of the relationship of a classroom and content knowledge.

4.2. Learner Discipline in a Postmodernist Paradigm

The reward-punishment principle is prevalent in all contemporary education systems. The teacher endeavors to give rewards more frequently than punishments. [Vermote et al. \(2020\)](#) found that the more rigidly the teacher applies the rule, the more reactionary the students' behavior tends to be because they are reacting to a rule, they consider inappropriate to their specific case. Supporting and rewarding students plays a major role in molding their characters and changing their unbecoming behavior ([Mwangi, 2020](#)).

The school today is trapped between post-modernistic changes and bureaucratic modernism, which has put up strong resistance to such changes. In an authoritarian era, discipline was exercised for its own sake. By then, discipline was viewed as a means to achieve other goals of education for the class and school, where discipline is viewed as a consequence and not as an assumption.

4.3. Roles and responsibilities of teachers

The study revealed that time management is an important and useful strategy to administer discipline effectively. Law-abiding educators reveal obedience and compliance as far as curriculum completion is concerned. [Gregg \(2018\)](#) also agrees by justifying that extra time management is viewed as a way of supporting and regulating the performance of tasks within a certain time frame. Parents, learners, and educators require principles of time management. The study further regarded educators as role models and not only as teachers to teach learners ([Harden & Crosby, 2000](#)). They further explained that teachers have a unique opportunity to share several topics with the learners. They play a role in igniting curiosity in their students. The teacher's role goes far beyond providing information; they have key roles to play within the education process.

4.4. Socio-Economic Factors

The study revealed a number of socio-economic factors that are contributing to ill-discipline, which is disturbing. [Scudder et al. \(2019\)](#) observed that as children grow older, their parents' control over them significantly declines as compared to group, such as their peers. In the study, peer pressure plays a major role in learners' behavior, where learners form groups that promote fighting and using dangerous weapons.

4.5. Behavioral Problems

Unbecoming conduct revealed by most of the learners includes fighting, bullying, threatening teachers, making noise, and stealing other learners' belongings. These forms of behavior are different from one school to another. In some schools, there are severe cases where learners go to the extent of stabbing and killing other learners. The study revealed that some violent behaviors are a result of watching action movies from television.

4.6. Ineffective Teaching

As explained earlier, it is not only the learner's misbehavior that promotes ill-discipline. Teachers, on the other hand, are contributing to the misbehavior problems of the learners. This may include factors such as bad staff behavior, authoritarian methods of administration, harsh school rules, poor examination results, and poor communication between teachers and learners as explained by [Mwangi \(2020\)](#). It is also reflected in the study that underperforming schools are a result of compromised teaching and learning; such results discourage learners who, at a later stage, reveal a culture of misbehavior.

4.7. Poverty and Unemployment

Unemployed parents are unable to provide basic needs for their children. It was alluded to that parents are unable to assist with homework. This is due to their own low level of education, which also leads to their children being unable to progress, and ultimately dropping out of school. The government is trying all its best to enable learners to cope with school attendance by providing them

with social grants that may assist with clothes, food, and transport to school if they stay far from school. The transport issue is also taken care of by the Department of Education, as there are scholar transport organised freely for those learners residing far from schools.

4.8. Guidelines Set Up for Teachers

Schools are now promoting health and well-being rather than imposing punishment that harms and may cause danger to the learners. However, the study revealed great support for and in favour of returning corporal punishment in order to instill discipline in schools. They alluded to the fact that if it is used as a corrective measure and not intending to harm, it can then bear fruit to be enjoyed later in life. Lyubansky and Barter (2019) support the use of corporal punishment but suggest that there should be proper laid-down procedures for administering it, whereby school heads are to keep records of all the cases and do not have to administer severe punishment that may hurt or cause harm.

In countries such as Zimbabwe, ill-discipline is limited to number of cases because corporal punishment is recommended as the last option to control and correct a learner's behavior. This study revealed that corporal punishment is not perceived as abuse as long as it is infrequent, not severe, and does not lead to injury.

4.9. Consequences of Imposing Corporal Punishment

This study revealed that corporal punishment has been illegal in South Africa since its ban in 1996. It further highlights that when found still using it, a teacher may lose employment or may be expelled without being given benefits. The South African Council of Educators clearly states that it is a dismissible offence if a teacher is found imposing corporal punishment as a way of disciplining learners. On the other hand, it was found that it helped many students to focus, with immediate compliance, contrary to it resulting in anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, or substance abuse. It has a negative impact that escalates ill-discipline instead of curbing it.

There are various factors that can reduce the impact of ill-discipline in schools, such as planning and organizing, resolving issues as they arise, rewarding good behavior, and being optimistic. As the main objective of this study was to investigate the roles and responsibilities of teachers in learner discipline, it was found that ill-discipline in schools is escalating and may lead to schools becoming war zones and unsafe places for effective teaching and learning. There is a need for interaction with all stakeholders in order to curb this. This was also shown during the research by participants that serious intervention is needed to improve and devise turn-around strategies to instill discipline accordingly.

Ethics Committee Decision

The Department of Basic Education, Limpopo Province, Waterberg District, Nylstroom Circuit together with Principals, School Governing Bodies, Disciplinary Committee Members and Learners of the three High Schools in Nylstroom Circuit supported this research study.

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