



# Effective Classroom Discipline Strategies for Maintaining School Discipline in Limpopo Province, South Africa: An Exploratory Study

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## ABSTRAK

Perilaku mengganggu di sekolah telah menjadi tantangan besar di mana guru dihadapkan pada siswa yang tidak tertib dan kurang hormat. Karena pemerintah telah menghapus tindakan hukuman seperti cambuk, strategi disiplin yang efektif seperti penguatan positif perlu diterapkan agar disiplin dipulihkan dan hubungan guru-siswa yang kuat terjalin kembali sehingga lingkungan kelas dan sekolah menjadi kondusif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran, dan desain penelitian yang dipilih adalah desain paralel konvergen yang memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif secara bersamaan. Untuk pengumpulan data, peneliti melakukan survei dan wawancara terhadap guru dan siswa serta meninjau literatur sebelumnya tentang strategi disiplin yang efektif. Studi ini bertujuan untuk memahami sifat, tinjauan historis, dan dampak strategi disiplin reaktif dan proaktif beserta tantangan yang dihadapi ketika menerapkan strategi disiplin yang efektif tanpa menggunakan tindakan hukuman. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa ada tindakan disiplin lain yang memberikan hasil positif, namun tindakan tersebut membutuhkan waktu, dedikasi, dukungan, dan pelatihan berkelanjutan agar dapat sepenuhnya diterapkan dan digunakan di berbagai lingkungan sekolah dengan siswa dari berbagai latar belakang budaya.

## ABSTRACT

*Disruptive behaviour at schools has become a huge challenge whereby teachers are faced with learners who are unruly and lack respect. As the government has banished punitive measures such as flogging, effective discipline strategies such as positive reinforcement needs to be implemented so that discipline is restored and strong teacher -student relationships are restored so that the classroom and the school environment is conducive. Mixed method research was used, and the selected research design was the convergent parallel design which allowed the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data as the same time. For data collection, the researcher conducted surveys and interviews of both teachers and learners and also visited previous*

*literature on effective discipline strategies. The study intended to understand the nature, historical overview and the impacts of reactive and proactive discipline strategies together with the challenges encountered when implementing effective discipline strategies without the use of punitive measures. This study unravelled that there are other discipline measures that yield positive results, yet they require time, dedication, support and ongoing training to be fully implemented and used in different school settings with students from different cultural background.*

## 1. Introduction

Discipline is a necessary ingredient for any school to be successful. Every teacher and school, use a particular style and technique of discipline (Gregory et al., 2017). This paper aims to explore effective discipline strategies that will help maintain school discipline. Since corporal punishment has been burnished, Strobel Education (2023) due to its controversial use, considering its potential negative effects on children's mental and emotional well-being, it is important to look at other strategies such as classroom management, in school and out of school suspensions, alternative schooling and school wide discipline plans as alternatives that will establish discipline plans that will create an environment which all students take the responsibility for their own behaviour, treat each other kindly while being productive at school (Flay et al., 2023). Discipline can be viewed as training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character, obedience to authority or rules and punishment to correct behaviour (Gregory et al., 2017). However, the challenge will be to balance the need for discipline with respect to the rights of the student and well-being due to diverse cultural norms and the needs of an individual and promote a positive learning environment (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Nonetheless, the study is important in that it will enable teachers to find a way to discipline students without inflicting pain and moreover learners will behave better when provided with effective instructions (Maynard et al., 2019).

The study focused on teachers and learners, and it aims to answer a research question such as what the most effective discipline strategies for are promoting positive behaviour and academic achievement among students considering both reactive (classroom management techniques) and proactive (conflict resolution methods) approaches. Despite the increasing focus on the need to improve student behaviour in schools, many educators have indicated that traditional discipline strategies are often ineffective in maintaining a learning environment that is positive. As discipline is a vital tool in the school environment, many schools struggle to implement strategies that balance student engagement and authority. This research aimed to explore and investigate the most effective discipline strategies in the classroom in order to maintain school discipline while promoting positive student behaviour. This addressed the persistent challenge that is faced by teachers and would contribute to better overall school discipline. The study also examined different approaches, including proactive behaviour management techniques, restorative practices and the impact of teacher-

student relationships on discipline. By identifying strategies that effectively address behavioural issues and contribute to a supportive learning environment, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for educators and school administrators.

Effective classroom discipline strategies are important for creating a positive learning environment in schools that is sustainable (Marzano & Simms, 2018). Educators encounter a wide range of student behaviours and challenges hence, implementing discipline strategies that are well-defined becomes very vital in promoting student engagement improving academic performance and fostering a culture of respect and responsibility (Marzano & Simms, 2018). According to McIntosh & Goodman (2016), the implementation of evidence-based discipline strategies assists in creating a safe and supportive environment where students can thrive. This exploration aims to examine different classroom discipline strategies by evaluating their effectiveness and the principles that reinforces successful application, thereby equipping teachers with tools that foster behaviour that is positive and academic success (Deutsch & Coleman, 2019). There has been a shift towards pro-active and restorative discipline practices in recent years that emphasizes prevention and social-emotional learning. The use of techniques such as positive reinforcement conflict resolution skills and clear expectations are important for shaping the behaviour of students and promoting a collaborative culture in the classroom (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Moreover, Lembke & McIntosh (2022) highlight the need for teachers' training and ongoing support in the application of these strategies. This exploration aims to examine different classroom discipline strategies by evaluating their effectiveness and the principles that reinforces successful application, thereby equipping teachers with tools that foster behaviour that is positive and academic success (Deutsch & Coleman, 2019). It further aimed to underscore the importance of inclusive discipline strategies that not only tackles disruptive behaviours but also foster a sense of belonging and community in the classroom while contributing to an effective classroom environment (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022).

The nature of effective discipline strategies in education lies in the ability to create a positive learning environment that is structured and encourages behaviour that is appropriate and minimises disruptions. These strategies are proactive and focus on establishing expectations that are clear, consistent routines and positive reinforcement to guide the behaviour of students (Simonsen et al., 2008). According to Marzano &

Simms (2018), the foundation of effective discipline is rooted in the predictability and clarity of rules, which help students understand what is expected of them. In addition, Simonsen et al. (2008) emphasise that incorporating evidence-based practices, such as positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS), can lead to improved student outcomes by promoting a safe and respectful classroom atmosphere. Effective discipline strategies are also characterized by their adaptability, allowing teachers to tailor their approaches to the diverse needs of their students while maintaining fairness and consistency (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022).

Moreover, the nature of effective discipline strategies is relational, emphasizing the importance of building strong, positive relationships between teachers and students. Research by Simonsen and Sugai (2019) highlights that when students feel respected and supported by their teachers, they are more likely to engage in positive behaviours and less likely to exhibit disruptive ones. Furthermore, McIntosh and Goodman (2016) point out that effective discipline involves not just managing behaviour but also teaching students the social and emotional skills necessary for success in school and beyond. By focusing on prevention, support, and education, effective discipline strategies contribute to a holistic approach that fosters a positive school climate and enhances the overall learning experience for all students.

Historically, the development of effective discipline strategies has undergone tremendous changes over the years, moving from punitive approaches to more positive and proactive methods. Early 20th century school discipline was primarily authoritarian, mainly focusing on severe and strict punishment for misbehaviour (Simonsen et al., 2008). These methods were primarily reactive in nature and often involved corporal punishment or practices of exclusion such as suspension of learners. However, as educational research advanced, scholars started to ask questions concerning the effectiveness of punitive discipline in a long term, considering the negative impacts it has on the emotional well-being of students and their academic performance. A growing emphasis on understanding the root causes of misbehaviour by shifting the focus towards a more learner-centred approaches and to address them through guidance and support by the mid-20th century (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

In the latter half of the 20th century and early 21st century, a rise of proactive discipline strategies was seen as Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which focuses on the prevention of misbehaviour through teaching appropriate behaviours and using

positive reinforcement (Sugai & Horner, 2014). The aim of these strategies is to prioritise creating an environment that is structured and predictable and encourages learners to practice positive behaviour. Restorative practices, in combination with PBIS, have gained popularity by emphasising the importance of relationship repairing and addressing the primary causes of conflict rather than using punishment on students (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Recently, teachers have recognised the importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) more increasingly as an element of discipline methods, that teaches learners skills such as empathy, conflict resolution and self-regulation (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022). This advancement reflects an understanding of discipline that is broad, which acts as a tool for both managing behaviour and encouraging holistic learners' development (Sugai & Horner, 2014).

Reactive and proactive discipline approaches are a presentation of two strategies that differ when it comes to managing the behaviour of learners in the classroom. Proactive discipline focuses on preventing inappropriate conduct before it even occurs (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022). In contrast, reactive discipline tends to address inappropriate conduct after it has happened and it typically happens through application of punitive measures such as corporal punishment, exclusion or suspension and detention (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022). Moreover, proactive approaches are more appropriate as they involve creating an atmosphere that is structured and supporting where learners are aware of the rules they must adhere to and the consequences in advance of breaking those rules, while reactive strategies only focus on applying punishment for the undesired behaviour without addressing the primary causes of such (Sugai & Horner, 2014).

Primarily, proactive approaches emphasize more on prevention and positive reinforcement, which in a long term, promotes change in behaviour. When learners are taught the expected conduct in advance, and instilling positive actions, learners are helped to internalize good behaviour through proactive discipline (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Other strategies such as Positive Behavioural Interventions (PBIS) builds a framework that is clear, setting expectations and provide rewards. This has proven to reduce conduct issues and improving the overall school environment (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). In addition, proactive discipline poses a more positive relationship among the learner and the teacher, and it dwells more on collaborations and mutual respect rather than punishment (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). This reduces the occurrence of misconduct while it helps with building a supportive yet inclusive learning atmosphere.

Reactive discipline strategies comprise of corporal punishment, suspension and other punitive measures which creates major challenges. As much as these approaches provide temporary solution to disruptive conduct, they normally fail to tackle the underlying problems that led to misconduct and can intensify the problem (Simonsen et al., 2008). Suspension for example, removes learners from the school environment, which could result in setbacks academically and further increase disengagement from school. Research has further shown that punitive approaches affect side-lined learners, and this contributes to the so called "school-to-prison pipeline" (Losen, 2020). These posed challenges indicate the limitations found within reactive discipline strategies, accentuating the need for approaches that are more prevention based to classroom management (Losen, 2020).

There are various challenges when it comes to the implementation of effective discipline strategies in schools as this is a very complex issue. One huge obstacle encountered by educators is lack of consistent training and professional development (Sugai & Horner, 2020). Educators are exposed to inadequate guidance on practices that are evidence based such as Positive behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) or restorative discipline which tends to limit their ability to successfully implement these strategies (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022). Moreover, rural schools or schools with inadequate resources may struggle to support the infrastructure that is needed for proactive strategies, which includes training of staff, ongoing monitoring, counselling services that are always available. Sugai and Horner (2020) stipulate that lack of consistency in the application of discipline across the classrooms could lead to students' confusion and further compromise the effectiveness of these approaches.

The diversity of students in the classroom poses another challenge. Teachers are faced with addressing various conduct issues which may result from trauma, learning disabilities, or socio-economic factors which makes it difficult for teachers to apply a one size fits all discipline approach (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Cultural responsiveness plays a vital role as discipline strategies that are not adopted to the background of the learner can consequently perpetuate discrimination or bias. This could result in unbalanced punishment of minority students and may complicate the successful implementation of equitable discipline system that is fair (Losen, 2020). Therefore, it is very important that teachers receive adequate support and school resources to be able to tailor discipline strategies to meet diverse needs of students.

Correct implementation of effective discipline strategies can drastically improve the behavioural conduct and academic performance of students. Proactive approaches such as PBIS and Social-Emotional learning (SEL) focuses on teaching students proper conduct and reinforcement of positive actions which leads to few incidents of discipline and more positive school environment (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Research indicates that schools that have opted for proactive strategies of discipline, reported reduced suspension rates, student engagements that is improved and higher performance in academics (Lembke & McIntosh, 2022). When schools focus on prevention and early intervention, these effective discipline strategies would foster a more supportive learning climate that promotes the success of students (Losen, 2020).

In addition, discipline strategies that are effective assist with strengthening the relations between learners and teachers, which tends to be a key in maintaining a positive and productive classroom. When students view discipline as fair and constructive, they will respect authority and adhere to expected behavioural conduct (Simonsen et al., 2008). This new atmosphere encourages a sense of trust and belonging which in return builds the emotional well-being of students and motivates them academically. Restorative practices on the other hand, when implemented proves to reduce conflicts and promote among students' better conflicts resolution skills and further contributing to long term results (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Eventually, effective discipline strategies addresses both immediate conduct issues as well as helping to cultivate life skills that benefits students beyond their academic careers (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

## 2. Materials and Methods

Pragmatism is a research paradigm which is suited for mixed methods as researchers are allowed to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods without the need to be restricted to a single philosophical stance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This paradigm emphasises on what works best, meaning that qualitative methods that is (interviews) was used to explore experiences that are subject and complex while quantitative methods that are (surveys) provided data that is measurable and generalisable. When using pragmatism, the researchers were free to choose a different technique depending on the research question's nature while providing a more all-inclusive understanding of the problem that is being studied (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Due to the

flexibility of its methodology, pragmatism tends to be highly applicable in various fields of research particularly those that need both detailed context and empirical evidence.

### Research design

Research design is defined as the structured plan that profiles how the study will be conducted by specifying data collection methods, analysis and interpretation to successfully tackle research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study used convergent parallel design. It is a design that allows the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously but analysed separately, which enables an all-inclusive understanding of the research problem (Fetters et al., 2013). For this study, the convergent parallel design was used as it is suitable for the mixed method research. This design further facilitated triangulation whereby findings from both methods can be compared and combined which enhanced the quality of the results. By adopting this design, the researchers were able to take advantage of the strength from both qualitative and quantitative data, making it a more powerful approach for inquiries that are complex (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

### Population

For this research, a variety of stakeholders included namely: The students, who enabled the researchers to understand the impact that effective discipline has on academic performance, behaviour change and emotional well-being. The teacher who assisted the researchers to assess the effectiveness of discipline techniques in classroom management while maintaining a learning environment that is productive. School administrators who assisted the researchers to gain a deeper understanding into the implementation of school wide discipline policies and their results.

### Sampling

The study employed concurrent sampling within a mixed-methods research design. This approach enabled the researchers to collect qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, using appropriate sampling strategies for each component. The study was conducted in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The participants comprised 20 teachers and 25 learners, selected according to the inclusion criteria of the study. The research was conducted during the days from February 2025 to June 2025.

### Data collection

Data collection is a systematic process of gathering information from different sources to

answer research questions or test a hypothesis. It may involve methods such as interviews, surveys, observations and document analysis. The data collected can either be qualitative (descriptive) or quantitative (numerical) and it ensures that research findings are reliable and valid (Tashakkori et al., 2021). The study was conducted over a period of four months from February 2025 to June 2025 in Limpopo Province, South Africa. During this period, quantitative data were collected through surveys, while qualitative data were obtained through interviews. Relevant documents and archival records were also reviewed to complement the survey and interview data. For quantitative data, surveys were used to gather information that is measurable on attitude, behaviours or character (Clark & Ivankova, 2016). For qualitative data, interviews were used which enabled the researchers to explore in-depth perspectives, experiences and meanings (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Document or archival analysis was used for both qualitative and quantitative data and it allowed the researchers to review existing records or documents (Ivankova, 2017).

### Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of examining, transforming and interpreting data that is collected to draw conclusions that are meaningful and answer research questions. As the researcher opted for mixed method, both interviews (qualitative) and surveys (Qualitative) will be used, and the data will therefore be analysed separately using respective techniques such as thematic analysis for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Clark & Ivankova, 2018). When separate analysis is done, the findings were combined for interpretation purposes to provide an all-inclusive understanding of the research problem, allowing both narrative insights and trends that are measurable to be examined together (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

### 3. Result and Discussion

This study has explored effective discipline strategies in the classroom for maintaining discipline in schools by using the approach of mixed methods to gain an overall understanding of the problem. Through surveys, quantitative data was gathered from a sample of teachers that is broad which provided a measurable insight into the prevalence and the effectiveness that was seen from different techniques. At the same time, qualitative data, using the in-depth of interviews with a selected sample of teachers offered more understanding into the challenges, personal experiences and the successfulness of managing

classroom behaviour. The merged data indicated a multi-layered perspective, which has emphasised the importance of consistent, behaviour management strategies that are positive, clear communication and teacher-student relationships with the aim to promote a learning environment that is disciplined. These findings provide implications that are practical for educators and school administrators aiming to improve their school's disciplinary practices.

### Categories, themes and topics

Using mixed methods, categories, themes and topics were developed using both the qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) data analysis process. Predefined categories in the quantitative data are based on the survey questions. Discipline strategies such as positive reinforcement, time-outs and detentions were focused on, checking their effectiveness, which led to categories such as positive discipline, punitive measures and preventative strategies. The categories were then analysed to identify topics such as most used strategies, their indicated effectiveness or their impact on student conduct. Themes emerged during interview analysis through the process of coding whereby patterns that were recurring and ideas from the responses of the participants were identified. Teachers gave insights on how communication, healthy relationship with students and the emphasis of consistency in rules affect discipline. Themes such as student-teacher relationships, consistency of discipline and communication strategies were developed. Thereafter, themes were grouped into categories that are broader, such as relationships and communication and discipline enforcement based on the relevance and their similarities to the research question.

The results were then integrated after analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, as the researcher used mixed methods to develop an inclusive understanding. Survey findings on the effectiveness of certain discipline strategies were supported by interview themes that explained why certain strategies work better in practice, hence this formed overall topics that connected the data sets of both methods, namely, the impact of positive reinforcement on student behaviour and the role of teacher consistency in maintaining discipline. The analysis of the data revealed interconnected categories and themes concerning effective classroom discipline strategies and their contribution to maintaining school discipline. The themes were further organised into specific topics that provide a detailed account of the issues emerging from the study. Table 1 summarises the categories, themes and topics that emerged from the data analysis.

Table 1. Categories, themes and topics

| Type of data               | Category                       | Interviews                                                                                          | Surveys                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Qualitative & Quantitative | Positive discipline strategies | Building strong positive teacher-student relationships<br>Recognition of good behaviour and rewards | frequency of using praise and rewards in the classroom,<br>Impact of positive reinforcement on student behaviour              |
| Qualitative & Quantitative | Punitive measures              | the use of detentions and consequences, punishment as last resort                                   | perceptions of teachers on the effectiveness of punishments,<br>Frequency of detentions and referrals in classroom management |
| Qualitative & Quantitative | Preventative strategies        | Formulating clear rules and expectations, consistency in enforcing rules                            | Frequency of classroom rule-setting practices,<br>Impact of clear guidelines on reducing disruptive conduct                   |
| Qualitative & Quantitative | Teacher-student relationships  | Effective communications with students, Addressing underlying causes of misconduct                  | Relationship-building practices used by teachers, Effects of teacher-student connection on discipline outcomes                |
| Qualitative & Quantitative | Support systems                | Role of school counsellors and administrators, Collaborative efforts in discipline management       | Availability of support systems for managing discipline, Teacher reliance on school-wide discipline policies                  |

### Effective discipline strategies and the school environment

Positive discipline strategies such as positive reinforcement significantly enhances the school environment by promoting a culture of respect and encouragement. When teachers frequently reward good behaviour, through rewards, praise or recognition, students tend to be more motivated to engage in positive actions. The approach minimises disruptive conduct and also shifts the focus of the teacher from punishment to recognition which creates a more positive and supportive environment. This therefore channels students to show self-discipline, engage actively in learning, and contribute to a cooperative and respectful environment which allows for a smoother classroom management and more dedicated time to teaching. Outside the classroom, the use of effective positive discipline strategies contributes to the overall culture of the school by fostering a sense of community and belonging. A

greater sense of security is built when students experience affirmation for their behaviour, and it cultivates mutual respect between peers and teachers which leads to solid relationships. Misconduct is reduced and a collaborative problem-solving is built which improves the overall school environment. When emphasis is on the reinforcement of desired conduct rather than focusing on punishment, schools create an environment where students feel valued supported and responsible, which promotes academic success and social well-being.

### **Challenges faced by teachers when implementing effective discipline strategies**

Teachers are faced with several challenges that makes it hard to fully implement effective discipline strategies that are positive without the need to resort to punitive measures. One huge problem found is that students have varying needs and what works for one might may not be effective for another which requires teachers to modify their approaches. Teachers lack the full support from parents or school administrators which undermines their efforts to maintain discipline making it difficult for teachers to enforce rules consistently. Furthermore, time constrains also limit teachers as managing behaviours takes away their instructional time. Most teachers struggle with class size as they are faced with a larger number of students approximately 50-65 students, whereby individualised attention and management of behaviour is more difficult. Trying to balance positive reinforcement with necessary corrective actions is sometimes tricky as teachers need to ensure that discipline remains fair while promoting a learning environment that is positive.

### **Punitive measures as last resort**

Despite a growing emphasis on positive discipline strategies that are effective, many teachers still view punitive measures as a measure to ensure discipline in the classroom due to numerous practical challenges. One key reason is the immediate effectiveness that comes with punitive actions, these includes detentions or reprimands and to some extent flogging which can quickly stop disruptive behaviour and restore order especially during high pressure situations. Class size and diverse students' needs also pose a challenge and forces teachers to use punitive measures as it is difficult to implement individualised positive strategies that will favour the diversity of all students consistently. The pressure to cover academic content leaves no room for patience as there is limited time while flexibility is needed for some restorative approaches. In some cases, teachers do not receive sufficient training or support for implementing

alternative discipline strategies which leads to them relying on more familiar punitive practices. Moreover, without the backup of school policies and parental involvement, punitive measures may seem to be the most straightforward way to maintain control in classroom environments that are challenging.

Several key solutions can be applied to ensure effective implementation of discipline strategies. Firstly, the development of professional body is very important for equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to use positive and individualised discipline techniques (Gregory et al., 2016). Classroom management strategies training that is ongoing such as restorative practices and positive conduct interventions may assist teachers to apply approaches that are non-punitive more constantly. Secondly, smaller class sizes can extensively improve the teachers' ability to manage behaviour, as they provide the opportunity for increased individualised attention and interventions (Aloe et al., 2014). Thirdly, application of strong-school-home communication guarantees that parents are aware of school policies and reinforce the same strategies of discipline at home as this will create consistency across environments (Epstein, 2018). Lastly schools must establish and retain a supportive school-wide discipline framework that encourages collaboration among teachers, counsellors and administrators to tackle conduct issues holistically, ensuring that strategies of discipline are consistently applied fairly (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

The successful implementation of effective discipline strategies such as positive reinforcement requires several key suggestions, namely: Ongoing teacher training: professional development must be provided by the school with the focus on positive discipline approaches and classroom management making sure that teachers are well equipped in using positive reinforcement effectively and consistently (Gregory et al., 2016). Clear and consistent policies: there must be an establishment of clear, school wide policies of discipline that prioritises positive reinforcement and this will assist to ensure that there is uniformity in the classroom. The policies must be communicated to the staff, students and parents frequently to promote experiences that are shared and accountability (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Parental involvement: Parents must be encouraged to support and reinforce positive discipline strategies in their homes so that consistency is created in behaviour management. A regular communication between parents and school must ensure alignment and reinforce the impact of reinforcement that is positive (Epstein, 2018).

Reduction of class size: smaller class sizes would allow teachers to manage the behaviour of students better and instil effectively positive reinforcement as they will have more chances to provide attention individually and tailor strategies of discipline according to the needs of students (Aloe et al., 2014). Rewards and regular feedback: The provision of immediate rewards to students and feedback that is positive for good conduct together with rewards that are tangible where appropriate, can assist with the reinforcement of desired behaviour. Merit-based recognition and incentive programmes are reward systems that can motivate students to continue showing behaviour that is positive.

In conclusion, the findings indicated a critical role that approaches such as positive reinforcement, communication that is clear and emphasis on consistency when it comes to maintaining school discipline play on effective discipline strategies. These strategies reduce disruptive conduct while on the other hand they cater for a learning environment that is supportive and students and teachers both benefit positively from it. It encourages self-discipline, student engagement and create an atmosphere that is productive. It also indicates that the successfulness of this implementation depends on teachers receiving adequate training, schools developing strong discipline strategies, an overflowing support from wider school community and parents. Punitive measures offer temporary solutions yet effective strategies of discipline contributes to behavioural and academic outcomes which moulds a more harmonious and productive school atmosphere.

The research findings for effective discipline strategies in the classroom for maintaining discipline in schools with the use of mixed method approach of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) to disclose perceptions. Most teachers made a report stating that they view clear, consistent communication, and positive reinforcement as the most effective strategy to instill discipline and reduce behavior that is disruptive in the classroom (Gregory et al., 2016). The surveys have shown that students respond better to systems that are reward based while on the other hand, a highlight made by interviews shows that it is important to create teacher-student relationships that are strong and to maintain consistency when enforcing the rules. Nevertheless, the research further shows that there are challenges that are found such as lack of parental support towards the teachers and large class sizes which at times prevents the effective application of these strategies (Aloe et al., 2014). The merging of both qualitative and quantitative methods revealed the need for school-wide

approaches and the importance of strategies that are tailored to meet the students' needs despite their background differences.

### **Discussion of each category and its themes**

Themes and categories emerged from both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) data. A discussion of each category and its theme are as follows:

#### **Positive discipline strategies**

##### *Theme 1: positive reinforcement*

Through survey, it has been shown that positive reinforcement which include praises or getting rewards are frequently used and tends to work effectively as a strategy of discipline. As teachers have reported, students are encouraged when their good behavior is rewarded, and they continue to behave well hence reduces the need to use punitive measures. Data from interviews further substantiate this by indicating that positive reinforcement consolidates the relationship between the student and the teacher where students feel motivated and valued (Gregory et al., 2016). As much as this takes dedication, effort and time, teachers have indicated that consistent use of positive reinforcement promotes a conducive learning environment, and this is a long-term effect.

#### **Punitive measures**

##### *Theme 2: Immediate control*

Despite proof that the use of punitive measures such as time-out, flogging and detentions is disregarded, data collected quantitatively shows that teachers draw back to them sometimes more especially when there is an urgent classroom control. As surveys indicates that while punishment is still effective in curbing misconduct for a while, it does not tackle the problem by the roots (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). On the other hand, punitive measures as revealed by interviews mostly occur when teachers feel as though they lack support or are overcome by class sizes that are larger, where controlling conduct through positive reinforcement becomes a challenge. Nonetheless most teachers indicated a concern regarding the long-term effects of punitive discipline and that it can put a strain on the relationship between teachers and students and threatens trust.

#### **Preventative strategies**

##### *Theme 3: Consistency and clear expectations*

Students tends to cooperate when there are rules and expectations that are outlined, communicated clearly and enforced consistently. Teachers who incorporate preventative measures such as rule setting at the start of the school year,

and regularly revisiting them, reported fewer disruptions of conduct. Teachers further indicates that consistency is the main key through interviews. When students are aware of what is expected of them, they are most likely to abide by the rules (Aloe et al., 2014). Exceptionally, both data, qualitative and quantitative have shown that lack of consistency in enforcing the rules, probably due to lack of parental or administrative support and can wear down the effectiveness of the strategies.

### **Teacher-learner relationships**

#### *Theme 4: Trust and respect*

Interviews and surveys conducted both emphasises the importance of having strong student -teacher relationships when it comes to discipline maintenance. As shown in quantitative data, students who show respect towards their teacher tend to follow the rules set in the classroom and engage positively in the learning process. Furthermore, interviews indicates that teachers who dedicates their time establishing strong bonds with their students' using communication that is open and empathy, have experienced fewer challenges in behaviour. In interviews, teachers have shown that strong bonds help them structure their strategies of discipline to the student's individual needs, which makes them, in the long term, more effective (Epstein, 2018).

### **Support systems**

#### *Theme 5: Collaborative discipline approaches*

Teachers who received support consistently from parents, administrators and counsellors tends to implement these approaches effectively according to quantitative survey. On the other hand, data from concur that approaches that are collaborative, where the community of the school, works together to enforce policies of discipline, create an atmosphere that is conducive and supportive for both the learner and the teacher. Teachers also stressed that when they are supported by the parents and the leadership of the school, they manage better the behaviour in the classroom and are able to maintain a disciplined positive environment (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

Several key solutions can be applied to ensure effective implementation of discipline strategies. Firstly, the development of professional body is very important for equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to use positive and individualised discipline techniques (Gregory et al., 2016). Classroom management strategies training that is ongoing such as restorative practices and positive conduct interventions may assist teachers to apply approaches that are non-punitive more constantly. Secondly, smaller class sizes can extensively improve the teachers' ability

to manage behaviour, as they provide the opportunity for increased individualised attention and interventions (Aloe et al., 2014). Thirdly, application of strong-school-home communication guarantees that parents are aware of school policies and reinforce the same strategies of discipline at home as this will create consistency across environments (Epstein, 2018). Lastly schools must establish and retain a supportive school-wide discipline framework that encourages collaboration among teachers, counsellors and administrators to tackle conduct issues holistically, ensuring that strategies of discipline are consistently applied fairly (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

The successful implementation of effective discipline strategies such as positive reinforcement requires several key suggestions, namely: Professional development must be provided by the school with the focus on positive discipline approaches and classroom management making sure that teachers are well equipped in using positive reinforcement effectively and consistently (Gregory et al., 2016). Clear and consistent policies: there must be an establishment of clear, school wide policies of discipline that prioritises positive reinforcement and this will assist to ensure that there is uniformity in the classroom. The policies must be communicated to the staff, students and parents frequently to promote experiences that are shared and accountability (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

Patents must be encouraged to support and reinforce positive discipline strategies in their homes so that consistency is created in behaviour management. A regular communication between parents and school must ensure alignment and reinforce the impact of reinforcement that is positive (Epstein, 2018). Smaller class sizes would allow teachers to manage the behaviour of students better and instil effectively positive reinforcement as they will have more chances to provide attention individually and tailor strategies of discipline according to the needs of students (Aloe et al., 2014). The provision of immediate rewards to students and feedback that is positive for good conduct together with rewards that are tangible where appropriate, can assist with the reinforcement of desired behaviour. Merit-based recognition and incentive programmes are reward systems that can motivate students to continue showing behaviour that is positive.

### **4. Conclusion and Suggestions**

In conclusion, punitive measures are temporarily effective in an urgent situation, yet implementation of effective discipline strategies requires not only the teacher but also the support structure from administrators, parents and the

school community as a whole. They also require clear communication and consistency which reduces disruptive behaviour and encourage a learning environment which is productive and enhance better student- teacher relationship.

Schools needs to put their investments in a regular developmental programme that are focused on positive discipline techniques such as positive reinforcement. Teachers will be well equipped with the necessary skills that will assist them to manage the behaviours of students effectively and build up a conducive learning environment (Gregory et al., 2016). A strengthened partnership amid parents and schools is a major key to establishing strategies of discipline both at the school and home. Communicating regularly about which behaviour is expected and constant support from families will assist in forming a united discipline approach which will ensure that a clear and consistent guidance is received (Epstein, 2018).

On the exploration of effective discipline strategies, the emphasis is put on consistency, clear communication and positive reinforcement. Tailoring an appropriate behaviour is very important for teaching students what is expected of them. In this way, natural consequences allow them to act responsibly and moreover, a learning environment that is supportive fosters decision making that is positive and accountability.

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