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# **Disciplinary Measures: A Survey from Selected Primary Schools**

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Welcome Mswazi Kubeka

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.77992>

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## **Abstract**

Corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure has been abolished in South African schools since 1994. The chapter is about the views of the teachers on the different disciplinary measures they use as alternative to corporal punishment at the selected primary schools in Tembisa, South Africa. It used a descriptive research design, and it is quantitative in nature. A population of 100 teachers who are based at Tembisa was considered. Probability sampling techniques were used, whereby 28 teachers were sampled. Data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers had not received any training pertaining to the management of discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment in Tembisa schools. Teachers view poor academic performance of learners as affected by the lack of proper discipline.

**Keywords:** alternative to corporal punishment, corporal punishment, discipline, disciplinary measures, punishment

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## **1. Introduction**

According to the annual report of the South African Department of Education [1], some of the reasons for the improved performance of learners are improved management in schools; improved discipline in schools; more time spent on tasks, including teaching and learning on the first day of the school year; and fewer disruptions in schools and additional curriculum support for teachers, including formal in-service training.

Before 1994 various forms of discipline were administered by teachers in South Africa to discipline learners in schools. These included picking up papers, standing against the wall,

watering school gardens, being kept indoors during break, and corporal punishment. These various forms of discipline were applied so that learners could change their behaviors.

After 1994, South Africa adopted a new constitution by passing legislation outlawing corporal punishment in schools as a disciplinary measure [1]. The banning of corporal punishment was also witnessed in other African countries such as Kenya, which banned corporal punishment in its schools through Legal Notice No. 56 of Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 25:199 of 30 March 2001 [2]. It is reported by [3] that an increasing number of cases of learner indiscipline in Kenyan schools is a matter of concern. In some cases, such indiscipline resulted in the destruction of property in schools, violence, and substance abuse. The school authorities have indicated that this indiscipline has reached an unmanageable level. For the South African school context, [4, 5] acknowledge the prevalence of learner indiscipline, particularly violence in some schools, which have resulted in learner deaths as well as serious injuries within school premises.

South Africa is a signatory of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which compels countries to pass laws and take social, educational, and administrative measures to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation including sexual abuse [6]. The abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools is underpinned by the Constitution of South Africa which states, inter alia, that:

*Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way [7].*

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 is also clear on corporal punishment. This Act states that:

*No person may administer corporal punishment in school to a learner, and any person who contravenes this act is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault [8].*

Even though corporal punishment has been abolished in South African schools and there is appropriate legislation in place, teachers in schools persist in using corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. A teacher found guilty of hitting learners' faces anything from a caution and a fine to suspension and being stuck off the roll of teachers. This study sought to investigate the views of the teachers on disciplinary measures in the selected primary schools in Tembisa.

This study was guided by the following sub-questions:

- What form of disciplinary measures is applied by teachers in the selected primary schools in Tembisa after the abolishment of corporal punishment?
- What are the views of teachers on disciplinary measures in the selected primary schools in Tembisa?

### 1.1. Area description for the study

This study was conducted in Gauteng Province, South Africa, in the city called Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality has nine cities with their accompanied townships. Hence, this study took place in Tembisa, which is in Kempton Park city.

In South Africa, the primary school career consists of three phases, namely, foundation phase (Grade R–3), intermediate phase (Grade 4–6), and senior phase (Grade 7–12). Grade 7 is housed in primary schools, and the remaining grades from 8 to 12 are based at secondary schools.

## 2. Literature review

Disciplinary action may be positive or negative. Negative discipline entails inflicting punishment, while positive discipline aims at influencing the person to behave differently. For effective teaching and learning to take place, the learning environment should be free of disruptive behaviors from learners; hence, discipline is of the utmost importance. It is argued by [9] that discipline and the possibility of effective teaching go together. In this regard [10] mentions that numerous schools experience increasing incidents of poor discipline that impact negatively on academic performance. According to [11], both learners and teachers need to be disciplined to ensure effective functioning of schools.

The disciplinary problems are defined by [12] as disruptive behavior that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect, and to learn. It is common knowledge that discipline is a serious problem in the South African school context, but various research studies have also indicated that it is a universal concern.

Discipline is important for the maintenance of order and harmony in the school and classroom [13]. According to [14], discipline should be reasonable and cooperative rather than autocratic and must not be seen by learners as a display of power by teachers. Disruptive and antisocial behavior can have a deleterious effect on teaching and learning. In order to promote good behavior, it is necessary for schools to have a school discipline policy, which should include details of school rules and expected behavior, as well as the consequences of deviation from school rules [15].

Some of the school-related factors which may lead learners to engage in disruptive behavior are negative school climate, teachers' professional incompetence, overcrowded schools, and ill-kept physical appearance of the school [16]. According to [17], the disruptive behaviors may also be experienced due to poor infrastructure that may lead to learners' frustration especially, whereby there is overcrowding which could lead to learners to have a limited space for moving around. McHenry as cited in [16] is of the view that examples of violence propagated in the media and witnessed or experienced as victims in society may have influence that could heighten learners' possibility to engage in disruptive behavior. It is also indicated by [18] that learners who are unable to understand or follow a lesson presented to them, due to the fact that their linguistic capital is low, tend to show disruptive behavior in order to receive attention.

It is stated in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 Section 11 (2) that discipline should be corrective and nurturing. The Act further recommends in Section 3 that the school governing body should involve all stakeholders (parents, teachers, learners, and nonteaching staff members) in the school, to contribute when drawing up a code of conduct and school rules [8].

It is the opinion of [19] that the indiscipline that learners display in schools is a reflection of what is happening at their homes. Whereas [20] are also in agreement, they maintain that lack of parental involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems in schools. In addition [21] argued that schools are not receiving the full support from parents with regard to learner misbehavior management. Not all parents respond positively on receiving reports that their children have been corrected for misbehavior [22]. Factors such as divorce, poverty, and physical and mental abuse do negatively affect the learners' ability to function properly [23]. It is also indicated by [24] that learners who are from dysfunctional families face enormous adjustment problems in school, and this has an impact on their self-concept. They (learners) feel that they are deprived of attention and not being loved; hence, they seek this attention in schools, in such a way that they misbehave in the classroom [24].

According to Maree (1995), as cited in [25], corporal punishment is defined as physical punishment distinguishable from pecuniary punishment or a fine and any kind of punishment inflicted on the body or the infliction of pain by a teacher or other education officials upon the body of the learner as a penalty for doing something that has been disapproved of by the punisher. Corporal punishment is a form of contrived punishment in which physical pain or discomfort is intentionally inflicted upon an individual for the purpose of trying to get that individual to regret having displayed a particular form of behavior [26]. On the other hand, [6] states that corporal punishment is any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain and physical discomfort to punish or contain him or her. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, paddling, or hitting a child with a hand or an object and denying meals, drink, heat, shelter, pushing, or pulling a child with force or forcing the child to do exercise. In this case the researcher defines corporal punishment as a disciplinary method by teachers at schools to inflict bodily harm on a child or a learner with the primary aim of altering disruptive behavior.

It is argued by Murray (1985) in [18] that corporal punishment does serious emotional damage, affects the self-esteem of learners, and has a negative impact on the academic performance of learners. They further argue that respectful relations between teachers and learners are impossible in a context where corporal punishment is administered. It is pointed out by [27] that corporal punishment is part of a wider web of violence that fuels antagonisms and hatred among the youth who grow up as hardened and insensitive members of the society.

According to Bitensky (1998), cited in [28], learners who suffer corporal punishment are often left with physical evidence of the abuse. Learners who experience psychological abuse because of corporal punishment or other forms of abuse may suffer from sleep disturbances including the reappearance of bedwetting. They may also experience nightmares, sleep walking, and fear of falling asleep in a darkened room [2]. It is furthermore mentioned by [29] that corporal punishment decreases a child's motivation and increases his or her anxiety. As a consequence the ability to concentrate is inhibited, and learning is poor.

Ref. [6] argues that corporal punishment is not a solution, since it does not build a culture of human rights, tolerance, and respect. It does not stop bad behavior in difficult children because these children are punished over and over again for the same offenses. Furthermore,



it does not nurture self-discipline in children or make children feel responsible for their own actions. It is clear that corporal punishment is not the solution because it makes children worry about being caught, instead of being aware of their personal responsibility. It also causes some learners to brag about being beaten; therefore, it is a badge of bravery or success. In addition, it stands in the way of proper communication between the teacher and learner and obscures the real problems that need to be tackled, such as trauma, poverty-related problems, and conflict at home. Finally, it has been shown to contribute to truancy and high dropout rates in South African schools [6].

Given all these arguments against corporal punishment, teachers responded by arguing that without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained in schools. In South Africa, [6] has noted that some of the common arguments against the banning of corporal punishment by some teachers are that children will neither show them respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they are beaten or threatened with being beaten. They also feel that their powers as teachers have been taken away from them, because they are not able to use corporal punishment. Teachers also indicated that corporal punishment is quick and easy, and other methods of discipline require time, patience, and skill that teachers often lack. It is their strong belief that unless children are beaten, they will think they have “gotten away with” wrongdoing and will repeat their misconduct. Teachers think that the only way to deal with difficult or disruptive learners with behavioral problems who do not respond to other disciplinary measures is to beat them. Finally, since teachers themselves experienced no harmful effects from having been beaten as children, they believe that there is no reason why they should not use this method of punishment too.

In South Africa [6] published a document on alternatives to corporal punishment 4 years after corporal punishment in schools was abolished [30], through a qualitative analysis that was conducted in some schools in KwaZulu-Natal, confirmed that a document on the alternatives to corporal punishment was handed out, but no training was supplied, or workshops were held to implement the guidelines. If no clear guidance on the implementation of a policy is given, no effect will be noticed in schools.

This study was conducted 2 years after the Department of Education in South Africa released the document, *Alternatives to corporal punishment: A guide for educators*, in 2000. In this guide, the Department of Education of South Africa explains why corporal punishment is banned in South African schools and what alternative measures could be used in disciplining learners instead of corporal punishment.

Some of the alternative disciplinary measures to corporal punishment are outlined by [6], as:

- Establish ground rules.

The teacher should set ground rules with the learners at the beginning of the year; these may be reevaluated on a continuous basis.

- Be serious and consistent about the implementation of the rules.

The rules should apply equally to everybody in the class. The principle of reasonableness and fairness should be applicable.

- Manage the learning process and the learning environment enthusiastically and professionally.

The teacher should always be prepared.

- Be inclusive.

The teacher should cater for the diversity of the class by using materials, pictures, language, music, posters, magazines, and other sources; this will ensure that no learner is left out.

- Give learners the opportunity to succeed.

The teacher needs to treat the learners in the class equally. Avoid favoritism and celebrate a broad range of student achievement.

- Allow learners to take responsibility.

Provide space for learners to be responsible.

In addition to these alternative disciplinary measures suggested by [6], some authors mention the following alternative disciplinary measures.

- Motivate learners through reinforcement.

Learners can also be disciplined through motivation instead of punishment. According to [31], reinforcement in the classroom can occur in two ways, namely, *positive* and *negative* reinforcement. *Positive reinforcement* occurs when teachers use a rewarding stimulus to motivate some action or behavior. The reward may be something tangible or intangible such as free time, praise, educational games, or free reading. *Negative reinforcement* involves removing learners from an unpleasant stimulus, such as detention or the threat of punishment.

Ref. [32] identified the following five types of reinforcements: (1) *Oral reinforcement*: it occurs when the teacher follows a learner's action or response with some type of positive comment, such as "good" or "excellent." (2) *Nonverbal reinforcement*: this refers to the use of some physical action to send a message of approval of some learners' actions or responses. This could be in the form of eye contact, a nod, or a smile. (3) *Vicarious reinforcement*: people learn by observing others. If they observe others being reinforced for certain actions or behaviors, they tend to act in the same way if the reinforcement is desirable. (4) *Delayed reinforcement*: teachers usually reinforce learners immediately following desired actions. Lastly, (5) *qualified reinforcement* occurs when one reinforces only the acceptable parts of a learner's action or the attempt itself.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1. Population and sampling

The primary schools in Tembisa are divided into two streams, which are East and West. For this study, a population of 100 teachers who are based in Tembisa West was considered. In the

sampling of 28 teachers, probability sampling technique was used, in which every member of the population has a chance of being selected [33]. In this sampling, the strata were equally represented according to teachers' positions that they occupy in the selected primary schools as follows: seven principals, seven deputy principals, seven heads of departments, and seven teachers (not occupying managerial positions).

### 3.2. Data collection

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The final questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely, Section A, which was devoted to biographical data, and Section B, which dealt with the participant's reactions to the presentation and content of the subject that was investigated. In Section B, a Likert scale of 4 was used, whereby the participants had to indicate whether they (1) *totally agreed*, (2) *agreed to a certain extent*, (3) *disagreed to a certain extent*, or (4) *totally disagreed* with the given statement. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively and presented in frequency tables. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to all participants, and they were also informed that their participation was voluntary.

### 3.3. Content validity

The study used content validity. The researcher arrived at content validity through the results and comments of the pilot study, which was conducted among teachers in another primary school. Items that failed to measure the variables they were intended to measure were modified, and others were discarded completely. The school that was used in the pilot study was excluded from the main study.

### 3.4. Ethical considerations

According to [34] ethics has to do with preventing harming or wronging others, promoting good, being respectful, and being fair. The interest of participants was promoted; in both data collection instruments, the researcher indicated that the respondents need not provide their names. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured during the data collection process through the distributed questionnaires. In order to avoid deception or misrepresentation, the researcher indicated in both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments that the data collected would be used for the purpose of this study only. All participants were expected to give informed consent; hence, they were provided with a consent form to sign. Consent to conduct the research in the selected primary schools in Tembisa was sought from the Gauteng Department of Education.

## 4. Results and discussions

In this section, the participant's biographical details as well as participants' responses to disciplinary measures are discussed.



4.1. Section A: biographical variables

**Table 1** on biographical details shows that there is no fair gender distribution. The majority (70%) of the participants are females, whereas 30% are males. Most (48%) of the participants had 20 or more years of teaching experience, and this posed a great challenge, since most of the participants had acquired their qualifications before the introduction of the guidelines on alternative disciplinary measures. An overwhelming majority (74%) of the participants had not received any training pertaining to the management of discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment in South African schools. To support the importance of teacher training, [1] in their annual report indicated that some of the reasons for the improved performance of learners includes improved discipline in schools and additional curriculum support for teachers, including formal in-service training of teachers. This revelation may have serious consequences since this implies that these teachers have started their teaching careers during the times when the use of corporal punishment to learners was still not a punishable offense.

In addition, 63% of the participants had not studied any literature on other forms of disciplinary measures. It is clear that, if teachers could invest some time and study various literatures on alternatives measures as discipline, they could have another perspective about the effects of harmful punishment to learners. This will assist the teachers not to base their assertion that they do not see anything wrong with not banning corporal punishment since they have also experienced it, they were also beaten as children, and they see no reason why they should not use it as a punishment method too [6]. Overwhelmingly, majority (96%) of the participants use disciplinary measures in their classrooms.

Biographic variable	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	8	30
	Female	20	70
Teaching experience	0–3 years	8	29
	4–7 years	3	11
	8–11 years	0	0
	12–15 years	2	8
	16–19 years	1	4
	20 years and above	14	48
Training received pertaining to the management of discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment	Yes	7	26
	No	21	74
Literature on other forms of disciplinary measures studied by participants	Yes	10	37
	No	18	63
Teachers who use disciplinary measures in their classes	Yes	27	96
	No	1	4

**Table 1.** Biographic variables.

#### 4.1.1. Forms of disciplinary measures applied by teachers in the school

Teachers were requested to indicate the various forms of disciplinary measures that they administer in the school.

The data in **Table 2** revealed that teachers use predominantly positive reinforcement (68%) as a form of disciplinary measures. Very few teachers are opting for negative reinforcement (32%) as a means of disciplining learners in their classrooms. In this regard [31] mentions that negative reinforcement involves removing learners from an unpleasant stimulus such as detention or threat to punishment.

Even though corporal punishment has been abolished, some teachers are still inflicting it on learners (7%), and this poses a challenge. The data also revealed that the majority (54%) of teachers uses oral reinforcement as a form of disciplinary measures. The use of nonverbal punishment (36%) is also evident as a form of disciplinary measure that is applied by the teachers in the selected primary schools in Tembisa.

The positive revelation of the data is the use of positive reinforcement as a means of disciplinary measure; hence, this contributes to mold and reinforce good behaviors' from learners. Such a finding confirms an assertion by [31] that positive reinforcement occurs when teachers use a rewarding stimulus to motivate some action or behavior and this reward may be tangible or intangible. These positive reinforcements could also be used exchangeably with oral reinforcement by giving positive remarks. The literature by [32] states that oral reinforcement is one of the five types of reinforcements that can be applied, whereby the teacher could follow a learners' action or response with some type of positive comment such as "good" or "excellent."

The negative point about the results is that there are still teachers who are using corporal punishment when disciplining learners even though it has been abolished and alternative disciplinary measures are available. The continuous use of corporal punishment has everlasting scars to learners on whom this has been administered too. Continuing to apply corporal

Form of disciplinary measure	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive reinforcement (praise, free time, free reading)	19	68
Oral reinforcement (good, excellent)	15	54
Nonverbal punishment (eye contact, nod, smile)	10	36
Negative reinforcement (detention, threat)	9	32
Oral punishment (tongue lashing)	9	32
Withholding privileges (not participating in sport)	5	18
Exclusion from group	4	14
Corporal punishment	2	7

**Table 2.** Forms of disciplinary measures applied by teachers in the school.

punishment as a disciplinary measure to learners is also contrary to the assertion of some authors such as Murray (1995) cited in [18] who argues that corporal punishment does serious emotional damage, affects also self-esteem of learners, and further has a negative impact on the academic performance of learners. To support this argument, [27] argues that corporal punishment is a wider web of violence that fuels antagonisms and hatred among the youth who grow up as hardened and insensitive members of the society.

It is clear that some of the South African teachers who want to perpetuate the use of corporal punishment when faced with learners' indiscipline will justify themselves. These are some of the arguments brought by these teachers in South Africa who are against the banning of corporal punishment in the schools in which children will neither show them respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they are beaten or threatened with being beaten. They also feel that their powers as teachers have been taken away and corporal punishment is quick and easy, whereas other methods of discipline require time [6].

#### 4.1.2. Factors that affect the behavior of learners

These factors that affect the behavior of learners are summarized in **Table 3**.

**Table 3** lists the various factors that affect the behavior of learners. These factors may be classified into three categories as depicted as those which top the list, those which are in the middle of the list, and those which are at the bottom of the list. Factors such as family problems (89%) and lack of parental attention (68%) are on the top of the list as indicated by the participants. Other factors, such as drug abuse (57%), the financial status of parents (54%), television programs (54%), and violence (50%), also have a role to play in how learners behave in schools; hence, they are in the middle of the list. It is therefore not surprising that at the bottom of the list, factors such as the educational level of parents (46%), lack of food during school hours (43%), and imitating role models also proved to have prominent influence on learners' behavior at schools.

Type of factor	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Family problems (divorce, separation)	25	89
Lack of attention from parents	19	68
Drug abuse	16	57
A shortage of money	15	54
Television programs	15	54
Violence	14	50
Educational level of parents	13	46
Lack of food during school hours	12	43
Imitating role models	11	39

**Table 3.** Factors that affect the behavior of learners.

The findings concerning factors that affect the behavior of learners revealed a number of drawbacks in the selected primary schools in Tembisa. These drawbacks as indicated by the majority of the participants as top factors that affect the behavior of learners are the family problems such as divorce, separation, and lack of attention from parents. This is consistent with the findings of [24] that factors such as divorce, poverty, and physical and mental abuse do negatively affect the learners' ability to function properly. According to [20] the lack of parental involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems in schools.

At the middle of the list, the findings from the participants revealed that factors such as drug abuse, shortage of money, television programs, and violence affect the behavior of learners. The findings are supported by the views of [3] who alluded that there is an increasing number of cases of learner indiscipline in Kenyan schools, in which some of those cases of indiscipline resulted in the destruction of property in schools, violence, and substance abuse. The same sentiment is shared by [4, 5] who also acknowledge that there is prevalence of learner indiscipline in some South African schools, which in some cases have resulted in learner deaths as well as serious injuries within school premises.

Factors such as the educational level of parents, lack of food during school hours, and imitating role models feature predominantly at the bottom of the list. The findings confirm the argument posed by [35] that the educational level of parents does have an impact on learners' disruptive behaviors, especially in cases where parents in rural areas speak very little or no English at home. It is a common knowledge that learners from this background often lack the English conversational experiences to extend their vocabulary to study some of the school subjects through English as a medium of instruction. In addition [20] states that learners who are unable to understand or follow a lesson presented in English, due to the fact that their linguistic capital is low, tend to show disruptive behaviors in order to receive attention.

#### 4.2. Section B: views of teachers on disciplinary measures

In order to establish teachers' views on disciplinary measures, participants were provided with predetermined responses through which they were expected to indicate whether they (1) *totally agreed*, (2) *agreed to a certain extent*, (3) *disagreed to a certain extent*, or (4) *totally disagreed*. Data are summarized in **Table 4**.

The data presented in **Table 4** reveal that the overwhelming majority (86%) of the teachers are of the views that learners need to be punished for their undisciplined behavior. The findings are consistent with [11] who contends that both learners and teachers need to be disciplined to ensure effective functioning of schools. In addition [9] points out that discipline and the possibility of effective teaching go together.

It is also clear that even though teachers agreed that learners are to be punished for their undisciplined behaviors, most (56%) of the teachers are of the view that the process of applying disciplinary measures should not be autocratic. Investigation on the statement revealed that the views of teachers are in disagreement. According to [14] discipline must be reasonable and cooperative rather than autocratic and must not be seen by learners as a display of power by teachers.

Statement	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)
Learners need to be punished for their undisciplined behavior	28	60	26	7	7
Learners should be involved in deciding what type of disciplinary measures should be applied	28	37	37	7	19
Teachers should adopt an autocratic style in applying disciplinary measures	28	15	22	7	56
Learners should be entrusted with the management of discipline	28	37	37	19	7
Learners should be allowed to participate in determining a consequence for a specific behavior	28	48	29	4	19
High enrolment figures resulted in disciplinary problems	28	41	33	4	22
Lack of discipline affects the academic performance of learners negatively	28	85	7	4	4
Teachers should be informed of disciplinary measures that could be applied in schools	28	96	4	—	—
Parents should be involved in assisting school with the discipline of learners	28	96	4	—	—
Discipline is important for the maintenance of order in the school and classroom	28	100	—	—	—
In drawing up the school code of conduct, all stakeholders should be involved, i.e., learners, teachers, parents, and interested parties	28	92	4	—	4

**Table 4.** Teachers' views on disciplinary measures.

In addition, the majority (74%) of teachers are also of the views that learners should also be involved when deciding the type of the disciplinary measures to be applied. In cases where learners are allowed to participate in determining a consequence for a specific behavior, it results in them taking ownership. These findings support the argument by [15] that in order to promote good behavior, it is necessary for schools to have a school discipline policy, which should include details of school rules and expected behavior, as well as the consequences of deviation from school rules.

The data further revealed that the majority (74%) of teachers are of the view that learners should be entrusted with the management of discipline and also be allowed to participate in determining consequences for specific behaviors (77%). The study also revealed the positive views on the statement that learners should be involved in deciding what type of disciplinary measures should be applied. This finding assert the position by [6] in the document on "Alternatives to corporal punishment: A guide for educators" that teachers should allow learners to take responsibility through providing space for learners to be responsible.

It is not surprising that the majority (74%) of the teachers indicated that disciplinary problems are the results of high enrolment figures in the selected primary schools. These findings correlate with the argument by [16] who indicates that factors such as negative school climate, inadequacy of teachers as role models, teachers' professional incompetence, overcrowded schools, and ill-kept physical appearance of the school may lead learners to engage in disruptive behavior. In addition [17] adds that the disruptive behavior may be the cause of poor infrastructure which may lead to learners' frustration especially where there is overcrowding which leads to learners to have limited space to move around in.



Parents should play a role in assisting schools with the discipline of their learners as alluded by the views of the overwhelming majority (100%) of the teachers. The findings showing the views of the teachers on parental involvement in assisting schools with the discipline of teachers were consistent with opinions of [19] together with [20] who contends that ill-discipline that learners display in schools is a reflection of what is happening from their homes. They further maintain that lack of parental involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems in schools.

The data also revealed that the overwhelming majority (100%) of teachers are of the view that the academic performance of learners is affected negatively by lack of discipline and also teachers are to be informed of disciplinary measures that could be applied in schools. These findings are in line with the argument posed by [10] that numerous schools experience increasing incidents of poor discipline that impact negatively on academic performance. The sentiment shared by [15] is that disruptive and antisocial behavior can have a deleterious effect on teaching and learning. Since there was overwhelming agreement by the teachers' views that teachers should be informed of disciplinary measures that could be applied in schools. This is also justified by [30] who contends that the document on the "Alternatives to corporal punishment: A guide for educators" has been provided to some schools in KwaZulu-Natal, but no training was provided let alone workshops on how to implement the guidelines.

From these results, it became clear that the overwhelming majority (100%) of the teachers are of the views that for maintaining order in the school and in classrooms, discipline is important. The findings were inconsistent with the argument posed by [13] that discipline is important for the maintenance of order and harmony in the school and classroom.

Finally, it became evident that the majority (96%) of the teachers agreed that all stakeholders should be involved in the drawing up of the school code of conduct. The teachers' views are in alignment with the point stated in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 of Section 3 that states that school governing body should involve all stakeholders (parents, teachers, learners, and nonteaching staff members) at the school, to contribute when drawing up a code of conduct and school rules [8].

## 5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to determine the views of the teachers about the different disciplinary measures they use as alternative to corporal punishment in the selected primary schools in Tembisa. It also looked at the views of teachers on disciplinary measures in the selected primary schools in Tembisa.

The study concludes that even though there is a lot of available learning material from which teachers could learn how to discipline learners, some teachers are still subjecting learners to corporal punishment as a measure for correcting unwanted behavior of learners.

Teachers still believe that corporal punishment is an easy and quick way to be used for disciplining learners, and they (teachers) sees nothing wrong with inflicting corporal punishment on learners, since they too went through that in their early years. These perceptions are in conflict with global trends associated with children's rights and safety school environments.

The study also concludes that, despite the availability of a document entitled, “Alternatives to corporal punishment: A guide for educators,” teachers have not read it, let alone being trained or attending workshop on how to implement it in their schools. It is imperative for the Gauteng Department of Education to train teachers on alternative mechanisms to be used in dealing with disciplinary problems in schools. It is also crucial for the Department to monitor schools on a continuous basis to ensure that learners are not abused through the infliction of corporal punishment, since it has negative developmental effects on them.

The findings of the study are of limited scope and cannot be generalized due to the sampling of teachers. This study, however, provided an indication of teachers’ feelings toward the abolishment of corporal punishment in the selected primary schools in Tembisa. In this study also the teachers’ views on disciplinary measures became evident, as well as the alternative forms of disciplinary measures applied by teachers in the selected primary schools in Tembisa.

## 6. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Ongoing continuous training on learner discipline, with the emphasis on management of discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment.
2. Avail learning resources such as literature or booklets on other forms of disciplinary measures that may be applied in the schools.
3. The schools need to share and engage with the parents about the crucial factors that affect the behavior of learners in schools.

## Author details

Welcome Mswazi Kubeka

Address all correspondence to: wkubeka@uj.ac.za

University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

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