

**Exploring the diverse perspectives of the disciplinary methods
aimed at modifying problem behaviours in young children in
selected areas in Pietermaritzburg**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social
Science (Psychology), School of Applied Human Sciences, College of Humanities,
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DECLARATION

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science (Psychology) in the School of Applied Human Sciences, Discipline of Psychology, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Supervisor: Dr Phindile L. Mayaba

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most importantly, I thank the Lord for giving me the strength to continue with my studies; my husband and daughter for supporting and believing in me; my mum and dad for being pillars of strength when needed; and my family and friends for the continuous support. I thank Dr R. Rajaram for his support and valuable advice.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr Phindile L. Mayaba, for her assistance during the writing of this thesis.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
CESA	Christian Education South Africa
DoE	Department of Education
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SGB	School Governing Body

ABSTRACT

Racial diversity shapes the way individuals perceive the concept of discipline, from the meaning they attach to it, to the different disciplinary methods they apply, to the role they assume in the disciplinary process. Described as a form of love, respect and guidance, discipline encompasses the teaching of values and behaviours. Young children are encouraged to know the rules and boundaries within the home and schooling facilities, making them mindful of the behaviours that are expected of them.

In South Africa, the modern child is labelled as technologically more advanced, eager to do more, see more and learn more, and therefore needs constant stimulation. Notwithstanding the impact of race and culture in nurturing a child, technology currently also plays a role, with the study results revealing that the majority of participants denied children luxuries as a method of modifying problem behaviours. Parents and educators approached discipline in various ways, implementing methods familiar to them. The research results revealed that several participants supported the occasional smack on the bottom, arguing that the intent and attitude of a light smack or tap is very different from physical abuse, and demonstrates love and guidance. Many of the participants interviewed were in favour of maintaining corporal punishment within the home environment. Further positive disciplinary methods used included time-out, rewards and praise, a change in tone of voice, and the denying of luxuries. The participants held very negative views on the use of demerits, with a number of participants choosing not to do so. Participants described demerits as demoralising and demotivating, and claimed that it created a sense of unfairness on the part of learners.

The parents, crèche facilitators and Grade R educators interviewed highlighted problems that included a lack of parental involvement in homework, recreational activities, and most importantly, discipline. Emphasis was also placed on establishing a more positive, healthy educator-learner relationship. The recommendations of the study included creating greater awareness through the means of support networks and workshops for parents and educators. These could establish a forum to share information and provide support when dealing with problem behaviours, language barriers and discipline.

Keywords: alternative disciplinary methods, corporal punishment, crèche facilitator, Grade R educator, parent, problem behaviours, racial diversity.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Disciplinary dilemmas within the home and schooling environments have in recent times received a great deal of negative attention in South Africa, with cases of neglect and abuse reported (Moloi, 2016). Notwithstanding over two decades of democracy and the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools, issues concerning punitive discipline continue, albeit in a milder form (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). If this harsh disciplinary method is to be stopped completely, then the disciplinary practices applied at home need to be taken into account (Morrell, 2001). Prior literature clearly establishes the critical role a parent plays in a child's development, highlighting how parental warmth and positive disciplinary strategies are related to elevated levels of moral internalisation, and how parental severity is related to negative behavioural results (Devi, 2014). Disciplinary measures that are too harsh as well as the absence of disciplinary measures impact negatively on a young child's life. There are different modes of abuse and neglect, as research has shown that young children can also be subtly abused when their desperate need for nurturance is ignored, which may include a lack of guidance (Dobson, 2014). The present study highlights the diverse perspectives of key participants, that is, the parent, crèche facilitator and educator, with the intention of providing a better, more in-depth understanding of the disciplinary methods currently used.

Historically, global research has shown that the pendulum has swung back and forth repeatedly between harsh, oppressive control, and unstructured permissiveness, impacting negatively on the lives of the victims (Dobson, 2014). During the apartheid era in South Africa (1948–1991), the National Party enforced stringent laws and passes as control strategies to separate White people from non-White people (Black African, Coloured and Asian/Indian) (Selin, 2014). The National Party also used religion as one of the means of exerting their power and when it came to parenting, the biblical belief was, “spare the rod, you spoil the child”; therefore, harsh authoritarian parenting was the approach used to discipline children or minors (Selin, 2014). Earlier studies reveal that corporal punishment became one of the approaches through which the patriarchal, racial and authoritarian apartheid system established itself (Bower, 2002, as cited in Dawes, De Sas Kropiwinicki, Kafaar, & Richter, 2005). Supporting these views, a further study affirms that colonial-

apartheid South African schools were associated with harsh punishment and brutal discipline (Ndofirepi, Makaye & Ndofirepi, 2012). Non-adherence to the laws laid down by the National Party meant arrest for many non-White individuals, mainly Black men and this resulted in the women seeking work far from home, forcing them to leave their children in the care of their grandmothers and other female family members (Selin, 2014). Extended family therefore played a major role in African culture, and with the belief that the child did not belong to the family alone but to society, child-rearing advice came from all, young and old (Wanjohi, 2013). Research indicates that historically, young children were nurtured by their parents and the extended family members until they grew to become self-sufficient and as parents grew older, their children made arrangements on how to care for them (Bhengu, 2010, as cited in Gwakwa, 2014).

Traditionally, in African culture the mother was seen as the keeper of the house and she had the responsibility of catering for all the domestic aspects of the children, including disciplining them (Amos, 2013). An additional study supporting this view confirms that a mother is expected to discipline the children simply because she assumes the role of main caretaker and spends added time with the children (Dawes et al., 2005). The post-apartheid environment brought about an increase in urbanisation, leading to the transition from an extended family system to a nuclear family system (Emmanuel, Akinyemi & Nimotalai, 2012). Prior research indicates that the increasing need for individualism was a cause for concern, as the extended family way of life which is an important part of African history was being discarded (Gwakwa, 2014). Children lost touch with their rich cultural values and no longer listened to folk tales but instead watched television, explored the Internet and read foreign books, often resulting in bad-mannered children who showed no empathy for others (Amos, 2013). Existing research suggests that in various societies where the family becomes more or less completely nuclear, additional difficulties are experienced (Maldonado-Duran, Moro & McLaughlin, 2007). These difficulties include reduced support and understanding received in child-rearing and discipline from experienced relatives and neighbours (Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007).

South African research points out that although parents are seen as the primary educators for their children and are responsible for instructing their offspring on all the values of life, they are reportedly failing to undertake this task (De Klerk & Rens, 2003). Further research affirms that poor parental supervision and lack of socialisation are two of the major

influences on a child's behavioural problems (Emmanuel et al., 2012). If parents are failing to provide proper guidance, then what roles do other key participants play in the disciplinary process? The present study examines the role of the parent, crèche facilitator and educator in the disciplinary process.

When exploring the disciplinary methods used in schools, research indicates that historically, the South African education system used punitive disciplinary methods in the form of corporal punishment to maintain discipline (Morrell, 2001). Bantu Education was introduced in 1955 and the system exposed Black African children to harsh physical punishment and unlike White girls, Black African girls were not exempt from hidings (Morrell, 2001).

Christian National Education was created to maintain the apartheid system by schooling young children to become submissive people who would eventually accept authority unquestioningly (Department of Education (DoE), 2000a). Being part of the British colony, the South Africa government implemented colonial educational practices, which included the use of harsh, physical disciplinary methods such as corporal punishment (Cicognani, 2006). South Africa's democracy in 1994 led to the abolishment of corporal punishment in schooling environments; however, a gap was left between reactive and proactive discipline, a gap that many educators lacked the necessary skills to bridge (Badenhorst, Steyn & Beukes, 2007).

Prior research has confirmed that educators were incapable of implementing positive forms of discipline and continued believing that their powers were vested in controlling ways of inculcating both respect and obedience in learners (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011). Educators were advised to attend workshops on how to discipline their classes without violence (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011). A further study echoed similar views, revealing that educators were in support of the utilization of corporal punishment and showed doubt and scepticism with regard to the alternatives to corporal punishment (Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2014).

The current study therefore addresses the need to probe more deeply and to explore the diverse perspectives on the disciplinary methods currently used.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After 23 years of democracy, which brought about the introduction of positive disciplinary methods by the South African education department and the abolishment of corporal punishment in all schooling environments, negative disciplinary methods continue to remain an issue (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). There are numerous reports on the use of punitive disciplinary measures or incidents of disrespectful behaviour by young children towards their parents, educators and others (Moyo et al., 2014). Research has shown a strong association between home and school modes of discipline, with the belief that domestic patterns of discipline may possibly have promoted the continued use of corporal punishment (Morrell, 2001). A longitudinal study focusing on parental disciplinary practices used on preschool children revealed that ineffective discipline and hostile attribution predicted growth in a child's conduct problems at home, in the crèche, and in Grade 1 (Snyder, Cramer, Afrank & Patterson, 2005). A further study acknowledged the parent-child bond as the most important structure for social learning and adjustment in pre-schoolers, and as a dependable forecaster of a child's internalising and externalising disorders (Trentacosta, Hyde, Shaw, Dishion, Gardner & Wilson, 2008). A media article in 2016 reported the use of harsh disciplinary methods at an Edendale school in Pietermaritzburg, strong evidence that South African society is still plagued with disciplinary problems (Pieterse, 2016). Existing literature establishes that disciplinary problems are the outcome of little or no obedience by learners, minor concern by parents, or frustration by educators to handle disciplinary problems (Ndamani, 2008). A prior study conducted in South Africa revealed that the major reasons for disruptive behaviour in schools included a full or partial lack of discipline sustained by parents at home, fear by many parents of their teenage children, and an expectation by parents that educators would teach their children proper conduct, failing to understand or admit their own parental accountability (Rossouw, 2003).

The current study sought to examine in-depth viewpoints from parents, crèche facilitators and educators, with the intention of understanding the causes for the increase in the current disciplinary problems.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The intention of the study was to explore diverse racial views on discipline. Previous studies conducted in South Africa have indicated that racially diverse societies embrace different views on what is considered acceptable behaviour in young children (Ntuli, 2012). Current global studies have shown that the strongest and most reliable influences on emotional and behavioural problems originate within the home environment and include factors such as abusive discipline, family instability, minimal parental supervision, family separation, aggression in the home, and physical neglect, all of which add to the signs of behavioural disorder (Tong et al., 2015). Although there are a number of studies conducted in South Africa on disciplinary issues in schooling environments, there is currently no research to the researcher's knowledge that explores the diverse perspectives of parents, crèche facilitators and Grade R educators in Pietermaritzburg. The purpose of the current study was to bridge this gap in the literature.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To explore diverse racial views on discipline.
- ii. To explore the various perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the current alternatives to corporal punishment.
- iii. To investigate the disciplinary roles of parents, crèche facilitators and educators as well as the disciplinary methods used in modifying problem behaviours.

To address the aforementioned research problem, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. What views do racially diverse parents, crèche facilitators and educators hold regarding discipline?
- ii. What are the existing views on the effectiveness of the current disciplinary methods?
- iii. What role do the parents, crèche facilitators and educators play in maintaining discipline in a young child's life and what methods do they use to modify behaviour?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In an attempt to get a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the concept of discipline and the methods utilised by the participants in the study, a qualitative research approach was followed in this study. Data collected in the words and categories of the participants lends itself to exploring what, how, when and where phenomena occur (Reid & Mash, 2014). An interpretivist research paradigm was used, as the purpose of the study was to describe and interpret different disciplinary methods in attempts to get shared meanings with others (Pollard, 2002). Purposeful sampling was used, as knowledgeable, experienced individuals were required to provide meaningful data on the issue of discipline. A total of twelve participants were selected, including five parents, three crèche facilitators and four Grade R educators, all from Pietermaritzburg. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews that were recorded. After transcribing the recorded data, it was thematically analysed and common themes were derived (Braun & Clark, 2006). The themes were explored in greater detail with the intention of understanding why, how, who and what disciplinary methods are currently used by the participants in Pietermaritzburg.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child: Refers to a person that continues to develop and unfold towards the stage of full adulthood (Rossouw, 2003).

Crèche facilitator: Refers to a person who works in a day-care centre (Collins English Dictionary, 2009). A crèche facilitator assists in a nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007).

Discipline: Refers to the process of teaching the child acceptable social conduct to ensure that he or she can develop to his or her full potential (Reyneke, 2013).

Disciplinary method: Refers to any specific actions taken to enforce discipline. For example, under the punitive approach to discipline, detention or corporal punishment would be typical disciplinary methods, while positive discipline helps adults find a respectful approach that is neither punitive nor permissive (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011).

Racial diversity: Refers to the races of humankind (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007).

Parent: Refers to individuals that ensure children are fit and secure, equip them with the knowledge and resources to succeed as adults and convey basic cultural values to them (Trumbull, 2007).

Problem behaviours: Refers to disruptive behaviour patterns that include disrespectful behaviours (verbal aggression, teasing, punching, neglecting academic work) and verbal interruptions (talking out of turn, name calling, humming and calling-out) (Levin & Nolan, 1996, as cited in Marais & Meier, 2010).

Punishment: Refers to the administration of aversive stimulus to reduce or eliminate unwanted behaviour. Punishment can be either physical or non-physical. Corporal punishment is a type of physical discipline and in the home environment this takes the form of spanking, whipping, smacking or slapping (Tong et al., 2015).

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 provides a broad contextual background to the changing disciplinary methods used to modify problem behaviours in young children in South Africa, from the Apartheid era (1948–1991) up to and including the country’s current democratic status. The problem statement and the purpose of the study are discussed. Thereafter the research objectives and the research methodology used in the study are outlined. Common terms used in the study are also briefly defined.

Chapter 2 provides empirical evidence starting with the definition of the concept of discipline. The different types of discipline are discussed and the effects of punitive discipline are further examined to indicate the density of this issue. A global perspective covering the Eastern, Western and African contexts are discussed. The ethical perspectives of discipline are explored and the South African laws pertaining to discipline are outlined. Thereafter the theoretical frameworks — which include Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, the behaviourist perspective and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory — are evaluated within a specific context.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology that was used in the study. An interpretivist research paradigm was used, as the purpose of the study was to describe and interpret

different disciplinary methods. A detailed description of the purposive sampling design used is summarised. The uses of the semi-structured interview are discussed, outlining the structural and developmental reasons for the selection of this instrument. The data collection procedure and thematically analysed data processes are also outlined. The data-editing and coding processes are described, as well as the measures taken to minimise errors.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the major themes that emerged from the data analysed. The themes are comprehensively outlined in relation to objectives of the study. Related literature was cited to support or refute the perceptions that participants had regarding the concept of discipline.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings. Conclusions are thereafter drawn from the findings. The implications are outlined, recommendations are made for ways in which the findings can be used to improve the current disciplinary dilemmas, the limitations of the research are stated, and further research is suggested.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a brief historical account of the harsh disciplinary methods used in South Africa, and traces incidents of punitive authoritarian parenting to corporal punishment in the schooling environment. Post-apartheid South Africa brought about many positive changes, including the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools and the introduction of more humane disciplinary alternatives. South Africa's democracy also led to the increase of urbanisation and the rise of the nuclear family. The smaller family unit entailed a loss of socialisation and of the passing on of important values from extended family members. Parents tended to neglect their responsibility for disciplining their children, leaving this task to others, in most cases crèche facilitators and educators. While numerous research studies have been conducted on disciplinary methods in schooling environments, there appears to be a lack of similar research exploring the diverse racial perspectives of key participants, that is, the parent, crèche facilitator and Grade R educator in the disciplinary process.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous studies, both locally and internationally, have highlighted the problems surrounding the issue of discipline. Although a great number of studies have been conducted in South Africa regarding the nature, extent and causes of disciplinary problems, these studies have focused primarily on the schooling environment. The current study set out to explore the diverse perspectives of the parents, crèche facilitators and Grade R educators in this regard, to examine their roles and to explore the alternative disciplinary methods that are currently in place. In what follows, the concept of discipline will be defined, the different types of disciplinary methods will be explored and the effects of punitive discipline will be discussed. Additionally, Eastern, Western and African viewpoints on discipline will be discussed, as well as the ethical issues surrounding the issue of discipline. The South African laws currently in place regarding discipline will also be outlined. The chapter will end with a discussion of discipline within three theoretical frameworks, namely, Kohlberg's stages of moral development, the behaviourist theory, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

2.2 DEFINING DISCIPLINE

Defining discipline is a complex process. Disciplining a child is a universal aspect of socialisation strategies adopted by parents and caregivers in various cultures to educate children on the values and normative behaviours of their culture (Wissow, 2002, as cited in Devi, 2014). The word "discipline" has many meanings and connotations, and the research suggests that there are broad and narrow definitions of the word, with different people attaching different meanings to it (Lessing & De Witt, 2010). The broadest viewpoint defines discipline as the compilation of acts and regulations that parents use to socialise their children so as to teach them the values and normative behaviours of the society in which they will have to function as adults (Cherlin, 1996, as cited in Halfon, McLearn & Schuster, 2002). The narrow definition sees discipline as targeted towards the control of specific behaviours that a parent considers appropriate or inappropriate (Halfon et al., 2002).

The concept of discipline is also defined as a set of behaviours, reactions and attitudes by those in a higher chain of command that shape, guide or mould those under their care or responsibility (Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007). As defined in the previous chapter, a child is a person that needs to be developed to his or her full potential, and this requires recognising the unique needs of every child (De Klerk & Rens, 2003).

Historically, the use of corporal punishment was universally accepted as a disciplinary method (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). During the past 30 years there has been a major shift to move away from physical, verbal and emotional punishment to more positive and less harmful disciplinary methods (Durrant & Smith, 2011). These changes called for a better understanding of the various types of disciplinary methods used locally and internationally.

2.3 TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

Individuals commonly use the concept “punishment” synonymously with the word “discipline” (Reyneke, 2013). However, punishment refers to the act of inflicting some penalty in response to behaviour that is considered wrong, while discipline refers to the act of guiding an individual towards appropriate behaviour (Halfon et al., 2002). Research affirms that authoritarian systems tend to be philosophically based on the idea that discipline must come in the form of punishment, as many members of society are incapable of critical thinking and self-discipline (Dawes et al., 2005). This view is supported by existing literature that argues that to punish children is to discipline them, and suggests that punishment be regarded as a component of discipline in that it comprises the actions taken to impose and guarantee discipline (Coetzee, Van Niekerk & Wydeman, 2008). In the following paragraphs, positive and punitive discipline will be discussed.

2.3.1 Positive discipline

Positive discipline is a disciplinary method that respects the whole child and promotes non-violent communication and relationships with children (Durrant, 2007). A disciplinary practice is successful when a child learns from it and engages in more adaptive behaviour

(Knox, 2010). Positive discipline helps adults find a respectful middle ground that is neither punitive nor permissive (Nelsen, 2011). As opposed to harsh discipline, which makes the young child feel ashamed and guilty, positive discipline stimulates tender affection that is made possible by mutual respect between a parent and a child (Dobson, 2014). Effective discipline is a positive parenting practice aimed at shaping acceptable behaviour in children and promoting positive interaction with others (Stein & Perrin, 1998). Non-physical punishment is a part of positive discipline and includes taking away attention, positive regard, privileges or possessions, isolating a child for a period of time, or asking a child to perform a task that he or she regards as difficult or undesirable, such as cleaning a room or sweeping the yard (Halfon et al., 2002).

2.3.2 Punitive discipline

Punitive discipline or harsh punishment is characterised by an individual's efforts to be in command of a child using verbal violence (shouting) or physical forms of punishment (pinching or hitting) (Orhon, Ulukol, Bingoler & Gulnar, 2006). Verbal and physical punishments tend to come together, as parents that frequently shout at their children are also likely to hit them frequently (Hemenway, Solnick & Carter, 1994, as cited in Orhon et al., 2006). Corporal punishment is a form of physical punishment and differs in intensity from spanking, which involves hitting the child on the buttocks or extremities with an open hand without inflicting physical injury, to forms of physical abuse, consisting of beatings and other forms of extreme physical force that inflict bodily injury (McLoyd & Smith, 2002). Exploring the effects of harsh physical punishment provides insight into the conflicting views on corporal punishment and highlights some of the reasons why the South African government moved away from this controversial disciplinary method.

2.3.2.1 The effects of punitive discipline

There has been much debate on the effectiveness of the different methods of disciplining children, with 49 countries banning parents from using forceful discipline on their children due to the physical and psychological repercussions (de Zoysa, 2011). Many professionals, including psychologists, are divided on the issue of whether the benefits of corporal

punishment outweigh any possible dangers, with some concluding that corporal punishment is both effective and advantageous (Baumrind, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Larzelere, 1996, 2000, all cited in Gershoff, 2002), while others have concluded that corporal punishment is unproductive at best and destructive at worst (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998; Lytton, 1997; McCord, 1997; Straus, 1994a, all cited in Gershoff, 2002). A number of researchers have argued that corporal punishment can be beneficial under certain circumstances, such as when this form of punishment is managed by emotionally supportive parents, when it is used cautiously and in a non-violent way, or when it is used restrictively in response to disobedience (Tong et al., 2015).

Research has indicated that a history of exposure to harsh discipline has been linked to negative outcomes for children, ranging from conduct disorders to depression and low self-esteem (Bender et al., 2007). Although corporal punishment can be successfully used to alter immediate conformity, this form of punishment has unintended consequences, as shown by studies which indicate that corporal punishment has unpleasant associations in childhood, including aggression, moral internalisation, delinquent and rebellious behaviour, decreased quality of the parent-child relationship, and higher rates of physical-abuse victimisation (Zolotor et al., 2008). An existing study has proven that the very act of hitting a child may provide an effective model for imitation, thereby teaching the child to hit (Knox, 2010). Prior literature asserts that corporal punishment evokes feelings of fear, anxiety, and anger in children; it interferes with the parent-child relationship by instilling fear in the child and a wish to avoid the parent (Grusec & Goodnow 1994; Maccoby & Martin, 1983, all cited in Devi, 2014).

Parents occasionally tend to use the same or similar disciplinary methods that their parents used on them and this inter-generational occurrence often leads adults to accept negative disciplinary methods such as corporal punishment and psychological aggression as effective and useful (de Zoysa, 2011). It is plausible that one of the reasons parents currently support the disciplinary methods they were exposed to, is the belief that they grew up fine, even though they were exposed to punitive disciplinary measures. Cultures vary in their style of discipline, which may be short or long-term and may sometimes involve physical punishment, embarrassment or shame, withdrawal of love, suspension of social and recreational activities, or deprivation of toys and television time (Canino & Spurlock, 2000). Culture also guides parental beliefs about child discipline, behaviour management, and

control (Emmanuel et al., 2012). These are the main reasons for gaining better insight into the global perspectives on discipline.

2.4 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary methods vary from country to country, and in the following paragraphs a brief outline of the disciplinary measures used in the Eastern, Western and African countries will be discussed to bring about an understanding of how diversity in race and culture shape our views on discipline.

2.4.1 Eastern perspectives on discipline

Research among Eastern cultures has revealed that parents acknowledge that children need to rely on them to a very high degree for assistance in being fed, getting dressed and with everyday activities. This dependency appears to be allowed, fostered and even celebrated for a longer period of time than in other countries (Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007). In China, disciplinary practices are based on ancient Confucian ethics that involve the belief that people are perfectible and that, with the proper teaching, role models and opportunities, everyone can change (Kojime, 1996, Pomerieu et al., 1991, both cited in Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007).

In Japan, studies have revealed that generally, mothers are more inclined to use guidance, suggestion, encouragement and at times shame and teasing so as to avoid direct confrontations with their children, all in an attempt to minimise the child's tendency to be difficult, disobedient or hostile (Kornadt, 2002). The Japanese believe that the objective of child discipline should be considered as assistance by adults to persuade children to advance from a heteronomous stage, where they follow rules given to them by others, towards an autonomous stage (Uchida & Ishida, 2011). The Japanese and South Koreans view discipline as a sharing activity that values close parent-child communication, in contrast with the Chinese, who use authoritarian discipline that forces obedience on children with frequent instructions (Uchida & Ishida, 2011).

Research focusing on Eastern cultures affirms that parents understand and accept the responsibility of providing proper nurturance. This supports the perspective that positive parental involvement and parent-child communication are key factors in the disciplinary process.

2.4.2 Western perspectives on discipline

In contrast to the Eastern perspective, mothers in European cultures tend to attribute more negative intentions to their young children and more readily believe that their children are being intentionally disobedient (Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007). Research indicates that strongly held convictions on parental rights to discipline as well as the communal view of parents as “owners” of children are some of the main reasons that American parents continue using harsh physical punishment in the form of spanking and hitting (Knox, 2010).

Studies performed with rural and urban participants in Samoa reveal that parents commonly use the Bible to justify the use of physical punishment by quoting from Proverbs 10, Verse 13 in the Old Testament, which states that “Hitting is useful/ appropriate on the back of the person that is stupid — implied or meaning — behaves inappropriately (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001a; Freeman, 1983; Pereira, 2004; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Singh & Dooley, 2001; Tanielu, 1997; Va’a, 1995, all cited in Pereira, 2010).

A survey conducted in New Zealand indicated that many parents reported hitting their child at least once at some point in their life, with the majority of the parents believing that physical punishment of children is acceptable (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993; Rodriguez, 1999, both cited in Goodman, 2007). In Spain a vast majority of the adult population was found to believe that corporal punishment in the form of spanking or slapping was necessary in child rearing (Gracis & Herrero, 2008). In Ireland a small number of parents reported using physical punishment on young children between the ages of 2–9 years in the form of smacking a child on the bottom, or on the hands, legs or arms, shaking, grabbing or pushing a child (Halpenny, Nixon & Watson, 2010).

In attempts to move away from harsh physical punishment, Spain and New Zealand have passed new legislature, prohibiting the use of corporal punishment on children by their parents (Halpenny et al., 2010). Even in American, media articles in 2016 reported that

schools nationwide were attempting to adopt more positive approaches to discipline through the practice of yoga and meditation by introducing the concept of the “mindful moment room” and “soothing spaces” instead of detention and suspension (McMahon, 2016).

In Western culture parents tend to favour physical forms of punishment, with some parents using the Bible to validate this form of discipline. The effectiveness of this form of discipline may be questioned, as an increasing number of Western countries are adopting more positive disciplinary techniques.

2.4.3 African perspectives on discipline

As stated earlier, in African culture a child is said to belong not only to the parents but to society, as the community work together to raise the child (Niala, 2011). This community does not just include relatives and friends, but anyone who interacts with the child (Niala, 2011). A Kenyan study revealed that in public places if someone notices a child doing something wrong or getting into any danger, they will step in even before getting permission from the parents to intervene (Niala, 2011). In Nigeria, child rearing is not exclusively the responsibility of parents but of the entire family and community as a whole (Emmanuel et al., 2012). A rigid, controlling, authoritarian parenting style is used, allowing no room for discussion or regard for the child’s feelings (Emmanuel et al., 2012).

In South Africa, harsh physical discipline is banned in most child-care and schooling facilities, based on the belief that violence begets violence (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011). Further literature supports this view, asserting that disciplinary approaches that encourage aggression socialise learners to be poor problem solvers with poor anger management and self-management skills (Moyo et al., 2014). This ban came about when the Constitutional Court passed a judgement in June 1995 that abolished corporal punishment in schools (RSA, 1996, as cited in Cicognani, 2006). The judgement was based on the South African Constitution which states that “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way” (RSA, 1996, as cited in Cicognani, 2006, p.1).

Attempts have been made to change South Africa’s education system to a more humane system where the well-being of all learners is of the utmost importance (DoE, 2000b). Although punitive disciplinary methods are banned in South African schools, corporal

punishment continues to be the preferred disciplinary method, as educators claim it to be quick and simple to administer (Moyo et al., 2014). In contrast, alternative disciplinary approaches demand certain skills, patience and time, which most educators claim not to have (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). It has also been reported that corporal punishment appears to be more acceptable in certain religious and cultural circles (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016).

A neglected explanation for the prolonged use of corporal punishment is that parents utilize it in the home and promote its use in schools (Morrell, 2001). A prior research study conducted in South Africa noted significant differences between ethnic groups in terms of parenting (Roman, Makwakwa & Lacante, 2016). Being part of a diverse society that has evolved from an era of separation and segregation has revealed the maternal authoritative parenting style to be the most prevalent across and within groups (Roman et al., 2016). It is also the belief that some parents have a tendency to shift their role of disciplining their children to the educators, thereby perceiving their role as external to the school environment with respect to discipline (Ndamani, 2008). It is when parents and educators in a schooling environment are at odds over discipline that a learner comes to believe that he or she can play off the parents against the school and vice versa (Ndamani, 2008). This miscommunication leads to the learner constantly being in trouble in school, to parents who are constantly angry with educators, and to schooling staff who have to discipline a learner who feels the school rules do not apply to him or her (Ndamani, 2008).

Reference has been made in many South African autobiographies to the moderate use of corporal punishment in homes by parents and other guardians (Morrell, 2001). Since most African parents themselves received harsh corporal punishment as children from their own parents, there is an inclination to maintain this type of discipline (Mposula, 2000).

Research indicates that harsh disciplinary methods used by parents on their children that result in the children getting physically hurt, can be regarded as criminal (Morrell, 2001). In the 1990s a Pietermaritzburg father was given a two-year suspended jail sentence for hitting his six-year-old son, thereby highlighting the blurred line between assault and punishment (Morrell, 2001).

Over the years, the composition of the crèche and schooling facilities in South Africa has changed, with the inclusion of learners from various racial backgrounds (Canter, 2011).

Racially diverse learners have attended school with new expectations and unfamiliar behaviour norms based on backgrounds that differed from those of the majority of students in the past (Canter, 2011). With South Africa having 11 official languages, educators face many linguistic challenges, and research indicates that language can prove to be a source of cultural conflict and controversy in the classroom when educators misunderstand children's behaviour (Canino & Spurlock, 2000).

While countries globally are moving towards more positive disciplinary methods, countries in Africa, especially South Africa, continue to use punitive disciplinary methods both at home and in schooling environments. The objective of the current study was to explore the diverse perspectives of significant participants, thereby questioning their roles in the disciplinary process and investigating the disciplinary methods used in modifying problem behaviours.

In attempting to understand the reasons for firstly using discipline to modify problem behaviours, it is important to explore the ethical concerns with the concept of discipline.

2.5 THE ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DISCIPLINE

Caring for the self is ethical, with the aim of achieving a complete full life for the individual, as well as for the community (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000). When a child is young, guidance and nurturance have to be provided by adult caregivers, and a lack of proper care is indicative of neglect (Dobson, 2014). When parents use inconsistent discipline or avoid practising some parental control, children are likely to be unsure about the rules and outcomes, and thus receive mixed messages about which behaviours are acceptable and which are not (Crosswhite & Kerpelman, 2009). Parents who fail in the duty of guiding their children, and who thus perceive their role as being external to the schooling environment with regard to discipline; leave a gap between the influence of the role of the educator and parental influences on the behaviour of learners (Ndamani, 2008).

This guidance involves the teaching of important values. Learning moral values enables a child to distinguish between right and wrong behaviour, thereby allowing the individual to develop properly by learning to empathise with others and by assuming responsibility for any wrongdoing (De Klerk & Rens, 2003). Previous research studies have indicated that the

lack of positive values is one of the factors, if not the biggest factor contributing to disciplinary problems (De Klerk & Rens, 2003; Rossouw, 2003; Steyn & Beukes, 2007; Lessing & De Witt, 2011, as cited in Reyneke, 2013). Earlier literature indicates that self-interest at the expense of the generally accepted norms and values is typical of the post-modern era and manifests itself in various ways, such as in a lack of respect for human dignity that often manifests itself in the victimisation and bullying of younger learners, the use of unacceptable language towards educators, assault, and the use of unacceptable and demeaning disciplinary measures by educators (Reyneke, 2013).

Attempts have been made when the following recommendations of the SAHRC (South African Human Rights Commission) were reported on school-based violence:

There is a need for the transformation of discipline models in schools in South Africa to models that reflect and promote constitutional values of equality, dignity and respect for others. This can be achieved by allowing learners to make choices, and by creating caring communities within their classrooms. Discipline and values need not be dealt with in isolation of each other as values are easier to impart if there are set boundaries. (SAHRC, 2008, p.21)

Schools locally and globally have attempted to curb disciplinary problems by establishing highly regulated environments that include a long list of rules and regulations intended to curb a child's behaviour (Goodman, 2007). These rules included how the learner should dress, and when they should talk, walk, eat or even go to the bathroom, yet despite these measures school discipline problems are increasing (Goodman, 2007). Research shows that a series of defiant acts followed by more regulations and sanctions tends to incite more noncompliance, which is eventually self-defeating. For punishment to become effective, it must be used sparingly (Goodman, 2007).

Prior literature unequivocally establishes that parents are failing in their duty to guide their children, that harsh physical discipline continues to be the preferred method of discipline, and that the slow erosion of the extended family has led to the loss of socialisation and the passing on of important moral values (Amos, 2013). South African society therefore has to realise that the responsibility for instilling good values does not fall to the school alone, but also to the parents, and other stakeholders such as the church and media (De Klerk & Rens,

2003). A brief outline of the South African laws regarding the issue of discipline highlights the responsibilities of key participants, that is, the parent, crèche facilitator and educator.

2.6 SOUTH AFRICAN LAWS AND RULES IN MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE

Understanding which disciplinary methods parents, crèche facilitators and educators are permitted to use is important, as certain forms of punishment are against the law. Morrell states that according to the South African Police Services there exists a very thin line between what the law deems to be assault and what parents see as appropriate punishment, and that parents should therefore be very careful when disciplining their children (Morrell, 2001).

In the following section, the provisions of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) relevant to discipline will be outlined so as to provide the necessary legal framework. In 1996, South African legislation made it illegal for educators in a schooling environment to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary method (DoE, 2002, as cited in Cicognani, 2006). The South African Schools Act clearly states that discipline must be maintained in the school and in the classroom situation so that the education of learners flourishes without disorderly behavioural offences, and that maintaining discipline is also the responsibility of the educator (DoE, 1996). The norms and standards for educators describe the relationship between educators and learners as follows:

The educator will practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others... within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational needs of learners. (DoE 2000a, p. 14)

Although great responsibility is placed on the educator to maintain discipline, parents/caregivers need to be held accountable for discipline at home and for learners' taking part in school activities (DoE, 1998). *The Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners* places the final accountability for learner conduct on parents/caregivers, and clearly stipulates their responsibility in obliging learners

to abide by school rules (DoE, 1998). According to the code, all stakeholders, including learners, know exactly what kind of behaviour is expected (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011).

The School Governing Body (SGB) is the mechanism through which parents, educators, non-educators, and learners are brought together in partnership to govern public schools within the parameters of the Constitution and legislation (DoE, 1996). The SGB executes various functions, including determining the mission of the school, the school rules, and the character and ethos of the school, as well as the drafting of policies, which include the drafting of a code of conduct (DoE, 1996).

In drafting the code of conduct for learners, the SGB needs to consult with educators, parents and learners. The code of conduct should include:

- the types of misbehaviour that will be punished
- the types of punishment that will be given for different forms of misbehaviour
- the procedures that the school will follow in disciplining a learner, and
- the grievance procedures for parents and learners if they want to take up a matter against another learner or the school (DoE, 1996).

The DoE (1997) also provides regulations governing cases of serious misconduct. These regulations provide a list of the different forms of serious delinquency, such as the possession or use of liquor or drugs, assault, theft, immorality, absenteeism and disgraceful conduct. For these types of misconduct a SGB can suspend a learner for up to a week (DoE, 1997). According to the regulations, a learner may be suspended only after a hearing has been conducted, during which the parents and learner must be told the full details of the hearing and charges, and must be given an opportunity to explain their side of the story (DoE, 1997). In the event of the SGB finding the misconduct serious, they can recommend to the Provincial Head of Education that the learner be expelled. Thereafter, the Head of Education must decide on the matter within a period of 14 days, during which the learner cannot attend school (DoE, 1997). In the case of a learner being expelled, the learner, together with his or her parents, can appeal to the Provincial Minister of Education and arrangements can be made to place the learner in another schooling institution (DoE, 1997).

In response to the need for alternative measures of discipline, in 2000 the South African government launched a national project on discipline and distributed a booklet to all schools in 2001 titled, *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience* (DoE,

2000b, as cited in Marais & Meier, 2010). The booklet was aimed at providing educators with guidelines on alternatives to corporal punishment and also provided a guide on how to establish a code of conduct (Marais & Meier, 2010). It was based on the argument that aggression creates more hostility, and that learners exposed to violence at home as well as in the school environment might want to solve all future problems with aggression (UNISA, 2001, as cited in Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011).

2.7 ATTITUDES ON THE BANNING OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The booklet distributed by the government received negative results, with media headlines stating, for example, “Punishment guide not helping much with discipline...wonderful theories not always practical” (Rademeyer, 2001). After the passing of this Act, many educators believed that their authority had been taken away (Naong, 2007). The introduction of *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* was met with resistance from educators, parents, and cultural and religious groups, who believed that the government had undermined their right to be consulted as the key role players in the education of their children (Du Preez & Roux, 2010). Through Christian Education South Africa (CESA), a few educators and parents challenged the banning of corporal punishment, claiming that their parental (and constitutional) right to give “biblical correction” was being violated (Pete & Du Plessis, 1999, pp 97-120). Although CESA lost the court battle, the legal challenge suggests that there exists a strong body of opinion in support of corporal punishment (Morrell, 2001).

Educators in general felt disempowered and believed that learners would not show respect or develop the discipline to work hard unless they received beatings or were warned about receiving a physical beating (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011). Feelings of disempowerment were experienced by educators, who found it difficult to maintain a balance between respecting the child’s rights while administering adequate and meaningful ways of dealing with disruptive learners (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). Prior studies revealed that following the introduction of *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* in 2000, disruptive behaviour in schools continued to grow (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, as cited in Moyo et al., 2014).

Discipline in schools has centred more on punishment than reward and positive discipline (Naong, 2007). Corporal punishment had been used by educators in South African schools for decades, as a form of punishment to instil discipline and maintain full control over their

learners (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011). Previous research shows that several South African educators reported that learner discipline problems had caused them, at times or regularly, to be unhappy in their work (Wolhuter & van Staden, 2008, as cited in Serame, Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Zulu, 2013). Problems with learner discipline had a serious effect to a large extent on the educator's family life, personal health, job satisfaction and overall morale (Serame et al., 2013). Earlier studies have shown that educators expressed continuous displeasure, claiming that the strategies presented in *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* strategy were unproductive, inadequate and a waste of time, and asserting that the DoE had little understanding of the impact these strategies had on teaching and learning (Wilson, 2002, as cited in Moyo et al., 2014).

The aforementioned is a clear indication that many educators do not support the banning of corporal punishment. In the following section, current research studies and media articles highlight the continuous use of this punitive disciplinary method.

2.8 SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE AND MEDIA REPORTS ON THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS AND IN HOMES

Existing literature claims that there is evidence that *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* is not used in certain schools, while in other schools it is incorrectly put into practice, the result of which is that the predicted outcomes are not attained (Moyo et al., 2014). In an effort to maintain discipline, and as a result of desperation, many educators have resorted to using the outlawed corporal punishment as a way of disciplining learners (Moyo et al., 2014). The continuous practice of corporal punishment remains a matter of contestation on a few grounds, but where it has worked before, the adage "why change it if it's not broken?" is cited (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016, pp. 10-11).

A survey conducted in Pietermaritzburg concerning schools in the greater Edendale and Vulindlela areas found that corporal punishment was still widespread (Khumalo, 2003, as cited in Maree & Cherian, 2004). A survey conducted on 16 schools in Durban, South Africa, showed that corporal punishment still remained a common practice in township schools with a weak explanation that included the belief that corporal punishment persists because parents utilize it in the home environment and support its use in schools (Morrell, 2006). Results from the survey showed that 48% of African learners indicated that corporal

punishment was the most common method of discipline at home, compared with 16,7% of Coloured learners, 16,5% of White learners and 9,0% of Indian learners (Morrell, 2006). A reason for the smaller percentage of Indian learners experiencing corporal punishment could be based on the belief in Asian cultures that children are very fragile and need to be taught values and appropriate behaviour with minimal or no confrontation, a task that requires significant tolerance from the caregiver (Maldonado-Duran et al., 2007).

While corporal punishment continues to be a problem in schooling facilities, media articles have also exposed cases of abuse within the home environment. A *Post* newspaper article exposed the issue of spanking children within the home environment, making reference to the Joshua Generations Church in Cape Town that published a parenting manual that condoned spanking as a method of discipline (Marriah, 2016). The *Natal Witness* newspaper in Pietermaritzburg also reported that two children had to be removed from a local crèche facility by their parents following allegations that the toddlers were assaulted by an educator (Kunene, 2017).

While the positive disciplinary methods introduced by the South African government were important steps towards ensuring better educator-learner relationships, these methods had to be put into practice, and needed to be promoted, encouraged and adopted by parents and educators. Further research was required to probe more deeply into the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm surrounding these new disciplinary methods. The following sections outline the three theories that were used to construct the theoretical framework of the study.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three theories were applied to provide a framework for this study, namely Kohlberg's stages of moral development, behaviourist theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. These theories are discussed below:

2.9.1 Kohlberg's stages of moral development

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory was developed by presenting ethical and moral problems to children in a brief, story-like format; followed by questions to elicit their feelings and decisions about the characters' actions (Walrath, 2011). The relationship between "values" and "morals" is often explained by means of Kohlberg's (1978) stages of moral development, which have three levels:

- Level one of morality involves obeying laws in order to avoid punishment and gain reward (known as the level of pre-conventional moral reasoning)
- Level two of morality involves doing one's duty out of a sense of conscience and group identity (known as conventional moral reasoning).
- Level three and the final level of morality involves a conscious choice of values, based upon one's perception of who you are and what life is about (known as post-conventional moral reasoning) (Woolfolk, 1998).

Kohlberg's theory proposes that young children's ability to distinguish between right and wrong is primarily determined by the standards set by the adults they interact with and the consequences of their actions (Kohlberg, 1971, as cited in McLeod, 2011). Regarding Level one (pre-conventional morality), Kohlberg states:

the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but he interprets the labels in terms of either the physical or hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favours) or the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels. (Kohlberg, 1971, as cited in McLeod, 2011)

Kohlberg grouped children younger than the age of nine years old in this pre-conventional level of morality, stating that they do not have a personal code of morality, and that instead their moral code is shaped by the standards of adults and the consequences of following or

breaking their rules (Kohlberg, 1971, as cited in McLeod, 2011). Level one is divided into two stages:

Stage one—*Obedience and punishment orientation*: In this stage children are good if they avoid being punished, and if they are punished then they must have done something wrong (Kohlberg, 1971, as cited in McLeod, 2011).

Stage two—*Individualism and exchange*: In this stage children realise that there is not just one right viewpoint but that different individuals have different viewpoints (Kohlberg, 1971, as cited in McLeod, 2011).

Stage two highlights the dilemma many children may experience — the realisation that different people hold different views on what is considered right and wrong behaviour. Therefore, exploring the views of key role players in the disciplinary process provides a better, more in-depth understanding of the relationship between values, morality and discipline.

2.9.2 Behaviourist theory

Behaviourists conclude that the differences in a person's learning experiences are the main reasons behind their individual differences in behaviour (Sincero, 2016). According to behaviourist theory, people are controlled by their environment and thus develop and grow as a result of what they have learnt from the environment. Certain environmental factors affect a person's observable behaviour (McLeod, 2007). In behaviourism, only observable behaviour is studied, as this can be objectively measured (McLeod, 2007).

The behaviourist approach proposes two main processes whereby an individual can learn from their environment, namely, classical conditioning and operant conditioning (Cherry, 2016).

Classical conditioning is the work of Ivan Pavlov (1849–1963) and centres on simple automatic responses known as reflexes, such as eye blinks and salivation (Windholz, 1997, as cited in Zimbardo et al., 2006). Classical conditioning is an essential form of learning in which a stimulus that produces an innate reflex becomes associated with a previous neutral stimulus, and in turn obtains the power to elicit the same response (Zimbardo et al.,

2006). Operant conditioning is the work of B.F. Skinner (1904–1990) and involves learning from the consequences of behaviour (McLeod, 2007). An operant behaviour is an observable behaviour that an organism uses to “operate” in, or have an effect on the environment, such as reading study material to obtain a good grade in school; reading is an operant behaviour (Zimbardo et al., 2006).

The current study was more concerned with operant conditioning (sometimes referred to as instrumental conditioning), which is a method of learning that occurs through reinforcement and punishment (Cherry, 2016). A further example of operant conditioning is when parents reward their children with praise when they clean their room; the desired behaviour is constantly reinforced, resulting in the children repeating the desired behaviour of cleaning their room (Cherry, 2016).

Skinner discovered that the timing of the rewards and punishments influences how quickly a new behaviour is acquired and the strength of the corresponding response (Cherry, 2016). Reinforcements need to be used continuously, and this learning experience starts in the home environment when parents first teach their children socially acceptable speech and behaviour (de Zoysa, 2011). Continuous reinforcement is a useful approach in the learning process, as it provides feedback on how well each response performed. It also helps in shaping intricate new behaviours, such as playing a musical instrument, as an educator can monitor a learner’s performance (Zimbardo et al., 2006). The principle of operant conditioning is that the consequences an individual experiences after doing something influences the chances that the individual will do it again (Huesmann & Podolski, 2003). A simple example is when a child hits another child and still gains a good reward (toy); the child is more likely to hit someone again in the same situation (Huesmann & Podolski, 2003). However, in theory a child who hits another child and is hit back harder, and is hurt and experiences only an unpleasant consequence, is less likely to hit someone again — an example of punishment (Huesmann & Podolski, 2003).

In the schooling environment, the South African government’s introduction of the booklet *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* highlighted behaviour modification strategies such as positive reinforcement, withdrawal of privileges, time-out and modelling good behaviour in attempts to promote positive discipline (DoE, 2000b). However, as the aforementioned research has indicated, this approach was met with resistance from many educators, who claimed it was not practical (Rademeyer, 2001). The need therefore arises for an exploration

of the alternative disciplinary methods in order to determine why this positive approach is being resisted by educators.

2.9.3 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

The ecological systems perspective was first introduced in the 1970s by Urie Bronfenbrenner, who stated that human development is influenced by the different types of environmental systems. According to Bronfenbrenner there are five systems, which include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, as cited in Coady & Lehmann, 2007).

Ecological behavioural theorists explain that children's behaviour is influenced directly by facets of their immediate environment, including their family and peers, as well as indirectly by aspects of the environment in which they themselves are not participants, for example certain stresses that their parents may experience at work (Tucker, 1999, as cited in Walker-Dalhouse, 2005). Children between the ages of five and 18 spend a great deal of their time during the school year either at school or engaged in school-related activities, making the family and the school the two most influential environmental contexts on a child's development (Epstein, 1992; Paylo, 2011, both cited in Berryhill & Vennum, 2015).

The first system is the microsystem, which includes individuals that one may have direct contact with and family members, friends, classmates, educators and neighbours. Relationships in this level are bi-directional in that an individual's reactions to those people he or she has direct contact with affect how they treat him or her in return (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Child behaviour, from the ecological systems perspective, is acknowledged as a system of dysfunction in the family and the school systems (Berryhill & Vennum, 2015). The goal from this perspective is to reduce dysfunction and increase the functional aspects of the ecological systems structures that have supported the maintenance of the problem behaviour (Berryhill & Vennum, 2015). One of the supporting aspects in the maintenance of problem behaviours is the tendency for some parents to shift their responsibility for disciplining their children onto the educators, thereby perceiving their role as external to the school environment with respect to discipline (Ndamani, 2008). Another aspect is a child's exposure to the social influence of peer pressure, where some learners, in order to feel part of a group, may be pressured to misbehave in a way that challenges authority (Ndamani,

2008). Research suggests that the maintenance of discipline in schools should be a partnership between parents, educators and learners (Chew, 2003, as cited in Ndamani, 2008).

The second level is the mesosystem and involves the relationships between the microsystems. The mesosystem covers issues such as how parents interact with the crèche or schooling environment, and the impact these experiences have on the child's behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Important relations include those between home, mother and child clinic, the home and crèche facility as well as the home and schooling environment (Härkönen, 2005). Family influences, social influences and disciplinary problems are usually interrelated, for example, children who are rejected at home may search elsewhere for acceptance (Ndamani, 2008). Aside from parents and educators, society also plays a central role in the development of the child's moral and other values (De Klerk & Rens, 2003).

Young children who have a positive, enriching interaction with their parents may have a higher probability of developing an optimistic approach towards their peers and educators (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Research indicates that children who grow up in a home with love, trust and understanding, confidence, warmth and acceptance are well adjusted (Reyneke, 2013). A parent-child relationship that is characterised by conflict may extend to the school environment (Ndamani, 2008). Inadequate care in the home environment across all socioeconomic levels results in some learners looking for attention through misconduct (Rossouw, 2003). Learners exposed to undesirable home environments, which are often characterised by conflict, alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, physical and emotional abuse, harsh physical disciplinary measures, lack of love and care, and domestic violence become traumatised, which often results in disruptive behaviour at schools (Reyneke, 2013). Lessing and De Witt (2010) indicate that 83% of educators blame learners' undesirable home environments for the learners' unacceptable conduct.

The third level is the exosystem, which includes people and environments that a child may not have direct contact with, but still have a large effect on the child these may include extended family members and the parent's workplace. Stresses that parents may experience at work and personal anxieties may affect a young child, as most children react sensitively to the way in which they are treated by their parents (Chazan, 1983). Global studies have found that parents in more demanding circumstances are more likely to use corporal

punishment (Dietz, 2000; Gershoff, 2002, both cited in Simons & Wurtele, 2010). The shift to democracy in South Africa saw an increase in nuclear families and the decline of the extended family system, resulting in the loss of socialisation and support in child-rearing (Amos, 2013).

The fourth system or level is the macrosystem, which involves the individual's culture and covers aspects such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity and race. This level is particularly pertinent to children in a country like South Africa, who are exposed to racial and cultural differences from an early age. Educators of learners from varied backgrounds have to instruct their learners to separate school behaviour from non-school behaviour, and, most importantly, the behaviours exhibited must be grounded in structure and choice, thereby giving the learner self-control over the behaviours they choose to perform (Walker-Dalhouse, 2005). Corporal punishment has been found to be associated with ethnicity and religious affiliation, with studies reporting the more frequent use of corporal punishment among African-American parents (Regaldo et al., 2004; Straus & Stewart, 1999, both cited in Simons & Wurtele, 2010) and conservative Protestant parents (Gershoff, Miller & Holden, 1999, as cited in Simons & Wurtele, 2010). Research indicates that the types of conflict that have an impact on order in the schooling environment are often related to racial, gender, cultural, religious or class differences (Badenhorst et al., 2007).

The fifth level is the chronosystem, which includes transitions that an individual goes through, such as the impact of moving to a new town or divorce (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Many children find the adjustment and changes to routine difficult to handle, and in many instances act out to get the attention they need (Chazan, 1983). In the current study we explore the impact of children being left for longer hours in crèche facilities and the role the crèche facilitators play with regard to discipline.

All who interact with a child influence the child's development and behaviour, either in a positive or negative way. As previously stated, studies reveal that the progress of a child's pattern of behaviour that determines whether the child becomes a delinquent or a well-behaved member of society, is determined to a large extent by the pattern and process of socialisation the child is exposed to (Emmanuel et al., 2012). In attempting to understand a child's behaviour patterns it is important to explore the perspectives of some of the key participants, that is, the parent, crèche facilitator and educator.

2.10 CONCLUSION

The chapter began with a definition of the concept of discipline, and highlighted the fact that different people attach different meanings to this concept. While various definitions have been outlined in the literature, racially diverse perspectives remain absent. Positive and punitive disciplinary methods were examined, and the harmful effects of corporal punishment were outlined. A global perspective shed more light on the varying perceptions held by individuals, and revealed that most parents from Eastern cultures adopt positive disciplinary methods, in contrast to parents from Western and African cultures, who prefer physical forms of discipline. A review of South African literature highlighted the failure of many parents to guide their children, instil important values, and thus discipline their children. While discussing the South African laws pertaining to discipline, it became apparent that although corporal punishment has been banned for more than two decades, educators continue using this disciplinary method, claiming it to be simple and easy to administer. In contrast the alternative disciplinary measures introduced have been met with great resistance by educators, who claim it to be ineffective and disempowering. The current study focuses on the diverse perspectives of key participants, in an effort to present new stances into the meaning of discipline, to outline the alternative strategies currently used, and to highlight the roles the key participants play in the disciplinary process.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a literature review that focused on local and global perspectives on discipline, the South African laws regarding discipline, and the theoretical framework used for this study, with specific reference to the child's environment and the impact it has on his or her behaviour. The current research stems from the need to explore diverse views on the disciplinary methods currently used, as previous research has indicated that while a more democratic and humane way of disciplining learners in schools has been introduced by the South African government, the approach has been met with much resistance by both parents and educators, resulting in the continuing use of punitive disciplinary methods.

This chapter will focus on the qualitative research methodology that was applied in the study. The sampling process, data collection and analysis will be further examined and discussed. The ethical considerations will also be outlined, thereby exploring the additional steps taken by the researcher to minimise errors and verify findings.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

An interpretive paradigm was used, as the purpose of the study was to describe and interpret different disciplinary methods in an attempt to get shared meanings with others (Pollard, 2002). Interpretive approaches rely on naturalistic methods, such as interviews, observations and analyses of existing texts (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Interpretive researchers do not regard the social world as "out there", but believe that it is constructed by human beings (Phothongsunan, 2010). The research started with the use of open-ended questions from which the meanings from twelve participants were interpreted, as the overall purpose was not to generalise but to explore the meanings that participants placed on the social situations under investigation (Phothongsunan, 2010). The study focused on the meaningful interpretations of the concept of discipline, the impact of race and environment on the disciplinary methods selected, and the roles played by key participants in the disciplinary process. The interpretive paradigm allowed for in-depth knowledge to be acquired through the process of interviewing a few participants.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research design was used to conduct the study. Qualitative research focuses on the what, how, when and where of things, and aims to determine the fundamental nature and ambience of the research object (Berg, 2009). Henning, Van Rensberg and Smit (2004, pp. 3-4); state that in qualitative research,

(w)e want to understand, and also explain an argument by using evidence from the data and from the literature (to determine) what the phenomenon or phenomena that we are studying are about. We do not want to place this understanding within the boundaries of an instrument that we designed beforehand because this will limit the data to those very boundaries. In this way our understanding will also be dependent on these boundaries.

A qualitative research design was used in the study to accentuate the reasons “why” individuals settle on certain disciplinary methods. Discipline is a concept not easily understood, and qualitative research supports the task of exploring behaviour that is poorly understood (Reid & Mash, 2014). Unlike quantitative studies in which certain variables are controlled and others are compared, this qualitative study created a profound awareness of the concept of discipline through the opinions, reasons and motivations of a few participants (Reid & Mash, 2014). Qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding the dilemma from the participants’ perspectives, as they (the participants) experience the difficulty as it is related to their reality (Hoberg, 1999).

The qualitative research for this study produced data collected in the words and categories of the participants, which lend themselves to exploring what, how, when and where phenomena occur. Through the qualitative research process the researcher actively works to minimise the distance between the researcher and those being interviewed (Abawi, 2008). Qualitative research involves obtaining a more naturalistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced with the sorts of data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research (Matveev,2002). Qualitative studies create a deeper understanding, as the researcher identifies and includes contextual issues and factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest in the data (Reid & Mash, 2014).

The current study focused on a more in-depth inquiry into a few perspectives, each one unique, which allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding of the social problem of discipline from a diverse perspective (Abawi, 2008).

3.4 SAMPLING

Purposeful sampling was used in the study, as information-rich cases were required (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). This form of sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Clark & Cresswell, 2011, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015). The aim was to choose participants on the merits of their position, their opinions and views, and for them to express these views freely, without fear (Reid & Mash, 2014). Identifying participants who were suitable and fitted the criteria required was a prolonged process. Participants were located through the use of the telephone directory and by driving through the community in Pietermaritzburg. However, all those contacted eagerly agreed to participate in the research process. Although no monetary incentive was provided, participants were eager to participate in the interviews; they highlighted the many disciplinary problems they were experiencing and provided suggestions for ways of improving the current dilemmas.

3.4.1 Demographics of the sample

The sample of twelve participants was selected, and although this reflects a small section of the diverse population of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the sample group provided rich, in-depth data on the issue of discipline. The objective was not to generate information that was representative of a larger population but rather to bring about a better understanding of a small number of occurrences that would help one value the diversity and limits of discipline, the phenomenon in question (Reid & Mash, 2014). The sample consisted of women of different backgrounds, ages and literacy levels. Table 1 below illustrates the breakdown of the sample.

Table 1. Demographics of the sample

Participant No	Participant Role	Race	Age	Literacy Level
P1	Educator	White	46	Diploma
P2	Parent	Black	21	Grade 12
P3	Parent	Black	28	Grade 12
P4	Crèche facilitator	White	40	Diploma
P5	Parent	Indian	33	Tertiary
P6	Crèche facilitator	White	43	Tertiary
P7	Educator	Coloured	52	Diploma
P8	Crèche facilitator	White	56	Tertiary
P9	Parent	Indian	38	Tertiary
P10	Educator	Indian	48	Diploma
P11	Educator	Indian	48	Tertiary
P12	Parent	Black	37	Grade 12

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data used in the study, and these allowed the researcher to converse more naturally with the participants. Semi-structured interviews use an established interview guide that sets out the broad matters that are assumed to be important through a series of open-ended questions, moving from common to more precise questions (Reid & Mash, 2014). The same questions were posed to all the participants, and they were given the opportunity to expand on their answers if necessary and add more information. Face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to capture spoken and non-spoken cues, which were indicators of the participant’s level of enthusiasm or discomfort (Wyse, 2014).

Initial contact was made telephonically and by means of e-mail. A meeting was thereafter arranged, which gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions and to sign the relevant consent forms. An information sheet outlining the reasons for the research and providing contact details for the relevant authorities in the case of poor conduct was handed to all participants. Participants were also informed of the limited confidentiality of the study, and it was brought to their attention that should the researcher become aware of abuse or signs of abuse, legal authorities would have to be notified. The information sheet also made the

participant aware that the interview process would be recorded and that no monetary reward would be given for their participation.

Participants were informed about the benefits of tape-recording the interview. It was explained that the average person speaks very fast and that therefore it is difficult to capture the spoken word accurately (Wyse, 2014). Quotes from the participants could also be captured correctly, and the tape recorder could act as a second witness if information needed to be verified (Wyse, 2014). The tape recorder also allows for the development of a rapport between the researcher and participant as the researcher can make eye contact with the participant and focus on the interview instead of taking notes (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Prior to the actual interview, participants were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary, and their limited confidentiality was assured. A letter was presented confirming that the study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the School of Applied Human Sciences of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (protocol reference number: HSS/1098/016M).

The interview process was very relaxed, and participants were given the opportunity to express themselves freely. The interviews were recorded; however, relevant notes were also made. The interviews lasted between 14 minutes and 1 ½ hours, after which participants were thanked and informed that feedback would be given to them in the form of a summarised thesis. All the participants were employed, and those who were parents left their children either at a crèche or preschool. Two of the participants required a translator; while the remaining ten conversed adeptly in English. The female translator had received a Grade 12 education that included both isiZulu and English as higher level subjects. She conversed confidently in both languages and translation occurred during the interview process, allowing the researcher to take notes in English.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The study was thematically analysed with the intention of finding common themes in the data. Thematic analysis can be defined as a kind of qualitative analysis that is used to analyse classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data (Alhojailan, 2012). It presents the information in great detail with diverse subjects via interpretations (Boyatzis,

1998, as cited in Alhojailan, 2012). Thematic analysis is helpful, as it allows the researcher to assign a description to the diverse information and to gain a clear, coherent understanding of the participants' reflections and to convey their experiences (Crawford, Brown & Majomi, 2008). Since qualitative studies are inherently interpretive research, the biases, values and judgements of the researcher need to be acknowledged and taken into account in the presentation of the data. It is therefore necessary to create and maintain a reflexivity journal (Creswell, 2013). In the current study the researcher maintained a reflexivity journal that recorded in detail the process involved in searching for patterns in the data. There are six phases in this type of thematic analysis, which are further outlined in the following sections.

3.6.1 Familiarisation with the data

Phase one involves becoming immersed in the data and transcribing all recorded data into written form (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the current study all information that was recorded was thereafter transcribed verbatim. Translation from Zulu into English took place during the interview process thereby allowing the researcher to make notes in English. The process started with the reading and re-reading of the data. Notes that were taken during the interview process were cross-checked against the transcribed data. Copies of each interview were stored on separate discs to serve as a second witness should information need to be verified. Hard copies were thereafter printed to allow for the analysis process to begin.

3.6.2 Generating codes

Phase two involved the encoding of information that organised the data so that the researcher could identify and develop themes from it (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The researcher worked systematically through the entire data set, encoding each data entry, and ended this phase by collating all the codes and applicable data extracts (Clark & Braun, 2013). In the current study, subsequent to the transcription of all the recorded data, initial codes were generated. As the same line of questions was posed to all participants, the participants' views on the concept of discipline became evident. Factors affecting their selection of disciplinary methods included aspects such as age, gender, race, culture, environment, and parenting styles. Views on corporal punishment and the alternatives varied, with many participants

being very forthright with regard to the disciplinary problems they were experiencing. Chunks of data were thereafter labelled, identified and connected to other codes, thereby allowing initial themes to emerge (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Underlying, hidden and interesting aspects in the data also became apparent after the researcher had worked systematically through the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Aspects such as the role of technology, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and understanding the modern child became evident.

3.6.3 Searching for themes

Phase three involved searching for meaningful patterns in the data relevant to the research questions (Clark & Braun, 2013). In the study the researcher moved back and forth through the entire data set, and initially found 73 codes that provided answers to the research questions. It is in this phase that a researcher begins examining how the codes could be combined to form overarching themes in the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Themes differ from the codes, as themes consist of ideas and descriptions used to explain statements derived from participants' viewpoints (Clark & Braun, 2013).

3.6.4 Reviewing themes

Phase four involved reflecting on whether the themes tell a persuading and compelling narrative about the information (Clark & Braun, 2013). This phase involves two levels of refining and reviewing themes, and researchers may decide to join two themes or to divide a theme into two or more themes, or to abandon the selected theme overall (Clark & Braun, 2013). In the present study the initial 73 themes were further analysed to determine whether a coherent pattern had appeared, and after merging and discarding a few themes, a final set of 12 themes was confirmed. The researcher made notes in the reflexivity journal of those themes selected and those rejected.

3.6.5 Defining and naming themes

Phase five required the researcher to carry out and write a detailed analysis of each theme (Braun & Clark, 2006). In the current study the researcher worked through the entire data set systematically to ensure that all relevant data related to each of the themes was organised and presented in order. Similarities and differences were also noted, and additionally direct quotations provided encouraging meaning to the data's interpretation for certain assertions (Patton, 2002, as cited in Alhojailan, 2012). Themes were thereafter named.

3.6.6 Writing a report

Phase six is the last phase and entails merging together the logical description and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a rational and credible narrative about the data, and contextualising the data in relation to existing literature (Clark & Braun, 2013). In the present study the refinement of the themes was further examined with the intention of providing clear answers to the research questions, and the report was written. In Chapter 4, the main trends, patterns and themes will be discussed in a concise, coherent manner.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In qualitative research, the researcher interacts personally with all participants, thereby entering the participants' private space. This raises several ethical issues that have to be addressed during and after the research has been conducted (Thomas, 2010). The researcher has a duty to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants (Creswell, 2003, as cited in Thomas, 2010). When conducting research it is crucial that the researcher adheres to certain ethical norms in research. These norms promote the aims of the research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error (Resnik, 2015). The ethical norms also promote moral and social values, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness (Resnik, 2015). Prior to the commencement of this research, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the School of Applied Human Sciences of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (protocol reference number: HSS/1098/016M). Participants were handed an information sheet before the interview process began, which outlined the ethical considerations that were being taken into account. In the following section the issues of

informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality of information shared, and beneficence and no harm to participants will be further discussed.

3.7.1 Informed and voluntary consent

Before written consent is obtained, it is essential that participants be informed about the purpose and the procedure of the research project (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). In this study an initial meeting was arranged where the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and to thereby settle any doubts they had. An information sheet outlined the reasons for the research project, the procedures involved, and the details of authorities who could be contacted in the case of unethical behaviour on the part of the researcher. In a multi-racial country like South Africa, language tends to be a common barrier. In the study, a translator was used to ensure that the participant understood the purpose and procedure of the research project. The translator, together with the participant, thereafter signed the consent form. Participants were informed that participating in the research project was entirely voluntary, and that after reading through the information sheet they could balance the benefits and disadvantages of the study, thereby deciding whether to play a part in it or not. In any cases where potential participants showed a reluctance to be involved, they were informed that participation was a personal choice and that withdrawal was acceptable.

3.7.2 Confidentiality of information shared

The principle of confidentiality is to protect the participants from harm, to establish trust and understanding with study participants, and to maintain the ethical standards and the truthfulness of the research process (Kaiser, 2009). Participants in the study were informed that they were entitled to limited confidentiality. The reason for offering only partial confidentiality was to allow for instances when the researcher could possibly have become aware of abuse or signs of abuse, at which point the researcher would have become ethically obliged to report the matter to the legal authorities. After the interview process, all participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used in the study so that the data provided by them could not be traced back to them in reports, presentations and other forms of dissemination.

3.7.3 Beneficence and non-maleficence

When conducting research on human subjects, the researcher needs to minimise harms and maximise benefits; respect human dignity, privacy and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable participants; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of the research fairly (Resnik, 2015). All participants were given the opportunity to select a venue for the interview that was safe and comfortable for them. One participant, a parent, stated the need for her spouse to be present during the interview process, to give her the support required. Participants were also assured that no harm would befall them, and that although their identity was known to the researcher, pseudonyms would be used in the dissemination of the research. No monetary incentives were offered; however, each participant was thanked for their valuable contribution and was assured of a summary of the research results.

3.8 CREDIBILITY, DEPENDABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

3.8.1 Credibility

The aim of any qualitative study is to design and incorporate methodological studies to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). In qualitative research, credibility is identified as the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy (Thomas, 2010). The issue of credibility arises early in the research process, from the resolution about the focus of the study and the selection of the context and participants, to the approach selected and the gathering of data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Selecting participants from diverse backgrounds, of different ages, races and cultures, and with wide-ranging experiences increases the likelihood of shedding light on the study's research question from a range of aspects (Adler & Adler, 1988; Patton, 1987 allcited in Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In this study, although only female participants were selected, they varied in terms of their social status, age, race, cultural backgrounds, and educational qualifications. To ensure internal credibility in the study, data triangulation was used. A wide range of participants was interviewed so as to obtain individual viewpoints and experiences that could be verified against others, thereby offering a rich picture of the

attitudes, needs and behaviours of those under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). The interviews were all recorded with the consent of the participants, in order for the recording to act as a second witness should information need to be verified. Another factor contributing to the credibility of a study is the knowledge, experience and qualifications of the researcher, as he or she is the major instrument of data collection. Because the researcher is a foundation-phase educator, with knowledge and experience of the disciplinary methods offered and used in the home, crèche facilities and schools, the researcher's awareness of the phenomena of interest is clear. Throughout the research process, constant reference was made to previous research findings, mainly in the schooling environment, to assess the degree to which the research results were congruent with previous studies (Shenton, 2004).

3.8.2 Dependability

In addressing the issue of dependability, certain techniques were employed to show that if the research was replicated in an identical context, with similar techniques and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). One of the techniques is triangulation, which involves collecting data using multiple methods. In the study, a semi-structured interview was used as the method of data collection, together with the examination of a wide range of related literature. The study also documented every operational detail of the data gathering and data analysis process, thereby creating an audit trail should the need for one arise.

3.8.3 Transferability

Research findings are considered transferable or generalised only if they fit into new contexts outside the actual study context (Thomas, 2010). In qualitative research, transferability is considered a major challenge due to the subjectivity of the researcher as the key instrument; however, transferability can be improved through detailing the research methods, contexts, and assumptions underlying the study (Thomas, 2010). In the study a rich, thick description of the phenomenon was provided, together with appropriate quotations from the participants, thereby enabling future researchers to compare instances of the phenomena described in the report with those that emerge in different situations. To

facilitate transferability in the study, a distinct, unambiguous account of the selection and characteristics of participants, the data collection and data analysis was provided (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

3.9 CONCLUSION

It has been stated that there is not just one correct meaning or universal application of research findings, but only the most credible meaning from a particular perspective (Thomas, 2010). In qualitative research, the trustworthiness of interpretations deals with ascertaining arguments for the most plausible interpretations (Thomas, 2010). In the study, strategies such as data triangulation, an audit trail allowing for examination of data collection and data analysis, as well as the provision of a thick, rich description on the phenomena of interest were utilised to ensure a trustworthy research project.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology applied in the study, and described the sampling process, data collection and data analysis. The various ethical considerations were also outlined.

Chapter 4 focuses on the various themes that emerged from the raw data set to provide a coherent, brief story that outlined the participants' diverse perspectives of the concept of discipline. In the following sections each theme is discussed in detail, and quotations from the participants and from existing literature have been provided to support various perspectives and interpretations, and to highlight new findings. Although all participants were known to the researcher, their anonymity was assured; therefore, participants are referred to as P1 to P12 when they are directly quoted.

4.2 THE DIVERSITY IN THE MEANING OF DISCIPLINE

The existing literature corroborates that different people attach different meanings to the concept of discipline, and that while various definitions have been outlined, racially diverse perspectives remain absent. The findings of this study indicate that a few of the participants classified discipline as respect. This included respect for objects, people and the opinions held by others. When the researcher further analysed the concept of discipline, the analysis uncovered that it encompassed knowing one's limitations, knowing one's boundaries, and knowing the consequences of one's actions. Children were encouraged to know the rules that they have to adhere to, thereby making them aware and mindful of what is expected of them. This is illustrated in the following extract:

P1: Discipline is knowing your limitations, knowing your boundaries, knowing when you overstep a line, there are consequences...so discipline is knowing the consequences of your actions.

All participants agreed that children younger than the age of five years have the intellectual and moral capability of understanding their wrongdoing and as a result have to face the consequences of their actions. Two parents corroborated this viewpoint, stating that their children tended to laugh and make up fictitious stories when engaged in wrongdoing. According to Kohlberg's stages of moral development, young children fall into the first stage (pre-conventional moral reasoning), which involves obeying and following rules so as to avoid punishment. The physical consequence of an action determines whether the action is right or wrong (Walrath, 2011). Proper role models are therefore required if children are to learn appropriate behaviour, as it is at this young age that children follow the rules set by authority figures.

A notable finding of this study was how opinions on what discipline meant to them varied amongst the participants according to their race. For the Black participants, discipline was perceived as a way of showing love, notwithstanding that it was in the form of physical punishment. These participants stated that parents in the Black community feel that physical punishment is a way of showing care and concern for their children by guiding them in the right way. However, one of the Indian participants, a mother, described discipline as a way of life that encompasses family and the environment. Supporting this viewpoint, another Indian participant, also a parent, defined discipline as the interaction one has with family and outsiders; she further explained that discipline provides structure to a growing child. For the White participants, discipline was identified as the teaching of values. Emphasis was placed on teaching the difference between good and bad behaviour, and in the process learning to correct the bad things. A crèche facilitator from the White community stressed the importance of giving a child love and attention, and passionately stated that she was in the process of building personalities. However, a crèche facilitator from the Coloured community ardently stated that children should be self-disciplined and should know how to behave all times. She defined discipline as guidance that corrects something that is wrong. The participants' diverse opinions regarding their definition of discipline are illustrated in the following extracts:

P8:If you start at home...people are happy to have you visit with your children...for me... we didn't jump on beds or over chairs... we didn't walk around eating and drinking and messing...we respect it... so in other people's homes I enforced it

too... and hopefully my children were welcome in other homes... aah... I think discipline... you teaching your children to respect other people and other things.

P11: I feel that when you discipline a child...you teaching your child values...giving them a sense of right and wrong in the world...teaching them that there are rules.

P6: Discipline means to teach a person the right values and morals...you have to teach them...correct them in their behaviour.

P12: Someone disciplines...it shows that she cares or he cares about me...he's... because he will be able to tell me...don't do that...this is not right.

The aforementioned diverse views on discipline are a clear indication that discipline encompasses respect, the teaching of values, love and guidance. Much emphasis is placed on correcting bad behaviour. Good behaviour includes being respectful to others and objects/things, saying “thank you” and “please,” and behaving appropriately without being told to do so in all circumstances. Receiving and showing respect was one of the components of discipline many participants focused on. Respect for people included individuals from the immediate and extended family, neighbours, friends, and all those people the child interacted with.

As the literature suggests, some of the reasons for why South African society has not succeeded in promoting self-discipline include the negligence of personal responsibility, the lack of a fully-fledged public value system, and the absence of self-disciplined role-models (De Klerk & Rens, 2003).

Participant 8 states “*if you start from home*”, clearly indicating that learning about respecting people and their objects/things begins at home. Parents are the first role models whom children can identify with or imitate, and as a result they cannot teach their kids respect by being disrespectful to them (Schwarz, 2016). It has been stated that the most successful way to teach respectful conduct is to model it yourself (Kear, 2010). People are not born with mutual respect; it must be replicated and taught (Nelsen, Lott & Glenn, 2000). Mutual respect permits an individual to respect others and to practise self-respect (Nelsen et al., 2000).

Setting up rules and boundaries within the home environment makes young children mindful of what is expected of them. Parents are encouraged to sit down with their children and discuss the rules, such as not jumping on the beds, putting away toys when one has finished playing, and not eating and messing in their rooms. If young children cannot follow the basic rules at home, they will not be able to do so in preschool and beyond, and those parents who allow their children to do whatever they want without consequences are basically setting their children up for disappointment (Kear, 2010). Behaviour that involves acting politely is not a mere formality, for when kids say “thank you” after an item is given to them, they are acknowledging that there is a mutual exchange going on, a give-and-take relationship, and that by going through the actions, they ultimately learn not to expect everything to be given to them on a silver platter (Kear, 2010). Setting rules and boundaries teaches young children that the world does not revolve around them, and, more importantly, that they also have to consider the feelings of others when doing things (Kear, 2010).

Parents are advised that when dealing with disrespectful children, empathising with children shows them that you are willing to relate to their experience, and indirectly teaches them to empathise with others (Schwarz, 2016). Parents also need to decode the behaviour of their children, as the behaviour is a reflection of what the child is feeling on the inside (Schwarz, 2016). Lastly, parents need to consider the time and environment the child is in, as the child could be merely hungry, thirsty or over stimulated in a loud, noisy environment (Schwarz, 2016).

Participant 8 stated that she enforced the same rules she has at home in other environments as well, with the hope that her children would be welcomed. The term “enforce” is an indication that the participant required strict adherence to the rules and boundaries at home and elsewhere. This is similar to the behaviourist notion of behaviour modification, which is concerned with altering the outcomes of an action or applying new outcomes to guide behaviour (Grace, 2017). The consequences experienced by an individual after doing something influence the chances that the individual will do it again; for example, a reward after appropriate behaviour will encourage a child to repeat the behaviour (Huesmann & Podolski, 2003). In today’s modern society, some parents, crèche facilitators and educators are persuaded to provide positive reinforcement to encourage good behaviour, which is seen as a healthier alternative to punishment, by affording children the appropriate behavioural procedures while allowing them their dignity (Grace, 2017).

Participant 6 confirmed the need for placing greater importance on learning moral values at a young age. The current study revealed that crèche facilitators and educators believe that growing up with good values enabled them to become good educators — values that they subsequently taught their learners.

Findings from the current study revealed the existence of a pilot value programme in a preschool in Pietermaritzburg. The value programme encompasses eleven values that are taught to the children using various media. Educators start with the concept of peace, by defining and describing the concept, and thereafter using it in stories, artwork and songs. The educator named her learners “peaceful stars” and passionately conveyed that they were truly peaceful. Some of the values included respect, love and honesty — concepts that are important when learning how to behave. The school did not encourage the use of toy guns and instead used the calming technique of meditation. Meditation was introduced during the morning ring and the children had to do affirmations, one them being choosing the right behaviour. The young learners were taught about sharing, taking turns, empathising with others and respecting everyone — behaviours that any parent, crèche facilitator and educator would be very proud of.

The study revealed that participants embraced ardent views on the teaching of values, suggesting that the inability to teach a child the right values and principles as they grow up into adults is indicative of neglect. This neglect becomes an endless chain of events, as problem children become problem adults, and problem adults eventually become problem parents, and the circle continues. While South African schools are still embracing the value programme, schools in Japan are already teaching values such as respect and honesty. The *Japanese Times* reported that schools in Japan have taken steps to support the moral development of children through every day activities such as maintaining cleanliness in the school, caring for pets and gardening on the school premises, and other special activities, including joining clubs, excursions and volunteering (Gordenker, 2004). These activities are common at Japanese schools, as are motivational talks and pictures encouraging good behaviour and hard effort. Children are taught to value their community, to respect life, to be appreciative to the people who assist them, and also to keep promises (Gordenker, 2004). Numerous South African researchers have outlined the importance of teaching values, a process that all key participants need to be part of, including parents, crèche facilitators, educators, religious organisations, the media, and the government.

Participant 12 described discipline as a way of showing love. According to this view, guiding your child on the correct path is a way for parents to convey their care and concern for their kids. This guidance and love sometimes includes the use of physical punishment. This is similar to views held by Samoan parents, who believe that the failure to teach and, if required, physically discipline children, is regarded as a failure to love them. Global research studies suggest that the act of disciplining generates a distance in the adult-child relationship, and helps establish status boundaries and relations of respect, admiration and appropriate social space (Magento, 1998).

The study has revealed that while some may see discipline as a way of showing love, others view it as setting rules and boundaries, and, most importantly, imparting lessons on respect and moral values. It is evident from the aforementioned data that within each racial group there are different beliefs, values and understandings that shape the way people nurture their children (Pereira, 2010).

4.2.1 The disciplinary methods currently used

A disciplinary method refers to any specific action taken by the parent, crèche facilitator and educator to enforce discipline (Reyneke, 2013). A punitive approach to discipline would be demerits and corporal punishment, while more positive approaches would include time-out, denying luxuries, rewards and praise, and changes in the tone of voice.

4.2.1.1 Time-out

Time-out is a discipline technique that involves placing children in a specific place for several minutes following unacceptable behaviours (Zolten & Long, 2006). The concept of time-out really means time away from attention, as children sit alone away from others. It is considered the most popular disciplinary technique used by parents and most often recommended by paediatricians (Siegel & Payne, 2014).

The results of the current study indicate that the majority of the participants used time-out as a disciplinary method in modifying problem behaviours and claimed it to be very effective. Participants referred to the “chair” in the time-out period as the “naughty chair”,

the “grow-good chair” or the “white chair”. While some participants claimed it to be totally effective, others stated that time-out only worked for children younger than the age of three years. Children sometimes enjoyed the time-out period too much, playing and keeping busy instead of reflecting on their wrongdoing, while other children left the area before the period ended but apologised and regretted behaving badly. As illustrated in the following extract:

P1: Time-out gives the child the opportunity to be taken away from the situation... gives the child time to sit and reflect a bit... to also calm down but then understanding that time-out is just a short time.

Although many participants claimed that time-out was a very effective disciplinary technique, a few participants noted the problem of keeping the child in a specific area for the required time. Crèche facilitators and educators used tracing activities to keep the children older than the age of three years occupied in the time-out area. Selecting an appropriate time-out area is important, as the location should be sensibly suitable and in a place where the parent, crèche facilitator or educator can monitor the child (Reece, 2013). There are numerous suggestions to improve this disciplinary method, which include using a chair or stool, a carpet or a door step, and giving a name for the time-out chair or space such as the “thinking chair” or the “quiet zone” (Reece, 2013). The area or space selected should be uninteresting and distant from the disruptions of other children, the television, toys and objects (Reece, 2013). Parents are advised to remain calm, not lecture or scold their children and in the event that children refuse to go to the time-out area, parents are advised to use a little physical guidance, such as taking them by the hand and leading them to the chair (Zolten & Long, 2006).

Time-out is seen as a positive disciplinary approach that allows children to realise and accept that their words and actions have consequences that they are responsible for. Time-out also provides a calming period for the young children to reflect on their behaviour. While some agreed with this view, many argued that in most cases the primary experience a time-out offered a child was isolation, teaching them that making a mistake resulted in being alone, a lesson mainly young children experience as rejection (Siegel & Payne, 2014). The last statement is an important factor that needs to be considered; therefore, it is essential that both parents and educators discuss with the child the reasons for the time-out period.

4.2.1.2 Denying luxuries

The denial of certain items (play time, toys, electronic gadgets, television, sweets and enjoyable activities such as gardening) is another favourable disciplinary method used. The results of the study indicated that the majority of the participants implemented this method. Participants claimed that children were inclined to make use of electronic gadgets, including cell phones, iPads, iPods, tablets and hand-held video games as a form of greater stimulation. Children used these items everywhere — at home, in the crèche facility, in school, in the malls, and even while travelling in a car. Parents, crèche facilitators and educators tended to favour this disciplinary method as it modified problem behaviour, if only for a short period. As illustrated in the following extract:

P10: I know it now at school from experience when it's the kids birthday party... they get party packs... so I would say it's a threatening thing...if you don't behave I'm going to take away the party pack because it's simple things but kids love sweets, they like these things and if you take it away...immediately you see.

The above quote is a clear indication that denying children simple things that they love or enjoy doing temporarily stops undesirable behaviour. To ensure that the above disciplinary method is effective, consistency is required as children tend to “abuse” this disciplinary method. The denial of luxuries is a disciplinary technique that involves learning from the consequences of behaviour. Young children learn that the consequences of problem behaviours result in not receiving a reward or partaking in a favourite activity, similar to Skinner’s operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is a technique of learning that occurs through reinforcement and punishment (Cherry, 2016). Positive punishment is when a penalty is given to modify certain behaviours, and this penalty may involve denying a luxury. A young child thereafter learns that certain behaviours result in a penalty and will eventually stop or modify these behaviours.

4.2.1.3 Demerits

In certain educational institutions learners receive demerits for various transgressions, including the failure to complete homework, wearing the incorrect uniform, lacking the necessary stationery, and talking or even eating in class. The study revealed that a collection

of demerits leads to detention as a form of punishment, which according to the participants never solves the real problems. A demerit was described by one participant as “blackmail”, where learners are forced to act and speak in a certain way or get a demerit, thereby leaving the learner stressed and dejected. Participants held very negative views regarding demerits, with many of them not implementing them. The belief was that demerits are not a very effective disciplinary method because rather than solving problems, they degrade the child and do not build character.

A comparatively small percentage of participants used demerits as a disciplinary method. One participant used a toy train, encouraging her learners to move forward in the train by displaying good manners, while bad behaviour resulted in a step back in the train. Participants candidly stated in the following extract:

P1: I am not so happy about demerits...I don't think they are very effective and I think... sometimes think the child gets a sense of unfairness from demerits...especially if their side isn't taken into consideration...I am thinking of my own children at school...when they got demerits...I think it is just easier for a teacher to say now I am going to give you a demerit.

P6:No...I don't take it away...no... I will encourage it...I don't think it...it's very nice to degrade a child...it's oh... well... I'm taking that away if you can't listen... I don't ...I don't believe in that...that's not building character.

One participant felt differently, as stated in the following extract:

P8:I think some forms of demerit are good...I don't think you must demoralise them all the time... but I think you got to be careful of overdoing.

The study results indicated that the use of demerits was not a very effective disciplinary method, with Participant 1 clearly outlining that children sense the unfairness and that educators merely use it as a coping tool. While many schooling institutions claim to have a strict demerit system in place, the question remains: is it modifying the problem behaviours? Demerits tend to “label” young children in a crèche or classroom environment. Instead of just labelling the child “naughty”, educators need to consider numerous factors when analysing the child’s problem behaviour. Communication is important, as it gives the key individuals — the parent, educator and learner — the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Earlier studies argue that if a demerit is a point removed or awarded against learners for incomplete work or bad behaviour, or something that deserves blame, this presents the demerit system as reactive (Naong, 2007). Supporting this view and the current study, existing literature reveals that removing a mark after a transgression has been carried out denotes that a demerit is only advice or tool meant to watch over learners for wrongdoing and then punish them (Moyo et al., 2014).

4.2.1.4 Mild forms of corporal punishment

Results from the study indicated that many of the participants believed that a mild form of corporal punishment (“a smack on the bum”) was acceptable, and supported the use of corporal punishment in the home environment. Behaviourist theory proposes that when a child experiences only an unpleasant consequence after an action, such as a smack on the bottom, it is less likely the child will repeat that action, and this is known as punishment (Huesmann & Podolski, 2003). Corporal punishment is a form of such punishment, and although there has been much debate on the effectiveness of punitive disciplinary methods, both parents and educators continue to use them. The rationale behind the occasional smack on the bottom included the young child’s inability to understand verbal punishment and his or her inability to understand the various dangers around the home and other environments. Only a few of the participants were totally against the use of any form of physical punishment, asserting that parents who exposed their children to corporal punishment continued the cycle of violence. Participants in support of mild forms of spanking forthrightly stated their views, as illustrated in the following extracts:

P4: You know a lot of the things nowadays... the problems that we are experiencing is because discipline is not happening at home, you know like I said and think... a good smack on the bum with a newspaper, we used to get smacks with a newspaper but you know we grew up fine... you know there is a boundary obviously, you not going to go hit your child at home black and blue... there is a boundary...you know one smack on the bum is fine.

P1: I used to be very anti-corporal punishment but I do believe every now and then a child deserves a good smack on the bum as long as it is not with a stick or a whip...you know just the hand on the bum at the appropriate time and age too...

like a little one year old because they need that immediate realisation and make the association with No! and they can't do that especially when it comes to issues of safety.

A crèche facilitator who was against any form of corporal punishment stated her views in the following extract:

P6: There's different ways that you love somebody and explain to them that they doing wrong...why must you hit them?...what is the solution to that? ...what's the outcome of that?...to hurt somebody?

The above extracts are clear indications that corporal punishment still remains a controversial topic; although it has been banned in all South African schooling facilities, many parents, crèche facilitators and parents support a milder form of corporal punishment.

The existing literature shows that parents who support the use of corporal punishment in many instances unlawfully mandate educators to use it too (Reyneke, 2013). The inter-generational use of corporal punishment often persuades adults to accept this disciplinary method as being effective and useful (de Zoysa, 2011). The above are a few of the reasons corporal punishment remains a commonly applied disciplinary method. However, it is important to note that there exists a very fine line between what the law calls assault and what parents see as appropriate punishment (Morrell, 2001). A factor to consider is whether the occasional smack on the buttocks becomes continuous smacks, and whether the attitude is still one of love when a child gets hurt.

4.2.1.5 Rewards and praise

The study results indicated that half of the participants were in favour of rewards, while all participants supported the use of praise. One participant referred to the use of rewards as “bribery and corruption”, and claimed that it worked perfectly, as it encouraged the young learners to be good and do the right things. Rewards came in the form of stickers, star charts, and marbles, and fun activities such as playing on the jungle gym. A reward was considered to be acceptable as long as it was utilised for the good, and not to stop the bad. Praise can be defined as “to express approval or admiration of; commend; extol” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). Global research reveals that praise in learning has a long history and can

be traced back to the 12th century, when children were rewarded for good performance with figs and honey in the teaching of the Torah (Ferguson, 2013). Praise received total support from all participants, with many confirming that the use of praise made the child feel good, appreciated and loved. Participants observed that praise helps build a child's self-confidence and teaches the child to treat others with respect and kindness. Certain participants expressed their unenthusiastic views on rewards, and the following extracts illustrate this:

P9: Doesn't motivate the child in any way... it sort of gives them more expectations in fact rather than any motivation... so... and you know what... whenever you expect things there's always disappointments... so obviously now if you bringing up the child to always wanting stuff... every time we go to the shop... he's always going to get a car... you know it's going to be a detriment to him later on in life because he will always want things his way and life doesn't work like that.

P11: Children need to learn... they need to know the difference and I think it's us that needs to teach them the difference of how we behave... how when you act out it's not acceptable and if... you stop... you figure out for yourself... you can't say... if you good... teachers going to give you a sweet... I will give you this... this... this... if you behave and the child hasn't but the child is throwing a huge tantrum and wanting it... you give it anyway.

On the topic of praise, one parent expressed her views as follows:

P5: It really helps because it lifts their spirits... their whole... being a kid... it's like... Oh mum said... I did good here and she's giving me this... It helps them... I'm seeing them grow when I praise them.

While some participants were in favour of rewards, claiming that it reinforced positive behaviour, half of the participants were against the use of rewards, and felt that rewarding a child for being good made the child feel entitled, with constant expectations. They felt that the child would thereafter cooperate only when pampered with objects and things, and would expect rewards all the time. The participants' view was that children needed to be good because they wanted to be good, and because they acted according to a personal inner motivation that encouraged them to treat others in the way they wanted to be treated. Children who receive rewards, according to these participants, constantly tended to "test" how far they could push their parents, and subsequently expected rewards even in cases

when their behaviour was not good, by throwing tantrums and manipulating their parents into giving them a reward.

Reward-and-praise systems have their origin in behaviourist psychology, their aim being to promote good discipline in homes, crèches and schools (Munn & Mellor, 2000). These key institutions can make a difference to children's behaviour by establishing clear rules and recognising and rewarding "good" behaviour and "punishing" bad behaviour, thus further encouraging such good behaviour (Munn & Mellor, 2000). While many are in favour of reward-and-praise systems, critics suggest that the approach is too basic, as it eradicates the circumstance in which behaviour transpires and places total responsibility on the individual for his or her behaviour (Munn & Mellor, 2000).

Praise is a positive behaviour management tool, which provides encouragement to students and helps build self-esteem and close teacher-student relationships (Ferguson, 2013). While praise received total support from all the study participants, prior research suggests that when praise is used as a strategy, the age of the child should be considered (Ferguson, 2013).

4.2.1.6 Tone of voice

The study results showed that a small number of participants supported the use of a sterner tone of voice. A crèche facilitator stated from personal experience her dad's stronger voice upset her more than her mum's method of discipline. Another parent claimed that it was not a matter of shouting, but simply a change in the tone of the voice that made the child understand that he or she had overstepped the rules and had done something wrong. As a crèche facilitator stated in the following extract:

P6: I never hit my children...never...I just had to raise my voice...they 16 and 20 today and still...my 16 year old...ask anybody...they've got good manners...no nonsense...because it's just a tone of your voice.

Tone of voice plays a significant role in human interaction, as it provides those involved in the interaction with more information about the topic of conversation, beyond simply the words used (Hicks, 2007). The change in the tone of one's voice is an effective disciplinary method when a rule is communicated once and the child follows it through; however, it

becomes ineffective when parents or educators end up “shouting” the same rule incessantly, because the child then becomes “immune” to the shouting. Prior literature reveals that often educators inadvertently assume that verbal warning is the same as shouting, which can constitute verbal abuse, as it can prompt anger and fear in learners (Moyo et al., 2014). Parents and educators must realise that constant shouting can lead to threatening and eventually verbal abuse.

4.3 THE MODERN CHILD

In the study, a common complaint amongst participants was the way in which young children argued with their parents, crèche facilitators and educators, often in a rude, disrespectful manner. One participant claimed that the current generation of children is different, that their approach to life is much more modernised, and that parents therefore need to be firmer. A crèche facilitator sadly expressed that her young learners could not colour in, as they were not exposed to the simple joy of colouring, most asked for a computer so that they could type in the colours. As one participant illustrated in the following extract:

P9: Nowadays kids ...do not have much respect for their parents to start of off with...and they actually project the same sort of behaviour outside home...and I think because a lot of parents are too much involved in their own working career and they don't spend much time with their kids.

Technology in our modern culture has drastically shifted social norms, and it is not uncommon to see children playing on their portable video game systems at home, in the car or while at a restaurant with family, or to see them operate cell phones, iPads and computers better than some adults (Hatch, 2011). Technology has become part of our daily lives, but parents may be becoming so involved in their own lives that it is easier to occupy their children with electronic gadgets or just place them in front of the television than actually give them the attention they require. As seen from the disciplinary methods that are considered most favourable, several participants felt that denying luxuries worked best, such as denying children the use of video games, cell phones and watching television. As children continue to become immersed in electronic media, some researchers argue that such immersion results in socially stunted, ungrateful children, who are sometimes ridden with

health-related issues, while others believe that technology is a result of an evolving society and is here to stay (Hatch, 2011).

While the study participants held negative views on children's technological immersion, research has shown that technology allows children to learn in a whole new way, as it accelerates and enriches basic skills, facilitates new fields of learning through stimulation, prepares learners for the workforce, and can be engineered to cater for students with disabilities (Hatch, 2011). In the following sections attention-seeking behaviours and learning behaviours are outlined.

4.3.1 Attention-seeking behaviours

The study participants stressed the importance of distinguishing attention-seeking behaviours from disobedient, rude behaviours. Participants spoke about taking into consideration a child's background, personality and age. A Grade R educator described young children as emotional beings who needed to express their feelings, and suggested having areas in a school where children who felt overwhelmed could feel comfortable. When asked on suggestions to improve the current disciplinary dilemmas, one parent stated that the amount of attention children were given made a difference. The participant had children in primary school and noticed that the educators who interacted more with the children had learners who wanted to behave, in contrast with the stern educators who only focused on the work and not on the child. Sometimes a child just wants to be included, as a participant stated in the following extract:

P4: You have you understand where the child is coming from too...some of them have very bad home lives...where they actually do things to get attention...some of the behaviour you have to decipher...I say come... right we are going to sit and work together... I sit with those kids and I pay them attention...because they are getting attention...they are realising that they don't have to be naughty to get attention.

The participants felt that the key is communication, and that truly listening to children shows them that you respect them and consider their opinions. As one participant previously stated, children are emotional beings, and allowing for that personal connection, whether it be with a parent, crèche facilitator or educator, makes the child feel that he or she is significant. All

children, both young and old, want to feel needed, and to feel that someone is listening to them.

4.3.2 Learning behaviours

In the study an educator explained that we need to understand that every child is unique, and that when interpreting a child's behaviour pattern we must take into account the context and the child's age, and not label the behaviour as ill-mannered. Communication continues to be the solution, for there are always reasons for why children behave in a certain manner. A participant quoted from the Quran as follows:

P10: Education starts from the cradle to the grave... It is so important that what we are taught at home... the way we respect our parents...the way we talk to adults and things like that...so I would obviously instil the same values onto my children and also onto kids that I'm teaching.

A Grade R educator emphasised the importance of experience, as asserted in the following extract:

P1: I had kids standing on the jungle gym... spitting, but I realised it was actually learning process... the whole idea of collecting the spit in the mouth and then watching it fall and land in the dust at the bottom... it wasn't that they were actually spitting at somebody in a rude way or anything...but then they lucky they have me as a teacher...another teacher would have freaked out.

As Participant 10 stated, the same values that she had learnt from her parents, she passed onto her learners. Younger learners observe and imitate those around them, and often their actions are merely imitations of what they have learnt from siblings, parents, peers and television, and should not be regarded as ill-mannered behaviour. Learning is a process that continues throughout life. Young children learn through play, through observation and through experience. The modern child is eager to do more, speak more and learn more. Exposure to electronic gadgets (video games, computers and cell phones) increases the child's ability to do things faster, better and, most of the time, independently. The simple act of watching saliva fall to the ground can be an enjoyable experience for a young child,

and can also be easily misunderstood as “naughty” behaviour. Parents and educators have to be patient with younger children and always investigate the reasons behind their behaviour.

4.4 THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

Various theories have been developed to explain a child’s moral reasoning. Kohlberg’s theory used stories to elicit feelings and decisions for certain actions.

4.4.1 Onset of discipline

In the study, many participants agreed that discipline should start from a very young age, with the correct values being instilled by the parents at home and thereafter reinforced at school. Study results showed that all the participants believed that discipline should have started by the age of four years, with several participants believing that it should start at the age of one year. All participants agreed that children younger than the age of five understand when they were misbehaving, and should therefore face the consequences of their actions. A participant quoted a Chinese adage as follows:

P4: Once the tree is skew you can’t make it straight again.

She further explained that making the tree straight and beautiful was similar to disciplining a child. One cannot leave a tree to wither away and grow in all different directions, as one needs to help shape the tree in the correct manner. Similarly, a child needs help to be shaped into growing up in the correct way. The first five to seven years are the most important, for whatever the child experiences shapes him or her into the person they become, and it does not help to start “chopping” things later in life. As participants stated in the following extract:

P1: I think a year...when the child is already well verbalising, they can understand a lot more than they can actually verbalise and I think one of the earlier words a child would learn is No!

P4: I would say from about a year... like you know if they touch something... you don’t shout or scream because the child is just going to get a fright... you just give them

a little tap on the hand and say...you know you mustn't do that...you know they going to learn and they going to stop.

According to the participants, babies as young as the age of one year can and should be disciplined. Many professionals agree that setting boundaries, strengthening good behaviour, and discouraging less desirable behaviour can start when a child is an infant (Leavitt, 2004). Babies have limited language comprehension, memory, and attention spans, and the two best strategies to employ are distracting (helping the child move from an average activity to something wonderful) and ignoring (simply ignoring certain behaviours) (Leavitt, 2004). Toddlers between the ages of two and three years understand simple instructions, compassion, and cause and effect, which can be applied when disciplining (Leavitt, 2004).

4.4.2 Attention span of the child

Previous research has documented the importance of children's early skills for charting later developmental trajectories (Shronkoff & Phillips, 2000, as cited in McClelland & Cameron, 2012).

In the study, crèche facilitators emphasised the importance of understanding the limited attention span of children. Children need to be told what is wrong immediately and disciplinary action must be taken. However, this is not always the case, as many parents postpone the disciplinary action until later, while others leave the task to another parent, in many cases the father. The child thereafter tends to manipulate the weaker parent, normally the mother, and in the process the child does as he or she pleases.

A Grade R educator encouraged the interaction of the different age groups in her pre-primary school, letting the young children participate in counting and morning songs with the belief that "subconscious learning" takes place. The idea was to encourage the younger children to become more involved in slightly more demanding tasks that required concentration.

As participant 4 stated in the following extracts:

P4: A child's memory span is its age times two.

P4: Parents need to realise that they also need to be firm with their kids you know...don't let them get away with things... don't say wait until daddy gets home...you know mummy must also learn that she also needs to discipline her children and the children need to respect her for that.

From the above extracts, it is evident that children need immediate guidance when behaving inappropriately. Discussion, advice and other disciplinary techniques need to be administered as soon as possible so that the child understands the consequences of his or her actions. However, parents and educators need to be mindful that a child's behaviour could be due to physical symptoms, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Research indicates that attention problems are common among preschool children, with some symptoms of inattention attributed to a formal diagnosis of ADHD; alternative co-existing conditions could include language disorders, hearing loss and low intellectual functioning (Mahone & Schneider, 2012).

4.5 THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

The family as an institution is exposed to widespread social, economic, political, and demographic influences, which concurrently mediate how people react to social change (Amoateng et al., 2004). Some of the social and demographic changes include higher levels of urbanisation, and dwindling birth and death rates, which means that families are becoming much smaller, people are living longer, and families are also becoming vastly diverse (Amoateng et al., 2004).

In the study, a crèche facilitator noticed changes in the behaviour of a young learner, who became rebellious and rude. She later became aware that the child had lost his mother that year, which had been very traumatic for him. He was thereafter left in the care of his uncle and grandmother. His mother, according to the facilitator, was very particular about his behaviour and her death had affected him immensely. He missed her presence and sought attention, even if it meant negative attention. Another educator stated that living arrangements affect young children, and that moving around from place to place and even amongst relatives makes a child feel unsettled and anxious. Single parents tended to overcompensate for the absence of one parent. The educator stated that the world is full of such single parents, and that overindulgence because of sympathy could prove to be

dangerous, as what is acceptable behaviour at home is not always acceptable behaviour at school or elsewhere.

All participants supported the need to learn and gain a better understanding of a young child's background, taking into account the family life and structure. A Grade R educator expressed it clearly in the following extract:

P7:How they behave at home also impacts here at school... how things happen at home...definitely...you can see those that... aaah like from our routines...from our daily programmes...you can see those that are not eating...eating the right way...they come to school with no mannerism and maybe because at home there is no tables and chairs... or they sitting on the floor and eating or some of them are in one rooms...most of our kids are in one room renting...so it's from the beginning...you get those that don't have that sitting, eating, saying please, can I, excuse me, thank you teacher.

Crèche facilitators and educators both stressed the impact that the home environment has on a young child's behaviour. Living in single room and in overcrowded households affects how young children eat, sleep and even play. Children experience numerous problems in overcrowded dwellings, such as difficulty in doing homework while other household members want to sleep or washing and changing in private (Hall, 2010). Young children are also at greater threat of sexual abuse, especially when boys and girls share a bed or when younger children sleep with adults, and the General Household Survey (2002–2008) shows that children under the age of six years are more likely than older children to live in overcrowded households (Hall, 2010). As discussed in section 2.9.3, according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, everything in a child's life and environment affects how a child grows and develops (Oswalt, 2008). The living arrangements of a young child affect his social skills, eating and sleeping patterns, and his overall behaviour at crèche and in school. The fifth level or system is referred to as the chronosystem, and includes the various transitions a person goes through such as death, divorce, and even the move to a new town or house. Young children find these changes difficult to handle and accept, and in many instances display inappropriate behaviour instead of verbalising their dissatisfaction.

4.6 RACIAL DIVERSITY IN PARENTING STYLES

In the study both crèche facilitators and educators wished for more involvement and support from parents. The results also showed that different races adopt different parenting styles. According to a Grade R educator, some of the White and Indian parents adopted a permissive style of parenting, allowing their children to do and say as they pleased, and were really “bad” in terms of discipline. Indian parents who were interviewed were very zealous about the rules and boundaries they had in place for their children, encouraging discussion and involvement in all activities, indicative of authoritative parenting. Black parents embraced both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles, adopting high levels of control and warmth. Although Black parents discussed the child’s wrongdoing and provided children with opportunities to amend their behaviour, obedience and respect were considered very important. The majority of Black parents used corporal punishment as a disciplinary method, believing that it was a way to show their children love.

Prior literature has identified three common parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting (Baumrind, 1967, as cited in Roman, Makwakwa & Lacante, 2016). Permissive parenting is when parents indulge their child’s every desire, resulting in little or no structure for the child, in contrast with authoritative parenting, which involves setting rules and boundaries, allowing the child some freedom but at the same time conforming to discipline (Baumrind, 1967, as cited in Roman et al., 2016). In authoritarian parenting, obedience is considered the most important factor and there is very little discussion between parent and child (Baumrind, 1967, as cited in Roman et al., 2016).

The current study revealed that different races prefer certain parenting styles, as stated in the following extracts:

P11: We had a couple of White kids...where I find...parents seem to think that certain behaviours alright...they really bad in terms of discipline.

P1: I think corporal punishment is more accepted in the Black community...children talk about hidings.

As earlier literature has indicated, social, economic and political factors do affect parenting styles, and in South Africa the apartheid era played a significant role in determining the way in which children were raised (Roman et al., 2016). The demise of apartheid resulted in an increase in urbanisation, with many Black individuals moving into the city for better employment and housing facilities. A lack of financial resources not only affects the parent’s

ability to provide proper food, health care and education, but it also makes parenting itself much more difficult, and research has shown that more than 50% of children in South Africa grow up in households where caregivers nurture them without the support of the other parent (Gould & Ward, 2015). Parenting has a direct impact on a child's behaviour; harsh, inconsistent parenting, exposure to violence in the home, and community and corporal punishment increase the risk of children using violence or being victims of violence themselves (Gould & Ward, 2015).

4.7 EDUCATOR-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Building a positive relationship with little children is a vital and foundational factor of good teaching (Joseph & Strain, 2004).

The study results indicate that educator-learner interactions are important. A Grade R educator expressed the need to be very loving towards the learners, as educators can either "make or break" a child, meaning that negative comments and lack of attention and interaction can de-motivate a child. Another educator stated that their facility registered a total number of only six children under the age of three years, as they required more attention.

A crèche facilitator stated that due to the language barrier, when disciplining her Black learners she interacted more with the children, taking time to explain their wrongdoing. As one parent stated:

P5: The amount of attention you pay... even at school... you get the different types of teachers... the more stern... the more focused ones who want to concentrate on work and the ones who are more interactive with the child...I see when you pay attention to the kid then they want to behave...because they know the teacher's interested in them.

Giving every child attention is important; however, within classrooms with many learners, educators find this task difficult, if not impossible. Educators in most South African classrooms have many learners and are faced with numerous administrative duties; however, educators who encourage and build healthy educator-child relationships teach children

important values in the process (Connor, 2011). A positive educator-child relationship helps children feel secure, thereby allowing them to feel free to explore and learn. It also provides opportunities for children to learn how to interact with others, respect others' rights, show care, and resolve conflicts, thereby enabling effective teaching and learning (Connor, 2011). A positive adult-child relationship that is established on trust, consideration and caring will promote a child's collaboration and motivation, and increase their positive results at school (Webster-Stratton, 1999, as cited in Joseph & Strain, 2004).

Young children learn through interaction and experience, and the traditional adage "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand" signifies that children learn best through direct experiences (Croft, 2000, as cited in Tu & Hsiao, 2008).

4.8 HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

All parents, crèche facilitators and educators want to see the children grow up to become healthy and happy individuals, as the research results revealed in the following extracts:

P8: I think health does play a role... a lot of kids have been put on Ritalin (medication for children diagnosed with ADHD) and I remember going for a talk where a guy said if there's good discipline, good sleep, good drinking water, good diet... I can't remember the 5th thing... but those things are in place properly... half of those kids don't need Ritalin.

P11: In our school we have a no juice policy... if we have a party they have to take the cake home... their snack's one yoghurt and fruit only.

A healthy lifestyle is important for a child to grow and develop; this lifestyle involves eating the correct foods, in the correct portions and exercising regularly. In the home and school environment, parents and educators are important role models for their children, and if the parents and educators drink water instead of sweet juices, eat fruit and vegetables, and also become involved in physical activities, this encourages young children to do the same (Thompson, 2005). The current study results indicated that many parent and educators tended to use sweets and juices as rewards for good behaviour, rewards that many times proved to be very unhealthy. These items tend to "fill" the child and take the place of

healthier food choices, and also lead to tooth decay (Thompson, 2005). Food and play are a major part of everyday life and are enjoyable social experiences that children and carers can share (Thompson, 2005).

4.9 THE IMPACT OF MEDIA AND TELEVISION

The study results revealed that young children are exposed to various forms of technology, including mini-tablets, videos games, iPads and iPods. There is a constant need for stimulation from these electronic gadgets and parents sometimes find it easier to leave their children in front of the television than to engage with them. As one parent stated, it is important to monitor what a child watches. Even cartoons project violence, and it is therefore essential to discuss with children the difference between reality and fantasy, as children tend to imitate what they have seen and heard. As one crèche facilitator stated in the following extract:

P4: Parents get home at 6, they got no time...they tired...the children are just left in front of the TV or they left to go and play computer games in the rooms and a lot of those computer games project violence...a lot of the programmes project sexual things...they don't know...they just kids and you know if you going to watch TV...watch it with them and if something comes up...you know you either switch the channel or you say...do you know that's not nice...it's only for big people.

A Grade R educator stated in the following extract:

P11:Has our whole culture thing...has our whole society changed that all this behaviour is acceptable...it is television...I actually believe in age-restricted movies...I believe that they there for a reason.

As discussed above, technology is part of our daily lives and is here to stay; however, it becomes the joint responsibility of parents, crèche facilitators and educators to ensure that there is parental guidance when it comes to watching television, and that age-restricted movies are “blocked”, and violent and aggressive video games are not encouraged, as in many instances these games encourage aggressive behaviour. In schools and crèche

facilities, the toys and activities the child participates in should be carefully selected and planned, taking into account the age of the child.

4.10 THE INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARENT, CRÈCHE FACILITATOR AND GRADE R EDUCATOR

In the study, crèche facilitators and educators made an ardent plea for additional involvement by parents. Requests were made for parents to be more actively involved in disciplining their children, in assisting with homework, and in providing overall support in recreational activities. Several parents blatantly requested that crèche facilitators and educators discipline their children, with some parents encouraging the utilization of physical punishment in the form of corporal punishment. These views are expressed in the following extracts:

P11: And you notice...I don't know about other schools but I've noticed here...it's the parents who come on a daily basis...know what's happening in school and try to be as active as they can...are the kids...their kids are interested in school...interested in learning...interested in everything that is happening and the kids with parents that leave them here...for the day and don't ask them what's going on in school...they also dodge their babies.

P4: Sometimes when we tell the parents in the afternoon, you know we had a problem with your child today and you know the one parent sort of sat with us and said...you must beat the child...you must hit my child...and I am like...excuse me! No!... we don't do that...that is for you to do at home...And I remember even shouting at one of the dads because his child didn't want to come to school... and the dad actually took him by the neck here and held him and smacked him in front of the class.

P10: Parents unfortunately they think they sending a child to school...the discipline has to be done there but it got to be worked both ways...it has to be reinforced...so the continuity with parents and teacher...the relationship too I think is positive...and the honesty

P8: Parents are often too involved in their own lives...I think I am generalising now...a lot of parents are almost scared of their kids and too involved in their lives and it's

almost like they have children because it is fashionable to have them and not because they are prepared to sacrifice and give up certain things to be the best parents they can and spend that quality time with their kids...too many parents are scared to put things in place...they not consistent.

The above quotes are clear indications that greater parental involvement is required in crèches and schools. As prior research has indicated, discipline in schools is the responsibility of everyone, and not only of the educator, and the maintenance of discipline should be a partnership between parents, educators and learners (Chew, 2003, as cited in Ndamani, 2008). The study also revealed that parents are of the opinion that personal interaction between educators and learners inspires learners to be better students and also to behave appropriately. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory outlines that the second level, referred to as the mesosystem, involves the interaction parents have with the crèche or schooling facility, and the impact these experiences have on the child's behaviour. A healthy parent-educator relationship gives the child more confidence to learn and develop. According to Kohlberg's stages of moral development, the moral code of children younger than the age of 9 years is shaped by standards of adults and the consequences of following or breaking rules, a healthy parent-educator relationship will ensure that children know what behaviour is expected of them at home and in school.

Another concern expressed by many of the participants was that some parents were ever ready and ever willing to satisfy every wish of their children, thereby nurturing children who feel entitled. Parents thereafter become "fearful" of disappointing their children. Parental and educator workshops are required to help balance this relationship between parent and child, crèche facilitator or educator, and learner.

4.11 THE IMPACT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE WE INTERACT WITH

Young children are greatly influenced by the environment they are in and the people they interact with. In the study, while half of the participants stated that children behave better at school, four out of the five parents claimed that their children behaved better at home. Both crèche facilitators and educators clearly stated that their institutions provided routine and structure, important building blocks in maintaining discipline. Routine lets children know

exactly what is expected of them; there is time to play, time to work, time to eat and time to listen. One mother expressed that her young son behaved best at home; as she was a bit of a disciplinarian and ensured that her child knew what was expected of him. Another parent stated that her young sons were negatively influenced at school, learning inappropriate language from other learners and constantly being exposed to peer pressure.

The results have shown that individuals who interact with the young children on a regular basis — family, friends, crèche facilitators and educators — all play a major role in terms of teaching appropriate behaviour. Children learn after a period of time which individuals accept certain behaviours and which individuals are much stricter and require total obedience. As Grade R educators stated in the following extract:

P1: I think they read the environment and the situation and they so clever...because they work on that and they know what they can get away with...they realise how far they can push granny...they can push granny further than they can push mummy...or vice versa.

P11:I think some of them are really smart where they know how to change their behaviour in a different environment.

As one crèche facilitator stated in the following extract:

P4:It's because...here is a different environment and they understand if they are at school, they have to sit, there's rules here.

The above extracts indicate that young children are very intelligent and learn from the consequences of past behaviour patterns which individuals are more accepting of certain behaviours. According to the ecological systems theory, a child's behaviour is directly influenced by aspects of his or her immediate environment, including his or her family and peers, as well as indirect aspects of the environment. Several of the problems that children encounter are an outgrowth of problems at home, society and the school (Ndamani, 2008). Research indicates that misconduct in schools and in the classroom may start off from the child himself or herself, the school, the society, the curriculum, the child's parents or the educators (Mwamwenda, 1995, as cited in Ndamani, 2008). As the current findings reveal, whether it is the home, the crèche facility or the school, the child's immediate environment affects his or her behaviour.

4.12 PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT DISCIPLINARY DILEMMAS

All participants were eager to suggest ways to improve the current disciplinary problems, with many recommending workshops for parents and educators. In contrast, some educators highlighted the need for young parents to discuss and agree upon more suitable methods to nurture their children, taking into account health issues, education, and discipline. Emphasis was placed on the need for spirituality within the home and schooling environment, with a greater focus on learning important values such as respect, love, honesty and peace.

A Grade R educator recommended forming a network of support for educators and parents, including the principal, social workers, and counsellors. The network would provide the necessary assistance regarding disciplinary issues. The educator further suggested that schools adopt a policy of discipline, one that each educator adhered to, thereby ensuring a state of so-called “harmony”. Children would move from class to class and through the various grades knowing what is expected of them. If there was consistency in the disciplinary methods used, children would develop feelings of trust.

Knowing a child’s personality was important for crèche facilitators and educators, as in the event of possible outbursts or temper tantrums, the child could be removed and given an activity to calm them. Educators suggested that parents be more truthful regarding their children’s personality and behaviour patterns and not simply ignore the requests made by educators to discipline their children. The educator went on to state that parents and educators need to work hand in hand. As a crèche facilitator stated in the following extract:

P6: I think lots of people don’t even do what they supposed to be doing and overall to improve it, I think people...teachers more because they take somebody who has got no experience...no background...nothing and they put them in a 30...classroom with children and expect them to handle that situation which definitely you can’t...so I think we need to be educated more...people need to be educated to handle those children from all different ages...all different cultures and all different environments.

The above quote clearly outlines that many educators lack the necessary experience and training when it comes to managing diverse learners. Educators are sometimes placed in an

overcrowded classroom having to deal with language barriers, personality issues, inadequate resources and learners that refuse to them. Workshops are therefore required to advise educators on more effective ways of communicating and dealing with problem behaviours.

4.13 CONCLUSION

The diverse participants from the small community of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa embraced different views on what discipline meant to them. The research results indicated that a few of the participants defined discipline as respect for people and things. Mutual respect is required, as young children model the behaviour of the adults they interact with. On the issue of moral development, all participants agreed that children younger than the age of five years understand their wrongdoing and should face the consequences of their actions. Many participants proposed the teaching of important values such as honesty, love and peace in schooling facilities. The study revealed that denying luxuries was the most effective disciplinary method currently used, with a large number of the participants implementing this method. Time-out was another favourable disciplinary technique employed, with many of the participants claiming its effectiveness; in contrast, the use of demerits was deemed negative and unfavourable, with few participants implementing it. On the debateable issue of corporal punishment, more than half of the participants supported the occasional smack on the bottom. The study highlighted the importance of a healthy educator-child relationship, a healthy lifestyle, and the need for greater parental involvement.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on outlining and discussing the various themes that emerged from the data. The following chapter summarises the findings, emphasising the similarities with the existing literature and noting the differences. Conclusions are drawn from the findings, and the implications are highlighted. The study's limitations are outlined and further research is suggested.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND KEY FINDINGS

The study findings revealed that racial diversity is a significant factor that affects how people in Pietermaritzburg define discipline. Consistent with previous findings, the study showed a lack of value education, which encompasses the instilling of healthy values such as respect, honesty and sympathy (De Klerk & Rens, 2003). Participants described the young child as modern and more advanced. Areas that were highlighted included understanding the modern child, the impact of technology on the disciplinary process, and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. While many participants supported the abolishment of corporal punishment, a few of the key role players approved of the occasional smack on the bottom, both at home and within the school environment. These findings were consistent with numerous prior studies (Cicognani, 2006; Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Morrell, 2001; Moyo et al., 2014; Rossouw, 2003). While existing studies (Naong, 2007; Moyo et al., 2014) have also indicated the negative perceptions held on the use of demerits, little has been outlined with regard to their lack of correct application. The current study findings revealed that demerits as a disciplinary method proved to be the most ineffective alternative disciplinary method, with most of the participants choosing not to use it. The lack of parental involvement and educator-child interaction was a major concern for many of the participants, who suggested parental workshops and a network of support.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN REGARDING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.3.1 Diverse views regarding discipline

In addressing the first research question, the study results concluded that the concept of discipline held various meanings. Discipline was defined as respect — respect for objects/things, for people, and for the opinions held by others. Discipline also encompassed knowing the rules and boundaries at home, in school, and in other environments. Most importantly, discipline was aimed at teaching important values, behaviours, and necessary skills to help one cope with life. The belief held by many participants was that parents were not teaching their young children the right values and principles, and that this was indicative of neglect. In 2008, the SAHRC recommended the modification of discipline models in schools to promote and reflect the constitutional values of equality, dignity, and respect for others. Prior literature has indicated that the lack of positive values is one of the factors, if not the biggest factor, contributing to disciplinary problems (De Klerk & Rens, 2003; Rossouw, 2003; Steyn & Beukes, 1970; Lessing & De Witt, 2011, as cited in Reyneke, 2013).

Perspectives on discipline varied amongst the participants according to their different races. The views of those participants from the Black community centred on love, as discipline was described as guiding a child in the right direction, showing care and concern, and using punitive disciplinary methods if required. Participants of Indian origin defined discipline as guidance, giving structure to a growing child and encompassing interactions between family and outsiders. Participants from the White community described discipline as teaching good values and correcting inappropriate behaviour. Discipline was viewed by the participant from the Coloured community as guidance by correcting bad behaviour, encouraging children to be self-disciplined and to behave appropriately at all times.

The current views on the definition of discipline are fairly consistent with previous research findings, echoing the same sentiments, namely that discipline encompasses providing guidance by setting rules and boundaries at a young age and, more importantly, the teaching of good values. The study results clearly conclude that the different racial groups in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa hold different views on what the concept of discipline means to them.

5.3.2 Views on the effectiveness of the current disciplinary methods

In relation to the second research question, the study provided surprising results. Denying luxuries proved to be the most favourable disciplinary method, with the majority of participants implementing it. Time-outs also worked very well with younger children, with more than half of the participants claiming its effectiveness. A surprising finding was that the participants did not support the use of demerits, with only two of participants using them. The belief amongst many participants was that demerits demoralise young children, are not character building, and are merely used as a coping tool for educators. The use of praise was favoured by all the participants, with many claiming that it built learner confidence. Prior research supports the view that praise is a positive behaviour management tool that helps build self-esteem (Ferguson, 2013).

Rewards to encourage appropriate behaviour received support from half of the participants, with the other half claiming that rewards did not motivate young children but merely increased their expectations. A change in tone of voice was another method favoured by a few participants; however, this method is only effective when rules are stated once and children adhere to them. The study findings revealed that several of the participants were in support of the occasional smack on the bottom as a mild form of punishment, and favoured the maintenance of corporal punishment within the home environment.

Consistent with prior research, the study findings have shown that punitive disciplinary methods continue to be utilised within schooling environments, and that parents encourage and supported the use of corporal punishment in schools, sometimes giving educators and crèche facilitators instructions to use this form of punishment when necessary. The conclusions drawn from the study indicate that although a few positive disciplinary methods are currently utilised, many people continue using corporal punishment, albeit in a milder form.

5.3.3 The roles that the parent, crèche facilitator and educator play in maintaining discipline in children

In relation to the third research question, the current research findings revealed that some parents tended to become too involved with their own lives and were not consistent with their disciplinary methods. These findings are consistent with existing studies that have shown that parents tend to leave the major responsibility for disciplining their children to educators, and view their role as outside of this process (Ndamani, 2008). When parents and educators are at odds on the issue of discipline, learners tend to manipulate those authority figures involved, resulting in miscommunication and a poor parent-educator relationship (Ndamani, 2008).

The study results conclude that a healthy, pleasant relationship between parents and educators provides a stable environment for learners, one that inspires and motivates young learners to become self-disciplined. To ensure that these young learners grow up to be mature, respectful, responsible adults, mutual support is required from the key role players—the parents, crèche facilitators and educators.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

A change in the mind-set and approach to discipline is required on the part of the key role players, namely the parents, crèche facilitators and educators. The current positive disciplinary methods in place need to be promoted and accepted, because these approaches are respectful of all participants. Young children can be taught to respect other people, things and the opinions of others, and to empathise, share and listen to those in authority. All schools need to adopt a common disciplinary policy, one that each educator holistically adopts to ensure that when learners move from class to class and from grade to grade they know what behaviour is expected of them. There is a need for a more comprehensive description of the responsibility of parents and educators in the schools' disciplinary policies. The re-evaluation of demerits as a disciplinary method needs to be addressed, as this method is currently viewed as ineffective and degrading.

Changes to policy would involve amendments to South African legislation, regulations and guidelines on discipline to encompass the teaching of universal values. There is a need for

amendments to the South African legislation pertaining to discipline to include the abolishment of corporal punishment within the home environment. Behaviour modification through corporal punishment is temporary, with young children learning very little from this form of discipline. Further amendments to South African legislation should include the reduction of the number of learners per classroom. As previous and current research findings have revealed, congested classrooms deny educators the opportunity of personal interaction, and make classroom management more difficult.

A positive, practical approach to discipline could include learner involvement in voluntary services, such as assisting in classroom duties, and cleaning their rooms and helping parents around the home, as these activities promote qualities such as respect, empathy, patience and care. The promotion of universal values in the schooling environment could be achieved through various mediums such as stories, art, music, play, and even voluntary and community activities. Positive disciplinary methods at an earlier age could be promoted and encouraged through greater awareness by means of support networks and workshops. Another practical approach is the formation of a network for crèche facilitators to share information and provide support when dealing with learner issues such as problem behaviours, language barriers and discipline.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation was the lack of a male perspective on the issue of discipline. During the sampling process, it was only females who were located and who agreed to participate in the research. A male perspective on the disciplinary methods currently used would have benefited the research. A further limitation was the limited literature available on the diverse perspectives of disciplinary methods used to modify problem behaviours at home, in the crèche and in the Grade R classroom in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The third limitation was a small sample size. Although twelve participants provide rich, in-depth data, a bigger sample size would have been more reflective of South Africa's diverse population.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is evident that for future research studies a diverse male perspective on the concept of discipline is necessary. In addition, a longitudinal study may be beneficial, to monitor the effectiveness of the various alternative disciplinary methods used, and to allow the researcher to follow and record changes in a child's behaviour patterns. Lastly, more theories on discipline in Africa are required, to help understand the African child in African society.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be emphasised that racial diversity influences people's perceptions of the concept of discipline and the meaning they attach to it. Racial beliefs determine the parenting styles people adopt and the disciplinary methods they apply. Defined as love and respect, discipline covers various aspects of learning appropriate values and behaviours. While findings revealed that a few of the participants rejected the use of corporal punishment, many supported the occasional smack on the bottom. A surprising finding included the negative views held on the use of demerits as a disciplinary method. The study findings revealed that a major concern amongst many of the participants was the minimal parental involvement in the disciplinary process. A healthy parent-school partnership is therefore crucial for an effective disciplinary approach to work. Parent and educator workshops were suggested, as well as a network for crèche facilitators, to allow for feedback on the disciplinary process.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL APPROVAL



24 August 2016

Mrs Ashika Singh 932418133
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Singh

Protocol reference number: HSS/1698/016M

Project Title: Exploring diverse perspectives of the disciplinary methods aimed at modifying problem behaviours in young children in selected areas in Pietermaritzburg

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 19 July 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application 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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Ms Phindile Mayaba
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Augustine Nwoye
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nondumiso Khanyile

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Pinetown Campus Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I..... have been informed about the study entitled: Exploring the different perspectives of the disciplinary methods aimed at modifying problem behaviours in young children in Pietermaritzburg by Ashika Singh.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 932418133@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

**Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)**

Date

**Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)**

Date

APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

- Do you use the same disciplinary methods that your parents/guardians used?
- Have the disciplinary methods changed from the time you were younger?
- What disciplinary methods do you use?
- When do you think discipline should start?
- What does discipline mean to you?
- What does punishment mean to you?
- Are the disciplinary methods that you use effective?
- Have your racial values impacted on your views of discipline?
- Describe some of behaviours that are considered racially acceptable in your community?
- Are these behaviours accepted by society?
- What are your views on corporal punishment?
- Do you think that corporal punishment should be abolished within the home environment?
- What are your views on the alternate strategies on corporal punishment? (time out, demerits)
- Do you believe that these alternate strategies are effective?
- Do you believe that young children understand that they are misbehaving?
- Do you believe that young children should face the consequences of their actions?
- What are your views on rewards and praise?
- Do you believe that young children behave differently in certain environments, better at school than at home?
- How can we improve our disciplinary methods?

APPENDIX 4: TURNITIN REPORT

Exploring the diverse perspectives of the disciplinary methods aimed at modifying problem behaviours in young children in selected areas in Pietermaritzburg

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APPENDIX 5: EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

P.O. Box 100715
Scottsville
3209

6 August, 2017

To whom it may concern,

I have edited the following document for language errors, and in the process have checked the referencing and layout:

Title: *Exploring the diverse perspectives of the disciplinary methods aimed at modifying problem behaviours in young children in selected areas in Pietermaritzburg*

Author: Ashika Singh

Degree: Master of Social Science (Psychology)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Student number: 932418133

Supervisor: Dr Phindile Mayaba

Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

Kind regards,



Debbie Turrell

debbie.turrell@gmail.com