

# Modelling Positive Behaviour: A Vital Strategy in Instilling Positive Discipline Among Secondary School Learners

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## ABSTRACT

*This qualitative study, guided by interpretive paradigm, explored how secondary schools use modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe. The study was enthused by the abolition of corporal punishment, exclusion due to delinquent behaviour and adoption of positive, inclusive discipline strategies to maintain order in schools. A case study design purposively sampled four schools in which four school heads, twenty members of the disciplinary committee, four school counsellors, two education officers, four School Development Committee chairpersons and forty prefects participated. Data collected through focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were thematically analysed. The results indicated that secondary schools adopted the modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners. New staff members' orientation focused on conduct, modelling of positive behaviour whenever teachers, learners and parents interact as they perform various activities in the school environment. The study also established that prefects as role models were afforded opportunity to lead assembly sessions. The study concluded that in spite of a few cases of misconduct, it is evident that modelling positive behaviour strategy produced affirmative outcomes in schools understudy. The study recommends further research that explores other strategies that could be adopted by schools to maintain positive discipline particularly in rural schools.*

## KEYWORDS

*Modelling positive behaviour; positive discipline; secondary school learners; strategy*

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of learner behaviour and its consequences for learning are a recurrent concern of educators, parents and other stakeholders worldwide. Disruptive learner behaviour has negative impact on teacher efficacy and wellbeing in addition to impediment of learners' learning outcomes. It has been found that teachers who are less effective in instructional delivery are those who feel overwhelmed by the learners' ill behaviour, low learner engagement and motivation. Such teachers are dissatisfied with their work and more likely tend to resign from their positions. Research has substantiated that teachers who felt confident about their teaching abilities expressed concern about learner disobedience, distractibility and disruption of others, as well as challenging behaviours such as physical aggression and bullying (Mooney, Dobia, Yeung, Barker, Power & Watson, 2008).

According to Parsonson (2012), the stress levels for both the teacher and learners are increased by untoward behaviour in the classroom. The problem behaviours lead to disruption of the flow of lessons and conflict with both learning objectives and the processes of learning. Such behaviours result in changing the classroom dynamics as the focus of attention shifts from the academic tasks at hand to the distractions provided by disruptive behaviours. Goss, Sonnemann and Griffiths (2017) observe that if teachers are highly stressed, they are more likely to react negatively to disengaged learners. The teacher's poor response to the disruptive behaviour in the classroom may prolong the interruption and distract other learners unintentionally, resulting in losing the momentum of the lesson and respect. Studies conducted in Australia have revealed that teachers repeatedly relapse to coercive and ineffective methods of disciplining learners when they are faced with problematic behaviour (Mooney et al., 2008). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Shumba (2002) established that when faced with disciplinary problems, some teachers used vulgar language, humiliation and negative labelling of learners, which affected the learners' emotions. Such derogatory comments are hurtful to learners and may cause them to drop out of school. Hence, there is need for the schools to establish effective, positive and sustainable processes for dealing prolifically with learner behaviour issues. One such method which could be adopted by schools in instilling positive discipline among learners is modelling positive behaviour.

### **Background**

The method of modelling positive behaviour is referred to as observational learning where learners develop behavioural habits through observing others (Bandura, 1977). Accordingly, observational learning is an influential way of acquiring attitudes, skills, knowledge, strategies, beliefs, thoughts and feelings (Noordien, Samson & Siers, 2008; Santrock, 2007). Attitudes, mannerisms, speech patterns and prejudices are learned without any intent to do so, from watching "significant others" display those behaviours. As a result, when a teacher exhibits respect for the dignity of learners and other school personnel, learners are more likely to acquire that behaviour (Noordien et al., 2008). Observational learning is inclusive in nature in the sense that it influences everyone within the learning space to learn and adopt good behaviour that is displayed. As teachers and school staff regularly and consistently interact with learners, their responsibility is to model attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a caring and safe school culture, by valuing and demonstrating respect for all learners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Vermeire, 2010). Thus, environmental events in the form of modelling, instruction, and social persuasion affect the learner who in turn evokes different reactions from the environment depending on his/her personality and physical features. The behaviour determines aspects of the environment to which the learner is exposed, and behaviour is, in turn, modified by the environment (Ahlstrom, 2009; Santrock, 2007). It is then the duty of the teacher to create an environment where discipline, benefits of good behaviour and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are understood by all involved so that effective, inclusive learning takes place.

Goss et al. (2017) attest that frequently, teachers may detain or refer an ill behaving learner to the school head as a form of punishment without first considering if their own behaviour might be causative to the problem. Bilaty (2012) emphasises that since learners learn from role models, teachers have an obligation of being living examples of the kind of behaviour that is expected. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to model good behaviour since learners learn from observing the behaviour of others around them. The learners' behaviour is likely to be influenced by the actions of others who might be using antisocial but effective strategies to satisfy their needs. For instance, if adults model violence, learners

are more likely to do the same. Similarly, when teachers model frustration and intolerance, learners are likely to follow this behaviour by expressing themselves with frustration and intolerance. If teachers model compassion, patience, high ethical values, and a light touch, learners are more likely to model the behaviours concerned. Hence, modelling self-regulation and providing specific, constructive feedback to learners as they develop the ability to regulate their behaviour are very important (Lapperts, 2012; Rohan, 2017).

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2004) confirms that teachers model positive behaviour by treating learners and adults with respect and building a positive relationship with learners, thereby creating conducive learning space. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (n. d.) advises that teachers should ask the following questions in relation to the model they set for learners:

- How do you present yourself?
- Are you modelling positive behaviours when attempting to solve conflicts?
- Are you communicating respect?
- Are you separating the behaviour from the learner?

Such questions assist in guiding teachers to always model the behaviour which will influence learners positively. However, studies conducted by Mugabe and Maposa (2013) and Sibanda and Mpofu (2017) revealed that in Zimbabwe, some teachers were not ideal role models as they engaged in socially unacceptable behaviour in the presence of learners. Likewise, Salifu and Agbenyega (2012), and Murithi (2010) made similar observations in Ghanaian and Kenyan schools respectively, where teachers were accused of contributing to disciplinary problems in schools by not conducting themselves in respectable manner in front of learners.

Research studies have further shown that parents and communities contribute to the development of the most severe forms of antisocial behaviour by failing to model appropriate social interactions (Ward, 2007). Rohan (2017) argues that learners' behaviour is influenced by the modelling and feedback to which they are exposed outside of school. The manner in which learners respond to stress, frustration, and challenges in forming and maintaining relationships is heavily influenced by social learning at home and in the community. Without strong disciplinary values at home, teachers' efforts against illicit behaviour are usually in vain, thereby diminishing chances of creating an inclusive learning environment. The Ministry of Education, Jamaica (2011) opines that without appropriate role models, learners do not have the opportunity to learn acceptable behaviours. Save the Children Sweden (2010) emphasises that acceptable behaviour is modelled by parents. In contrast, Mugabe and Maposa (2013), and Sibanda and Mpofu (2017) found that some parents, family and community members involved their children in activities such as selling marijuana to other learners at school, selling beer to customers at home, sending children to buy cigarettes and alcoholic drinks. Shockingly, learners bribe some members of the community to pose as their parents/guardians during disciplinary cases at school. Thus, such practices by parents, family and community members portray unacceptable behaviour to learners, which hinders teachers from creating an inclusive learning ambience.

Also, peers can either positively or negatively influence the behaviour of learners. Literature reveals that peer modelling helps the individual learn by having others perform an appropriate version of the behaviour (McNiff, 2015). According to Tungata (2006) learners or children in general, worship their heroes and imitate those whom they appreciate and admire. In schools, prefects are expected to be good role models whom other learners should emulate. Mukiri's (2014) study indicated that in Kenya, prefects enhanced maintenance of discipline to a greater extent as they modelled positive behaviour to other learners. Furthermore, Sibanda's (2018) study revealed that in Bulawayo, learners were encouraged

to emulate good behaviour as they interacted during club sessions and co-curricular activities. Thus, the cited authorities disclose that positive behaviour modelling is an indispensable strategy in maintaining positive discipline in schools. If teachers, parents and community members model positive behaviour, learners will imitate such behaviour, which will result in reduced incidences of learners' untoward behaviour.

In line with the global practices as suggested by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) in Zimbabwe has abolished corporal punishment in schools (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2018; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2019). Studies conducted by Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) in 2012 and 2015 respectively, revealed that learners in schools were subjected to psychological aggression and/or physical punishment that sometimes involved exclusion of the offending learner from lessons. It was also found that some of the perpetrators were discharged from the teaching service while others found not guilty of the offences were cautioned only, highlighting an inconsistency in the approach to creating and maintaining conducive learning environment for all (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2017). Such practices were challenged in the Zimbabwean Constitutional Court by parents and other stakeholders, and the court ruling outlawed use of corporal punishment by parents and schools (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2019). Hence, the MOPSE had to align its disciplinary policy with the global practices which advocate for positive discipline practices in schools. The MOPSE stresses that every school head should strive to cultivate a school climate where learners will/can develop internal discipline which is not initiated by fear of punishment. A school ethos which promotes self-discipline among learners supported by positive remedial disciplinary and pro-active measures, is necessary and also ideal for situations where learners avoid misdemeanours because the alternative could be the infliction of physical pain by the school head (MOPSE, 2018). With reference to the foregoing discussion, it is in the interest of this study to interrogate how secondary schools use the modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

### **Research Question**

The study was based on the subsequent research question:

How do secondary schools use modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province?

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study was embedded in interpretive paradigm because it enabled the researchers to understand the viewpoint of the participants and their interpretation of the world around them in their natural setting (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The paradigm assisted the researchers to comprehend the motives, meanings, reasons and participants' other subjective experiences regarding the problem under study (Edirisinha, 2012). The adoption of qualitative approach in this study facilitated the researchers to make sense of and to interpret the phenomena under study in terms of the meaning based on participants' perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). A case study design was favoured in this study for the reason that it provided the researchers an overview and in-depth understanding of a case, process and interactional dynamics within participants' real-life situation (Kumar, 2011; Yin, 2009).

The sample of purposively chosen participants comprised twenty members of the disciplinary committee, forty prefects, four school counsellors, four school heads, two

education officers, and four School Development Committee (SDC) chairpersons. The data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews administered to school heads, school counsellors and SDC chairpersons; focus group interviews with members of the disciplinary committee and prefects, and document analysis. Data were transcribed, coded and thematically analysed to respond to the research questions (Kumar, 2011). To validate the results of the study, credibility and trustworthiness were taken into consideration as the researchers' audio recorded interview sessions to guarantee accurate reflection of the participants' views, transcribed interviews verbatim and presented thick descriptions of the data from various sources (Tracy, 2010). Throughout the research process, the researchers seriously took cognisance of the ethical issues of informed consent, protection from harm, privacy and confidentiality, as well as honesty. For the purposes of anonymity, the participants were coded as School Heads (SH), Education Officers (EO), School Counsellors (SC), School Development Committee Chairpersons (SDC), Focus Group interview for Members of the Disciplinary Committee (FGDC) and Focus Group interview for Prefects (FGP).

## **RESULTS**

### ***Modelling positive behaviour***

Modelling positive behaviour in schools is a necessity if positive discipline is to be maintained. The models learners emulate should demonstrate good behaviour which will influence learners' behaviour positively. Failure to model good behaviour might have negative impact on the behaviour and the learning ability of the learners. Ideally, the learners' environment should have models who always conduct themselves in an acceptable manner. Hence, the participants' responses were sought regarding questions relating to how teachers, peers, parents and members of the community modelled positive behaviour as they interacted with learners. Varied responses from participants are presented in the succeeding sections.

### ***How teachers model positive behaviour***

Teachers are the key role models in the school environment. Their conduct has a great impact on the behaviour of learners. Thus, teachers have responsibility to present themselves in an acceptable manner that can influence learners' behaviour positively to enhance and maintain positive discipline in schools. The participants responded to how teachers modelled positive behaviour. It came out from several for a such as the minutes of staff meetings, parents' meetings, and documents stuck on schools' notice boards that teachers were urged to model positive behaviour. For example, some of the participants responded as follows:

*SH1: During staff meetings we encourage teachers to be role models in whatever they do. We encourage them to dress properly, their behaviour in the staffroom, i.e. the level of noise and orderliness should impact positively on learners. We also encourage them to be punctual for lessons because unattended learners tend to be rowdy.*

*SH2: There is also a code of conduct for teachers, which includes punctuality, dress code, performing our duties as per ministry requirement. During staff meetings teachers are always reminded of this code of conduct. When new teachers join the school, they are inducted on conduct and are given a copy of the code of conduct to keep it in their personal files so that they keep referring to it.*

*SH3: We encourage teachers during staff meetings, workshops, and staff development sessions to be good role models to learners and new teachers receive orientation.*

On the same issue, disciplinary committee members' answers concurred with school heads' responses. Their responses are presented as follows:

FGDC1: *We give teachers the charter which explains how one should present himself/herself to the learners. The charter spells out the conduct of teachers. We also always encourage them to play the loco-parentis role to the learners.*

FGDC2: *During staff meetings the administration reads the code of conduct from the ministry encouraging teachers to be good role models by dressing decently, using the correct language and speaking politely to learners and knowing the correct register in order to instil good behaviour in learners.*

FGDC4: *We encourage teachers to have and read a copy of the Civil Service dress code, have a copy stuck on the notice boards for frequent and easy reference.*

The school counsellors also reiterated in line with other participants' responses. SC1 states,

*Teachers should not be found wanting, learners should not be exposed to unacceptable behaviour and the teachers are reminded that they should reflect positive behaviour to learners. If the teacher is showing wayward behaviour, we counsel them and remind them to be good role models to learners.*

SC2 explained,

*At times we organise staff development sessions where the head reminds us about the code of conduct and policy circulars. Even at departmental level the Heads of Departments also remind teachers to model positive behaviour. Sometimes we invite resource persons from various organisations to come and talk to us about behaviour modelling issues.*

Similarly, the prefects confirmed previous participants' responses by stating that:

FGP1: *Most teachers use appropriate language when talking to learners. They do not shout or use bad words. They conduct themselves appropriately in front of learners and usually dress formally so that learners can copy from them.*

FGP2: *Some teachers talk about their experience when they were at our age, how they conducted themselves to earn their present status which motivates us to emulate them. Personally, I admire the way teachers interact on their own as teachers, they are an example to us on how we are supposed to treat each other as learners. They dress formally so that learners can emulate them.*

FGP3: *They model positive behaviour by trying to build a reputation of fairness in class, and the way they dress.*

Correspondingly, the SDC chairpersons' responses corroborated other participants pointing out that:

SDC1: *Generally, we encourage teachers through the meetings and through the school administration to excellently present themselves in the way they dress, talk, interact and behave.*

SDC2 and SDC4 shared the same sentiments: *We encourage teachers to conduct themselves well all the time for learners to emulate them especially the way they dress, behave, communicate and remind them to treat all learners fairly.*

Responding to the same question, EO1 as a policy maker was inclined to Part viii, Section 44 of the Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000, a code of conduct for all civil servants. He stressed that:

*Well, all teachers act in loco parentis, that is, they represent parents at school, so whatever they do is under spotlight and they are expected to be role models. Learners are supposed to*

*emulate them to say, "I want to be like so and so..." However, those teachers who are found wanting, depending on the nature of the behaviour they find themselves in their defects. They might be asked to account, or certain disciplinary measures may be taken against them depending on the nature of untoward behaviour. For example, the Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 is a guide to all teachers, e.g., if someone comes to school drunk, what kind of behaviour does such an individual want the learners to emulate? It is certainly a wrong kind of behaviour and in such instances a teacher found guilty of this offence is charged.*

Although the schools under study encourage teachers to model positive behaviour, it also came out from the participants' responses that some teachers were not good role models for learners as they did not lead by example. FGDC2 complained that *...some of the teachers are bad role models, they smell liquor, smoke and use bad language that degrades learners.*

Similar sentiments came from prefects participants who also felt let down by people whom they looked up to as role models. For instance, FGP2 commented *...some teachers do not demonstrate positive behaviour at all during our presence, they are a disgrace.*

Furthermore, SDC chairpersons, as parents also expressed displeasure on the way some teachers behave in the presence of learners. This is the challenge they have observed which reiterates the observations of other participants. SDC2 pronounced:

*The problem presently is that good role models are very few from the schools... some teachers' conduct is questionable, sometimes they use vulgar language when talking to learners, and one wonders what sort of behaviour is modelled by such teachers.*

In support, SDC3 confirmed:

*Some teachers behave inappropriate in the presence of learners, for instance, they smoke cigarettes or buy and consume alcohol at neighbouring shops whilst learners watch them. Some teachers dress inappropriately which is not in line with the dress code of their employer.*

Ultimately, presented data reveals that while schools use numerous ways to encourage teachers to model positive behaviour, schools still encounter challenges in using the modelling positive behaviour strategy. Even though there is evidence of good practices expressed earlier, such as teachers adhering to the Civil Service Code of Conduct, the Dress Code and the induction of new teachers to familiarise them with the culture of the schools, participants have indicated that there is inappropriate behaviour such as alcohol consumption and smoking cigarettes in full view of learners. This behaviour impedes the creation of conducive learning environment because it leads to learner exclusion when they emulate the teachers' inappropriate behaviour.

### ***How learners model positive behaviour***

Like teachers, learners are also responsible for modelling positive behaviour towards their peers, parents and teachers. This notion is confirmed in the Secretary's Circular No. P. 35 (2018) on discipline in schools, suspension and exclusion which states that the enforcement and administration of proper school discipline is a pre-requisite to successful learning. Learners should also know that, like teachers, unbecoming behaviour attracts disciplinary action. Henceforth, the participants' views were solicited on how learners modelled positive behaviour as a way of maintaining positive discipline in schools. The participants' responses reveal that schools tried to encourage learners to model positive behaviour during assemblies, lessons, prefects' workshops, and also use of prefects as role models for other learners and peer educators/peer counsellors, and giving learners leadership responsibilities for various clubs. The responses of some of the participants are indicated below.

SH1 expounded that:

*Learners are encouraged to show good behaviour in the way they interact with adults, the way they dress, the way they move about from one lesson to another. They are encouraged to show that the learner is demonstrating the best school behaviour and we also encourage them to do that at home, that they should greet and respect the elderly.*

SH3 particularised:

*We encourage learners during guidance and counselling lessons, through clubs to dress in complete uniform. Prefects have also attended discipline and leadership workshop.*

SH4 agreed:

*During assemblies we encourage learners to choose good friends, decide why they are at school, what they want to achieve and that they should always be honest.*

Concurring with the school heads, the members of the disciplinary committee, FGDC2 and FGDC4 conceded that:

*Prefects are encouraged to dress smartly so that other learners can copy from them. Mostly, we also encourage all learners to be courteous, take care of themselves, dress well, wash themselves up, and be presentable because appearance goes with their behaviours. A rowdy learner does not dress well yet a well-behaved learner has a way of dressing because of the discipline and self-consciousness. All this is done at assembly which is one of the major platforms we use to encourage learners to model positive behaviour.*

The school counsellors also echoed the same sentiments with other participants as they gave the following responses.

SC1: *We encourage learners verbally about positive behaviour at assembly and sometimes when there is a situation that is out of control, we invite the police to address them during assembly.*

SC2: *Learners are encouraged through the team talks, the peer educators and senior prefects leading the assembly to emulate good behaviour and should not be comfortable in the company of those who misbehave.*

SC3: *We give learners responsibilities like heading different clubs to encourage good behaviour.*

SC4: *Always there is this statement that the deputy head uses at assembly that you are your brother's keeper which reminds or encourages learners to look after one another. When they see someone doing a negative behaviour, they should quickly correct them or report to school authorities if it is beyond their comprehension.*

Corroborating views came from the prefects' focus group who unanimously stressed on adherence to the school's dress code to influence others to do so, punctuality for school activities, respecting each other by abiding to the school rules and using appropriate language when talking to each other. FGP2 added that:

*As prefects, besides focusing on academic work we always lead by example, by being involved in clubs and sporting activities, showing good behaviour and always be in complete school uniform so that other learners can copy from us.*

Supporting other participants, all SDC chairpersons emphasised on the importance of choosing good friends who will positively influence the learners' behaviour.

SDC3 reinforced:

*Learners are encouraged to emulate those who are disciplined and report bullying, inappropriate behaviour, delinquency and other behaviours that put other learners at risk.*



The Education Officers' responses strengthened other participants' opinions, and EO1 stressed:

*Learners also have their role to play through their structure, that is, prefects, head-boy and head-girl; they are also expected to be exemplary because they are leaders who have been chosen by the learners and teachers.*

EO2 explained further:

*We have trained some peer counsellors and we want to believe that those become role models to other learners and they set the standard and mode of behaviours.*

The participants' responses depict that learners in the selected schools, especially prefects, model positive behaviour so that other learners can imitate. They dress according to the school dress code, abide by the school rules, participate in co-curricular activities and also use appropriate language when communicating to other learners. It also came out that schools use assembly time as platform for instilling good behaviour, use prefects as role models, have peer educators/counsellors and, those trained in guidance and counselling to combat bad behaviour so that all learners are engaged in using behaviour modelling strategy to maintain positive discipline.

### ***How parents and the community model positive behaviour***

Parents and community members play a critical role in shaping the behaviour of learners and this cannot be overemphasised. It is essential that parents and the community should model positive behaviour for their children to emulate them and transfer that good conduct to school. The participants were requested to give an acumen on how parents and the community modelled positive behaviour. Because parents, in conjunction with the community, are the first educators of children who instil values, it was necessary to hear how schools mainly use parents' meetings, consultation sessions and orientation sessions to encourage parents and community to model positive behaviour. Participants' responses are presented below.

SH1 and SH2 concurred:

*When we meet the parents once in a term, we encourage them to be role models to their children, comment positively to children on issues about the school, ensure children are in school uniform and that all fees due to the school are paid in time to avoid exclusion of learners from school activities and above all, monitor behavioural changes in their children which may develop into bigger problems.*

The disciplinary committee confirmed what the school heads advanced. For instance, FGDC2 affirmed:

*Whenever we have meetings with parents, we also meet during their orientation when their children enrol for form one and on consultation sessions where we discuss the need to be exemplary as good role models to their children, encourage them that they should be responsible for their children and to check their children when they leave home for school whether they are properly dressed.*

The school counsellors also expressed similar sentiments showing concern on the impact of parental behaviour on their children. Their comments are expressed below.

*SC2: During parents' meetings, the SDC members together with administration members talk about those social ills which parents impart to learners so that they can avoid them. Parents are reminded of their responsibilities which include encouraging their children to attend lessons regularly, avoid being involved in drugs and substance abuse, be vigilant when their children suddenly exhibit behavioural changes. Parents are urged to be highly involved in their children's education and life in general.*

In accord with other participants, the SDC Chairpersons advanced that:

SDC1: *When we get to these general meetings, the administration encourages us to have a positive attitude when dealing with children because if we are negative, the administration usually has challenges in dealing with ill behaviours in school. The issue of parents being good role models is always emphasised as there are some parents who impart bad morals because of their bad behaviour.*

SDC2: *During parents' meetings we always encourage parents to be good role models so that their children can emulate them. Sometimes children are invited to the teachers and parents' meetings where we advise parents to use the proper language when making contributions so that learners can copy the proper language use from their parents. This also encourages parents to do the same at home to instil positive behaviour in their children.*

Furthermore, the Education Officers were of the same view with the rest of participants' responses. For example, EO1 acknowledged that:

*We have School Development Committee meetings that are held in schools, such issues are addressed by the head of school through the parents' meetings.*

Nonetheless, it came out from participants' responses that despite the efforts made to use the modelling positive behaviour strategy to maintain positive discipline, schools encountered some difficulties. It was revealed by the participants that some parents and community members were not good role models for the learners. As an illustration, SC2 stated that:

*Some members of the community are corrupt as they are given money by learners to come to school and pretend as if they are the learners' parents/guardians when they have been summoned because learners have misbehaved. One time we saw one corrupt community member claiming to be a relative of quite a number of learners. Such undesirable behaviour from the community members has negative impact on the behaviour of learners.*

FGDC2 make reference to other participants' observations as they lamented:

*The problem we come across nowadays is that learners do not have good role models in their homes. Due to poverty, it has come out during some disciplinary hearings that some parents or members of the family give their children drugs to sell to their peers at school. Some parents ask their children to sell beer at their homes.*

SDC1 admitted that:

*The environment where children are brought up today has a negative impact on their behaviour. The society itself is full of ills that negatively influence children's behaviour.*

The responses from participants illustrate that schools do reach out parents and the community members on the importance of modelling positive behaviour to their children. The gathered data reveal that schools, parents and members of the community work together to maintain positive discipline through use of modelling positive behaviour strategy even though there were some parents and members of the community who still negatively influenced learners' behaviour. The participants' responses validate what was documented in the parents' meetings minute books which were accessed by the researchers during document analysis. It came out in the minutes that parents were always encouraged to be good role models to their children. However, incidences of community members who masqueraded as parents to misbehaving learners were noted and a recommendation to hand over such cases to the law enforcement agencies was suggested.

### **Effectiveness of modelling positive behaviour strategy in maintaining positive discipline**

The participants were asked to give their views on the effectiveness of the use of modelling positive behaviour strategy in maintaining positive discipline in the schools. SH2 opines that:

*I think modelling positive behaviour strategy is becoming effective as we are seeing some change in our learners. Parents also come forward, we see that they are concerned, and they want to see this school maintaining a good name. We now have fewer disciplinary cases to deal with and have more parents showing interest and concern with disciplinary issues in the school.*

SH4 confirmed that:

*The modelling positive behaviour strategy is quite effective as it improves the social fibre significantly because gone are the days when the whip was the code of conduct. Today's learner wants to be taught and to see the results. Hence it is essential that learners are gainfully engaged in learning activities that do not leave them idle. Parents also need to know who their children hang out with and know their whereabouts all the time.*

In agreement with the school heads' opinions, the disciplinary committee members' FGDC2 indicated that:

*Modelling positive behaviour strategy is very effective because we are exposing our learners to appropriate behaviour. We are giving them no excuses for negative behaviour, because many times when you have negative behaviour it would be either a result of some teachers modelling negative behaviour or parents or some other learners. But when we get rid of all these aspects then we will not have any excuses from the learners. To add to that, it is them learners who correct each other before we actually do it because they know the right thing.*

Corresponding comments came from the school counsellors whose responses are as follows.

SC2: *Modelling positive behaviour strategy works to a greater extent because those learners who do well are chosen as prefects, they parade at assembly, and they have badges to identify them so that other learners emulate them.*

SC3: *It is an effective strategy because it is easy for learners to copy what they observe rather than just being told to do something which they do not see.*

Showing contentment, the prefect participants indicated that:

FGP2: *The strategy is quite effective because you hear some of the learners saying, "that person is doing great things, I wish I could be like that person."*

FGP3: *Modelling positive behaviour is effective because if the learners see teachers properly dressed, they will emulate them.*

Likewise, the SDC Chairpersons' responses were in harmony with other participants' views. For example, SDC1 confirmed:

*I believe if we take the responsibility of modelling positive behaviour, all the challenges experienced in schools will be minimised, so the strategy is quite effective.*

SDC2 acknowledged:

*...it is effective as it encourages the learners to emulate good behaviour.*

The Education Officers reinforced the responses of other participants as EO1 admitted:

*It is indeed effective because everyone plays a part, it is not only teachers, but it is teachers, learners and parents, the whole school community, everyone plays a part.*

EO2 maintained:

*I find it to be quite effective because if there are role models that learners are emulating then they should work towards achieving the expected behaviour.*

Contrary, FGDC4 had this to say:

*Modelling positive behaviour strategy is effective to a certain extent because if we look at the way some teachers dress; there is a conflict in the kind of fashion nowadays and the kind of dressing expected in the dress code. A young teacher will tell you we no longer buy such clothes because of change in fashion and it is quite difficult to convince them to dress according to the dress code.*

FGP4 concurred:

*Positive behaviour modelling is effective to a lesser extent because learners want to follow the celebrities other than the local people.*

The data presented suggest that most of the participants agreed that modelling positive behaviour strategy is effective in maintaining positive discipline in schools despite the negative observations highlighted by a few participants. The strength of the strategy is anchored on the collaboration of parents and the school community in instilling positive discipline among learners.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the study revealed that a number of methods were used to enhance the use of modelling positive behaviour strategy among teachers so that learners could imitate. The study established that during staff meetings, workshops, and staff development sessions, staff members were always reminded to abide by the Civil Service Code of Conduct and Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000. It came out that each member of staff was given a copy of Civil Service Dress Code so that they could present themselves as expected. It was further found that new staff members in the schools were inducted on expected conduct and were each given a copy of the Civil Service Code of Conduct to file it in their personal files so that they always referred to it. Additionally, the study established that the copies of Civil Service Code of Conduct and list of duties and responsibilities of staff members were stuck on notice boards as a reminder to staff members. The results of the study are in line with Bilaty's (2012) view that since learners learn from role models, teachers have an obligation of being living examples of the kind of behaviour that is expected.

The findings of the study also confirmed that when talking to learners, most teachers used appropriate language; conducted themselves appropriately in the presence of learners and dressed formal so that learners could emulate them. Moreover, the manner in which teachers interacted among themselves, set an example to learners on how learners were supposed to interact among themselves. The findings of the study are congruent with literature observations which state that as teachers and school staff regularly and consistently interact with learners, it is their responsibility to model attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a caring and safe school culture, by valuing and demonstrating respect for all learners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Vermeire, 2010).

Despite efforts made by selected schools to encourage staff members to model positive behaviour, the study found that some staff members were bad role models as they engaged in unbecoming behaviour in the presence of learners. Some staff members would consume alcoholic drinks while learners watch them and also defy their employer's dress code. The findings are consistent with results of the studies conducted by Mugabe and Maposa (2013) and Sibanda and Mpfu (2017) which revealed that in Zimbabwe, some teachers were not ideal role models as they engaged in socially unacceptable behaviour in the presence of

learners. Similar findings were witnessed in Ghanaian (Salifu & Agbenyega, 2012) and Kenyan (Murithi, 2010) schools where teachers were accused of contributing to disciplinary problems in schools by not conducting themselves in respectable manner in front of learners.

It was revealed in this current study that during assembly sessions learners were reminded to dress in complete uniform according to the school's dress code, be always punctual and to use appropriate language when talking to each other. It also emerged from the findings that learners were encouraged during lessons to choose good friends who would influence them positively and to show good behaviour in the way they interacted with adults in and out of school. Prefects were used as role models for other learners since sometimes the senior prefects were afforded the opportunity to lead the assembly sessions. The results of the study also indicated that giving senior prefects the chance to lead assembly sessions would motivate other learners to emulate the way prefects presented themselves in accordance with the dress code and copy their good conduct. It was found that learners were encouraged to model positive behaviour by giving some learners responsibilities to lead different clubs that were offered in schools and others were engaged as peer counsellors. The results of this study correspond with literature revelation that peer modelling helps the individual learn by having others perform an appropriate version of the behaviour (McNiff, 2015). The findings of the study also support the results of Mukiri's (2014) study in Kenya which revealed that prefects enhanced maintenance of discipline to a greater extent as they modelled positive behaviour to other learners. The results of the study are also in line with Sibanda's (2018) findings in Bulawayo where learners were encouraged to emulate good behaviour as they interacted during co-curricular activities.

The study established that the parents and the community were encouraged to be good role models for their children mainly during parents' meetings and consultation sessions. It came out that during the parents' meetings, the SDC members together with school administration members encouraged parents to abstain from exposing their children to the social ills in which the parents were engaged. It emerged from the findings that some members of the community engaged in corrupt activities with learners. Some parents or members of the family give their children drugs to sell to their peers at school while other parents ask their children to sell beer in their homes. The findings of the study underpin Rohan's (2017) observation that learners' behaviour is influenced by the modelling and feedback to which they are exposed outside of school.

The findings of the study further indicated that the modelling positive behaviour strategy was quite effective since the social fibre was greatly improved. The strategy made it easy for learners to imitate what they observed rather than just being told to do something which they could not see. The findings confirmed the observations from literature that teachers, parents and community members should model attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a caring and safe culture in both at the school and the broader community (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that not all staff members adopted the strategy. Some staff members dressed inappropriately. Besides, the celebrities observed through media have influenced some learners' behaviour negatively.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examined how secondary schools used the modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners. Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that schools adopted numerous methods as they used the modelling positive behaviour strategy to instil positive discipline among learners. These include orientation of new staff members in terms of conduct, constantly reminding teachers, learners and parents about modelling positive behaviour whenever they interact, teachers and learners modelling

positive behaviour in various situations in the school environment and prefects leading assembly sessions. Although there were a few cases of misconduct by staff members, parents and community members due to bad modelling, it is beyond doubt that modelling positive behaviour strategy produced affirmative outcomes in schools under study. It is recommended that other researchers should find out how private schools use modelling positive behaviour strategy to maintain positive discipline so that the results could inform those schools that are experiencing challenges. Furthermore, other researchers should explore other strategies that could be adopted by schools to maintain positive discipline, particularly, in rural schools.

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