

DISCIPLINE VERSUS PUNISHMENT: WHICH WAY FOR EDUCATORS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS?

Dr. Cosmas MAPHOSA
University of KwaZulu Natal
University Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO)
Durban, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ABSTRACT

The study is part of a larger study on the management of learner indiscipline in schools. The study sought to establish educators' insights on the disciplinary measures used to deal with minor and major forms of indiscipline in selected South African schools. Available literature points to the realization that educators use mostly punitive disciplinary measures to deal with learner indiscipline in schools. There was a need to establish the situation on the ground. The study was a descriptive survey that utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It looked into insights of 125 educators selected from 15 independent schools in one educational district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected mainly through a semi-structured questionnaire administered on educators as well as interviews. The SPSS version 17 software was used to analyze quantitative data while content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. It emerged from the study that from the educators' point of view educators mostly employed punitive disciplinary measures when dealing with both minor and major forms of indiscipline. The study concludes that educators still viewed disciplining learners as synonymous to punishing them. The study recommends the establishment of staff development workshops to equip educators with skills to embrace supportive, proactive and cooperative disciplinary measures when dealing with learner indiscipline.

Keywords: Positive discipline, physical punishment, preventive approaches, learners, educators.