Research Article

Management Strategies to the Behavioural Challenges of Learners from Child Headed Households as an Optimum Approach to Nurturing a Child-Friendly Learning Environment

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Abstract

Student behaviour management is one of the contemporary problems faced by managers of schools. This study explored how school principals address behavioural challenges of orphaned learners for positive outcome. Using qualitative approach, purposive sampling was used to select eight principals whose schools had a visible population of learners from child headed households who exhibited behavioural challenges. Data was collected using unstructured focus group interviews to encourage spontaneity and in-depth discussions. Focus group interviews were used to collect data to allow for spontaneity and in-depth conversations with respondents. The results showed that most of the intervention strategies employed by the principals in schools did not generate restorative learner behaviour. It was also revealed that most of the behavioural management strategies were not effective since undisciplined learners who returned from suspensions often repeated similar behaviours that got them suspended. From the inadequate managerial skills on orphaned learners' behavioural challenges revealed by the study, it is recommended that school managers need staff development on how to implement restorative disciplinary approaches on learner management.

Keywords: relationships, vulnerable children, behaviour management, restorative discipline, child headed households

1. Introduction

Discipline in schools is an essential element in the socialisation of children for the formation of their character and in the process of education (Carr & Runai 2014). Poor classroom management not only makes it difficult to foster an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, but it also seriously undermines healthy interpersonal relationships (Pharaoh, 2007). According to Pharaoh

(2007), poor discipline not only has a negative impact on creating a conducive teaching and learning environment, but it also severely damages sound relationships. Mushayi (2013) observes that discipline is therefore even more critical especially for learners who have lost parents and are now living in Child Headed Households (CHH). In such instance the primary agent of socialisation has been compromised given the absence of father and mother figures in these homes. The absent parents are supposed to act as role models and guide for these children- inculcating positive morals and values into them.

The breakdown of family means some orphans are forced to look after themselves as well as their younger siblings. The death of parents therefore erodes the tradition of families' role to take care of their own children, hence leaving them vulnerable. For example, in some communities orphaned children are vulnerable to recruitment by drug lords and many may also face sexual exploitation resulting in a generation of victims with emotional scars Pentz (2010).

Managing students who have varying backgrounds in an ever-changing school system inundated with countless internal and external pressures may create challenges for principals of schools (Burton, 2008). Children who grow up without the love and care of adults who should be concerned about their wellness, are more likely to experience psychological challenges (Pharaoh, 2007). As the number of orphans grows and the number of potential caregivers shrinks, traditional coping mechanisms are stretched to breaking point in many Southern African communities (Mushayi, 2013). In some cases, this results in ill-disciplined learners causing unnecessary disruptions during teaching and learning. Students therefore need to be socialised into the norms and expected behaviours of schooling.

Student behaviour management is one of the contemporary problems frequently faced by the school community (Nooruddin & Baig, 2014). Burton (2008) & Pentz (2010) point out that behavioural challenges such as bullying, violence in schools, bunking of classes, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, rape, sexual harassment, gangsters, vandalism, teenage pregnancy and other major and minor acts of misconduct create an extremely hostile and unsupportive environment for the school community as well as a culture of dread and discontent. These conditions not only demonstrate the extent of lack of discipline, but also the state of the interpersonal relationships and the nature of the culture and ethos currently found in the school community.

The current challenges of children's daily lives require principals with not only intelligence and hard work but also to be managers with humanity, empathy, maturity, confident, assertive and ethical.

2. Theoretical Framework

The chosen theoretical proposition that explains the phenomenon of this study, namely the manifestation of learner ill-discipline in schools and its management by school managers was the restorative disciplinary approaches. According to Hopkins (2011), the approaches offer schools an alternative way of thinking about addressing discipline and behavioral issues and offers a consistent framework for responding to issues of discipline. Establishing a respectful rapport with people; listening and responding to all sides of an argument without interrupting or passing judgment; creating a sense of safety and trust, and encouraging people to express their thoughts, feelings and desires in an appropriate manner are all necessary for facilitating such a process (Hendry, 2009). These procedures provide a supportive learning environment where faculty, staff, and administrators can feel valued and connected, which improves student academic achievement. By resolving conflicts, fostering positive relationships, and promoting an inclusive and respectful school culture, restorative practices help to make schools safe havens where everyone in the community is responsible for their actions.

According to Wachtel (2013) the utilisation of restorative methods can transform human behaviour; reducing crime, violence, and bullying; develop civil society, and decrease the use of restorative practices helps to reduce crime, violence, and bullying; improve human behaviour; strengthen civil society; restore relationships; demonstrate effective leadership and restore harm

inflicted to people and relationships than just sanctioning offenders. Thus, restorative discipline provides some implications on behaviour management that embraces and advances sound relationships between teachers, parents, and learners. These approaches enlighten learners on their responsibilities as citizens on how to build good relationships which are important for day-to-day interaction patterns amongst, peers, friends, teachers, parents, and the community members at large.

Restorative discipline primarily focuses on restoration, reintegration and dialogue, sensitivity to the needs of offenders and a whole school approach to discipline. The goal of restorative practices is to establish secure school environment where everyone in the community is responsible for their actions, resolve conflict and tension, cultivate a culture of inclusion and respect in the school by fostering positive relationships (Gonzalez, 2012). Therefore, effective communication, relationship, and even friendship, empathy and understanding for the other's perspective, respect, confidence and understanding the impact of one's own behaviour on others are restored (Hopkins, 2011).

Most school personnel concur that classroom and management of student behaviour is a crucial component of their profession, especially in view of the widely voiced perspective that children are getting more disruptive and challenging to teach. (Nooruddin & Baig 2014). In the school environment, disruptive student behaviour can have a deleterious effect on both students and teachers (Psunder, 2005).

The use of restorative approaches in dealing with ill-discipline becomes handy in the teaching and learning process, given that it emphasises on preventing misbehaviour before it occurs through building strong relationships and a sense of community. These practices provide a supportive learning environment where students, faculty, and administrators can feel connected and appreciated, which in turn improves learning outcomes. (Wachtel 2013). Hopkins (2011) asserts that restorative methods build on the fundamental tenets and ideals of humanistic psychology. include genuineness - sincerity, openness, honesty; respect for each person as an individual; empathetic comprehension – being able to relate to another person's experience; collective responsibility as well as individual accountability; self-actualisation - the human capacity for constructive growth and development and positive perceptions on self-development - that humans are capable of growth and development for the better.

The modern trend in education therefore requires managers (principals) of schools to use controls which, while not threatening children's independence, self-esteem, and self-confidence, will empower them to evaluate their actions objectively in terms of what is right and wrong or appropriate and inappropriate (Carr & Runai, 2014). This is in line with Kyriacou (2003) as cited by Mushayi (2013) who posits that caring and responsive managers with democratic interaction styles tend to have students who feel relatively comfortable.

3. The Problem Statement

The socialisation process in schools must include the element of discipline. of learners for character formation and in the process of education (Carr & Runai 2014). According to Pharaoh (2007), poor discipline not only hinders the development of teaching and learning environment at school, but it also undermines healthy relationships. Discipline is therefore critical for all learners and more so for those who have lost parents and live in Child Headed Households (CHH). It is worth noting that in the South African's education policy, every child has the right to education, in a safe, secure environment free from frequent disruptions. (Department of Education, 1996). Therefore, preventing and managing behavioural issues is essential to ensuring that teachers and students have a pleasant experience at school. As managers of the schools, principals are guided by policy to devise support mechanisms that provide learners the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in a friendly and conducive environment for them to participate in the learning process. Given that schools in Schweizer Reneke town, North West Province-South Africa have learners with diverse needs, principals need to put in place management systems that will address their behavioural challenges in order to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. One of the systems is the restorative disciplinary approach. The technique offers schools an unique perspective on how to

handle behavioral and discipline concerns and provides a consistent structure or framework for addressing these challenges. The framework is based on reliable learning theory addressing interpersonal relationships and how to effectively address the diverse needs that may result from conflict or trauma. From the literature reviewed, there was limited evidence on employment of restorative disciplinary approach by principals in the management of their schools in South Africa. This study therefore endeavoured to fill this gap. The study was conducted in Schweizer Reneke because there was a greater likelihood that principals had dealt with behavioural challenges exhibited by learners living in CHH (Mushayi, 2013). Thefore, the purpose of the study was to evaluate the extent to which restorative disciplinary approach was applied in the management of student behaviour among orphaned learners from CHH to enhance positive outcomes in schools.

4. Research Questions

The focus and scope of this study was guided by the following research questions:
- What managerial skills do principals in schools employ in dealing with behavioural challenges faced by orphaned students who are heads of households to enhance positive learning outcomes?
- How effective are the intervention strategies used by principals in managing conflict and tension and reintegrating wrong doers into the school community?
- How should school managers be supported in modern restorative management styles to manage behavioural challenges of orphaned learners from CHH?

5. Research Methodology

Working within an interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Linclon 2008), the study employed the qualitative approach to data collection to answer the research question; "How do principals of schools address the behavioural challenges of orphaned learners in CHH to promote positive behaviour which enhances learning outcomes?". Qualitative research was best suited for the study because it provides an in-depth account and insights of the phenomena under examination that would otherwise be challenging to present with quantitative approaches. Additionally, it aims to collect rich, comprehensive, and thick data from a small number of respondents (Creswell 2009). In addition to providing the descriptive data necessary for this study, the research also allowed for the triangulation of participant data to accurately report the results.

6. Sampling Approach

Purposive sampling was used, which is in line with a qualitative approach (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2010) to choose eight principals. Purposive sampling was the suitable method of identifying the relevant study because "samples are selected because they are potentially informed and knowledgeable about the subject the researcher is studying" (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2006 cited in Mushayi & Runhare, 2015:161). The eight principals were therefore included because of their official and special responsibilities as managers of schools. The biographical details of the participants are contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Biographical detail of participating Principals

Principal	Primary/Secondary	Experience (years)	Gender
Focus Group 1	Primary	13	Female
	Primary	12	Male
	Secondary	22	Male
	Secondary	15	Male

Principal	Primary/Secondary	Experience (years)	Gender
Focus Group 2	Primary	18	Male
	Primary	15	Female
	Secondary	10	Male
	Secondary	20	Female

7. Data Collection and Analysis

Ethical measures were observed during the research process. Eight (8) principals, five males and three females participated in the study. As shown in Table 1, they were divided into two focus groups with four participants each to ensure a balanced representation of managers from primary and secondary schools. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used to collect the data in order to stimulate spontaneity and in-depth discussion of participant experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Data analysis was conducted using themes that emerged from the interviews. The themes were identified, described, and substantiated by verbatim quotes of participants from the recorded, transcribed interviews and field notes (Creswell, 2009). To ensure trustworthiness four criteria were used namely credibility, conformability, and transferability (Polit & Hungler, 2008). Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, member checking and debriefing. The responses, provided during focus group interviews were established by means of continuous meetings and discussion of preliminary study results with participants. This process enabled the participants to correct and contest the interpretations of data that were gathered from them.

8. Results

Data analysis showed that principals thought that they were inadequately empowered to manage behavioural challenges of orphaned learners from CHH using restorative approaches consistently. Five (5) out of the eight (8) Principals who participated in the study revealed that they had not received sufficient support or training to enable them to be creative in handling or managing cases of ill-discipline from orphaned learners from CHH. This implied that principals were experiencing challenges in managing behavioural challenges of most orphaned learners at their respective schools, especially the secondary school principals who dealt with adolescents who are more psychologically and emotionally influenced than primary school learners. The emergent themes, supported by direct quotations from the principals are presented and discussed with relevant literature surveys.

8.1 *Principals' managerial strategies to address behavioural challenges of learners from CHH*

While a study by Mushayi and Runhare (2015) on intervention strategies for managing behavioural challenges of orphaned learners identified four intervention strategies (verbal reprimands and written warnings, extinction of bad behaviour through positive behavioural reinforcement, drawing up and displaying classroom rules and learner support through rehabilitation) that teachers employed to address behavioural challenges of orphaned learners in CHH, the school principals in this study identified the following intervention strategies as school managers:

- Designing and enforcing a learners' code of conduct.
- Suspension or temporary exclusion of misbehaving learners from school.
- Making use of monitoring tools
- Developing courtesy.
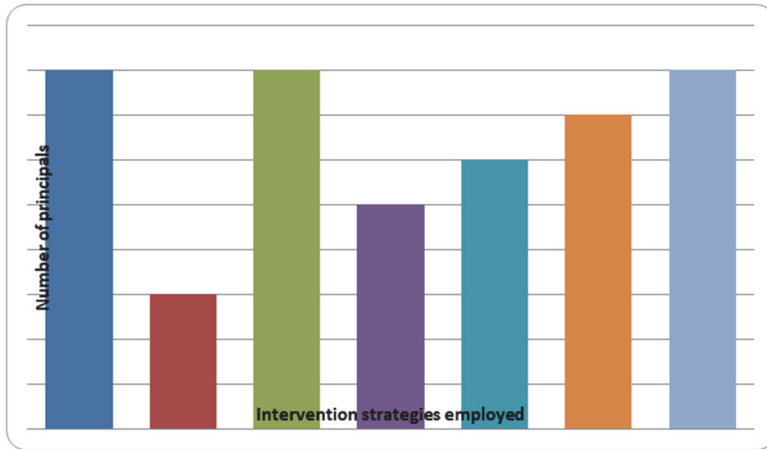- Detention
- Verbal reinforcement

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Figure 1: Intervention startegies employed by principals

All the eight principals as indicated in figure 1 said that their schools had developed and enforced a code of conduct for learners, which are used as a corrective measure for offences committed by both parented and orphaned learners. This is in line with the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 (Department of Basic Education, 1996) which has a provision for the learners' code of conduct (Mathebula & Runhare, 2021). The code of conduct for learners is aimed at establishing a disciplined and productive environment for quality learning and to safeguard the interests of learners. This general application of policy by the school managers to deal with behavioural challenges of learners from CHH is illustrated by the following two extracted narratives:

> *Every learner who commits minor violation of general classroom discipline, we use verbal warning or detain learners to clean toilets after school or clean their classrooms [Male School Principal].*

Another principal said the following:

> *For minor violation of code of conduct of rules, we give written warning or sign behavioural contracts with the learners and also have disciplinary talks with them [Female School Principal].*

Four of the school principals made a distinction between the above stated minor offences and serious disciplinary cases such as severely disruptive behaviour, defying educators, vandalism of school property and possession of dangerous weapons that are referred to by the School Governing Body (SGB), which constituted the School Disciplinary Committee (SDC) for disciplinary hearings.
For the serious offences, it was indicated that all learners, whether orphaned or not, could be expelled from school or referred to social workers or the police for further counselling. This disciplinary strategy, which all principals concurred that they were using for all learners, including those from CHH, was summed up by one of the female principals who explained that:

> *"if misconduct is very serious, the principal may refer the matter to the School Discipline Committee, the School Governing Body or even to the District Education Department".*

8.2 *Effectiveness of intervention strategies used by principals in managing behavioural challenges of learners from CHH*

On whether the policy-related strategies they used were effective in reintegrating the wrong doers, three principals indicated that this depended on the staff establishment of the schools. Seven (7)

Principals argued that in some instances, some teachers ignore unacceptable behaviour, and some do not put boundaries or rules in place for monitoring and accountability of learners' behaviour when it becomes questionable. Thus, the success of the intervention strategy is difficult to assess, as one male principal explained that:

> *"The responsibility of maintaining discipline in the school lies with all teachers. However, there is inconsistency in implementation of school policy when dealing with ill-discipline".*

From the statement, the study concluded that principals seem to put most of the blame, authority and responsibility to correct the behaviour of learners on the teachers and no distinction is made for learners from CHH.

Exclusion from school: In line with general school rules and regulations, two principals indicated that their schools issued up to three (3) written warnings for deviant behaviour, while the fourth is a written undertaking that precedes exclusion from school. For serious offences, one secondary school principal indicated that:

> *"Learners may with immediate effect be suspended or excluded from school by the chairperson of the disciplinary committee".*

The strategy of exclusion is applied where criminal charges may be brought against the misbehaving learner. The negative effect of suspension or exclusion came out from another secondary school principals who further indicated that:

> *"some return to school after suspension, but others may transfer to another school or drop out altogether without the behavioural challenge being addressed".*

Temporary exclusion or suspension from school might result in learners dropping out of school, and therefore most (five) of the principals felt that this strategy was not effective given that when students returned from their suspensions, they often repeated behaviours that led to suspensions. They suggested that alternatives to suspension programmes such as counselling need to be devised and implemented in schools.

School progress monitoring tools: All principals in the study indicated that they used monitoring tools to check on regular attendance of learners, and their performances on both formal and informal tasks. For example, class registers, period attendance registers, intervention forms and learners' exercise books. Others included end of term/year schedules as well as the checking of portfolio files by the Principals, their deputies, or Heads of Departments (HoDs) on a regular basis. The monitoring tools were put in place as checks and balances to monitor the behavioural and academic progress of the learners from the management point of view. The use of monitoring tools was meant not only for learners, but also for teachers in that:

> *"some of teachers do not have much interest in the progress of individual learners from disadvantaged families so need monitoring too on helping learners from CHH".*

The victim in this instance seems to be learners from CHH because there is usually no parent or guardian to monitor their school progress. Contrary to SASA; ACT 84 (1996) provisions on monitoring learners' school progress, five (5) principals commented that the main drawback of the strategy of using monitoring tools is that there was high teacher-negligence on record keeping in their schools. This results in lack of consistent, accurate and well controlled records for monitoring the behavioural and academic challenges that learners from CHH usually experience. One female principal expressed the concern that:

> *"How can we expect teachers to care and monitor orphaned children when they are failing on their general duty of loco-parentis".*

This showed the existence of a problem in coming up with restorative approaches to build and restore relationships between teachers and learners in managing behavioural challenges of learners from CHH.

Developing common courtesy: Another strategy employed by the principals in their schools is developing healthy, obedience, or common courtesy in children through use of equitable rules and fair treatment. Three (3) principals supported this strategy as remarked by one of them that:

"We place a great emphasis on obedience in children because without rules and law-abiding citizens, no human society, family, school, business, community, or nation can function effectively."

Most of the principals believed that obedience is following instructions, abiding by the law, and respecting reasonable demands from people in authority, including teachers. Principals indicated that they sensitised learners about their responsibility towards others within the school community, and therefore emphasised that sound relationships and collaboration is fundamental in achieving disciplined and safe school environments. This view was summed up by a female principal who remarked that:

"by teaching students the school rules, educators can provide them with the chance to learn how to change the behaviour that gets them into trouble in the first place."

In addition, principals also argued that learners must always be polite towards their educators, other learners, the office staff in school. However, three principals acknowledged that sometimes this does not bear positive results because orphaned learners sometimes behave like adults because of the financial, emotional and social demands placed on them at their respective homes given their orphaned circumstances, as observed by one principal that:

"Obedience, citizenship and courtesy are usually learnt in the family by children, most orphans have no role models and this causes behaviour problems for them".

When probed to explain how they enforced the strategy of developing courtesy in learners at their schools, most principals indicated that they sometimes counsel those learners brought to their offices for acts of misconduct instead of enforcing punishment on them. At other times, they engaged resource persons or motivational speakers to address learners at the school assemblies, and even briefed educators to be proactive in noting and assisting learners with potential behavioural challenges. The effectiveness of the strategy received mixed reactions from principals due to the different personality dispositions of teachers at different schools. At schools where aggressive, impulsive, and assertive educators were in large numbers, the strategy was not well implemented as one of the female principals expressed her concern that:

"Some teachers want to rush through things and do not care about the feelings of their learners".

Most (five) principals argued that such teachers are inconsistent, create unhappy classroom situations, blame, name, and shame learners using strong voices or tones that portrayed anger and instilled fear, especially to those learners from CHH. Such tendencies create tension and conflict between learners and teachers causing unnecessarily sour relationships. The result is that learners lose the little respect they had for authority figures and the indiscipline problem in the schools persists and may even intensify.

However, on a positive note two (2) principals indicated that at their schools, the strategy was working for some learners because they had teachers who were friendly, kind, fair, tactful, diplomatic, positive, firm, honest and exemplary. This resulted in positive changes in the behaviour of some learners from CHH, as confessed by one of the two that:

"for all children to reach their potential, the school needs such teachers with the ability to nurture and develop them".

Detention: Six of the eight school principals in the focus group interview indicated that they employed the practice of detention as one of their strategies to manage behavioural challenges of orphaned learners from CHH. In support of this practice, they indicated that it was a good substitute for corporal punishment that has since been abolished as *"Detention is a better way of disciplining students because learners can be detained to complete outstanding tasks under close supervision of teachers".* Detention was therefore supposed to be applied together with counselling whereby the learner as detainee and the teacher would reflect and discuss the problem behaviour to be redressed.

Verbal reinforcement: All the eight (8) Principals highlighted that they employed the strategy of verbal reinforcement to manage the behavioural challenges exhibited by orphaned learners in their schools. This was done by giving encouraging comments to positive change in behaviour portrayed by deviant learners. Some of the principals (six) stated that they made frequent use of praise to reinforce appropriate learner behaviour on expected standards of clothing, time keeping, punctuality, social conduct and work ethics. Sometimes principals extended reinforcement of appropriate behaviour by giving achievements awards during assembly gatherings to neutralise some stigmatising perceptions:

"most orphaned children struggle with coping mechanisms to manage anger, bitterness, hopelessness, low self-esteem, grief among others, and therefore need public recognition in front of teachers and other learners".

The strategy was rated to be effective by most school principals, not only for learners from CHH but any others who struggled with schooling.

8.3   Support needed by school principals to deal with behavioural challenges of CHH

Asked to indicate the nature of support they would require assisting learners from CHH to overcome their behavioural challenges, the following emerged:
- The need for in-service training on restorative approaches.
- The need for counselling skills;
- Provision of special grants to orphaned learners;
- The need for material provision for Children Heading Households (CHH).
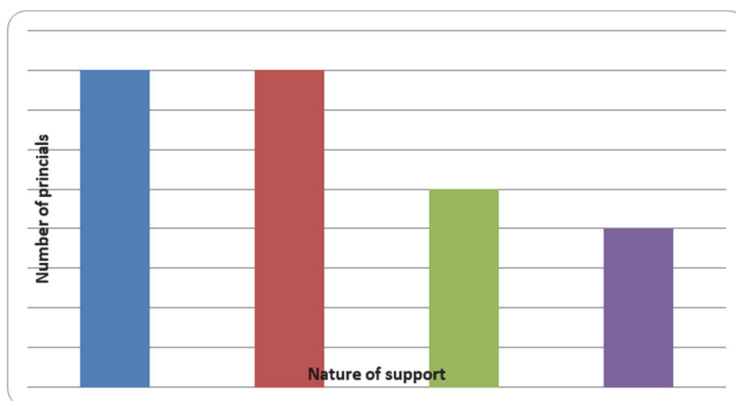
This is illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 2: Nature of support needed by principals

These results in figure 2 above, on the nature of support needed showed a significant similarity between perceptions highlighted by teachers in Mushayi and Runhare (2015) study. Similarly, in this study school principals who requested re-training felt that as school managers they needed innovative management skills to address the current behavioural challenges they encounter from orphaned learners. To echo the same sentiment about the need for training, another female principal agreed that:

> *"New approaches in public schools meant to keep these learners in school must go beyond programmes on academic enrichment or behavioural intervention"*

There is need for counselling skills as highlighted by one female school principal who pointed out that:

> *"Given that problematic learners are frequently brought to our offices for attention, basic counselling skills which we currently lack need to be introduced in management courses when one is appointed as principal".*

Apart from the above needed support, all the principals also indicated that admission policies needed to be revisited to enable schools with a high population of orphaned learners receive special departmental funding and additional specialised teachers to assist in the care and support of not only orphans, but also all other learners who had psychosocial problems or disabilities.

Majority of the Principals argued that the goal is to keep learners in school. In this regard, one female principal lamented that the Department of Education failed to implement its own policy on inclusive education by questioning:

> *"How can we take care of special cases such as orphans and disabled children without specially trained teachers or additional funds and resources? It's the Departments not us who are failing".*

This view was similar to that expressed by one of the male Principals who said that:

> *"The government must provide material support to orphaned learners in the form of school uniforms, stationery, and food handouts like social grants given to teen mothers, in order to curb absenteeism or drop out from school".*

However, there were concerns from two principals who were against this practice, like one male principal remarked:

> *"Treating the orphaned learners differently is like discrimination and they will feel protected and continue to misbehave."*

From such perceptions, it was evident that the two principals lacked adequate knowledge on positive discrimination, which applies in inclusive approaches, whereby learners are equitably rather than equally treated, according to their unique educational needs.

9. Discussion of Results

Results of this study revealed that some of the management interventions used by principals' such as detention, exclusion from school and use of code of conduct were merely used in schools according to educational policy with little relevance to learners from CHH. The interventions were more of traditional punitive disciplinary practices that fail in neither building relationships between school authorities and learners from CHH. Pentz (2010) concurs by maintaining that the role of the teachers, is to promote a significant instructional behaviour of school leadership which is school learning climate.

Contained in the South African code of conduct for learners are some strategies that include issuing of warning letters to learners and suspending learners from school activities, such as school outings and tours. It also contains the suspension of misbehaving learners from class, supervised detention, and verbal reprimands (Department of Education, 1996; Mathebula & Runhare, 2021; Mathebula, Runhare & Marishane, 2021). Results of this study revealed that the school principals employed these provisions of the schools' code of conduct for learners in a wholesale manner without innovation in relation to the educational and behavioural needs of learners from CHH. The loco-parentis role of teachers was partly observable in the curtesy and detention approaches which has some infusion of counselling in them.

The use of suspension and expulsion which school principals confessed to use on learners has been criticised by advocates of restorative discipline practices, for not having the intended effect on either the learner or on the interpersonal relationships within the school community. In this regard Wachtel, (2013) points out that restorative discipline cannot be achieved by removing a learner from school, but rather by giving the wrongdoer a second chance within the school community. It emerged from some of the principals that exclusion from school had the effect of some learners dropping out of school altogether, especially orphaned learners from CHH who may not be represented in disciplinary hearings as required by school policy (Mathebula, Runhare, & Marishane, 2021).

Gonzalez (2012) opines that removing wrongdoers from school exacerbates their academic determination given that learners might experience alienation whilst delinquency, crime and substance abuse may ensue. Due to their vulnerability, orphaned learners from CHH are usually the culprits who experience school burn-out because of the family burdens that they have shouldered.

Some of the identified managerial strategies used by school principals to deal with behavioural challenges of learners from CHH were found to be very general and largely retributive, punitive and could have damaging than restitution effects on child behaviour (Hicks, 2008). Regarding South Africa, Reyneke (2011) observes that despite the abolition of corporal punishment, disciplinary practices in South African schools are largely retributive, punitive and humiliating. Instead of restoring relationships and advancing safety and discipline such practices negatively affect relationships.

The study also showed that even though strategies such as verbal reinforcement and developing courtesy attempted to restore relationships, in principle, they were not as effective as they should be, given that learners continued to exhibit ill-discipline after being talked to. This is consistent with Pentz, (2010) who says that sound relationships were necessary to create a positive school environment and to ensure that learners behave well and that schools become safe havens.

The study also investigated the effectiveness of the intervention strategies used by principals in schools with the hope of building positive relationships that reduce disciplinary problems in schools. There were mixed reactions from the research participants on this aspect. Some principals indicated that some intervention strategies such as developing courtesy and verbal reinforcement bring affected parties together. Principal argued that these strategies promote values of human dignity, respect and consideration for others. Department of Education (1996a) indicated that promoting these values is important for they provide, "the code of values by which the society wishes to live and consents to be judged." Lack of values leads to a school environment where educators and learners treat each other without respect, fairness and honesty.

Sugai and Horne (2008) concur and argue that learning to understand and apply such interpersonal concepts as equal rights, tolerance and respect is not only a slow process but also complex. Children must learn to develop an understanding of what respectful conduct entails and that it takes time, effective modelling, effort, and maturity. We, therefore, concluded that having the type of exemplary teachers who are role models in the school was viewed by the school Principals as an important strategy that can be used to minimise the behavioural challenges of orphaned learners from CHH. Similarly, the practice of verbal reinforcement is supported by Hayes, Hindle & Withington (2007) who state that perhaps the most fundamental tool available for school administration and teachers is the verbal reinforcement. It is also arguably the most meaningful and

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powerful tool available for learners because it may influence their behaviour.

The study also revealed that although frequent patrols and detention practices were not restorative in nature in terms of being proactive and reactive, in their view, Principals indicated that these practices were effective in the absence of corporal punishment .This is consistent with other research findings .For example, in support of frequent patrols, According to Gillborn (1997), the head teacher can support the classroom teacher if they are seen visiting lessons, strolling the halls, and, most importantly, intervening against indiscipline. Studies have demonstrated that school administrators believe that frequent monitoring of the school campuses is helpful in resolving issues before they become problematic (Keesor, 2005) To what extent such practice is restorative is a subject of this discussion. The Principals considered detention as being effective method of controlling deviant behaviour. This is consistent with Omojala (2013) who opines that detention teaches appropriate behaviour and accountability thereby allowing classrooms and schools to run much more smoothly. The study concludes that principals in schools employed limited restorative leadership approaches in managing behavioural challenges of offending learners.

The use of school progress monitoring tools was observed to be ineffective since principals indicated that teachers who were supposed to be actively involved in this process were inconsistent in the practice. The orphan children's right to quality education as promulgated under the South African Schools Act, Act 84, (Department of Education,1996) and states that pupils expect teachers to maintain a high standard of professional ethics, be present to teach their classes, to assist them with their learning difficulties, report on their progress and look after their wellbeing.

Lastly the study also looked at how school managers should be supported in implementing modern restorative management styles or approaches in their schools. The study findings were consistent with Mushayi and Runhare (2015) in which teachers also identified the need for re-training or in-service training, basic counselling skills and material social and emotional support for orphans as the nature of support needed. Principals emphasised the need for re-training in restorative management styles in line with modern trends of school management. The need for training is based on the premise that the results of the study seemed to suggest that most principals in schools lack restorative leadership approaches when handling behavioural challenges. One contributory factor included some Principals were trained under apartheid school and were never in–serviced in restorative disciplinary and management approaches. These Principals often lacked the knowledge and skills to lead democratically or strategically despite the vast management experience they possessed. This has major implications for them to effectively implement restorative disciplinary approaches that build relationships.

The other contributing factor is that most schools are currently confronted with enormous challenges emanating from social, economic, and technological changes. These challenges have a direct impact on schools and their effective management. Some Principals have to deal with issues hither to unknown to them in historical school cultures. Hence ongoing developments of management skills and the improvement of school leadership skills for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness are required. Studies on educational efficiency and effectiveness demonstrate unequivocally that strong leadership is essential for schools to rise above the challenges they are facing (Steyn & Mays, 2008). Scholars also agree that the effectiveness of school leadership largely depends on appropriate training. Steyn and Mays (2008) concur and state that successful leadership more than just than just landing the position. It is about possessing the knowledge and understanding of successful leadership abilities as well as the ability to effectively use those skills n leadership. Therefore, developing the leadership and management capacities of school Principals in South Africa is seen as an important ingredient in improving school quality.

Principals also advocated for the provision of special grants and material support for children in child headed households to alleviate behavioural challenges. Currently, schools are confronted with enormous challenges and principals are working under the most difficult conditions. Examples of these challenges include poverty, dysfunctional families from which learners operate from, child headed households, learners taking drugs at tender ages and the use of technological devices all of

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which bring a host of behavioural challenges (Mushayi, 2013). The provision of material support may, to some extent reduce crime and violence in schools, help improve interpersonal interactions, and support civil society. This view concurs with research which indicates that children who suffer from malnutrition do not have the same potential for learning as healthy children and are more likely to drop out of school (Shafir, Zhao, Mani & Mullainnathan, 2013).

10. Conclusion

The findings of this study established that some school principals lacked adequate knowledge on restorative approaches that can assist the behavioural challenges faced by orphaned learners who lose their childhood in the absence of adult figureheads. Some of the approaches used by principals were found to be more punitive than restorative. It was evident from this study that the principals lacked adequate knowledge on positive discrimination, which applies in inclusive approaches, whereby learners are equitably rather than equally treated, as per their unique educational needs as orphaned children. Based on the results of the study, there should be continuous in-service training to build the capacity of educators with the necessary knowledge and competency on restorative disciplinary approaches to assist learners from CHH such as child counselling services, developing school disciplinary codes of conduct and inclusive education strategies.

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