

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**EXPLORING THE PRACTICES OF EDUCATORS IN MANAGING LEARNER  
DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE CLASSROOM AND IN SCHOOL: PERSPECTIVES  
FROM TEACHERS IN THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE UMZINYATHI  
DISTRICT**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the Master of Education Degree in the  
Discipline of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy, School of Education,  
College of Humanities**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**October 2022**

**Supervisor: Professor TT Bhengu**

## DECLARATION

I, Precious Nondumiso Mlondo declare that:

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Signed:  .....

Date: 25 October 2022

Precious Nondumiso Mlondo (student)

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## STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation is submitted with ~~without~~ my approval.

Signed.....  Date: 25 October 2022

08 June 2022

Precious Nondumiso Mlondo (221116335)  
School Of Education  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear PN Mlondo,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00004279/2022

**Project title:** Exploring the practices of educators in Managing learner discipline within the classroom and in school: Perspectives from teachers in three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District

**Degree:** Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 27 May 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

This approval is valid until 08 June 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

## **DEDICATION**

To the almighty God, all glory, honour and praise I give it to you. Without your strength, guidance, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, I would never have completed this dissertation, you deserve to be praised all the time. Hallowed be thy name.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my late grandmother, Gloria Mlondo, my grandfather Simon Mlondo for being there for me since I was young, my Aunt Nokukhanya Ndlovu for the support and the encouragement she provided and lastly to my Fiancé Lindokuhle Nicholas Sithebe, for being my pillar of strength and for his understanding of my educational struggles and patience when I could not be there when he needed me the most.

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- My former principal, Mr Khoza for allowing me to conduct the study at the school.
- My participants, this study would not have been possible without them. Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of this study.

## **Abstract**

The goal of this study was to explore and understand how teachers in the three primary schools in the uMzinyathi district managed learner discipline in the classroom and at school. To produce data, I used semi-structured interviews within a qualitative research design. Due to persisting learner disciplinary issues, schools are faced with a number of difficulties. Any school's environment must be well-kept and secure for both teachers and learners for teaching and learning to be effective. A qualitative case study design was carried out to examine how teachers or educators at the three primary schools that were in a township, a rural community, and a town managed learner discipline. Much of the data was gathered through a series of semi-structured interviews that lasted between 30-40 minutes each and included probing questions to elicit further information. Six teachers made up of sample size.

Prior to analysis, interviews were recorded and written down. Themes were created when data from transcriptions was coded, analysed, and categorised. The replies to the open-ended interview questions were analysed using categorisation and inductive coding to establish themes. The study's conclusions showed that teachers at these three schools struggled with disciplinary issues. These issues included learners who do not complete their homework, bullies who fight, learners who do not respect their teachers, and those who steal. This study also showed that there are enabling factors, such as the availability of school policies like the code of conduct and the involvement of other stakeholders like the principal, class heads, departmental heads, SGB's, social workers, and SAPS, that assisted teachers in managing discipline in schools.

## ABBREVIATIONS

|          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| SMT      | School Management Team                |
| SGBs     | School Governing Bodies               |
| DH       | Departmental Heads                    |
| DP       | Deputy Principal                      |
| DoE      | Department of Education               |
| DBE      | Department of Basic Education         |
| ATCP     | Alternatives To Corporal Punishment   |
| PGCE     | Postgraduate Certificate in Education |
| STD      | Secondary Teachers Diploma            |
| BED      | Bachelor of Education                 |
| Bed Hons | Honours in Education                  |
| Med      | Master of Education                   |
| NGO      | Non-Governmental Organisation         |
| NSC      | National Senior Certificate           |
| RCL      | Representative Council of Learners    |
| UKZN     | University of KwaZulu-Natal           |



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **AN OVERVIEW AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

One of the most vital elements of an effective classroom and school management is excellent discipline in the school (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007; Oosthuizen, 2009). In an environment that is safe and orderly, educators can teach more effectively and learners can learn more effectively (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Therefore, in order to promote teaching and learning in the classroom and school, the management of learner discipline is essential. Failing to do so could have a harmful impact on education (Kiwale, 2017). The rising learner misbehaviour in schools is thought to have a deleterious effect on education (Davids, 2017). Such effect is that teaching and learning can be hampered by disciplinary issues that exist and are practiced in schools. According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (henceforth, the Schools Act, 1996b), educators are obligated to uphold discipline in the classroom and throughout the school setting to ensure that learners receive an education free from disorderly behaviours. This suggests that educators are expected to uphold discipline in classrooms because of their occupation.

This study aimed to comprehend how teachers in primary schools manage learner behaviour in the classroom and at school. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the study by outlining its background and justification. This chapter also includes a summary of the problem, three research questions, definitions of key terms, and study boundaries. This chapter summarised all the chapters of the dissertation in its conclusion.

#### **1.2 Background to the study**

Everyone faces a problem from the rise in disruptive behaviour in schools, and this must be addressed using all available tools (Nkabinde, 2020; Tungata, 2006). As a limitation to the culture of teaching and learning in many schools, Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, Van de Walt (2004); Baruth and Mokoena (2016) cite instances of learner indiscipline in primary schools in north of Durban. Similar to this, Aziza (2001) and Magabe (2020) documents a considerable rise in the number of learners being suspended and expelled from the Western Cape and

Gauteng schools. Due to disruptive and antisocial children's behaviours, primary schools face a number of difficulties (Mabaso, 2019; Mtsweni, 2008). The setting must be calm and secure for both the educators and learners in order for teaching and learning to be successful; However, lately, there has been a rise in the deficiency of learner discipline in South African schools (Masingi, 2017). According to Özdemir and Pektaş (2017), learners have recently displayed a variety of disruptive behaviours, including bullying, drug abuse, vandalism, absenteeism, bunking, and more. This scenario outlined above suggests some schools have become perilous and disorganised due to learner indiscipline. For schools to be organised and safe, discipline issues must be dealt with. Mabaso (2019) asserts that discipline violations and tensions between learners and educators are getting worse. As a result, schools become less effective, it is challenging for teachers to effectively teach and supervise classes as a result of these discipline concerns (Mabaso, 2019).

Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) remark that in their attempt to construct a democratic nation, South African society has seen significant societal, political, and financial changes since the first democratic elections in 1994. The Schools Acts elimination of physical punishment in all schools in June 1995 occurred amid a number of changes in the educational field (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Cornelissen (2016) contends that learner discipline in schools has increasingly become more relevant from the time when the Schools Act was passed, as an increase in disciplinary difficulties simultaneously increased with this ban (Cornelissen, 2016). Deprived of this disciplinary method, on which numerous educators depended and which was authorised by law in South Africa, educators felt incapable of imposing learner discipline, and that mechanisms to do this were inadequate (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020).

According to research, many South African educators find it challenging to administer discipline, especially after corporal punishment was banned (Reyneke, 2016). Makhasane and Chikoko (2016) assert that a number of incidents of learner disobedience have been documented in schools and have had a detrimental effect on instruction. According to the Schools Act, a teacher must maintain order in the classroom to prevent disruptive behaviour from interfering with the learners' education. According to research, educators have been using corporal punishment to accomplish this aim and still believe it to be a worthwhile strategy (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016; Masingi, 2017). Segalo and Rambuda (2018) state that recently learners exhibit a range of disruptive behaviours, such as vandalism, alcohol and drug misuse, absenteeism, failure, and reluctance to complete given classwork or homework, refusal to

follow instructions, mocking of other learners, disparaging educators, cursing at teachers or other learners, bringing dangerous arms to school, endangering other learners with dangerous weapons, assaulting teachers, staff, or learners, and many more. This statement indicates that schools have become unsafe and disorderly due to learners who are not behaving well. The atmosphere of teaching and learning in schools is not present, according to unplanned conversations I have had with teachers at schools in the district I work in. Learners disobey their teachers and school policies; teachers find it difficult to manage learners who act wilfully. Other parents are even worried about the education of their children. This study is inspired by the necessity to develop a secure schooling practice for teachers and learners at the school.

As a primary school teacher, I have informally noticed that learners' behaviours are getting worse, and that teachers are struggling with how to deal with these learners. Many of us teachers appear to be frustrated and believe that the school management should oversee in disciplining learners. Teachers' lament having to spend more time managing troublesome students. Despite the reports of an increased lack of learner discipline, in my experience, not all schools are severely impacted by this challenge. Therefore, it is clear that some schools are succeeding in maintaining learner discipline while others are not. In this study I am not targeting any schools, but the study assumes that all teachers have the responsibility to maintain learner discipline. Therefore, the study aimed to comprehend how teachers manage learner discipline, and whether they were succeeding in that regard or not.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The behaviour of learners is one of the most significant components that affect education in South Africa (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007; Oosthuizen, 2009). In the uMzinyathi District, various teachers, parents, and communities are concerned about the messy learner behaviour in some of their schools. The management of disciplinary matters brought on by learners with ill-discipline is the most challenging burden that teachers have to handle. Effective management is necessary to preserve decent discipline in the classroom and at school. According to Section 8(1) of the Schools Act, a code of conduct for learners must be created by school governing bodies after consultation with learners, parents, and teachers.



The most common grievances educators have around the world are related to the subject of student discipline (Semali & Vumilia, 2016; Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2014). This shows that the lack of learner discipline in academic settings is a widespread issue. The rise in learner indiscipline in various schools has drawn criticism and had a detrimental effect on learners' educational achievement (De Witt & Lesssing, 2013; LeeFon et al., 2013; Masitsa, 2008; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015); Parsons et al. (2019), the learners' lack of discipline in schools, is not conducive to learning. Continuous disturbances in the classroom are caused by issues including peer pressure, bullying, failure to complete assignments, dishonesty, disobedience, absenteeism, and intimidation (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015; Parsons et al., 2019). As a result of the combined effects of the situation outlined in the above section, it is difficult for educators to effectively conduct their teaching responsibilities and administer classroom rules and standards. This observation is also supported by Matseke (2008); Ntuli (2012); Bilaty (2012); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) who claim that school leaders and managers do not receive full parental support in resolving learner behavioural issues (Bilaty, 2012; Matseke, 2008; Ntuli, 2012; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Various specialists indicate that managing learner behaviour has become one of the major problems that teachers face; hence, efficiency may drop if educators lack the essential discipline management skills (Nunan, 2018). This has inspired me to research how teachers manage student behaviour in the classroom and at school, with the goal of finding alternatives to corporal punishment that could still allow for successful teaching and learning.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

My six years of informal observation as an educator helped as the inspiration for this study. Following the legal ban on corporal punishment, LaRoche (2014) and Ibrahim (2019) report that learner disciplinary issues in schools are on the rise and pose a significant challenge for many teachers. Studies show that learners conduct issues in schools have an impact on teachers' morale and can be very problematic. Mukeredzi (2017) states that some teachers get upset trying to manage discipline issues, some have even quit their jobs as teachers, while others state that they plan to. Recruitment of student teachers has been hampered by poor learner behaviour since fewer people want to become teachers. Murekeredzi (2017) makes the claim that when a teacher is unable to keep the classroom in order and maintain discipline, learners

may get discouraged and upset; the learning atmosphere is damaged, which results in learner underachievement. This is because learner today just do not know how to act in formal settings like classrooms or schools, both inside and outside of them (Elias & Schwab 2013; Martin, Schafer, McClowry, Emmer, Brekelmans, Mainhard and Wubbels (2016)I have informally observed that many educators that I know struggle with the ability to manage learner discipline whether in class or in school. Rather, they resort by simply taking the misbehaving learners to the office for the School Management Team members (SMTs) to deal with. According to Stavrou (2018), research across a range of fields has demonstrated that there is a deficiency of information on educators' viewpoints on discipline issues with their students. To instil discipline in the learners, I have seen numerous teachers use illegal methods like corporal punishment, which has led to their termination from their service.

According to Nunan and Ntombela (2019), discipline promotes productivity in schools. Nunan (2018) further states that educators are exasperated and confused regarding the discipline difficulties that they encounter. I believe that there is a need for empirical research that provides knowledge about how teachers manage learner discipline after corporal punishment was banned. This study, therefore, sought to identify and understand leadership practices of the educators in managing learner discipline within the school and in their classroom. This study is significant because its discoveries may help in understanding how educators manage learner discipline and assess the extent to which teachers explore and embrace other ways to deal with ill-discipline amongst the learners.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study:

- How do teachers in selected primary schools manage learner discipline within the classroom and in school?
- What challenges do educators encounter in managing learner discipline?
- How do management of learner discipline affect effective curriculum delivery in classrooms and in the school?

## **1.6 Definition of key concepts**

To facilitate understanding of the key terms underpinning this study, this section briefly explains the following terms: discipline, learner discipline, learner, educator, school, and management.

### **1.6.1 Discipline**

Discipline is defined as the capacity to operate in an organised method, as well as the act of establishing strict norms of behaviour on society. In addition, discipline is also known as the actions that educators do to re-establish order (Mabaso, 2019; Mtsweni, 2008). The person is motivated and supported to the point of self-direction needed for fruitful learning, acceptable self-actualisation and accountable and rewarding adulthood (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020; Mabaso, 2019). Discipline in this study relates to the actions educators take to help students behave properly in primary schools.

### **1.6.2 Learner discipline**

Learner discipline is the control of learners and the preservation of law and order in educational institutions. These guidelines may outline the appropriate expectations for attire, punctuality, socialising, and moral code (Motseke, 2020). Learner discipline in this study is used to refer to both the state of learners behaving in a disciplined manner and the process of correcting their misbehaviours when they occur.

### **1.6.3 Learner**

In this research, “learners” are all students’ who accept education. The term “learner” relates to all pupils, from infancy to adulthood (Department of Education, 1998). In this study, a learner will indicate an individual who is trained by educators at a school. Therefore, this term is used to refer to those school going children and excludes those who are in institutions of higher learner as the term students is applied to them in the context of South Africa. This term is used in this study in the sense that this term is defined in the Schools Act and other pieces of legislation in the country.

#### **1.6.4 Educator**

In this research, educator denotes an individual who delivers or passes knowledge to the learners and has a major part in handling discipline in the classroom. Employment of Educators Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998) defines an educator as any individual who teaches, educates, or trains individuals in an institution or who helps in providing educational amenities.

#### **1.6.5 School**

The Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) summarises a school as a community or privately owned institution that registers pupils in many grades from creche to matric. According to Motseke (2020), a school is an area where teachers and students gather for teaching and learning. In this study, school will be the place where research will be taking place.

#### **1.6.6 Management**

According to Motseke (2020), "management" in education refers to a certain sort of employment that comprises regulating processes and actions carried out by a person or organisation with standing in a particular specialty with the intention of directing to make developmental education possible. Management is all about getting things done through the use of people (human resource) and other resource, namely infrastructure and finance to put it simply. But how one goes about achieving one's target or goals is the method, and in this sense, management is regarded as both an art and a science (Nkabinde, 2020). This phrase will be used in this study to describe the methods teachers employ to foster an environment of teaching and learning.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

In the previous sections, I have highlighted that the study will enhance our understandings of how teachers manage learner discipline and the extent to which their practice in that regard promotes effective teaching and learning. Viewed from that perspective, I considered that this research is important and feel confident that it will as well contribute to the already existing research that has been conducted. The Department of Basic Education in the province may

elicit some insights about what is going on some schools regarding this phenomenon of learner discipline and how this is being handled.

The study contributes to national and international discussions by shedding light on how teachers approach student behaviour issues in the classroom. The study will also aid in reining in inappropriate behaviour and preserving order in classrooms. The study may potentially lead to modifications in the methods and techniques for upholding order, particularly now that physical punishment of students is not permitted in schools (Simba et al., 2016a). There have been studies on the type, patterns, and severity of discipline issues both internationally and in South African schools, including Cornelissen (2016), Davids (2017), Kiwale (2017), Mabaso (2019), Makhasane and Chikoko (2016), Musa and Martha (2020), and Nkabinde (2020), have been done on the type, patterns, and degree of disciplinary issues internationally and in South African schools. As a result, the study investigates how teachers in the uMzinyathi District of schools control student behaviour, thus, adding to the body of existing knowledge.

### **1.8 Demarcation of the study**

Three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District of KwaZulu-Natal were specifically chosen for this study. One was an English-medium that is fully integrated; the second is a primary school in a township that is not totally integrated and the third is a primary school that is located in a low socioeconomic region rather than an affluent one. Only those participating schools' procedures for controlling student discipline were examined in the study.

### **1.9 Outline of the study**

This section provides the outline of the whole study. The study consists of five chapters in which each deal with a particular aspect of the study.

## **Chapter One**

This chapter introduces the topic and provides background information. The background of the study, the problem statement, the rationale for the study, the research questions, the definition of key concepts, the significance of the study, the demarcation of the study, the outline of the study, and a summary of the chapter are all included in this chapter.

## **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two presents the literature review and the two theories that constitute a theoretical framework for this study. The literature reviewed presented perspectives from both national and international arena.

## **Chapter Three**

This chapter presents a discussion about issues of the research design and methodology implemented in the research.

## **Chapter Four**

This is the chapter where data presentation and discussion of findings are done. The data generated through the semi-structured interviews, is presented, and discussed.

## **Chapter Five**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It commences with the summary of the entire study and concludes with the study's recommendations based on the findings as well as implications of the study.

### **1.10 Chapter summary**

This chapter has introduced the study by amongst other things, giving a background and the rationale of the study. Additionally, the chapter discussed statement to the problem, research questions, definition of key concepts, significance of the study and demarcation of the study. Moreover, the chapter has provided the outline of all chapters to indicate how the report was developed. The following chapter discusses the literature review and the theories that underpin the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter One provided an introduction and background context of the study. This chapter presents a review of literature on the topic of learner discipline management by the teachers in the context of the classroom and the school. The examination of various circumstances is done to explore the approaches and strategies used by educators to deal with discipline issues in primary schools. In discussing the literature reviewed, the chapter also focuses on the following themes, namely, the nature of discipline; International perspective, the South African perspective; the role of teachers in managing learner discipline in schools; the causes of learner discipline problems in primary schools; the educators' mandate with regards to learner discipline; management of learner discipline; strategies that can be used to prevent learner discipline problems in the classroom and the school; impact of discipline on effective teaching and learning, implementation of disciplinary practices towards effective teaching and learning and the theoretical framework that underpin the study.

Discipline is widely accepted as necessary for fostering an environment in schools that is supportive of successful teaching and learning and that results in students performing well (Nkabinde, 2020). According to Nkabinde (2020), discipline is always based on a learning context. Masingi (2017) confirms that a lack of discipline makes teaching difficult. Nkabinde (2020) reports that in-depth interviews with educators suggest that they are struggling to deal with issues of disrespect, aggressiveness, defiance of authority and irresponsibility displayed by some students at their schools.

#### **2.2 The nature of discipline**

Multiple definitions exist for the term "discipline," and it makes sense that different interpretations exist depending on one's point of view. Some scholars claim that discipline refers to proper behaviour (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Others, however, claim that discipline refers to measures that are taken to address improper behaviour (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Davids (2017) argues that educators' diverse conceptions of discipline range from the building



of moral character to asserting one's control over learners to the prevention of misbehaviour, use of corrective measures, punishment, as well as self-discipline. According to Davids (2017), there are two definitions of discipline when it comes to learner behaviour. The first definition of discipline is the standard of learner behaviour or teacher control. Second, discipline describes the steps that teachers take to ensure that learners behave in a proper manner (Davids, 2017). This confirms the argument stated by Rice (1987); Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020), that discipline comprises the exertions made in the classroom to halt and regulate learner behavioural issues. Discipline also includes the manners that results in improved learning and displays proper conduct.

Some academics lean toward the first meaning when interpreting their field. For instance, according to Simba et al., (2016a), discipline denotes a suitable behaviour, obedience with acknowledged behavioural standards and rules. Similar to this, Dzivhani (2000); Gabana and Madrigal (2021) and others regard discipline as the state of conformity and order amongst the learners that enables the school to accomplish its goals. This implies that learners in schools are required to abide by the regulations of the school and the classroom. Simba et al. (2016a) support this view by making the argument that rules are essential for maintaining order because they instruct the learners on what behaviour is appropriate and what is not. Undisciplined behaviour is defined as any conduct that violates the established rules or the established order in the classroom (Gae, 2016). It is necessary to stop this kind of behaviour since it undermines learning and teaching. Eliminating obstacles that can prevent the fulfilment of this goal will help learners learn and develop to their full potential in a structured setting (Mupa & Isaac Chinooneka, 2019).

On the other hand, other researchers view discipline in the second sense that was just mentioned. According to Rogers (1998); Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020), discipline is a planned activity in which a teacher tries to lead, control or challenge a learner about conduct that interferes with the rights of others. According to Mtsweni (2008) and Motseke (2020), discipline is the goal to combat and reroute students' wrong behaviours in order to uphold order in the classroom through remedial actions. Gae (2016) claims that discipline is the act of keeping the peace in a school. According to Davids (2017), educators need to preserve discipline in the classroom. They also think that maintaining order is essential to developing a setting that is good for teaching and learning. Therefore, it is assumed that educators utilise punishment as a tool to get learners to behave. With disobedient learners, teachers use various

disciplinary techniques in order to achieve educational goals. Simba et al. (2016a) make the argument that, should the learners fail to behave appropriately, disciplinary methods should be used to correct or reinforce adherence.

The basis of this research is that discipline is essential for successful teaching and learning, which stems from the discussion on the nature of discipline that was just mentioned. In order to foster an environment in the classroom and school that encourages strong academic performance, discipline is a need (Simba et al., 2016a). Therefore, discipline is viewed for the purposes of this study as a method used by educators to guarantee that an organised setting is preserved so that teaching and learning may proceed efficiently.

### **2.3 International Perspective**

According to Nunan (2018), learner discipline in schools has always been a challenge for teachers and principals. Teachers agree that developing a safe and secure learning atmosphere is the sign of an effective school principal and an effective organisation. Consistently, the Phi Delta Kaplan Gallup public opinion survey has recognised discipline as the key issue facing public schools. Singh (2012); Nunan and Ntombela (2019), cite surveys that show that Americans consider many schools to be disordered, rowdy environments. They make the supposition that schools are to blame for not being unable to keep students accountable for their behaviour and for accepting parental reproach of or lawsuits against schools that attempt to encourage accountability in the learners. Nunan (2018) claims that educators are under constant pressure to show improvement in their learners' performance in the examinations and may not have much time or forbearance for behavioural issues in the classroom. Improving learners' discipline is indisputably vital for safety reasons, as well as for academic and social achievement. Nunan (2018) argues that in order to effectively address issues with learner discipline, principals must be conscious of the particular nature of the problems they face in their specific schools and possess a comprehensive cognizance of the resources at their disposal. Since the circumstances may differ from one school to another and for diverse people, principals must use several methods for various problems (Nunan, 2018).

## **2.4 The South African perspective**

Nunan and Ntombela (2019), claim that discipline issues in schools are growing worse and are out of control in some places. According to Du Plessis and Looock (2007), certain schools have such severe discipline issues that it affects both the overall number of teachers and the number of individuals who were trained to become teachers. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), learner disrespect and impoliteness were the main causes for teacher resignations. They add that it has always been challenging for teachers to discipline pupils, especially those who have serious behavioural problems. The use of punitive versus supportive disciplinary methods is at the centre of this issues. This claim implies that while using punitive methods like corporal punishment may be prohibited, there are no effective alternatives. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), assert that adolescents who are absent from school are at most likely to participate in crime and delinquency. Moreover, they emphasise that zero acceptance strategies have not improved school climate or boosted school safety, but rather have had the opposite effect, leading to higher rates of school dropouts, for instance (Du Plessis & Looock, 2007; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

Additionally, learner disobedience is rife in South African classrooms (Hughes, 2020). Nkabinde (2020) The increasing amount of learners being suspended and expelled from several Western Cape schools is highlighted by (Nkabinde, 2020). In the Libode District of the Eastern Cape Province, Segalo and Rambuda (2018) recognise the pervasiveness of learner misbehaviour, including violence in schools. In certain schools, learner disobedience has led to learner deaths and severe injuries sustained on school grounds (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Additionally, when learners intoxicated themselves during a school outing in one of the independent schools in the Mthatha district, the episode caused criticism in the media. They were suspended, and the administration at the school nearly prevented them from taking their final Matriculation test (Nkabinde, 2020).

Another independent school in Mthatha requested a learner to leave because he disobeyed the educator's order to take off his hat, which was against the dress code for the school. He left the house, bought fuel, and set the teacher's car on fire (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). According to Nhambura (2020), there was a lot of violence in the classrooms, making learners feel uneasy and untrusted by their classmates. The environment of teaching and learning has been severely disturbed in schools by violence and misbehaviour. The type of indiscipline that raises concerns

is the kind that disrupts the safe and conducive learning settings that should be present in schools.

According to Nhambura (2020), some educators are finding it challenging to develop plans that enable them sense that they are able to manage learners' that they teach. Hence, they are troubled, and others are thinking of resigning their careers because they are having problems in managing learner misbehaviour. Additionally, as stated by the Department of Basic Education, the majority of teachers have not obtained official training about the punishment tactics and their use. Nkabinde (2020) adds that some learners act obstinately with their educators, participate in aggressive and violent behaviour, smoke marijuana, and bring dangerous weapons to school. This confirms Motseke (2020) claim that other learners often insult, interfere with, and disparage their teachers. According to Motseke (2020), learners routinely verbally abuse teachers, in addition to using mobile devices in class and leaving earpieces hanging from their ears, they similarly steal, cheat, lie, and vandalise. Nunan (2018) further supports that learners vocally annoy and intimidate their educators and they also carry knives and guns. The fact that parents of learners who normally cause disturbance to educators are always absent when they are needed at school. Parents are not giving schools their full support when it comes to handling learner misbehaviour (Motseke, 2020). David (2017) supported the claim that not all parents react favourably when told that their children have been disciplined for misbehaviour.

## **2.5 Teachers' role and practices in managing learner discipline in schools**

Because of learners' disorderly behaviour, educators in schools confront the problem of managing learner discipline. Semali and Vumilia (2016), who claim that teachers regularly encounter an absence of discipline in primary schools, bolster this claim. Literature demonstrates that indiscipline, which manifests in behaviours like drug misuse, absenteeism, bullying, truancy, and more, poses a severe problem to education leaders and practitioners in schools (Mabaso, 2019). According to Mabaso (2019), teachers have issues with learner indiscipline both nationally and internationally. This is supported by research on the occurrence and increase of learner misconduct in schools (Foncha et al., 2017). For instance, Littles (2021) notes that angry and disrespectful behaviour has increased to dangerous levels across the country in schools. In contrast, Prins et al. (2019) on the other hand, contend that while

discipline issues are rare in Australian schools, they do exist. This suggests that behavioural issues in schools are a worldwide issue and are not exclusive to South Africa.

To prevent interruptions in the educational process, teachers are charged with managing learner discipline. Section 8 of the Schools Act of 1996 states that harmony must be maintained in school and classroom settings in order for learners' education to be successful in the absence of disorderly conduct and wrongdoing (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). This suggests that as part of their legal obligations as educators, in schools' educators are obliged to uphold discipline. Semali and Vumili (2016) state that maintaining order in the classroom can be seen as a sign of real character because, a teacher has the authority to exercise power over the learner in their capacity as a person in *loco parentis*. According to Onyango, Raburu and Aloka (2016), instilling discipline in learners will not only aid learners' change toward a harmonious and open-minded community, but it will also aid learners develop self-control and inspire them to reach their academic potential. Since no productive learning occurs in a chaotic environment, educators have a duty to develop and preserve a progressive, productive classroom environment that is favourable to learning (Barbetta, 2022). Accordingly, this study holds that teachers' responsibility is to prevent disruptions in learning by effectively managing learners' behaviour.

According to Mabaso (2019), disciplinary issues stated by the teachers in schools can vary from minor indiscretions to more significant cases of misbehaviour. Learner misconduct and disciplinary issues have a harmful effect on teaching and learning, which causes academic performance to rapidly decline (Simba et al., 2016a). In support of this, Davids (2017) argues that learner misbehaviour—which obstructs instruction and inhibits learning and adds a lot of stress—is the biggest disruptive reality in education today. In addition, Prins et al. (2019) assert that teachers experience stress as a result of upholding discipline. According to Prince et al. (2019), management strategies need to be employed to deal with misconduct issues. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) adds that discipline is necessary to enforce adherence to school policies and correct misconduct on the part of students. These viewpoints include the connotation that teachers must find solutions to these disciplinary issues since they have an impact on both their instruction and the learning of their students.

Nevertheless, studies show that with the end of corporal punishment, school discipline issues have become more and more stressful for teachers (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). This shows

that teachers were solely familiar with using corporal punishment as a form of discipline. The findings by Hill and Chin (2018) that some methods are underutilised in the educational setting lend credence to this. The majority of teachers feel powerless and unable of resolving disciplinary issues in the classroom since corporal punishment was outlawed. Another argument is that although teachers are familiar with various forms of punishment, they do not believe they are successful in reducing learner misbehaviour (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). This suggests that some teachers are not successfully enforcing discipline through other disciplinary procedures, which discourages learners from reaching their full academic potential, because they do not take these alternatives seriously, teachers find it difficult to use them (Mabaso, 2019).

Similar to this, Nkabinde (2020) shows that teachers struggle to come up with solutions that will allow them to properly assist students. Some educators are effective in maintaining harmony and proper conduct in the classroom, others are not (Naicker, 2021). Schools perform differently as a result; some schools attribute their poor performance to disciplinary issues. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) assert that many schools identify a deficiency of discipline as a major issue hindering efficient teaching and learning as evidence in support of their thesis. According Mabaso (2019), teachers should constantly be on guard for diverse types of learners indiscipline in classes and at school in order to foster a secure and beneficial to learning environment. To be able to cope with inappropriate behaviour, teachers must be familiar with and knowledgeable about various methods of discipline (Semali & Vumili, 2016). However, studies done in Sudan show that additional circumstances, such as unpleasant school settings and crowded classrooms, make it challenging for the teachers to use other methods of upholding discipline (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

Nkabinde (2020) asserts that teachers are crucial in overseeing learner behaviour. However, they require parental and other stakeholders' assistance in order for them to carry out this duty effectively (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Semali and Vumilia (2016) assert that everyone in a school is accountable for maintaining order, this includes teachers. According to Davids (2017), all participants must be involved in the creation of regulations that would encourage progressive conduct. Additionally, Sections 8(1) and (2) of the Republic of South Africa (1996); Schools Act of 1996 specify the duty of the school governing board is to implement a student code of conduct by consulting the relevant stakeholders. Parents, teachers, and learners ought to participate in the consultation procedure. Nevertheless, there is a shared opinion from

various academics that there is a deficiency of parental participation in student conduct problems (Simba et al., 2016a). This suggests that educators need backing from all stakeholders for managing learner discipline.

## **2.6 Causes of learner disciplinary problems in primary schools**

The usually documented reasons of learners' misconduct comprise bad parenting, bad influence by the mass media and politics (Kanjogu & Bosire, 2012; Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016; Ruto-Korir, 2003). According to various scholars such as Nene (2013); Edwards and Watts (2004); Majani (2020), disciplinary issues are never the result of nothing; instead, they consistently have an underlying cause, such as the community that learners originate from, their families, their schools, and the peers they associate with. These elements influence how learners behave in the classrooms (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Majani, 2020; Nene, 2011). Edwards and Watts (2004); Majani (2020) states that some of these issues are brought on by educators who are regularly overstrained by the disciplinary problems they must handle. However, many of these problems are a symptom of societal and domestic issues, as well as issues with the school's environment and administrative practices (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Majani, 2020). According to various authors, the following some of the elements that contribute to learner behaviour issues are individual factors, family factors, school factors, societal factors and the influence of gender and race.

### **2.6.1 Individual factors**

Lewis (1991) and Slee (2020) claim that emotional problems in the learners' can result in misbehaviour. When they feel that they require different treatment, they want to be in charge, they want to be left alone, or want to harm others because they have been hurt in the past, they may act out in class (Lewis, 1991; Slee, 2020). Some learners use their mobile devices in class, and when the teacher challenges them, they respond belligerently to make a good impression to their classmates (Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016; Rossouw, 2003). Learners that have challenges emotionally, can be very disorderly when teaching approaches are used. For example, Rossouw (2003) makes observations about active learning plans that enable learners to talk out. Some learners exploit the conditions as the lesson continues and start creating a lot of noise they are therefore, problematic (Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016; Rossouw, 2003). Additionally, Rossouw (2003) and Majani (2020) say that emotionally disturbed learners

frequently have no regard for human self-respect; therefore, newer learners are regularly persecuted and tormented by the elder ones. He goes on to say that learners have a detrimental effect on other learners. For instance, a number of learners could idolise and copy learners who are obnoxious and conceited (Majani, 2020; Rossouw, 2003). This is typical teenage behaviour in the primary schools. The misbehaviour of learners in class may be caused by a number of child-related issues (Matseke, 2008; Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016). A juvenile often misbehaves in order to meet the expectations of their peers and avoid rejection (Matseke, 2008; Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016).

Developmental issues and immaturity learners' came across that they do not understand some reasons for a learner's inappropriate behaviour. Moreover, anger at home or at school, as well as the encouragement and praise a child gets from his peers for challenging the authority of the educator, can lead to unsuitable behaviour. The desire to avoid making mistakes and receiving punishment may be the driving force behind bad behaviour, such as cheating on tests (Matseke, 2008; Osagie-Obazee & Eduwen, 2016). According to Knott-Craig (2007); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), today's youth are aware of their rights; therefore, learners are aware that educators cannot refuse them their right to an education. The obligation to consistently go to classes and to refrain from impeding others' ability to learn also applies to those who have the right to an education. Parents' and learners' must be taught in schools how rights, responsibilities, and duties relate to one another. If a duty is not carried out, a privilege may be suspended (Knott-Craig, 2007; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

### **2.6.2 Family factors**

The closest and possibly the most important system influencing a person is their family (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Walsh, 2011). Families in disorder and a lack of parental management are often quoted as risk elements. According to Rayment (2006); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), some parents act violently and belligerently toward school employees, and their kids often exhibit violent, belligerent and disruptive behaviour as well. Moreover, 10% of the interviewees admitted to frequently seeing their parents arguing, either vocally or physically. Children will undoubtedly carry these memories with them into the classroom if they observe antagonistic conduct between their mother and father whom they look up to. According to Wolhuter and Oosthuizen (2003) and Majani (2020), the absence of parental input is the primary cause of misconduct issues from the viewpoint of the student. According to



Edwards and Watts (2004); Majani (2020), different home experiences have an influence on kids' conduct. Kids may look for inappropriate social experiences elsewhere if parents spend minimal time with them, which can occasionally have tragic results. Conflicts may arise between parents and children even when parents are present. Children's capacity to operate normally can be negatively impacted by factors including divorce, poverty, in addition to physical and psychological abuse. Particularly learners from very dysfunctional families experience significant adjustment issues at school. Damage to one's self-image, lack of attention, and lack of love are the four characteristics of dysfunctional families (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Majani, 2020).

Edwards and Watts (2004); Majani (2020) make further mention of the fact that learners who get minimal care from their family often pursue it from their teachers. Unfortunately, a lot of children only get their parents' consideration when they misbehave. They are ignored if they do not trouble the parents too much. These situations encourage bad behaviour while discouraging good behaviour. Children from these settings learn that misbehaving will always attract the consideration they want. These behavioural patterns are learned by children at home, and they frequently repeat them at school. The lack of love is similar to the lack of attention. Learners usually believe that being given consideration means they are loved (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Majani, 2020). Additionally, learners' self-concept begins to develop long before they enrol in school. The level of confidence that students bring to class will either have increased or decreased because of diverse home situations. This knowledge is important for the teachers to have so that they can understand when the learner's act the out.

Young children can recognise their own helplessness in comparison to adults who are bigger and more experienced. In general, parents' and caregivers' ability in assisting learners in making the transition from a sense of helplessness to self-assurance affects how they view life. According to scholars such as Alidzulwi (2000); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), parents have the main duty in developing an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning. It seems that the key issue causing disciplinary problems in primary schools is the deficiency of parental participation (Alidzulwi, 2000; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). The deficiency of parental participation in kids' education in Venda, as noted by Alidzulwi (2000), contributes to learners' poor performance, high dropout rates, and lack of discipline in the classroom. According to Nene (2013) and Majani (2020), the main contributing cause to disciplinary issues in schools is parents' failure to instil discipline in their children. According to Hayward (2003) and Majani

(2020), when parents interact with their children with the suitable decorum and respect, their interactions with teachers reflect that. Nevertheless, if parents do not respect others, their children will copy them and have little to no regard for their teachers (Louw & Barnes, 2003; Majani, 2020).

Masekoameng (2010); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) state that factors like poor, cruel, or inconsistent discipline, parental conflict, inadequate child management, and parental attitudes and actions that excuse the kids immoral behaviour are among the significant predictors of juvenile behaviour issues that have been uncovered by a significant body of research. Furthermore, according to Masekoameng (2010); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), a sizable portion of young people are having difficulty coming to terms with the numerous losses brought on by split-up, blended families, extremely mobile way of living, paucity, disability discrimination, ambiguous social morals, and perplexing interactions with adults. All these issues, combined with the fast fluctuations in the financial, political\ and cultural areas, severely influence kids, and the capacity of adults to provide them satisfactory attention. To supplement these conclusions, Rossouw (2003) and Majani (2020) indicate that adolescent parents are anxious of their children's and hence they feel powerless. Moreover, he notes that parents assume that the schools impart their children's appropriate behaviour, while no acknowledging their own duties (Majani, 2020; Rossouw, 2003).

### **2.6.3 School factors**

Numerous school-related factors are listed by Oosthuizen and Van Staden (2007) as having the potential to increase learners' tendency to participate in disorderly behaviour. These factors include a hostile school environment; educators who are insufficient role models; educators who lack educational/didactic proficiency; congested schools; poor institutional structure of the school; and schools that are dilapidated and poorly maintained physically. Learner conflicts are more likely to occur in untidy, graffiti-painted, and unclean schools than in organised schools where a constructive school environment is prevalent (Wolhuter & Oosthuizen, 2003; Majani, 2020). According to Kubeka (2018), inadequate infrastructure might cause anger and violence among the learners. He continues to say that congested, enormous urban schools, where learners either have little room to roam about on the school surroundings or blend in with the anonymous throng, can be said to be similar (Kubeka, 2018).

In addition, Grobler (2018) notes that South Africa has a large number of school violence incidents despite the fact that many of its schools are not operating efficiently. Furthermore, a document produced by the Department of Education and the Secretariat for Safety and Security finds that because schools do not operate at the most essential level, they inadvertently add to such violence. By doing this, they inspire violence and fall short of presenting youths with the vital steadiness, support, and sense of consistency that they require to grow and mature. Moreover, even those schools that are scarcely operational still add to the violence system because they do not correct the risk factors that motivate violence or give children the means they need to be strong (Grobler, 2018). According to Grobler (2018), studies on high achieving learners in Alberta, Canada, proposes, that education is unable to shield them from racial aggression and insults and that they are held to poorer standards by teachers than Caucasian learners. This research is consistent with several other studies conducted in Canada.

#### **2.6.4 Societal factors**

According to De Wet (2003) and Majani (2020), racial clashes, poor accommodation and medical care, the availability and inadequate control of guns, insufficient policing, and joblessness are some of the social-centred risk aspects that may raise the probability of the learners behaving disorderly in class. Additionally, Wolhuter and Oosthuizen (2003); Majani (2020) hold the opinion that media-propagated examples of violence that the public sees or experiences as victims have a biasing influence that could increase learners' predisposition to act disruptively (Majani, 2020; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007).

According to Edwards and Watts (2004); Majani (2020), society plays a big part in encouraging issues that relate school discipline. He refers to the four categories of social influences, which include peer pressure, technology, race and class tension, drug use, and gang and drug-related behaviour. Discipline issues are typically influenced by both family and social factors. Children who experience rejection at home may look for acceptance elsewhere. Children that are rejected are frequently drawn to gangs (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Majani, 2020). A child's demand for identification and attention may be met by joining a gang. Andersson and Stavrou (2001); concur with Majani (2020) that a lack of parental monitoring is associated with misbehaviour which a learner may exhibit. Adolescents' behaviour will be impacted by inadequate parental guidance and a deficiency of domestic interaction since they will choose

to hang out with classmates who may also exhibit a range of undesirable behaviours. Peer pressure, which is a common occurrence at school, has a big impact on how children behave. If their peers think school is a joke, students may follow suit and put minimal effort into their academics (Majani, 2020).

### **2.6.5 The influence of gender and race**

An additional critical feature worth considering in terms of the factors that contribute to the learners' misbehaviours which impacts on the severity of disciplinary issues is the sex of the learners (Masekoameng, 2010; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Day-Vines and Day-Hairston (2005); Osagie-Obazee and Eduwen (2016) state that there are many ecological factors that contribute to metropolitan American boys experiencing excessively greater number of disciplinary transfers, suspensions, and expulsions than female adolescents. These include misconceptions and cultural issues pertaining to the culture of origin and the school. When he claims that African American boys are penalised more regularly and severely than their classmates in other nations, Monroe (2005); Simba et al. (2016b) also highlights the gender gap Monroe (2005); Simba et al. (2016b) indicates that school administrators are inclined to view the conduct of males as more menacing than that of females, and in many instances, males get severe, punitive punishment. Additionally, males are more belligerent in at school than females, they use physical violence as well as intimidation. Females are disposed to showing more roundabout forms of malevolent gossip, as well as malevolent shunning. Monroe (2005); Simba et al. (2016b) additionally indicate that the causes of males being more savage than females is that males are physiologically more ready to learn to be dominant, to be cut-throat, and belligerent. Females are socialised to be more reserved.

### **2.7 The educators' mandate regarding learner discipline**

Segalo and Rambuda (2018) state that every educator must provide an academic environment in which every learner is encouraged to nature a civil and progressive attitude towards other learners and educators. The *in loco parentis* principle (i.e., the teacher "acting as a parent") maintains that educators have a responsibility to act like real parents to the learners and in that regard, they should safeguard learners from any form of harm (physical, mental, or emotional). Teachers acting *in loco parentis* position are expected to identify in advance any possible hazards to which learners may be exposed at school, and they should initiate safety measures

to safeguard learners from harm. Moreover, there are two complementary concepts that guide teachers' roles, namely, the *in loco parentis* role, that is, the responsibility to look after (which involves teachers' obligation to take care of students' physical and psychological welfare) and the obligation to ensure harmony at a school (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018).

Furthermore, all teachers or educators are responsible for preserving school discipline (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). When an educator is first told of a problem or witnesses one, he or she must take responsibility and refer the indiscipline to a higher authority or, if possible, handle it himself/herself. If required, the teacher may submit disciplinary issues to a senior member, subsequently, sending the subject to the principal. The principal may report the problem to organs dedicated to dealing with indiscipline, for example, the school's student discipline committee or the MEC of Education if the indiscipline is extremely severe. Any disciplinary punishment taken should be proportional to the degree of misbehaviour. Section 8 of the Schools Act states that schools should assess misbehaviour severity and act accordingly.

## **2.8 Management of learner discipline**

In this segment, the focal point is the management of learner discipline, and this entails emphasising the two broad management methodologies, namely, the stringent approach as well as the lenient approach. Then there is a third one which is closely linked to the lenient approach, and this is called praise and rewards approach, which is the system that is used to promote good discipline and good behaviour when managing learner discipline.

### **2.8.1 Stringent Approach**

Mestry and Khumalo (2012); Nunan and Ntombela (2019) contend that when educators are strict, they use tough speech, criticise the learners, and intimidate them strong-arm them to do their classwork in a timely manner., This may cause learners to behave badly and lower their participation in class. Singh (2012) and Nunan (2018) admit that the use of punitive disciplinary methods temporarily advances the learners' behaviour nevertheless. This approach is likely to raise the chances of antisocial and deviant conduct such as hostility, lawbreaking, bullying, and aggressive actions within and out of the school, which is exactly the type of behaviour that schools are trying to curtail. According to dos Santos and de Carvalho Neto (2020), when poor

behaviour is not addressed through disciplinary measures, it may only be bottled-up and may later return under new conditions.

According to Nunan and Ntombela (2019), research shows that punishment is effective in the sense that it frequently results in immediate obedience from the learners. However, if it is used frequently, it can have negative effects such as reduced self-respect, withdrawal, impulsivity, apprehension, depression, lawbreaking, and drug abuse. According to Driekurs et al. (1998) and Shala (2021), punishment may exacerbate undesirable behaviour rather than curtail it. Furthermore, they claim that punishment does not deter misbehaviour but rather strengthens learners' perceptions of teachers as spies. According to Munn (1999); Nunan and Ntombela (2019), rather than always disciplining the learners for misbehaviour, it is preferable to praise or reward them for excellent behaviour. This may encourage other learners, particularly delinquents, to act appropriately. More details are provided in the next two sections where lenient and reward approaches are discussed.

### **2.8.2 Lenient management approach**

According to Noguera (2008); Good and Lavigne (2017), maintaining safety and order in schools does not call for turning them into prisons or detention facilities. Therefore, hiring teachers who challenge the inclination to chastise, using segregation and disgrace and who regard themselves as kids' champions who can also embrace a lenient approach, instead of becoming wardens and prison guards, is even more important than changing disciplinary procedures (Good & Lavigne, 2017). A tolerant attitude has the ability to develop schools where all learners are encouraged to study and excel academically, and where disciplinary issues are dealt with in a way that is consistent with the larger educational objectives. Good empathisers, considerate teachers are aware of the child's past and the issues that are there (McNamara & Moreton, 2012, 2016; Singh, 2012). Additionally, McNamara and Moreton (2016) confirm that forgiving teachers work to identify any potential causes of or motivations for the child's misbehaviour. Because their parents do not love or care for them, some learners may act out in class because they are trying to get noticed. Others might have experienced physical or sexual abuse in the past, and serial relationships could also lead to emotional issues. Such learners experience feelings of rejection, abandonment, incapacity, and depression.

To seek the teacher's love and attention, they may try to express their emotions by striking, kicking, fighting, verbally abusing, insulting, and harassing other students. Weeks (2001); Badrus and Arifin (2021) emphasise the necessity for educators to comprehend the various emotional requirements of learners with behavioural issues and to handle them using pastoral care, along with more dialogue and less shouting; this is what characterises lenient teachers. This caring approach is believed to be more effective in promoting discipline among the learners and teach them to take responsibility for their actions rather than acting in fear of the teachers' punishment. This information is important in explaining how teachers can or do manage learners' discipline in the classroom.

### **2.8.3 Praise and reward systems**

By acknowledging learners' good behaviour and efforts, Nunan and Ntombela (2019) claim that praise and reward system helps promote a good attitude and decent discipline in the classrooms. Most South African schools have mechanisms in place for dealing with disruptive behaviour and honouring learners who excel in sports and academic arenas. However, few schools have procedures for honouring good behaviour (Nunan & Ntombela, 2019). According to Singh (2012); Nunan (2018), if schools explain to the learners the logic behind this incentive system, it can encourage them to behave better and reduce behaviour issues. According to Sadruddin (2012); Ward (2016), positive discipline is the most common type of discipline because it focuses on encouraging good behaviour in the classroom, reinforces good behaviour with prizes, and involves students in decisions regarding rewards and punishments. He goes on to say that it is thought that good behaviour would be encouraged by recognising, rewarding, and punishing poor behaviour (Ward, 2016). This system is closely linked to the second approach, lenient approach. In other words, this system is used by those educators who adopt a lenient approach to maintaining learner discipline. Viewed in that way, we may not regard it as a third approach, but as a system that is used by those educators who embrace a lenient approach.

## **2.9 Strategies that can be used to prevent learner discipline problems in the classroom and within the schools**

According to scholars like Nakpodia (2010); Majani (2020), there must be adequate disciplinary guidelines and procedures in place in order to prevent and attend to learners'

conduct problems and facilitate for the effective functioning of the schools. When considering separate schools, the guidelines and measures are additionally defined as rules and regulations. Rules and regulations at schools must be sensible, have an instructional motivation, and be manageable organisationally so that they can be legally enforceable. Only in the situation of the implementation or fact of the setting can the sensibleness of rules and regulations be determined in the abstract. To determine the fairness of any rule and regulation, certain benchmarks must be used to all the tabled rules before they are affected by the school officials. They must consider issues such as: 1) is the suggested rule essential for the school to operate effectively and in an organised manner? 2) Do the rules include some clampdown of liberty?

Moreover, Chapter 2 of the 1996 Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) outline the Bill of rights that apply to human rights concepts and also apply to learners as citizens of the nation (Nakpodia, 2010; Majani, 2020). These constitutional provisions must be taken into consideration while designing laws and regulations because when someone's rights are violated, they may object and dispute the disciplinary action unless it can be shown that it is reasonable and legal under the circumstances. A teacher must handle disciplinary concerns in many different places because of the specific nature of the school. As a result, the rules and regulations are made to address a wide range of issues affecting the learners, including attendance at school, the use of uniform, personal grooming of the learner, the use and abuse of school property, relationships between learners and teachers, class rules, and tests and exams. Furthermore, Nakpodia (2010) and Majani (2020), state that an educator dealing with any of the above-mentioned disciplinary concerns has to do it within the confines of the law. There are three rules for completing these. They are: 1) When handling a learner, the educator has to implement the appropriate code of conduct. 2) The Ministry of Education must approve the discipline-enforcing policy. 3) The educator's actions have to be exempted from indirect responsibility, which means that they have to act in the in the course and range of their occupation.

The Schools Act outlawed physical punishment in all South African schools, as noted by (Nene, 2013; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). The banning of corporal punishment from schools has produced a gap and it has proven too difficult to cover (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2018). This has caused a range of disciplinary problems (Majani, 2020; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007). Disruptive behaviour that interferes with a learner's fundamental rights to safety and respect in the learning environment is referred to as these discipline problems (Majani, 2020; Rogers,



1993). Many of the findings from a nationwide study on discipline in South African schools that was conducted in 2000 added to the publication, “Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience”. The Department of Education sent this pamphlet to all South African schools in 2001. To combat the rapidly worsening discipline issues, the book comprises strategies for handling the alternatives to corporal punishment, as well as illustrations of disciplinary measures that have been used to deal with misbehaviour, varying from oral warnings and communal service to being suspended from all school-related events. If a learner infringes on the Code of Conduct, there are measures that should be followed, and these include counselling, verbal and written warnings, community service, menial tasks, additional work, constructive detention and ultimately, suspension and expulsion (Department of Education, 2000). These disciplinary measures are briefly outlined below.

### Counselling

It is hoped that the subject can be handled positively by referring the learner to a school counsellor to take a more optimistic approach to the issue. The counsellor has expertise to deal with learners who exhibit disruptive behaviours and understand what could be happening in the life of an individual learner. Therefore, it is important that this route is taken as part of the code of conduct for learners (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2018).

### Verbal and written warnings

Another disciplinary measure that can and should be used in giving a learner a verbal warning first after the matter has been discussed and the learner is aware that his/her actions have been noted to be deviant from the Code of Conduct for Learners adopted in the school. This should be followed up with a written warning if there is recurrence of the misdemeanour (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). A verbal warning is followed with a written warning. Because there should be a record of all disciplinary action taken, even a verbal warning is recorded, and so is a written warning.

### Community service

One of the disciplinary measures that can be taken involves the school working closer with community structures and ensuring that a learner who has been found guilty of an offence is

forced to do community service under monitoring by both the school and the community structures where this service is conducted (Nene, 2013). This is one of an important disciplinary measure that can be used, but also that hardly ever used in South African schools (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

### Menial tasks

Another form of disciplinary measure includes doing menial work within the school premises. This may involve a learner cleaning certain identified section of the school. There is no physical pain that is inflicted on the learner (Department of Education, 2000). Although this measure can be used as an alternative to corporal punishment, there are scholars who argue that such a step may also have its own negative aspects if it is not handled properly and with care (Majani, 2020; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007).

### Additional work

Discipline may also take the shape of more menial work as addition to the work that a learner may have been exposed to (Department of Education, 2000). Like the menial task I presented above, this kind of disciplinary measure needs to be handled with extreme caution as it may send wrong messages about the importance of work (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

### Constructive detention

One of the measures that schools adopt is constructive detention. This term constructive detention refers to giving learners extra work after school hours and or during the break, learners are also required to remain in a presumably undesirable place for a specified amount of time under the supervision of their educators (Majani, 2020, Ntombela, 2019). This form of disciplinary measure can only work where schools have infrastructure to keep learners in detention after school and also it has implications for teachers' work as these detentions are supervised by the teachers (Bhengu, 2005). Many teachers in rural communities do not like this measure because it takes their time whereby, instead of going home, they are kept behind supervising the detained learners (Bhengu, 2005). In the context of rurality and the fact that the majority of schools in South Africa belong to Quintile 1 to Quintile 3, (Bhengu, 2021), the majority of the schools do not have the facilities to use this form of disciplinary measure

## Suspension and expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are the ultimate disciplinary action that can be taken by a school for the learner who has committed a serious offence (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). These actions should only be taken as a last resort after all other options have been exhausted. The authority of teachers was cut since corporal punishment was fast and straight forward to use whereas other approaches needed time, perseverance, and skills, which educators often be deficient in (Kubeka, 2018).

### **2.10 Impact of discipline on effective teaching and learning**

Semali and Vumilia (2016) state that discipline is one of many aspects that must be present for a lesson to be considered successful. According to research, maintaining order in a classroom environment is indispensable for productive learning and teaching to happen (Mabaso, 2019). According to Semali and Vumilia (2016), disruptive learners cause discipline issues in schools that affect both teachers and learners who want to learn. According to Candeias, Galindo, Calisto, Borralho, and Reschke (2021), the learning process is the primary victim of discipline issues. Additionally, according to Semali and Vumilia (2016), disruptive behaviours hinder the efficiency of the teaching and learning practice in the classroom. They continue by saying that less time is spent educating since more time is spent regulating these behaviours. Therefore, it is critical to find a solution to the discipline issue to prevent disruptions in education and ensure that schools operate at their peak efficiency (Semali & Vumilia, 2016).

An organised setting is necessary for productive teaching and learning. Davids (2017) states that keeping order and practising discipline are both necessary for fostering an environment that is favourable to teaching and learning. This opinion makes it very evident that discipline is a precondition for any good teaching and learning. According to Foncha et al., (2017), discipline in schools is envisioned to enable the security of teachers and learners as well as to foster an atmosphere that is favourable for both teaching and learning. Segalo and Rambuda (2018) further note out that due of the school's supportive atmosphere for teaching and learning, success which is the main objective of the institution will be accomplished. Therefore, for effective teaching and learning and strong academic achievement, discipline must be effective.

According to Foncha, Ngoqo, Mafumo and Maruma (2017), the disruptive behaviour of numerous learners in a classroom prevents effective learning and teaching from taking place. If learner indiscipline situations are not stopped, the institution can lose its effectiveness. Diverse researchers have come to the same conclusion regarding how indiscipline affects learners' academic performance; it makes performance worse. For instance, Simba et al., (2016a) discovered that the majority of schools were not practicing productive discipline since learners would not comply with it because of this, learners become delinquents yet, they receive no punishment, which results in poor academic achievement. Moreover, he asserts that if a school has suitable disciplinary procedures, academic achievement will advance. The management of school punishment affects academic performance (Simba, Agak & Kabuka, 2016a). The administration of school discipline has an impact on the academic achievement. According to Jamil and Khalid (2016), learners who act out at school do worse. This suggests that strong academic success depends on the proper control of indiscipline (Jamil & Khalid, 2016).

## **2.11 Implementation of disciplinary practices towards effective teaching and learning**

Hill and Chin (2018) contend that the development of a structured and disciplined learning atmosphere in the classroom is essential for the success of both teaching and learning. Learners that misbehave usually disturb learning environments, necessitating the implementation of disciplinary measures to manage indiscipline (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). This shows that for effective implementation, schools need to have a discipline process that is well-known to all relevant parties. To develop an atmosphere that is conducive to productive teaching and learning, Hill and Chin (2018) argue that principals should set up complete classroom and school-wide policies in partnership with the learners, parents, and teachers.

Nkabinde (2020) argues that parents should be involved in discipline management, noting out that it should begin with the creation of a learners' code of conduct. School Governing Bodies are required by Sections 8 and 20 of the Schools Act (1996) to create and approve a student code of conduct that specifies appropriate disciplinary procedures for students (Republic of South Africa, 1996). A research done in secondary schools in Nigeria states that, school regulations and rules have a progressive influence on students' academic performance (Simba et al., 2016a). Additionally, the Botswana Ministry of Education recognises that school discipline laws are a struggle to uphold and maintain security and harmony in classrooms

(Makwinja, 2017). This suggests that discipline is based on following school policies and guidelines. In the previous sections I have spelt out how schools in South Africa can apply the Code of Conduct for learners, using the policy guidelines provided by the Department of basic education to streamline the procedures of handling disciplinary measures in public schools.

Legally permissible disciplinary measures have to be contained within in the student code of conduct at the institution. Simba et al., (2016a) assert that schools need to follow recognised principles and regulations governing the circumstances of disciplinary actions as evidence in favour of this. Productive teaching and learning will not occur in a disorderly setting, as was already mentioned. Using disciplinary actions, any barrier to achieving a tranquil workplace should be removed. Disciplinary measures include any type of discipline used to learners who disobey school rules (Simba et al., 2016a). However, it appears that there is a problem with how teachers handle disciplinary actions because some of them are against the law. Despite government prohibitions, there has been agreement among academics that corporal punishment is still applied in schools to maintain learner conduct (Hill & Chin, 2018; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Semali & Vumilia, 2016). The study found that despite its use having been outlawed, teachers still accept as true that corporal punishment is the most worthwhile form of punishment (Simba et al., 2016a). The absence of corporal punishment leaves teachers feeling discouraged about their ability to uphold discipline (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). This mindset of the teachers has caused them to give up their crucial responsibility of disciplining students. This suggests that either teachers remain silent, or they use illegal disciplinary methods to deter misbehaviour. This is a sign that teachers are unable to manage learners' disobedience, which has a detrimental effect on learners' academic success (Semali & Vumilia, 2016).

Additionally, teachers believe that the alternative approaches are inadequate at upholding learner discipline in the classroom (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). However, some research suggests that teachers can effectively address learner misbehaviour without resorting to severe means of discipline (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). According to Naicker (2021), a positive teacher-student relationship leads to the teacher managing learner misbehaviour effectively. Hill and Chin (2018) contend that adequate preparation for the class and employing constructive discipline, teachers can successfully address learner misbehaviour. Furthermore, Makwinja (2017) emphasises that the growth and learning of learners are aided by the integration of discipline, supervision, and instructional methodologies.

## 2.12 Theoretical framework

A theory, in the words of Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is a set of concepts that tries to find a reason for something precise happening. This study sought to understand teachers' practices in managing learners discipline in primary schools. There are two theories that provide a theoretical framework that is underpinning the study, and these are **Assertive Discipline Model** by Canter and Canter (2001) and **the Jones' Management Model** (Jones, 1987). The Assertive Discipline Model will be used as a theory because it requires the teacher to set limit on learners' behaviour so that order is maintained in an effective and efficient learning environment through teaching obedience to authority, but at the same time giving support to learners. Assertive model will be used to explain how educators establish rules and implement discipline plan in the classroom and in school. According to Serakwane (2007) and Nkabinde (2020), teachers utilise ways to enforce discipline in the classroom based on the information, abilities, approach, and principles they have attained.

Serakwane (2007) and Nkabinde (2020) also state that classroom management models are the source of the disciplining techniques used by educators. Jones' model will be used to explain how educators establish rules and implement discipline plan in the classroom and in school. Jones model will also be used to explain how teachers use instructional strategies and negative sanctions towards discipline management and effective teaching and learning. Additionally, Serakwane (2007) and (Nkabinde, 2020) divide disciplinary techniques into proactive discipline techniques and control-oriented discipline techniques. While proactive discipline tactics encourage self-discipline and are more hands-on, control-oriented discipline strategies place greater emphasis on educator control in the classroom. Both the assertive discipline and management models are more control-oriented.

The purpose of assertive discipline model is that it will be applied to elucidate on how educators launch rules and enforce discipline strategy in their classrooms and in school. Assertive Discipline Model will be utilised to illustrate how educators develop rules and carry out disciplinary plans. Jones' model aim to describe how educators employ instructional tactics and negative consequences to promote successful teaching and learning and disciplinary management.

### 2.12.1 Assertive Discipline Model

This concept was created by Canter in 1989, keeping in mind that learners may not always be interested in performing well in school. Moreover, they also functioned under the assumption that learners with high self-respect in the classroom will behave more appropriately. Assertive Discipline Model seeks to teach learners how to make responsible decisions, which will afterwards boost their self-esteem and academic performance (Canter, 1989; Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). By enabling teachers to educate and learners to learn, Assertive Discipline Model provides an alternative paradigm that will assist in analysing teachers' management of learner discipline in their schools. This model removes any ambiguity on how behaviours are handled when learners decide not to adhere to the norms of the classroom or the specific instructions of an activity on the part of both teachers and learners. It also makes it possible for learners to receive rewards for adhering to rules or instructions. There is a clear reason why this method of classroom administration differs significantly from that used by previous generations. The students in the classrooms of today differ greatly from those in the past (Canter, 1989).

According to Canter (2010); Muijs and Reynolds (2017), disruptive learners are taught to choose proper behaviours that result in academic success and high self-esteem when teachers are upfront about their expectations for them. The Canter's Model aims to encourage a welcoming classroom that enables both teachers and learners to learn. Learners are taught appropriate behaviour, and educators are trained to use fewer harsh disciplinary measures. However, the excessive praising and other benefits in this paradigm prevent more intrinsic motivation (Canter, 2010). Both the Canter (2010); Dreikurs and Grey (1968) theories emphasise that instead of punishing students for poor behaviour, teachers should support them in improving their behaviour management skills (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017).

Assertive Discipline Model created by Canter (2010) attempts to support educators in maintaining calm and consistency while exercising authority over learners (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). According to Canter (2010), educators utilising this strategy need a discipline strategy to maintain order in the classroom for efficient teaching and learning. According to Canter (2010), the teacher must use this punishment plan as a tool to set expectations for learners' behaviour. To create a productive learning environment, constraints on learner behaviour aid in upholding the law by teaching submission to authority (Nkabinde, 2020). Aggressive Discipline Model places a strong emphasis on punishing learners for bad conduct and

encouraging good conduct. According to Canter (2010), the key elements of assertive discipline are a teacher setting clear, fair, and consistent rules and expected outcomes; a prearranged set of progressive outcomes for following the rules; a planned set of undesirable penalties for breaking the rules; and a strategy to put the plan into practice with the learners. According to (Utami et al., 2019), educators who employ assertive punishment are better at explaining their needs and expectations to their learners.

According to Canter (2010), school leaders and managers on one hand, and parents on the other, should support teachers in their efforts to set up regulations that would allow them to discipline students without interfering with their ability to educate. Additionally, Canter (2010) asserts that learners have rights. Learners require educators who will communicate with them clearly, limit incorrect behaviour, and encourage appropriate behaviour in order to show them care and direction. Muijs and Reynolds (2017) further argues that for these rights to be upheld, teachers must assume responsibility and not put up with anything that is against the interests of the learners. The assertive disciplinary paradigm makes a distinction between hostile, assertive, and non-assertive styles of teachers. A hostile teacher is one who responds to the learner behaviour with aggressive techniques. A forceful teacher explains class expectations in detail, under control and again. A passive educator fails to make expectations apparent to the learners. Nkabinde (2020) asserts that a learner's behaviour is impacted by the attitude of the educator. For fostering an environment that is favourable to both teaching and learning, the teacher should also always be in charge but not in an oppressive manner (Nkabinde, 2020).

The main purpose of assertive discipline is in the classroom (Nkabinde, 2020). However, by establishing the rules that outline what constitutes appropriate and unacceptable behaviour in the school, assertive punishment can also be used and organised on a campus-wide basis (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). Assertive Disciplinary Model aims to support teachers in taking control of the classroom in a steady and controlled manner while engaging the learners (Canter, 2010; Lane, 2021). According to Lane (2021), educators who employ this method should have a thorough disciplinary plan in place to preserve order in the classroom and promote successful teaching and learning. Learners' behaviour expectations should be set using the educators' disciplinary technique. In order to preserve discipline in the classroom and develop a productive learning atmosphere, the educator must set rules for learner behaviour (Malmgren et al., 2005; Wolff et al., 2021). Assertive Discipline Model emphasises corrective action for inappropriate behaviour and positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour. According to



the key elements of assertive discipline are a comprehensive list of assertive and progressive rules and expectations that will be explained to the learners a list of the benefits of compliance and the drawbacks of non-compliance; and finally, a strategy to put the model into practice with the learners. According to Muijs and Reynolds (2017), aggressive disciplinary approaches give teachers more flexibility in how they communicate their demands and expectations to learners.

### **2.12.2 Jones' Management model**

According to Jones (1987), learners disobedience happens both in and out of the classroom on school grounds. However, as the classroom is the primary setting for teaching, learning, and progressive evaluation, management theory concentrates solely on maintaining order in the classroom (Nkabinde, 2020). Jones' disciplinary strategy emphasises the need for a teacher to be present in the classroom in order to keep learners focused on their task (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Lane, 2021). Additionally, clear, and practical disciplinary procedures are necessary to lessen the administrative burden placed on instructors. Discipline concepts based on management theory are designed to assist teachers in handling difficult classroom management situations. According to the management idea, teachers should set up their classrooms efficiently, develop appropriate teaching strategies to maintain control, encourage a collaborative culture, and create respectable fallback plans for potential misbehaviour. Jones' approach to discipline emphasises the value of establishing classroom standards and imparting them to learners (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017).

Making classroom norms and imparting them to students are crucial components of Jones (1987) disciplinary model (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). Rules, procedures, and standards, in the opinion of Muijs and Reynolds (2017) are essential components of any classroom. Rules, customs, and expectations should be taught by teachers for learners to comprehend and uphold. Much of the instructional time is spent dealing with disruptive learners. Jones (1987) idea is that seats should be arranged to allow educators to gain easy contact with disruptive learners to enable easier maintenance of authority in the classroom. Additionally, educators should guarantee that they have sufficient knowledge about their learners to preserve a progressive educator-learner association. Jones also stresses on boundary fixing, which comprises nonverbal language and actions that allow the teacher's vision and physical closeness to restraint misconduct (Jones, 1987).

According to Jones (1987), using his teaching tactics effectively may also help teachers avoid the issue of disciplining learners. According to Jones (1987), concept teachers should encourage cooperation instead of punishing learners by providing them with responsibility training and omission instruction. Jones (1987) states that the responsibility training encourages learners to behave well on their own; nevertheless, this theory needs to be supported by the development of positive relationships with learners and of an incentive structure that uses negative reinforcement. On the other side, positive reinforcement is employed in place of negative reinforcement during omission training. According to paradigm, methodical use of negative sanctions might be employed as a fall back when learners act out, contingent on the severity of the sanction (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). The sanctions are also ordered hierarchically, from less severe sanctions to more harsh ones (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). Jones' model lists the minor penalties that can be applied for misconduct, such as a cautioning, drawing a card, and leaving a letter on the table at home. Jones advises teachers to use mid-level consequences including detention after school, time-out, parent conferences, and losing benefits if learners continue to cause problems.

Jones sees the severe penalties as the school's last-ditch effort to get unruly learners to behave better. He lists the following sanctions for this level, that is, Saturday classes, in-school suspension, parent chaperonage, delivery of the student to a parent at work, suspension, police involvement, and expulsion. If the issue persists after taking all necessary procedures, teachers are permitted to recommend the learner to the school management (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). This paradigm views the classroom teachers as having responsibility for discipline. This model is pertinent to the planned research as well because it will be utilised to examine how discipline for learners' is handled in the classroom when teaching and learning are being conducted.

## **Chapter summary**

The literature on teacher disciplinary management has been covered in this chapter. The purpose of the literature review was to better understand the problem of learner discipline in schools. The first section of the chapter discussed the literature about discipline and made references to both South African and international perspectives. As a result, the chapter has presented research on the educator's responsibility for managing learner discipline in schools, disciplinary approaches, student discipline management, the impact of discipline on productive teaching and learning, and the application of disciplinary methods for productive teaching and

learning. The theoretical bases for the investigation have also been covered in this chapter. I will outline the research strategy and methods used to conduct the study in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter Two presented a comprehensive discussion of various aspects of learner discipline and how it can be managed in the classroom and the school. The methodology and research design of the study are presented in this chapter. The chapter also provides a brief explanation for each of the following sub-headings; the research paradigm on which the study is based, the research design, the research methodology/strategy, sampling, the methods used to generate the data, the methods used to analyse the data, reliability, ethical considerations, the limitations of the study, and finally a summary of the chapter.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), a research paradigm is a group of underlying assumptions that serve as a basis for a worldview. A paradigm is a strategy that is used in research that helps researchers position their findings and help readers grasp the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology of the study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A research paradigm is a way that academics conceptualise a study. The interpretivist method can be used in qualitative research (Mukan et al., 2017). Ncaphalala (2019) claims that four paradigms—post-positivism, social construction (interpretivism), critical theory, and postmodernism are frequently used in social research. The study uses an interpretive paradigm to examine how teachers manage discipline issues with students in primary schools. Anthropology has a big impact on the interpretive paradigm. It seeks to comprehend and analyse significant social behaviours or civilisations from the inside out (Mitchell et al., 2017).

With the use of the interpretative paradigm, I was able to establish an understanding of trust with the respondents, particularly, the educators at the participating schools. Since they have shared trust, the respondents were able to express themselves willingly and liberally about how they see, carry out, and handle punishment in their respective schools. Researchers that adhere to this paradigm make the following assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and the suitability of qualitative research techniques for this purpose. People's individual experiences are real and

should be regarded seriously in terms of this paradigm (methodology). Ontology is concerned with the essence of reality, and different ontological viewpoints reflect distinct prescriptions of what can and cannot be real (Ling, 2017; Willis, 2007).

According to interpretivists, the pre-existing theories and ideologies of the scholars have an impact on and shape every study. Additionally, because research is a socially fabricated pursuit, so is the "reality" it informs us of (Ling, 2017; Willis, 2007). What can be discerned about reality and how it can be discerned are the main subjects of epistemology. Interpretivists frequently employ qualitative techniques like case studies and ethnography, and their written reports are typically more in-depth (Ling, 2017; Willis, 2007). According to Esterberg (2002); Lune and Berg (2017), interpretative tradition calls for the researcher to fully immerse themselves in the lives of the subjects they are interested in studying. Interpretivism asserts that it is feasible to comprehend subjective meaning of an action while doing so in an objective way (Denzin, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Martens, 2019). The researcher might need to interact with others lifeworld's to comprehend the intersubjective implications of human conduct. It is clear from this that interpretive researchers want to comprehend the phenomenon they are studying (Denzin, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Mertens, 2019).

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the interpretive paradigm makes an effort to understand the subjective realm of human experiences. In the light of this perspective, I refer to the interpretive paradigm as a worldview that takes human practices into account. The purpose of this study was to comprehend how primary school educators manage learner discipline. The study tries to comprehend how they employ disciplinary procedures that support efficient teaching and learning. As an interpretive researcher, interpretative paradigm enables me to better understand how primary school teachers in the uMzinyathi District manage learner behaviour. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), interpretivist researchers try to comprehend from within by penetrating the individual in order to maintain the integrity of the phenomenon being studied. This is accomplished by beginning with individuals and learning how they perceive the environment around them (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretive paradigm allows individuals to share their individualised methods and experiences for dealing with learner discipline. In my role as an interpretative researcher, I was exposed to a variety of participant practices, facts, and realities on how they handle learner punishment. With the use of this paradigm, I was able to get to know the participants well and learn how they handled learner discipline in their individual schools (Mabaso, 2019). However, the findings of the

study are subjective and cannot be supported by science (Eyisi, 2016). As a researcher I depended on what the participants were telling me.

### **3.3 Research design**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that research design is a technique the researchers use to produce and analyse the data that is necessary to answer to the study questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that the research design reveals the overall strategy for the study, comprising how it will be organised, the data generation methods used, and what will happen to the subjects. Researchers use three different sorts of designs, namely, mixed methods, qualitative research, and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). McMillan and Schumacher (2010); Creswell and Sinley (2017) focus on objectivity, employing data and statistics to observe a phenomenon. Quantitative designs, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010); Creswell and Sinley (2017) focus on objectivity, employing data and statistics to observe a phenomenon. The two types of quantitative designs are experimental (involve participant interventions) and non-experimental (no direct intervention for participants). On the other hand, qualitative designs are distinct from quantitative designs in that they generate data from the participants' natural settings and the data is in the form of words rather than numbers (Creswell, 2009). Research designs using mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2009). Explanatory design (quantitative, then qualitative), exploratory design (qualitative, then quantitative), and triangulation design are the three categories (quantitative and qualitative together). This research used a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell (2009); Creswell and Sinley (2017), the use of participant viewpoints that are gathered verbally from individuals is what distinguishes qualitative research.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), claim that qualitative research enables a thorough understanding of the individual behaviours and experiences of study participants. As a result, this study depended on the teachers' opinions in order to elicit how they handled student discipline in the classroom. Maree (2012) states that the objective of qualitative research is to understand human behaviour in its natural environments or situations. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010); Mills and Gay (2019), qualitative research designs allow for the study of behaviour in its natural setting. This was accomplished using interviews as a source of data (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Sinley, 2017).

As I generated the data and was therefore, involved in the generating process, a qualitative design was useful to me (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Sinley, 2017). I was able to learn about the individuals and their social setting as a result. The primary data gathered was used to address the study questions, which was another reason why I chose this research strategy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Mills & Gay, 2019). Instead of using numbers to report the data, words were used. The qualitative research approach was appropriate for the study's sequential organisation, goal, and theoretical framework (Cohen et al., 2017). It is possible to criticise qualitative research as being biased, value-laden, subjective, and accepting of different realities through the use of a small sample (Maarouf, 2019). However, there are techniques that are used to minimise issues of biasedness and thus, retain the study's integrity and trustworthiness. A detailed discussion on these techniques is given in the trustworthiness section of this chapter.

Additionally, according to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2020), qualitative researchers' approaches are good examples of the widespread notion that they can offer a "deeper knowledge" of social phenomena than would be possible with only quantitative data. The qualitative research method was the one that was most appropriate for my study because I am a teacher and a member of the SGB at a school in the uMzinyathi District. It allowed me to see the problem from an insider's perspective. Qualitative research was well suited for providing a voice to the teachers as professional role actors within the school since it places a lot of attention on the manufactured or deliberate reality and concentrates on understanding the varied perspectives of all participants in a natural background. Additionally, qualitative research was the most effective in helping me, the researcher, understand the beliefs, principles, actions, and worries of the research participants, notably the teachers.

### **3.4 Research methodology**

Maree (2012), as well as Eyisi (2016) both define methodology as the strategies an investigator uses for sampling, data generation, data documentation, and data analysis. Additionally, a number of alternative approaches are mentioned by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as being used by qualitative researchers, including surveys, case studies, ethnography, action research, and more. In the context of this study, I used a case study as a methodology. Case studies are described as a rigorous and in-depth analysis of a particular occurrence in its context to develop information by Rule and John (2011); Rashid et al. (2019). Maree (2012) and Eyisi (2016) define methodology as the strategies an investigator use for

sampling, data generation, data documentation, and data analysis. Additionally, a number of alternative approaches are mentioned by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as being used by qualitative researchers, including surveys, case studies, ethnography, action research, and more. The study used a case study approach as its technique. Case studies are described as a rigorous and in-depth analysis of a particular occurrence in its context to develop information by Rule and John (2011) and Rashid et al., (2019). A case study, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Mitchell et al., (2017), entails a thorough investigation of a case or bounded system through time using a variety of sources of data gleaned from the surrounding environment. Case study entails a thorough investigation of a case or bounded system through time using a variety of sources of data gleaned from the surrounding environment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2017). My choice of this methodology was guided by Rule and John (2011); Rashid et al., (2019) 'fit for purpose' principle.

According to Cohen et al., (2018); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), case studies acknowledge and accept that numerous variables are at play in a single example. This implies that there are multiple realities or truths at play in a single instance. As this study adheres to an interpretive paradigm that holds that there is no one absolute truth in the social world, case study technique was appropriate. I was able to acknowledge the multiplicity of views regarding the strategies that teachers used to manage learner discipline. Because the case study is adaptable, comprehensive, varied, and manageable, I deemed it appropriate for this study (Rashid et al., 2019). The purpose of the case study, according to Cohen et al., (2011); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is to analyse and evaluate the singularity of real people and circumstances through relatable descriptions. Since the case study methodology of this study concentrated on three primary schools in one district to elicit detailed practices of educators in controlling learner discipline.

According to Rule and John (2011); Rashid et al., (2019), a case study can either produce or verify theory. The hypotheses supporting this study can be validated by this case study. Since the case study addresses both "why" and "how" concerns, the decision to choose it was further influenced by the certainty that all of the research questions will be addressed (Rule & John, 2011; (Rashid et al., 2019). I was confident that the study's research questions on teacher's practices in managing learner discipline will be answered.



### 3.5 Sampling technique

The method used to choose a part of the population for the study was sampling (Eyisi, 2016). A portion of the population that took part in the study was represented by the sample (Boddy, 2016). Sampling might be probabilistic or non-probabilistic (Scholtz, 2021). This scholar further asserts that qualitative research is based on non-probability and purposeful sampling methods rather than probability or random sample techniques. A combination of convenience and purposeful sampling was utilised to choose participants of the study. According to Cohen et al., (2011); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), "purposive sampling" is a sampling method in which the researchers hand-select the instances to be included in the sample based on their perception of the particular traits they are looking for. Purposive sampling, Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014); Etikan et al. (2016) state that this allows the researcher to deliberately choose the participants based on a set of criteria identified from the research topic.

I purposively selected participants with a particular objective in mind. Purposive sampling was more suitable in this situation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Three schools were purposefully selected for the study. I also purposefully selected two educators per school which makes the total of six participants who were chosen specifically for the project with the aim of getting knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. Participants were chosen on the basis that they could supply information relevant to the problem in question. Township school, rural school, and model school in the uMzinyathi district were purposively selected. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), purposive sampling can be used to identify learned individuals who have in-depth knowledge of a certain topic, such as a professional job, power, expertise, or experience. In order to gain a thorough understanding of how to manage learner discipline in the uMzinyathi District, I chose experienced educators who have worked in the chosen schools for at least four years.

In the study, individuals were chosen via convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, according to Etikan et al. (2016), is a non-random sampling in which the sample consists of members of a target population who meet a specific practical criterion, such as geographic proximity, ease of accessibility, availability at a specific time, and willingness to participate in the study. In addition, it is also known as accessible sampling as it involves researching subject from the population that is accessible to the researcher. Since I only had to travel a small distance to see the participants at their separate institutions, I used this sampling. Being near to

where these schools are located made this convenient for me. According to Cohen et al., (2011); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), convenience sampling may be used as the sample approach in a case study.

### **3.6 Data generation methods**

According to Eyisi (2016), data generation methods are the strategies used to generate data for a research project. Qualitative researchers can generate data using a range of methods, including questionnaires, observations, interviews, and document reviews, to mention a few (Ncaphalala, 2019). The study relied solely on semi-structured interviews with six instructors to learn about how they handled student discipline in primary schools.

#### **3.6.1 Semi- structured interviews**

The interview, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is an adaptable method for data production that enables application of verbal, non-verbal, spoken, and auditory channels. Moreover, the interviewer can control the interview's course while leaving room for spontaneity, and they can apply pressure to get not only complete answers but also responses to thought-provoking and in-depth questions. A two-way conversation known as an interview comprises the interviewer asking the participants questions in order to collect information and understand their beliefs, perspectives, ideas, opinions and behaviours (Eyisi, 2016). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), an interview is a flexible technique for acquiring data that enables the use of multisensory channels. Interviews are divided into three categories semi-structured, structured, and open-ended (Ncaphalala, 2019). Interviews were employed in this study because I needed a lot of descriptive information to understand how the participants explained their understanding of knowledge and social reality (Ncamphalala, 2019).

All participants underwent semi-structured interviews because it was necessary to speak with them in order to fully grasp their practices and experiences, because I could ask the participants questions and learn more about how they manage learner discipline. I chose semi-structured interviews for this study, an interview schedule was used as a research tool to guide the interview procedure (Ncamphalala, 2019). In order for me to pay attention and for the interview process to go more quickly, I digitally taped the interviews with a voice recorder (Mitchell et al., 2017). The interviews drawback was the requirement for verbatim transcription of the

digitally recorded interview, a laborious operation requiring a high degree of accuracy (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were asked to affirm that their participation was voluntary and agreeable. After asking the interview questions, clarification queries were requested.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Data analysis involves drawing conclusions from data by applying various analytical techniques. Thematic, content, narrative, and analytical induction are crucial data analyses in qualitative semi-structured interview research (Bazeley, 2021). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), making sense of data in terms of participant definitions of the scenario, in terms of themes, categories, and regularities, as well as noticing trends, is a component of qualitative data analysis. According to Ncamphalala (2019), the interpretivist paradigm typically uses inductive analysis of qualitative data. According to Ncamphalala (2019), inductive data analysis enables major themes that are inherent in the raw data to emerge as study findings. For the interviews in this study, a theme (content) analysis was applied. Thematic analysis is a systematic method for identifying and summarising communication content (Ncamphalala, 2019). Content analysis is appropriate for any written material, including documents and interview transcripts, claim Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). Since a thematic approach produces high-quality information from raw data, it was appropriate (Braun & Clarke, 2021). claim guided my decision to study content analysis.

For the data analysis process, data was organised and prepared (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The recorded interviews were fully *verbatim* transcribed; to become comfortable with the notes. I read them repeatedly while also listening repeatedly to the audio files, which were then separated into analytical units (Buthlezi, 2021). I analysed the data using the six processes of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Creswell 2017). Here are some of them.

#### **Step 1: Preparing field notes and transcripts**

I literally transcribed the audiotape recordings of the interviews soon after they were conducted. I was able to easily obtain the information for analysis thanks to this format. As a backup in case the audio recording equipment should fail, I also wrote down my own notes. I found the approaches outlined by Creswell (2017) to make the analysis process easier to use. This included underlining the headers, various contributors, queries, and comments. To give a

realistic summary of the interview that was analysed, words that specified what happened during sessions, such as pause and silence, were written in. I listened to the audio recording of the interviews and contrasted it with the verbatim transcriptions to make sure the printed transcripts were accurate.

#### Step 2: Read through all the data

After confirming that the transcripts were accurate, I read through all the information multiple times to become familiar with the information from each of the three interviews.

#### Step 3: Theme identification/generation

The participants' responses to my study questions helped me identify the themes, some of which were identical and others of which were different (John, 2012). I highlighted the potential themes with various coloured highlighters to make it simpler for me to recognise them.

#### Step 4: Theme representation

Eventually, the ideas that had been discovered were captured in words, allowing for rich narrative and descriptive interpretations.

#### Step 5: Coding the data

Coding is the process of converting answer sets to questions into specified sets for analysis (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher can locate the relevant data thanks to coding. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2013), the first step in data coding is to find relatively short chunks of information (segments) that each contain a single concept and stand alone. The segments are then analysed to create codes. The segment has meaning because of a code. I applied the coding method by underlining the topics and labelling them appropriately. I gave each theme a name that seemed to make the most sense (de Vos, 2016). After completing open coding, I carried out axial coding, which involved finding themes so that related subjects could be grouped together. This is referred to as looking for categories of meanings that are consistent while also being distinct from one another (De Vos, 2015). The transcripts from several participants were observed to have clusters of related themes. The last step in the coding

process was selective coding. The research study core concepts were developed by condensing all of the themes into a small number. According to De Vos (2015), the creation of the final story is aided by the winnowing and reduction of the facts to a digestible set.

#### Step 6: Interpretation of data

To specifically address the study issues, the data were interpreted. The study of the data was documented in a report.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness of findings**

By focusing on a study credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, trustworthiness of that study is established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Selvi, 2019). Evaluating the quality of qualitative research is difficult since they are vulnerable to bias and unscientific methods (Elo et al., 2014; Selvi, 2019). Many scholars concur that trustworthiness should make use of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Danial, 2019; Guba (1981). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), in order to raise the dependability of the interviews, it is crucial that every interviewee comprehends the questions in the same way.

#### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility is defined as the confidence placed in the truth of the research findings (Stewart et al., 2017). I drew precedence in the choice of methodologies from other peer previous studies in the same field to ensure that the methodologies are sound, proven and accepted (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). Additionally, the study was subjected to peer review to identify and correct any flaws. Furthermore, only willing participants were included in the study as they had a higher chance of sincerely eager participation and willingness to provide data openly.

#### **3.8.2 Transferability**

The interpretative counterpart of generalisability, transferability refers to the degree to which qualitative research findings may be applied to other settings with different respondents (Hayashi Jr et al., 2019). The research report would provide a complete analysis of the inquiry to ensure that any following studies conducted under similar research conditions would provide similar, if not identical, results (Johnson et al., 2020).

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985), as well as Spiers et al. (2018) state that dependability refers to the stability of findings over time. To ensure dependability, all aspects of the study were subjected to a peer review, and the data analysis was cross-checked (Anderson, 2017). Additionally, the research report was included the following to ensure that readers have a comprehensive understanding: a) the research design and application, recounting what was scheduled and implemented on a strategic level; b) the functional detail of data generation, detailing what was done in the field; and c) reflective appraisal.

### **3.8.4 Confirmability**

Integrity or confirmability deals with ensuring that the information provided is true (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Cuervo-Cazurra et al. (2020), the degree to which the researcher accepts his or her own biases, is a vital requirement for confirmability. To that aim, the research report will evaluate the assumptions that underpin the decisions made and methods taken, explain why one solution was selected over another, and will identify flaws in the actual techniques utilised. Consequently, it is vital to address speculative hypotheses that were subsequently disproved by the data in terms of results. The "reflective commentary" is where a lot of the information in these parts originates from.

## **3.9 Ethical considerations**

Participants were made aware of their rights, including the option to remain anonymous or to have their real names and locations disclosed. Participants in social research are frequently given anonymity to protect their identity for a variety of reasons, such as unfair societal

pressure (Edwards & Weller, 2016). If participants chose to proceed in this manner, anonymity was assured.

### **3.9.1 Participant consent**

The participants were requested to sign the informed consent forms, where they were acknowledging that they understand the nature of the project, the procedures that was used and the way in which the results was displayed (Edwards & Weller, 2016). All the participants in the study were notified and reminded along with the research that participation is entirely voluntary and that they can leave when they feel that they do not want to be part of the study; also, all participants were inducted about the research, including the purpose and goals of the study, so that they can make informed consent choices.

### **3.9.2 No harm**

It is an important principle that the lives of the participants should not in any way be compromised because of their participation in a research project. This is normally known as the principle of non-maleficence. One of the ways in which the participants are protected from possible harm is to ensure that their identify is not divulged. To protect the identity of the participants, they all received guarantees that the data collected during the research procedure would be kept confidential and that both their identity and those of their school and principal would remain anonymous (Nunan & Ntombela, 2019). .

### **3.9.3 Ensuring that permission is obtained**

It is always important that before research is conducted, permission is sought and granted. In that regard, I sought permission from the provincial Department of Education to conduct research in its schools and that permission was granted. I also sought and received permission from the principals of each of the three schools that participated in this study. I also applied for ethical clearance from the UKZN Ethics Committee. As part of that application, I had to clearly indicate that I had applied and received permission from the provincial education department and that I had applied for and received declaration of informed consent from all the participants. There are many issues that I had to declare to satisfy the University's Ethics committee that the study would be conducted in a way that complies with all ethical protocols. Even the questions that I was going to ask from the participants were checked to ensure that they were aligned with the purpose of the study and that they would not cause any harm to the participants.



### **3.10 Limitations**

Limitations may be the result of the difficulties the researcher runs into because of design defects (Buthelezi, 2021). Furthermore, Buthelezi (2021) further argues that it is crucial for the researcher to disclose any limitations so that the reader may understand how the result was arrived. There are no perfect study designs, according to Marshall and Rossman (2016), because every suggested research project has flaws. Furthermore, the study is constrained by being framed within a specific scholarly and research tradition (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This study was a small-scale study that were only be able to highlight issues and ideas that some educators were raising, and their practices in managing learner discipline in the classroom and in school. I was fully aware that the two educators' practices were by no means representative of a general view of other educators. It was due to those participants were working full time, the limitation for the study was that the time to spent with participants were insufficient.

### **3.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter contains a presentation of the study's research design and methodology. The steps taken to carry out the study are explained in this chapter. As the paradigm under which the investigation was situated, the interpretivist paradigm was examined. A case study was utilised as the methodology to explore the essence of a qualitative research design. Both convenience sampling and purposeful sampling were mentioned as the sample techniques employed in the study. The study used semi-structured interview as a method of data production was emphasised. The method used for data analysis was discussed. The next chapter presents and discusses the qualitative data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was employed for the study. This chapter focuses on the data presentation, the analysis of the data and the subsequent discussion of the findings. The data presentation was elicited from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with Post level one (PL1) educators or teachers, as they are also called. The discussion of the findings is presented according to themes. To justify the claims that I made, the participants' voices in the form of *verbatim* quotes were used. Pseudonyms, for the educators were used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The discussion is also enhanced by the injection of literature that was reviewed and theories that frame the study. Before the themes that unfolded from the data are discussed, a short summary or profile of each participating school, and the participants is presented. The profiling of the researched schools will help the reader to understand the context from which the data was generated. This chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

#### **4.2 Profiling of schools and participants**

This section provides a discussion of the profiles of the schools, followed by that of the participants. The profiles of the six participants and the three participating schools are described in this section. Emagengeni Primary School (EPS), Oval Primary School (OPS), and Langelihle Primary School are utilised as pseudonyms for secrecy and anonymity (EPS). The three schools are part of two Circuits in the uMzinyathi District. Oval Primary School and Langelihle Primary School are both under the eNdumeni Central, whereas Emagengeni Primary School is situated under the eNdumeni South (uMsinga) (Dundee). Two teachers from each school were interviewed in the study.

##### **4.2.1 Emagengeni Primary School**

Emagengeni Primary School (EPS) is a Quintile 2 public primary school in a low socioeconomic background that is governed by Section 21. It is situated in deep rural areas in

eNdumeni South under uMsinga municipality, a typical rural and largely tribal authority where the population is sparse. Historically, the population is disadvantaged, dispersed, and basic services are in short supply. The area's primary economic activity is subsistence farming, and Nquthu is the principal town. According to Section 39 (7) of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), each year the Minister must decide the national quintiles for public schools, which the MECs must use to determine which schools are not allowed to charge tuition. As a result, schools in South Africa are divided into five categories, starting with the lowest (Quintile 1) and ending with the highest (Quintile 5). Quintile system is a formula that is used to distribute funds to schools, with Quintile 1 receiving the greatest per-learner allocation and Quintile 5 receiving the lowest. Further to that, public divided into two categories, those belonging to Section 20 and those in Section 21. According to Section 21, the provincial education department allocates funds directly to the schools, who then take charge of purchasing supplies like stationery and textbooks, pay water and electricity bills, and do their own upkeep. Additionally, they may choose what courses the school will teach as well as what extracurricular sports and activities that learners can participate in. The school is led by a male administrator who gives instructions to the teachers, department leaders, and other staff members.

Six teachers, a principal, and two departmental heads (DHs) work at the school. Two non-teaching employees work at EPS, including a cleaner and a security guard. The school presently has 242 learners enrolled. Nine classrooms are available to the learners, with an average of 22 learners per class. Due to a lack of classrooms, one class includes both Grades 5 and 6, combining both grades. Learners at the school range in Grade from R to Grade 9. The school receives additional support from a non-profit organisation known as Khula Foundation. This organisation helps the school by providing extra teachers to support department teachers in subjects including Mathematics, English, EMS, LO, and computer. Additionally, they provided Grade RRR at the school, which greatly helps the neighbourhood kids, especially those who struggle with English.

#### **4.2.2 Langelihle Primary School**

In Sibongile Township, Dundee, which is in the uMzinyathi District, there is a public primary school called Langelihle Primary School that is ranked in Quintile 1 and that has exclusively African learners who are enrolled under Section 21. The eNdumeni Municipality, which

includes Langelihle, is special since it has no tribal authority territory and a population that is primarily urbanised or based on commercial farming, unlike the other local municipalities. The commercial centre, or "major town," is Dundee. It has the most diverse economy, is the centre of the Battlefields tourism zone, and produces commercial dairy products. A male principal leads the school and gives instructions to a deputy principal, department heads, teachers, and other staff members.

There are 22 teachers at the school, along with a principal, a deputy principal, and four Departmental Heads (DH). One office assistant, one gardener, one cleaner, and one security are among the non-teaching employees at the school. There are 1048 learners enrolled in the institution at this time. The school has 29 classrooms, each of which is overflowing with an average of 52 learners, spanning from Grade R to Grade 7.

#### **4.2.3 Oval Primary School**

Oval Primary School is a Quintile 4 school, which starts from Grades R through to Grade 9, and is a public primary school classified as Section 20 in Dundee Town, eNdumeni Central, and the uMzinyathi District. Learner population comprises African and Coloured learners who come from both privileged and impoverished homes. The junior primary and senior primary blocks are divided by a brick complex after the school's modest origins as a prefabricated structure with a shared school. Since there is a taxi and bus rank adjacent to the school, learners have easy access to public transport. A female Indian principal leads the school, giving instructions to a male African deputy principal, department heads, teachers, and other staff members.

There are four departmental heads, a principal, one deputy principal, and 25 teachers working at the school. Three items are not related to teaching (administration clerk, security and a cleaner). There are 1021 learners enrolled in the school at this time. The school has 24 classes with an average of 40 learners in each. The school has enough resources, including a kitchen, a sick room, and a sizable schoolyard. Although the school is now accepting learners in Grades R through to Grade 9, I was informed that as from 2023, Grades 8 and Grade 9 will no longer be offered in the school.

#### 4.2.4 Background information of the participants

The participants were teachers from the three primary schools in the eNdumeni Central (Dundee) and eNdumeni South areas (uMsinga). Table 1 gives background information on the number of years the teacher has worked in the classroom and whether or not the teacher is qualified. All the participants are qualified and have attended their schools for more than three years, as shown by the table.

| School and Participants          | Number of years in the school | Qualifications                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Emagengeni Primary School</b> |                               |  |
| Miss Myeni                       | 11 years                      | Bed, Bed Hons.                             |
| Mrs Skhakhane                    | 12 years                      | Bed, Bed Hons.                             |
| <b>Langelihle Primary School</b> |                               |  |
| Miss Gumede                      | 7 years                       | Bed.                                       |
| Miss Mthethwa                    | 6 years                       | Bed.                                       |
| <b>Oval Primary School</b>       |                               |  |
| Miss Petersen                    | 23 years                      | National Professional Diploma in Education |
| Miss Williams                    | 4 years                       | Bed.                                       |

**Table 1: Background information of educators in the sample**

#### 4.3 The emerging themes

The themes that emerged from the data are covered in this section and include; Teachers' opinions about their responsibility for overseeing student behaviour in their classes and at the school; The four sub-themes under the main theme of "Challenges faced by educators while managing learner ill-discipline has four sub-themes those are: Home and family background of learners as a challenge in managing learner discipline; Abuse of various types experienced by learners as a challenge in learner discipline in the classroom; Maintaining a balance between learner rights and responsibilities poses a barrier to effective learner discipline; The media as a challenge in the maintenance of learner indiscipline in the school. The impact of learner misbehaviour on teaching and learning, the role of stakeholders [SGB, parents, SMT and DoE] in supporting teachers in maintaining learner discipline, Educators' views about the contribution of policies in addressing discipline problems, the discipline problems practised by

teachers at the participated schools and disciplinary measures implemented by teachers in ensuring effective teaching and learning.

#### **4.3.1 Teachers' perceptions of their role in managing learner discipline in their classrooms and the school**

This theme emerged from participants as most of them were giving the researcher similar ideas towards teachers' perceptions of the role played by them (teachers) in managing learner discipline in their classrooms and in school. According to Section 8 of the Schools Act, for learners to get quality education free from disruptive behaviour, the school must maintain discipline. This indicates that teachers in schools are required by law and their profession to uphold discipline. The findings show that participants are aware of their responsibility for preserving a disruption-free atmosphere for teaching and learning. They must uphold discipline in the classroom, speak for parents, represent parents, led by example, keep learners safe, be watchful, and step in when appropriate. When the participants were asked what precisely they were doing to fulfil their job as teachers who must maintain discipline among the learners, Miss Myeni in her presentation stated:

*As a teacher, I am a facilitator, so I'm the manager of the class, so I need to make sure that everything is taking place accordingly and based on that I also need to, to make sure that the class is conducive for learners to learn and also as a manager of a class I need to make sure that teaching and learning is taking place, learners are disciplined, they know what is wrong and what is right, what is expected from them, homework is done, classwork is done so there is a lot that they need to know to make sure that discipline is maintained.*

Making a favourable environment for teaching and learning is another responsibility of the teacher; Miss Petersen clarified:

*My role in maintaining discipline is merely to ensure a safe learning environment, that is conducive to learning and the environment that allows freedom of expression of children, so it non-sexist.*

The participants' opinions on how to keep the classroom orderly were shared by Miss Williams who added:

*I'm supposed to... manage discipline within the class and in the school area as ahm, as a teacher I'm supposed to manage the class and ensure that it is quit and ensure that learners are always doing their work, avoid situations where children are being bullied ahm also where they are stealing resources.*

Miss Mthethwa thought that educators ought to set the bar high. She clarified:

*I am... a manager in my class, so I always need aah... I need to be a good exemplar, I need to lead by an example, I need to make sure that teaching and learning is effective.*

It is clear from the aforementioned ideas that teachers were aware of and played a crucial role in controlling learner discipline. According to these presentations, most of the teachers in this study believed that a stable atmosphere is essential for efficient teaching and learning. Since no effective learning occurs in a chaotic setting, it is the duty of the teachers to create and maintain a good, productive classroom environment that is conducive to learning (Barbetta et al., 2005; Semali & Vumilia, 2016). These results show that teachers are aware of their responsibility and take appropriate action. In accordance with Jones' disciplinary model, it is crucial for teachers to be present in classrooms to ensure that learners stay on track (Joiner & Edwards, 2008; Sueb et al., 2020). In order to prevent learners' behaviour from impeding teaching and learning, this is done. But it was clear from the participants' responses that all the teachers in the study understood their roles in handling learner behaviour, and that they respected and knew what it meant to be in a classroom. One participant appeared to comprehend the need to focus solely on learners while in class. Miss Gumede's remarked:

*Mmh, you must make sure that you do what you suppose to do, for example, when you're at your classroom, you must teach learners. Do not focus on other things, do not keep on chatting with your friends while leaving learners unattended.*

We can infer from the aforementioned comment that the teachers are aware of her responsibility for overseeing the behaviours of her learners. Despite the advice in the literature that teachers should be aware of and understand their obligations with regards to classroom discipline, this problem nevertheless persists (Ndamani, 2008; Qhosola, 2016). However, teachers are required to uphold school discipline and function *in loco parentis* with regard to the learner due to their profession and the legislation. According to Prinsloo (2005); Baruth and Mokoena (2016), the duties that educators should carry out in accordance with the common law principle of "in loco parentis" include the right to retain control and the duty to provide the learner with loving

supervision. Additionally, the *in loco parentis* function, educators have two facets: the duty of care (The responsibility to exert tender monitoring) and the responsibility to uphold order (the obligations to maintain authority or discipline over the learner). When a learner enrolls in school, the educator or the school takes over the parent or guardian's responsibility for the child. Miss Williams claimed the following in her presentation:

*As a parent, being there as much as we might be on a point that we set boundaries with children, but the child mustn't be afraid to approach you as a teacher.*

The participants had similar opinions on the matter of parenting the learners while they are in school. Miss Gumede further added:

*My understanding is that when I am disciplining a learner or a child, I must discipline a child as I'm disciplining my own child, I mustn't take... feelings like, this child is not mine because I will end up doing wrong things. They are kids, all kids make mistakes, they need to be corrected.*

Mrs Skhakhane acknowledged that teachers act as parents to the learners while they are at school. She emphasised that this is not the case and that instead, teachers must assist learners and make sure they are heading in the proper route. She uttered:

*We are parents to the kids because when learners are here at school, we are parents to them, so we need to guide them, discipline them, and make sure that they take a right direction all the time.*

Thus, it is the responsibility of educators to protect the learners' safety while they are at school. Thus, the educator's pedagogical and legal duties include ensuring the learners' safety while they are at school. According to Westhuizen et al., (2008) and Makendano (2016), the law requires the educator to really take care of the learners' bodily, psychological, and spiritual well-being. As a person with professional training, the law anticipates that he or she will perform this function with the required expertise. Therefore, the assertions demonstrate that teachers are aware of the *in loco parentis* responsibility of educators.

#### **4.3.2 Challenges encountered by teachers when managing learner ill-discipline**

The participants in the study listed a number of difficulties or challenges that they faced while administering disciplinary actions in their educational settings. From the conversations, it has



become clear that some of the punitive actions used by the teachers were not consistent with the provisions of the law. Additionally, it has come to light that teachers require the assistance of other stakeholders while implementing the regulations relating to the learners' behaviour. Therefore, these problems are where the teachers' difficulties in controlling disciplinary actions. The interviewees had similar opinions when asked to describe the difficulties they have in maintaining the discipline of their learners. Participants in the research cited problems with learners' home and family backgrounds, various forms of student abuse, the difficulty of keeping a balance between learners' rights and obligations, and other concerns. The media as a barrier to maintaining student indiscipline in the classroom.

#### **4.3.2.1 Home and family background of learners as a challenge in managing learner discipline**

It came out of the research findings that learner discipline is negatively impacted by home and family circumstances. Miss Myeni said:

*Home where they are coming from as I have stated that they are living with grannies so the discipline is not that much instilled to them at home as they may not know what is wrong and what is right, because grannies are not that much powerful to take care of them, for them it's just to make sure that they (children) get food that is the only thing they know they should do to them.*

Miss Petersen also acknowledged that some learners resided with their elder siblings and other family members rather than their original parents. She uttered:

*It the fact that very often we find that aahm... the primary giver is an older sibling or an elderly grandparent, or an aunt, or an uncle but not the parent, the biological parent.*

Miss Mthethwa added that the first factor is the home environment. She clarified:

*Even at home you find that the parent does not have time for their children's, maybe they drink alcohol.*

Regarding the subject of family history, participants had similar opinions. Added Miss Williams:

*Parents are using language that they are not supposed to be using in front of children and are exposing children to things or behaviour they are not supposed to... for example: drinking and other certain things, so they come and exercise it at school.*

Miss Mthethwa also emphasised how challenging it was for a school to work with learners from diverse backgrounds, whose values, beliefs, and life outlooks are very different. When learners do not receive enough attention at home, they typically seek it out from their teachers. Another factor is that some of the parents use drugs, leaving their kids feeling abandoned because they are often not at home. Using drugs causes the parent's attention to be diverted. This is supported by Masekoameng (2010); Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) who claim that variables including poor, harsh, or inconsistent punishment, parental conflict, inadequate child monitoring, and parental attitudes and behaviours that excuse the kid's behaviour are among the significant predictors of adolescent conduct issues, because some kids live only with their grandmothers. Rayment (2006) and Majani (2020) also note that some parents exhibit violent and hostile behaviour toward school personnel, and that their children exhibit violent, hostile, and antisocial behaviour as well. Additionally, it was discovered that 10% of the participants admitted to frequently witnessing their parents arguing, either verbally or physically. Children are expected to bring their experiences from home into school if they witness hostile behaviour between the adult couples who serve as their role models. This view is consistent with what various scholars say on this issue (Rossouw, 2003; Louw & Barnes, 2003; Edwards & Watts, 2004; Nene, 2012; Majani, 2020; Wolhuter & Oostuizen, 2003; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

#### **4.3.2.2 Abuse of various types experienced by learners as a challenge in learner discipline in the classroom**

The theme arises as participants agreed that certain forms of maltreatment have a detrimental impact on learner discipline. In this regard, Miss Petersen added:

*You know in my experience as a teacher, the, the problem come to school they are not from the school, so its emotional problems, its emotional instability it, it, uhm its cases like you know, abuse, its cases like uhm rape.*

Regarding the many forms of abuse, Miss Mthethwa stated:

*You find that the uncle touches or abuse the female child and the child ends up having anger finding them not able to play with other children at school, and when the child*

*come school, you find that other learners will bully him/her and the child ending up being uncontrollable.*

According to Edwards and Watts (2004) and Porter (2020), who corroborated the aforementioned findings, learners who experience domestic violence or abuse in their homes are unable to express the issues they are facing. Sensitive teachers learn about these abuses by monitoring the behaviour of their learners. Additionally, according to Edwards and Watts (2004) and Porter (2020), learners who have experienced physical abuse may exhibit nervousness, hyperactivity, aggression, disruptiveness, or destructive behaviour, be excessively compliant or passive, show little to no emotion when injured, or be wary of interacting with adults. Older learners who have experienced sexual abuse may act out or be angry, demonstrate depressive symptoms, or engage in risky behaviours including substance misuse, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, or prostitution.

In these situations expressed in the paragraph above, the teacher and the school management need to look for the underlying causes of the behaviours in order for the school to act to support the learners rather than escalating the abuse by penalising the learner for the improper behaviour (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Porter, 2020). According to Glasser (2000); (Burton, 2018), lowering the number of disgruntled learners is the key to reducing violence and can be done in every school. According to Glasser's reality therapy approach to counselling, learners can be motivated to take charge of their own development by being given a welcoming, pleasant, supportive atmosphere that fosters initiative and is non-punitive. According to Nene (2013) and Nkabinde (2020), in such a setting, learners would develop a sense of trust in others, which will motivate them to make constructive contributions. There will be fewer school issues—including violence—the less dissatisfied students there are in the school (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Porter, 2020).

#### **4.3.2.3 Maintaining a balance between learner rights and responsibilities poses a barrier to effective learner discipline**

In schools, learner discipline is negatively impacted by various attempts to maintain the balance between learner rights and obligations. The emphasis on respecting and preserving children's rights has been brought about by democracy in the South African educational system in accordance with the new democratic constitution adopted upon attaining independence in 1994.

Trying to uphold the children's rights while also coming up with appropriate and effective ways to deal with learner indiscipline without violating their rights is a challenge, according to Miss Myeni. She went on to say that learners are aware of their rights, but are unaware that those rights come with responsibilities, made it harder for the teachers to maintain discipline in classroom. She said:

*The main cause that I can say is that there is this thing of them having rights, they just put that on top or forward to say they are having rights forgetting that their rights go with responsibilities.*

Miss Williams thought that one of the biggest obstacles to learners' lack of discipline was striking a balance between their rights and obligations. She said:

*Our children think that they are untouchable because of such things, they know they are untouchable, and they know there is nothing that will be done to them, and they should not be given so many privileges, I think the department focuses more on giving children's rights instead of responsibilities, ok I don't mind us having rights and what. Children know I have this right and this right but when it comes to a point where the child knows that ok, I have this right, this is my responsibility, they don't. they are very... my god... they excel shame our kids, they know, and they know about their rights shame just not their responsibilities.*

The views expressed by Rossouw (2003) and Segalo and Rambuda (2018) resonate with those of the study's findings and they claim that one of the causes perplexing principals, teachers, and learners in situations connected to student discipline at school is the excessive focus placed on children's rights. Rossouw (2003) also says that some teachers are feeling pressured to acknowledge learners' rights but are unsure of when to give them a voice. Rossouw (2003) and Segalo and Rambuda (2018) report that teachers have said that they are unsure, perplexed, and fearful of violating learners' rights and of being accused of wrongdoing. He also makes the point that placing too much focus on learners' rights may result in a "do not care attitude" and a disregard for the importance of teachers in the classroom. This is difficult since it may prevent some learners from striving for excellence. Instead, the disruptive students will attempt to adversely encourage their other learners to display the same lack of control.

#### **4.3.2.4 Social media as a challenge in the maintenance of learner indiscipline in the school**

The majority of the participants also mentioned that one of the elements that has a bad impact on learner discipline is the media's involvement. Miss Williams said:

*In terms of social media, tik Tok hhaaa...it goes back to say they are able to access things they are not supposed to access they could be watching something very explicit in terms of sexuality, in terms of uhm...violence on tik Tok or twitter and they think it cool and they do not have anybody to tell them that no, this is not fine so, it goes back to them being expose to a lot of things.*

Miss Gumede, said:

*They observe everything and the come and experience it here in schools. Whatever they see at home or in their community they come and implement it in school.*

Mrs Skhakhane, stated:

*The influence of media as I have said before that they know that corporal punishment was abolished so, they do in any how because they know that we won't punish them physically, we can do whatever, but we will not touch them.*

Rayment (2006); Majani (2020) note that watching television, as well as playing on a computer and playing videogames, inspires young people to be heroes and emphasises the need for power, control, and violent behaviour, supported these findings. As a result, the media encourages learners to imitate what they see. Learners' daily behaviour and temperament are impacted by watching entertainment-based power and control, and this effect follows them into classrooms. Coe (2017); Coleman and Briggs (2002) assert that viewing television can lessen the learners' ability to study. It does not encourage sequential, logical thinking, which is necessary to comprehend cause-and-effect relationships. These issues are intimately related to the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional challenges, including aggression, that children experience. It is possible that televisions nature promotes violence more than its actual programming. TV and computers can reduce imagination, drive, and creativity while also reducing focus and the will to persist.

#### **4.3.2.5 Peer pressure as a challenge in the management of indiscipline learners at school and in the classroom**

According to the findings of the study, the participants believed that peer pressure may affect a child's behaviour at school both directly and indirectly. According to Miss Williams, peer pressure is one of the biggest obstacles. She mentioned:

*peer pressure also is another thing that is a challenge you find learners instead of listening to their teacher, they rather listen to their friend and peers like for instance if their friends are misbehaving in class, they as well do that because they sometimes want to provoke a teacher and sometimes wants unnecessary attention.*

Mrs Skhakhane shared similar as those expressed above about peer pressure. She explained:

*In school the peer pressure is the main problem, because learners are going in groups, they do negative things some of learners do things because they want to fit in a scheme, they also want attention from teachers.*

According to Edwards and Watts (2004); Porter (2020), peer pressure, which is a regular element of school life, has a substantial role in both positively and adversely influencing learners' behaviour. This result is corroborated by the studies above. Peers supporting one another in their ideals, job decisions, and social decisions show how peer pressure may be good. Parents and educators frequently ignore peer pressure's beneficial effects, which may be utilised as a tactical tool for improving academic performance, social skills, and behaviour. On the other side, learners get linked with and are affected more by their peers than by their family when families have bad interaction styles, lack prestige, have worse connections, and have weaker links. In this situation, the learner's peer group may replace the learner's family and have an impact on the learner's profession choices, school exit points, sexual activity, drug use, and criminality (Edwards & Watts, 2004; Porter, 2020).

According to Skinner and Hales (1992); De Dieu and Andala (2021), behaviour modification model, many primary school teachers utilise behaviour modification to teach their children appropriate behaviour by rewarding good behaviour and depriving bad behaviour. According to Mohapi (2008); Ngubane (2018), more openly disciplined learners may succeed in attracting unfavourable attention they crave from their classmates and then continue acting out in the hopes of getting more attention. With younger children, behaviour modification appears to be effective, especially with more challenging situations. However, as learners age, they may feel ashamed to receive special praise in front of their peers, and punishments in the form of withheld prizes may lose its "sting."

#### 4.3.3 The impact of learner misbehaviour on teaching and learning

As the majority of the participants touches the impact of learner misbehaviour on teaching and learning, this theme arises. Participants in this study noted that learner misbehaviour did have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning. The responses provided by the teachers to the question, which intended to determine how learner misbehaviour affects teaching and learning in the classroom and at school, made this clear. In response, Miss Petersen stated that both the teachers and the learner are impacted by the misbehaviour of the learner. She clarified:

*Because you must deal with misbehaviour and ill-discipline immediately uhm intends to take away from your contact time with the children that are well behaved, so you find that you've got to be flexible in your lesson, to....to.... uhm accommodate for those disruptions and then obviously like I said when the child is distracting the lesson too much, then you just isolate.*

Additionally, Miss Williams saw learner misbehaviour as a hindrance to the teaching and learning process. She bemoaned the fact that when learners behave badly, everything stops and there will not be any teaching and learning activities. She clarified:

*Uhm, it literally stops, it literally stops it uhm, no teaching and learning takes place in the class and no activities goes on because a child is misbehaving a child is doing this, so you cannot carry on, and it takes more time to do certain activities because you have dedicated a certain amount of time towards that misbehaving child or that misbehaving group of children, so it stops everything.*

Managing learner misbehaviour, according to Miss Myeni, is a waste of time because there will be no teaching and learning in a misbehaving class. What she said was as follows:

*It affects learning, like in many ways because you come as a teacher prepared to teach and then when these incidents come, you find that your lesson has been disturbed, your time has been wasted maybe you had only one hour to teach finding out like that you have to deal now with that misbehaviour and then you find that you are left with only maybe 30 minutes to teach then your, your, lesson will be disturbed like that is whereby you need now to come up with a recovery plan to say this is how now I need to recover what I had prepared for.*

Miss Myeni and Miss Mthethwa both used the same space. She remarked that time is squandered and that no teaching or learning occurs while students are misbehaving. Miss Mthethwa said:

*Teaching and learning will be affected because what I have planned to do is interrupted, is interrupted because of the misbehaviour of one learner or two, and sometimes you find that I will stop for some time when I stop obviously, I won't finish that lesson that I had planned because we have a limited time to teach each subject.*

The participants' opinions on the subject of how learner misbehaviour affected teaching and learning were similar. Miss Gumede added:

*The feeling that I have is just that, if the learner misbehaving while you're busy teaching, it interrupts the teaching and learning because you have to stop and deal with that learner, you need to act immediately. It is going affect it because you now shifting from teaching and focusing on disciplining.*

Mrs Skhakhane also addressed the question about how learner misbehaviour has an impact on teaching and learning. She clarified:

*In the classroom definitely teaching and learning will not be effective because if the learner is misbehaving it disturbing the whole class, I have to stop and deal with the matter, I cannot carry on while other learners are misbehaving.*

It is clear from the description above that learner misbehaviour has a detrimental influence on teaching and learning because it shortens the time allotted for instruction, causes work to be completed improperly, and causes disturbances that affect the entire class, including the teacher. These conclusions are supported by empirical studies from other fields. For instance, Finn et al., (2008); Evans et al. (2018) demonstrate that disruptive behaviours cut down on teaching time since it takes more effort to manage them than to actually educate. These results are consistent with those of Moyo et al., (2014); Makhasane and Chikoko (2016), who discovered that student misbehaviour and disciplinary issues have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning and, as a result, academic performance suffers greatly. Charles (2008) and Romero et al., (2020) also suggest that learner misbehaviour is one of the most distressing realities in education today since it obstructs instruction, inhibits student learning, and causes a lot of stress.

#### **4.3.4 The role of stakeholders (SGB, parents, SMT and DoE) in supporting teachers in maintaining learner discipline**



Stakeholders (SGB, Parents, SMT and DoE) have been highlighted by participants that they plays a vital role in supporting teachers in maintaining learner discipline although not all stakeholders take part as participants highlighted during the semi-structured interview. This research intended to comprehend how primary school teachers managed learner discipline. These procedures cover the part that numerous parties play in upholding learner discipline. The discussions with the participants showed that not all stakeholders are helping teachers keep learners in line in a discipline-abiding manner enough. In this study, it became abundantly evident that the principal, departmental heads, grade heads, and other educators have a significant role in providing participants with assistance. Following is what the participants said in response to the question about support from various stakeholders about the topic of learner discipline. According to Miss Petersen, if a learner is a persistent offender, DH is contacted before a parent is contacted. She asserted:

*if you have a repeat offender then we will refer that to our DH and upon referring it to the DH, then we contact the parent via telephone, we make an appointment, parent make an appointment with us, we meet and having one on one with the parent.*

Miss Myeni, who backed this up, added that while they have SMT, if the situation is serious, the school will summon an SGB. She explained:

*We have the SMT, if we see that the incident is beyond the SMT then it is whereby the SGB will be called and discuss the matter.*

They do have an SGB committee, according to Miss Mthethwa, but they often collaborate with their grade heads. Miss Mthethwa agreed with Miss Myeni that SGB meetings are only held in extreme circumstances. She stated:

*There is an SGB discipline committee, but most of the time we use Grade heads not unless it is a case that is not a minor case than SGB is called.*

Miss Williams had the same opinion as the other participants in her comments, stating that if the scenario persisted, the SGB would be contacted. Nevertheless, she commended the teachers and the SMT for their assistance in helping the teachers manage learner behaviour. She argued:

*In most cases, we the teachers... the teachers stretched out in terms of discipline of disciplining the child and if you can't handle the situation anymore, uhm you report the child to the SMT, and uhm there is LSEN that the child speaks too, to get to the bottom of why the child is acting like that, and then after that uhm...if the situation prevails it then the SGB.*

Participants also mentioned that the SAPS and social workers play important roles in maintaining learner discipline in schools, in addition to school management teams and other teachers. Miss Gumede added:

*We do have eeeh.... the committee that deals with discipline and we do have Polices (SAPS), we work with polices and social workers most of the time.*

Miss Myeni also expressed similar ideas. She clarified:

*There is this forum from safety forum whereby policeman, police station is also involved or SAPS, so I think that one is helping or is assisting a lot because these boys are having like too bad attitude that they are having when they grow, they become more aggressive, involved being in drugs and some in alcohol.*

The data generated makes it clear that, if any help is provided at all, it is either insufficient or non-existent. Miss Williams also mentioned that parents did not provide her with any assistance. She emphasised that the provincial education department did not assist teachers with the problem of learner discipline. Miss Williams said:

*There's not much help we get from in terms of department on how you can discipline a child.*

This was backed up by Miss Myeni's remarks. She argued:

*DoE just give us... but then they do not do a follow up to say if ever this ATC is not working then this is what we shall do. They do not follow up or support that much.*

When handling learner punishment, other stakeholders including parents must be involved. Idu and Ojedapo (2011); Simba et al. (2016a) assert that it is imperative for all parties involved in education to find answers to the issue of a lack of discipline in the educational system. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003); Semali and Vumilia (2016) make an argument that learner discipline should be dealt with at the school level with the participation of all role-players, with parent engagement being of particular importance. These researchers make it clear that other stakeholders must assist teachers in dealing with the issue of learner discipline because it is not just their responsibility. It is clear from the discussions that not all stakeholders are fulfilling their obligations to uphold discipline in schools. Participants did agree that teachers are supported by school management teams (SMTs), nevertheless. The SMT's responsibility appears to be to step in when learner behaviour has to be corrected and to maintain order in the classroom so that teachers may do their jobs well.

In contrast, parents do not appear to be doing enough to keep order in schools, since the majority of them do not even show up when it is necessary. These results support Zulu's (2008) assertion that parents are insufficiently involved in overseeing student behaviour in schools. Again, Motseke (2010) asserts that parents do not support educators in upholding learner discipline. The assertive disciplinary approach developed by Canter and Canter (2001) emphasises the necessity for instructors to build strong family support. In support of this, Sections 8(1) and (2) of the Schools Act provides that the SGB oversees developing a learner behaviour code through a consultation process. The consultation process should involve collaboration between parents, teachers, and learners. These results substantiate the assertions of some studies that teachers do not receive adequate assistance from the DoE in handling discipline issues with learners (De Witt & Lessing, 2013; Masitsa, 2008; Rossouw, 2012).

#### **4.3.5 Educators' views about the contribution of policies in addressing discipline problems**

It came out of the study findings that the contribution of policies in addressing discipline problems is assisting teachers a lot when it comes to learner discipline, participants also highlighted the importance of policies and how they used those policies in their schools in maintaining learner discipline. This study proved that learner codes of behaviour exist in schools, providing a set of rules for efficient punishment enforcement. The learner's code of conduct is said to help teachers set out the rules and direct learners as to what is expected of them in class, at school, and during disciplinary proceedings, according to a general viewpoint voiced in the interviews. A variety of comments were produced in response to questions that aimed to identify whether policies were in place to manage disciplinary issues and how the policies helped teachers deal with learner discipline. In reply, Miss Myeni said:

*We do have the code of conduct, it does assist us a lot because each year at the beginning we just call the parents, the code of conduct will be read both for parents and kids so..., so like, that one makes them very scared because they know if something bad happened their parents will be called.*

This study proved that learner codes of behaviour exist in schools, providing a set of rules for efficient punishment enforcement. The learner's code of conduct is said to help teachers set out the rules and direct learners as to what is expected of them in class, at school, and during disciplinary proceedings, according to a general viewpoint voiced in the interviews. A variety of comments were produced in response to questions that aimed to identify whether policies

were in place to manage disciplinary issues and how the policies helped teachers deal with learner discipline. In reply, Miss Myeni said:

*We do have the code of conduct, they assist a lot because each year at the beginning, it is read for both teachers, learners, and parents so if a learner misbehaves parents and learners know exactly what is it that will happen next. So, it does exist in other ways. But not all the time because some parents do not show up when they are being called by the school.*

In a similar vein, Mrs Skhakhane said:

*It is the policy that is called the code of conduct that I mentioned before, that is having the cases and the consequences... the rules and the consequences if you broke the rule then the consequences will be this... for an example if the learner found carrying the dangerous weapon, obviously will be expelled immediately.*

When probing if this code of conduct helps to manage learner discipline, Mrs. Skhakhane went on to say:

*They do assist because the parents are involved, they know exactly, when a learner is expelled obviously will come back with the parent to solve the matter.*

There are a variety of opinions on punishment procedures, and one participant appeared to be aware of the existence of school regulations but to know nothing about them. Miss Williams emphasised that she is aware of the existence of a code of conduct, but she believes that it is only a piece of paper because the provisions of the code are not followed.

She clarified:

*There is the code of conduct, but it does not do much at all but it just there, it just there just being paper, it not really exercised, at the beginning of the year we make them go through the code of conduct, so they know what is expected of them and they sign them, but things go South after that.*

The learner code of conduct is the disciplinary policy that schools have implemented to handle discipline, as is shown from the excerpts. This is supported by Sections 8 and 20 of the Schools Act, which requires school governing bodies to create and implement a student code of conduct that specifies appropriate disciplinary procedures. Many participants noted that upholding the code of conduct helped them maintain student discipline. It was evident that the code of conduct clearly specifies the standards that learners know how to act in school. According to Serakwane (2020), in certain schools, teachers adhere to the administration's guidelines for the employment of disciplinary measures, unlike at other schools where teachers have more freedom to choose. Unexpectedly, some teachers' ignorance of the school's regulations was

discovered. This implies that some teachers were unaware of the policies and guidelines guiding the institution. This goes against Jones' model, which says that teachers should explain norms, customs, and standards so that learners would comprehend and adhere to them. Teachers will struggle to enforce classroom rules if they fail to do this. The aforementioned excerpts also show that some teachers establish classroom rules without consulting the learners. This might make it challenging for the learners to internalise these norms. Gordy et al., (2018) argue that teachers and learners should jointly create the norms for classroom behaviour and decide on the logical repercussions for adherence to or disregard of those standards (Charles, 2008; Romeo et al., 2020). The necessity of creating classroom norms and imparting them to learners as a teacher is at the heart of Jones' discipline paradigm (Charles, 2008, Romeo et al., 2020).

#### 4.3.6 The discipline problems experienced by teachers in the participating primary

Theme emerged as participants offered similar opinions based on their experiences in their schools when asked to expound on some of the discipline issues that teachers encountered in the classroom. These issues with discipline included bullying, theft, fighting, and inability to do assignments, as well as a lack of respect for the teachers and for learning and teaching. Miss Gumede stated that learners show little regard for their teachers. Miss Gumede also said that learners are stabbing one another with harmful objects. She continued:

*What I normally encounter in my classroom is bullying, then undermining some of the educators, that is what our learners normally do, theft, using dangerous weapons, the one that are sharp, yah, for example, pair of scissors, or a pen to stab one another.*

Regarding the issues with discipline, they encountered at their school, Miss Williams and Miss Gumede expressed the same opinions. She clarified:

*Bullying, both physical and emotional right and.... Uhm. Theft obviously, the theft of pens, pencils now and again, hitting, biting, and I think that basically it uhm... I haven't had an issue where a learner talks back to me uhm. I think it just that, that now and again fighting to each other, 'this one is doing this to me, this one is doing that to me'. we do receive learners that are rude that don't do their work and they are just gives you attitude,*

When it comes to the homework that teachers assign to the learners, Miss Mthethwa said that she too had significant issues. Miss Mthethwa bemoaned the fact that learners' disinterest in their academics was the cause of the discipline issues they experienced in the classroom. She claimed:

*In my classrooms uhm... They talk too much, and some of them, some of them they dodge their schoolwork, but then I don't have too many problems because they are still young. Ooh another incident that I encounter is bullying, fighting, and stealing at each other, some learners still monies of others, pens and pencils.*

Similarly, Miss Myeni agreed that bullying and violence are significant issues that learners encountered at school. She stated:

*Bullying... there is a lot of incidents that eh... contains bullying in our class whereby other learners, you find that other learner has bullied other learners and then there are too many reports that we are coming across that are based on that, they also like to fight, they do fight a lot, only to find that there is also no reason for that fight to take place.*

Participants' comments made it clear that bullying in schools was a serious issue that all educators deal with in the classroom. She also cited using foul language and making fun of other learners. The same emotion was expressed by Mrs. Skhakhane and the other participants, who said:

*Bullying is one of eeh of the major crisis, also vulgar language and teasing other learners also is there.*

It is clear from the excerpts that teachers at the three schools regularly faced similar disciplinary issues. This supports the points made by Ndamani (2008) and Qhosola (2016) who state that elementary school teachers regularly deal with a lack of discipline. According to the findings of this study, the most frequent issues that the teachers see in the participating schools include disrespect for teachers, bullying, failure, theft, fights, peer mocking, and a lack of enthusiasm in doing homework. Undisciplined behaviour is defined as any conduct that violates the established rules or the established order in the classroom (De Witt & Lessing, 2010; Masingi, 2017).

This kind of behaviour needs to be controlled. As it was described in Chapter Two, it can lead to inadequate teaching and learning. However, despite the difficulties they face, the participating schools' teachers have been able to instil discipline in these institutions, ensuring that teaching and learning takes place successfully and produce positive outcomes. There must be order for teaching and learning to be successful. The discipline issues raised by the learners are the teachers' responsibility to handle. Participants did note several difficulties teachers had in upholding discipline, though. Participants emphasised that teachers have challenges when dealing with significant offenses like fighting and theft.

#### **4.3.7 Disciplinary measures implemented by teachers in ensuring effective teaching and learning**

According to the report, teachers in the participating schools employed a variety of disciplinary strategies to prevent and manage learner misbehaviour and ensure successful teaching and learning. There were similarities among the disciplinary measures used by participants, such as establishing rules, boundaries, and consequences in accordance with school policies, giving warnings, involving parents, imposing detention, assigning cleaning duties, conversing with learners, and setting an example of appropriate behaviour. It was highlighted that although

some of the disciplinary techniques used by the teachers were prohibited, they were nonetheless employed, fully conscious of their illegality, including removing the learners from class and having them clean restrooms. This is supported by Serakwane (2020) who said that schools employ a variety of tactics to uphold discipline, some of which are constrained by the law.

According to the research, the participants thought that controlling learner discipline began with establishing the ground rules for the class. Depending on the type of misbehaviour—a slight infraction or a significant offense—punishment was given if the learner breached the rule. When asked how they handled learner discipline in their courses, Miss Williams said that after establishing the rules, learners were disciplined for misbehaving, but those that behave well need to be acknowledged or given rewards for their efforts.

She clarified:

*So, in terms of inside the class uhm. Basically children, I believe that children gives the energy you give them, so if you, like giving them respect they will give you the same thing also you must always, always set boundaries, give them rules they supposed to follow and, uhm... cos they won't assume what types of rules they are going to follow so instant of just uhm going with the flow you have to set boundaries in terms of what you expect from them and then uhm, yah, when, when they do follow them rewards them or praise them that when they don't follow that when you have to chat with them and talk with them.*

Similar to Miss Myeni, who said it helps with learner discipline to share guidelines with learners. She continued:

*As a class manager by every beginning of the year we just draw classroom rules, so they just go with consequences, so each learner know, knows what is expected from them or from him/her so it becomes easier for us to discuss what is it that we want to do the whole year, then we just agreed on that.*

Mrs Skhakhane afterwards stated:

*In classroom at the beginning of the year we use to draft the classroom rules with my learners eeh that goes with the consequences, then if a learner breaks a rule, what kind of punishment will be. I use, since corporal punishment was abolished so I use the alternative eeh... punishment like a detention, the learner will not go to break or will left some of the time after school or I will make them him or her to clean the classroom on his own, depending on how many broke the rules. I will send them to the... cleaner to help the cleaner pick up the papers and help the cleaner in the school gardening.*



*Based on school, our school has its code of conduct that was draft, eeh the code of conduct was presented to the learners and parents, so there are different types of cases, there are minor cases, there are serious cases, depend on that the learner what case it may be.*

In addition, Miss Gumede said that rather than punishing a learner physically, she provided them their own place and did not mix them up with other learners or put them in detention. She suggested:

*What I normally do... instead of using a stick I take a learner and give his or her own space like not involving with other learners, maybe will sit next to me or next to the board alone but..., sometimes I keep the learner inside the classroom, telling them "You not going to the break because you are doing one, two, three, so you will remain in the classroom.*

Significant action is done for serious offenses including bringing weapons to school, fighting, and stealing. Participants emphasised that learners who committed major offenses first get warnings. If the behaviour continues, it is brought to the attention of the school management for possible assistance before being sent to the disciplinary committee with notification of the parents. The findings, however, made it clear that including parents in punishment is a significant difficulty. There is no doubt that parents are involved in handling serious instances. Discussing the situation with a parent has helped in critical circumstances; Mrs Skhakhane said:

*We do fill some forms that called incident report form, when the learner misbehaves, we fill the form if the, if the case is serious, the letter will be written to a parent to come and attend the matter, it will depend on the form of the case, how serious it is.*

Miss Myeni brought up a critical matter that occurred in class, and she said that she decided to ignore the learner until she talked with his parents. She clarified:

*There was an incident where one of my learners like became rude in my class... so... it was whereby he was refusing to take the, the punishment that was given by that time, so... I just ignored the learner because he, he was rude to me, that was the, the outcomes strategy that I came up with to say I will just let him be... up until I met with the parent.*

These discussions make it clear that teachers use various methods for various offenses. According to the literature study, some teaching strategies for discipline are proactive while others are control oriented (Serakwane, 2020). This supports the assertions stated by this study in Chapter Two that there appears to be a problem with the disciplinary techniques employed by the teachers, as some of them employ methods that are against the law. Additionally,

research showed that despite government prohibitions, there is consensus among academics regarding the continued use of physical punishment in schools to preserve learners' discipline (Mabaso, 2019). This contrasts with Gilbert Masitsa (2008) and Simba et al., (2016a) assertions that schools must adhere to generally recognised laws and regulations defining the terms of disciplinary processes. Serakwane (2020) asserts, as noted in other pieces of literature, that classroom management models are the source of the discipline techniques used by teachers.

The ideas that underpin this study provide support for its conclusions. The assertive discipline model emphasises the teacher setting up a set of norms and expectations, a set of positive outcomes for following the rules and a set of negative consequences for disobeying the rules, as well as a strategy to implement the model with the learners. It is clear from the results that teachers attempt to pinpoint learners' fundamental issues by speaking with them. On the other side, Jones' approach supports the use of punitive measures such as warning, detention, and contacting parents. According to Jones' approach, systematic application of negative penalties may be employed as a fallback when learners act inappropriately, depending on the severity of the consequence (Joiner & Edwards, 2008; Sueb et al., 2020). The results show unequivocally that teachers are fully accountable for their classes.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the data that came from semi-structured interviews was analysed and evaluated. I broke the data down into seven topics and then analysed, presented, and discussed them. Additionally, I connected the research results to the theoretical frameworks and the literature that were discussed in Chapter Two of the study. Chapter Five main focus is on summarising the study, highlighting the key conclusions gained from the data, and offering suggestions. The next chapter presents conclusions reached and makes recommendations based on the conclusions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The data generated in three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District through the use of semi-structured interviews were presented and discussed in the preceding chapter. The conclusions from the data analysis and discussion in Chapter Four are presented in this chapter. The first thing that is offered in this study is a synopsis of the whole thing. Second, the three study research questions are used to describe the findings. Thirdly, some recommendations are offered considering the conclusions. Fourthly, the conclusions of the study explore the implications of the study. The chapter summary is then given.

#### **5.2 Study summary**

This study tried to explore and understand how teachers handle learner discipline in the classroom and at school. Three elementary schools in the uMzinyathi District were the subject of the research case study. An introduction to the study and an outline were included in Chapter One. I gave an overview of the study, including its history, problem statement, justification, research questions, explanation of important terms, importance of the study, study demarcations, and outline. The literature on how learner behaviour can be managed is provided in Chapter Two and came from both local and global viewpoints. After that, the theoretical framework for the study were provided, including the Jones' management model and the assertive disciplinary model. This study attempted to explore the practices of educators in managing learner discipline within the classroom and in school. The study was a case study of three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District.

In the third chapter, I discussed the research design and methodology that was adopted in conducting the study. As part of that discussion, issue of research paradigm dominates as the paradigm provides a philosophical undermining of the whole study. Other elements such as the research design, methodology, sampling, data gathering techniques, including semi-structured interviews, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness are also discussed in that chapter. The fourth chapter presents the findings and discuss them as well. The fifth and final chapter makes conclusions and recommendations.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) claim that conclusions offer a final assessment or opinion on a particular study. The three research questions that were utilised to generate data for the study are addressed in the three findings that follow. This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the information provided in the preceding chapter. The results show how well the important concerns stated in the first chapter have been addressed by the data given by participants. The following is a list of three research questions for the study:

- How do teachers in selected primary schools manage learner discipline within the classroom and in school?
- What challenges do educators encounter in managing learner discipline?
- How do management of learner discipline affect effective curriculum delivery in classrooms and in the school?

These research questions serve as the title for each discussion, which is where the findings are addressed.

### **5.3.1 How do teachers in selected primary schools manage learner discipline within the classroom and in school?**

The findings have showed that school policies, especially the learner code of conduct, supported the teachers in setting expectations for learners in the classroom and at school, and guiding them in those expectations, and managing learners' disruptive behaviour. In other words, I can argue that the teacher relied heavily on the code of conduct for learners as their legal guide for managing learner discipline in the classroom. The other finding that was not expected given their understanding of the code of conduct for learners, was that of a teacher who expressed unawareness of the code of conduct. However, and confusingly, the same teacher expressed a view that the code of conduct was helpful in dealing with learner behaviour. She claimed that the code of conduct is just a piece of paper written in black and white in school because it is not practised at the school. One conclusion to be made here is that the role of the code of conduct in practice was not clearly understood by all the participants in the study. This raises more questions about the ability of some of the teachers in managing learner discipline in the classroom. In Chapter Four, Section 4.3.5, more details in this issue are provided.

The literature that was presented in Chapter Two specified that discipline must be upheld in the classroom and at school for learners' education to be successful in the absence of disruptive behaviour and wrongdoing. Speaking with the learners was judged to be the most appreciated discipline technique among those employed by the teachers. They achieved this, for instance, by showing up to class not just prepared for the subject but also motivated to encourage learners, providing them a reason to get out of bed and go to school each day, and using one-on-one conversations to help educators manage learner behaviour. The participants discussed how educators have a responsibility to all their learners to operate *in loco parentis*, or as if they are assuming the role of a responsible parent, when it comes to the management of learner disciplinary issues. They jointly bear the burden of ensuring the security of the learners at school with the parents. To ensure the learners', teachers properly supervise, direct, and regulate them. They have a duty and responsibility to supervise learners appropriately and protect them from reasonably foreseeable injury or danger. Because of their rank and position, they are designated to function in the parent's place, and as such, are required to conduct themselves as a cautious father of the family (in loco parentis) would. In order to establish a safe atmosphere that is conducive to learning, the educator fulfils his or her responsibility of care. Section 4.3.1 of Chapter Four has more information on these measures.

Teachers described the many types of disciplinary issues they see on a regular basis and their experiences upholding discipline in their classrooms. The first theme makes clear that teachers in the study schools deal with comparable or identical discipline issues. These conduct issues include disrespecting instructors, stealing, fighting, bullying, carrying hazardous weapons, and showing little interest in academics. Participants said they tried their best to preserve discipline in the classroom and at school, for example by establishing classroom rules, holding parent meetings, and reporting concerns to the SMT and the SGB, but they still run into difficulties. Section 4.3.6 of Chapter Four has more information on this topic. Participants said they tried their best to preserve discipline in the classroom and at school, for example, by establishing classroom rules, holding parent meetings, and reporting concerns to the SMT and the SGB, but they still ran into difficulties. In Chapter Four, Section 4.3.4, more evidence on this issue is provided. The results of this study showed that teachers struggled to deal with significant offenses like bullying and theft because they lack the necessary competence.

### **5.3.2 What challenges do educators encounter in managing learner discipline?**

The findings suggest that although educators succeeded in some respect to manage learner discipline, there are numerous challenges that they encountered. Despite other stakeholders (SMT, SGB, SAPS, and Grades heads) supporting educators in managing learners' discipline, challenging issues persisted. It was clear from the participants that the greatest obstacle to solving behavioural issues seemed to be a lack of parental participation. Lenient Management Approach drew attention to the fact that learners may be disruptive if they are looking for attention and feel unloved or uncared for by their parents (Badrus & Arifin, 2021; Weeks, 2001). Others may have a history of sexual or physical abuse, and long-term partnerships can also be emotionally problematic. Such learners experience feelings of rejection, abandonment, incapacity, and depression (McNamara & Moreton, 2016; Singh, 2012). To get the teacher's affection and attention, they could fight, insult, or abuse other students to express their feelings.

According to the findings presented in Chapter Four, some parents failed to show their children enough love and attention, which may have contributed to them to turn to their teachers for attention. Parental involvement in their children's schooling is lacking. The parents of the children who are misbehaving in school are typically the ones who do not attend parent-teacher conferences and do not supervise their children's academics, which makes it difficult for the school to maintain effective discipline. The environment and upbringing of children affect their behaviour. Some parents do not spend much time at home, and even when they do, they do not talk to their children about behaviour. This will happen as a result of peer impact on their children. As mentioned by Miss Mthethwa, Miss Myeni, and Miss Petersen in the first, second, and third paragraphs of Section 4.3.2.1 of Chapter Four, one difficulty was that some of the learners only lived with their grandparents or siblings. My conclusion is that the teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of the impact of the environment on the learners' behaviours at school. However, in the same vein, I can conclude that the participating teachers did not do enough to sensitise the parents about the importance of getting fully involved in the education of their children, by among other things, cooperating with the schools.

Numerous forms of abuse have a significant role in the learners' misbehaviour. Some of the learners experienced various forms of abuse at home or witness domestic violence, which may make it difficult for them to act out in school. Some of the learners have experienced physical violence from their parents. If educators implement disciplinary measures that reward bad

behaviour at school, they run the risk of inviting discipline issues. Participants acknowledged that peer pressure may be difficult and has an impact on a child's behaviour at school. Peers are those learners that each learner chooses to associate with. The effects are detrimental that when teachers teach them, proper manners, they do not listen. They seemed to prefer what their classmates tell them compared to what their teachers have to say. In schools, learner discipline is negatively impacted by the balance between learner rights and obligations. Although the children have more rights than a teacher, they tend to forget that those rights come with obligations. This topic is described in Section 4.3.2.3 of Chapter Four. Learners are highly attentive to their rights and aware of them. They also seek a number of rights that were not previously granted to them, such as the right to be heard and the freedom of speech, whether it be oral or written. Learners become more abrasive and outspoken in their approach when these needs are not delivered. A further factor in aberrant behaviour in schools is the media's influence.

### **5.3.3 How do management of learner discipline affect effective curriculum delivery in classrooms and in the school?**

The third theme conclusions went into detail onto how student misconduct affected both teaching and learning. The findings of the study shown that the teaching and learning processes were negatively impacted by learner misbehaviour for teachers. Teachers made it apparent that learner misbehaviour affects both them and the learners since it causes disruptions in the classroom and at school, loses time for teaching and learning, and shortens the time allotted for instruction. For instance, in Section 4.3.3 of Chapter Four, Miss Myeni, an EPS teacher, and Miss Williams, an OPS teacher, agreed that controlling or dealing with discipline issues take a lot of time. As a result, discipline-related activities took up valuable time that could be spent on teaching and learning. However, as was indicated in Chapter Two, the success, the primary goal of the school, will be accomplished when the climate of the school and the classroom is favourable to teaching and learning. Learners who are misbehaving also tend to fail to complete their work and ultimately fail.

Therefore, for effective teaching and learning, as well as for strong academic success, learners have to demonstrate strong discipline. The study's findings, however, showed that the studied schools have implemented other practices to counteract these negative effects. For example, when teachers try to manage misbehaving learners during teaching and learning, they discover

that their teaching time has been wasted because they only have an hour to teach a subject. Participants also agreed that their teaching time was wasted while trying to deal with learner discipline issues. In Chapter Four, Section 4.3.3, the second and sixth paragraphs provide more information. It quickly became clear that the Department of Education's alternate suggestions for preserving discipline in the schools that participated in this study did not work. They did not appear to be able to curtail learners' indiscipline behaviours in the schools. The majority of these alternate techniques, from the perspectives of the participants, were time wasting. Weeks would be spent by a teacher only attempting to cope with the situation of a learner who is not turning in his or her work. This consumes a lot of the teacher's time and was disruptive to those learners who took their education seriously. Teacher would miss lessons to attend disciplinary hearings or speak with parents who have been called to the school.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

The following suggestions are made in light of the findings of the study in order to assist or benefit teachers and help relieve some of the issues in the school and classroom environment:

### **5.4.1 Recommendation One**

It came up from the participants that some educators were not aware of the code of conduct for learners. This suggests that this important document is invisible to the important stakeholders in the schools, the teachers. Therefore, this study recommends that school management has to ensure that this document is reviewed from time to time and that all relevant stakeholders such as teachers participate in accordance with the Schools Act provisions. Thereafter, a copy of the Code of Conduct should be availed to the learners along with an acknowledgment card they may fill out and return to the school, so their parents are likewise informed of the rules and the repercussions of breaking them. Since the majority of learners in the participating schools speak isiZulu as their first language, the code of conduct ought to be translated into that language to suit all parents' varying levels of literacy.

### **5.4.2 Recommendation Two**

To better comprehend the students they are working with, teachers should become familiar with and learn about the learner's family histories. Each school should encourage cooperation



or collaboration in the implementation of the rules and conduct codes. Therefore, educators should provide an example of self-discipline for the learners to follow. Teachers should also address the issue of punishment with empathy for any issues that learners might be having at home or at school that are contributing to their poor behaviour. Every school should create a system of safety regulations and an official school safety policy. This is done to make sure that rules and expectations about behaviour are implemented fairly.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendation Three**

The administration of the school must take a more active role in handling discipline concerns. They must aid educators more and provide them with direction. The Alternatives to Corporal Punishment policy paper should be copied by the school and distributed to all teachers. The documents contents must be discussed with all the teachers. This study showed, among other things, that teachers do not consistently use disciplinary actions against learners. The administration of the school, all the educators, and other interested parties should come to consensus on a consistent strategy for handling learner behaviour, especially when it comes to the topic of incentives and sanctions. Teachers should continuously use disciplinary measures to make sure that students comprehend and follow the rules that govern the classroom.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendation Four**

The findings and conclusions have shown that the cooperation of parents in the education of their children was weak. My conclusion was that the participating schools had work to do in that regard. Therefore, this study recommends that teachers and their management need to do more in terms of mobilising parents to play an active role in the schools' activities, including cooperating with schools in handling learner discipline issues.

### **5.5 The implications of the study**

Two educators from each of the three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District participated in the small-scale study, which was conducted there. The results of this study should not be interpreted as representing the methods used by all educators in the uMzinyathi district, nor can the methods used by educators in these three primary schools be applied to all the other schools in the area.

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this study was to comprehend how teachers in three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District managed learner discipline in the classroom and the school. The introduction of this chapter included a synopsis of each study chapter. The results, which were organised according to the study topics, were then presented. The chapter has made suggestions for educators and other education stakeholders considering these results (SMT, SGB and Parents). The consequences of the study were addressed in this chapter's conclusion.

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**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

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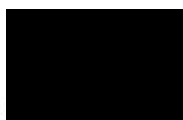
Miss Precious Nondumiso Mondo  
P.O. Box 79015  
**EMPANGENI**  
3880

Dear Miss Mondo

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING THE PRACTICES OF EDUCATORS IN MANAGING LEARNER DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE CLASSROOM AND IN SCHOOL: PERSPECTIVES FROM THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE UMZINYATHI DISTRICT"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from **24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.



**Dr M.J.B. Mthembu**  
**Acting Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

## LETTER OF REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O Box 79015

Empangeni

3880

17 February 2022

Attention: The Acting Head of Department (Dr MJB Mthembu)

Department of Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Doctor

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is **Precious Nondumiso Mlondo**, a Master of Education student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Pietermaritzburg Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in three school under your jurisdiction in the uMzinyathi District. The title of my study is: **Practices of educators in Managing learner discipline within the classroom and the school: Perspectives from three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District.**

This study focuses on exploring the practices of educators' in managing learner discipline in the selected primary schools in the uMzinyathi District. The planned study will focus on post-level one educators in three primary school (two from each school). The study will use semi structured interviews with educators. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively

selected to participate in the study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that the participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

You may contact my supervisors, UKZN Research Office or myself should you have any queries or questions.

I (Precious Nondumiso Mlondo) can be contacted at:

Email: (magqapn@gmail.com)

Cell: (083 426 5750/ 071 150 9480)

My supervisor is Prof. T.T. Bhengu, at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: [bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za) ; Phone number: 031 260 3534.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through:  
[HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

---

Miss Precious N. Mlondo

## LETTER TO GATEKEEPERS (PRINCIPALS)

P.O Box 79015

Empangeni

3880

01 March 2022

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Precious Nondumiso Mlondo. I am a Master of Education student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Pietermaritzburg Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct this research at your school. The title of my study is: **Practices of educators in Managing learner discipline within the classroom and in school: Perspectives from three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District.**

#### Please note that:

- Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after reporting process.
- All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Fictitious names will be used to represent participants names.
- The interview may last for about 45 minutes to an hour and may be split depending on the participants preference.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The research aims at knowing the challenges of your community relating to resource scarcity, peoples' movement, and effects on peace.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I (Precious Nondumiso Mlondo) can be contacted at:

Email: (magqapn@gmail.com)

Cell: (083 426 5750/ 071 150 9480)

My supervisor is Prof. T.T. Bhengu, at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: [bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za) ; Phone number: 031 260 3534.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through:  
[HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

I hope this letter will find your positive consideration, thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

---

Precious N. Mlondo

## LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

P.O Box 79015

Empangeni

3880

01 March 2022

Dear Participant

### INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Precious Nondumiso Mlondo. I am a Master of Education student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Pietermaritzburg Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. The title of my study is: **Practices of educators in Managing learner discipline within the classroom and the school: Perspectives from three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District**. The objectives of the study are:

- To seek an understanding of how teachers in the selected primary schools manage learner discipline within the classroom and in school.
- To identify challenges that educators encounter in managing learner discipline.
- To seek an understanding of how teachers' management of learner discipline affect effective curriculum delivery in their classroom and in school.

#### PLEASE NOTE THAT:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 45 minutes to an hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the challenges of your community relating to resource scarcity, peoples' movement, and effects on peace.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable with an X) whether you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

|                 | Willing | Not willing |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| Audio equipment |         |             |

I (Precious Nondumiso Mlondo) can be contacted at:

Email: (magqapn@gmail.com)

Cell: (083 426 5750/ 071 150 9480)

My supervisor is Prof. T.T. Bhengu, at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: [bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za) ; Phone number: 031 260 3534.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through:  
[HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

I hope this letter will find your positive consideration, thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

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Precious N. Mlondo

## **INFORMED CONSENT FROM PARTICIPANTS**

### **DECLARATION**

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project: Practices of educators in managing learner discipline within the classroom and in school: perspectives from three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District and I consent to participating in the research project. I am also fully aware that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire, without any negative or undesirable consequence. I am also aware that there are neither any foreseeable direct benefits nor direct risks associated with my participation in this study. I therefore understand the contents of the letter fully and I do GIVE CONSENT/DO NOT GIVE CONSENT to the interview being voice-recorded.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

**DATE**

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## DATA GENERATION TOOL

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL POST LEVEL ONE (PL1) EDUCATORS

#### TITTLE

Exploring the practices of educators in Managing learner discipline within the classroom and the school: Perspectives from teachers in three primary schools in the uMzinyathi District

1. Many reports that I have read indicates an increase in learner discipline problems in schools and in the classroom. Can you share with me how you manage learner discipline in your classroom and in school (outside the classroom)? Please elaborate! **Probes:** [What drives your decision to manage learner discipline this way?]
2. What are some of the incidents of learner misbehaviour that you encounter in your classroom? **Probes:** [How do you deal with learner misbehaviour/indiscipline in the classroom? What structures do you have in your school that handles or deal with cases of learner misconduct?]
3. Many reports that I have read indicates an increase in learner discipline problems in schools and in the classroom. Would you say that you have high incidents of discipline problems among the learners? **Probe:** [If that is the case, what are some of the learner discipline problems you face in class as a teacher? Please elaborate].
4. Teachers face multiple challenges when disciplining learners. Do you have such case, if so, can you explain the challenges you encounter when managing learner discipline? Are there any documents you have at your school that talks about Alternatives to Corporal punishment from DoE? **Probe:** [if yes, do this ATC assist? If no, then what strategies do you use to overcome these challenges since corporal punishment has been banned long ago?]

5. As a teacher what is your understanding of your role in managing learner discipline?  
**Probes:** [What exactly are you expected (parents/society/DBE policy or guidelines) to do? What exactly do you do in playing your role as a teacher who must maintain discipline among the learners?]
  
6. Learning and teaching is said to be negatively affected by the learner misbehaviour. In what way does learner misbehaviour affecting teaching and learning in your classroom and in school? **Probe:** [What exactly do you do as an educator to mitigate learner misbehaviour for effective teaching and learning?]
  
7. What upsets you or makes you angry about the learner ill-discipline in your classroom and in school? **Probes:** [ Do you think managing learner discipline affect or disturb effective curriculum delivery in classroom and in the school? If so, how? If you could, how would you change things at this school to make it better for effective teaching and learning?]
  
8. Are there any school policies in place to address discipline problems? **Probes:** [How do these policies assist you as a teacher in dealing with learner discipline? How does the way you manage learner discipline support teaching and learning in your class? Does it help to improve performance of your learners? If it does, how?]
  
9. In my readings I have also find that if teachers use one and the same (uniform) disciplinary measures, learners will know and see that disciplinary measures are serious. What can you say about this view? What disciplinary measures do you have in your school that assist you as teachers in managing learner discipline? Are they effective?  
**Probe:** [Do you as teachers obey, follow, and observe those measures to manage learner discipline, if so, how do you do it?]
  
10. What other disciplinary strategies besides the one from Department of Education you think might support teachers to improve the management of learner discipline/ misbehaviour in classrooms and in the schools of uMzinyathi District?

11. As a teacher, what do you think are the main causes of learner discipline problems in the classroom and in school? If you can, please name the few. **Probe:** [If you could, how can you manage the causes of learner discipline/ misbehaviour in your classroom and in the school?]

**NB:** Before we conclude our conversation, is there anything you would like to share with me as a researcher on the practices of managing learner discipline towards effective teaching and learning which I have not asked you, but you feel that it is important to share with me? Please feel free to share that with me.

Thank you for giving me your time and for this opportunity to have this conversation with you.

## Precious Mlondo First Draft Turitin

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

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| <b>7</b> %       | <b>7</b> %       | <b>0</b> %   | %              |
| SIMILARITY INDEX | INTERNET SOURCES | PUBLICATIONS | STUDENT PAPERS |

### PRIMARY SOURCES

|          |  |                |
|----------|--|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>researchspace.ukzn.ac.za</b><br>Internet Source | <b>6</b> %     |
| <b>2</b> | <b>repository.nwu.ac.za</b><br>Internet Source     | <b>&lt;1</b> % |
| <b>3</b> | <b>ulspace.ul.ac.za</b><br>Internet Source         | <b>&lt;1</b> % |

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