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A Framework for Implementing Positive Learner Discipline in Public Secondary Schools from the Context of the Mpumalanga Province

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Abstract:

Introduction: Learner indiscipline has emerged as a global cause for concern for educators and parents in the 21st century. This study sought to develop a framework for the successful implementation of positive discipline. The study sought to provide answers revolving around the contributing factors towards learner indiscipline, the effects of indiscipline on teaching and learning, educators' perceptions on positive discipline, factors leading to the ineffective implementation of positive discipline and the constituents of an effective framework for implementing positive discipline.

Methods: The study adopted a qualitative approach. Districts were identified utilising convenience sampling, while participants were sampled purposively. Data collection comprised semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Six schools from two districts in the Mpumalanga Province were selected as the study sample. The sample comprised twenty-four participants, including principals, class teachers, Life Orientation teachers, and chairpersons of School Governing Bodies from each school. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data and present the findings.

Results: The findings revealed that learner indiscipline is affected by several contributing factors such as family situation, community setting, human rights, peer pressure, educators, and learners themselves. Lack of stakeholder engagement, absence of training, overemphasis on learners' rights and conditioning of educators and parents on corporal punishment are the factors that have led to the ineffective implementation of positive discipline.

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Discussion: To ensure the implementation of positive discipline is successful, a framework should support a multi-stakeholder consideration to engagement. Ubuntu values should be incorporated in re-packaging the positive discipline toolkit so that it suits the local context.
Limitations: Only two education districts in one province of South Africa formed part of the study.
Conclusions: Educators are to adopt a revised curriculum that accommodates positive discipline and Ubuntu values in related subjects taught in school. Effective implementation requires regular monitoring, evaluation and reviewing of the positive discipline approach. The study proposed an Afrocentric framework for the implementation of positive discipline.

Key words: learner indiscipline, positive discipline, corporal punishment, disciplinary problems, positive discipline framework.

Introduction

Learner indiscipline refers to a learner's conduct that amounts to a breach of rules and regulations resultantly undermining school effectiveness (Masingi, 2017). Discipline problems are a thorny issue not only in South Africa (SA) but globally (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2014). Historically, corporal punishment (hereafter CP) was the most common method of discipline. CP was legalised in public schools in South Africa during the apartheid era. This system of instilling discipline negated the rights of children, as well as basic human dignity. South Africa entered a new political dispensation in 1994 and thus ushered in a democratic Constitution (1996), which brought about a new dispensation with a new set of values that sought to promote children's rights and therefore heralded the abolishment of CP (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2014). According to the National Education Policy Act (1996), no person shall administer CP or subject a learner to physical or psychological abuse. The banning of CP, therefore, gave rise to the introduction of alternative means of learner discipline. Positive Discipline (hereafter PD) was then introduced as a more humane way of dealing with learner indiscipline.

PD provides parents and teachers with the knowledge and skills to be both kind and firm simultaneously, fostering a sense of connection with the children they interact with. This approach neither condones permissiveness nor advocates for punitive measures. It serves as an effective avenue for parents, teachers, and learners to acquire life skills and cultivate a sense of community and connectedness through relationships built on mutual respect.

McVittie (2003) states that PD equips all parties involved with the necessary skills to establish healthy interpersonal connections, creating an environment where each person's contribution is meaningful, valid, and anticipated. If

properly implemented, it can transform a school system into a peaceful and orderly one where educational goals are achieved with fewer predicaments. This approach plays a pivotal role in establishing safer school environments where children's rights and dignity are upheld, and they are empowered to reach their full potential. Notably, this approach firmly rejects the use of violence as a teaching tool.

According to Durrant (2016), PD focuses on guiding children's behaviour. Instead of instilling good behaviour through fear, educators take on the roles of models, mentors, and guides, while schools make long-term investments in the holistic development of each child. This approach not only supports the comprehensive growth of children but also enhances the school environment by eliminating fear, teaching self-discipline, and fostering greater enjoyment and engagement in learning. In line with this, Ozan (2015) reveals that cultivating a positive classroom climate involves assembling various puzzle pieces, with each component contributing to an environment that values determination, compassion, self-esteem, and mutual respect. It focuses on implementing a comprehensive plan that demonstrates effective teaching practices and highlights the emotional motivations of teachers. Furthermore, it aims to promote emotional, cognitive, and behavioural development, nurture positive relationships among individuals, and equip learners with systemic thinking and judgment skills (Ozan, 2015).

Du Plessis (2015) asserts that despite the introduction of the approach, disciplinary issues persist in South Africa, and the situation is deteriorating. Likewise, Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) argue that learner discipline remains a challenge in South African schools. Magaba (2018) highlights that indiscipline among learners has significantly increased over the past 15 years causing considerable anxiety for teachers in their day-to-day experiences. Poor discipline manifests in various ways, including truancy, tardiness, involvement in cultism, drug abuse, verbal insults, physical assaults, theft, bullying, rioting, threatening other learners and school staff members and many other antisocial vices (Masingi, 2017).

The foregoing demonstrates that the implementation of the approach has not yielded the much-anticipated levels of success. Rather, it has been confronted with difficulties and challenges, as learners reject any kind of authority; this has resulted in the phenomenon of ‘learner power,’ as a form of entitlement, which leads to intimidation and violence (Rampa, 2014). The question then arises: What kind of framework for implementing PD can be proposed for greater effectiveness of managing learner discipline? In pursuit of this question, the authors of this paper sought to explore ways of establishing a context-oriented framework for the implementation of PD in public secondary schools in the Mpumalanga province. This transpires at a time when the notion of

'Africanisation of the curriculum' has taken centre stage among academic debates in South Africa (Msila & Gumbo, 2017). The researchers intended to develop a framework based on Ubuntu values that would guide the effective implementation of this approach. In this endeavour, the following objectives were considered:

- To identify the factors that lead to learner indiscipline.
- To examine the influence of learners' indiscipline on the quality of teaching and learning.
- To explore educators' perceptions of positive discipline.
- To ascertain the factors that contribute to the ineffective implementation of positive discipline.
- To determine the essential components that should be included in a framework for the effective implementation of positive discipline.

1 Theoretical framework

This study was mainly be guided by Adler's Individual Psychology theory. However, the Ubuntu African Philosophy was also incorporated to augment Adler's theory, to develop a richer and better-balanced theoretical framework. According to Watts (2015), Adlerian Psychology encompasses two key principles: the pursuit of perfection or superiority and Gemeinschaftsgefühl (community feeling/social interest). These concepts, proposed by Adler, played a significant role in the inception of positive psychology, which in turn laid the foundations for PD.

Watts (2015) indicates that Adler's concept of "striving for perfection or superiority" refers to the human endeavour directed towards achieving competence or self-mastery, serving as the central motive behind human behaviour. Adler (1927) explains that individuals engage in self-evaluation, resulting in the development of a persistent mood characterized by a feeling of inferiority. This triggers a deliberate pursuit of final compensation and the formulation of a life plan influenced by unconscious thought processes and envisioned goals. Schultz and Schultz (2013) further emphasise Adler's belief that feelings of inferiority are common to all individuals and serve as a motivating force for behaviour. Adler posited that experiencing occasional feelings of inferiority is an inherent aspect of being human, rather than a sign of weakness or abnormality. Schultz and Schultz (2013) assert that Adler's concept of superiority differs from its conventional understanding. It does not involve a sense of being better than others or having a superiority complex. Instead, striving for superiority is driven by a pursuit of perfection and a desire to become whole and complete (Watts & Erguner-Tekinalp, 2017).

DeRobertis (2014) adds that the aspiration to overcome feelings of inferiority and become more competent can serve as a motivating force for children to

become actively engaged and enthusiastic learners. This presents an opportunity for educators to create a nurturing and empowering environment that inspires learners without indulging them excessively. By understanding and harnessing this motivation, educators can foster a conducive learning atmosphere that encourages genuine growth and development.

Ubuntu is a virtue that is common among most African communities. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) have observed that the concept of Ubuntu exists in various languages across Africa. For instance, in the Zimbabwean context, the Shona term "Hunhu" is synonymous with Ubuntu in Zulu, Botho in Sesotho, Ajobi in Yoruba, Numunhu in Shangaan, Vhuthu in Venda, Bunhu in Kalanga/Tsonga, Umntu in Xhosa, Utu in Swahili, and Abantu in Ugandan. Similarly, Mugumbate and Nyaguru (2013) mention that in Botswana, the word "botho" carries the same meaning as Ubuntu, while in Tanzania, it is "bumuntu." Other countries such as the Congo, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, and Uganda use the terms "bomoto," "gimuntu," "umunthu," "vumuntu," and "umuntu," respectively (Mugumbate & Nyaguru, 2013). The claim, therefore, that Ubuntu is a widely shared African virtue is thus substantiated by the above observations.

Ubuntu emphasises the fundamental understanding that human beings cannot thrive in isolation; it highlights our inherent interconnectedness. Individuals labelled as having Ubuntu are known for their generosity. Mugumbate and Nyaguru (2013) state that Ubuntu also entails a continual consciousness that recognizes the inherent worth of "the other" and imparts a profound respect for them, akin to the regard one has for oneself. It embodies the principles of "I am because we are," "You are; therefore I am," "Without the other, I am nothing; together, we are one." Ubuntu instils in individuals the value of prioritising the well-being of others above their own.

While it is a fact that Ubuntu values were passed on from one generation to another through oral traditions and the complex system of socialisation, the current dispensation would most likely require a more packaged and deliberate approach that achieves effectiveness within a macro-social environment, characterised by multi-media technology platforms that allow easy access to diverse lifestyles from across the globe. This study, therefore, sought to develop a framework for the effective transmission of Ubuntu values within the education system to achieve optimum levels of discipline in secondary schools.

2 Methods

The study adopted a qualitative approach. According to Tomaszewski et al. (2020), qualitative research conducted unselfishly, is internally consistent, rigorous, and assists researchers to answer important questions regarding people and their lives. Qualitative studies undergo an assessment of trustworthiness through a systematic approach that evaluates the extent to which credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are achieved throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, organisation, analysis, presentation, and interpretation of findings. The study employed a collective case study design. De Vos et al. (2015) reveal that the collective case study is an instrumental research design that encompasses multiple cases, facilitating comparisons between cases and concepts, thereby extending and validating theories.

Convenience sampling was used to identify districts and schools to take part in this study. Convenience sampling is a method of non-probability sampling that allows researchers to select individuals from the target population based on practical considerations such as accessibility, proximity, availability, and willingness to participate. This approach, as described by Etikan et al. (2016), enables the inclusion of participants who meet the practical criteria set by the researcher. For this study, purposive sampling was employed to identify and select schools and participants. Purposive sampling, as discussed by Maree et al. (2016), is commonly used in qualitative research and involves the researcher's judgment to include elements that possess the most characteristic, representative, or typical attributes of the population. Data collection included semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The research sample consisted of six schools located in two districts of the Mpumalanga province, with a total of twenty-four participants including principals, class teachers, Life Orientation teachers, and chairpersons of School Governing Bodies. The document analysis focused on incidents record books, school codes of conduct, as well as minutes from the school disciplinary committee and school safety committee. Thematic content analysis was applied to analyse and present the collected data. The data collected from the study participants and examined documents were subjected to thematic analysis. Qualitative data analysis is utilised by researchers to uncover the most significant findings of the. In this study, qualitative data analysis aided the researchers in highlighting key issues relevant to the investigation of technology integration into teacher education. The researchers familiarised themselves with the collected information by thoroughly reading the data. The process of annotating the transcripts, which involved labelling relevant key terms, phrases, sentences, or sections, established the coding framework for this study. Subsequently, coding was employed to conceptualise the qualitative data, organize and categorise it into essential themes.

3 Findings and discussion

Qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis are analysed, presented and interpreted. The analysis was conducted using the content analysis technique where themes emerging from the sub-research questions of the study were generated and articulated in detail with the support of sub-themes constructed from the views of participants.

During this presentation (in living up to the ethical code of anonymity and confidentiality), schools and participants are named using codes of the alphabet. Schools are named as School A, B, C, D, E and F. Principals are identified as PA, PB, PC, PD, PE and PF, where PA is stationed at School A and PB at School B and so on. Class teachers, SGB chairpersons and LO teachers are coded similarly; as are the documents.

In this multiple case study design, School A and B are rural-based, School C and D are semi-urban while schools E and F are purely urban. The findings of the study were triangulated during a presentation with this socio-geographic aspect in mind. Detailed codes used for the identification of participants and documents are provided in the table below.

Table 1

Code names used for participants

Category	*Code name*
Schools	SA, SB, SC, SD, SE, SF
Principals	PA, PB, PC, PD, PE, PF
School Governing Board Chairpersons	CA, CB, CC, CD, CE, CF
Class teachers	CTA, CTB, CTC, CTD, CTE, CTF
Life Skills Orientation teachers	LSTA, LSTB, LSTC, LSTD, LSTE, LSTD
School Code of Conduct	CCA, CCB, CCC, CCD, CCE, CCF
DC Minutes	DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE, DCF
Incidents Record Book	IRA, IRB, IRC, IRD, IRE, IRF
School Safety Committee Minutes	SCC

3.1 Factors leading to learner indiscipline

It was necessary to establish the factors that lie at the centre of learner indiscipline. Identification of these factors would assist in developing a framework for PD that addresses the root cause of behaviour problems in selected public secondary schools in Mpumalanga. The study found that learner indiscipline can be attributed to various factors, including family setting, community setting, peer pressure, the learner, the educator, human rights, and

biological factors. These factors are in line with Porubčanová and Pasternáková (2018) who state that if a child is successful with indiscipline behaviour, then they determine principles, attitudes and values that affect people in their surroundings. Each of these factors contributes to shaping the behaviour of learners, as discussed below.

3.1.1 Family setting

The family serves as the primary socialization agent for learners, where they acquire the norms and values that regulate their behaviour. The dynamics within the family can have an impact on the learner's behaviour in the wider world, often presenting challenges. The behaviour of learners is often a reflection of their home environment. PC noted that *"In the majority of cases, we struggle with learners with an improper home background involving the family."* This perspective is consistent with Jinot's (2018) assertion that the underlying causes of learner misbehaviour in schools originate from the home environment. Similarly, Kiwale (2017) argues that the home environment has a significant impact on shaping a learner's behaviour at school. Tauatswala (2018) further reinforces this claim by suggesting that the type of family in which a child is raised influences their behaviour in the educational setting. A learner is an essential component of a cohesive family unit, and their conduct is often a reflection of the behaviours exhibited by other family members with whom they are associated.

3.1.2 Community setting

The lifestyle and characteristics of the community from which learners come tend to have an impact on their behaviour within the school environment, which can be seen as a microcosm of the larger community. The characteristics of a school are a reflection of the surrounding community it serves. Any criminal activities and negative behaviours prevalent within the community are likely to manifest among the learners in the school setting. It has been observed that learners originating from high-density environments tend to display more instances of misbehaviour compared to their counterparts from low-density environments and rural areas. PF highlighted that *"Crime in communities where learners come from also causes learner indiscipline as learners tend to import criminal activities from their communities into the school."* Similarly, Netshitangani (2014) confirms that a school is influenced by the broader environment, suggesting that school violence reflects violence in the wider social context. This suggests that instances of school violence are frequently influenced by the surrounding community and society as a whole. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), the immediate community of learners has a substantial impact on their behaviour, while Makhasane and Chikoko (2016) support the

notion that violence present in the community can extend to neighbouring schools. Consequently, many of the behaviour challenges educators face at school can be traced back to the community where learners reside.

Real threats of community influence on learner misconduct identified in the study relate to drug abuse and gangsterism. The study revealed that the community acts as the source of drugs that learners traffic and consume. The prevalence of drug abuse in the community is reflected in the school environment to some extent. The types of drugs trafficked and consumed within the school premises are the same as those readily available in the surrounding community. Rural communities that are known to produce dagga supply rural schools with this drug, while urban communities plagued by nyaope, cocaine, alcohol, and other drugs infiltrate urban schools with the same substances. Learners who are under the influence of drugs often exhibit disruptive behaviour that hinders teaching and learning activities. LSTA stated that:

"In this community, there is no motivation for the value of education. Most rich people here earned their riches through production and trafficking of dagga. This area produces a lot of dagga and our learners get involved as well."

Similarly, CTC reiterated that *"Learners here abuse a lot of 'nyaope', alcohol and cocaine. This is a town environment, and these substances are readily available. Some even sell them here at school."* The perspective shared by Kiwale (2017) in the literature aligns with the notion that the school is often seen as a reflection of society. Upindi (2013) is also of the view that some of the causes of indiscipline in schools are drug abuse, neglect and media violence emanating from the community.

3.1.3 Peer group pressure

It was revealed that the peer group contributes to the behavioural problems in schools. Participants emphasised that learners form peer groups within the school, and these groups play a significant role in shaping behaviour. The peer group establishes norms and behavioural expectations, driven by the learner's innate desire for a sense of belonging. In their pursuit of acceptance, learners often conform to the subculture and values of their peer group, which can sometimes clash with family expectations and the school's code of conduct. Particularly during adolescence, learners seek to establish their identity among friends who validate their actions, leading to the adoption of behaviours such as smoking that are learned from peers. CE shared the following thoughts regarding the influence of the peer group:

"Our children misbehave because of influence from bad friends. Their friends teach them to do things we do not allow them to do at home. Which parent in his or her right mind can teach a child how to smoke?"

This perspective aligns with Jinot (2018), who argues that many learners engage in misconduct due to peer pressure within the school environment. Similarly, Nene (2013) asserts that learners often misbehave to conform to the expectations of their peer group and avoid rejection. Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) add that some learners exert a negative influence on others, leading to disruptive behaviour, particularly when they interact with peers who have different behavioural tendencies. They further suggest that as children grow older, the influence of parents as a reference group and a model for conformity diminishes, and they begin to prioritise their relationships with peers.

3.1.4 The learner

In the current study, learner-based factors were also identified among the key contributors to learner indiscipline. According to Jinot (2018), the learner is one of the factors that have a hand in the increase in violence. Kagoiya and Kagema (2018) similarly posit that learners themselves are a source of indiscipline in schools. This study identified the learner's personality and the developmental stage associated with secondary school-going learners (adolescence) as key learner-based aspects that impact negatively on learner behaviour. Regarding personality, participants argued that some learners have an inborn type of personality that predisposes them to be ill-disciplined. CD candidly remarked that *"People are created differently; some were born to be naughty."* Netshitangani (2014) shares a similar perspective by asserting that certain personal characteristics, such as innate traits, gender, age, impulsivity, inattention, hyperactivity, substance abuse, lack of guilt, and experiences of victimisation, can act as precipitating factors that may trigger aggressive behaviour. Educators also observed that some learners exhibited attention-seeking tendencies in their personalities, which were responsible for disruptive behaviours that hindered teaching and learning. LSTF articulated that:

"Attention seekers are a problem. When they misbehave and you punish or rebuke them, they get excited because that is what they wanted in the first place. They are even seen as heroes by their friends because they can stand up and challenge the teacher."

These findings align with the research conducted by Nene (2013) in KwaZulu Natal, which aimed to explore the challenges of managing learner discipline. The study concluded that learners' behaviour problems were primarily attributed to emotional difficulties. It was further noted that some learners exhibit unconventional behaviour in the classroom due to various reasons, such as the need for special attention, a desire for leadership, aversion to interference, or a tendency to hurt others because they have been hurt before (Nene, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that personality traits characterized by attention-

seeking tendencies play a significant role in the development of problematic behaviours in learners.

Furthermore, the challenges related to puberty, which primarily impact individuals during their adolescent phase, also play a role in learner indiscipline. The research findings indicate that a considerable number of secondary school learners are in the midst of adolescence, and many behavioural issues exhibited by these learners, stem from developmental factors. Jinot (2018) proposes that adolescent learners, aged 13 to 15 years, often demonstrate a notable lack of discipline due to experiencing an adolescent crisis. Individuals undergo physiological and hormonal changes during this stage that can influence their temperament, views, and actions. CTF stated that *"Most of our kids are in their adolescence. So, the hormones are making them to behave hey wire [sic]."*

This reflection is in line with Barbot and Hunter (2012), who state that adolescence is often characterised as a phase of inherent 'storm and stress'. Throughout these various fluctuations, the primary task of adolescence is centred around the formation of identity, which is influenced by environmental, communal, adolescent, and neurobiological factors. These adolescent changes often manifest in behaviours such as risk-thrill-seeking, impulsivity, and emotional disturbances. The indiscipline observed in adolescent learners can be ascribed to the pursuit of identity, as explained by Erickson's theory of psychosocial development. As per Sznitman et al. (2019), the identity-seeking status represents an identity arrangement that emerges when there is a deficiency in the exploration and commitment to significant aspects of life. Additionally, adolescents experience the Moratorium status, which is characterised by probing and a search for identity, involving searching and consideration of potential commitments (Barbot & Hunter, 2012).

3.1.5 The educator

The study uncovered that educators play a role in the emergence and display of learner indiscipline. As learners typically spend a significant amount of time with educators, the conditions created within the school and classroom by these educators have an impact on the level of learner discipline. Some educators were found to be lenient towards indiscipline, while others were criticised for inadequate lesson preparation and frequent absences. Educators who have irregular attendance, come to class unprepared, or leave the classroom before the lesson concludes tend to contribute to learner indiscipline. When learners are left idle, they are more prone to engage in disruptive behaviour. CF argued that *"Some teachers fail to attend classes regularly. When learners are left alone, they end up misbehaving."* PD also remarked:

"Educators sometimes come ill-prepared for the lesson. When learners discover that the educator has not prepared enough teaching material to occupy them for the whole lesson, they start making noise."

These perspectives align with the findings of Magwa and Ngara (2014), who assert that teachers who frequently and unjustifiably miss school and fail to promptly respond to the bell (such as after a break) contribute to the prevalence of indiscipline. Additionally, Tauatswala (2018) argues that educators who inadequately prepare for their teaching contribute to learner indiscipline, as learners tend to lose focus when faced with an educator who appears unsure of their lesson content and objectives.

3.1.6 Human rights

The study established that there was an over-emphasis on human rights by the government upon banning CP. Learners were accorded too many rights ahead of educators, hence the development of negative attitudes that allow them to behave as they want. Learners have developed a superiority complex, showing no respect to adults either at home or at school. Such learner attitudes have escalated the levels of indiscipline in schools to unprecedented levels. PF remarked that *"Government's appetite for political gains gave too many rights to learners without emphasis on responsibility. Learners were overloaded with rights without teaching them what they entail."* Educators and parents were also rendered powerless in the process, hence their limitation in instilling discipline properly. This was articulated by PE, who argued that *"Too many rights and freedoms were given to learners by the government. These rights have rendered educators and parents powerless to the extent that they can't control the behaviour of learners."*

The introduction of PD was largely coated by an emphasis on human rights (Rampa, 2014). This culminated into a situation where educators and parents are confronted with difficulties and challenges of learners rejecting any kind of authority under the guise of 'learner power' (Rampa, 2014). This pupil power phenomenon, as a form of entitlement, led to intimidation and violence.

The learner, family settings, peer pressure, the educator, community settings, and emphasis on human rights emerged as the core factors responsible for learner indiscipline in selected secondary schools in the Mpumalanga province. The findings revealed a wide array of factors that are at the centre of learner indiscipline. These findings portray a holistic perspective to understanding contributory aspects to learner indiscipline.

This comprehensive perspective is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's (2006) bioecological systems theory, which posits that behaviour is influenced by intricate processes involving interactions within the individual and between the individual and the surrounding environmental forces (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

According to this theory, there are four interrelated types of environmental systems that operate across four levels: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem, which is the closest to the individual, encompasses their regular and direct interactions with family members, peers, teachers, or caregivers. The mesosystem involves the dynamic interactions among the various elements within an individual's microsystem. The findings of this study highlighted how the relationships between the family, peer group, the school and the community affect learner behaviour. The exosystem consists of the factors beyond the person that have an impact on them, such as the parent's employment status. This was accommodated through exploration of the family's socioeconomic status and its effect on learner indiscipline. The macrosystem represents the broader societal system that encompasses a set of ideological beliefs, values, and norms, which are manifested in the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic organization of a society (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). The government's approach of emphasising human rights is an ideological aspect that fits well within this purview.

3.2 Effects of learner indiscipline on quality of teaching and learning

The study also sought to establish the views of participants on the effects of learner indiscipline on the quality of teaching and learning. It was revealed that learner indiscipline has adverse effects on teaching and learning. Ntuli and Machaisa (2013) concur with this position; they contend that disciplinary problems have a propensity to negatively impact learner performance. Themes generated from the data gathered include *disruption of teaching and learning, demotivation of teachers and learners, inducing fear in educators and learners, time-wasting, and low work rate by undisciplined learners.* These are discussed below.

3.2.1 Disruption of teaching and learning

The study established that misbehaving learners disrupt teaching and learning sessions by engaging in fights and making noise. Fights involving rival groups gain the attention of the entire school and side-track learners from concentrating on their studies. Noisemaking, pandemonium, and restlessness create a hostile environment that hinders effective teaching and learning. PB reiterated that *"Indiscipline has a huge impact on teaching and learning. For an example, learners under the influence of alcohol will be passive in class, others will be out of the way, while some become loud, restless and disrupt learning."* In the same vein, Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) argue that indiscipline is evident in disruptive behaviour, which poses challenges for other learners in their learning process. Khewu (2012) also support the findings in stating that misbehaving learners with aggressive tendencies and anti-social behaviours create a hostile environment

that impedes the effective acquisition of learning matter. Learning cannot take place amid chaos. Aggressive learners intimidate their classmates and often create a chaotic classroom environment that hinders successful teaching and learning. In most cases, undisciplined learners are uncontrollable and difficult to manage (Nconietsa & Shumba, 2013).

3.2.2 Demotivation of teachers and learners

Learner indiscipline creates a hostile school environment which lowers the morale of educators and other learners. Effective teaching and learning thrive on educator and learner motivation. Learner indiscipline angers the educator and dampens their interest in teaching. Educators and learners find themselves emotionally disconnected from the teaching and learning environment because of learner indiscipline. Schools with unbearable levels of learner indiscipline experience high staff attrition as educators opt for schools with acceptable levels of learner discipline. Teaching and learning as an academic process and core business of the school suffer a huge blow when educators and learners fail to emotionally commit themselves. PF summed up the argument: *"Due to learner indiscipline, some educators tend to be demotivated and disengaged. Some educators end up transferring to other schools where discipline levels are optimal."*

This resonates with Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), who pointed out that because of learner indiscipline, the morale of the educators dwindles, and they become completely demotivated. Magaba (2018) further contends that teachers experience demoralization when they must handle challenging learner behaviour, which ultimately impacts the quality of their teaching practices and their dedication to their profession. Similarly, Ofori et al. (2018) argue that due to concerns for their personal safety, teachers are unable to perform at their best and implement strategies that could foster effective learning.

3.2.3 Inducing fear in educators and learners

It was established that learner violence scares educators and other learners. Educators and learners require a conducive environment for learning that is free from threats. One cannot expect productive teaching and learning to take place where violence and death threats are the order of life. Undisciplined learners and their gang leaders can pose a safety threat to educators and other learners. LSTC contended that *"Educators cannot teach well in an unsafe environment where there are threats from learners and gangsters they collaborate with from outside."* According to Karanja and Bowen (2012), there is a growing apprehension about the safety of many schools, which poses a risk to the teaching and learning environment. They also highlight that indiscipline not only hampers learners' academic performance but also instils fear in others, leading to

a phobia of attending school. The emotional and psychological distress resulting from learners' disruptive behaviour further strains interpersonal interactions among individuals (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). It has also been observed that learners who are victims of bullying live in constant fear, lack concentration, and thus perform badly in their schoolwork (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). The arguments made in this regard fit well within Maslow's theory. Safety needs come second in the hierarchy of needs. Teachers and learners cannot be motivated to perform at their best in an environment marred with threats to their survival and safety. The feelings of fear and lack of control over events happening in their lives create a sense of anxiety and paranoia which negatively impacts performance.

3.2.4 Time wastage

Learner indiscipline consumes time originally meant for productive teaching and learning. Educators direct a lot of time towards solving discipline problems instead of teaching. Learners also lose learning opportunities as a result of the consequences of engaging in acts of violence. Additionally, time lost through absenteeism is not easily recovered. This results in poor preparation for external examinations as well as poor performance.

PC argued that *"The teacher puts so much effort into disciplining learners and setting order instead of teaching. This leads to poor performance."* In terms of absenteeism, CTE remarked that *"Absenteeism involving significant numbers retards pace of content coverage since teacher has to repeat what was taught during their absence. Preparation for examinations becomes compromised in the process."*

Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) concur with these findings; they argue that school violence creates chaos and shortens learning and tuition time, given that disturbances call for the need to attend to the problems reported before learning can proceed. Much time is wasted as almost all the learners' present attempt to give an account of what transpired. Shortened instructional time has a direct impact on the high failure rate in schools. Likewise, Waithaka (2017) asserts that a considerable amount of classroom time, nearly half, is consumed by activities other than actual instruction, and discipline issues contribute significantly to this loss of instructional time. Further, Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014) contend that undisciplined learners do not have enough reading time hence negatively affecting their academic performance.

3.2.5 Low work rate by undisciplined learners

Participants observed that learners who constantly misbehave do not perform well in their academic work. In support, Khewu (2012) argues that research has demonstrated that schools, where learners are not disciplined, have a plethora of

problems, chief being a high failure rate. Poor performance of such schools is a result of disruption of learning, lack of teacher and learner motivation coupled with fear for their safety, time wastage, and low work output by undisciplined learners. LSTB remarked that "*In-disciplined learners will not pass. They invest too much effort and energy into unproductive activities instead of reading and doing schoolwork. They are always behind."* Document analysis of School C's SSC minutes points to the following statement that well explains the overall effects of indiscipline on teaching, learning and academic performance: *"The principal highlighted that the school might not be able to perform well due to the problematic behaviour challenges it is faced with."*

In support of the foregoing observations, Khewu (2012), contends that anarchy and chaos resulting from an act of indiscipline obstructs the effective running of schools and negatively impacts the learners' academic achievement, thereby making it impossible to attain the mandate of the school. Karanja and Bowen (2012) also argue that the consumption of cannabis is associated with the adoption of a non-conventional lifestyle, which in turn contributes to a significant increase in indiscipline and lack of proper commitment to studies in schools. According to a study carried out in Kenya by Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014), the academic performance in most schools was abysmal, with numerous cases of poor grades subsequently attributed to indiscipline. Ofori et al. (2018) conducted a study in Ghana and concluded that indiscipline has contributed to the poor performance of learners in schools. According to their perspective, the diverse inappropriate behaviours exhibited by the learners hindered their ability to concentrate in class, led to the loss of taught content and knowledge, created tension and a sense of insecurity, disrupted lessons, and consumed a significant amount of instructional time in resolving conflicts.

Learner indiscipline has adverse effects on teaching and learning. The study established that learner indiscipline disrupts teaching and learning sessions, lowers educator and learner motivation, induces fear in educators and learners, wastes valuable learning time and lowers academic achievement. The assumption is that once a proper framework for the implementation of PD is developed, discipline levels in schools will improve and thus eliminate these negative effects that come with high levels of indiscipline.

3.3 Participants' perceptions of positive discipline

It was essential for the study to establish participants' views regarding PD. Participants' different views broadly fell within the categories of the definition, strategies and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach in maintaining discipline and order in schools. The following subsections explore the findings.

3.3.1 Definition of positive discipline

In defining the approach, participants demonstrated varying levels of understanding. The range of understanding varied from ignorance to adequate understanding of the concept. One participant expressed total ignorance of the concept. One wonders as to how the educator performs in terms of implementing it when they confess to hearing the term for the first time. LSTC remarked, "*Yeah, hey…I am meeting the word for the first time."* Successful implementation of PD hinges on the understanding of its principles and strategies. It was yet to be established as to how educators who have no clue perform in terms of its implementation in managing learner discipline. Others provided definitions close to being correct, however, fell short of certain imperatives that provide a clear-cut separation of PD from alternative disciplinary measures that are punitive. These viewed it as an approach that incorporates more humane strategies in moulding learner behaviour as opposed to CP. PF defined it as: *"Positive discipline is using other methods to shape a desirable behaviour of the learner other than using CP."* Others demonstrated an impressive understanding in which issues of human rights and learner dignity were mentioned. PE elaborated that *"Positive discipline is a means of handling learner discipline issues using approaches that respect the rights of the learner and do not degrade him or her in any way."*

Authoritative sources present it in a manner closest to what PE expressed. According to Assali (2015), PD is a model of teaching and parenting that seeks to find a harmonious equilibrium between two crucial aspects: effective teaching and the acknowledgment of children's rights. Ozan (2015) additionally perceives it as a management approach aimed at fostering children's sense of responsibility and their ability to address challenges, enabling them to develop positive self-perception while learning societal norms. Furthermore, he argues that in practical implementation, it emphasizes the implementation of a well-structured plan that aligns accurate teaching methods with teachers' emotional motivations. It is interesting to note that none of the participants could mention a single principle that guides it. This demonstrates the existence of a huge knowledge gap in principals, educators and SGBs chairpersons regarding the concept of this approach.

3.3.2 Positive discipline strategies

It was also necessary to establish what strategies principals, educators, and SGB chairpersons apply in managing learner indiscipline within the PD purview. Participants' views agreed that it does not incorporate CP as a means of correcting learner behaviour. Manual labour, parental involvement, detention, counselling, delegation of responsibility to learners, suspension, the multi-stakeholder approach, motivation, expulsion, and law enforcement were

identified as the strategies that are used in managing learner behaviour in selected public secondary schools in Mpumalanga. Some of the strategies suggested bear a punitive undertone, even though they appear less violent than CP.

Physical punishment in the form of manual labour is still used as a way of enforcing discipline in schools. Learners are made to dig holes, pick up litter, clean toilets or water the garden as punishment for committing offences at school. The main purpose of using manual labour for offenders is to deter others from doing the same. PA revealed that *"For severe cases, we require the learners involved to dig holes. This serves also as a lesson to others not to do the same."* It was also noted that the school codes of conduct also bear phrases that legitimise the use of punitive measures. School A's code of conduct has a section that reads *"All disciplinary measures shall match the offence committed and shall be more severe as the behaviour becomes repetitive."* The paradox surrounding the use of manual labour during the PD era is the fact that learners' rights appear to be trampled upon in the process. Cleaning toilets and other forms of physical punishment can be humiliating to the learner.

The use of punitive strategies is against what literature views on PD dictate. Coetzee and Mienie (2013) assert that it adopts a preventive approach as opposed to a punitive one, emphasizing proactive discipline rather than reactive measures. This approach places emphasis on supportive behaviours, including mutual respect, teaching, effective communication, collaborative planning, self-discipline, role modelling, encouragement, and motivation (Rampa, 2014). In situations where misbehaviour has occurred, it employs carefully selected corrective techniques that aim to address the issue without humiliating or compromising the learner's dignity (Coetzee & Mienie, 2013). The principle of 'discipline that teaches' calls upon teachers and parents to shun punitive measures and embrace an approach of being kind and firm that focuses on the attainment of set goals in a safe environment (Assali, 2015). The use of manual labour with PD is a misnomer. The argument can be made that forcing learners who tend to fight to take part in physical labour would make them stronger, thus there might be far more serious consequences in the next physical altercation. This brings to light the extent to which educators lack an understanding of what the concept entails.

Many educators use detention for instilling discipline in learners. Detention requires the learner to remain behind when others go home after school. The educator plays a supervisory role whilst the learner is under detention. Productive detention implies that the learner undertakes schoolwork during detention so that the time is put to the benefit of the learner. LSTB remarked that *"We use supervised detention, where the learner is encouraged to ask where they do not understand."* This is in line with Nene (2013), who reveals that

alternative methods to CP, such as detaining learners, can prove beneficial as they provide an opportunity for such learners to engage in their schoolwork while simultaneously instilling discipline. What seemingly raises questions about the appropriateness of detention to the PD approach is the fact it is punitive to both the learner and educator. CTB indicated that *"When you detain a child after school time, you directly detain yourself as well since you have to be there to enforce the detention."*

In as much as detention is legally approved for use in maintaining learner discipline in schools, it violates the learners' rights as enshrined in the Constitution. Section 12 (1) of the Constitution reads: *"Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right - (b) not to be detained without trial."* Detention violates this provision, as the learner is often detained without a fair trial. However, literature supports the use of detention in instilling learner discipline in schools. According to the Department for Education (2016), detention during lunchtime, after school and at weekends is a legally permissible measure of instilling discipline in learners. In the authors' opinion, it is necessary to differentiate between legally approved measures and mechanisms. The fact that certain measures such as detention are permissible by law does not necessarily render them PD compliant. Compliance of disciplinary measures with PD expectations should be based on the extent to which those measures subscribe to the concept's principles and values. It is, therefore, necessary for legislative frameworks that regulate learner discipline issues to be revised so that they embody PD strategies.

Parental involvement is one of the strategies used to maintain learner discipline in schools. This goes a long way in ensuring that both the school and home speak the same language where the discipline and learning of the child are concerned. Joint efforts eliminate manipulation of the school and home by the learner. CTA summarised this notion as:

"We call the parent and discuss indiscipline matters of the child so that the home and school can cooperate with each other in correcting the child. Some of these learners are very clever, they say one thing at home and a completely different story at school. So, if you do not involve the parent, you can both be fooled and manipulated by the child."

These findings are consistent with Ntuli and Machaisa (2013), who state that greater parental involvement in the disciplinary and academic affairs of the child should be encouraged. Ntuli (2012) similarly posits that the involvement of parents as much as possible in the education of their children should be made a priority. According to the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) (2012), this approach is most effective when there is open communication between parents and teachers, as well as consistency in discipline styles between the school and home environments. Ntuli (2012) argues in favour of parental

involvement by emphasising that the working together of parents and teachers can produce more effective results in the learners' behaviour than when either party is grappling with the problem alone. Similarly, according to Nene (2013), establishing an active partnership between parents and schools can yield positive outcomes, as parents have a significant influence on children's behaviour. Newman et al. (2019) further emphasise that Epstein introduced a model of parental involvement that emphasises the importance of ongoing communication between parents and the school. This communication allows for the sharing of parenting styles and effective communication methods that align with each other's expectations regarding learner discipline.

Counselling is also one of the strategies used to manage learner behaviour. Parents and educators engage in face-to-face discussions with learners to deal with indiscipline matters. Face-to-face discussions play a pivotal role in discovering the reasons why a particular learner misbehaves, facilitating the generation of appropriate solutions to the behaviour problems. The learners also get to understand themselves better and, in the process, takes an active and voluntary part in complying with suggested courses of corrective action. CE remarked, *"When my child has done wrong, I sit him or her down and we talk one on one. This sometimes helps me as a parent to understand why the child did what they did."* Similarly, CTF echoed: *"We conduct counselling for learners who misbehave. It helps us discover sometimes the deep sited issues that cause the learner to misbehave. We then are able to work out an appropriate solution for the learner."*

These findings resonate well with CJCP (2012), arguing that PD encourages teachers to talk to learners on an individual basis to understand their backgrounds and the issues and challenges confronting them. Understanding the context and circumstances that shape learners' behavioural tendencies will assist in mapping out appropriate solutions to the behaviour challenges and avoid arriving at irrational conclusions about the learner. Mabea (2013) contends that teachers can use counselling to identify mistaken goals, faulty logic in the minds of learners and closely work towards dealing with the associated faulty behaviours. The counselling process enables the teacher to gain an understanding of the developmental, environmental, individual, relational, and cultural factors behind the conduct of learners, to map out informed corrective and coping mechanisms for the affected learners (Prins et al., 2019).

This study established that some schools had created multi-stakeholder platforms to manage indiscipline in schools and crime in communities. Schools work with different professionals in the community to instil discipline. Individuals cited as part of the multi-stakeholder approach consisted of religious leaders, traditional leaders, political leaders, educators, police officers, social services representatives, parents and Learner Representative Council. The approach takes

advantage of the different skills and expertise each professional group has. It also rides on learner inclusion as a mechanism for managing learner discipline. This provides a holistic mechanism that makes use of knowledge from a wide variety of disciplines in dealing with learner indiscipline. LSTC stated that *"Police conduct awareness programmes on crime prevention and other health professionals. Psychologists, pastors, and community leaders also come and address our learners on the dangers of crime and encourage them to behave morally and responsibly."* In addition, document analysis of School C's SSC minutes recorded attendants to the meetings as *"Pastors, Traditional leaders, Principal, Social services representative, School Governing Board members, Police representative, Councillor, Mayor's representative, Department of Education representative and Learner representative."* The multi-stakeholder approach also recognises the value of learners in the generation of school regulations. Under the section titled, Operationalisation of the school rules, Schools A, B and E's codes of conduct for learners articulated: *"Learners shall be involved in the drawing of school rules through questionnaires, use of indaba, classroom monitors reporting to the Learner Representative Council."*

The adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach to handling matters related to learner indiscipline is in sync with Tlhapi (2015), who proffered that discipline in schools should not be left to educators alone but should be the responsibility of all stakeholders. Lumadi (2020) contends that lasting solutions to learner indiscipline can be arrived at through consistency and teamwork. The teamwork approach calls upon what Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) describe as the working together of policymakers, parents, principals, educators, learners and community members. The multi-stakeholder approach calls upon the mutual participation of the local community in the affairs of the school, to adequately address those indiscipline elements that emanate from the wider community (Tlhapi, 2015).

The use of punitive strategies such as suspension, manual labour, detention, and expulsion could be seen as a violation of learners' rights. Subjecting learners to manual work such as digging holes and cleaning surroundings give learners the impression that physical work is punitive; hence they may grow up with a negative attitude towards physical work and hygiene. Ordinarily, work is good practice, and the education system should inculcate values of industriousness and hard work in learners through positive means. Additionally, detention is isolative in nature. The learners find themselves in a semi-prison setup whilst others enjoy their freedom. Suspension deprives learners of a learning experience during the period of absence. Upon returning, there is no guarantee that they receive additional support from educators to catch up on missed work. Expulsion gives the impression that the school has failed to correct the learner. It is synonymous with passing on the problem to the learner's next destination. Expelling the

learner is a violation of the learner's universal right to education. These strategies share commonalities in that they embarrass the learner who feels humiliated out of the public spectacle that comes with punishment. The continued use of such strategies points to the fact that educators lack an adequate understanding of PD principles and approaches.

3.3.3 Evaluations of positive discipline

In the process of exploring participants' perceptions of PD, the study generated views that reflect their evaluation and appraisal of the approach. Participants made positive and negative appraisals. Some were of the view that it is a good approach, while others mentioned that it was a difficult approach to apply. Views in support of it indicated that the approach is productive and prepares learners for current and future life in terms of behaviour. CTB remarked that *"It is a good approach. You strike two birds with one stone. It is good for correcting current behaviours, but it also prepares the learner for life after school."* These findings align with the perspectives shared in the existing literature. A study conducted in Eswatini by Mabuza et al. (2017) found that teachers viewed it as an effective approach for disciplining learners and expressed that it allows for a smooth correction of learners' behaviour without causing unnecessary pain, which could potentially lead to psychological and emotional disturbances among the learners. The study further asserted that this kind of discipline is instrumental in maximising the possibilities of producing responsible learners. In a similar study conducted in the USA, Roberts-Clawson (2017) also confirmed that PD helped to minimise negative learner behaviour. Somayeh et al. (2013) conducted a study in Taiwan; it underscores the fact that applying it in the classroom paves the way to internalisation of the values, decrease disrupting behaviours, and also leads to promotion of self-self-discipline among learners. It is therefore viewed as an effective strategy that promotes good learner behaviour and helps in cultivating a culture of acting responsibly in learners.

Some participants viewed it as a good approach, however, with a few concerns. The main obstacle hinged on how it was introduced and implemented. It was established that the poor implementation strategy adopted made it difficult for educators to understand the PD concept. The approach was also said to be good on paper but lacked the much-expected effectiveness in bringing behaviour problems under control. PB stated that *"It is a good approach on paper but how do you put it to use? Sometimes you find yourself wondering as to what you end up doing especially when you try talking to the child and nothing works."* Similar views also indicated that even though it is a good approach, it tends to spoil learners and does not yield results on learners that are way out of line. CTF remarked, *"It has its fair share of good things and problems. It helps learners to be responsible, but it also can spoil learners in a big way."* Ntuli (2012)

conducted a research study reviewing ways of controlling discipline in particular secondary schools in Limpopo; participants in the study stated that specific alternatives to CP were effective while others were not.

It has also been viewed as an approach that exists in theory, is time-consuming and not practically effective in handling learner indiscipline matters. It was blamed for the worsening state of learner indiscipline. The approach has also been described as Western-oriented and thus lacks relevance to the local socio-cultural context. CC expressed that:

"It is a system for the Whites. Why do you have to change a winning team? Things were ok during CP. Children had respect for adults. I see it as a strategy introduced by the Western countries to kill African Societies."

These views confirm what Mabuza et al. (2017) reported on, that certain teachers in Eswatini expressed reservations about implementing PD in an African context. According to the participants in the study, PD was seen as incompatible with their cultural setting, as they observed an increasing moral decline among learners who were accustomed to disciplinary measures involving physical punishment in their homes. In African society, it was argued, when a child misbehaves at home, parents often resort to CP as a disciplinary method.

In addition to this, some parents consider the act of abolishing CP as a Western-centric concept that causes havoc in African cultures and leads to moral decay. This implies that PD is considered a foreign strategy that has not been tailored along with African values for adaptability and is bound to destroy the moral fibre of African societies. Roberts-Clawson (2017) observed that it is viewed as a strategy that does not prepare learners for the real world. This observation is consistent with Mabuza et al.'s (2017) perception that this approach lacks relevance in the day-to-day means of disciplining learners. PD is therefore viewed as a superficial system that is not in tandem with systems applied in wider society. Educators have held the perception that its strategies are ineffective, inadequate, and a waste of time (Chonco, 2019; Moyo et al., 2014; Singo, 2017).

3.4 Factors contributing to the ineffective implementation of positive discipline

It was necessary to establish participants' views on the factors that led to its ineffective implementation. Identifying these factors was considered appropriate for developing a framework for effective implementation of PD that attempts to address the pitfalls experienced so far. Sub-themes generated from the data gathered through interviews revolved *around lack of stakeholder engagement in policy formulation, lack of stakeholder training, over-emphasis on learners' rights and conditioning of educators and parents on CP as an effective disciplinary strategy.*

3.4.1 Lack of stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation during the policy formulation process and the subsequent development of an implementation framework for PD. Principals, educators, and parents voiced their concerns about being excluded from the decision-making process regarding the adoption of this approach. The implementation was perceived as top-down, and some stakeholders saw it as the imposition of a foreign disciplinary model that lacks relevance to the local context. PF summarised the argument as follows:

"School administrators, educators and parents were not consulted in the first place. The system was just copied and pasted from foreign countries without considering the situation in Africa as a continent and SA as a country. Proper consultation was going to help generate ideas on how best the system could have been better localised."

Bowling (2018) points out challenges in implementing this approach, including the use of complex strategies and a top-down approach that disregards stakeholders' involvement. According to Moyo et al. (2014), educators expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation when PD was introduced, leading to their continued use of CP and reluctance to adopt alternative disciplinary measures. Similarly, Ntuli (2012) states that participants criticized the lack of consultation in the introduction of disciplinary changes in South Africa. Rampa (2014) argues that it was imposed on educators by the Department of Basic Education, without considering their input. Additionally, Moyo et al. (2014) highlight concerns from educators, parents, and religious groups who felt that their right to be consulted in their children's education was disregarded by the government.

3.4.2 Lack of training for stakeholders

The study found that its implementation lacked adequate training for principals, educators, and parents on its principles and strategies. This posed numerous challenges for educators and parents, as they lacked alternatives and the necessary skills to effectively address disciplinary issues in an environment where CP is prohibited. As a result, educators and parents resorted to trial and error with alternative methods that may not align with its values. Consequently, its intended goals are not fully realised. PC aptly remarked:

"The approach was not properly introduced. There was no formal orientation for principals and educators. Also, conditions for PD are not clearly stated by the department. Schools end up relying on their own experiences in seeing what works and what does not work."

These findings resonate with Bowling (2018) who spells out that what hindered PD was the lack of support and training for teachers on the new approach. This is confirmed by Mabuza et al. (2017), who reveal that teachers in Eswatini stated

that limited knowledge of the concept had hindered them from effectively implementing it. According to Rampa (2014), the government neglected to provide ongoing professional development and training for educators in disciplinary procedures that could serve as alternatives to CP. He further notes that educators experienced the pressure to implement disciplinary reforms with no support from authorities. Mahlangu et al. (2021) argue that educators perceive themselves as lacking empowerment and adequate knowledge of effective PD methods to establish a safe and conducive learning environment. Moyo et al. (2014) hint that the reason behind this unfortunate reality is that educators and parents were left all to themselves to discover alternative ways to CP. Bilatyi (2012) further confirms this by stating that the DBE has not put any capacity building initiatives in place that target stakeholders with regards to discipline and seemingly it does not know how to handle the training programme for it.

3.4.3 Overemphasis on learners' rights

Its implementation also suffered a blow because of the over-emphasis on learners' rights. The introduction of PD was paired with the abolishment of CP, hence the emphasis on children's rights overlooked corresponding responsibilities. In the process, the rights of educators and parents were ignored. This study established that educators and parents felt alienated within the new approach. Participants indicated that in their judgement, it was vindictively implemented to get back at the educators who were seen as abusive to learners. Educators and parents felt that they have been rendered powerless, as most of the power and authority has been given to learners. CTC argued that:

"PD wasn't introduced well. Teachers were made to feel like they wanted to punish learners unfairly. The department was more on the side of learners. Too much attention was given on the rights of the learner and ignoring the educator altogether. As educators, we felt like we are not important and have no rights."

The aforementioned perspectives align with Venter's (2016) observations, where educators voiced their concerns about the emphasis placed on learners' rights in the new system. As a result, educators hesitated to enforce disciplinary action against rule-breaking learners due to fear of being accused of violating learners' rights. Research conducted in various regions of South Africa also reported that educators felt disempowered, unsupported, and experienced a decrease in respect since the implementation of PD, replacing CP schools (Chonco, 2019; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; Moyo et al., 2014; Nene, 2013; Van Wyk & Pelser, 2014). According to Moyo et al. (2014), several educators at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality expressed the view that their power had significantly been reduced since the abolishment of CP. According to Van Wyk and Pelser (2014), educators perceived a decline in respect due to the implementation of PD and the adoption of alternative discipline approaches. Similarly, Nene (2013)

found that educators in KwaZulu Natal expressed concerns that their power and authority as educators had been diminished with the absence of CP.

3.4.4 Conditioning of educators and parents on CP

The findings of this study revealed that educators and parents were still bent on using CP even though it was officially banned. Some educators and parents continue to believe that it is effective since it is what has always worked. How adults were socialised was cited as the cause of this rigid stance. Also, when educators have not been capitated with skills to handle discipline the positive way, they resort to the old system they find familiar. CTD remarked: *"Teachers grew up being disciplined through CP...it's not easy to adapt to the new system. CP is in their blood."* The continued use of CP at home creates an imbalance of approaches. This waters down all efforts by the school towards instilling PD values as learners despise educators for adopting a softer approach when they are used to a more aggressive approach at home. Lack of parental involvement in the introduction of the new approach left parents with fewer options save for reliance on CP, which is what they have always known. Parents confirmed using CP to instil discipline at home. CA stated that *"We still beat children at home as a way of moulding them."*

These findings align with Nene's (2013) views, who highlighted that many participants expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed alternative measures to CP, considering them ineffective in managing learner indiscipline in schools. The alternatives were seen as time-consuming, requiring educators to invest a significant amount of time addressing misbehaviour and subsequently engaging with parents. Similarly, Ntuli's (2013) study conducted in Limpopo revealed that alternatives to corporate punishment do not yield immediate results, unlike CP, which provides instant behaviour change through the infliction of pain. Shaikhnag and Assan (2014) also agree that most educators perceived the alternatives to be less effective. The persistence of CP usage despite its prohibition indicates the challenges encountered in implementing PD in schools (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

3.5 Framework for the effective implementation of positive discipline

Considering the weaknesses identified in its implementation in SA schools, this study proposes a framework for effective implementation. The framework is also based on the suggestions put forward by principals, class teachers, Life Orientation educators, and chairpersons of SGBs of selected schools in the Mpumalanga province. The proposed framework adopts a multi-stakeholder Afrocentric approach. This approach intends to blend PD with the theoretical underpinnings of the Ubuntu philosophy. The framework comprises stakeholder engagement, tailor-making of PD to appeal to the local cultural context, review

of school guidelines and handbooks for learner discipline, training of stakeholders, harmonisation of home and school disciplinary practices, establishing vibrant LRCs and infusion of PD into the school curriculum.

Step 1: Stakeholder engagement

The proposed framework advocates for the engagement of all stakeholders across all stages, starting with enlisting their views about it. Participants bemoaned the fact that PD is a foreign concept that was imported from the West and pushed down their throats without consultation. Given the foregoing, it is necessary to engage in genuine consultation to gather views from all stakeholders that will be brought together to develop a concept reflective of the beliefs, norms, values and rights of citizens. This home-grown concept will appeal to the local socio-economic and cultural context and thus enjoy ownership and support from all stakeholders.

The consultative process should target principals, educators, parents, traditional leaders, community leaders, religious leaders, political leaders, related professionals, and learners. Consultation should be coordinated by the DBE. This exercise can be done at the school, circuit, district, and provincial levels. This exercise entails engagement on issues concerning legal frameworks of learner discipline, CP, PD, human rights and Ubuntu. The outcome of these engagements should produce a consolidated report for guiding activities and decisions.

Step 2: Review and repackage positive discipline concept

There is need to review the existing PD toolkit, guided by the report of the consultative process carried out in the first step. Participants observed that certain strategies suggested by the DBE for use in instilling learner discipline as per the dictates of policy violate human rights. The findings of this study also condemned certain strategies contained in the schools' manual for regarding the concept.

This framework advocates the indigenisation of the concept through the blending of human rights values with Ubuntu values that emerge from the Ubuntu philosophy as a component of Indigenous Knowledge Systems. The flavour of local values deposited into this approach is bound to produce a model of discipline that stakeholders can be proud to implement and promote. It is also important to go further and reconfigure policies, school codes of conduct and the school handbooks so that they align with human rights provisions in the Constitution alongside the emerging PD concept. The handbook should spell out disciplinary mechanisms that are attuned to PD principles and are practicable within the SA education system. Reviewing and repackaging this approach is

necessary to ensure that a more relevant disciplinary approach which takes cognisance of cultural permutations that underpin the SA value system is birthed.

Step 3: Training of stakeholders

Due to the existence of a multi-stakeholder Afrocentric framework, the third step focuses on the training of principals, educators, members of the SGBs, learner representatives, parents, and community leaders. Principals, educators, and chairpersons of SGBs indicated that they had not been trained on PD approaches hence they lack knowledge, skills and competencies on its principles and techniques. Training should be formal and must ideally begin at the provincial level with the training of trainers. Assessment of training participants should include, among others, theory tests, role plays and simulations, case study scenarios, verbal quizzes and portfolios of evidence. Trainees must be awarded certificates of competence and receive a full toolkit for future reference during implementation.

Having produced adequate trainers, the DoE can widen training to districts, circuits, clusters, and schools. At lower levels, assessments could be simplified to role plays, verbal quizzes, and case scenarios. Teacher training institutions producing pre-service educators will review the curriculum in educational psychology, professional studies, and other related modules to accommodate PD topics, concepts and activities. Training should focus on corporal laws and policies regulating learner discipline, CP (pros and cons), PD principles, values, and strategies applicable to the community, home and school settings. Additional topics related to parenting styles, classroom management techniques, and administrative issues related to codes of conduct and related records also need to be looked at. The subject matter and content of training should depict the localised version of the approach with implications for each stakeholder group.

Step 4: Harmonisation of home and school disciplinary practices

The framework emphasises the importance of providing training to parents, learners, and other stakeholders on positive learner parenting and discipline techniques. It advocates for the simultaneous implementation of the approach both at home and at school. Educators have observed that the implementation in schools has faced obstacles due to the unbalanced situation where PD is only practiced at school while parents/guardians employ CP and other punitive measures at home. Achieving harmony in parenting approaches and learner handling between home and school allows educators and parents to collaborate in fostering the development of PD values in learners. Parents should utilize positive parenting techniques to raise their children, enabling the school to build upon the values already instilled by the family as the learner grows. Challenges encountered at home in implementing strategies for discipline can be discussed

with educators and other professionals available in the community for practical solutions.

Furthermore, the involvement of learners in all aspects of learner discipline and well-being is crucial as part of the implementation program in schools. The establishment of Learner Representative Councils (LRCs), consisting of leaders selected by the learners themselves, serves as a bridge between the school and the learner body. LRC members should receive periodic training to effectively fulfil their roles. This concept of establishing LRCs aligns with good governance principles and encourages participatory approaches to leadership and problem-solving, which often yield positive outcomes. LRCs should be involved in the formulation and enforcement of school rules, as well as in promoting learner discipline. An environment characterised by mutual respect between educators and learner representatives is more likely to address behaviour challenges in schools effectively.

The implementation also requires a deliberate commitment by educators to include principles, values and approaches in their day-to-day teaching and learning activities. To facilitate better understanding and acceptance of PD, it is recommended that it be incorporated into the school curriculum. This would involve integrating content related to a localised version into subjects such as Life Orientation and Social Studies. By integrating its content into these curriculum areas, learners can study about and engage with PD values in a context that is familiar and applicable to their daily lives.

Step 5: Monitoring, evaluation and review

Finally, the study proposes that periodic monitoring of progress in terms of the effectiveness of the approach be conducted at home and school at regular intervals not exceeding six months. This could be done through face-to-face meetings and interviews, questionnaires, suggestion boxes and other means considered appropriate by the DBE. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the monitoring exercise should be evaluated regularly. Observations on challenges encountered by parents and educators and corresponding recommendations emerging from the evaluation exercise are to be used for making modifications on the ground. After a series of evaluations, a more refined PD concept is bound to be realised.

Conclusions

A framework for implementing PD should comprise stakeholder consultative engagement, tailor-making it to appeal to the local cultural context, review of school guidelines and handbook for learner discipline, training of stakeholders, harmonisation of home and school disciplinary practices, establishing a vibrant LRC and infusion of this approach into the school curriculum. The consultative

process is aimed at gathering views about PD to reposition the approach to one that commands local context relevance. This is to be arrived at by blending its principles, values and strategies with Ubuntu, which results in the creation of a multi-stakeholder Afrocentric framework for implementing PD. Learner discipline policy, schools' PD manual and school codes of conduct require modification to get rid of strategies that violate learners' rights. All stakeholders are to be trained on PD principles, values and strategies. Implementation should target both the home and school for synergy purposes of working towards raising a self-disciplined learner under an environment characterised by a shared set of values between the home and the school. The framework further advocates the establishment of LRCs that will work with school administration in solving learner disciplinary issues. Educators are to adopt a revised curriculum that accommodates PD and Ubuntu values in related subjects taught in school. However, effective implementation requires regular monitoring, evaluation and reviewing of this approach.

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