

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINING LEARNERS
IN SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF LUVUVHU CIRCUIT, VHEMBE DISTRICT**

BY

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Abstract

This study was conducted in schools in Luvuvhu circuit, Vhembe district. Parents, learners and teachers contributed a lot for this paper to be of value to the community. The focus of this paper is on the effectiveness of management in disciplining learners in Luvuvhu circuit, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

This study focused on the role of discipline in the establishment and maintenance of discipline in school. In a mainly qualitative investigation, empirical data from several primary and secondary schools of the Limpopo Province, Vhembe District were collected by means of individual interviews and questionnaires. Historico-legal research also formed part of the literature review, thus law reports and articles from South Africa and other countries were included as part of the research process. This was done to shed light on the legal consequences of school violence and discipline, affecting the safe learning environment of learners.

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) stipulates that all public schools in South Africa must have democratically elected school governing bodies, comprised of the principal (in his or her official capacity), representatives of educators; non-teaching staff; parents and learners; in the case of secondary schools. The reform in the Act is intended to foster tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making. This article reports on an empirical study which focused on the role of the principal in the school governing body (SGB) and reports on the findings of what governors in four different schools perceived as the role of school principals in the democratic governance of secondary schools in South Africa. Governors view the principal as in charge of the professional management of the school, ensuring that all duties are carried out adequately, setting the tone in SGB meetings, and responsible for interpreting education policies and ensuring that they are well implemented.

The data revealed that a culture of violence existed in these schools, and that corporal punishment was still practised. Learners' perceptions on safety and discipline at their

schools revealed that bullying persists, especially when there is no teacher supervision. Participating educators' experiences suggested the need for promoting positive discipline, and creating a safe learning environment for all, by involving parents in the education process and involving them in drawing up a code of conduct for the school.

Learners confirmed that other forms of discipline and punishment were indeed used. But these were generally corporal punishment in another guise. Hard labour, for example, was identified by learners as a frequent form of punishment. While some learners accepted the various forms of punishment that were used, others opposed both corporal punishment and the other forms of punishment introduced as an alternative, especially the cleaning of toilets. Male teachers proved to be stricter and more severe than females as they were less tolerant and less reasonable.