

## The Implementation of Effective Management Strategies for Learner Discipline in Secondary Schools: An Analysis of the North-West Province

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**Abstract:** The management of learner discipline constitutes a problem in South African secondary schools as evident from scholarly publications which is not unique to South Africa but occurs as a world-wide problem. Learners and educators face threats of security and safety in school environments due to the lack of proper and effective management strategies for learner discipline. This study reports on the findings of a research study that helped in investigating the implementation of effective management strategies for learner discipline in secondary schools in the North-West province. The empirical investigation was conducted by using the mixed methods approach which was based on the explanatory sequential research design. Questionnaires and interviews were employed for collecting the data. The population (N = 6180) was educators in a selected region of the North-West Province in South Africa. n = 361 questionnaires were distributed for the quantitative phase and n = 20 participants were selected for the qualitative phase using stratified, purposeful and the convenience sampling techniques. Both statistical techniques and content analysis were used to arrive at the findings of this study. The main findings of this study revealed that the available management strategies are not implemented thereby affecting the effectiveness thereof. The policies which guides education managers on the management of learner discipline addresses more of learner's right than their responsibility towards learning. It is recommended that a review of policies associated with learner discipline is done with prior focus to corporal punishment and a tested generic implemented strategy be adopted for discipline and management strategies for all schools.

**Key words:** Discipline, management strategies, management and leadership theories, strategy, recommended

### INTRODUCTION

Since, the end of apartheid, it can be argued that South African society has faced many economic, political, social and educational challenges (Mathe, 2013). Amongst these has been the decentralisation of school governance through the enactment of new policies in the education system (Mathe, 2008; Maphosa and Shumba, 2010). By decentralisation, it means that public schools are able to act as juristic persons, able to govern and manage schools at the functional level (Mathe, 2013; Oosthuizen, 2015; Republic of South Africa, 1996). At this level, school governance and management can be explained as acts of determining policies and rules used to organise and control the school. The introduction of this process presupposes that all stakeholders have a clear understanding about the responsibilities that come with managing a school (Mathe, 2013; Tsotetsi *et al.*, 2008). In reference to the aforementioned, the execution of these complex functions implies the proper management

and governance of public schools regarding discipline which requires active participation of parents, educators and learners themselves (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

Learner discipline constitutes a problem in South African secondary schools as evidently clear from scholarly publications (Eloff *et al.*, 2010). In addition, Lacton (2012) emphasised that learners and educators face threats of security and safety in school environments due to the lack of proper and effective management strategies for learner discipline. By all accounts, this problem with the management of learner discipline is not unique to South Africa but occurs as a world-wide problem on all continents (Wollhuter *et al.*, 2013). This is supported by a comparative study conducted by Wollhuter and Russo (2013) using a survey of eight education systems-Brazil, England, Turkey, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Australia and New Zealand reveals serious indications of learner ill-discipline. This comparative study was done in order to extract positive

management strategies which could be applicable to South African schools. This problem affects teaching and learning negatively (Wet, 2010; Wollhuter *et al.*, 2010; Wollhuter and Steyn, 2010; Zulu and Wollhuter, 2013) which invariably has detrimental effects to the future of a better society built on sound moral, cultural and Christian values.

To help in the management of learner discipline, there are legal structures put in place since 1996 to help the school management in determining, implementing and managing strategies as regards discipline. Examples of these documents are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996, (RSA, 1996a), the National Policy of Education Act, No. 27 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), Guidelines for governing bodies in establishing code of conduct for learners as stipulated in Notice 776 of 1998 of the Government Gazette (Republic of South Africa, 1996c), international law practiced in South Africa based on section 39(1) (3) of the Bill of Rights in the constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and other regulations issued by the Minister of Basic Education (Wollhuter and Russo, 2013). These documents are available for school managers to serve as mere guideline when drafting the code of learner's conduct as endorsed in section 8 of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

**Objectives:** Having established the problem of proper management of learner discipline, the important question is: to what extent is the School Management Team capable of "establishing and managing a disciplined and purposeful environment dedicated solely towards improving learning and a better society" as required by section 8 (2) of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This led to the purpose of this study which was to investigate the implementation of the management strategies as provided by school managers for learner discipline in secondary schools. More specifically, the objectives are to establish the disciplinary and management strategies which are available and applied for learner discipline in secondary schools through a literature review to determine the effectiveness of management strategies as determined empirically on their ranking of implementation and effectiveness thereof by educators in secondary schools through descriptive statistics and content analysis of interviews to determine the relationship between variables (variables related to management strategies on discipline) in order to provide more clarity on the problem under study using inferential statistics. The idea of validating these objectives is through a framework which establishes and explains

learner behaviour, safety and leadership and management theories in relation to learner discipline and through an empirical investigation which discusses results using a mixed approach (QUAN-qual) to explain the implementation of management strategies for learner discipline.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study is based on the strength of theoretical and empirical evidence explored on management strategies for learner discipline in Ngaka Modiri Molema district of the North-West Province which was conducted through an explanatory-sequential design in order to capture and validate theoretical standings. The pragmatic paradigm guided the approach of this study. Creswell (2003) noted that paradigm shapes a study by establishing the epistemology behind the paradigm choice and explains how the paradigm shapes the approach of the study. This paper reported on data collected through quantitative and qualitative assumptions which created a better solution on the problem with the liberty to determine which method and techniques that best suits the problem at hand. This study also adopted the pluralistic theoretical approach. According to Bush (1986) possible inter-relationships between multiplicity of educational theories which is tested through past literature and empirical research will possibly inform a better way of practice thereby bridging the theory-practice gap.

The theoretical frameworks applicable to the subject of this investigation implementation of effective management strategies on learner discipline includes the work by Bush (2003, 2011) on theories of education management and leadership, the work by Glasser (1998, 2009a, b) on choice theory of learner behaviour and Oosthuizen (2015)'s work on the geborgenheit theory for learner security. The theories offered different aspects of relevance on learner behaviour, leadership and management styles and safety of the school stakeholders.

### **Conceptual-theoretical framework**

**Management strategies for learner discipline:** Based on the nature of the problem of the management of learner discipline as noted in the introduction, it seems as if there is a feeling amongst different authors that it is critical to design a number of management strategies to deal with disciplinary matters in secondary schools. Management strategies in literature is thus implemented in combination with discipline strategies to combat various disciplinary challenges. However, discipline strategies may also be referred as alternatives to corporal punishment. The Minister of Education published a document-alternatives

to the use of corporal punishment and it notes that educators are to administer these alternative measures according to the magnitude of offense or misconduct committed by a learner (DoE, 2000, 2007). The use of corporal punishment in South African schools is considered as a criminal activity and offenders are liable for prosecution (Maphosa, 2011).

Management strategies form the basis of a new approach to discipline support and represent a shift from control, towards a developmental and restorative approach. Learners should be enabled to progress towards responsibility, relationship building and a greater sense of well-being which are embodied in the South African Constitution, No. 108 of 1996, the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, the South African Schools Act, Notice 776 of 1998 and the specific outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement which give priority to the concept of responsibility. According to WCED, this approach is essentially holistic and contains clear guidelines for actions which every school can follow, maintain or even develop on discipline related matters. The point of departure and guiding facts on discipline strategies are: positive discipline as basis for school development, establishment of a classroom code of conduct for effective classroom management, expansion of support structures and provision of a skill development programme for educators.

Positive discipline as basis for school development positive discipline helps develop in school a culture of total wellness and supports the teaching of responsibility and positive symbiotic relationship between participants in the school, e.g., learner and educators. This developmental approach focuses on allowing children the opportunity to grow positively and also make good decisions. This aligns with Glasser's Choice theory which employs educators to teach learners with taking responsibility for their choices (Glasser, 2009; Bechuke and Debeila, 2012).

A shift of focus to effective discipline management is the improvement of positive relationships; a climate of trust and understanding implemented by the whole school and class is essential for positive behaviour. With this in place, mutual respect, care, a feeling of belongingness in the school can be realised more easily. In a positive school climate, school rules are a vital tool to the whole development of the learner. According to WCED, the strategy for positive discipline arguably relies on the principles of integrated management which involves all the stakeholders involved in the management of discipline in schools, i.e., educators, parents, amongst others.

**Classroom management:** Classroom management is another approach towards building a positive learning environment. Classroom management as defined by Mabea (2013) is the way in which educators keeps order daily and adhere to published rules while conducting lessons. For purposes of clarity and synthesis, the important strategic principles to be followed as seen in WCED are:

- Know your learners by name and establish a meaningful relationship with the learner
- Be consistent in your expectations and application of discipline
- Be punctual, organised and prepared for lessons. This promotes discipline
- Motivate your learners through awards and encouragement
- Create positive learning experiences for your learners by presenting well-prepared and interesting lessons As an educator, start the teaching process with a positive attitude
- Handle a disruptive learner in class immediately without delay
- When rounding up a lesson, ensure that learners have clarity about your expectations on matters such as homework assessment tasks and incomplete work
- It is of paramount importance to know each child's personal background. For example, if his/her parents had a serious fight at home, the learner may be affected in class
- Learners do not handle conflict properly as they mostly blame others for their issues so try to listen and adopt the use of positive reinforcement. Your professional conduct as an educator really counts at this stage
- Always be clear with your instructions for learners as vagueness may be confusing to them
- Classroom discipline used must conform to the code of conduct for learners in the school. This ensures consistent actions and creates security among learners
- Some issues of learner discipline require a long-term strategy to eliminate. In such situation, you can rely on the support teams
- Behaviour does not exist in a vacuum. As an educator, try to understand why a learner exhibit certain attributes through theories of behaviours
- Set a good example for your learners as you are part of their role models and
- Only function within accepted legislative framework of rules, rights and responsibilities and not in terms of your position as an educator

Classroom code of conduct is a very useful tool for effective classroom management. A classroom code of conduct describes and outlines the responsibilities and rights of each learner in the class. It helps in the management of sound discipline and behaviour in the classroom. It also contributes to enhancement in learning process.

When a school or educator is drafting a classroom code of conduct, the following are to be considered: rules should be clear and comprehensive, it should be created with the possibility of change and improvement, it should not follow the must not but the style of must, it should make provisions for rewards for observable positive attitudes and punishment for offenders. A classroom code of conduct or even a school's code of conduct is not complete until it consistently applies punishment for offending learners. The learners and educators must together determine the content for successful classroom learning. This final draft should be given to learners for final approval after which it can now be placed on classroom walls. Copies should also be given to them to put in their lockers.

**Support structures:** Support structure is described in this study based on the synthesis of the research undertaken by the Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC) on learner discipline and management. To improve positive behaviour, the SMT creates systems to help as interventions rather than punishment through consultation and participation of stakeholders which is done through participatory, contingent and transformational leadership. It helps by focusing on learners with behaviour problems and regular offenders by providing a holistic approach for learners in order to establish and achieve the goals of a well-disciplined environment.

**Skill development programme:** A school must provide a skill development programme for educators in the form of interventions for the purpose of handling learner discipline problems. It should be developed by outlining quick responses and rationale to learner's behavioural problems. For example, an inappropriate behaviour can be making noise during teaching. In this situation, a possible intervention can be planned ignoring so as not encourage attention seeking behaviour. In addition, educators must act as professionals by organising disciplinary hearings for serious problems of learners and needs to find better ways of handling stress from both job and learners. This automatically helps in their anger management. Lastly, educators should be enlightened on conflict management. Conflict results based on different opinions or arguments. Conflicts can be destructive or constructive. Educators should be encouraged to promote constructive conflict

which often leads to growth, improved relationships, initiative and creative ideas for the whole development of the school.

**Theoretical framework:** For this study, a pluralistic approach was adopted as noted earlier. These theories offered different approaches from leadership and management, learner behaviour and the security of a school. Because of space constraints, these theories would be summarised and used as base theories for the purpose of this study.

**Transformational leadership:** Transformational leadership basically is how a leader exerts his influence on his/her followers which is mostly how they inspire their followers or colleagues in order to increase their follower's commitment to organisational goals (Bush, 2014; Leithwood *et al.*, 1999). Transformational leadership is more operational in self-managed schools (Bush, 2007). According to the k (DoE, 2006), transformation will depend on the nature and quality of its internal management. In South African schools (Bush, 2007). Notes that there must be a proper internal devolution of power (learners, educators, HODs) within a school for transformational leadership to occur in a self-managing school. The schools act is a tool for such through the devolution of power to the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Governing Body (SGB), they are required to manage learner discipline through the adoption of the learner Code of Conduct as endorsed by the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

**Participatory leadership:** Bush (2007) points out that the participative model is consistent with the new democratic schools in South Africa based on the introduction of SGBs for all schools and greater importance given to SMTs which suggests a strong bond and commitment to participative decision-making. The new educational policy framework sets an overall vision for South Africa towards democratic governance. The Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) indicated after the apartheid era in 1994, a new era of school governance and management with power put in the hands of the SMTs and the SGBs. School managers have the responsibility of adopting a learner code of conduct according to section 8 of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). A good strong working relationship between the principal and the SGB should bring about effective governance (Bush and Heystek, 2003; Bush, 2007). According to the South African council of educators, decision-making by full participation in school governance is a total breakaway from the former apartheid education administration

thereby introducing a system of ownership and acceptability to communities. According to Mohapi (2014), decision-making is the process of selecting a logical choice. For the purpose of this study, decision-making is based on the premise that SMTs are provided with the task of making strategic decisions for the upliftment and goodwill of the school in general.

**Contingent leadership:** The contingent approach to leadership is an alternative or non-conventional approach where effective leadership styles are adopted by selecting best strategies to solve a problematic situation (Bush, 2007). With South Africa's diverse education system which ranges from well-organised enabled city schools with adequate provisioning to very poor schools with no access to basic facilities, it would be unappealing and not advisable to prescribe one universal approach to effective school leadership and management. Principals and/or the SMTs should be equipped with the required and necessary skills in order to fit in any kind of situation or circumstances they are required to manage (Bush, 2007, 2003).

**Choice theory on learner behaviour:** The choice theory aims to find new ways to understand and explain how learners behave but most importantly, how educators can help these learners exhibit positive behaviour by themselves through the choice that they make (Glasser, 1988). A vital aspect of Choice theory is the belief that human beings are internally and not externally motivated (Glasser, 1988). Accepting this idea requires a paradigm shift on the part of those who view life according to stimulus-response theory (Crawford *et al.*, 1993). This study intends to use the Choice theory to explain the behaviour of learners. The philosophical assumption of Choice theory explains that students must have a choice (Glasser, 2009). This choice can be their choice of curriculum, the rules that govern them in their classrooms and the school in general. This will give a learner some sort of ownership in their learning by getting involved through participation which will obviously bring about self-awareness and esteem (Bechuke and Debeila, 2012). Choice theory can be applied in classroom management as it create space to learn because of learner's ownership in the classroom which promotes willingness with great eagerness for learners to come to class (Bechuke and Debeila, 2012). Glasser (2009) in his work on dealing with discipline problems in classroom management, proposed that educators have two goals, the first being to try to put a stop to unwanted occurrences of learner's bad behaviour and the second which is the most important is that educators must teach learners the best ways to control their behaviours.

**Geborgenheit theory:** The theory as formulated in 2009 by Oosthuizen discusses critical issues in the application of learner discipline strategies from an educational law perspective (Oosthuizen, 2010). Geborgenheit is a German word meaning "security or a place of security and safety". This theory proposes that it is essential that all participants in the school (learners, educators, parents/guardians and even the state) enhance and apply Geborgenheit. Owing to the nature of reality of discipline, education management and law are very suitable tools for achieving a well-regulated environment of Geborgenheit (Oosthuizen, 2015, 2010). These fields in education promote rights and obligations of participants in order to achieve a quiet, peaceful and safe learning environment. The Geborgenheit theory as referred to by Manyau (2014) is particularly concerned with good organisational skills practiced by educators in schools to enhance learner discipline.

#### **Empirical research**

**Research design:** The design used focused on mixed methods based on the establishment of a pragmatic paradigm. The design choice was the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. This design chosen involved two phases in which the quantitative data was collected and analysed in the first phase. The results of this phase were then built on in the second phase through qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). This enabled the researcher to have a more in-depth understanding of the research objectives. In addition, this design also helped achieve triangulation by adopting a pluralistic approach in which one method compensates for the weaknesses of the other by collecting data sequentially (Gray, 2014). This design embraced the use of a survey (quantitative) in the first phase and one-on-one interviews (qualitative) in the second phase to explain deeper the quantitative responses from the first phase.

**Aim:** The aim of this research project was to theoretically and empirically investigate the implementation of management strategies for learner discipline in secondary schools in North-West Province.

**Sampling:** Sampling is the process of selecting elements of a population for inclusion in a research study. The sampling involved two phases using different sampling strategies. For the first phase, subjects were drawn from a population of all educators in Ngaka-Modiri Molema district of the North-West Province using stratified random sampling. The strata were Mafikeng, Rekopanstwe and Distobotla. The total participants sampled from these strata were  $n = 361$  educators out of  $N = 6180$  as provided by the Area manager of the Mafikeng District Office using Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s work on sample size determination. The simple

random sampling was used in selecting the schools from these strata. A total number of  $N = 36$  schools was selected from  $N = 87$  which exists in the district. The purposeful sampling was then used to select SMT members in each school and the convenience sampling was used for the remaining educators in the respective schools.

For the second phase of the project, the purposeful sampling was used in selecting participants. A principal or an educator in-charge of learner discipline was selected in 5 secondary schools making a total of  $n = 20$  participants for this phase. The selection of this participants was with the criteria that participants have at least seven years work experience. The participants of the second phase was selected from the  $n = 361$  of the first phase.

**Data collection:** Questionnaires were distributed in person to educators in selected schools. The researcher also collected the completed questionnaires from the respondents after administering. In the second phase, interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions. Audio tape was used during all interviews with prior consent made with the participants.

**Data analysis:** Data was analysed with computer packages using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and statistical Analysis System (SAS). Content analysis technique was used on the transcribed data from interviews to generate themes and categories.

**Trustworthiness, validity and reliability:** For the quantitative phase, internal validity was controlled through the validity of the instruments and measurements used in the study which was through statistical tests. External validity is used to generalise from the research sample to the larger population. Sampling techniques such as stratified, simple random and convenience sampling were used to establish trustworthiness. Factors such as subjects, situation, time, intervention and measures that could affect external validity and generalizability were also considered. Reliability is also known as internal consistency and it is used to examine the consistency of the measuring instrument (questionnaires) used in this study. A pilot test was employed as a source of pre-test (also known as stability) by administering questionnaires to one group of individuals. Objectivity is used through the methodology of measurements, data collection and data analysis through which reliability and validity are established. Objectivity was attained by creating an appropriate distance with subject in the sample frame. For the

qualitative phase, trustworthiness was established by member checking. Also, the identified themes and categories from data were discussed with the participants to ensure accuracy and dependability.

**Ethical consideration:** Permission was obtained from the department of education, chief directorate, departmental research services of the North-West Province to approach and collect data from the subjects sampled. Letters were written to the principals and educators of selected schools to seek their cooperation and consent concerning administering questionnaires and conducting interviews at their schools. Ethical protection according to contemporary social science ethical protection was observed. Voluntary participation was ensured. Right to discontinue was guaranteed. Confidentiality was also assured by not sharing identifying information or thoughts with anyone. Anonymity was also ensured by keeping respondents anonymous throughout the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The effectiveness of management strategies for learner discipline**

**First phase-quantitative data reporting on descriptive statistics:** The statements or variables on Table 1 represent management strategies as applied for learner discipline. This section highlights management strategies as adopted by school management which are innovative ways pre-determined by the school management to creating a disciplined school environment. The focus was to determine the effectiveness of these strategies. The table below shows the valid percentages and frequencies of the responses of respondents (educators). The responses had four scales: very ineffective; ineffective to some degree; effective to some degree and very effective.

Table 2 represents the management strategies as currently adopted and applied for learner discipline in schools. Respondents (educators) responded to their level of effectiveness. As far as positive discipline is concerned: 68% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 32% responded effective to some degree/very effective. For learner involvement: 24% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 76% responded to effective to some degree/very effective. As far as parental involvement is concerned: 24% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 74% responded effective to some degree/very effective. Based on the consideration of learner's need: 19% of the respondents selected very

**Table 1: Management strategies for learner discipline**

Variables/statements	Percentage/frequency			
	Very ineffective	some degree	Ineffective to some degree	Effective to Very effective
Positive discipline (A1)	13 (36)	55 (154)	23 (63)	9 (24)
Parental involvement (A2)	8 (23)	16 (45)	77 (185)	9 (24)
Learner involvement (A3)	11 (31)	13 (26)	68 (187)	8 (23)
Consideration of learner's needs (A4)	11 (30)	10 (29)	69 (191)	10 (27)
Positive school and classroom climate (A5)	6 (16)	13 (36)	73 (202)	8 (23)
Code of Conduct (A6)	8 (23)	9 (25)	73 (202)	10 (27)
Classroom rules and management (A7)	9 (25)	12 (32)	69 (192)	10 (28)
In-service training for educators (A8)	6 (15)	15 (42)	74 (206)	5 (14)
Support structure on interventions (A9)	8 (23)	14 (40)	72 (199)	6 (15)
The professional conduct of an educator (A10)	5(13)	16 (46)	71 (196)	8 (22)
Community involvement in safety related issues (A11)	5 (15)	16 (45)	73 (201)	6 (16)
Promotion of relationship building (A12)	3 (7)	21 (60)	71 (196)	5 (14)
Ratio of male to female educators (A13)	8 (23)	19 (52)	68 (189)	5 (13)

ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 71% responded effective to some degree/very effective. As far as keeping classroom positive climate is concerned: 19% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 81% responded to effective to some degree/very effective. As far as the learners code of conduct is concerned: 17% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 83% responded effective to some degree/very effective. According to classroom management: 21% of the respondent chose very ineffective/ineffective while 79% responded effective to some degree/very effective. As far as in-service training for educators is concerned: 21% of the sampled respondents selected very ineffective ineffective to some degree while 79% responded effective to some degree very effective. As far as support structures on interventions are concerned: 22% of the respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 78% responded effective to some degree/very effective. As far as promotion of relationships and participatory building is concerned: 24% of the sampled respondents selected very ineffective/ineffective to some degree while 76% responded effective to some degree/very effective. According to the ratio of male to female educators: 27% of the respondent chose very ineffective/ineffective while 73% responded to effective some degree/very effective.

**Discussion of the descriptive statistics:** Management strategies contextually in this study refer to innovative ways pre-determined by the school management to creating a disciplined school environment. According to Table 2 above, it reveals that all management strategies based on the responses of respondents are all effective to some degree except for positive discipline with a shocking result that 68% as ineffective. However, in literature, positive discipline is thought of as one of the most important management strategies. It is thought to help

**Table 2: Multivariate correlations of the variables that influence management strategies for learner discipline**

Variable	Correlation/p-value	Correlation range	Level of significance
A2/A3	0.73532/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A2/A4	0.74408/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A2/A5	0.77352/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A3/A4	0.82024/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A3/A5	0.70382/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A3/A6	0.74405/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A4/A5	0.75156/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A5/A2	0.77353/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A5/A3	0.68382/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A5/A4	0.75165/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A5/A6	0.77722/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A7/A6	0.75764/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A6/A7	0.75714/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant
A9/A11	0.70128/<.0001	Strong uphill	Significant

develop a school culture of total wellness and supports the teaching of responsibility and the positive symbiotic relationship between participants in the school, e.g., learner and educators which automatically give learners the opportunity to grow positively and also make good decisions. This aligns with Glasser's choice theory which tasks educators to teach learners to take responsibility for the choices (Glasser, 2009; Bechuke and Debeila, 2012). In a nut shell, positive discipline contributes to an improvement of positive relationships, a climate of trust and understanding which are essential for learner positive behaviour. Moreover, parental involvement, learner involvement, the code of conduct for learners, in-service training for educators, availability of a support structure, the professional conduct of educators and the ratio of male to female educators are thought to be effective/very effective to some degree with a range of 73-86%. Mahlangu (2014) and parents helps improve learner discipline and reflects on the consistent implementation of the discipline policy (code of conduct). However, the use of the participative leadership model by the school management is important to achieve an environment good for teaching and learning. In addition, the code of conduct must be compiled in co-operation with all the relevant persons (teachers, learners and

parents) and must be revised regularly (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). It is, however, important to stress that the content of the discipline policy must be made known to all that are concerned. WCED (2007) supports the results further saying that in-service training is done for educators, training them on new interventions as organised by the school management. If educators are aware of the advantages, disadvantages and the technical know-how of these intervention programmes it will help them with the issue of proper choice of intervention thereby helping manage properly the issues of learner behaviour. Educators must act very professionally in their relationship with learners and also be consistent in the way a disciplinary hearing is being organised. This also helps control their stress level at work (WCED, 2007). Lastly, Emekako agrees that the ratio of male and female teachers in the school can also determine the disciplinary climate of the school. In the NMM district, empirical findings show that there are more female teachers than male teachers. Based on this, it is likely that the school will face more disciplinary problems.

**First phase-quantitative data reporting on correlation on management strategies:** Correlation helps in explaining whether there is a relationship or association between any two given variables. It also measures the strength, weakness and direction of a linear relationship between two variables which is always between +1 and 1. The level of significance was calculated with 0.01 (1%) as the p-value. When the p-value is = the level of significance, then the correlation is found to be significant. Correlation between statements on the research instrument (questionnaire) on management strategies was carried out. This study focused on correlations that were significant at 1% and those with the correlation range of +0.70 to +1.00 and 0.70-1.00 thereby connoting a strong correlation. Table 1 shows the relevant variable correlations for management strategies.

Although, all correlations were significant on the 1% level, the following correlations were useful for group predictions because they were between the +0.70 to +1.00 range which signified the strong uphill:

- Parental involvement (A2) with learner involvement (A3), consideration of learner's needs (A4) and positive school and classroom climate (A5) on the one hand and positive and classroom climate with parental involvement (A5), learner involvement (A3), consideration of learners needs (A4) and code of conduct (A6) on the other hand
- Learner involvement (A3) with the consideration of learners needs (A4)

- Learner involvement (A3) with consideration of learners needs (A4), positive school and classroom climate (A5) and the code of conduct for learners (A6)
- Consideration of learner's needs (A4) with positive and classroom climate (A5)
- Code of conduct (A6) with classroom rules and management (A7)
- Support structures on interventions rather than punishment (A9) with community involvement in safe-related issues (A11)

Discussion on correlation of management strategies from the above relationships, the code of conduct is related to Parental involvement (A2), learner involvement (A3), consideration of learner's needs (A4), positive school and classroom climate (A5). In literature, the code of conduct for learners takes into consideration the involvement of stakeholders which includes educators, learners, parents, values and traditions of the community (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In the guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners, the code of conduct for learners is a set of rules and regulations for the purpose of promoting positive discipline, self-discipline and exemplary conduct as learners learn by observation and experience (DoE, 2007). This is in accordance with the participatory leadership model which emphasises the need to include all stakeholders in decision-making to better the school (Bush, 2007). The geborgenheittheory with emphasis on the security of a school environment also confirms that all participants of education (learner, educator, parent/guardian and the state) are responsible for the proper implementing of a secured learning environment (Oosthuizen, 2015). Support structures are related with community involvement according to the strong uphill correlation between them. According to WCED interventions can be achieved through consultation and participation of stakeholders which is done through participatory, contingent and transformational leadership. These stakeholders can also be external. Interventions is done solely to improve the positive behaviour of the school environment.

**Second phase qualitative data qualifying the quantitative results:** This session aims to explain deeper on the results in the quantitative phase. The theme was determined a priori-management strategies for learner discipline. This theme generated the following categories during coding for further discussion:



- Parental involvement
- Disciplinary hearing
- Referral to the SGB discipline committee

**Parental involvement:** It was very evident that this was the most used and effective method adopted for use by school managers in the district from the interviews conducted. This also shows a reflection in the quantitative phase where 76% of educators grouped it in the category of ‘effective to some degree/very effective’. According to The Parent Institute (2006), parents should be involved in their child’s life; be informed about the development of teenagers to ensure that you understand the behaviour better; create quality time for your child. Adolescence is a time during which the teenager disengages him/herself from family. Listen rather than just talk because adolescents want their feelings to be acknowledged and respected; reinforce positive behaviour as it is more effective than disapproval. Disapproving remarks harm an adolescent’s feelings and confidence. The best instruments available to you for building meaningful relationships are love, care, sensitivity, encouragement, attention and appreciation.

**Disciplinary hearing and referral to the SGB:** According to one SMT member, “suspension and expulsion are usually last resort used by the school SGB when other methods have been explored”. It is a method that was found to be used by all schools where the research project was carried out. During this stage, a learner guilty of misconduct has already passed through the disciplinary hearing where they are allowed to share their own side of the story. This is also known as Audi Alteram Partem, a Latin phrase meaning ‘let the other side be heard as well’. It is the principle that no person should be judged without a fair hearing in which each party is given the opportunity to respond to the evidence against them (Oosthuizen, 2015).

The results of the quantitative phase on referrals to the SGB showed it as very effective. The interview transcriptions revealed that referrals to the SGB usually happen when the disciplinary committee or the educator responsible for discipline cannot handle the issue of the learner misconduct/discipline. It is deemed as very effective because it usually involves the parents of learners and sometimes may lead to suspension and expulsion. Maphosa (2011) supports that referrals mostly happen with serious misconduct of learners which often leads to suspension and expulsion. Referral creates positive behaviours in learners and it should be applied by following the right procedures (Oosthuizen, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

In terms of the research objectives which prompted the empirical investigation on the implementation of effective management strategies for learner discipline, the findings revealed that amongst the strategies to manage learner discipline, only three out of the thirteen management strategies tested for effectiveness are actually implemented in the district by educators. They are parental involvement, disciplinary hearings and referral to the SGB. Some of the other strategies as shown in Table 2 are effective based on responses but not implemented in schools. The study concludes that a number of strategies available to manage learner discipline are not extensively utilised and implemented by the school management in secondary schools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to investigate the implementation of effective management strategies for learner discipline as currently applied in secondary schools. After applying an appropriate research design under a suitable philosophical assumption, the following strategies and suggestions may prove to be useful to school managers in secondary schools, educators and even the Department of Education. These recommendations may not only be applied in the North-West Province but in all public secondary schools in the Republic of South Africa.

Educators should ensure they get acquainted with all the management strategies available to them for use in their respective schools. Educators should request for training on the use of any sort of mechanism (management strategies) that would help them better manage or handle the issues with learner discipline both in the classroom and the school premises. Educators should ensure they master properly the content of their subject so have more control for the sake of proper classroom discipline and management. The school managers must ensure they utilise all possible management strategies to manage issues related to learner discipline. The School Management Team (SMT) in conjunction with the School Governing Board (SGB) at the appropriate time should organise training seminars and workshops on the application of management strategies and intervention programmes. The Department should serve as a link for external help to schools in order to support the initiatives of the school management regarding intervention programmes.

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