




Principals' Leadership and Management Perspective on High School Violence: The South African Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The paper sought to explore solutions to revolutionary principal leadership practices for the next generation in contemporary African society. Despite the efforts done by the government, schools continue to be confronted with problems of disruptive behaviour by students and some disrespectful people from the society. The study targeted principals of the Libode Sub-district of OR Tambo District using the purposeful sampling technique. Data was qualitatively collected and the analysis was done thematically. The findings of the study revealed that regulations, acts, and rules set by the DoE are outdated and made it difficult for principals to maintain school discipline. The study further revealed that lack of resources, safety and security contribute to poor leadership practices, drug abuse, and safety leading to disruptive behavior (cases). Also, alternatives measure to corporal punishment in managing school discipline could not solve ill-discipline problems. This paper recommends that policy on drug abuse, safety and security should be revised. There should be also rethinking around the issue of better security and a need for a consolidated and coordinated system in schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The leadership practices exercised almost in all the spheres of governance in South Africa have proved ineffective as they do not solve the myriad of problems. The education sector is not an exception. Many principals face disruptions caused by students, educators, and disrespectful citizens. There is a general lack of resources, safety and security, and the abuse of drugs has led to disruptive behavior among students. Also, alternative measures to corporal punishment in managing school discipline have not solved problems of indiscipline. In Eastern Cape schools, students and instructors frequently behave badly, engaging in behaviors including rudeness, truancy, tardiness, skipping class, and smoking during lessons. Some learners fight and even attack teachers in schools.

The following examples are evidence of the porous security network in South African schools. A case at hand is the gunning down of a 50-year-old Thembisa Deputy Principal, Mrs Mangendana, of Phomolong High School. She died on the school driveway in her car. The Gauteng Education Minister described her as a hard worker and a dedicated and committed teacher.¹ The perpetrator is still at large. In another incident, News 24 reported that three suspects were at large after robbing Sigcino Zimba, Thobani Manqele and Vukani Zikalala all lecturers who lived in off-campus residences on 22/10/2021 at about 00:40. Having contracted an armed response security company to investigate the incident, the University later found the company ineffective and underutilized because no evidence was unearthed.²

¹ NEWS 24, 22 January 2022.

² NEWS 24, 22 October 2021.

The above scenarios show that security in schools is weak since the perpetrators cannot be apprehended on the spot. Even though the safety and security policy stipulates that the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), teachers and learners should work together to identify and manage risks and threats of violence, there is no evidence of how this helps insecurity problems at school. The lack of resources like classrooms, playgrounds, burglar-proof fences, CCTV cameras, libraries, furniture, Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) and stationary makes it difficult for school managers to lead successfully.

The use of corporal punishment has also been outlawed. Principals have become subject to human rights abuses and the Bill of Rights, and alternative discipline methods that have also been introduced to protect them remain ineffective. Principals and heads of schools are often blamed for these negatives. However, the challenges they often face when implementing policies make it nearly impossible to maintain law and order. Stakeholders should therefore be rethinking the issue of offering better security and there is a need for a consolidated and coordinated system in schools which should be spearheaded by principals.

This paper thus aims to explore ways to revolutionize the practices of the leadership of principals in contemporary African societies with a focus on South African schools. The paper seeks to find mechanisms to solve leadership problems. The authors believe that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should improve leadership skills, ideology, and mindset of leadership by rethinking and modernizing policies for the betterment of the changing society.

Using a qualitative research technique, this study seeks to explain the challenges experienced by principals in their leadership and management of school discipline and establish interventions and support for principals in their leadership practices for effective schools. It focuses on the OR Tambo Coastal District of Education in South Africa. The findings are discussed in the subsequent sections. It commences with a literature review of the various themes underlying the discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Principals in schools are the most influential individuals in an educational and organizational institution. It is the principal's role to make decisions, facilitate problem-solving, help students develop and be the agent of social change.³ Moreover, he defines leadership as exercising influence and setting direction for team members. Those who seek significant changes share similar purposes, reflecting purposes that are shared by leaders and followers. To shape productive futures through a process of self-renewal, schools rely on school discipline leadership throughout the organization. Sorensen, Bushway and Glifford argue that principals should create a framework for teachers to follow in order to be consistent and fair.⁴ Principals should also put much time into developing the classrooms. For schools to be effective, principals are expected to apply school policies accurately. As a result, principals are subject to the Educational Legislation and Policy of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 in their role as School Leaders.⁵

Challenges Experienced by Principals in their Leadership and Management of School Discipline.

According to Prinsloo and Slade school discipline encompasses following certain rules of behavior within the school environment, including policies regarding classroom behaviors, dress codes, and etiquette as well as punishments for breaking those rules.⁶ An important aspect of any discussion of school discipline is to consider the discipline in boarding schools, theories of discipline, and teacher incentives.⁷ Moreover, Nomtshongwana and Buka state that principals are generally responsible for creating a safe and enjoyable learning environment.⁸ When a teacher is unable to control, order, and enforce discipline, learners will be likely to achieve academic

³ Janet Marie Hogan Chapman, *Collaborative Early Intervention Program Teachers' Roles as Change Agents in Relationship to Current Change Theory* (University of West Georgia, 2006).

⁴ Lucy C Sorensen, Shawn D Bushway, and Elizabeth J Gifford, "Getting Tough? The Effects of Discretionary Principal Discipline on Student Outcomes," *Education Finance and Policy* 17, no. 2 (2022): 255–84.

⁵ Education, Department. "Manual for School Education Management. Education and Government Development. Eastern Cape. Department of Education," (2012).

⁶ Paul Prinsloo and Sharon Slade, "Student Privacy Self-Management: Implications for Learning Analytics," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge*, 2015, 83–92.

⁷ Esther Quintero, "New Research On School Discipline," Albert Shanker Institute, December 8, 2014, <https://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/new-research-school-discipline>.

⁸ Thanduxolo Nomtshongwana and Andrea Mqondiso Buka, "Teachers' Experiences on Stress during COVID-19: A South African Case Study," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (January 11, 2023): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023411>.

laurels. According to du Plessis et al., the recent laws and regulations governing discipline and punishment in schools are making it difficult for principals and educators to maintain discipline in schools.⁹

To sustain and create effective schools, administrators need to be knowledgeable about legal issues, principles, and practices in addition to the legislation governing school discipline. The focus of discipline is to maintain an environment that promotes learning and teaching. Therefore, this paper explores the options for next-generation African leadership based on revolutionaries' leadership practices.

Additionally, Buka and Molepo contend that school violence, teacher burnout, drug abuse, and teen pregnancies in public schools all contribute to the crisis of the educational system.¹⁰ Nomtshongwana posits that the abolition of corporal punishment and communities' lack of interest in education are obstacles affecting school discipline.¹¹ This is in reference to the National Education Policy Act of 1996 which states that students should not be subjected to corporal punishment. Another law, Section 7 (7.4) of the South African Schools' Act (SASA, 1996), further emphasizes the abolition of corporal punishment. Additionally, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 2020 demonstrates that methods of instilling discipline are more effective than corporal punishment. Principals are therefore expected to adhere to fundamental procedural fairness principles found in common law and constitutionally protected statutes when maintaining school discipline.¹² As a result, to avoid issues with discipline, principals and other stakeholders must cultivate a positive atmosphere and a disciplined school environment.

The researchers are of the view that principals have a moral obligation to handle school discipline in a climate and atmosphere that are supportive of teaching and learning, despite the limited legal structure on discipline within the educational system. Additionally, Panda adds that disciplined administration is necessary for a school to be successful in terms of teaching and learning, implying that school discipline should reflect the administrators' level of leadership ability.¹³ The following are some specific difficulties administrators face in upholding order in the school environment.

Lack of Punctuality among both Learners and Teachers

Mussa argues that lack of punctuality seems to be a sign of a lack of respect for those who are in authority and time.¹⁴ In addition, Parkes and Thrift argue that time management gives order to events identified as successful.¹⁵ Coming to school late leads to missing classes and this has a negative effect on school performance and an indication of lack of school discipline.¹⁶ Nomtshongwana and Buka believe that learners should arrive before classes start and wait for the teacher who should also be punctual. They further argue that persistent cases of absenteeism and lateness will affect a learner's progress in school.¹⁷ The researcher believes that regular teacher school attendance, lesson preparation and being role models, contribute to the maintenance of school discipline. Having a good healthy relationship with the principal, learners, parents and the nontemporal society at large is evidence of good leadership practices.

The prevalence of substance abuse by learners and educators

In accordance with National Education (Act of 1996) section 3(4), Kader Asmal provided a strategy that can be used nationally to manage drug abuse in public schools and private schools. This was done after consulting with the Council of Education Ministers.¹⁸ Tobacco, cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal substances are all types of medications. A teacher who is discovered to be in possession of any intoxicating, unlawful, or drug while at work is required to be fired.¹⁹ Drug abuse among students in both remote and metropolitan institutions is on the

⁹ Anna Elizabeth du Plessis and Eva Sunde, "The Workplace Experiences of Beginning Teachers in Three Countries: A Message for Initial Teacher Education from the Field," *Journal of Education for Teaching* 43, no. 2 (2017): 132–50.

¹⁰ Andrea M. Buka and Jacob M. Molepo, "A Psycho-Pedagogic Approach for Inclusive Classes in Disadvantaged Rural Primary Schools in South Africa: Advancing Teaching Practices," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 12, no. 1 (2016): 38–44.

¹¹ Thanduxolo Albert Nomtshongwana, "Stressful Experiences of Primary School Teachers in One Education District: A South African Case Study," 2019; Dale M Harris et al., "Development of a Parkinson's Disease Specific Falls Questionnaire," *BMC Geriatrics* 21, no. 1 (2021): 614, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02555-6>.

¹² R. Joubert and J. Squelch, "Learner Discipline in Schools. Pretoria: Centre for Education Law and Policy," 2005.

¹³ Santosh Panda, "Mentoring, Incentives and Rewards in Research as Professional Development," in *A Keynote for the Conference on Research in Distance & Adult Learning in Asia*, 2000.

¹⁴ Lilian, Mussa. "The Role of School Discipline Towards Students' Academic Performance in Dar Es Salaam Region, Tanzania." The Open University of Tanzania, 2015

¹⁵ Don N Parkes and Nigel Thrift, "Timing Space and Spacing Time," *Environment and Planning A* 7, no. 6 (1975): 651–70.

¹⁶ Quintero, "New Research On School Discipline."

¹⁷ Nomtshongwana and Buka, "Teachers' Experiences on Stress during COVID-19: A South African Case Study."

¹⁸ Asmal, Kader. *National Identity and Cultural Diversity*. University of Cape Town, 2009.

¹⁹ South African Schools Act 84 (1996). Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.za/acts/1996/a84-96.pdf>.

rise, according to data on drug use in the nation. Drug addiction is strongly correlated with other antisocial behaviors like gangs, violence, sexual assault, and stealing. The use of alcohol and drugs affects academic achievement.²⁰

According to Parkes and Thrift, some students believe that it is a good thing to use drugs and drink at social events.²¹ Different understudies accept that medications and liquor misuse are approaches used to remove pressure, monetary concerns, and relationship issues. Studies have also uncovered that understudies who take liquor might perform badly because of liquor misuse.²² Thamsanqa contends that liquor debilitates memory.²³ Morbidity is largely attributable to smoking tobacco and cigarettes. It causes dependence and abandonment. As a result, substance abuse should be outlawed in schools because it causes violence and lowers student performance.²⁴ The possession of *dagga* (illegal drugs), is considered a criminal offense under the South African Schools Act of 1996, and it should be dealt with. A spokeswoman for the SA National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Thembelihle Msane, verified a rise in drug use among school-aged minors, including cannabis use.²⁵

According to Panda, the greatest strategy for reducing drug use among students is a collaboration between institutions, parents, and the community.²⁶ To combat substance misuse in schools, Mhlanga emphasizes the importance of school safety initiatives like a joint effort between DBE, the South African Police Services, Social Development and Health, the School Governing Body, Anti-Drug Organizations, Parents, the Community, and Students.²⁷

Lack of Resources in Schools

Although principals are expected to maintain school discipline, researchers argue that resources to do so are not available. Maslow identifies safety and security as basic needs that humans need and must be met before moving on to better achievement levels.²⁸ McGuire et. al., also emphasize the need for administrators to guarantee the security and safety of the school. Principals should ensure that the school geography is safe and secured and must ensure that, burglar-proof windows and doors, and fenced school boundaries are provided to control outsiders. He further advises that schools should employ security, personal, and practical maintenance facilities. Also, visitors should be identified by Identity Documents (IDs).²⁹ Mubita further suggests the installation of closed-circuit television, firefighting equipment and watching helicopters. To maintain school discipline effectively, principals should make sure that all parties are instructed about safety and security.³⁰ The following ideas were put forth by Mubita to enhance order, classroom safety, and security:

1. A representation of the classroom protection plan.
2. Support for an effective scheme for visitor control
3. Informing all parties involved about the need for security and safety, school emergency protocols, and secure routes to and from school.
4. Uniform wear and the use of ID cards or photos.
5. Involvement of all parties in the planning and evaluation of the school's safety and security.³¹
- 6.

The Influence of School Violence on School Discipline

²⁰ Yi-lang Tang et al., "Alcohol and Alcohol-Related Harm in China: Policy Changes Needed," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 91 (2013): 270–76.

²¹ Parkes and Thrift, "Timing Space and Spacing Time."

²² Tang et al., "Alcohol and Alcohol-Related Harm in China: Policy Changes Needed."

²³ Clifford, Tuta Thamsanqa. "Teachers 'Perspectives of Learners 'Indiscipline on Grade 12 Academic Performance: A Case of the Libode District.'" Walter Sisulu University, 2012.

²⁴ Nodestine-Henry, LaWanda. "The Educational Goal Achievement Among Diné (Navajo) And Their Resiliency." (2022).

²⁵ Estelle Ellis, "Are Children Dying of Hunger and Malnutrition Viewed as Less 'Deserving' of Help?," *Daily Maverick*, April 5, 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-05-are-children-dying-of-hunger-and-malnutrition-viewed-as-less-deserving-of-help/>.

²⁶ Panda, "Mentoring, Incentives and Rewards in Research as Professional Development."

²⁷ David Mhlanga, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: What Lessons Are We Learning on 4IR and the Sustainable Development Goals," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 3 (2022): 1879.

²⁸ Abraham H Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Simon and Schuster, 2013).

²⁹ James McGuire et al., "Managing Sex Offenders on Licence: Effectiveness of Registration and Notification Procedures," *Evidence-Based Policing and Community Crime Prevention*, 2021, 61–97.

³⁰ Kaiko Mubita, "Understanding School Safety and Security: Conceptualization and Definitions," *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology* (Online ISSN 2664-0899. Print ISSN 2517-9306). 5, no. 1 (2021): 76–86.

³¹ Mubita, "Understanding School Safety and Security: Conceptualization and Definitions."

In this paper, "school violence" refers to students breaking the law and causing damage to school property. In support of this point of view, Irwin posits that teachers and students encounter incidents that pose a threat to their safety, such as fighting, carrying dangerous weapons, outsiders entering the school without permission, students being sexually assaulted, robbed, and killed by outsiders, and so on. Irwin suggests that parents, the DBE, and the School Governing Body take swift action against students who commit violence or serious misconduct and put teachers and students in danger. Again, students who bully other students, are in possession of drugs or weapons, have suspicious items in schools, or both should be disciplined.³² The principal is empowered by Section 5 (1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) to take such measures to safeguard students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 states that drugs and hazardous items are not permitted on school grounds. Zulu, et.al., contend that students continue to transport weapons onto school grounds and stab students and instructors in defiance of SASA requirements.³³ According to Crime Data from April 2022 for Naptosa, instructors and principals must deal with the murder of students because according to the statistics, there have been 779 attempted murder cases, 5672 attack cases, and 3058 sexual assault instances. They also advocate for strengthening the security and military forces.

The introduction of well-resourced specialty services like counselors and psychologists to deter violent behavior in students, according to Naptosa teachers, is the most effective way to avoid school violence. They also urge DBE to concentrate on stopping gender-based violence in classrooms.

The Application of Corporal Punishment

A student who has broken a school regulation and engaged in misconduct may be subjected to corporal treatment as a form of discipline. According to Moyo, Khewu, and Bayanga, corporal punishment is a type of retribution that involves inflicting suffering directly on the learner's physical body.³⁴ According to Mugabe and Maphosa, many teachers, managers, and parents have used this type of discipline because they think it's essential to teach students a lesson.³⁵ Panda argues that some types of punishments that schools apply are completely illegal.³⁶ Naidoo states that in most schools, students are punished chiefly for coming late to school, for not completing the work and for misbehaving.³⁷

In South Africa, physical discipline was outlawed by the government in 1996. According to the SASA of 1996, students may not be subjected to physical discipline at school. Anyone who violates subsection (1) is culpable of an offense and subject to punishment upon judgment, which may include an assault term. In other words, the Schools Act of 1996 declares that any teacher who administers corporal punishment to a learner is liable for a criminal offence. However, principals and teachers are faced with many problems in their day-to-day experiences. These problems include learners who assault teachers and stab others. Principals and teachers will be unable to teach effectively if they cannot maintain school discipline. Since physical punishment was outlawed in South African schools, learner regulation, according to Lumadi, has remained an issue in schools.³⁸ Administrators should however play a crucial part in enhancing student control. Applebury posits that to prepare future school stakeholders with discipline skills, educational officials should implement mandatory secure security systems.³⁹

According to Mtsweni, most instructors feel helpless to deal with indiscipline after physical punishment was outlawed in schools. They bemoan the lack of discipline among students and even question the authority of instructors because they are confident that nothing will happen to them. This is due to teachers' misconception that beating a child translates to corporal punishment.⁴⁰ The DBE mandates educators to adopt alternative ways

³² Aisling Irwin and J Nkengasong, "What It Will Take to Vaccinate the World against COVID-19," *Nature* 592, no. 7853 (2021): 176–78.

³³ B. M. Zulu et al., "Violence as an Impediment to a Culture of Teaching and Learning in Some South African Schools," *South African Journal of Education* 24, no. 2 (2004): 170–75.

³⁴ George Moyo, Noncedo P D Khewu, and Anass Bayaga, "Disciplinary Practices in Schools and Principles of Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Strategies," *South African Journal of Education* 34, no. 1 (2014).

³⁵ Madzviti Jacob Mugabe and Angela Dorcas Maposa, "Methods of Curbing Learner Misconduct in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools," *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications* 4, no. 4 (2013): 111–22.

³⁶ Panda, Santosh. "Mentoring, Incentives and Rewards in Research as Professional Development."

³⁷ Anthony Vernon Naidoo, "Factors Affecting the Career Maturity of African American University Students: A Causal Model," 1994.

³⁸ Rudzani Israel Lumadi, "Turnaround Learner Discipline Practices through Epistemic Social Justice in Schools," *Education as Change* 24, no. 1 (2020): 1–21.

³⁹ Gabrielle Applebury, "Why Is School Safety Important?," Parenting- Love to Know, 2015, <https://www.lovetoknow.com/parenting/kids/why-is-school-safety-important>.

⁴⁰ Jim Mtsweni, "South African Principals' Perceptions of Shared Leadership and Its Relevance for School Discipline" (Citeseer, 2013).

to corporal punishment to maintain discipline, such as rewarding learners for their efforts to maintain good behaviour, discussing rules, respecting learners, implementing rules, and focusing on the behaviour, not the learner. According to the DBE, the SGB is mandated by the South African Constitution, South African Schools Act and learner code of conduct to make sure that the proper structures and procedures are in place to ensure that disciplinary measures taken against ill-behaved students are applied fairly and sensibly. Principals, teachers, and students must work together and implement strategies to keep school discipline while adhering to the constitution and public laws on school discipline, even though corporal punishment is prohibited in schools. Some of the laws that teachers should consider when punishing students are covered in the paragraphs that follow.

Bill of Rights

According to the Bill of Rights, a school's disciplinary procedures must take the child's rights and respect into account. Examples of how a learner's right to respect may be violated include belittling, calling them names, and demeaning them in front of their peers. Such violations should be avoided. Some liberties are outlined in the Bill of Liberties and cannot be violated. These include the rights to personal dignity and education. Du Plessis asserts that administrators are responsible for ensuring that all laws, rules, and public policies regarding penalties and discipline in schools are consistent with significant legal sources.⁴¹ Furthermore, du Plessis and Sunde add that many learners have misconceptions, and believe that they have fundamental rights, and that they should not be protected from disciplinary measures.⁴²

Human rights

Human rights are universal basic rights, according to Bray.⁴³ Principals should therefore make sure that both students' and teachers' human rights are upheld in institutions. The rights of students and instructors to respect privacy, freedom, and security, as well as a right to a safe workplace, should be upheld by principals. Everyone has the right to freedom and security under Section 12 (1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996), including students, who also have the right not to be subjected to any form of abuse or to be handled or disciplined in a manner that is cruel, inhuman, or degrading. Learners, therefore, should be made to understand that having rights implies responsibilities on their side, which is mostly ignored. Then, learners' rights should be observed in a balanced way, as an overemphasis on their rights may lead to the neglect of teachers' rights which should also be avoided. In so doing, school discipline might be maintained.

Learners Right to Education

According to the DOE, principals should ensure that parents encourage their children to attend school regularly.⁴⁴ DOE stipulates that it is an offence to any parent who denies a child to attend school.⁴⁵ Every school ought to have a code of conduct that serves as the institution's guide for developing an atmosphere of appropriate behavior in which students are expected to behave. The expectations for learners' behavior, the repercussions for not meeting those expectations, and the code of conduct serve as a guide. Parents should be aware of the school's behavior policy and make sure their children abide by it. To ensure that they receive the advantages of education in South Africa, students need to become acquainted with their fundamental rights and obligations.⁴⁶

Interventions to Maintain Discipline in Schools

The following intervention techniques, knowledge, and abilities are addressed to help principals in their leadership practices in upholding school discipline:

Disciplinary Measures

The Europe Language Resource Coordination mandates several disciplinary actions that administrators must take when instructors and students disobey or breach school policies. Misbehaving students may be disciplined using gentle vocal warnings and nonverbal cues. When a student disobeys a school regulation, he or she may

⁴¹ Sharon du Plessis-Schneider, *The Need to Belong in Secondary School: A Social Work Science Study of Austrian and Australian Students* (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2022).

⁴² du Plessis and Sunde, "The Workplace Experiences of Beginning Teachers in Three Countries: A Message for Initial Teacher Education from the Field."

⁴³ Mark Bray, "Beyond and against the State: Anarchist Contributions to Human Rights History and Theory," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 10, no. 3 (2019): 323–38.

⁴⁴ Department of Education. "Education Statistics in South Africa." (2010).

⁴⁵ Department of Education (2004) Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools. Pretoria: Government Printers

⁴⁶ Department of Education (1996) South Africa Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, General Notice 553. Pretoria: Government Printer

be directed to a community service project, an outside agency for counseling, or a written caution about potential punishment. If counseling is suggested, there may be a restricted ban from all extracurricular activities. The director, along with the SGBs and the Provincial Department, should implement remedial action when a severe breach of school rules, such as harming another person with a dangerous weapon, sexual assault, or drug sale, occurs. du Plessis and Sunde state that other forms of punishment include sending a learner home, subjecting him/her to detention or time out, withdrawing privileges, or assigning extra work.⁴⁷ However, Kelly argues that learners who are disrupting others should be removed from school to protect other learners.⁴⁸ The researcher believes that working together with the principal and stakeholders (educators, learner representatives, and SGBs) in maintaining discipline among learners and teachers is promoted. Disciplining learners is, therefore, a societal matter.

Alternative Forms of Punishment

Principals should use a variety of alternatives to corporal discipline to impose school rules and regulations. According to Nyath, schools with high scholastic achievement are characterized by excellent behavior, regular attendance, and respect for the faculty and other students. The use of suspension and banishment is one option for physical discipline. He further posits that maintaining order in the classroom is essential for efficient instruction and learning.⁴⁹

Suspension and Expulsion

Learner suspension and expulsion are considered types of punishment in the South African educational system.⁵⁰ Mestry and Khumalo state that suspension is the temporary refusal of admission of a learner from school. Suspension may not exceed one week and must be regarded as a corrective measure.⁵¹ Section 9 of the SASA stipulates that a learner must be given a fair hearing before being suspended or expelled. If a governing body suspends a learner from school for up to a week for serious misconduct, parents and the learner must be given details of the charges.

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a learner from a school. If the government finds the offence too serious, the HOD (Head of the Department) for education can expel the learner after 14 days of suspension.⁵² The learner should be expelled, pending a decision by the Director General of the relevant Provincial Education Department.⁵³ According to Rata, learners who experience suspension or expulsion are more likely to drop out of school and become criminals. She further argues that principals should support all learners by giving them more opportunities to succeed without discrimination and removing them from the learning environment.⁵⁴ This implies that principals should be cautious when applying disciplinary measures.

The researcher urges administrators to make sure that accused offenders, whether they are teachers or students, are treated fairly in all connected parts of the discipline. It might be wise for the DoE to include individuals with legal knowledge in schools on the discipline panels in severe instances that could result in suspension and dismissal.

Monitoring and Sharing of School Goals

Hendrickson et. al., emphasize the importance of tracking organizational performance, with successful administrators evaluating the school's performance using a variety of signs and using that data to set, evaluate, and accomplish goals.⁵⁵ This calls for a practice of inquiry and reflection, as well as the ability to collect and analyze information. According to Kelly, effective school leaders focus on the use of systematic proof, foster

⁴⁷ du Plessis and Sunde, "The Workplace Experiences of Beginning Teachers in Three Countries: A Message for Initial Teacher Education from the Field."

⁴⁸ Kelly, Brian P. "K-12 and the Active Shooter: Principals' perceptions of Armed Personnel in Nj District Factor Group'gh/public Schools." *International Journal of Arts & Sciences* 10, no. 2 (2017): 493-523.

⁴⁹ Mthokozisi Nyathi, "The Right to Organise: Critiquing the Role of Trade Unions in Shaping Work Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa" (Rhodes University, 2010).

⁵⁰ Joan Squelch, "Back to School for Parents: Implementing Responsible Parenting Agreements and Orders in Western Australia," *Education and the Law* 18, no. 4 (2006): 247-66.

⁵¹ Raj Mestry and Jan Khumalo, "Governing Bodies and Learner Discipline: Managing Rural Schools in South Africa through a Code of Conduct," *South African Journal of Education* 32, no. 1 (2012): 97-110.

⁵² Zulu et al., "Violence as an Impediment to a Culture of Teaching and Learning in Some South African Schools."

⁵³ Department of Education (2007) Education Laws Amendment Bill 2007, General Notice 553. Pretoria: Government Printer.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Rata, "A Pedagogy of Conceptual Progression and the Case for Academic Knowledge," *British Educational Research Journal* 42, no. 1 (2016): 168-84.

⁵⁵ M Hendrickson Le Carolyn et al., "Lifetime Trauma Exposure and Prospective Cardiovascular Events and All-Cause Mortality: Findings from the Heart and Soul Study," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 75, no. 9 (2013): 849.

critical and constructive questioning, promote cautious tracking of teachers' and students' development, and uphold school discipline. Sharing goals as a way of collaboration between the principal and staff are very pivotal in maintaining discipline.⁵⁶

According to Flemming and Kleinheiz, principals are supposed to guide the whole school with determination and commitment to discipline enforcement.⁵⁷ Flemming adds that principals should monitor teacher lessons as part of a professional recognition programme. They should discipline learners with sound knowledge and skills and demonstrate to other teachers how learners should be disciplined.⁵⁸

The researcher, therefore, believes that monitoring planned activities, evaluation of the whole school and ensuring that targets are met is vital for the success of an organization. Principals are supposed to guide the whole school with determination and commitment to discipline enforcement. The researcher believes that principals should share their leadership practices and ensure that staff collaborates towards the attainment of school goals. In an environment where there is a strong professional culture and performance, the knowledge and skills of experienced teachers are valued in supporting a new teacher, which enhances school discipline. Principals should ensure there is shared growth and development in their work areas and within the school. Thus, shared leadership, working together as a team in school is crucial.⁵⁹

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study technique was applied in this essay. This paper was structured as a case study. An in-depth understanding of the case in its context is the goal of a case study, which also considers its intricacy.⁶⁰ A case study, also tells the narrative of how a scenario came to be by capturing the events that led to it. Ngidi and Sibaya assert that case studies are appropriate when unique or compelling tales need to be told. Case studies provide considerably more detailed information. A case study gives a comprehensive explanation, examination, or justification of research.⁶¹

The research was conducted in the Libode subdistrict's elementary institutions in the OR Tambo Coastal District of Education. There are 200 teachers in the entire sub-district. The researcher chose twenty high school teachers from the OR Tambo Coastal District of Education in South Africa for this study using a purposive selection method. The respondents' perspectives and opinions regarding the revolutionizing principals' leadership practices for the next generation from the African standpoint in contemporary society were gathered by the writers using face-to-face, in-depth individual interviews. During the data gathering for this study, all ethical considerations were observed.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The Challenges Experienced by Principals in their Leadership and Management of School Discipline

a. Dealing with challenges of teacher insubordination.

Most participants mentioned that they experienced challenges during decision-making caused by a lack of unity, resistance to change, ignorance in some instances, lateness, absenteeism, and the early departure of teachers. Furthermore, problems of conflicts between teachers, teachers bunking class periods, undermining school management teams and school governing bodies, lack of collegiality, lack of teamwork and lack of preparation of lessons also emerged. The respondents also elaborated on how they dealt with each of the above challenges. Mr. Vanqa said:

In my school, there is a teacher who always arrives late. I talked with the teacher as a colleague and involved other teachers to talk with her to assist but the behaviour continued. I called the school disciplinary committee where I made a verbal and written warning. I quoted from the policy to emphasise and show the danger of this misconduct. I made the teacher aware of the consequences of losing her job because of her continuous lateness to work. I educate my teachers about professionalism all the time.

⁵⁶ Kelly, "K-12 and the Active Shooter: Principals' perceptions of Armed Personnel in Nj District Factor Group'gh'public Schools."

⁵⁷ John Fleming and Elizabeth Kleinhenz, *Towards a Moving School: Developing a Professional Learning and Performance Culture* (Aust Council for Ed Research, 2007).

⁵⁸ Rob Flemming, "Extraordinary Education Initiatives during Extraordinary Times," 2020.

⁵⁹ Mtsweni, "South African Principals' Perceptions of Shared Leadership and Its Relevance for School Discipline."

⁶⁰ Eunjung Lee, Faye Mishna, and Sarah Brennenstuhl, "How to Critically Evaluate Case Studies in Social Work," *Research on Social Work Practice* 20, no. 6 (2010): 682–89.

⁶¹ David P Ngidi and Patrick T Sibaya, "Student Teacher Anxieties Related to Practice Teaching," *South African Journal of Education* 23, no. 1 (2003): 18–22.

Mr. Silwana however had this complaint:

I have a challenge with a male teacher who always comes to school drunk and because of that he always quarrels, scolds, and abuses learners. I called the teacher and warned him verbally in front of the SMT and SGB. The problem persisted and I had to refer the problem to the department where counselling sessions with departmental psychologists were arranged. The teacher was later sent to the rehabilitation centre for treatment.

Mrs. Bala highlighted the following:

I insist that teachers sign the roaster timetable that stays with class leaders for every period attended by each teacher and that serves as a way of involving learners in school discipline and making them feel that they are part of the school environment.

Mr. Sangela stated:

I experienced a teacher who always absented herself from school asking for permission. I first talked with the teacher to find out the reason for her action and informed her of the danger she was posing to the learners in terms of teaching and learning and the failure to cover the curriculum. I also called the disciplinary committee to talk with the teacher.

Mr Silwana on resolving conflict said:

I have encountered the problem of teachers who always fight when they have conflicting issues. What I do in such instances is to recognise the existing problem, and then find the root cause of the problem. I try to avoid biases when resolving the conflict. Sometimes I call the Union to assist me when resolving teacher conflicts.

From the discussion above it was evident that principals faced several challenges in maintaining school discipline pertaining to management of teacher discipline. Various acts of misconduct by the teachers were evident in their responses. From the experience shared by Miss Sangela, it was clear that the problem of teacher absenteeism was prevalent in schools. Mr Silwana also alleged that there was evidence of conflict among teachers in schools that required principals to resolve issues with caution.

b. III-Discipline and Leadership

On leadership processes, the respondents alleged that there were several problems like theft, learners who are drug abusers and bully other learners, swearing at them, vandalising school property, using vulgar language and engaging in violent behaviours. This is what transpired from their direct responses:

Mrs. Maduna:

I have an experience with learners who are drug abusers, who bully other learners, swear at them, vandalise school property, use vulgar language and engage in violent behaviours. Theft is also another misbehaviour I experience in my school. I had a case of learners who entered through the trapdoor to steal groceries for the school nutrition programme. Some lock the main gate padlock to make it difficult for the staff to enter the school premises. I consult the disciplinary committee; and code of conduct and we punish learners for those disruptive behaviours in my school.

Mr. Zondo:

It is difficult to control learners who always misbehave. Some Grade 6 learners who were taken out for an excursion drowned at sea because they could not take instructions and they left the other learners and went astray. The community and the department blamed me. Learners are bullies. The older boys bully the little ones. My role is to ensure that perpetrators are punished. My strategy in dealing with learner misbehaviour is to love them and accept them while making an effort to rehabilitate them. I ensure that rules and regulations stipulated in the code of conduct are well enforced.

From the discussion above, it was clear that most respondents experienced learner misbehaviour in schools. Therefore, Mr. Zondo suggested the strategy of punishing, loving, and accepting learners.

c. Union Site Situates.

During the field study, most of the principals complained that they find it difficult to maintain discipline for both learners and teachers because teachers are protected by their union site situates. There are also no strategies in place that are provided by DoE to maintain discipline except punishing learners by giving them work after school.

Mr. Matshaya stated:

It is difficult to maintain discipline for both learners and teachers because teachers are protected by their union site situates who don't see things as I see them. Also, there are no strategies in place that are provided by DoE to maintain discipline except punishing learners by giving them work after school. Moreover, learners these days have rights. I need the DoE to support us with proper ways of maintaining school discipline.

I have a problem with this Financial Management Act. Also, the funds that are given by the DoE are not sufficient, as a result, I do not finish what I am supposed to do in my school.

My weak points are that I am not good at managing school discipline and homework activities not done by learners in school. I am failing in communicating with my staff regularly, and we have failed to cover the curriculum. Infrastructure management is difficult for me; there is a shortage of classrooms and classes are overcrowded with a shortage of desks. Learners are always vandalising available desks. The toilets are so dilapidated.

Support and Intervention Strategies Needed by Principals

a. Support in maintaining school discipline

In the previous discussion, most of the respondents clearly stated that they lack support and training in terms of maintaining school discipline for both teachers and learners. Furthermore, they mentioned the issue of difficulty in maintaining safety and security in their schools. They urged the DoE to ensure that the fences were strong, tight, and long so that strangers could not enter and murder teachers and learners. They also complained about the need for strong security guards who would be able to search learners and strangers when entering the school. To ensure that they needed support and training. Zitha posited:

In our department, there is skills development. This section plays a role in developing us in project management, Human Resource Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, but there is no program on financial management, curriculum coverage management, safety, and security as well as skills on management of school discipline. The departmental officials offered us two days of workshops on curriculum management that left us empty because of the short time.

b. Policies and Code of Conduct

In dealing with their views on measures and policies to control learner behaviour the participants highlighted the use of the code of conduct where rules and regulations for the schools were clarified. Below is what Mrs. Maputo said:

Honestly, Mam, I have a learner and teacher code of conduct. In the school, we crafted a learner code of conduct together with learner representatives, but the learners are unruly. In my school, I make sure that each teacher has a European Language Resource Coordination (ELRC) book for teachers where everything is tabulated even in terms of teacher-school discipline. The DoE also registers all the teachers and when a teacher engages him/herself in serious misconduct he or she is extracted from the roll and dismissed.

The respondents mentioned that policies were written down for everyone to read them. In dealing with lateness, absenteeism, and conflict management the policy is applied. This is illustrated with Mrs. Silo's narration of the drunk teacher highlighted above.

c. Leadership Styles and Skills in Leadership

The participants claimed that they lack skills in mixing and implementing all the leadership styles for effective schools. On the aspect of leadership styles needed:

Mr. Luzuphu said:

I am lacking skills in mixing and implementing all the leadership styles. In teacher training, we were only equipped with the democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. There are a lot of changes these days; we need to be reminded about additions and changes in our leadership practices.

The findings that emerged from interviews revealed that principals experienced the following challenges in their leadership practices: Lack of unity in school, resistance to change, and ignorance of some of the skills and knowledge on the side of principals. Lateness and absenteeism of both learners and teachers and the early departure of teachers and learners without permission were also mentioned. Other challenges include conflicts between teachers and between teachers and learners, undermining authorities such as SGBs and SMTs by teachers, lack of lesson preparation by teachers and unfinished curriculum coverage during the targeted time, and drug abuse by both teachers and learners. Learner violent disruptive behaviour, theft and vandalism, billing of learners by other learners, learners' rights and the abolition of corporal punishment, failure to manage homework and complaints of language used by teachers to learners were among the tall list of challenges revealed during the field study.

Regarding suggestions, support, and interventions, consulting the code of conduct and discipline policies were suggested by the respondents. Support in maintaining learner discipline was suggested to be a priority given to principals by DoE. Skills in different leadership styles and curriculum changes are needed by principals. Comparing interview findings with quantitative findings similarities revealed that there is the crystallization of findings from both qualitative and quantitative terms of interpretation.

DISCUSSION

The study found that principals experience challenges during decision-making that are caused by a lack of unity, resistance to change, ignorance in some instances, lateness, absenteeism, and the early departure of teachers. It was revealed by the principals that they face problems of conflicts between teachers, other teachers bunking class periods, undermining school management teams and school governing bodies, lack of collegiality, lack of teamwork, and lack of preparation of lessons contribute to poor leadership practices and lead to disruptive behavior. On leadership processes, the principals revealed that there were several problems like theft, learners who are drug abusers who bully other learners, swear at them, vandalize school property, use vulgar language and engage in violent behaviours. According to Maslow, effective school leaders focus on the use of systematic proof, foster critical and constructive questioning, promote cautious tracking of teachers' and students' development, and uphold school discipline.⁶² Sharing goals as a way of collaboration between the principal and staff is pivotal in maintaining discipline.

It was found that principals find the lack of support and training by the Department of Basic Education as factors that undermine the maintenance of school discipline for both teachers and learners. It was also revealed by the principals that they find it difficult to maintain safety and security in their schools. The data revealed that most of the principals find it difficult to maintain discipline for both learners and teachers because teachers are protected by their union site situates and no strategies are put in place by DoE to maintain discipline except punishing learners by giving them work after school.

In dealing with their views on measures and policies to control learner behaviour the principals posited that the use of the code of conduct where rules and regulations for the schools were clarified was necessary. Principals clearly stated that they lack support and training in terms of maintaining school discipline for both teachers and learners. Learner suspension and expulsion are considered types of punishment in the South African educational system.⁶³ The findings confirm Flemming and Kleinheiz's view that principals are supposed to guide the whole school with determination and commitment to enforce discipline.⁶⁴ The findings also confirm Flemming's position that principals should monitor teacher lessons as part of a professional recognition programme. They should discipline learners with sound knowledge and skills and demonstrate to other teachers how learners should be disciplined.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that all principals receive adequate training in communication skills, conflict resolution, decision-making, and human resources management, the Department of Basic Education should collaborate with curriculum experts. It is also recommended that the School Management Team do training for teachers to know how to work as a team or to collaborate effectively. It was also recommended that DBE employ subject advisors who are properly trained in each subject in order they can train teachers on how to tackle their subjects in school.

⁶² Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*.

⁶³ du Plessis-Schneider, *The Need to Belong in Secondary School: A Social Work Science Study of Austrian and Australian Students*.

⁶⁴ Fleming and Kleinheinz, *Towards a Moving School: Developing a Professional Learning and Performance Culture*.

⁶⁵ Flemming, "Extraordinary Education Initiatives during Extraordinary Times."

To ensure favorable working conditions for the School Management Team and teachers, the Department of Education must collaborate with teacher unions to alleviate teaching stress. There is a need for a coordinated security system among the departments of Education, Police and Social Security to improve discipline. CCTV cameras and security guards from schools should report to both the Police and Social Security departments. There should be enough vehicles that are in good condition including a helicopter to chase perpetrators.

This paper further recommends that the policy on drug abuse, which stipulates that learners' bags should be searched randomly be strictly enforced. Also, the use of surveillance cameras and drug detectors should be part of the policy. There should be also rethinking around the issue of better security and safety as well as a need for consolidated and coordinated safety and security systems in schools. All stakeholders should be involved in safety and security planning.

It is also recommended that regular meetings should be convened by schools to decrease disruptive behaviour in learners. Principals should be strict with educators and stick to the policy concerning late coming and absenteeism, also subject advisors should constantly visit the teachers to check the lesson planning. Alternatives to corporal punishments should be tight and firm. The Department of Basic Education should conduct developmental training about the leadership styles that can be used by principals.

Finally, regular school attendance by educators and learners, punctuality, and lesson preparation are key practices in maintaining school discipline. Improvement of discipline in educators and learners, as well as the creation of healthy relationships with the principal, parents, stakeholders, and community, is essential for the maintenance of school discipline.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored possible solutions to revolutionize the leadership practices of principals of educational institutions in South Africa. This is in light of the various challenges principals face in executing their duties due to the high rate of student and teacher indiscipline. The study discussed the various challenges principals face and the strategies to combat them. It also put forward recommendations to help alleviate the challenges principals face. In conclusion, the DBE should introduce a safety and security system to avoid ill-discipline. Trends of safety and security in schools that include a collaborative approach. This system would have a positive impact on the overall management of school discipline by deterring anyone who is engaged in disruptive behaviour. This would ensure that all stakeholders live in a peaceful environment which would promote growth and development.

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