

Exploring Students Discipline in Primary and Secondary Schools: Teachers' Perspective

Maintaining discipline in schools remains a challenge towards academic performance of students. The purpose of this study was to explore students' disciplinary problems in schools. A qualitative research method is used to address the primary objective of this study. In-depth interviews were conducted with gather teaching staff to gather the primary data. The data was analysed through the use of content analysis method with the aid of Atlas.ti software package version 25. The findings of this study uncovered that students with poor family background tend to lack discipline in schools, overcrowding and poor leadership were identified as contributing factors towards poor. This study provide significant contribution by providing possible solutions to poor discipline in schools and future research directions regarding discipline in schools.

Introduction

Den Brok (2015) states that maintaining school discipline is necessary for creating a conducive learning and teaching environment. Absence of discipline in school might prompt educational issues for teachers and students. Educators, school administrators, and parents can maintain discipline without using corporal punishment to create a positive learning and teaching environment at the school. Den Brok (2015) says that disciplinary actions show students that they are following the rules of the school to fix a lack of discipleship. At the point when discipline is overseen in school, it prompts better student's presentation in school. Discipline is essential for maintaining school discipline and helps students perform well in school.

O'Hara (2008) claims that students who do not adhere to school disciplinary procedures perform poorly compared to those who do. These students' tendency is clear evidence that schools should always enforce discipline. Students' performance in school may be affected by having a clear understanding of disciplinary procedures. Discipline, in the words of Nunn (2002), gives one a clear understanding of what is good and bad. Additionally, he asserts that a number of students lack discipline for a variety of reasons, including: the absence of parental association, parental joblessness, harmful guardians and ill-equipped teachers. A bad teaching and learning environment is created when students do not adhere to classroom discipline rules.

In order to help students who lack discipline develop and perform well in the classroom, discipline should be maintained in schools. Teachers, guardians and SGB ought to continuously energise keeping up with discipline in schools (Nouton, 2015). The widespread belief that issues of discipline should be addressed in schools can result in corporal punishment, which can be a significant concern for the teacher in question. We are able to investigate what causes discipline issues in students, how discipline can be maintained without

1 corporal punishment, and the advantages and disadvantages of employing a
2 variety of methods for maintaining discipline in schools without corporal
3 punishment now that we are aware of the problem.

4 5 **Background of the Research and Rationale**

6
7 I have always been interested in studying students who lack discipline and
8 how to maintain discipline without using corporal punishment. Although few
9 people have attempted to alter their perception of how discipline is
10 administered, communities all over the world have developed students who
11 lack discipline, which has become a problem in schools (Duke, 2006). My
12 anxiety is that discipline is as of now an issue in schools. The teaching and
13 learning environment has been negatively impacted by these issues, with fewer
14 students performing well academically and more performing poorly. In light of
15 these disciplinary issues that students face, I came to the conclusion that more
16 research is needed to find out what will happen in a school and classroom
17 setting regarding maintaining discipline without corporal punishment. We must
18 examine discipline related situations in schools, classrooms, homes, and
19 communities in order to maintain discipline. This assisted with recognising the
20 reasons for the students' absence of discipline and manners by which discipline
21 can be kept up with without corporal punishment. The results of these studies
22 have implications for maintaining discipline without using corporal
23 punishment.

24 According to Den Brok (2014), students' discipline in schools has been
25 and continues to be valued as a fundamental component of education. After the
26 prohibition of corporal punishment, educators face difficulties when they hit
27 students as a form of discipline. I've always been interested in studying
28 discipline without using corporal punishment. Absence of students' discipline
29 is a serious test in the public eye and in schools all over the planet. According
30 to O'Hara (2008), my concern is that students who lack discipline will exhibit
31 disruptive behaviour in the classroom, resulting in a negative learning and
32 teaching environment. In light of these problems with discipline, and this
33 research will have suggestions for the potential reasons for disciplinary issues
34 and how discipline can be kept up with without corporal punishment.

35 36 37 **Purpose of the Study**

38
39 The purpose of this study was to explore students' disciplinary problems in
40 schools. in Mopani East's education system where corporal punishment is
41 abolished. To address the research purpose, the following question was asked;
42 What are the underlying causes of students' disciplinary issues at school?
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44
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Literature Review

1
2
3 Over the years, previous studies have sought to identify the characteristics
4 of effective teachers and teaching methods. However, it should be noted that
5 teaching and achieve desired out are complicated tasks since what works in
6 certain situations does not work in other circumstances or settings. Teaching is
7 also dependent of the discipline, behaviour and attitude of learners in schools.
8 As per Cowley (2002), there are various explanations behind disciplinary
9 issues. According to Fontana (2006), it can be difficult for an educator to direct
10 and instruct a large number of students in a classroom, which can result in
11 disruptive behaviour.

12 Maintaining discipline in a classroom with a large number of students
13 becomes extremely challenging. In my experience, maintaining discipline in a
14 classroom with a large number of students is difficult. Students have the
15 opportunity to cause trouble in the classroom in a school with no disciplinary
16 policy (Duke, 2005). In schools, having disciplinary policies is essential.
17 Cowley (2002) states that classroom tension can result in disciplinary issues.
18 Some students in the classroom have a propensity to tell jokes just to make
19 other students laugh. Rogers (2001) concurs with Cowley regarding the
20 influence of peer pressure on learner behaviour. Rogers (2001) says that
21 insufficient parental care, a lack of food at home, and excessive alcohol
22 consumption can sometimes make students problematic.

23 Wragg (2002) says that there are many ways to keep school discipline up.
24 The several methods for maintaining discipline without using corporal
25 punishment. According to Alexander and Darla (2013), a small group of
26 students in a classroom fosters positive learning behaviour. In order to maintain
27 discipline, Chaplain (2004) suggests that a set of classroom rules should be
28 established for each student to follow. I agree that the rules help foster a
29 positive school environment and strong relationships between students and
30 teachers. The Ministry of Education's laws should serve as the foundation for
31 the disciplinary policy. A code of conduct should be established by the school
32 administration in accordance with the SA Schools Act of 1996 (Department of
33 Education, 2001).

34 Munn (2002) claims that involving parents in the school can lessen the
35 severity of disciplinary issues. I looked at this information and weighed the
36 benefits of parental involvement in school as one of alternatives for
37 maintaining school discipline without corporal punishment. Giving students
38 detention as an alternative punishment for not being disciplined after school
39 hours, according to Wragg (2002), requires the educator in question to spend
40 more time managing students. Algozzine and Lay (2013) claim that suspension
41 gives students a chance to bank lessons, which they value. Docking (2007)
42 states that ignoring students' disruptive behaviour when they are aware that
43 their teacher has noticed it can help maintain discipline. Codes of conduct
44 encourage classroom discipline to be maintained.. The majority of students
45 lack the discipline that society instills in them as a result of past events. I
46 decided to include teachers' and principals' perspectives on disciplining

1 students for better understanding. My eighth-grade classmates were disruptive,
2 making the learning and teaching process challenging. My English teacher
3 expelled disruptive students from the classroom in the tenth grade.

4 Discipline issues, which are prevalent in the education sector, confront
5 educators. Most teachers seem to think that what used to be a way to correct
6 bad behaviour is now illegal and can't be used as a way to get students to
7 behave better. Many educators are unsure of alternatives to corporal
8 punishment when students are disruptive. Hence, this study aimed to explore
9 by identifying underlying causes of lack of discipline in school, and how
10 teachers and principals deal with keeping discipline in schools after corporal
11 punishment is banned conditions were used.

12 According to Mouton (2016), in the absence of corporal punishment,
13 teachers and principals can consider alternative methods for maintaining
14 discipline in schools. These imply that teachers should not look outside of
15 themselves when dealing with issues related to school discipline. Educators
16 shouldn't simply zero in on principal as the ones accountable for school
17 discipline. The points of view of the educators and principals were gotten from
18 their encounters in keeping up with school discipline.

21 **Theoretical Framework**

22
23 Maree (2015) characterises a calculated structure as a fragmented
24 clarification of occasions where ideas are connected and a hypothetical system
25 as a current hypothesis in setting used to help the investigation of your
26 exploration. I involved a hypothetical system in my exploration since it applies
27 to the possibility of educator conduct. The theoretical foundation of my study
28 was the teacher behaviour theory. I have looked into how educators keep
29 discipline up without using corporal punishment. Ryan (1963) explains teacher
30 behaviour theory that the teacher may be considered an information-processing
31 system that functions for the purpose of aiding the pupil/learner in acquiring an
32 appropriate behavior repertoire. This implies that teacher behaviour theory is
33 based on what a teacher is and how he should behave in a school environment.
34 This theory is relevant in this study because it addresses teachers
35 characteristics as Instructors that impacts on the learners' behaviour. Ryans
36 (1963) argue that teachers are data handlers that help student's way of
37 behaving. In this study, teachers in the study are asked about how they see the
38 causes of poor discipline and how to keep discipline without using corporal
39 punishment.

42 **Research Methodology**

43
44 Exploratory qualitative research was adopted in this study to address the
45 research objective. In order to keep students disciplined, the underlying causes
46 of ill-discipline by students in secondary schools were explored. Teaching staff

1 from a secondary school in Mopani District in Limpopo province, South Africa
2 were interviewed. Non-probability sampling was utilised. According to Maree
3 (2015), non-sampling is used in qualitative research not to generalise results
4 but rather to create a detailed description. Mannion and Marrison (2018) states
5 that in some instances of qualitative research, non-probability sampling is
6 utilised. A purposive sampling method was used to select principals and
7 teachers in schools to address the research objective of this study. According to
8 Maree (2016), purposive sampling is utilised in exceptional circumstances
9 where sampling is carried out for a specific purpose. This was done to figure
10 out what was really making students behave badly in school environment. The
11 purposeful sampling of participants for the study involved selecting
12 respondents based on the characteristics they bring to the study. Deliberately
13 chosen from three schools in the Mopani East region were two participants are
14 selected. Individuals from the three schools secondary, a primary, and two
15 secondary schools were chosen based on their involvement in the daily
16 teaching of school discipline. Participants were required to meet the Mopani
17 East district of Limpopo teachers as a sampling criterion. There were two
18 instructors (principal and educator) from each school who were evaluated
19 about how discipline can be kept up with without corporal punishment. They
20 are chosen for their contributions to and involvement in resolving disciplinary
21 issues in their schools, as well as their prior experience with dealing with
22 disciplinary actions. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for
23 data analysis to be carried-out. The primary data was analysed using content
24 analysis method with the aid of Atlas.ti version 25.

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Findings

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Description of the Sample

29

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31 Interviews were conducted to realise the research objective of the study.
32 The study focused on two secondary schools and one elementary school in the
33 Mopani area, Limpopo province. A teacher and a principal were selected from
34 each school. The research gathered data by asking questions during interviews
35 at each school. The principals and teachers who took part in the study were
36 carefully chosen because of their connection to the disciplinary issues at the
37 two schools. Additionally, the participants were drawn from the community
38 that was in close proximity to the three schools.

39

1

<u>Description of the sample</u>	SCHOOL	GENDER	AGE GROUP	SUBJECTS TAUGHT (GRADE)	TOTAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS
PRINCIPAL A	SCHOOL A	MALE	31-50	L.O (12)	20
TEACHER A		FEMALE	31-40	MATHS (10-12)	5
PRINCIPAL B	SCHOOL B	FEMALE	43-50	SEPED I (7) L.O (6)	25
TEACHER B		MALE	30-42	N.S (7) MATHS (7)	8
PRINCIPAL C	SCHOOL C	MALE	39-48	ENGLISH (11)	30
TEACHER C		FEMALE	35-47	PHYSICAL SCIENCES (10-12)	12

2

3 When conducting the interviews, two themes that emerged from the data
4 analysis were taken into consideration. The information are given and
5 examined in understanding the subjects got from the exploration inquiries to
6 show the thought about discoveries. The following three themes are the focus
7 of the research: The underlying causes of lack of discipline in schools, role of
8 principals and teachers to maintain discipline in schools using other ways in the
9 absence of corporal punishment, and the advantages of implementing methods
10 to maintain discipline in schools.

11

12 **The Underlying Causes of Lack of Discipline in Schools**

13

14 Principal A demonstrated that students with poor educational backgrounds
15 may lack discipline as a result of alcohol abuse and parental absence. He also
16 insisted that learning difficulties could be caused by a negative attitude toward
17 school and a lack of enthusiasm for learning. Principal B also agrees that a lack
18 of discipline is caused by a variety of factors, including depression,
19 unemployment, and the absence of parents. According to Principal C, the root
20 causes of a lack of discipline are classroom overcrowding and a lack of school
21 leadership. Teacher A stated that the school's disciplinary issues are the result
22 of the principal's lack of leadership, disciplinary policies, and conduct codes.
23 She went on to say that teachers lack management skills and are ill-prepared
24 for classroom situations. Teachers B and C both agreed with Teacher A and
25 went on to explain that disciplinary issues hinder learning and teaching when
26 students interfere. Discipline issues should be dealt with in an appropriate
27 manner without resorting to physical punishment in order to maintain a
28 positive learning and teaching environment.

29

30 **Multiple Ways for Keeping Discipline in Schools without Corporal** 31 **Punishment**

32

33 According to Principal A, two methods for maintaining school discipline
34 are receiving detentions and practicing good management skills in the

1 classroom. He added that a school's disciplinary strategy can help with settling
2 disciplinary issues without turning to corporal punishment. Additionally,
3 Principal B stated that adhering to the school's code of conduct can assist
4 students in maintaining appropriate behaviour. Principal C is of the opinion
5 that reducing the large number of students present can assist in maintaining
6 classroom discipline. Teacher A replied that maintaining discipline can be
7 accomplished through suspensions and enforcing the school's code of conduct.
8 Both teacher B and principal C agree that classrooms shouldn't be
9 overcrowded. Teacher C added that deprivation of privilege, the creation of
10 disciplinary measures, suspensions, and imprisonment are some of the methods
11 that can be used to maintain discipline in schools without using corporal
12 punishment. Schools can keep discipline up without using corporal
13 punishment.

14

15 **The Advantage of Implementing Methods for Maintaining School** 16 **Discipline in the Absence of Corporal Punishment**

17

18 Detention is a good way to keep discipline in the absence of corporal
19 punishment, according to Principal A. Teacher A, responded that suspension is
20 advantageous because it ensures the smooth operation of the teaching and
21 learning process. The response from Principal B was that limiting the size of a
22 classroom can help manage disciplinary issues at the school. According to
23 Teacher B, parents can help maintain school discipline by participating in their
24 children's education. Teacher C said that manual work is good because students
25 will get tired and learn a lesson, and Principal C said that suspension can keep
26 discipline in the classroom.

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30 **Discussion of Findings**

31

32 The study's objective is to research how principals and educators in
33 Mopani East can maintain student discipline without resorting to corporal
34 punishment. The goal is to determine whether or not teachers and school
35 principals are aware of their roles in controlling school discipline without the
36 use of corporal punishment. Findings were discussed based on:

37

38 ❖ The roles that principals and teachers play in controlling school
39 discipline without corporal punishment.

40 ❖ To lay out disciplinary issues experienced by principals and teachers in
41 school.

42 ❖ In the absence of corporal punishment, to provide a description of
43 several strategies for dealing with school discipline issues.

44 ❖ To discuss the benefits and drawbacks of implementing methods for
45 maintaining school discipline without the use of corporal punishment.

45

1 The following themes from my findings were deconstructed and compared
2 to what known is based on the preceding.

3 **The Roles that Principals and Teachers Play in Controlling School** 4 **Discipline without Corporal Punishment**

5
6 Principals and educators in the study claim that it is their responsibility to
7 maintain discipline even in the absence of physical punishment in order to
8 ensure that appropriate instruction and learning are provided. Several
9 researchers claim that educators are responsible for maintaining school
10 discipline. According to Bless and Cigson-Smith (2003), educators and school
11 principals must always uphold discipline. According to Fontana (2006),
12 educators and school principals are also accountable for students' moral
13 development and growth into law abiding citizens. This suggests that, in
14 addition to breaking school rules, school leaders and teachers are expected to
15 control bad behavior like theft, bullying, and vandalism that has a moral
16 connection.

17 18 **Disciplinary Issues experienced by Principals and Teachers in School**

19
20 Discipline issues emerge when learners appear to deliberately endeavor to
21 keep teachers from following through with the responsibility for which they
22 were recruited, as indicated by Cowley (2012). They accomplish this by not
23 paying attention, disrupting, disobeying, being inconsiderate, and threatening
24 to take over the situation rather than the educators. Before educators face the
25 challenge of maintaining discipline in classrooms and schools, it is essential to
26 consider the factors that contribute to student misbehavior. Educators and
27 school principals will be able to address disciplinary issues more effectively
28 with this assistance.

29 Principal A demonstrated that students with poor educational backgrounds
30 may lack discipline as a result of alcohol abuse and parental absence. He also
31 insisted that learning difficulties could be caused by a negative attitude toward
32 school and a lack of enthusiasm for learning. According to Den Brok (2015)
33 and Mouton, indiscipline is common in many schools in South Africa, and
34 parental involvement is low. According to Wragg (2002) and Rogers (2001), a
35 lot of parents don't want to cooperate with their children's teachers and school
36 administrators when it comes to discipline. Many of them appear to delegate
37 their duties to the schools, requiring them to resolve all disciplinary issues.
38 When parents participate in school activities, children will feel more secure,
39 perform better, and behave more appropriately. Principal B also agrees that a
40 lack of discipline is caused by a variety of factors, including depression,
41 unemployment, and the absence of parents.

42 According to Principal C, the root causes of a lack of discipline are
43 classroom overcrowding and a lack of school leadership. Munn (2003) says
44 that school leaders should avoid using too much control, dominance, and
45 coercive power because doing so hurts students' sense of freedom. It is
46 expected of teachers and school principals to communicate effectively with

1 their students in order to avoid behavioural issues. Effective communication in
2 schools, according to Bertram and Thristiansen (2006), prevents issues.
3 Teacher A stated that the school's disciplinary issues are the result of the
4 principal's lack of leadership, disciplinary policies, and conduct codes. She
5 went on to say that teachers lack management skills and are ill prepared for
6 classroom situations. Teachers B and C both agreed with Teacher A and went
7 on to explain that disciplinary issues hinder learning and teaching when
8 students interfere. According to Docking (2007), students can become irritated
9 and engage in disruptive behavior when their teacher or lesson is dull, lifeless,
10 or irrelevant. Mannion and Marrison (2017) say that in a classroom where the
11 teacher talks all the time and doesn't let students explore and learn for
12 themselves, students are forced to listen passively. Out of boredom, some
13 students look for ways to distract themselves at the expense of the teacher.
14 Discipline issues should be handled appropriately without using corporal
15 punishment to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment.

16

17 **In the Absence of Corporal Punishment, Description of Several Strategies** 18 **for Dealing with School Discipline Issues**

19

20 Fontana (2006) says that disruptive students in the classroom have been a
21 problem for a long time. Fontana discusses classroom behaviour management
22 strategies in her writing. According to Principal A, two methods for
23 maintaining school discipline are receiving detentions and practicing good
24 management skills in the classroom. According to Cowley (2012), the majority
25 of students dislike after school detentions due to their isolation from the rest of
26 the class. In addition, Principal A stated that the school's disciplinary policy
27 could help resolve disciplinary issues without resorting to corporal punishment.
28 According to Fontana (2006), a well-written code of conduct can aid in
29 effective school discipline. Additionally, Principal B stated that adhering to the
30 school's code of conduct can assist students in maintaining appropriate
31 behavior. Principal C is of the opinion that reducing the large number of
32 students present can assist in maintaining classroom discipline. Alexander and
33 Daria (2013) claim that students behave better in smaller classes. Teacher A
34 replied that maintaining discipline can be accomplished through suspensions
35 and enforcing the school's code of conduct. Both teacher B and principal C
36 agree that classrooms shouldn't be overcrowded. Teacher C added that
37 deprivation of privilege, the creation of disciplinary measures, suspensions, and
38 imprisonment are some of the methods that can be used to maintain discipline
39 in schools without using corporal punishment. According to Lankshear and
40 Knobe (2013), beating students is less enlightening and constructive than after
41 school detention and privilege suspension. Schools can keep discipline up
42 without using corporal punishment. Rewarding good behaviour in the
43 classroom, according to Docking (2007), "maintains appropriate behaviour"
44 and reduces behavioural issues. He advises against praising good behaviour
45 while criticizing bad behaviour. To support the idea of praising good

1 behaviour, Wragg (2002) suggests that teachers and principals should reward
2 or acknowledge good behaviour.

3 **The Benefits of Implementing Methods for Maintaining School Discipline** 4 **without the Use of Corporal Punishment**

5
6 Principal A says that detentions are beneficial because they are carried out
7 after school hours. Students who are detained can attend all classes. Teacher A
8 responded that a suspension is advantageous because the process of teaching
9 and learning will not be disrupted. According to Teacher C, doing manual labor
10 is beneficial because it both exhausts students and teaches them a lesson.

11 **Recommendations to Stakeholders**

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13
14
15 After conducting research at three schools in Mopani East, the findings
16 and recommendations regarding how to instill discipline in schools after
17 corporal punishment were implemented were derived. According to the
18 literature reviewed, school discipline is a concern, particularly since legislation
19 outlawed corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Discipline issues in
20 schools should be traced back to poorly equipped classrooms, unprofessional
21 principals and a lack of qualified counselors, according to literature. Discipline
22 issues at school can arise from students who aren't adjusting to the school
23 environment, are in need of attention, or want to improve their personal status.

24 This study has contributed to knowledge as a result and based on its
25 findings, it is recommended that:

- 26
27 ❖ Parents should be encouraged to work with teachers to improve
28 discipline at schools with the aim of strengthening better relationships
29 between schools and communities.
- 30 ❖ Teachers should acquaint themselves and learn to know learner home -
31 backgrounds in order to understand learners they are dealing with.
- 32 ❖ Co-operation or teamwork in the execution of school rules and codes of
33 conduct should be promoted at each school.
- 34 ❖ Teachers and schools management team should be developed and
35 empowered through workshops with specialised managerial skills.
- 36 ❖ Special schools for learners with special needs or specialised training
37 for teachers are to be put in place if such learners are to be included in
38 ordinary public schools.
- 39 ❖ The Department should find ways to limit class size, since bigger
40 classes are difficult to control.
- 41 ❖ Good lesson preparation under the supervision of heads of departments
42 could play an important role in improving the discipline situation,
43 especially with reference to under qualified and inexperienced teachers.
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Future Research Directions

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study using small sample served as a limitation focusing in one region. Therefore, future research should include quantitative research approach investigate discipline in schools to cover larger sample. In addition, future research should in other regions, provinces and even in other parts of the world could yield different results.

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