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Research Article

Barriers to the Effective Implementation of Behavioural Strategies by Principals of State Secondary Schools in Mauritius

Dr. Belle Louis Jinot

Lecturer (Education),
Open University of Mauritius

Abstract

One of the leadership role of the secondary school principal is learner discipline management. However, in the context of Mauritius, the behavioural strategies that they implement are found to be ineffective due to various barriers. This study examines the current barriers that are imbedded into the education system and which are obstacles to effective learner discipline management. A qualitative research approach was adopted in order to collect data on the barriers among principals, educators, parents, superintendents and learners. It was found that political interference of parents, the universal free transport system, too much bureaucracy when reporting cases of indiscipline to the Ministry of Education, a lack of collaboration between educators, the school superintendent and the principal, and a lack of parental involvement in learner discipline management in schools are the main barriers to the effective implementation of behavioural strategies by principals in the state secondary schools in Mauritius. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education rethink about the educational policies in terms of free transport for learners and that the school principal, along with the parents, educators, learners and superintendent, sets up a school discipline plan that would adopt a collaborative management of the problem of learner discipline.

Keywords: Learner Discipline Management, Barriers, Collaborative Management

1. Introduction

Learner discipline is defined as the absence of misbehaviour, and the students' responsibility to make the difference between right and wrong, and between socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Belle, 2017a). However, the absence of leaner discipline is a very serious problem in secondary schools among adolescents (Edinyang, 2017), and Belle (2017b) found that the school environment in state secondary schools in Mauritius is drastically worsening due to the inability of the principal to effectively manage learner discipline, in particular, and the absence of learner discipline, in general. Yet, the school must have the primary function of establishing a safe and non-disruptive environment that would facilitate effective teaching and learning (Lane, Cook & Tankersley, 2013). Besides, an effective school should ensure that learners are connected and supported by their educators and the principal who must practise good social and emotional skills and working collaboratively for effective instruction (Themane & Osher, 2014).

On account of the seriousness of the problem of learner discipline, the Ministry of Education has spelled out the responsibilities of the principal in the Student Behaviour Policy document, which are as follows: ""*stimulate a school-wide approach in preventing indiscipline; lead by example by being regular and punctual; work in partnership with parents to develop and support the social and emotional skills of students; promote a positive school culture; acts promptly against all forms of student indiscipline; develop a sense of belonging to the school among the students; provide support to educators in their attempt to sustain high behaviour standards; arrange in-house sharing*

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experiences and good practices; and organise and facilitate training of staff to successfully manage challenging behaviour." (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, 2015). Moreover, the discipline management measures prescribed by the Ministry of Education are verbal reprimand, issue of a verbal warning, notes to parents in the student journal, temporary suspension of privileges, detention after school hours and on Saturdays, temporary suspension (not exceeding five days), and expulsion. All these disciplinary strategies are reactive and punitive. This is because discipline is defined as punishment, and learners are punished for disruption (Losen, Martinez & Okelola, 2014). Discipline is viewed from the traditional or custodial perspective where rules and regulations are set and learners have to obey them in strict manner (Belle, 2017c). It is in this context of learner discipline management that the study on the barriers to the effective implementation of disciplinary strategies is considered important and relevant.

1.1 The statement of the problem

In a study carried out in Mauritius, Belle (2018) found the following causes of a lack of learner discipline in secondary schools: the parenting styles of parents, working parents, ineffective parental discipline, the dysfunctional family, the learner's attitudes, the educator's attitudes, the principal's lack of authority and leadership in disciplining learners in schools and the peer group pressure among secondary school learners. Besides, a newspaper survey revealed that learners in Mauritius manifest a lack of discipline for the numerous reasons: parents' disengagement and lack of responsibility to the children's academic and behavioural attitudes, lack of educators' authority to maintain discipline, the centralisation of authority and decision-making, teaching and learning are to examination-oriented and content-based, too much emphasis on children's rights without educating learners about their responsibilities, lack of discipline from the educators, the absence of extra-curricular activities, no counselling services, private tuition, lack of school-parents partnership, the emergence of nuclear families with working parents, the over-mediation of violence, the exposure of young learners to social media, the incapacity of the school to promote positive behaviour among learners, the permissiveness of the responsible authorities at school to ensure learner discipline, the absence of adult models for children and peer pressure (Panchoo, 2016, Ramjanally, 2015, Le Defi-Quotidien, 2015, Quirin, 2009, Mahadeo, 2008, Hilbert, 2008). No studies have ever been carried in the country to determine the causes of the failure of the secondary school principals in maintaining learner discipline in an effective manner, though the Ministry of Education has come up recently with policies, namely the Student Behaviour Policy and the School Management Manual for state secondary schools. What are the obstacles that principals are facing in their leadership for disciplining their learners? This study looks into this situation in an attempt to address it in the best possible manner in the future.

1.2 The purpose of this study

This paper examines the possible barriers that may affect the effective implementation of disciplinary strategies that school principals in Mauritius are currently adopting in an attempt to address disciplinary problems among learners. Principals are doing their best to maintain discipline; however, they are constrained by various factors that are often outside their administrative authority and leadership. So, the objective of this study is to investigate into the barriers to effective learner discipline management in Mauritius, within the administrative and legal framework that govern the management of secondary schools. A study of the barriers is important as it helps the researcher to do a better assessment of the effectiveness of the behavioural strategies being used and implemented in the selected state secondary schools in Mauritius. It also contributes to the compilation of the most appropriate strategies that may be implemented in these schools for a safer and saner school environment for the learners, the educators, school superintendents and the principals.

1.3   Literature review

Belle (2017c) also found that the use of reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies and the educational and legal framework in the country encourage secondary learners to manifest disruptive behaviour. Moreover, in a critical evaluation of the implementation of learner disciplinary interventions in schools in Mauritius, Belle (2017d) found that the strategies adopted by principals are rather ineffective. State secondary school principals are implementing mainly parental conferencing, video surveillance cameras, the E-register (SMS) system, the attendance card and special report. These disciplinary measures were found to be ineffective. This is consistent with the Human Rights Watch (2010) which maintain that they result in negative high risk adolescent behaviour, learners develop a more significant dislike for the authority from educators and the school head, and they manifest more unacceptable behaviour.

The Canter's assertive discipline model propounds the use of parental conferencing as a disciplinary strategy (Rosen, 2005). The School Management Manual for principals of state secondary schools prescribes this strategy for the principal to be able to discuss issues that pertain to late coming of learners to school, learner absenteeism and other behaviour issues (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2009). Yet, Kimaro and Machumu (2015) claim that parent conferencing is not the appropriate means of communication about the children's misbehaviour with parents as when the latter are called to school they do not come to collaborate with the school head in an attempt to address the behaviour problems of the child.

The use of video surveillance cameras on the school premises to control learners' behaviour was introduced in Mauritius in 2010. However, this is a zero-tolerance policy that encourages learners to manifest a lack of discipline in open places that are not covered by the cameras (Amos, White & Trader, 2015). Secondary school learners smoke marijuana and synthetic drugs in the toilets where there are no cameras (Belle, 2018). A zero-tolerance policy is the practice of using stricter consequences such as suspension and expulsion (Skiba, 2010). This sends the right message to the learners that the school does not at all tolerate any manifestation of indiscipline. However, though the cameras serve as a prevention method, yet they do not help to reduce the manifestations of unacceptable behaviour.

The Ministry of Education introduced the e-register system in state secondary schools in 2011. This disciplinary strategy was implemented in an attempt to control unjustified lateness and absences of learners by informing parents of the lack of discipline from their children through an SMS everyday (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2014). Indeed, many learners sign their report cards or journal without their parents' knowledge or without getting the school notification of their absence or late coming at school (Business Mega 2012). However, the e-register system does not work effectively as many learners give their own mobile number or that of their friend, and therefore, parents do not receive the SMS from the school superintendent. They are never aware of their children's manifestation of a lack of discipline (Belle, 2016). Trevinio, Braley, Brown and Slate (2014) confirm that learners find ways and means to circumvent this electronic system and keep bunking classes.

The attendance card is a government property which is an official document for recording the attendance of learners. It is commonly called the pink card in Mauritian schools. The School Management Manual stipulates that "*attendance should be taken twice daily, morning and afternoon. The Form Masters, the superintendent, the Deputy principal and the principal must monitor closely the attendance card everyday*" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, 2009). It is used as an early intervention measure to prevent learner absenteeism and bunking classes from worsening (Ginsburg, Jordan & Chang, 2014). Belle (2017b) added that the superintendent reports cases of regular absences or lateness to the principal who does counselling with the learners concerned. However, in a study carried out by Belle (2016) on learner discipline and school leadership, it was found that the school superintendent is so overwhelmed with the administrative tasks in his/her office that he/she cannot closely monitor attendance in a school of around one thousand learners. Besides, the principal uses a laisser-faire attitude towards the superintendent to the extent that the latter does not maintain learner discipline, thus giving way to learners to be indisciplined.

The special report is a daily behaviour report card that is used together with daily training of learners in social skills (Manning & Bucher, 2013). It is a check-in/check-out system (CICO). This system consists of features such as (a) being readily available to implement; (b) there is better and continuous monitoring; (c) the disruptive learner is in contact with adults; (c) the provision of regular contingent feedback; and (d) more collaboration and coordination between the school and parental support (Martella, Nelson, Marchand-Martella & O'Reilly, 2012). It establishes and reinforces the behaviour expectations from the disruptive learner and helps him/her to start the day positively (Kelly & Vaillancourt, 2012). The special report is therefore a corrective disciplinary strategy. In fact, when a particular learner does not change his/her behaviour after the use of the special report, the principal may use suspension and expulsion as measures. However, principals cannot effectively use this strategy to correct behaviour as they lack the empowerment to do so. Some learners find detention and temporary suspension as an opportunity of vacation (Zaslaw, 2010). Besides, the special report does not bring the expected result of behaviour modification as the principal must have the approval of higher education authorities who take the final decision to suspend (Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2014).

2. Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used to collect information about the barriers to the effective implementation of behavioural management strategies that are currently being used in secondary schools. The study aimed at investigating into the perspectives, views, feelings and opinions of the school principals, superintendents, educators, parents and the learners who are the key-informants about the leadership capability of the principal who is responsible for maintaining discipline in schools. They are the key actors in the natural setting of the school in which learner discipline management is one of the key functions of the principal as the school leader. A qualitative research approach helps to understand the reality that these participants experience about learner discipline management in their everyday life (Sarantakos, 2014). In addition, it is more about exploring the research problem (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2013). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were done for collecting data about the learner discipline management in order to investigate the barriers that prevent principals from successfully addressing the problem of learner discipline.

2.1 Sample

The convenience and purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study. Purposive sampling calls for the researcher to identify and target individuals and cases who seem to be typical of the population, or to conduct interview with all individuals within a sub-population that is deemed to be representative of the population (Davies & Hughes (2014). Individual face-to-face interviews were done with four principals in order for them to tell their stories and reality regarding the research problem (Patton, 2002) and semi-structured focus group interviews were done with 72 participants, among whom educators should have at least five years of professional experience in teaching; parents should form part of the School Governing Bodies; the learners forming part of the student council, should be aged between 11 and 18 years old; and the principals should have at least five years of experience in the post of school principal. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to have flexibility in terms of question order and the participants have the freedom to develop their ideas, views and perceptions about the topic (Denscombe, 2010). The main question of each interview dealt with the aim of the study: "What are the possible barriers to the effective implementation of behavioural management strategies that the principal is adopting to address the discipline problem among learners in the school?"

2.2 Data processing

The collected data was transcribed and the inductive approach of content analysis was used to analyse the data. The data analysis for this study follows the six steps suggested by Lodico,

Spaulding and Voegle (2010): preparing and organising the data; reviewing and exploring the data; coding data into categories; constructing thick descriptions of people, places and activities; building themes; and reporting and interpreting the data.

2.3 Ethical considerations

Permission was sought and obtained from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research through the Director of the educational zone. The aim of the study was explained to all participants who gave their consent to participate in the interviews. The learners also signed the assent form to give their approval for their participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the information gathering process and interpretation, and afterwards.

3. Research Findings

The findings from this study revealed that principals are facing many difficulties in implementing the current learner disciplinary strategies. Political interference of parents, through the members of parliament or trade unionists, the universal free transport system, too much bureaucracy when reporting a case of learner indiscipline, a lack of collaboration between the educators, school superintendent and the principal, and a lack of parental involvement in learner discipline management at schools are the barriers to the principal's leadership to maintain discipline in schools. These themes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.1 The political interference of parents in the implementation of disciplinary measures by the principal

When the principal adopts disciplinary strategies to correct their child's undesirable behaviour at school, the affluent parents who are civil servants working in the government sector, trade-unionists, and those who have political contacts with political agents or an elected member of the parliament interfere in the way the principal deals with a lack of learner discipline. This is a common barrier to the principal's authority and leadership's objective of maintaining effective discipline among the secondary school learners.

Often, principals have to backpedal or avoid taking a disciplinary measure that would not please the parents and that may create administrative or professional problems for them. This barrier to the principal authority and empowerment is illustrated by the anecdotal statement of the principal of School C: "*I give you a case to show how much we have constraints regarding the implementation of behavioural interventions: A principal in another school suspended a learner. His parent went to the Ministry which called the principal concerned to ask him from where he got the authorisation to suspend the learner. In fact, the parent did not agree his child's rustication and so he went to talk about it to an elected member of the Parliament who interfered at the level of the Ministry so that the parent's child was not suspended. When parents are unhappy they look for political interference.*" On account of this constraint, principals of state secondary schools are often helpless in their attempt to maintain effective learner discipline at schools. White (2010) asserts that politicians are often involved in decisions about school matters and this is in conflict with the technical plans of school managers. Besides, Pascal (2015) reports that principals and educators have lost their power to deal with cases of indiscipline because of political interference.

3.2 The free transport system

All learners are provided with public transport at different pick-up points for different schools and are dropped off at their respective schools in the locality. However, this study revealed that the system is causing havoc to the disciplinary issues of schools: learners are reaching school late in the morning and they blame the school bus for their late coming. Moreover, due to the high rates of secondary school learners taking private tuition in the afternoon after the school hours, principals

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cannot implement detention, which is a prescribed disciplinary action by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources in the School Management Manual for principals.

The principal of School B complained about his inability to adopt detention due to the state provision of free bus transport to learners: "*I cannot even give arrest classes or detention to learners who misbehave. If I give arrest to a learner who misbehaved during the day at the end of the school day, I will have to consider many aspects so as not to be blamed by the Authority or parents: what will happen if she encounters a problem on her way home? The government provides free transport to all learners. Why should the principal deprive a learner of this facility to give her an arrest class? The learner will not get the free school bus and will have to pay for a bus to go home because I keep her at school! So, there are serious implications for me if I use arrest as a measure. For girls, arrest class is almost risky for the principal to take*." The principal of School D shared the same feeling of failure and frustration as the person responsible for learner discipline management in his school: "*I am proud to tell you that the number of late coming by learners this year compared to last year has decreased as at today by 700. Of course, we would wish to eliminate this problem but we cannot, given the free school bus system we actually have in Mauritius*."

Therefore, principals are helpless in their task to maintain learner discipline at schools. This finding is pertinent to the Mauritian context as private tuition is widespread, there is fierce competition at the secondary education level and the free transport system is universally provided to all learners to and from the school premises. The findings of this study is supported by Seegopaul (2016) who argues that principals of state secondary schools in Mauritius admit that learners are late in the morning due to transport problems: certain buses refuse to take learners at the bus stop, and therefore they cannot take any disciplinary measures as it is an external factor, out of their control.

3.3 Too much bureaucracy when reporting a case of a lack of learner discipline

A case of learner indiscipline necessitates an urgent disciplinary measure, but the procedures, processes and practices imposed by the Ministry of Education make it a difficult task to deal with it with immediate effect. As per the School Management Manual, the principal must make a case against the learner with severe misconduct to the Zone Directorate; he/she must submit a detailed history of the case in an attempt to justify with evidence of all actions that have been taken to solve the problem (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015).

The principal of School C commented with much desperation: "We are restricted by the Ministry's policies and protocol for suspension which takes a long time before it is approved or not. We are accountable to the Ministry and this is a constraint for the principal. If you really want disciplinary actions to be taken against a learner who demonstrates serious behaviour offence, but the Ministry does not approve your request, then it defeats the purpose implementing discipline." Though Moyo, Khewu and Bagaya (2014) who maintain that for serious and criminal acts the principal must refer the case to the higher authorities for decisions like a limited suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school, yet Ntombela (2014) asserts that the principal and the school management team have a huge amount of paper work and the directives from the higher authorities concerning the submission thereof is problematic as it is time-consuming.

3.4 A lack of collaboration between the educators, the school superintendent, the senior educator and the principal

The principal alone cannot accomplish much in terms of learner discipline management. Belle (2007) asserts that managing school discipline is one of the various instructional leadership functions of the secondary school principals in Mauritius. However, on account of the accountability of the principal to the Ministry of Education, Jenkins (2009) states that only one-tenth of his/her time is left to instructional leadership. the principal needs the support and collaboration of the educators, school superintendent and the senior educator. The findings of this study revealed that the state secondary school principals do not have the collaboration of these stakeholders. Principals

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therefore have less control of their professional task, including learner discipline management (Boris-Schachter 2006).

On one hand, the principal adopts a soft policy and a *laissez-faire* approach to learner discipline to avoid conflicts with parents and the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, educators develop a carefree attitude (Moye, 2015), whereby they do not share the responsibility of learner discipline management with the principal even if they are empowered to do so, but rather neglect their moral responsibility to discipline learners. Thus, a blame culture has developed in the state secondary schools and this is hampering school effectiveness. To illustrate this blame culture, the principal of School B attempted to justify the lack of educator's collaboration which discourages effective learner discipline: "*I am the principal of a school which is difficult to manage and I am directed to maintain learner discipline. How do I do that? I must have the collaboration of the educators also, but very often you will see it is not clear as educators do not want to maintain learner discipline when he is outside the class. The educators keep the role of discipline management for the principal for whom it becomes an additional task for the day. It is difficult for me as the principal to ensure physically that there is learner discipline in each class and everywhere on the school premises.*" The educators, on one hand, and the principal, on the other hand, are shifting their responsibility of maintaining learner discipline because of the unintended consequences from parents, the Ministry or from the law.

According to the School Management Manual, the school superintendent must "walk around the school premises regularly, during breaks and between periods, to ensure that learners are in classes and do not manifest socially unacceptable behaviour" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009). However, the superintendent neither monitors learner attendance on the school premises, nor supervises the movement of learners before they board the school bus in the afternoon. This is clearly explained by the Educator 6 of School D: "I can note that there is a clash about decision-making between the principal and the superintendent. The latter does not really report all cases of a lack of discipline to the principal. He rather lets go over discipline issues at his own level. The principal however is very strict. When the educators report disciplinary problems, the superintendent does not do the follow-up and this encourages learner misbehaviour. He is himself overloaded with administrative and paper work, so he cannot follow on the discipline problems that arise in the school. There are one thousand learners in this school, now if there are one hundred cases of indiscipline among learners weekly, do you think the superintendent will be able to do the follow-up to restore learner discipline? Let's say he may not be able to follow all of them, but then there are major discipline problems that should at all cost be dealt with." The school superintendent's collaboration with the principal and the educators is limited.

3.5 A lack of parental involvement in the management of learner discipline at schools

Parents in Mauritius are very concerned with the education of their children and are willing to be involved in the school, but they hesitate to come to school because they feel they are not welcomed by the educators and the principal. This is explained by Parent 6 of School B who shared her disappointing experience: "*But, I don't believe that all educators would welcome the parents at school at any time to talk about the child's behaviour at school. It happened to me that I was near the school, so I thought to pop up in the school to go to meet my child's educator to talk about my child. But, the school principal told me that educator was teaching in his class and I had to wait till lunch or to take an appointment for the coming day. So, I could not talk to him*." State secondary schools are not welcoming and inviting places for parents. This is supported by Strickland (2015) and Carr & Chearra (2004) who assert that invitations by the school for parental involvement have an effect on home-based involvement behaviour and on school-based involvement behaviour. The statement of parent 6 implies that the state secondary schools do not have a parental involvement plan to spell out the processes and procedures for parental involvement in the school.

In addition, the only school structure in which parents may be involved is the Parents Teachers Association. However, this study revealed that this school structure is powerless in terms of active parental involvement in school matters, including learner discipline. The principal of School B demonstrated the inability of the PTA to communicate the shared values of the school among all

the parents and therefore the absence of parental involvement in the school: "*You know, in the school PTA there are only ten parents who are representative of nine hundred learners. So, you can imagine how parents are not attainable and we cannot really have their collaboration on any school matter. The PTA is only for administrative purpose. The ten parents only decide about how the school funds should be allocated for school projects and may be about some school activities.*" Jodut (2015) supports this finding by asserting that the school's efforts to include parents are limited to orientations, fundraising and voluntary social events. Moreover, this is consistent with Chikudo (2016) who claims that parents in schools in Mauritius are involved only in fundraising activities and they are not involved in decision-making at the school level.

4. Discussion

From the findings of this study, it has become obvious that the barriers to the implementation of disciplinary strategies by the secondary school principals in Mauritius are related to the attitudes and willingness of the stakeholders in the education system: the educators, the parents, the principal, the learners and the school superintendent as well as the prevailing political system. As the school head, the principal may have the responsibility to maintain learner discipline, but without the active engagement and commitment of the other immediate stakeholders, he/she would fail in the function of learner discipline management. Yet, the current learner discipline situation necessitates the collaboration of all of them for s successful discipline implementation plan.

Politicians often intervene, as and when their political backing is required, in the daily operation of schools in their electoral constituency as they are mandated to serve their constituency and its people. However, this political intervention acts as a barrier to the effective implementation of learner discipline. Indeed, schools must never be politicised, practice party politics or promote sectarian political interests of politicians and parents; otherwise, democratic values are not inculcated in learners, who in turn may manifest indiscipline (Smit, 2013).

The free transport system forms part of the policy of the Mauritian government to enable free access to education, especially for the poor children. However, this study has revealed that this political decision is causing much havoc to the disciplinary problem and the principals find themselves in a difficult position to act effectively in managing learner discipline. They are not able to implement detention as a prescribed disciplinary strategy as most of the secondary school learners have to proceed to private tuition in the free school bus. Private tuition is institutionalised in Mauritius (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 1997) and it is so widespread that it is called the shadow system of education (Hollup 2004).

In contrast to private secondary school principals, principals in the state schools are accountable to the Ministry of Education and therefore they are compelled to abide to the long procedures, processes and practices imposed by the Ministry. In case of reported serious lack of learner discipline, the school principal must inform the first aid and refer the case to the medical centre in case of injury; in case of possession of illegal weapons and drugs, he/she should isolate the learner, place him/her under supervision and inform the Anti-Drug Support Unit; in case of physical assault, he/she must inform the police; in case of suspected child abuse, he/she must inform the Child Development Unit; and in the case of cyber-bullying, he/she must inform the Cyber Unit and the Computer Emergency Response Team (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015). This stance is in line with Moyo *et al*. (2014) who maintain that for serious and criminal acts the principal must refer the case to the higher authorities for decisions like a limited suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school. So, these administrative procedures are obstacles to the autonomy of the principal to adopt and implement disciplinary measures at the school level. Moreover, Ntombela (2014) and Trevinio, Braley, Brown and Slate (2008) pointed out that the principal and the school management team, including the school superintendent, have much paper work to compile to follow the school protocols in case of reporting a learner's lack of discipline and this is time-consuming for them.

5. Conclusion

Learner discipline management must be a collaborative process. The principal alone is not in a position to deal with learner's lack of discipline. Not having the collaboration of the educators, the school superintendent and the parents hampers the effectiveness of the implementation of disciplinary measures on a daily basis. It is obvious from the findings that every stakeholder must take his/her responsibility and duty to contribute towards a sound and safe school environment in which the teaching and learning take place in the most favourable school conditions. Besides, the Ministry of Education must review its policy of universal free transport for learners of secondary schools. It should use the targeting approach whereby only those learners from low-income family are provided with free transport or they may be provided monthly transport allowance instead of providing school buses for all learners. Each state secondary school should also develop a school-wide discipline management framework that best suits its school characteristics so that the educators, parents and learners have a sense of belonging to the school and develop the willingness to work collaboratively in creating a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment. To achieve such a collaboration and school cohesion, the principal should adopt the visionary leadership and the distributed leadership in managing learner discipline.

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