Disciplinary practices in schools and principles of alternatives to corporal punishment strategies

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The aim of the study was to determine the consistency prevailing between the disciplinary practices in the schools and the principles of the Alternatives-to-Corporal Punishment strategy. The three main research questions that guided the study were to determine (1) How much variance of offences can be explained by disciplinary measures of alternative corporal punishment? (2) How well do the different measures of alternative corporal punishment predict offences? (3) Which is the best predictor of offences given a set of alternative measures? Twenty-nine schools participated in the survey and five schools participated in the case study, so the achieved sample was 34 schools. From the 29 survey schools, one principal and one Life Orientation (LO) teacher participated. All in all 58 people participated. The results revealed that 66.60% of the variation in the offence of vandalism was explained by the predictors. When vandalism was predicted it was found that School identification (β = .693, p < .05), gender (β = –.180, p < .05), coordination of disciplinary committee (DC) meetings (β = .116, p < .05), communication with parents (β = 1.070, p < .05) and monitoring compliance to DC (β = .852, p < .05) were significant predictors. Responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and p > .05). The results reveal that there was no established consistency between the disciplinary practices in the schools and the principles of the alternatives-to-corporal punishment strategy.

Introduction

Issues of indiscipline in schools have attracted growing attention of many worldwide. The problem of learner indiscipline has been characterised as serious and pervasive, negatively affecting student learning (Leigh, Chenhall & Saunders, 2009; Tozer, 2010). This problem manifests itself in a variety of ways which include vandalism, truancy, smoking, disobedience, intimidation, delinquency, murder, assault, rape, theft, and general violence (Marais & Meier, 2010). In South Africa, learners are alleged to have murdered others inside the school premises, openly challenged teachers and have a "don't care" attitude towards their work (Masitsa, 2008:57). Aziza (2001) notes that suspensions and expulsions are highly prevalent in the Western Cape schools due to physical and verbal confrontations, theft, substance abuse, and pornography. Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt (2004) and Marais and Meier (2010) further note that there are constant highlights by the media of a number of incidents related

to physical violence, bullying and victimization in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape province.

Indiscipline problems in South African schools have prompted Naong (2007) to describe them as a disproportionate and intractable part of every teacher's experience of teaching. In similar vein, Marais and Meier (2010) report that teachers in South Africa are becoming increasingly distressed about disciplinary problems in schools. It has been suggested that teachers link the growing problem of indiscipline in schools to the banning of corporal punishment in schools (Naong, 2007). Corporal punishment was replaced by a discipline strategy called Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) (Tungata, 2006).

Context of study

Corporal punishment is defined as a kind of discipline that entails direct infliction of pain on the physical body. However, it can also be taken beyond the physical to emotional and psychological domains, e.g. verbal abuse and deprivation of basic needs like food and the use of the toilet (Leigh et al., 2009; Tozer, 2010). ATCP is defined as a disciplinary strategy that emphasises effective communication, respect and positive educational exchanges between teachers and students, the recommended disciplinary measures are verbal warning, detention, demerits, community work and small menial physical tasks (Chisholm, 2007).

Following the introduction of ATCP in 2000, research has shown that indiscipline in schools has continued to grow (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). It has further been reported that, as a result of banning corporal punishment, teaching has become a "stressful and challenging occupation" and many teachers are de-motivated and feel hopeless (Mtsweni, 2008:112; Marais & Meier, 2010). In similar vein, Mtsweni (2008) observes that after the banning of corporal punishment in schools, most teachers feel incapacitated and helpless in dealing with learner indiscipline in schools. The criticality of the issues around teachers' stress is also revealed in school leadership literature that highlights its impact on the core business of the school and the critical aspects of the school culture and climate (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). A nationally representative household survey (2003 in Dawes, Kafaar, De Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter, 2004) asked 952 parents about their attitudes to discipline and the use of corporal punishment, and the survey found that 57% of the parents still used corporal punishment. In 1999, a Member of Executive Council (MEC) for Education in Kwa-Zulu Natal publicly announced her support for the use of corporal punishment and was adamant that the cane is the surest way of maintaining "an orderly and safe environment" in schools and revealed that she had an "internal arrangement" with the teachers at her son's school, that, "if they feel he has done an act that warrants he should be given a slap, they should do so" (Radile, 2007:89).

It is a fact that since the publication of the ATCP document by government in 2001, education critiques have noted that, irrespective of the publication, indiscipline in school is still increasing (Masitsa, 2008). Senosi (2006) also believes that the re-

commended measures remain questionable as an alternative. According to Wilson (2002), teachers in South Africa expressed their displeasure by stating that the ATCP strategy is ineffective, inadequate and a waste of time and they also feel that the Department of Education (DoE) is trivializing the problem and does not understand its magnitude as far as its impact on teaching and learning, and the total management of the school are concerned. This observation raises the question of the effectiveness of the ATCP as a strategy to bring about or maintain discipline in schools. There have been few studies, in South Africa, critiquing the ATCP being implemented in schools or assessing whether education practitioners have developed their own set of alternatives to the ATCP which government has mandated. Only one study was conducted in the Free State (Masitsa, 2008) and it looked at discipline and general disciplinary measures used in the schools. Wa Kivulu and Wandai (2009:5) state that although there is evidence that corporal punishment perpetuates negative emotions which are contrary to the prescripts of the South African Constitution, little is known about the impact of these other methods in promoting desirable changes in behaviour. As part of the broader research question of wanting to establish the disciplinary practices used in schools and their compliance to the ATCP, this research also sought to establish the consistency between disciplinary practices in schools and principles of ATCP.

The solution for the problems experienced in schools is also not clearly articulated in literature. What is clear is that since the ban on corporal punishment in 1996, there is still no remarkable change in learners' behaviour and corporal punishment is still largely used in schools, sometimes resulting in hospitalisation of learners. As Maphosa and Shumba (2010) note, the escalation of learner indiscipline cases in schools suggests failure by teachers to institute adequate alternative disciplinary measures after corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools. Looking at the research studies dating back from 2002–2010, corporal punishment is still continuously used in schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). In this study we further argue that the fact that the ATCP does not seem to work raises a fundamental question as to whether the ATCP is an appropriate strategy for instilling discipline in schools.

Alternatives to corporal punishment in South African schools

As a result of the perception that the ATCP was imposed on other stakeholders the introduction of the ATCP was also met with resistance in South Africa. Teachers, parents, cultural and religious groups feel that the government has undermined their right to be consulted as the key role players in the education of their children (Du Preez & Roux, 2010). They also complain that their cultural, religious and personal experiences (teachers) were ignored when this strategy was initiated as it is in conflict with what they stand for and what they would like to see their children become (Masitsa, 2008; Senosi, 2006). It is important to note that there are critical role players in education who are also against the ban on corporal punishment, e.g. Christian organisations took the DoE to court after the ban on corporal punishment (Masitsa, 2008); traditional leaders almost unanimously insist that corporal punishment is a traditional

practice and a cultural right (Masitsa, 2008); a former Kwazulu-Natal MEC for Education publicly called for the reinstatement of corporal punishment (Radile, 2007); the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) supports its members when they are charged for administering corporal punishment to learners (Masitsa, 2008); there are learners who are publicly endorsing corporal punishment (Radile, 2007), and some teachers feel that since corporal punishment was outlawed the power of teachers has been significantly diminished (Radile, 2007). As a result of the above, the debate about how to instil discipline in schools is on-going and is often emotional as it is fuelled by the perceived belief that the ban on punitive strategies such as corporal punishment is the cause of lack of discipline in schools (Radile, 2007).

Research problem and questions
Indiscipline remains a serious challenge for education leaders and practitioners in South African schools. Indiscipline is variously reflected in behaviours such as drug abuse, assault, theft, rape and murder. Teaching and learning are affected and learners' academic performance is deteriorating drastically. Various approaches to instilling discipline such as the ATCP, i.e. verbal warning, demerits, additional work, tidying the classrooms, and detention, have been implemented, yet indiscipline continues to grow. There is evidence that in some schools the ATCP is not used and in some it is wrongly implemented, as a result of which the envisaged outcome is not reached. At the same time, out of desperation to maintain discipline, many teachers have resorted to using the outlawed corporal punishment as a way of disciplining learners. These measures seem to have impacted on various aspects related to rights-based education in schools, and the particular practices and their impact on school leadership seem to have not been investigated which leads to the research questions below:

Research objective
The aim of the study is to determine the consistency that prevails between the disciplinary practices in the schools and the principles of the ATCP strategy.

Research questions
• How much variance in offences can be explained by measures of alternative to corporal punishment?
• How well do the different measures of alternative measures predict offences?
• Which is the best predictor of offences given a set of alternative measures?

Research method
This was a mixed methods design which was carried out in two phases: the quantitative phase which consisted of a survey of disciplinary practices in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality South African primary schools, and the qualitative phase which consisted of a case study of five schools. The target population for the study was all public primary schools in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Twenty-nine schools participated in the survey and five schools participated in the case study, so the

achieved sample was 34 schools. From the 29 survey schools, one principal and one LO teacher participated. All in all 58 people participated. Only learners from the middle and upper grades (Grades 5 – 7) participated because of the possibility that learners in the lower grades would not be competent enough to speak and understand the research questions. The analysis is restricted to the degree of contribution of predators on dependent variables.

Results
Vandalism against predictors[1]

To answer the "how much variance in offences can be explained by measures of alternative to corporal punishment," the coefficient of multiple determination is used. The coefficient of multiple determination (cf. Table 1: $R^2 = 0.666$). Therefore at the 0.05 significance level, the model is useful for predicting the responses. Therefore, about 66.60% of the variation in the *vandalism* is explained by the predictors (monitoring compliance to DC, experience as a principal; responsibility, school location, gender, school identification, recording of sanctions, availability of policy, coordination of DC meetings, capacitation on discipline, counselling, monitoring implementation of sanctions, communication with parents) (cf. Predictors).

Table 1 Degree of explained variation of predictors on Vandalism[2]

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard error of the estimate
1	.816	.666	.356	.369

To answer the question "how well do the different measures of ATCP predict offences?," the Standardized Coefficients as well as *p*-values are used (cf. Tables 2a and 2b). The researchers ran and analysed all 14 independent variables on the dependent variable (vandalism) that are required in the multiple regression analysis. With multiple regressions it is important to report the influence of each predictor. This is often done by giving the standardised coefficient, as well as the *p*-value for each predictor. However, to answer the question "which is the best predictor of offences given a set of alternative measures?" one must chronologically determine the absolute magnitude of *Beta*'s.

When the offence *vandalism* was predicted it was found that school identification ($\beta = .693$, $p < .05$), gender ($\beta = -.400$, $p < .05$), coordination of DC meetings ($\beta = .116$, $p < .05$), communication with parents ($\beta = 1.070$, $p < .05$) and monitoring compliance to DC ($\beta = .852$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors (cf. Tables 2a and 2b). Responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$).

Table 2a   Influence of each predictor on Vandalism

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	*t*
	B	*SE*	β	
(Constant)	1.757	.734		2.396
School identification	.016	.006	.693	2.671
Responsibility	−.145	.391	−.083	−.370
School location	−.079	.080	−.189	−.987
Experience as a principal	−.092	.127	−.180	−.722
Gender	−.365	.168	−.400	−2.171
Availability of policy	.176	.500	.072	.352
Coordination of DC meetings	.105	.239	.116	.438
Communication with parents	1.070	.312	1.070	3.432
Capacitation on discipline	−.529	.232	−.585	−2.277
Counselling	−.470	.282	−.519	−1.669
Recording of sanctions	−.455	.271	−.498	−1.677
Monitoring implementation of sanctions	.009	.246	.010	.038
Monitoring compliance to DC	.788	.250	.852	3.158

Table 2b   Significant predictors

Model	*p*	Correlations			Collinearity statistics
		Zero order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
(Constant)	.031				
School identification	**.018**	.222	.581	.412	.354
Responsibility	.717	−.439	−.098	−.057	.479
School location	.340	−.167	−.255	−.152	.648
Experience as a principal	.482	.051	−.190	−.112	.384
Gender	**.048**	−.091	−.502	−.335	.702
Availability of policy	.730	.122	.094	.054	.564
Coordination of DC meetings	.668	.000	.116	.068	.339
Communication with parents	**.004**	.225	.676	.530	.245
Capacitation on discipline	**.039**	.000	−.520	−.351	.360
Counselling	.117	.045	−.407	−.258	.247
Recording of sanctions	.116	−.068	−.409	−.259	.270
Monitoring implementation of sanctions	.971	−.023	.010	.006	.338
Monitoring compliance to DC	**.007**	.185	.645	.488	.327

Fight against predictors

When the offence *fight* was predicted it was found that school identification (β = .195, $p > .05$), gender (β = .011, $p > .05$), coordination of DC meetings (β = .116, $p < .05$), communication with parents (β = 1.070, $p > .05$) and monitoring compliance to DC (β = .233, $p > .05$) were all not significant predictors. Responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$).

Intimidation of educators, drinking and bunking of classes against predictors

When the offence *bunking of classes* was predicted it was found that school identification (β = .343, $p > .05$), gender (β = .009, $p > .05$), coordination of DC meetings (β = .507, $p < .05$), communication with parents (β = .419, $p > .05$) and monitoring compliance to DC (β = .296, $p > .05$) were all not significant predictors. Responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$). Not doing assigned work revealed that only school location had a significantly predicative impact (β = .487, $p = .037$).

Use of vulgar language against predictors

When the offence *vulgar language* was predicted it was found that monitoring implementation of sanctions (β = .750, $p = .026$) was a significant predictor. However, school identification (β = .206, $p > .05$), gender (β = – .062, $p > .05$), coordination of DC meetings (β = .004, $p < .05$), communication with parents (β = -. 114, $p > .05$) were all not significant predictors. Responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$). The same can be said of '*late coming*' against the predictors.

Noisemaking against other predictors

When *noisemaking* was regressed against other predictors such as assign community work, clean school yard, stand with their noses against the wall, write words repeatedly, chase them out of the class, give additional school work, give counselling, deny use of lunchtime, sit in labelled corners, strip naked if books are not covered, deny use of the toilet, demerits, beat with an object, beat with a hand, pinching, verbal warning, sit in class and ponder, run around school premises, stand on one leg, clean school toilets, ignore or turn a blind eye no significant contribution(s) were found.

Discussion

The results reveal that the 66.60% of the variation in the offence *vandalism* is explained by the predictors. When the offence was predicted it was found that school identification, gender, coordination of DC meetings, communication and monitoring

compliance to DC were significant predictors. However, responsibility, school location, experience as a principal, availability of policy, capacitation on discipline, counselling, recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$). When the offence *bunking of classes* was predicted it was found that school identification, gender, coordination of DC meetings, communication with parents and monitoring compliance to DC were all not significant predictors.

When the offence *vulgar language* was predicted it was found that monitoring implementation of sanctions was a significant predictor. However, school identification, gender, coordination of DC meetings, and communication with parents were all not significant predictors. Recording of sanctions and monitoring implementation of sanctions were not significant predictors (varying β and $p > .05$). Same can be said of '*late coming*' against the predictors.

The contestation suggests that the ATCP strategy is believed to necessitate developmental and constructive ways of instilling discipline amongst learners; ways which will not only help learners move towards a more peaceful and tolerant society, but which will also help instil self discipline and encourage them to realize their academic potential and become mature and independent thinking adults (Tungata, 2006). Besides the values listed above, peace, tolerance, cohesion, respect and responsibility are other key values to be inculcated (Tungata, 2006). This strategy is aimed at protecting children's rights as enshrined in Section 28 (d) of the Bill of Rights that children must be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. Different approaches to handle the offences have been suggested in South Africa. For minor offences the following tools were recommended: verbal warnings; demerits; additional work; physical work; community work and detention (Tungata, 2006). For serious misconduct like gambling, theft, vandalism, selling drugs or being drunk at school, the Provincial Department of Education (PDoE) must be contacted so that the culprits can be given limited suspension, if appropriate, and, lastly, criminal acts like rape, robbery or break-ins must also be referred to the PDoE for possible expulsion or transfer of the culprit (Masitsa, 2008). Tungata (2006) reports that when the ATCP law was passed, schools and teachers were left with a number of problems. Firstly, the DoE did not immediately provide the teachers with an alternative or suggestions to deal with disciplinary problems after corporal punishment was abolished in 1996; the ATCP was only introduced in 2000. Teachers, and even parents, were left to themselves to provide alternative ways to corporal punishment in disciplining children. Secondly, Tungata (2006:142) further notes that a representative from Childline South Africa once raised a concern that, "... not enough was being done to train teachers in alternative methods or discipline, with educators 'floundering' to find alternatives which enabled them to feel in control of the children they taught". As a result, he continues, the organisation "has come across many incidents in which children were humiliated and hurt emotionally and psychologically because of a lack of knowledge of alternative methods of discipline".

This non-compliance with the policy has resulted in some schools continuing with the use of corporal punishment and not using the ATCP, some partially using it and some wrongly implementing it (Du Preez & Roux, 2010). A research study conducted by Wa Kivulu and Wandai (2009:2) reports that although reasoning or discussion and giving additional learning tasks were the most preferred disciplinary measures – and there was a gradual decrease in the proportion that supported the former – there was an increase in the proportion that supported giving additional tasks from 2003 to 2006. Support for corporal punishment remained unchanged while that for physical labour, like sweeping and keeping learners after school hours, decreased over the years.

Contradictions in use of ATCP in schools

The Bill of Rights states that children must be protected from any action that would place at risk the child's wellbeing, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development (Dawes et al., 2004). Looking at the nature of the recommended ATCP strategy, it is important to note that although it does not entail direct infliction of 'physical' pain as is the case with corporal punishment, it can be argued that all the alternative measures have a potential to have a detrimental effect on the learners' mental, spiritual and moral development.

Teachers are believed to be the implementing agents for the ATCP and are the ones who should have a deeper understanding of the dynamics, the implementation challenges and results of the ATCP. As a result, they should be able to play a role in informing the policy makers on the strategies that do work in their schools, as well as the perceptions and the challenges thereof. However, this seems to be lacking in a country like South Africa as consultation is a principle that must be considered whenever issues of public interest are handled (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

Despite discussion or dialogue being one of the principles emphasised by Maphosa and Shumba (2010), teachers claim that they were never consulted on their views when the strategy was initiated and this could be a contributing factor to the continuous use of corporal punishment and the partial or non-use of ATCP. If consultation was not done and the ATCP was simply given to teachers to implement then whose interest is the ATCP serving? Is it teachers, learners or government's interests? This failure to consult can also produce conflicts, and the refusal or reluctance of the teachers to implement the ATCP can lead to conflicts between school leaders, teachers and learners. When looking critically at the ATCP it is important to ask questions relating to its nature and its implementation practices in terms of whether it alleviates or minimizes all the traces of child degradation and abuse.

Corporal punishment: disciplinary measures

Although the study findings revealed a weak negative correlation between punitive disciplinary measures and violent disciplinary problems, Maphosa and Shumba (2010) and study participants believe that there are meanings, messages and symbols that are communicated by disciplinary measures and some of the violent offences emanate from the use of violent disciplinary measures on learners.

Normative behaviour focuses on a lifeworld where a child internalises moral values, cultures and beliefs that will determine and regulate good behaviour. Chisholm (2007) defines moral internalisation as the taking over of the values and attitudes of society as one's own so that socially acceptable behaviour is motivated by intrinsic factors rather than by fear of external consequences. Chisholm (2007) bears witness that a whack on the bottom may stop children for that moment, but it won't stop them doing the same thing later because being hit does not teach them anything useful. Mtsweni (2008) advocates that when kids act up, it is important to engage them in a dialogue about why their actions are unacceptable instead of scaring them into behaving with threats of violence. A learner participant commented that he didn't understand why learners are told to keep quiet in class because, as far as he knows, the mouth was made for talking, so setting rules for learners without explaining them tends to confuse learners. Mtsweni (2008) also suggests that a healthy, open conversation about inappropriate behaviour is more likely to lead to long term behavioural changes which could lead a child to become a functional and disciplined adult. However, as much as open conversations are important and must be allowed, learners need to understand that normatively, they cannot just do things haphazardly; they need to know that they are expected to be able to self-regulate themselves. They cannot just talk anytime they feel like doing so.

In addition to corporal punishment having a negative effect on parent-child relationships, it also encourages learners to be emotional rather than being objective thinkers. To confirm that corporal punishment sends a message that if expectations are not met or rules are broken, physical force is justified, three reports from learners exposed to corporal punishment were identified in the study. The first learner reported that after a teacher instructed him to kneel and hold bricks in both hands, he felt like striking the teacher with a brick; a second learner attacked another learner for taunting him about his squint eyes; and the third learner hit another learner for refusing to give him his chair. Disciplinary approaches that promote violence can socialise learners to be poor problem solvers with poor anger management and self-management skills. One of the principles of the normative approach is that learners must acquire self-regulation, so that when they are faced with challenges, they can respond to them in a moral way.

Furthermore, the use of violence seems to be a power issue as teachers expound that violence can be used to control those weaker than others (Tozer, 2010). This approach could socialise learners that "having power" (being older and stronger) justifies the marginalisation and oppression of the younger and weaker learners and this could also have a bearing on the way they live and solve problems as adults, as it is confirmed that "there is a correlation between corporal punishment and domestic violence" (Tozer, 2010:79). Tozer (2010) believes that a normative approach that entails moral internalisation is enhanced by discipline strategies that use minimal parental power, promote choice and autonomy and provide explanations. The above mentioned approach to discipline can socialise learners that having "power" qualifies

other people to treat others in violent ways. However, normatively learners are supposed to be encouraged to build relationships (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:69).

ATCP: Moral commitment and self-regulation

The study also revealed that there is tension between some measures suggested in the ATCP strategy built around moral commitment and self-regulation and the punitive measures that schools use in attempting to implement the ATCP. This means that although the ATCP was initiated with a normative objective, the actual implementation is punitive and can yield unintended results, and all of the recommended alternatives seem to be yielding unintended results.

One of the main practices recommended in the ATCP strategy as an alternative to corporal punishment is "verbal warning" (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:79). Tozer (2010) defines verbal warning as a disciplinary measure administered by the class teacher on the spot. However, more serious, bad, dangerous, or annoying disciplinary measures, together with formal reprimands, must be given in the school office, e.g. by the school principal. However, the words "bad", "dangerous", or "annoying" have a negative connotation and can trigger fear. Often teachers also mistake verbal warning with shouting (verbal abuse) and shouting can also trigger anger and fear in learners. In changing the learners' behaviour, if verbal warning has a possibility to trigger fear and to expose learners to psychological abuse, then it is in conflict with the ATCP principle to outlaw the physical and psychological abuse of learners (Tozer, 2010).

Other alternatives to corporal punishment include demerits and physical work. Research, in agreement with this study, has identified problems with such measures. Naong (2007) argues that non-corporal forms of punishment, such as making children do heavy and unacceptable physical labour, are not normative and constitute corporal punishment. Measures that also do not bring change to the learners' behaviour, e.g. a learner who enjoys physical work, are futile and not normative as the normative approach emphasises that change must be observed, e.g. the acquisition of self-regulation, intrinsic control and moral commitment.

In similar vein, and with reference to another alternative, demerit, Naong (2007) argues that if a demerit is a mark deducted or awarded against learners for bad work or behaviour or something that deserves blame, fault or offence, this gives a sense that the demerit system is reactive. Taking away a mark after an offence has been committed connotes that a demerit is only an instrument or tool meant to police learners for wrong doing and then punish. Masitsa (2008) also believes that demerits focus on what a child should not do and because, at times, there is no consistency in administering demerits, learners end up seeing them as a mockery. Naong (2007:69) prefers to de-stigmatise the demerits by calling them "merits" because of the belief that demerits are punitive as they are imposed only when pupils behave unacceptably and no rewards are given for acceptable and improved behaviour because the focus is on punishing rather than developing a learner to grow to be a responsible citizen.

Another problematic alternative to corporal punishment is raised by Masitsa (2008:102) with reference to "detention". He explains that detention may take the form

of isolation during class, during break or after school; however, Masitsa (2008) queries if detention is able to change the learners' behaviour because detention is not always positively received by learners. Some learners view detention as punishment because the learners' perception or receptiveness towards being kept in isolation, confinement or custody as a consequence of their actions can never be the same (Masitsa, 2008).

Alternatives to corporal punishment and school culture
It can be concluded, from the foregoing discussion and findings of this study, that the socialisation consequences of corporal punishment undermine the very discipline that it seeks to instil. For this reason, this study concurs with the banning of corporal punishment and argues for the conceptualisation and practice of alternative ways of instilling discipline, including ATCP. The problem, however, with ATCP, as seen in this study, is that it is implemented in punitive ways which end up taking up characteristics and consequences similar to those arising out of corporal punishment.

One of the major arguments of this study is that ATCP strategy and practices must go beyond alternative punitive practices towards building an alternative school culture based on non violence and self-discipline. Marais and Meier (2010) believe that for schools to have individuality and institutional character it is important for each school to create its lifeworld (culture, values, beliefs, norms). With regard to the issue of discipline, Marais and Meier (2010) argue that a key responsibility of leadership should be to build a lifeworld that promotes intrinsic control or self-discipline. In other words, the point is that emphasis should not be on instilling discipline through punishment. For Marais and Meier (2010), punishment puts emphasis on world systems of mandates and rules, which may be necessary but not sufficient. It can be learnt from Aziza (2001) that what matters, in this case acceptable behaviour, cannot be mandated. The ATCP strategy should, therefore, put emphasis on building an appropriate school worldwide which goes beyond instrumentalities as a means of instilling discipline.

Conclusion
In general, the results reveal that there is no established consistency prevailing between the disciplinary practices in the schools and the principles of the ATCP strategy. There was strong support for corporal punishment, while at the same time teachers were disagreeing with some statements which opposed corporal punishment and due to that there was no evidence that teachers believe in alternatives to corporal punishment. Due to the latter finding, principals and teachers' beliefs on the use of alternatives to corporal punishment revealed ambivalence and lack of understanding.

Recommendation
It is evident from the research findings that there are a number of ATCP related issues that are not addressed. Of most importance, school principals and stakeholders must focus on measures meant to cultivate a new school culture guided by values such as self-discipline, in order to minimise the need for extrinsic punitive control. The latter can be realised if the following policy issues are addressed: (a) capacity building of all

critical role players (parents, teachers and learners) to ensure an understanding and implementation of normative disciplinary measures; (b) review and crafting of feasible and behaviour-altering disciplinary measures; (c) availability of normative disciplinary policies in schools; (d) introduction of a monitoring strategy for ATCP implementation; (e) design of normative assessment tools for review of the effect of the disciplinary measures on learner behaviour; (f) community engagement/social facilitation on issues of discipline, the ban of corporal punishment and the ATCP strategy; (g) incorporation of learner discipline to other DoE advocacy programmes and, lastly, (i) benchmarking with other schools, provinces or countries.

Notes

1 Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring compliance to DC, Experience as a principal, Responsibility, School location, Gender, School identification, Recording of sanctions, Availability of policy, Coordination of DC meetings, Capacitation on discipline, Counselling, Monitoring implementation of sanctions, Communication with parents

2 Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring compliance to DC, Experience as a principal, Responsibility, School location, Gender, School identification, Recording of sanctions, Availability of policy, Coordination of DC meetings, Capacitation on discipline, Counselling, Monitoring implementation of sanctions, Communication with parents

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